

# A VIEW TO THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF LGBTI PEOPLE

IN POLITICAL PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS IN COLOMBIA







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in political parties and movements in Colombia

Corporación Caribe Afirmativo Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute Observatorio de Participación Política de personas LGBTI en Colombia

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### **Presentation**

The origin of modern democracy in the Western world had an excluding nature, in which the so-called minority population groups- including all who were not men. heterosexual, white, aristocrats, and erudite started being categorized as inferior since it was considered that their distinctive distanced them from features citizenship; a situation that was originally denounced by women, who during many years were not recognized as eligible for political rights, and whose representation, in spite of being the majority percentage of population, is still affected and reduced today, in spite of the multiple efforts made towards gender equality in political practice.

Laws, round tables, and recommendations from the highest strategic political spheres have called attention to this expression of inequality. However, as of today, the system has not vet addressed non-discrimination as a Human Right, despite of being formally established within the majority of the legislative branches. It seems that this practice has been instated in the political culture, in which -historically- men have been the main characters. Although in some Western cultures the acceptance preconceived roles for men and women is being increasingly reduced, a patriarchal imaginary still remains at a political level where diversity does not appear as an added value of democracy but, on the contrary, as obstacle or imperfection for the democratic exercise.

The petition that women started over fifty (50) years ago followed by African descent groups in the Western world, whose fierce work still influences the "ranking" of equality within political participation

scenarios from electoral processes to political party structures and government processes, continues today with the actions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans and intersex people. And their struggle for recognition has helped them get closer to the exercise of a full citizenship that arises from the full exercise of Rights and is materialized in the real, formal and informal ways of participation.

Nowadays, Political **Participation** become the fourth generational momentum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex peoples' (LGBTI) activism towards achieving equality. These moments, in our opinion, are shaping the social movement; and although this is not a linear or sequential process, sometimes they interrelate amongst themselves regardless of the time period of history; and they show why the LGBTI activism scenario and the sexual diversity and gender agendas endorse emblematic and direct political participation.

The first cycle of LGBTI activism in Latin American countries began in the 70s and 80's with the decriminalization homosexuality. The first activists in Colombia were mainly homosexual men who made their stance public through culture, art and even syndicalism, as in the cases of Manuel Velandia and Leon Zuleta. Then, in the late 80's and early 90's, the fight against HIV/AIDS became stronger in Colombia. At this time, homosexual people (mainly gay men and trans women) were considered a high risk and vulnerability population group, which initiated the second period of the LGBTI movement characterized by a struggle from the point of view of health policies focused on care, prevention, and non-discrimination. guarantee of Subsequently, and as a third founding milestone, there were struggles in the Constitutional Assembly and postconstitutional agendas in the Constitutional Court and its sentences in favor of Rights. As well as the writ for the protection of fundamental rights, the enforcement of constitutional obligations to equality (art 13), and to the free development of personality (art 17) encouraged by citizens who had realized that bills in the Congress were not fruitful and wanted to motivate actions towards equal rights shown on over one hundred writs for the protection of fundamental rights and constitutional sentences from this Court, recognizing full Rights ranging from the right to work, access to healthcare, and public space use, and, nowadays, with the recognition of

same-sex marriage and adoption.

Nevertheless, and in the face of a lack of solid legal tools consistent with Democracy and the equality guarantees that should be granted by the Social State based on the Rule of Law; the ambiguity within national, regional, and local State policies; and the invisibility of LGBTI people participation agendas, we are experiencing the fourth generational momentum of the sexual and gender diversity agenda, related to direct participation in politics, meaning a direct and transforming decision mechanism in which just with the real and effective presence of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans and intersex people, they will be able to become not only makers of their agendas but also leaders of in-depth social transformations that could Democracy and consolidate the Social State based on the Rule of Law.

- § Corporación Caribe Afirmativo.
- § Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute

### Introduction

In Colombia, with the Constitution of 1991, the political participation of leaders representing the social sector composed of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and trans and intersex people (LGBTI)<sup>1</sup> has been increasing in the past decades. Although, historically in Colombia there have been participatory practices from non-conventional scenarios, the Constitution becomes the road map that opened legal and sociocultural doors for these groups that were on the process of legal, electoral, and political activism.

In this way, it is possible to find not only individual leaderships of LGBTI people in political spaces, and the creation and strengthening of organizational processes such as foundations and associations of LGBTI people or people that are leaders of the LGBTI agenda, but also the birth and growth of collective actions, protests, and mobilizations. Additionally, in the past few years, the impact within the political parties and electoral movements has begun to strengthen. All these actions are showing that the LGBTI movement in our country is initiating its third generation of leadership, which emerges with direct participation in political participation scenarios where they are key actors in the construction, setting in motion, and achievement of agendas of social and political reforms.

In this respect, it is possible to revive specific and local cases, marked by the success of the pioneering Polo de Rosa within the Polo Democrático party; or by the emergence, role, and management of openly LGBTI politicians such as Sebastián Moreno, councilor of Chapinero in Bogotá city. However, due to the qualitative increase of the LBGTI agenda in several political parties and the visibility and strength of the leadership of some LGBTI activists in political scenarios, it is of vital importance to propose an analytical exercise that would let us become aware of perceptions and situations in a systematic way on how this process has been developing in the country. In other words, to be able to understand LGBTI leadership and participation when introduced in the parties' organizational structures.

The Right to political participation is compiled in several international Human Rights documents, of which Colombia is a signatory State. So for example, this is a statutory right on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 21 and article XX of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, among others. Political participation is a subsidiary Right of people's integrity and dignity. In their territory, holders of rights must have not only the necessary mechanisms to have a decent life within full citizenship, but also have the real tools for their activation in democratic processes. In Colombia, several documents frame the identification for this need of

<sup>1-</sup> The LGBTI acronym is a political category to demand the Rights of lesbian women, gay men, bisexual people, trans and intersex people. However, it is important to note that, sociologically speaking, this acronym cannot be understood under an homogeneus perspective nor a unit or monolithic connotation or as a single social group that is constructed through a common notion of identity. Even though it is a category with a political functionality to demand Rights to the State under a liberal conception of multiculturalism, in daily practice, it requires a more indepth analysis before historic asymmetries that are linked to gender, ethnicity, territorialism, etc.. Therefore, it is necessary to do a differentiated translation, unveiling inner nuances, oppressions and asymmetries. (Pérez, Correa and Castañeda: 2013)

#### participation:

- Recognition of the politicization of public or nonpublic agendas from population groups. These agendas compile the needs, efforts, and pressures led by such groups with their specific characteristics, to achieve full citizenship; and that are needed to elevate them to a status of Law, policy or agreement for their sustainability.
- The Colombian political reform of 2011, which emphasized the importance for political parties and movements to move forward with the implementation of internal practices for the inclusion on the political participation of underrepresented groups, under real mechanisms of key performance indicators, social bases, candidates of popular election posts, and the agendas they represent.
- The political empowerment of leaderships that were already established by the progress made on public policies, supportive actions, and guarantees of Rights from national and local governments, that made the LGBTI agenda public, and that currently need to evaluate the agenda regarding the direct and true representation of LGBTI people.
- ♣ The experiences at the 2006 2010 and 2010 2014 Congresses, where bills on sexual and gender diversity were addressed, that allowed the identification of allies, possibilities, and discourses to increase the participation of LGBTI people and agendas on the Legislative Branch.

The visibility of the political participation of the historically excluded and underrepresented groups becomes a challenge for the politics and equity in Colombia. Even though Colombia is a Social

State under the rule of law, the exclusion and the low participation of several historically violated population groups is a visible and tangible reality in which women, disabled, African descendants and LGBTI people, become populations in need of aimed at processes including strengthening their roles as holders of rights. For this reason, it is necessary to take steps towards the implementation of democratic and supportive actions that would enable the resignification of the role they play as part of the Colombian society in environments of power and decisionmaking.

The participation strategy for LGBTI people in Colombia should be based on a Rights Based Approach (EBDH for its acronym in Spanish), where respect and recognition of population groups rights are established as the main guiding principle participation strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to implement mechanisms of political influence to ensure the material effectiveness of the rights before institutional and social responses. In other words, participation strategies as democratic guarantees for underrepresented groups become messengers of responses in the face of social reality. Thus, these should prioritize political agendas on the Legislative and Executive Branches, or in the party structure of participation based on respect, protection, guarantee, and promotion of the full enjoyment of rights.

Although since the late 90's, the visibility of LGBTI people and agendas has made its way through the Political Parties, the electoral processes and local government structures, there is still a deep potential to be explored because, as a matter of fact, nowadays what political agendas lack from (dynamism, social mobilization, base work) is basically the process of higher consolidation of the LGBTI movement, which will allow a dual instance equation so that the sexual and gender diversity agendas with their potential

of transformation become politicized and so that the political agendas can find in the strength of the LGBTI movement a new scenario to make politics, understood as the direct participation (not of political use) of its members in the social transformation proposals. This report is an academic resource that could serve as an example, in terms of the importance of political participation, not only for LGBTI people and groups, but also for different parties committed to being inclusive and increasing the democratic participation of this group.

### Research methodology

This report is the result of an investigation carried out in 2014 in twelve (12) cities of Colombia<sup>2</sup>. It aims to provide an explorative and descriptive look at political participation processes of LGBTI people. The intention is to reveal experiences, perceptions, obstacles, and possibilities.

This is a Mixed Method Research in which the quantitative data is in dialogue with the participants' intersubjective perceptions. The information was collected through surveys, review of documents and resources, along with in-depth interviews and discussion groups, which allowed an insight into individuals' voices and experiences. For this exercise, a categorical system and an information collection process were defined as described on the table below. The categorical system operates as a road map to address the techniques and the participants.

#### **TABLE 1. CATEGORIAL SYSTEM**

Categories of analysis	Description
Political parties and movements	Organic structures, bylaws, political ideology, inclusion practices, funding and guarantees for electoral campaigns.
LGBTI activists' political participation under the electoral process framework.	Individual candidacy, support and presence in political campaigns, collective actions under the electoral processes framework, political agendas and participation scenarios in the core of political parties and movements, candidacy development (quota law enforcement and placement on the LGBTI candidates list)
Public policies	Local and territorial government commitments for coalition building within the citizens
LGBTI leadership	Politicized social mobilization, LGBTI people training and participation in social movements, impact on policy design and structural reforms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The cities where the information for the investigation was collected are: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Pasto, Bucaramanga, Cúcuta, Montería, Sincelejo, Ibagué, and Pereira.

TABLE 2. METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS FOR INFORMATION COMPILATION

Techniques	Description	Sources
Review of documents	Review of coverage of LGBTI political agendas in printed media at a national level from 2007-2014.	El Espectador, El Tiempo (National newspa- pers), El Heraldo from Barranquilla, El País from Cali, El Colombiano from Medellín. And, a na- tional weekly publication: Semana magazine.
	Review of existing regulations, historical records.	Laws and jurisprudence in Colombia regulating political participation, local public policies on LGBTI Rights, Planeta Paz (civil society movement that includes LGBTI agendas) records, and UNDP files of the Governability Program.
Surveys	Compile LGBTI people's perceptions (1124 surveys administered) about political participation, at a non-probability sample size from the twelve cities prioritized for the research.	LGBTI people participating in Pride Parades in cities such as, Pasto, Barranquilla, Bogotá y Medellín.  Conduct of survey in LGBTI bars and meeting places.  Service centers for LGBTI people in Bogotá and on one-on-one conversations with LGBTI leaders in cities such as Ibagué, Pereira, Bucaramanga, Cartagena, Cúcuta, Montería, Cali, and Sincelejo.
In-depth interviews	Recover the experiences of LGBTI people that have participated in politics.	Interviews with 30 LGBTI activists in Colombia.
Focus groups	Foster reflection and problem-posing before political participation	Four (4) focus groups were arranged: two with LGBTI people who had their political debut and, two with leaders from parties that manage LGB-TI agendas.

It is important to consider that this research has an exploratory level – descriptive in nature and, in this sense, it was necessary for the research team to intentionally use a nonprobability sampling. The guidelines to survey LGBTI people in the twelve selected cities were defined based on random criteria, which core requirements were being over 18 years old and self-identifying as a LGBTI person.

The nonprobability methods are a methodological option to approach realities in which a probability study is highly expensive and when the characteristics of people or population groups are not visible such as in cases of diverse sexual, identity, and gender orientations. Although, this type of research does not allow generalizing, it certainly becomes a research input and a road map that demonstrate perceptions towards the realities experienced by individuals.

### **Document structure**

This report has been divided into five segments and a few general recommendations, as follows:

- 1. The introduction of initial reflections about the importance of LGBTI agendas as vital strategies to strengthen political parties and deepen democracy in Colombia.
- 2. An approach to the political participation context in Colombia is carried out to show constitutional progress and how, when put into practice, it has worked as a bridge to bring up actions and processes from historically excluded groups such as the LGBTI sectors.
- 3. A conceptual approach is presented with normative guidelines as support in the country; to do so, three central categories were defined: political participation, electoral systems, and political parties. Additionally, the political parties are placed in a Colombian context, keeping in mind their structures, principles, and levels of inclusion within their LGBTI agendas.
- 4. A nonprobability study is done based on perceptions and experiences of LGBTI people in twelve selected cities.
- 5. The experience of political activism is presented at this point, revealing the implications of political exercise and the level of advocacy party leaders and activists exercise daily at the national and regional level.

The last part of this report presents a series of recommendations and best practices that can be used by parties and political movements in their LGBTI agendas, guaranteeing the LGBTI people's participation and their rights, thus creating affirmative actions in favor of this population.

# 1. The LGBTI agenda strengthens political parties and deepens democracy



The purpose of this section is to present the reasons as to why political parties must undertake actions within their organizations to recognize the rights of LGBTI people. The challenge is to look into reasons that are not necessarily related to idealistic versions about the parties because they are conferred a group of tasks that, when in contrast with reality, reveal an imbalance that makes the context more confusing and less stimulating instead of shedding light on the topic.

To achieve the aforementioned challenge, we will use the theoretical and methodological approach of Realism, in other words, a theory that understands parties for what they really are and do, and from there, find real possibilities to start delving into the LGBTI agenda, and even achieving a greater materialization of the rights of its representatives within the parties.

We will undertake this path relying on the clarity of what a political party is not and for that, we will be supported on what Gutiérrez Sanín (2007, p.55) said in his book "Lo que el viento se llevó" in which paraphrasing the words of Duverger, he points out, "First of all, it is not a programmatic or ideological alliance (...). Ideas count within the parties but in a much more oblique way than the simple association around a unique vision of the world. It is not a community, but rather a of communities". Undoubtedly, Gutiérrez Sanín started to search for elements that would enable him to prove the true reality of these individuals and, from there, explain their evolution through history so as to be able to explain the type of parties we have nowadays, their limitations and potentialities.

In our case, we do not mean to go beyond this reflection. On the contrary, we want to support ourselves on the insights given by the author as it allows to have a more complex view of reality since he suggests different variables for its study. According to Gutiérrez (2007a, p.61) "The parties' history is the history of their way "of doing things" against the general institutional frame and other forces. Particularly, it is the history of the changing alliance among business owners and political niches and the way in which they interact under the institutional frame".

What Gutiérrez Sanín (2007b) suggests is a twoway definition, as an encounter between business politicians and social niches or as a formal free recruitment association, through an idiosyncratic combination of ideas and selective incentives and outreach. It also offers a notion of progress based on the idea of differences among the parties and the system and, finally, technological innovations.

Therefore, the fact that parties include the materialization of the Rights of LGBTI population within their ideology or organizational structures has to do with the revision of the strategic value of this social sector as a new social-electoral niche for political parties. The pressure of the national context, including the legal system, and the international context, are necessary to guarantee civil and political Rights related to sexual diversity. In this sense, political parties become a channel of socially built needs, thus being responsible for implementing solutions for these through the acquisition of power.

### The LGBTI population, a new social - electoral niche

Demands from the LGBTI social movement and citizens have had repercussions on the electoral processes as proven at the Primer Encuentro de Liderazgo Político LGBTI de América Latina y el Caribe (First Meeting on LGBTI Political Leadership of Latin America and the Caribbean) in Lima, September 2014. Experiences in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina and Venezuela demonstrate the creation and growth of a political niche that is increasingly identifying with those candidacies that carry the flags of this social movement.

The Observatory of Political Participation of LGBTI People in Colombia has systematized, through research that has not been published yet, at least 21 electoral experiences throughout Latin America which, from 1992 to the present, are related to a visible and invisible electorate that prioritizes the recognition of the sexual diversity Rights.

In the case of Colombia, the Observatory highlights the work of Sebastián Romero, who was elected for the Local Administrative Board of Chapinero between 2008–2011, the work of Angélica Lozano, former local Mayor, former councilwoman in Bogotá, later a member of the Capital District House of Representatives. Both

of them, without hiding their sexual orientation, demonstrated the potential of this programmatic option within the Colombian culture, that is typified, according to Marco Palacios (2002) and López de la Roche (1993), as a deeply conservative culture, tied to the past and to Catholic values.

Undoubtly, the electoral results in relation to the total influence of the voting are not meaningful. However, the emergence of this type of leadership proves the division in the dominant homophobic culture. Verifying this hypothesis is the result of a research that is not the purpose of this article, yet we can certainly find some recurrences that reassert this idea on the surveys carried out in the past years.

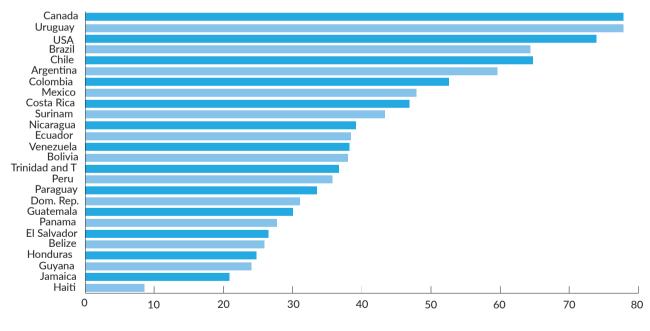
In a survey elaborated by Econometría S.A. and revealed by the national radio network Caracol Radio on August 26, 2010 -- in which 1,200 people living in Bogotá were surveyed by phone and with a meaningful sampling by sex, age, social status, and location -- disclosed that 63% of the people from Bogotá supported lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual marriages. On the other hand, the newspaper El Tiempo (2010), when referring to the same survey stated,

"53,8% of the survey respondents were women and 46,2% were men. The survey respondents were between the ages of 18 and 59 years old and 89% were heterosexuals".

In the same way, if we consult the Cultura Política de la Democracia en Colombia y en las Américas, 2012: Hacia la igualdad de oportunidades (Political Culture of Democracy in Colombia and the Americas, 2012: Towards the equality of opportunities) survey, we can note that:

"By far, the country that, in average, harbors the greatest prejudices against homosexual public officials is Haiti; while Canada, Uruguay, and the United States of America stand out for being the most tolerant. Colombia occupies a middle high position on this list of countries. Its average support to homosexuals nominated for public official roles is only exceeded by, besides the aforementioned countries, Brazil, Chile and Argentina, and is significantly above other countries. (Raga, 2012) (See Graphic 1).

GRAPHIC 1. CITIES OF RESIDENCY AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING LGBTI PEOPLE



95% Confidence intervals.
 Americas Barometer sources.
 by LAPOP

The survey results also indicate that, "the support to homosexual public officials is positively correlated to economic status and education level. Individuals with higher social status and education tend to provide more

support to the idea of having homosexual people apply to public appointments" (Raga, 2012 a) (See Graphic 2).

#### GRAPHIC 2. WAYS TO IDENTIFY YOURSELF UNDER THE LGBTI CATEGORY



This openness has permitted topics of gender diversity and freedoms and Rights for the LGBTI population to be present in daily life, while breaking the cultural barrier that institutions such as the church and school have created around them. Institutions that, as per Boudieau (1994), are responsible of the State ideological reproduction and, therefore, guarantors of the control of the symbolic capital monopoly that in turn permits domination.

In contrast to the above argument, as per Tarrow (1994), the configuration of a favorable structure of opportunities for the embodiment of the LGBTI population Rights, has been validated. Legal and institutional changes that started with

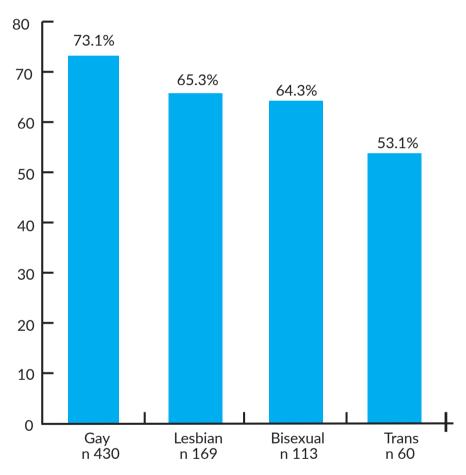
the passing of the Constitution of 1991, which permitted the addition of specific articles to the Carta Magna in the Constitution such as the freedom of personality development, the pluralist and diverse conception of the Constitution, some issuance of Constitutional Court rulings that has issued a writ of protection to those Rights, as well as the existence of leaders that, within State structure important roles, have supported the LGBTI population Rights based on Liberal principles. The LGBTI movement national and international growth, and the permanent collective action, demonstrated on the "Gay Pride" manifestation, proves it.

Although the most reputable electoral

expressions have only been visible in the last decade, this does not contradict the evidence of the survey made by Brigeiro, Castillo, and Murad, who, in 2007, had already detected an intention to vote from the LGBTI population for those candidates that declared in favor of their claims.

The Latin American Centre for Sexuality and Human Rights and the Rio de Janerio State University Social Medicine Institute, under the coordination of Mauro Brigeiro, Elizabeth Castillo, and Rocío Murad, implemented the survey, LGBT: Sexuality and Participants Rights of the LGBT Citizens Parade in Bogotá 2007, with the common interest of broadening knowledge on sociability, social participation ways, political conceptions, body care, and LGBT discrimination and violence experiences in Colombia as well as in the rest of Latin America.

#### GRAPHIC 3. PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE THAT ARE PART OF THE LGBTI POPULATION ORGANIZED GROUPS

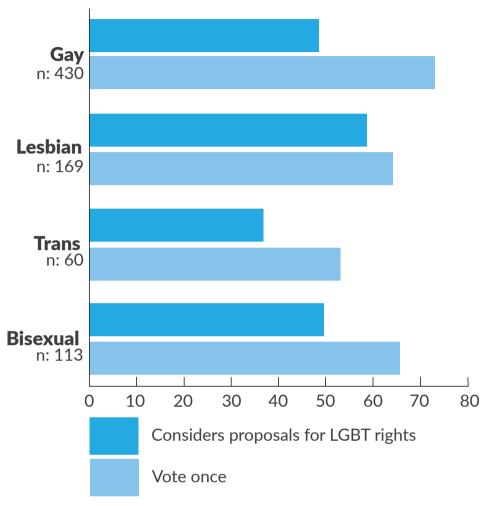


In short, such behavior has not been disconnected from social, political, legal, and cultural claims that reveal the manifestations of the LGBTI movement, since, according to the aforementioned study,

"On average, half of the survey respondents (49.9%) considered the specific proposals for LGBT people when choosing their candidates. In relation to the added sexual orientation, lesbians

are the group that expresses taking these proposals into account with more frequently: 58.6% of them did. Gays and bisexuals also present similar responses on this point, close to the general average. The verification of the candidates' specific proposals from trans people was of 36.7%, which suggests that it is a criterion less considered by them when voting" (2007) (See Graphic 4).

GRAPHIC 4. PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE BY POPULATION SECTOR THAT BELONG TO LGBTI COLLECTIVE GROUPS OR ORGANIZATIONS



Angélica Lozano is an emblematic case regarding the aforementioned situation. In the parliamentary elections of 2014, she obtained almost 31 thousand votes through the Alianza Verde party list, becoming the most voted candidate. Her master key was Claudia López, candidate to the Senate of the Republic, who -- with a less emphatic speech on the LGBTI topic but with significant support from the LGBTI movement -- obtained almost 82 thousand votes, also becoming the most voted candidate on the Senate list, above well-known politicians such as Antonio Navarro Wolf, former President of the National Constituent Assembly, former Minister of Health during the presidency of César Gaviria,

former Mayor of Pasto and former Governor of Nariño.

With no intention of forcing a conclusion, these examples illustrate, as a hypothesis, the configuration of a social electoral niche that will let these political business men connect with a new electorate that represents – as well as the electorate of women, indigenous people and afro descendants – a new social and cultural conception of the country, who require specific proposals and behaviors to conquer their vote intention.

### The political parties and the new political-institutional context

Panebianaco (1993) establishes four dilemmas to comprehend the political parties' evolution. The first one is the tension between a rational model and a natural system model. The second one is the confrontation between offering collective incentives or selective incentives to their activists. The third one, adaptation to the environment or relinquishment of its dominance. The fourth one, freedom of action of their leaders or subordination to organizational constrictions.

There are several debates regarding Panebianco's (1993a) conception. Gutiérrez Sanín (2007c) poses one of them when he points out that when parties are conceived as organizational structures rather than voluntary associations, with a more flexible vision, they end up having a rigid view that barely allows the analysis of their inner evolutionary processes. Nonetheless, on the sidelines of this debate, the establishment of dilemmas certainly allows us find the quandaries that they encounter themselves in their political actions. This generates concrete evolutions within the interior and exterior of the organizations and associations.

In our case, we will focus on the third dilemma, which relates to the control of the environment or to its predominance. Panebianco (1993b) says that parties always face specific contexts that affect them and consequently their existence is put at risk, being that the reason why, it either gets transformed through actions aiming such purpose or end up being subordinated. In other words, they go through a process of restructuring which allows them to survive.

As previously mentioned, the restrictions experienced during previous decades by homosexual, transsexual and transgender people, have not ended but have been reduced, especially in the legal and cultural sphere.

As per the American Civil Liberties Union - ACLU -, "the modern movement of Homosexual Rights started dramatically on June, 1969 at the Greenwich Village on New York city, when the police, during a typical raid, tried to arrest them simply because they were at a bar for homosexuals. The Stonewall Inn clients counter-attacked.

Using many basic litigation strategies -- at a mass level -- that had been used by other activists of the 20th century, the homosexual movement has obtained significant achievements".

Among those, ACLU highlights the following: nine states, District of Columbia, over 200 municipalities and hundreds of businesses and universities prohibited discrimination.

Additionally, "local societies" programs recognized among their employees lesbian and homosexual couples in dozens of municipalities and hundreds of private institutions, including some of the biggest corporations and universities of the country. Also, ACLU pointed out the sodomy laws, typically used to justify discrimination against homosexual people, which only exists in 19 out of the 50 States in the United States of America.

The sexual diversity agenda is increasingly getting into the public arena along with the efforts towards the equality of Rights. El Portal Luz (January, 2014) states that

"In the world, 14 countries have legally approved homosexual marriage and 19 others have regulations of civil union or similar (... like the AVP approved in Chile). [...] Thirty-three countries [are] pro-gay, [meaning] 17% of the total in the world, considering that there are, according to the United Nations, 193 countries in the world".

In a press article, the El Portal RTV.ES (November, 2014), affirms that, since the year 2000, Holland was the first country in the European continent to approve homosexual marriage. Followed by Belgium in 2003, Canada and Spain in 2005, South Africa in 2006, Norway and Sweden in 2009, Portugal, Iceland and Argentina in 2010, Denmark in 2012, New Zealand, Uruguay and France in 2013, and Luxemburg and Finland in 2014. It is also legal in a dozen of States in the United States, in Mexico's capital city and another state and Brazil, by order of the Supreme Court, although there still is not a specific law.

Although in Latin America, same-sex marriage its only legal in few countries, it is making its way to other countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile and Peru, where bills for equality have been presented recently.

These legal transformations, which are based on feeble but equally important perception changes, on different aspects of homosexuality (as observed in the above cited surveys), have been shaping a social-electoral niche that becomes an environment with new elements that requires changing the way the issue is tackled at an internal as well as an external level.

In Europe and the United States of America the development of civic responsibility has been linear; that is to say that the Human Rights materialization has evolved by waves, known as the political and civil rights, economic, social, and cultural rights waves, and finally the collective rights such as peace and environmental protection wave. However, Assies Willem and other authors (2002) have argued that such evolutionary logic has not been experienced in Latin America. Moreover, they say that there have been processes of evolution and/of regression more in line with development of the state in Latin America.

For example, they call attention to societies that went through dictatorships, people ended up sacrificing economic, social, and cultural rights for the recognition of civil and political rights. Or vice versa, before the unfulfilled welfare promises of the Neoliberal model, citizenry has limited its expectations of fulfilling their civil and political Rights, with the aim of making their economic, social and cultural Rights possible. In short, the authors note that our continent is characterized for not being in full enjoyment of citizenry.

Hence, amidst the economic restrictions experimented by the Latin American and Colombian societies, collective actions in favor of and for the recognition of LGBTI civil and political Rights, gain audience. There is also a direct tie to democracy, but not so much to economic, social, and cultural Rights, but rather to the recognition of political Rights (Martínez, 1997; Raga b., 2012).

Latin America, the European continent, and the United States of America, have had changes not only in their legal scope due to the recognition of some Rights but in the political parties' regular internal life. The list of political parties that have included sexual diversity matters in their programmatic platforms is basically captured by

the left wing or center left as Partido Socialista Obrero Español –PSOE- and Izquierda Unida in Spain, Labor Party in United Kingdom (UK), the Democratic party in the United States of America, Partido de la Revolución Democrática –PRD- in Mexico, Kirchnerism or Peronism in Argentina and Polo Democrático Alternativo in Colombia. There have been also cases of sexual condition recognition in some right wing parties such as in the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom (UK).

During 2010, the Spanish newspaper El Confidencial, described the strategy that David Cameron applied in past elections: recognizing the homosexuality of eleven of his tory leaders, thus obtaining a new thorough frame of the conservative speech, with those who "break the so far commonly accepted taboo of being full blooded conservatives: white men, from medium-high social class, liberal, and of course, heterosexuals".

Parties have the challenge of recognizing this reality or denying the facts which would not only widen the gap among their electorate and the party members but would also relinquish a strategic niche captured by the center left and left wing which is already making changes in the right conservative parties´ strategy. As explained by Nick Herbert, one of the eleven homosexual tories and the one responsible for leaking the list in the ultraconservative newspaper The Mail on Sunday

"if a political party aspires to govern it should be similar to the country it represents. If we genuinely represented our country we should have 99 congresswomen, 16 African descendant or other minorities, and ten homosexuals". (El Confidencial a., 2010)

The view above demonstrates that the recognition of political rights of the LGBTI community is a point of no return that will increasingly influence voting intentions. This is the reason why parties should respond positively to this demands, otherwise they could experience a reduced electoral success.

### The sexual diversity discourse, an innovation

Gutiérrez Sanín has formulated, within a methodological frame analysis about parties, the concept of innovation using what Schumpeter has proposed and said, "Innovation is a new way to do things" (Schumpeter, in Gutiérrez, 2006d, p. 61). To support this hypothesis, he brings up the organizational developments produced by the Communist and Socialist parties or the Nazi parties' militia.

Gutiérrez (2006e) highlights that innovation is suitable to the parties' duties of solving their collective actions problems in the continuous efforts to maintain their electoral niches and invade those from their adversaries. Innovations are, the author claims — besides new ways of doing things — new products, i.e., new ways of organization, practices and routines. According to him, there are "hard" innovations, as for example, the introduction of television; and "soft" innovations, such as new speeches and ways of organization. And, as a consequence, parties and businessmen of politics continue imitating successful innovations.

However, imitation may generate three effects. 1) It could lead to a creative destruction because of the high number of imitations or bad imitations that could lead to failure. 2) Imitators could cause a displacement of innovators because in the process technological improvements to innovation are made, thus generating incremental changes. 3) Maintain inferior technologies over superior technologies because they have allowed, under critical circumstances, survive to many turbulences without being defeated. Finally, the author highlights a major contradiction, regarding the innovations created by the political parties, which leaded to selfdestruction. Therefore, they undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions.

In our case, we will refer to soft innovations developed by political parties that have hypothetically shown results that, with some incremental progress, could have higher impacts for the strengthening of their own parties and, consequently, democracy.

We are referring to political and organizational actions by social sectors, that is to say, the distribution of tangible and intangible resources such power, representation, etc., among social or age groups that represent groups of people identified by specific socio-cultural characteristics like women, the elderly, peasants, workers, indigenous people, afro-descendants and the LGBTI population or by age such as the vouth.

This form of organization and action has a virtue, it offers collective incentives to militants amidst the oligarchical tendencies parties face, that contrary to the tendency to individualize incentives, resolves the problem of belonging to those very same parties, not necessarily because of the benefits associated with increasing resources for personal use. Panebianco (1993c) had already highlighted this problem, for which reason he recognizes that collective incentives contribute to building solid levels of sense of belonging that strengthen these political organizations. An example of incentive is the participation at a managerial level or the delivery of representation on popular election roles. However, these resources or incentives are limited; many members may feel excluded and consequently unmotivated to participate.

Sectorial work is an efficient way to collectively distribute incentives because it does not only distribute intangible resources but, at the same time, recognizes that, unlike past experiences, the organization is composed of a diverse spectrum of individuals or actors that require recognition because each one of them follows different discourses, views, perceptions, and practices most likely on a same topic.

In any case, it is not only an efficient way at the core of the organization since, as mentioned above, if a political party aspires to govern it should be similar to the country it represents. As a result, the sectorial work allows a higher connection between the party and the electorate, who feels excluded and isolated from the political sphere. Partly because the parties' outreach does not reach some social sectors or in our case, political niches that have been excluded for years from the hegemonic discourse about men, Catholics, heterosexuals, white, medium-high or high socio-economic status.

The emergence of the patriarchal, socio-cultural matrix, product of the incursion of feminism,

allowed detecting a diverse society that was hidden in the periphery of the modern society of the XIX and XX centuries. The movements for the civil rights in the United States, the fight against war or the nuclear weapons dismantling; the emergence of ethnic recognitions originating the Balkans wars, or in the African continent, supportive demonstrations the species conservation of through environmental protection, and the vindication of diversity, demonstrated that homogeneous discourses were in decline.

The most paradigmatic case in Colombia is the Polo de Rosa, which was part of the Polo Democrático Alternativo – PDA- structure. The PDA establishment brought about a structure that allowed the connection between the party and social movements. Thus, the recognition of LGBTI representatives, women, peasants, and young people at a managerial level was given, as well as a green light for the configuration of organizations with autonomy related to the party structure in order to process internal demands around each sector and the demands of political niches that each sector represented.

This way of working did not emerge with the PDA; the pioneer of this type of organization in Colombia was the Liberal party, which distributes resources through the so called Departments of State, with the aim of making contact with established social or age groups sectors.

Although this way of organization has been a successful innovation that has permitted a higher approach to new political niches and has been replicated by other parties, even by the Conservative party which nowadays has representatives for women and the youth, has also contributed partly to move forward with the democratization of lists for decision making bodies. The PDA determined its lists by giving 30% to women and 20% to the youth in each of the lists and it even granted a percentage to ethnic groups or LGBTI representatives to swell the electoral lists for the party general congress.

That said and even though the aforesaid innovation has been copied by several parties, it is still insufficient because, in many cases, it ends up becoming a way of using the representation of these social sectors as a tool without actually transforming anything at the

core of the parties and the society per se.

It is here where what Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003) stated becomes important. He, with a strong critique of the fragmentation between the participative and representative democracy during the 90's, qualified it as a useless discussion since, rather than excluding each other, they complemented each other, thus consolidating democracy. Social movement demonstrations are the voice of those without a voice in the liberal representative democracy and parties are the leading subjects of such democracy that aims to represent the entire society. As a consequence, more than disputes for legitimacy, they should articulate and recognize each other to make liberal democracy a more intense and therefore legitimate democracy.

However, such consolidation does not happen only and exclusively by manipulating social movements, in this case the LGBTI social movement, and providing room for participation and representation as a collective incentive, but by developing a discourse acknowledging their Rights and their human condition.

Ruth Wodak, promoter of the historical analysis of the discourse, notes that oral and written languages constitute a way of social practice. In other words, facts, institutional practices, and discourses, as well as actions and social and political processes have an influence on discourses.

To put it another way, Wodak (2001, p. 105) states, "discourses as linguistic social practices, can be considered as elements that constitute discursive and non-discursive social practices and, at the same time, as elements established by them".

For example, Teun Van Dijk (2001, p. 146), in his discourse – cognition – society triangle proposes an analysis of the discourse, understood as a sociable occurrence in which the interaction of conversations, written texts and associated gestures, cover design, typographical lay out, images and any other semiotic dimensions are included. Also, with the cognitive dimension, he refers to beliefs, goals, values or emotions, as well as any other mental representations or memories. Finally, regarding society, it's the local microstructures of face to face interactions

like global, societal and political structures, that are defined in the form of groups, group relationships, and institutional movements. In other words, cognitive and societal ways determine the context of the discourse.

Both Wodak and Van Dijk expose the power of only on giving a voice or allowing this voice to express itself based on new organizational structure designs, such as sectors, committees, secretaries, etc. The key aspect of innovation consists of building a new discourse transforming the negative or pejorative images that segregate and exclude the LGBTI population. It also consists of building new meanings and signifiers that structure new democratic practices to make the most basic democratic principle, freedom of expression and personal development, a reality.

The creation of a new language will build a new social reality, a new social practice that will allow accepting the responsibility for the Rights, not as something extraordinary that needs positive discrimination policies, as in the case of LGBTI population, women, ethnics, and the youth, but as an essential reality without which democratic canons cannot be achieved.

Without these incremental changes, innovation will fall into what Shumpeter mentions about collective inactivity and lack of creativity, since it will be taken for granted that what is new is institutional engineering and not the socio/cultural transformation of it.

# 2. Contextualizing Political Participation in Colombia



#### Bipartisanship, Constitution of 1991, and Social Rule of Law Emergence

Different political and social aspects<sup>3</sup> have pervaded the history of Colombia. Nonetheless, these aspects have been linked to sectorial disputes for the State power. The political by the two-party polarization generated predominance triggered a series of violent actions that nowadays, fifty years later, continue to claim the lives of thousands of Colombians. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight, as established by Walter Bustamante (2008:41) that one of the main characteristics of confrontations has been having men as fundamental figures. men that have conferred themselves the right and duty of building the State and imposing order and the kind of relations to be established.

These violent fights, based in power disputes by the two oldest parties in Latin America, the liberal and conservative party, painted the country's electoral panorama in two different colors. On one side, the liberal party, which grew out of an external organization of businessmen who were influenced by British liberal commercial doctrines; and on the other side, the conservative, which appears in the oligarchy in hopes of preserving the status quo, forged the beginning of a fight to the death to assume ownership of the state (Roll, 2002:226).

It is paradoxical to note that history shows similarities on the understanding on how the State has been built by both political parties. David Roll (2002:229) states,

What began to condition these rising parties' pertinence, were social reasons, that is, one social class' pertinence and a defense of their interests. In political terms, both liberals and conservatives agreed on the fundamentals of the state's organization, for example accepting the rule of law, the importance of law and suffrage. This means that the confrontation did not stem from a contradiction of ideas but from a power

struggle. Therefore, these battles were developed based on the obstruction of emerging processes that could risk their hegemony.

It is important to point out that the electoral process conditions were not the best in terms of participation. Roll (2002:56) analyzed the Congress elections of 1958 and 1968 and showed the following data about the citizens' participation in the electoral process:

(...) This is the most pressing item for those who refer to Colombia as an oligarchic democracy, in which even by having a formal democracy, citizens do not have participation. In 1958, 60% of electors voted for the Congress while in 1968 just 31% voted. A similar decline took place for the presidential elections, from 50% to 34%".

The bureaucratic distribution of roles, the patronage system, violence, and absenteeism, took both political parties to a crisis that put their continuation and legitimacy at risk. "From that moment on, the oligarchic model got into a crisis but it was not replaced successfully by any alternative model, although there certainly were several possibilities that failed" (Roll 2002:58). So, political agreements were made to face the latent threat of losing the reins of the State; by means of which a reform to alternate the Presidency of the Republic every four years by each of the parties was established: it was the so called Frente Nacional.

It can be said that Frente Nacional was a political agreement that organized the government between the Liberal and Conservative parties from 1958 to 1974. The facts show that the goal was, beyond leaving behind the violence raised by polarization, to lower the dissatisfaction created by the two-party perverse dynamics of that era. It is important to emphasize that the definitive rejection from some opposition groups to the alternation of the Presidency did not resonate among those who rigged power distribution for the preservation of their own personal interests. Roll confirms the above mentioned information with his analysis:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The Colombian political struggle has been historically related to the continuous violence that still claims thousands of Colombian lives. Some of the aspects that have pervaded the Colombian reality started back in the time of Nueva Granada and went through different historical moments such as, bipartisanship, internal conflict, and the start-up of an economic model based on a growing social inequity.

The failure of bi-partisanship is rooted in its inability to direct new social forces mainly due to a patronage system. This inability started with Frente Nacional but what really nullified the possibility of an opposition, typical of the democratic dynamics of drafts legislation Number 1 from 1959, was the presidential alternation without consulting the prime constituent.

During the 80's the violent confrontation was separating from the political polarization generated by bipartisanship, and was getting into a military, guerrilla, and militia war that targeted the citizens as their center of confrontation. On his second publication, Oscar Mejía, as the Director of Cuaderno de Ciencia Política (2004:31) states that:

The State structural crisis is worsened by the indiscriminate terrorism, kidnappings, and murders executed by the Medellin cartel, the dirty war among guerrilla armed forces, military forces and militia against the civil population, collapse of criminal justice, decline quality of life, and other conflicts created a national atmosphere of chaos and displacement.

After the emergence of the student movement following the murder of Luis Carlos Galán on 1989, a proposal was made to Colombians to reform the National Constituent Assembly instituted by the governments of Rafael Núñez and Miguel Caro. The initiative that aimed to shape the participation of other non-traditional sectors in the electoral dispute was added as a seventh ballot in the elections on March, 1990.

Due to the social dissatisfaction triggered by political fragmentation, the legislative decree from May 3rd, 1990 gave green light to a civic call to determine the legitimacy of a constituent assembly. So, in this way, on May 27th votes were in favor of the reform of the Colombian Carta Magna.

On December 9, 1990 the beginning of a constitutional change was established. Clearing the path for emerging sectors that were not identified or were against the traditional and predominant parties, for their free political participation. Even though this process set a historical precedent for the country in terms of the recognition of Human Rights, an in-depth

discussion was going to take place due to the number of seats in Congress designated to each sector.

Oscar Mejía (2004:32) explains that:

The traditional political sectors lists, Partido Liberal, Partido Social Conservador, Conservatismo Independiente, and the Movimiento de Salvación Nacional, won 45 out of 72 available seats at the assembly. The controlled opening of the political system was evident with the rise of the M-19 as third force with 19 seats compared to Unión Cristiana, Unión Patriótica, and indigenous people, with two seats each.

The M-19, which played an important role in the re-routing of Columbian politics, was going to have an unequal participation in the face of the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties. The distribution didn't allow for any tendency to dominate, because agreements between elites guaranteed the continuity of the prevailing model.

The Unión Patriótica, which emerged from the frustrated peace process of Belisario Betancourt, was also considered a minority before the traditional supremacy. Both parties that were against the excessive political abuse of power on the people, and were also cornered by an unequal participation at the National Constituent Assembly. Therefore, the aspect that influenced the collapse of the political agreement was the exclusion of the different social sectors from discussions, among them, the LGBTI population.

Given this political landscape, the aforementioned opening of the political system seemed to vanish. Not only because of the strong, traditional and biased elite presence, but also because of the M-19 different third forces minority role. In the same way, the evident exclusion of conflict actors such as FARC-ELN-militia and the enormous majority of social sectors such as afro descendants, women, students, peasants, etc., made it impossible to think of the Assembly as a space of national unity and deliberation.

Before the bustling growth of the extremist forces, general dissatisfaction due to the corruption, which was reflected on the electoral abstentionism and the search for agreements that could give room to the protests of that time, the Magna Carta of 1991 was established. Despite its flaws and displeasure, it paved the way to the fight for the recognition of Rights of people and or sectors of the society that had been historically marginalized.

Likewise, Mejía (2004:36) pointed out:

The Constitution of 1991 brought about significant progress in relation to the "Carta" of 1886, such as the inclusion of the constitutional principles of the Social Rule of Law and the mechanisms for the protection of new rights and freedom. However, consciously analyzing the content of the "Carta" from 1991 and the rulings of the Constitutional Court, it is possible to catch sight of the fact that three different and conflicting State models were introduced: Social Rule of Law, a Neoliberal model, and the multicultural model.

Movements of women, afro descendants, indigenous people, sexual and gender diversity, etc. that were growing around the political context, found on the 1991 Constitution the path to the achievement of their historically denied rights. They found a green light path on the Constitution to the recognition of their Rights and their participation on different political scenarios in which they were not taken into account.

Despite the promising outlook due to the implementation of the Rule of Law, in which the LGBTI population had recognition of their rights as legal base, it did not influence the political, social and economic scenarios to pave the way for an inclusive society. Although the Rights denied to the LGBTI population were mentioned, their definition and inclusion were not specifically considered as a fundamental aspect on the Constitution of 1991.

Sexual minorities have lived a less fortunate situation. There have been very few advances in the definition and delimitation of the specific ethnicity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and tans population. This situation has been fed by the social rejection, promoted towards these groups, which has been demonstrated by an open discriminatory attitude in all levels of the community. An attitude that was seriously strengthened by the historical absence of a legal

recognition to this sexual diversity expression (Mejía 2004:59)

This gives an idea of the complex process that Columbia has gone through in search of a legal framework that allows for the recognition of the LGBTI community's rights and political participation. Of course, the progress and achievements have been framed under struggles in the sector that have pushed for this kind of defense in the face of society's discriminatory logic.

### The LGBTI people's political participation in Latin America

In Latin America, the emergence of the political participation of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans and intersex people, is not far away from Colombian reality. In Chile, after Rolando Jiménez --president of the Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual (MOVILH) in 1996-- lost when running for Council to Santiago, Alejandra Gonzales was elected in 2004, becoming the first trans woman to hold a popular election role.

In an interview for the Chilean magazine Paula, Gonzales states that the day in which she took her oath, the Mayor called her worriedly and suggested that, since they did not know how people could react, she had to be dressed in a suit and with a tie so as to pretend she was a man. Alejandra confessed that at the beginning she rejected the idea, but then she accepted to avoid –as she said– "causing greater trouble".

Discrimination was not an obstacle for this woman, as she was able to win a seat on her town's council for the third time in 2012. This is not the only case of political participation of an open LGBTI person, the activist and former MOVILH spokesman, Jaime Prada, became the first homosexual to hold a popular election position in 2011, 23 years after Rolando Jiménez tried without succeeding. Nowadays, Prada is an independent activist.

Currently, Chile has its first openly homosexual member of Parliament. He is Claudio Arraigada, former Mayor of La Granja between 1992 and 2012. He was the President of the Chilean Association of Municipalities between 2005–2007 and 2009–2011. Arraigada, openly declared his homosexuality for the elections on 2013<sup>5</sup> and he was elected with 27% of the votes in communities such as La Granja, Macul, and San Joaquín.

Finally, and regarding the political participation experience of LGBTI people in Chile, it is important to underline that Jaqueline Karen Atala Rifo was the first and only female judge who openly identified as a lesbian. She is also recognized for facing a legal battle against the State after being deprived of her daughters' legal custody after being sued by her ex-husband.

Karen went to the witness stand of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which in 2010 considered that the Chilean State had violated her Rights. Afterwards, in 2012, she was compensated by the State and made a call to the rejection of discriminatory behaviors due to sexual or gender orientation.<sup>6</sup>

As for Brazil we found Jean Wyllys and the Tv host and stylist Clodovil Hernandez, who in 2006 became the third congressman with the higher number of votes in his country with a poll of 493,951 votes. Although he was the first openly gay congressman in the Brazilian Congress, Clodivio Hernandez was against same sex marriage and the homosexual movement in Brazil because he considered them "of little importance"<sup>7</sup>. The congressman is also known for the sarcasm he showed in his campaigns and controversial comments to the media<sup>8</sup>.

In relation to LGBTI political participation in Argentina, two people stand out: Senator Osvaldo López, who was the first openly homosexual Argentinian congressman and María Rachid, leader of the Argentinian Federation of Gays and Lesbians, who was elected as legislator of Buenos Aires city on the elections of July 10, 2011.

After the death of Senator Juan Carlos Martínez,

Senator López served as Senator during the last two years. In 2011–2012 Senator López served as Congressman and he integrated the "Nuevo Encuentro" section in which he presented and promoted laws such as the rules for equal labor opportunities and compensatory pension for transsexual people, and the regulation of independent work, among others.

As for María Rachid, she was President of the National Institution against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI-acronym in Spanish) and resigned in 2010 after being involved in a dispute with Claudio Morgado, president, after a series of accusations due to mismanagement from both ends. In 2011, the LGBTI activist and Human Rights advocate was elected congresswoman of Buenos Aires city, assuming her role on December 10, 20119.

Finally, it is important to highlight the work from Esteban Paulón, current President of Federación de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales y Trans (FALGBT). On an interview for Rio Negro¹o magazine, Paulón mentioned the advancements on the recognition of the LGBTI people Rights in Argentina and talked in depth about the setbacks from a global perspective. Esteban, who was secretary of the socialist group at the Congress of the Republic, has been distinguished for his participation on the extension of same sex marriage to foreigners that want to get married in Argentina, and also for the gender identity law approval.

The political participation of LGBTI people in Mexico has an additional component. Back in 1897, José Ignacio Mariano Santiago Joaquín Francisco de la Torre y Mier, son-in-law of the president at the time, Porfirio Díaz, and elected congressman at the XVI Legislatura del Congreso de la Unión of México was accused of leading a secret homosexual life shortly after marrying the president's daughter.

On November 18, 1901, the police made a raid at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The complete interview can be seen at, http://tinyurl.com/lvb8qsd

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Interview describes how Alejandra was discriminated against. She was not only asked to dress up as a man but she has also been threaten and attacked in different ways.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>To read the Deputy's declaration, visit, http://tinyurl.com/nyrhknr

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Cushman, Roberto. (Acapa)2006. For complete article, visit, http://tinyurl.com/6zjg5qw

Cushman, Roberto. (Acapa)2006. For complete article, visit, http://tinyurl.com/6zjg5qw

a gay party known as "The dance of the forty one" in which half of the men were transvestites. At the beginning there was a rumor that there were forty two people at the party, number 42 being the son-in-law of President Díaz, therefore it is said that his relationship with the president prevented him from being arrested."

But José Ignacio is not the first LGBTI politician assuming a role of popular election in Mexico. In 1997, David Sánchez Camacho was elected local congressman at the Legislative Assembly. He was a pioneer in organizing a forum on sexual diversity and Human Rights at the Distrito Federal in 1998. Apart from being the first openly gay congressman, Sánchez is the creator of the law on children's Rights as well as the law for elderly Rights at the Distrito Federal in Mexico<sup>12</sup>.

On the other hand, Elsa Patria Jiménez Flores, was the first openly lesbian woman being elected as multimember congresswoman in legislature LVII in 1997. Jiménez is the head of the nongovernmental organization El closet de Sor Juana, an organization that protects the rights of lesbians in the country. Elsa Patria Jiménez became the first person from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans population to hold a public position in Mexico.

Likewise, we find Enoé Margarita Uranga Muñoz, congresswoman for the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PDR) who is known for her staunch defense of women rights and lesbian women in Mexico. Uranga, has also stood out in the political sphere for promoting the law of coexistence and same sex marriage in the Distrito Federal<sup>13</sup>.

Lastly, there are records of the candidacies of Amaranta Gómez Regalado, a trans woman who was running to represent the México Posible party for a seat at the Chamber of Deputies and self-called Muxhe, pointed out to Letras magazine in 2005 her intention of promoting the creation of a federal legal framework that would allow the creation of a national law against discrimination.

Regarding the political participation of LGBTI people in Venezuela, the presence of Tamara Adrián Hernández stands out: she is a judge, lawyer, and activist defender of women and LGBTI rights. This Trans woman has started a fight for the recognition of Rights equality in Venezuela, which, as she said, "does not have laws that guarantee equality for transsexual and homosexual people"14. This LGBTI leader pointed out as well that, "it is time for Venezuela to enter into the equality era and to eliminate laws that do not protect against homophobia"15.

In Ecuador, we found Dina Rodríguez and Carina Vance Mafla, current Health Secretary for the Rafael Correa administration, and activist for the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transsexual people. Despite of being born in the United State of America, Vance Mafla studied Secondary school in Ecuador and became the Executive Director of the Causana Foundation; an organization working on advocacy for the lesbian and bisexual women's rights. Aside from implementing an agenda that aligns with her duties, Carina promotes an agenda in areas such as family planning and pregnancy prevention under the motto "speak seriously, sexuality without mystery" 17.

For the first time in Bolivia, the Senate elections in October 2014 had the participation of LGBTI population members such as Raiza Torriani, trans woman and current president of the Transsexual and Transgender network in Bolivia

<sup>9</sup>Prieto, Sol. (Page 12) 2011. See the interview at, http://tinyurl.com/kwxndms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>See the entire interview at, http://tinyurl.com/mo2n2yw

<sup>11</sup> Bazant, Míladas (2005). Crónicas de un baile clandestino. Pág. 9

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Alberto, (2009) interview to David Sánchez Camacho (PDR): "El pan y el PRI no contemplan el reconocimiento de los derechos del colectivo LGBT" See entire interview at, http://tinyurl.com/m5fbbuc

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Caracas 447 "Támara Adrián: Venezuela debe entrar en la era de la igualdad" (2014) See complete article at, http://tinyurl.com/lm28bcu

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Caracas 447 "Támara Adrián: Venezuela debe entrar en la era de la igualdad" (2014) See complete article at, http://tinyurl.com/lm28bcu

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>McCormick, Jhosep (2012) PinkNews "Ecuador's new lesbian health minister to close 'gay cure clinics'". See complete article at, http://tinyurl.com/839gqz4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Lobato, Freddy (2012). "ella es una ministra que sí sabe lo que es discriminación y acoso". See complete interview at, http://tinyurl.com/osuumf3

(RED TREBOL) and cofounder of the LGBTI Bolivian coalition. Also, Luis Emilio Ayllón, Human Rights activist and current President of the GLBT civil association of Oruro<sup>18</sup>. Although this is not the first case of political participation of LGBTI people. For the municipal elections in Sucre between 2011 and 2013, Ronald Céspedes, former spokesperson of the GLBT movement of Bolivia between 2006 and 2007, became the first openly gay person to be at the municipal assembly in his country<sup>19</sup>. Likewise, Manuel Canelas was the first openly gay congressman in Bolivia.

Whereas in Paraguay, in spite of not having any records of openly LGBTI people participating in politics, the partnership that LGBT organizations and activists have started with the aim of reaching recognition of Rights in their country is recognized. LGBT – Paraguay is an organization that emerged from the coalition of several organizations with the goal of building actions and discussions that could strengthen and impact society to exercise a real democracy from a collective action<sup>20</sup>.

Also, the creation of a lesbian women organization, "Lesvos" in 2013 should be emphasized. It started as a political alternative with the aim of offering spaces for discussion on the isolation originated by the "machismo" and phobia against lesbians, and looking for solutions to big problems experienced by the lesbian women in Paraguay<sup>21</sup>.

In Uruguay, Federico Graña, activist from the collective group Ovejas Negras and the Minister of Education, Ricardo Ehrlich stand out for their support to the LGBT agendas in their country. Although Ricardo is not known as member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex

population, he has joined the LGBTI community in diverse protests against discrimination and for the recognition of rights in Uruguay<sup>22</sup>. On his part, Graña excels as co-author and promoter of same sex marriage in his country. Apart from being the leader of the debates around the proposal, he was played a fundamental role in its approval<sup>23</sup>.

In countries such as Perú, Puerto Rico, and Bolivia the political participation of activists and people related to the LGBTI agendas such as Carlos Bruce, Pedro Julio Serrano y David Uruquipa, Luisa Revilla, Pedro Peters Maldonado, Alejandro García Padilla, Shariana Ferrer, among others, are highlighted. Carlos Bruce is a congressman that has participated in different civil service positions<sup>24</sup> and he has created and promoted the law that paves the way for same sex marriage in his country. In 2014, Carlos Bruce, after openly declaring himself gay, became the first homosexual man at the Congress of his country.

Pedro Julio Serrano is a Human Rights activists from Puerto Rico, current president of "Puerto Rico para tod@", which works for the recognition of the Rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and trans people in that country.

Regarding Bolivia, the work done by David Uruquipa is highlighted. He is the president of the Transsexuals, Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals group of Bolivia (TLGB). Uruquipa is recognized for his demonstrations against violent killings in Bolivia of LGBTI people and for his written work related to the Right of participation of this population in his country.

The Costa Rican case is to be highlighted. The current head of State, Luis Guillermo Solís (2014-2018), has appointed two openly LGBTI people as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Recalde, Rocio (2014). "Representantes GLBT buscarán el voto en octubre". See complete article at http://tinyurl.com/op6r72f

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Recalde, Rocio (2014). "Representantes GLBT buscarán el voto en octubre". See complete article at http://tinyurl.com/op6r72f

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Centurión, Domingo (2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Somos gay (2013) <sup>«</sup>nueva organización LESVOS formadas por mujeres lesbianas en Paraguay". See complete article at, http://tinyurl.com/magztna

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>180 grados (2010) "Olivera y Ehrlich en marcha por la diversidad". See complete artcile at http://tinyurl.com/o4cjusl

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Rosenberg, Joel. 180 grados (2013) "es un momento de liberación para mucha gente". See complete interview at, http://tinyurl.com/lwuxsn4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>For more information about the different civil service positions, visit her CV at, http://tinyurl.com/nafog6c

Ministers. The current Governance and Police Vice Minister, Carmen Muñoz who previously, as congresswoman, was the leader of the opposition legislators, is in charge of the division of the such Ministry and the later creation of the Ministry of Public Security. She was the first openly lesbian woman to hold a Ministry in Costa Rica. Wilhem Von Breymar, known as a gay business man, was appointed as Minister of Tourism by President Solís, and caused great impact in the media since he took his partner to his oath of office. In April 2015 he resigned after being questioned about his low impact within the administration by the private sector.

In 2014, two extremely relevant events happened in Latin America. The first trans woman, Luisa Revilla, was elected as Deputy Mayor of La Esperanza District in Trujillo, Perú. The second case is José Manual Canelas, the first openly gay legislator in Bolivia.

An unfortunate event happened in Honduras in 2012, a year in which many LGBTI candidates endured threats. As in the case of Claudia Spellman, a trans woman and candidate to congress, who was intimidated and treated violently; or Erick Martínez, gay man and precandidate to congressman, who was assassinated.

### Approach to the LGBTI movement history in Colombia

Speaking about the LGBTI movement in Colombia is a complex matter. However, this document aims at compiling the perspective of two important authors in the building of its history, process, and progress. From the perspective of Manuel Velandia<sup>25</sup> and the contributions from Falón Ramírez Aya on the LGBTI sector agenda for Planeta Feliz<sup>27</sup>, a brief compilation about the process of the struggle for recognition, participation, and equality of the LGBTI population in the country is intended.

It is necessary to start this document by emphasizing that Colombia is a country that has historically experienced strong discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion, violence, and invisibility of people with a sexual orientation different from heterosexuality due to a lack of interest or a wrong perception about what being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans and intersex means. In this way, the LGBTI movement emerges under the frame of a society that is merely based on laws from a heteronormative and exclusive perspective (Ramírez s.f.).

The history of the LGBTI movement in Colombia starts with the activity of homosexual men who organized in the seventies, influenced by the Left wing currents coming from Europe, to connect gender and politics with the aim of permanently studying laws and homosexuality (Ramírez s.f.).

As already mentioned, politics in Colombia have been characterized by patriarchal dynamics and laws based on heterosexual perspectives. This has limited or has placed moral obstacles to those who identify themselves with a diverse sexual orientation or different identity construct. However, despite these obstacles, it is important to stress the political exercise of four personalities that have openly accepted their sexual orientation and have climbed to popular election positions, namely: Gustavo Álvarez Gardeazabal, Angélica Lozano, Ramón Ortiz, and Sebastián Romero, among others. They managed to get a seat in Parliament, thus setting a big precedent for the political participation of LGBTI people in Colombia. It is also worth mentioning that many other people have also been in the political scenario such as, Erika Otero in Popayán, Manuel Bermúdez in Medellín, Manuel Velandia and Germán Rincón in Bogotá and Pedro Fallah in Barranquilla.

Gustavo Gardeazabal was elected city councilman of Cali in 1978, and subsequently became Congressman at the Valle del Cauca Assembly. In 1988 he was elected as the first popular Mayor in Tuluá and Governor of Valle del Cauca in 1997. Since 1997, while he was Governor of Valle, he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Manuel Velandia is an investigator, University professor, and defendant of Human and Sexual Rights. He is from Colombia, exiled to Spain from 2007 since he was threaten to death several times. Threatens due to his tireless work as homosexual leader on the recognition, defense, and actions in favor of the LGBTI movement in Colombia. <sup>27</sup>Later on the importance of 'Planeta Paz' is highlighted on the organization and creation of LGBT population participation scenarios.

openly declared himself homosexual. Nowadays, he is one of the most prominent journalists in Colombia.

On the other hand, Sebastián Romero was an LGBTI activist leader and member of the Polo Democrático Alternativo. He was the first openly gay Councilor in Colombia and cofounder of the "Polo Rosa" tendency, an organization within his political party that works on LGBTI matters. He was a tireless advocate for the recognition of Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people within the legal framework<sup>28</sup>. Additionally, Romero is the first homos homosexual man to enroll his partner on his social security<sup>29</sup>. Sebastián passed away in February, 2011.

In the 2000s Ramón Ortiz, gay leader from Chaparral, Tolima initiated a project in his hair salon to demand that armed forces groups in his municipality stop violent acts and moral control over LGBTI people's bodies who were victims of threats and violent deaths in this area. His leadership transitioned into a collective leadership that continued demanding respect to citizens on the part of antagonistic groups. Also, the local government was increasingly pressured to strengthen social inclusion. This situation brought him closer to the Liberal party, which he represented in the 2007 elections, however he was defeated. Finally, he was greatly supported in his second attempt and elected Councilor of this city in 2011.

Angélica Lozano, LGBTI activist and Colombian politician led an arduous fight in defense of the Rights of this community. She has been the Local Mayor of Chapinero, City Councilor in Bogotá during 2012–2015, and currently elected as representative of Bogotá at the House of

Representatives. At present and from the Congress she promotes the debate regarding the violence that LGBTI people face in Colombia<sup>30</sup>.

The participation of the above mentioned LGBTI people has been quite meaningful. Beyond being elected to office, through their visibility, approach, and work with political parties as well as their political proposals, they achieved four very important effects on the political participation agenda:

- **1.** Provide visibility to the hidden and undervalued agenda and demonstrate its potential to guarantee an effective equality.
- 2. Show the ability of leadership, alignment and capacity to transform the LGBTI activists' reality.
- **3.** Open up spaces within political movements and parties not only for LGBTI people, but for sexual diversity and gender identity agendas.
- 4. Generate training processes and citizen awareness on the real and effective participative space democracy must provide to LGBTI people in Colombia.

It is important to highlight that the LGBTI activism and the political exercise in Colombia has historically emerged from a complex scenario, marked by opinions overloaded with sexual prejudice and the absence of a political culture that recognizes diversity as central concept to build a deliberative democracy. Taking into account Manuel Velandia's point of view<sup>31</sup> and the LGBTI agenda's contributions created by Falón Ramírez Aya<sup>32</sup> for 'Planeta Paz'<sup>33</sup> a brief summary about the struggled process of the recognition, participation, and equality of the LGBTI people in Colombia is will be made. In

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>El Espectador (2011) "Población LGBTI pierde a uno de sus más importantes líderes" See complete article at, http://tinyurl.com/kt3x589

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>El Espectador (2011) "Población LGBTI pierde a uno de sus más importantes líderes" See complete article at, http://tinyurl.com/kt3x589

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> For more information, visit the Citi Counsilor's web page, http://tinyurl.com/p9owv4dv

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Manuel Velandia is an investigator, University professor, and defendant of Human and Sexual Rights. He is from Colombia, exiled to Spain from 2007 since he was threaten to death several times. Threatens due to his tireless work as homosexual leader on the recognition, defense, and actions in favor of the LGBTI movement in Colombia.
<sup>32</sup>The LGBTI Agenda Sector is a document from "Planeta Feliz" created by Falón Yamili Ramírez Aya. The document, with no issue date, is a historic compilation of the creation, progress, and agenda of the LGBTI movement in Colombia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Later on the importance of 'Planeta Paz' is highlighted on the organization and creation of LGBT population participation scenarios

this research, three significant moments in Colombian LGBTI activism are identified; the first is connected to individual leaderships fostered by Unions and the HIV-Aids Agenda. The second is linked to the Constitution of 1991, and finally a transcendental moment of connection between the movement and the political parties.

#### León Zuleta and Manuel Velandia Leaderships

The history of the LGBTI movement in Colombia starts with activities organized by homosexual men in the seventies (XX century) influenced by the Left wing tendencies. At a time in which homosexuality was considered a crime in Colombia, León Zuleta appears in the city of Medellín; who from his militancy on behalf of human rights and workers' rights, was able to position a taboo topic like homosexual rights in various organizations' agendas. He promoted the first Pride Parades and created the first "homosexual" publication called "Otro" in Colombia. Zuleta is recognized as the first homosexual leader in Colombia and his death, the result of a hate crime, did not erase his work, which is nowadays the foundation of many collective groups and youth in the country.

In the 80's, the progress achieved by the homosexual demonstrations across the world was faced with a challenge when homosexuality was linked to HIV-AIDS. Society started to establish a prejudiced connection, generating stigmas reinforcing prejudice and hatred towards homosexual people. It is then, within this context, when Manuel Velandia's leadership starts in a decade marked by prejudice and filled with fear towards homosexual people, who were considered "HIV positive and AIDS multipliers". He becomes a leader that openly takes over the battle of fighting and defending the Rights of people infected by such virus. His work on breaking the stigma about homosexuality being a contagious disease was reflected in important advancements throughout the country. However, this was also the cause of an assault against his life, which led him to request political refuge outside of Colombia. Velandia is also the first homosexual in Colombia recognized as victim of the armed conflict.

Zuleta and Velandia leaderships arose within the Union and HIV agendas framework, and in a time of moral and conservative tensions in which the closet seemed to be the destiny for those who assumed a sexual orientation outside of the conventional one. However, their actions achieved some first steps within such scenarios to reach visibility and political participation. This acceptance has turned into meaningful references for future battles and collective actions, which the LGBTI movement in Colombia would take on in subsequent decades.

### Lesbian women and their activism in Colombia

On its part, the lesbian movement started to become visible within gay organizations. In 1980 the first women joined GELG<sup>34</sup> however, women who had always been a small group, could not convince men to add the word "lesbian" to the organization

Initially it was a work group on female identity, gender and lesbian identity. This group has transformed into a support group for women for the construction of their sexual identity. It is coordinated by four women and decision—making processes are done with the consensus of all participants. Triángulo Negro is another group of lesbian women working in Bogotá, which after being founded opened to bisexual women and women who re-constructed themselves from masculinity (Velandia 2007).

At that point in time, lesbian women started being visible at the head of feminist groups. However, as time passed, the difference among women with a sexual orientation different to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>The Encounter for the Gay Liberation (GELG), as mentioned, was the name given to the first documented meeting of the homosexual movement in Colombia on April 9, 1977. This movement is what later on became known as Movement of Homosexual Liberation in Colombia (MLHC).

heterosexual one has marked some differences. Ramírez (s.f.) states that, "the lesbian women path is much recent, their first features as organization emerged within gay organizations that made them invisible and set them aside on secondary roles".

Then, a group of women used the "snow ball" strategy to unite and shape the Lesbians and Homosexual Association. After a year and a half of meetings, they decided to start a merely lesbian group called "Lesbian Solidarity" (SOL).

At the beginning of the 90's a milestone that made a difference in the Western world history made a direct impact on the LGBTI population in Colombia. On May 17, 1990 the WHO (World Health Organization) eliminated homosexuality from its lists of mental illness, thus taking a step towards the recognition and use of the acronym LGBT as a way of inclusion for lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people who were not identified with the so called "gay community".

Ramírez (s.f.) also stressed how, during the 90's, homosexual ways of being were adopted from the American homosexual rationality:

During the 90's there was a clear development of an identity influenced by the American model of a more masculine than feminine homosexuality, more of urban and middle class educated people, more of consumerism than political struggle and their rationale behind their public expressions, that were gradually adopted as well as other symbols such as the flag and the celebration on June 28 as "Gay Pride Day".

### The voices that awaken with the Constitution of 1991

By 1991, under the new Constitution framework, President Cesar Gaviria enacts the Human Right Constitution on July 4 in Bogotá, in which the Rights of all citizens start to be taken into account, it is particularly important to stress Article 13:

\* All people are born free and equal before the law; they will receive the same protection and treatment of the authorities and will enjoy the same Rights, freedom, and opportunities without any discrimination because of sex,

race, national or family origin, language, religion, political or philosophical opinion.

- The State will promote the conditions for real and effective equality and will adopt measures in favor of discriminated or marginalized groups.
- \* The State will specially protect those who, due to their economic, physical or mental condition are vulnerable or under a clear weak condition and will penalize abuses or mistreatments against them

The possibilities that the Political Constitution opens on the normative level and not considering homosexuality as a pathology, allowed the emergence of new groups and organizations that would start fighting, protected by political and legal activism, and that would influence the transformation of the State into a more inclusive State for LGBTI people and sectors in Colombia.

This is how the legislative struggle becomes valid, through the writ of injunction, the rulings of the Court, among other figures that, led by the lawyer German Rincón, will place political actions on a political and normative sphere and no longer only in direct actions and street protests.

This scenario of demanding of Rights is aligned with some precedents of social minority sectors participation within dynamics of building a country that, in an internal armed conflict, has historically excluded minorities.

Certainly, resources and protests that have been used correspond to circumstances of each time, not only of the redemption battles in honor of the violent deaths of LGBTI people, but also for the call on the part of different sectors to action, unity and the creation of processes aiding the development of an inclusive society, as in the case of the Planeta Paz project.

The Planeta Paz project started in 2000 with the aim of opening space for the participation of different social sectors in processes of dialogue within the national government and guerillas characterized by their bilateral condition. The project convened different social sectors, such as African descendants, LGBTI, women, union members, youth, etc., with the aim of promoting

their participation on the peace building process (Serrano, 2013: 60).

By 2001, Planeta Paz invites LGBTI leaders with some knowledge about the subject matter to share experiences of their leadership and scenarios of discrimination that contributed to the construction of a stable and lasting peace. This is how by the end of April 2001 the first national encounter of LGBTI people is carried out and sponsored by Planeta Paz.

This first event was a highly touching experience for many participants because it was the first opportunity they had to meet similar people and share life stories on discrimination as well as leadership. It was also the moment in which the acronym LGBT was adopted as the way to name the alliance created there. (Serrano 2013:61).

Due to the complexity of the topics addressed at the meeting, a second meeting was called to specifically address topics regarding the LGBTI population's peace agenda. The second meeting slogan was, "Body, first peace territory". It addressed the new rising LGBT sector and 73 people from 16 cities under peace building processes, attended (Serrano 2013:61).

A third meeting was held between December 5 and 8 of 2003. During this meeting, topics about armed conflict were discussed but also topics on economic, social, sexual and reproductive Rights framed on the LGBTI sector impact within local and national level (Serrano 2013:62).

This project opened educational spaces since the LGBTI population was provided with material they did not have before. In the same way, the population was socially legitimate before their active participation on the development of their own agenda that could provide another starting point of view for peace negotiations.

Planeta Paz triggered the dialogue and the development of discussion spaces for the LGBTI population. The scenario that launched social initiatives more widely focused on constructing a peaceful country, gave visibility to a proposal focused on diversity and context transformation. (Serrano 2013: 72).

The startup of this project not only systematized the LGBTI population participation on peace

dialogues in 2001, but also the discussions around the proposal and purpose of its objectives. The proposal makes emphasis on three meetings that prove that the processes were strengthened by the search of a society that did not label or classify bodies.

#### Planeta Paz

Planeta Paz is an initiative that aims to follow up and develop awareness on the peace dialogue that took place in 2000 between Andrés Pastrana B's Administration and the FARC guerilla forces. The distinctive feature of Planeta Paz comes from its inclusion of historically excluded popular social sectors such as: African descendants, peasants, youth, women, indigenous people, union members, LGBTI, among others.

One of their members, Edgar Robles, said: "Planeta Paz aims to reunite for the first time in Colombia something that was not united, which is the peace discourse beyond the simple armed conflict, peace seen as a process at the base of the important social political reform and economic and cultural as well, if I may say. Considered as a broad project in which social movements, political and academic actors will come together for the first time in Colombia."

Assuring that Planeta Paz was born within a framework of peace dialogues and the need of active participation on the part of civil society, he states that, "through Planeta Paz the social movement agendas have been articulated, recognition has always been biased, on one hand by peasants, African descendants, and on the other hand, by women, indigenous people, workers, who were the real historic movements up to that moment. But through Planeta Paz, the agendas of traditional social movements were articulated with the new emerging and urban movements. For example, cooperatives and local social action committees, an LGBT leader is called into the known LGBT organizations, still in the closet, in the shadows, still very under covered to be part of the process".

Robles concludes by stating, "I consider Planeta's process as highly valuable. I believe that the project lasted for about 5 to 6 years with milestones such as the articulation between

organizations and leaders, connection between the political discourse and the academic sphere, vision on what should be and how the acceptance of LGBTI topics should be included, political discourse, and mainly peace. The first fundamental element emerged from here was, conceiving the body as a territory of peace. That was the first political denomination: lay the foundation of the academic discourse that came up as a result of the first national encounter, which marked the direction for what was coming next. As a result of the first encounter, a second one was organized with more logistics and the following year a national board of coordination of Planeta Paz of the LGBT sector is organized."

affiliated around ideological positions, common interests, or a political program that usually aims at reaching the institutional power. Likewise, political parties are characterized by being organizations that are based on collective actions and serve as channels to gain access to power.

It is worth mentioning the creation of Polo Rosa as an initiative of great relevance within the national sphere. Polo Rosa is a section of the Polo Democrático Alternativo in charge of creating impact from the LGBTI agenda. The analysis of what Polo de Rosa has been is later on developed on another chapter of this document.

## The beginning of partisan participation

Political parties are the natural space for democracy building, the representation and consolidation of the population groups agenda. After the Constitution of 1991, even within prior instances at the Constituent Assembly, many political parties started inviting historically underrepresented population groups to their social base work. This situation will be stronger for LGBTI people after the constituent process with progressive political forces, liberals, and left wing.

Political parties accordingly understood that beyond a struggle of ideas and a construction of positions, it was necessary to recognize that what the sexual and gender diversity agendas were aiming at was part of a social and political struggle; it was a way to renew their bases with more legitimate aspirations, and, as a consequence, to guarantee democracy and as an opportunity to gain power within their parties, mostly for the same structure in relation to representing their citizens interests. transformation of society, cultural changes in solid agendas -- so to speak -- which is what effectively facilitates parties to think about future plans for the country, allows many LGBTI activists to find a way to legitimize their struggles within the parties.

Political parties and social movements are a key element in any democracy because they are active subjects that represent the citizens before the State. They can be defined as groups of people 3. Political parties in Colombia: Definition, structure and level of inclusion of LGBTI issues in their statutes and programs



To understand what the LGBTI population faces in terms of inclusion, it is necessary to look at the statutes, and ideological and programmatic platforms of the more important political parties in the country. To do that, we must analyze the regulations arising from the statutes. First, the analysis involved a description of the statutory approach of the political parties towards LGBTI issues. Then, an analysis was carried out implementing value judgments. Finally, an interview was held with delegates and party executives who were able to express their party's perceptions and legislative agenda regarding LGBTI issues.

#### Ideological and programmatic platforms of political parties in Colombia regarding LGBTI issues

It is necessary to read their statutes in order to understand the position of the parties and their members on certain topics, which are the guides for those who join such parties. Down below, the main parties and political movements in the country are presented in alphabetical order. We provide some facts of importance such as, foundation, evolution, and lastly, a descriptive analysis of how these parties address LGBTI issues.

#### Alianza Social Independiente (ASI)

Alianza Social Independiente (Independent Social Alliance), formerly called Alianza Social Indígena (Indigenous Social Alliance), was founded in 1991 as a result of the first assembly meeting in Yaguara, an indigenous community. In the meeting were present leaders who supported the indigenous movement of the time.

In the statutes, ASI defines itself as, "A voluntary multi-ethnic and multicultural association of citizens, where there is also confluence of other political, social, ethnic and cultural organizations without losing their identity, and that they are meant to

build political, democratic, participatory power option in our country," and whose mission is that to promote a tolerant country. Chapter XVIII of the ASI statutes is dedicated to develop the issue of gender equality. Article 145 -entitled Fairness and Gender Equality – says, "Under the principle of equity and gender equality, men, women and other LGBT sexual options will have real equality of rights and opportunities to participate in political activities, to lead the organization, to access the election-year debates, and to obtain political representation."

#### Centro Democrático Mano Firme, Corazón Grande (CD)

Centro Democrático (Steady Hand and Big Heart Democratic Center) was founded in 2014 as a political strategy led by former President Álvaro Uribe Vélez and his followers to access positions of popular representation once he abandoned the U party and moved away from the parties of the so-called Unidad Nacional (National Unity): Liberal, Conservador (Conservative), U, Cambio Radical (Radical Change). CD is based on and seeks to give continuity to the policies that Uribe Vélez defended during his presidency.

Centro Democrático defined itself in the statutes as, "A political organization of citizens of democratic, popular, diverse, inclusive, and modern character." Five pillars, which are the core of the public administration, inspire CD and the political life. These five pillars are democratic security, investor confidence, social cohesion, austere and decentralized State, and popular dialog.

Gender equity is defined throughout the statutes in many instances by referring to women's equality. As an example of this, there is article 58 that refers to the National Women's Committee, which aims to work for inclusion and gender equality.

Among the sectoral organizations that are mentioned in the statutes, the CD proposes the creation of the following committees: women, youth, union, minorities and vulnerable populations, peasants. It is worth Vulnerable mentioning that in the Populations and Minorities Committee there is a reference to "work under the party postulates to provide participation to all those who require policies of positive ethnic discrimination for racial and conditions, sexual orientation, or level of vulnerability."

Within the CD postulates or in their political statement there is not a direct allusion to LGBTI population.

#### Partido Conservador Colombiano

The Partido Conservador Colombiano (Colombian Conservative Party) was founded in 1848 by Julio Arboleda in a discourse enacted in the House of Representatives. José Eusebio Caro and Mariano Ospina Rodríguez provided the ideology of the conservative party by an article entitled "Conservative Program of 1949," which highlights the preservation of order and tradition.

This party is —along with Partido Liberal (Liberal Party) — one of the two traditional political parties that for more than 100 years competed for political power. Both parties were protagonists of political contests in the middle of the two-party political system that had prevailed prior to the 1991 Constitution.

Partido Conservador defines itself in the statutes –resolution 4708 of the National Electoral Council of 2012– as "democratic, popular, inclusive, modern, and advanced center political organization. It is committed to the principles and values of the Social State of Law, governed in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Republic,

and inspired by the programmatic statement made by José Eusebio Caro and Mariano Ospina Rodríguez on October 4th, 1849, such principles are embraced and practiced." The party follows the basic principles set by the Constitution and laws for the operation of political parties and movements, which are transparency, objectivity, morality, gender equity, and the duty to present and make public their political programs.

While in the statutes or doctrine there is no allusion to LGBTI people nor to sexual diversity and gender, the definition of contents incorporates the term equality and it is defined as, "The exclusion of any discrimination or deprivation due to ideological, economic, social, gender or race reasons in the participation processes within the party." On the other hand, equity and gender equality is understood as "the equality of men and women for the genuine enjoyment of rights and opportunity in participation in political activities and leadership of the organization, access debates, and obtaining political representation."

It is worth mentioning the party's 5th principle, which refers to the defense of freedom, dignity, and recognition of others, respect for human rights, and the coexistence of diversity of all inhabitants of the national territory, among others.

On the other hand, the guiding actions "promote a greater participation of employers, workers, academics, youth, women, and minorities in the heart of the community, as well as in the national and regional public and private spheres, among others."

In the statutes, as well as in the thinking and doctrine, there is a reference to the concept of a Christian humanism —where God is the center of the universe—, and the precepts of defense of order and tradition (as mentioned above).

Finally, in terms of the grassroots groups that make up the party (article 77 of the

statutes), it says that these groups must address issues of gender, female-headed households, youth, peasants, workers, professionals, displaced persons, ethnic groups, athletes, artists, retired and senior people, as well as the issues the conservative directory may define –not mentioning LGBTI people.

#### Cambio Radical (CR)

Cambio Radical (Radical Change) was founded in 1998 under the leadership of a group of dissidents from Partido Liberal who opposed how the party was handled. At first, the party adopted the name of Movement Valdivieso 98 (then-presidential candidate's last name); in the year 2000 was renamed Cambio Radical. Later, the party welcomed other movements such Colombia Siempre (Forever Colombia), Renovador de Acción Laboral Moral (Renovator of Moral and Laboral Action), Nuevo Liberalismo (New Liberalism), Voluntad Popular Pas (PAS Popular Will). Nacional Cristiano (Christian National), and Voluntad Popular (Popular Will).

The statutes -National Electoral Council Resolution 33 of 2005 – define the party as a "political choice of democratic change to Colombia, which aims at advocating for the overcoming of injustice, poverty, and immorality by the achievement of peace and efficiency in public administration."

These statutes do not directly refer to the enactment of freedom of gender or the development of sexual diversity. They only make reference to the "promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, a marker of the MDG (Millennium Development Goals, an initiative of the United Nations) that needs further work, and specially to reduce family violence, the monitoring of gender equality, and the search for a better quality of employment for families," where we see that they associate gender with the category of woman.

At the same time, only a differential approach is made to refer to women, young people and ethnic minorities, leaving aside the LGBTI people. Article 9 is opening up the possibility of creating LGBTI committees where is says that you can create committees of "youth, women, blacks and others who are governed by Resolution."

In terms of the party's ideological platform, Colombian LGBTI people are not mentioned, nor the inclusion and/or acceptance of the personality free development.

#### Partido Liberal Colombiano

Partido Liberal Colombiano (Colombian Liberal Party) – founded in 1848 by Ezequiel Rojas – states in the article called "The Reason of My Vote" the motivation that Ezequiel Rojas and his followers had to support General José Hilario López to the presidency. That article embodied the principles (still in force) of the Colombian liberal doctrine, where democracy, separation of powers, primacy of laws, respect of rights, among others, are promulgated.

Since its foundation, to date, the Colombian Liberal Party has been one of the two parties of utmost importance (with a high number of presidents and supporters) and permanence in time.

Currently, and according to the statutes, Partido Liberal (Resolution 2247 of 2012, registered to the National Electoral Council) proclaims itself as "A people's party that has a pluralistic nature and that is a coalition with left democratic nuances. The mission is working to resolve the structural economic, social, cultural and political, national and regional problems through the intervention of the State."

Although in its ideological statement there is not direct mention to LGBTI people, it

does mention equity (including gender), and it is claimed in several sections of the document that Partido Liberal "has its raison d'être in the promotion of the human being and the defense of the fundamental rights of the people."

Among the basic principles, equality is emphasized, and it is understood as non-discrimination against its members, including sex discrimination. Another of its principles refers to equity and gender equality, it not only speaks of men and women, but also it talks about "other sexual options," who "will have real equality of rights and opportunities to participate in the political activities of the party, within their organization, and under conditions for obtaining political representation."

On the other hand, in one of the paragraphs of article 13 (on the liberal territorial directories) that is referring to the formation of those directories, it mentions "the two genders." Similarly, article 69 (on Definition and Functions) states that programmatic councils must meet the criteria of gender and regional participation. This gender differentiation takes place in other articles, but only article 48 specifies that the gender differential approach relate to women.

On their website, there is a tab for Gente Liberal, where there are displayed the processes carried out by groups of women, youth, ethnic groups, regions, and victims; LGBTI people are absent.

## Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta (MIRA)

MIRA movement (Independent Movement for Absolute Renovation) was founded in Colombia in 2000, after a process of collecting signatures. This movement, under the banner of the so-called Revolución Absoluta (Absolute Revolution), is the political arm of the Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional (Church of God

Ministry of Jesus Christ International), whose founder was María Luisa Piraquive – who is also a political leader within the MIRA movement.

In the statutes approved by Resolution 3780/2014 of the National Electoral Council, Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta (MIRA) is constituted as a political movement aiming to participate in the democratic life of the country. General interests will prevail over personal ones within the movement, and it will adopt the so-called Miraismo por la Renovación Absoluta (Miraism for an Absolute Renovation) as its political ideology. The Miraismo or la Renovación Absoluta is defined as: "The human and political behavior based on values and their application, which is made manifest in individual and collective acts."

The MIRA differential approach makes direct reference to women (and gender equality), youth, boys and girls, Afro-Colombian and ethnic groups, family, elderly people, Colombians abroad, and disabled people.

It is worth noting that current statutes mention the family, and it is defined as "the principle of society." MIRA protects family as a fundamental cell of society. In addition, marriage is understood as a bond between a man and a woman. In terms of protection of children, it states that it will ensure to carry out actions that will "contribute to the full development in the bosom of the family."

Throughout the statutes LGBTI people are not mentioned, nor in their so-called "Population-based Foundations," which only include women, boys and girls, youth, Afro-Colombian and ethnic groups, family, groups by economic activity, elderly people, female and male Colombians abroad, and the disabled. This group is very similar to the one previously presented, only adding the so-called groups by economic activity.

Despite the foregoing, MIRA was the promoter of Act 1482, better known as the

Anti-Discrimination Act, which penalizes acts of discrimination because of race, sex, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity, and incurring in penalties of 1 to 3 years in prison and fines of 10 to 15 minimum wages.

#### Opción Ciudadana (OC)

Opción Ciudadana (Citizen's Option) was founded in 2013 upon disappearance of the former PIN (Party of National Integration) and Convergencia Nacional (National Convergence) due to para-political scandals of their members.

In the statutes, the party is defined as "a national political party, of social and business nature, made up of citizens, participatory, democratic, pluralistic, pacifist, and environmentalist party. The basis of foundation is to respect human dignity, labor, solidarity, and the prevalence of the general interest. It is a party that believes in God as the supreme source of all authority, and also a party that respects religious freedom according to the Constitution and the laws." It is worth noting that within the party purposes is seeking an equal society, understanding citizens from an equality and diversity stand point.

Regarding the issue of gender equality, the statutes assert, "Under the principle of equity and gender equality, men, women, and other sexual options will have real equality of rights and opportunities to participate in political activities, to lead political organizations, to access the election-year debates, and to obtain political representation."

At the same time, the party creates Family, Youth, Children, Gender and Ethnic Groups Commissions to promote the participation and development of these sectors.

The statutes document makes no direct mention to LGBTI people, but it is assumed they are included when referring to "other sexual options."

#### Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA)

Polo Democrático Alternativo (Alternative Democratic Pole) was founded in 2005 as a coalition between Polo Democrático Independiente (Independent Democratic Pole) and Alternativa Democrática (Democratic Alternative); attracting to their ranks various sectors of the left in Colombia that at the time were opposed to the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez.

In the statutes it is defined as "A democratic and pluralistic political party, of democratic left, committed to the well-being and happiness of Colombians. The party defends life and condemns and rejects all forms of violence; ensures the full exercise of the human rights enshrined and defined in the Declaration of the Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Human Rights System, and the Constitution. The party promotes internal democracy and free will, it seeks consensus among its members and affiliates, and it allows freedom of trends within its political platform."

Although the explanation that the party provides regarding gender and sexual diversity is short, article 12 states, "In all instances of the party (National Congress, territorial assemblies, addresses) guarantee the election of people coming from women's, youth and afro-descendant groups, indigenous populations, and sectors of free sexual choice, in proportions such that will correspond at least to thirty, twenty and ten percent, respectively. Ten percent will be distributed equally between each of these groups (Afro-descendants, indigenous and LGBT)."

Under the umbrella of the previous article, Polo Democrático has managed to institutionalize a series of actions that ensure the participation of LGBT people, such as the implementation of Polo Rosa (Pink Polo), and the inclusion of LGBT lists in the internal consultations to be held on April 19, 2015.

#### Unión Patriótica (UP)

Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union) was founded in 1985 as part of the peace agreements between the FARC guerrillas and the government of Belisario Betancur. At first, it was conceived as one of "all forms of battle" seeking to be the political arm of FARC. In the absence of guarantees and systematized murders of its militants, in 2003 the party loses the legal status by not having presented candidates to Congress in 2002 (according to Legislative Act 01 of 2003) that regulates the loss of legal status of the parties if they do not reach the stipulated electoral threshold). Its legal status was restored in 2013 and it was recognized that the legal status threshold was not reached due to the genocide against its militants.

According to the statutes, the UP is defined as a 'broad social and political movement, popular, and of democratic convergence that works according to the rights and duties enshrined in the Colombian Constitution and the laws of the Republic.'

Among the basic principles are: Equality, "the understood as exclusion discrimination or privilege of any kind due to ideological, economic, social, gender, or race in the different processes of participation within the UP", and equity and gender equality. Stating that "men and women, as well as those who express sexual orientations and gender identities different from the majority, will enjoy real equality of rights and opportunities to participate in activities of direction, access to nominations in election-year debates, and possibility to obtaining political representation of the UP."

At all times that there is a reference to minority groups in the statutes, such as women, indigenous, afro-descendants and young, LGBT people are included. That is important because it determines the destination resources, affirmative actions for equity participation, and sectoral organizations.

It is worth mentioning that UP program makes special reference and recognition of sexual diversity and gender.

#### Partido Social de la Unidad Nacional (Partido de la U)

Partido de la U (Social Party for the National Unity) was founded in 2005 as a political choice to support the reelection of former President Álvaro Uribe Vélez. A number of dissidents from the Partido Liberal and the now President of the Republic, Juan Manuel Santos (Minister at that moment), were the main promoters.

According to the statutes of November 2012, Partido de la U is defined as "a center political organization, democratic and pluralistic, which is conceived as a tool to propose solutions to the problems and needs of the Colombian nation and its regions in order to provide a sustainable development within the framework of the State of law."

The postulates that the party defends include, "Real and effective equality for all citizens," and "Respect for freedom, free will, cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and opinion pluralism."

Although there is no direct reference in any of the sections of the statutes regarding LGBTI people, among its democratic principles are, "Equality of all its members. According to Act 1475 of 2011, by equality it is understood an exclusion of all forms of discrimination or privilege due to economic, social, gender, or race reasons in the processes of participation in the activities of the party", and "promotion of participation in an area of equity and equality of young,

women minorities," without specifying what the term minorities encompasses.

According to article 12 of the statutes, it can include movements of several origins, such as of youth, women, ethnic groups, peasants, workers, and other social sectors as an organization attached to the community, without direct reference to a LGBTI.

It was the Senator of Partido de la U, Armando Benedetti, who introduced the Bill in favor of the legalization of equal marriage between partners of the same sex in 2013 (initiative which had 17 votes in favor and 51 against).

#### Partido Verde

Partido Verde was founded after a process of transformation in the Colombian electoral political scene. In 2005, the legal identity of the extinct Alianza Democrática M-19 (M-19 Democratic Alliance) -as a result of the peace process with the revolutionary movement M-19was taken over, and Partido Opción Centro (Center Option Party) was created, which had a special constituency as it was a political minority (according to the legislative Act 01 of 2003). In 2007, the party was renamed as Partido Verde Opción Centro (Green Party-Center Option), which in 2009 again renamed as simply as Partido Verde.

Among its general principles is the recognition and appreciation of differences and plurality, and within its priorities are the effective pursuit of equality, equity, the exercise of rights and access to justice, and the elimination of all kinds of sexual discrimination or gender.

In the statutes, Partido Verde is defined as a "democratic political organization of citizens, with freedom of trends, that respects the democratic principle of majorities and minorities, capable of clarifying longings, prioritize and validate

objectives and actions. The exercise of politics is based on clear and transparent rules, the party values and respects differences, seeks full and lively realization of democracy, transformation of culture and political practices, effectively and fully exercises the fundamental human rights, defends and promotes sustainable development, and welcomes the principles contained in the Charter of the Global Greens."

The perspective of gender, inclusion, and equality is key for the party as demonstrated in the objectives and priorities; one of these priorities is "equity and equality of gender, men, women, and other sexual options will real equality of rights opportunities." At the same time, among the rights of the members, none can be excluded, discriminated against, privileged due to ideological, economic, social, gender or sexual orientation, or race, in any of the processes of participation in the political life of the party, which should be observed by its members.

In the internal process of selection of candidates, the party will promote the participation of young people and ethnic groups, as well as the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity. At the same time, the Capital District Assembly will be formed by 227 members, of which three members will represent the sectors of gender and sexual diversity.

Finally, article 38 refers to integration and affirms that: "The youth, women, afrodescendants, indigenous, LGBTI, and other sectoral congresses representing the interests of a population group will be integrated by delegates elected from the corresponding sectoral committees in each Department, municipality, and in the capital district." This article makes direct reference to LGBTI people

#### **Changes in Normativity**

The political Constitution of 1991 sought a strengthening of the political participation; that is why both, article 95 and article 107, clearly reflect this sense. The first article quoted announces that "it is the citizen's duty to participate in the political, civic, and community life of the country." Then, in the second article, the Constitution recognizes the parties as a natural setting for such participation, warning "that the parties will be organized democratically and they will have as guiding principles: objectivity, transparency, morality, gender equity, and the duty to present and disseminate their political programs."

In addition, the Constitution had a structural mission in relation to political parties: reducing its fragmentation and strengthening its internal mechanisms of participation. Therefore, the constitutional reforms and the acts promulgated sought to strengthen this principle.

Two acts, one statutory agreement, and one reform of the law validated this exercise: the legislative Act 01 of 2003, the Act 974 of 2005, the reform of 2009, and the Act 1475 of 2011.

In 2003, legislative Act o1 sought to break through partisan fragmentation, and invited those political parties that fail to get a 2% of the votes – and that will lose their capacity of representation— to transfer their votes into seats by means of the D'Hondt formula or electoral quotient. The Law on Blocs was also regulated, as well as the single system of submission of lists by parties in the elections, which may not exceed the number of seats, and that now will have two modalities: open lists and closed lists.

The spirit of this law was to ideologically unite around political projects to various structures and political leaders, to allow a partisan discussion around the different bills, and to make sure illegal agents –or any actions that put democracy at risk– did not act from the inside of the political parties.

**Then, the Act 974 of 2005,** also called Law on Blocs, proposed that the electors of a party, in order to build group cohesion, should make decisions democratically and vote the same way by making previous conciliations.

This law promoting the regulation on how the parties should operate based on the party caucuses in public organizations and communities, allowed, although tangentially, individualisms to be deposed when it comes to making policy and return the eyes to the community. Party caucuses are understood as processes of groups ideologically cohesive, operating within a collegiate body, consisting of one to more elected representatives of the same political organization.

This reform to the law, while it summoned the discipline of party caucus, gave way to thinking about thematic caucuses in scenarios like the Congress of the Republic and later in councils and assemblies. Thus, the way was opened for a multi-partisan caucus of women comprised representatives from different parties not regulated by law and even though their decisions were not binding; they generated a precedent of visibility and participation, both of women in politics as well as gender agendas. With the passage of time, it forced political parties to repeat this exercise in their internal structures. The parties and the political class were receiving external pressure in order to progress forward: The requirement of making women -who appeared as the majority electoral force in the country- visible and to give them a prominent role, the need for expert and decision-making committees in legislative and collegiate bodies about women and

gender agendas able to stop violence and the invisibility of their struggles, and finally, the ability to reach the local stage with public policies and positive actions.

This experience of women or gender caucus in the national, regional, and local level, and in the legislative stage as well as inside the parties, generated a four-level route:

- 1. Establish the priorities and needs of women and gender agendas in politics that need to be taken care of, such as the quota law, affirmative actions, and preferential treatment policies to break the systematic inequality.
- 2. Identify key actors (parties and politicians) that by their ideological proximity, their social bases, or their organizational structure could count on the support of women and gender caucuses.
- **3.** Formulate specific proposals from these caucuses yielding to political scenarios resulting in the increase of participation and visibility of women in politics and the positioning of gender agendas.
- 4. Motivate the electorate and the public in general (women in particular) to take advantage of the leadership, mobilization and representation they had in the society to become a political representation that has the same or better effects in partisan politics.

In 2009, there is a law reform to strengthen the capability of response of political parties and their level of representation of social realities, as well as the leadership capability of electoral sectors. Thus, the threshold increased to 3%, institutionalizing the sense of belonging to the communities and

punishing the political floor-crossing. In the short term, this democratic exercise and the advance of women's caucuses and gender agendas did not have the same effect in the media of local and regional stages because politicians did not have party discipline, and political directories showed greater identification with politicians than with their parties; also there was a breach among political leaders and social leaders, and community processes.

This situation drew the attention of a new political reform that necessarily would affect the parties from their bases and would demand concrete actions for the inclusion and participation of under-represented groups and social bases, giving rise to the **Act 1475 in 2011.** 

## Bill 1475 of 2011, or Bill on political parties and movements luta

The Bill 1475 of 2011 enacts the rules of organization and operation of parties and movements, as well as electoral processes, political movements, and other provisions. It supersedes the old Bill 130 of 1994 and it is characterized by the inclusiveness of gender and minorities topics (the Bill 130 did not mention them). At the same time, it commits parties to take responsibility for the candidates they give their endorsement to (in order to avoid that candidates go unpunished before scandals like the 8000 Process or for political affairs).

This bill develops what it was set forth in article 40 of the Constitution of 1991 that affirms that, "every citizen has the right to participate in the shaping, exercising, and controlling of political power," and in provision 3, on the mechanisms to make the article go into effect, you may find: "To constitute parties, movements and political

<sup>35.</sup> Understanding young people are those citizens between 18 and 26 years old.

groupings without limitation; freely be part of them, and disseminate their ideas and programs," and title IV of the Constitution, named On Democratic Participation and Political Parties, where the partisan issue and their bilateral responsibilities resulting from the party and its affiliates (rights and duties) is broadly developed.

One of the major advances of this law is that it promotes more direct involvement and forces parties to include in their ranks ethnic minorities, women, and other sexual options, following the principle of equity and equality of gender. This law claimed that these groups "shall enjoy real equality of rights and opportunities to participate in activities, lead partisan organizations, access to electoral debates, and to obtain political representation. At the same time, as one of the basic principles of any party organization, equality is defined as "the exclusion of every privilege due to ideological, economic, social, sex, or race in the participation processes within the life of a party or a political movement" (article 1).

This fact is of great importance in legal and political matters because it binds all political parties with legal status participating in electoral scenarios to accept their members, regardless of their sexual orientation and thus, ensuring the enforceability of rights on the issue of political participation, both in the internal decisions of the parties, as in the strife for access to positions of popular election.

Other legal advances of this law, in the field of gender equity and minorities, is related to campaign funding by the State. The old law was only due to the following criteria: a 10% to all parties equally, 50% to each party in proportion to the number of seats obtained, 10% and 30% in relation to activities engaged parties to fulfill their purposes. Bill 1475 of 2011 sets incentives regarding State funding, so the parties were to include and encourage participation and election of women and

young people. According to this, the National Fund for Political Financing will distribute the funds as follows: "5% of the funds will be distributed equally among all parties or political movements in proportion to the number of women elected in the public organizations," another 5% is "to be distributed equally among all parties or political movements in proportion to the number of youngsters<sup>35</sup> elected in the public organizations" (article 17).

However, in terms of funding the parties, the law does not make reference to LGBTI people or other sexual options, but it can be taken as a precedent so that eventually the possibility of creating such incentives so political parties will encourage leadership of LGBTI people. On the other hand, it is worth noting that article 18 referring to the destination of State resources - affirms that, among others, these resources must be earmarked for the "effective inclusion of women, youth, and ethnic minorities in a political process." It emphasizes that "in any case, parties and movements will allocate in their annual budgets a sum not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the State contributions they were granted to conduct political and electoral training courses for the activities of their centers of thought, and for the effective inclusion of young people, women and ethnic minorities in the political process" (article 18).

The above opposed the basic principles of equality and equity and gender equality that should be the guiding principles of the entire law, since by excluding groups of LGBTI people that must receive the allocation of the resources of State funding, political parties are not obliged to ensure training and support that many need to achieve the full exercise of their rights, and according to article 40 of the Political Constitution of Colombia, which reads that, "Every citizen is entitled to participate in the shaping, exercising and controlling of political

power."

According to Bill 1475, parties must assign exact percentages of their budget to their structure's operation, the effective inclusion of women, youth and ethnic minorities, the operation of centers of thought, support to their caucuses, training and political electoral process, disclosure of their programs, and policy proposals for the exercise of internal democracy mechanisms planned in their statutes.

Specifically, this law states that, "Under the principle of equity and gender equality, men, women and other sexual options will have real equality of rights and opportunities to participate in political activities, to lead

political organizations, to access election-year debates, and to obtain political representation."Initially, this statement gave rise to the systemization and analysis of women's movements to determine progress and challenges of the movements and political parties regarding the inclusion of women's agendas. It led to successful exercises like the equal ranking conducted by the World Economic Forum, an instrument of agreement between the parties with the support of the international cooperation agenda and the women's movement that was seeking to deepen participation in politics.

Those exercises crystallized the idea of a direct and effective representation of LGBTI

FRAME #	1 COM	PARATI	VE POL	ITICAL F	PARTIE	S	Inc	clusion	issue	s:
Characteristic party	Political orientation (R, C, L)	Founded before PC 1991	Mention of God	Family = Man + Woman	Woman	Children / Youth	Ethnicities	Afrodescendant	Handicapped	LGBT*
Liberal	C-R									×
Conservador	R									
U	C-R									
CR	C-R									
Verde	С									
UP	L									
Polo	L									
CD	R									
MIRA	R									
Opción Ciudadana	R									×
ASI	С									

Source: prepared based on the statutes of parties and political movements from Colombian information of Caribe Afirmativo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>. The case of Polo Rosa will be explained in the next section.

people by making an interpretative reading of the law regarding other sexual options (by the way, of confusing wording). At the same time, showing the potential that the sexual diversity and gender identity movement has as a pressure group that exercises social mobilization as well as political impact, and demonstrating how their agendas become a gauge of modernity for democracy: real equality, rights for all, diversity improving democracy and respect for self-determination and freedom as values of human dignity.

## Comparison of Colombian political parties in relation to the topic of LGBTI

Below, there is a detailed and objective analysis on the levels of inclusion of LGBTI issues in the statutes of political parties. The analysis includes value judgments based on constitutional provisions. This table shows a summary of what is presented below and it compares some variables, it shows the parties that have specifically included LGBTI issues, the parties that do not refer to them, and the parties following the law by the book and vaguely referring to other sexual orientations. After presenting a comparative table of some categories that objectively can help clarifying the position of some political parties about the LGBT issue, it can be clearly seen that the left and center parties are more prone to include the LGBT issue in their statutes and therefore, they possess a level of much higher commitment to the inclusion of these issues in their political and electoral agenda.

The above is clearly reflected in the polls. Partido Verde (or Alianza Verde, name used in the last legislative elections) is currently the only party inthecountrywith an openly gay Congresswoman: Angélica Lozano, who reached her seat as a representative for the capital district of Bogotá with 30.950 votes, has ensured the rights of LGBTI people throughout the country. Similarly, the Senator with the most votes in the 2014 elections (81.045 votes nationwide), Claudia López, is also a gay woman, although her political proposal is not related to the positioning of these

topics in the national legislative agenda.

Similarly, Polo Democrático Alternativo has been one of the parties that has made the most effort for the inclusion of LGBTI people in the active and effective participation of their political rights, not only by promoting the vote, but also promoting candidates openly LGBT. This has been done through the implementation of strategies such as Polo Rosa37, and the inclusion of LGBT lists for their internal consultations to be performed on April 19, 2015 (prior to the local elections in 2015).

Moreover, although the statutes of UP openly support LGBT people on the promotion of their rights and to enhance their capabilities, they have not been reflected in reality yet since only a couple of years ago they were returned their legal status, which had been lost after the genocide that was committed against this group by State and paramilitary agents. So, given that situation and being recognized as a rising political party for the first elections after having their legal structure back (for Congress and presidency), the party made a coalition with Partido Verde and Movimiento Progresista and founded the party Alianza Verde. For the presidential elections, they joined with Polo Democrático, nominating Clara López and Aida Avella for Presidency and Vice Presidency, respectively; who proposed a progressed government program seeking -above allequality, respect, and inclusion.

At first, Alianza Social Independiente was seeking to represent indigenous people and ethnic minorities, it surprised many when openly includes LGBT people in their statutes in association to the concept of equality and gender equity, not only for the women's issues, but also for LGBT issues, understanding that without the participation of these people it is impossible to achieve effective participation of different genres. On the other hand, it is interesting to see how a center-right option as Partido Liberal opens space for gender equality and effective participation of what they call "other sexual options," although it does not speak directly of LGBT people. It is worth mentioning that, actually, within Partido Liberal there are different sects, some of which have defended the rights of LGBT people, while others have opposed topics such as marriage and adoption by samesex couples (such is the case of the former prosecutor and the current Senator Vivian Morales).

Opción Ciudadana, a party of the right, mentions God in the statutes and refers to Him as the supreme source of all authority (understanding this God as a monotheistic Christian God). This party affirms that counts with the affiliation of leaders and religious groups. They affirm that they are seeking to generate inclusion and equality, as when they include the so-called "other sexual options." It is of great importance to mention two of the more representative parties of the Unidad Nacional (National Unity) -a political coalition that accompanies and supports the President of the Republic-. One of them is Partido de la U (counting President Juan Manuel Santos as a member of the party), and Cambio Radical (having Vice-President German Vargas Lleras as member of the party). Both parties split from Partido Liberal and according to their ideological platform; they considered themselves as center-right parties. However, neither one nor the other includes LGBTI people in their statutes despite the fact both are secular parties and that within their ranks are some of the major law and politics supporters of the LGBT rights, particularly those in favor of equal marriage and adoption as Senator Armando Benedetti and more recently, Senator Roy Barreras.

Although, both parties' statutes defend equality, oppose discrimination, and leave open the possibility of forming LGBT committees (they mention that other committees can constituted, but without specifying their possible issues), there should be more coherence between their statutes and actions, and they should incorporate binding measures in the statutes for directors and members. In this way, LGBTI people will be given the possibility, through incentives and channels of opportunity, for actively participating in the electoral political exercise, since the measures adopted in the internal environment of the party to date are very soft and do not represent binding or the necessary level of commitment towards LGBT people.

Centro Democrático, contrary to what the name tries to suggest, is within the denomination of right wing (this is implied when analyzing their ideological commitment). In the internal guidelines, there is not any allusion to the promotion of participation of LGBT people, and it could be said that these are included when they mention that other committees could be established (besides those of women, ethnic groups, young people, etc.), according to the provisions of the party leadership.

Partido Conservador over the years has been characterized to defend the order, traditions and Catholicism (without considering itself a confessional party). The statutes show that they are against all types of exclusion or discrimination (of gender, religion, etc.). Nevertheless, despite the above, no incentives are generated to encourage the participation of LGBT people within the party, nor the formation of groups for these people. Despite the fact that Partido Conservador has been an advocate of the family topic, understanding "family" as defined in the Constitution, in their statutes or guidelines there is no reference to a direct exclusion to other forms of family, whereas MIRA movement explicitly exclude the topic from the statutes. Given this, it is known that MIRA movement is the political arm of a Christian religious group, it has the only statue that openly discriminates and unknown any other form of family that is not made up of a man and a woman (leaving out not only homosexual families, but also the wide range of possibilities that can be understood as a family in a modern sense), contradicting certain paragraphs that speak of equality and nondiscrimination. Therefore, it could be argued that MIRA movement has the most retrograde statutes to the LGBTI people and discriminates them. MIRA not only do not open the possibility LGBTI people could actively participate in the development of the political contests, but it also violates their civil and human rights, making it clear how damaging the union of religion and politics continues to be, within a modern democratic setting.

#### Emblematic cases of political participation of LGBTI people in Colombia

In the political history of Colombia there have been few facts highlighting the triumphs of the LGBTI movement. While this movement has gradually gained many decision making spaces, three emblematic cases deserve to be taken into account and considered as milestones in the vindication of the political rights of LGBT people. The following table was made based on press articles and semi-structured interviews made to members of the community and people knowledgeable in the topic.

	Polo - First party on creat- ing an openly LGBT fac- tion in Latin America	Liberal - First party to include a LGBT agenda.	Verde - First openly lesbian woman is chosen for a posi- tion of popular election.
Description Experience	It was founded by LGBT activists from Bogota and Medellin. It is worth highlighting Among the leaders Juan Sebastian Romero, former Mayor of Chapinero, and Robinson Sánchez Tamayo, a militant from Medellin Polo; both, Along With other leaders of the movement, and based on the example of the United States Gay Pride Movement, managed to put the issue on the nation's political agenda. Among Their political triumphs are getting a share of sexual minorities to Participate in the Congress of Democratic Pole; another success was When Lucho Garzón, former Mayor of Bogotá, named a member of Polo Rosa to advise on building up the LGBT politics in Bogotá, Also the victory of Romero as Mayor of the locality of Chapinero in Bogota, and lastly, the realization of gay pride marches.	During the period in which Piedad Córdoba was elected as president of the Partido Liberal, the first Secretariat for sexual diversity issues was founded. It is the first party to include this topic within their intra-party agenda.  The Secretariat had no continuity; however, the creation was a landmark at the national level. The example given by this party was later followed by others (such as Polo), thus empowering the human capital and the vindication of the rights of LGBT people.  It served as precedent for the inclusion of LGBT people within Partido Liberal, and for the eventual creation of the still existing Sexual Diversity Committee.	For the first time in Colombia's political history, an openly lesbian woman managed to reach a seat in the Congress of the Republic as a representative to the Chamber by the capital district of Bogotá, obtaining also the highest vote in her list. Angélica Lozano had previously been councilor of Bogotá with Movimiento Progresista, which made a strategic alliance with Partido Verde prior to the 2014 elections.  The statutes of this party defend and promote the active and effective participations of LGBT people in politics; therefore, the choice of Lozano as the first LGBT woman to get to the Congress of Colombia is something that goes in accordance with the internal organization and the party.

Foundation year	2002	Late 90's	2014
Status	In 2009 began the fragmentation between moderates and radicals, creating a second stream called Colectivo León Zuleta (León Zuleta Collective), hosting those that are more radically leftist.  On April 19th, they conducted a PDA internal consultation to designate their delegates to the 4th Congress of the party. Among the lists that were presented, there was an LGB-TI list, where 119 LGBTI people competed for one of the 25 designated quotas so that this population group would be representing in such Congress.	The Sexual Diversity Secretariat had no continuity when the presidency of Piedad Córdoba in Partido Liberal ended, but it has served as a precedent for the creation of the Committee on Sexual Diversity.  Nicolay Duke, a lesbian woman, was chosen as candidate for Mayor in Los Martires, Bogotá during the party's internal consultations to designate who the candidates will be for mayoralities, governorships, councils, assemblies and local administrative boards.	sentatives to the Camera Lozano with more visibility today, standing by his com- mitment and discipline. There is an ongoing process of loss of investiture because of her relationship with an- other Congresswoman (who
Relevance	The experience of the Polo Democrático Alternativo is different from any other political party in Colombia to the extent that creates the first openly LGBT faction in Latin America. Polo Rosa stands out for having nodes at a regional level that are articulated between them to form a larger national group. Based on this larger national group, pilot plans are formulated so that they can be executed in different regional nodes.	history of the country, a political party deals in-	By having at least one openly LGBT person in the Congress of the Republic, it will be possible to: 1. Have a precedent of the importance of participating in these scenarios; 2. To immediately, enforce the rights before an eventual attack on LGBT people; 3. To position LGBT issues in the Colombian legislative agenda.

tee on Sexual Diversity within Partido Liberal have historically been some experiences, but no continuity. Therefore, the establishment of this Committee is relatively recent and "As from Lozano's camaims, above all, to genpaign,, it was possible to erate a structural contimake evident the emergence nuity within the party. of the LGBT community as Regarding the internal an electoral force and with "Polo Rosa's experience organization of the allowed political parties to new political scenarios. Posparty, it is stated that start understanding the sibly their efforts will focus the Organización de Juissue from its different on a gender identity law and ventudes Liberales nuances, recognizing the the need for people to sup-(Liberal Youth Organiport it. In the regional elecexistence of a social and a zation) has an LGBT political struggle; where tions is expected a large coordinator and the Or-Polo saw the opportunity representation of the LGBT ganización de Mujeres to grow and LGBT people community." (Women's Organiza-Reflections had the opportunity to ac-"Working in cross-cutting tion) has an LGBT coprojects to include LGBT from the intively participate in the ordinator. Aside from side decision-making topics (example of a hothat representation, the tions within the party. mophobia-free school), party has the Commit-When Polo Democrático need to sensitize the police, tee on Sexual Diversity begins to split, Polo Rosa insist on the issue of marwhich is not an official begins to split as well, and riage (because it gives media part of a structure of many of their members exposure, but not political the party, but it is lookare going to other parties, exposure, and it gives power ing forward to it in the mostly of moderate left or to mobilize the population), future." center-left." jobs that have short-term "It aims to identify: 1) political, but not legislative The needs; 2) The Conincidence; however, do have gressmen and Conpolitical incidence in the gresswomen elected long run." and engaged with the agendas to formulate a political agenda on the flags, the intention and the reason for the existence of the Committee; and 3) A social projection, through education, social and reproductive rights."

"On the consolidation process of the Commit-

## Good practices by the political parties to include and encourage the participation of LGBTI people in Colombia

It has been sought to emulate the example of the work done by IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) in the Manual of good practices for the participation of women in Latin American political parties (2008), in which good practices are systematized in favor of inclusion and promotion of the political participation of women in Latin America. The idea is to highlight good practices within political parties in relation to inclusion, creation of incentives to encourage and promote the active participation, and activism of LGBTI people in Colombia. The selected categories are based on statutes, internal organization, inclusion of LGBTI lists, government

programs for the 2014 presidential election, number of openly LGBTI candidates and representatives postulated for the 2014 elections, relations with civil society and openly LGBTI spaces (e.g. marches) and promoters of bills in favor of LGBTI people.

The information used was supplied by reading the party statutes and government programs of the 2014 presidential candidates, press reviews, related literature, follow-up to discussions on the proposed topics, emblematic cases, and semi-structured interviews.

• **Statutes:** Within the statutes, the parties use inclusive and non-discriminatory language and acceptance of diverse gender identities as part of the purpose, goals, objectives, or other items of great importance for the partisan precepts.

Party	Description
Polo Democrático	Allows its affiliates free sexual choice and freedom of trends within the statutes.
Unión Patriótica	Its basic principles include equality (exclusion of all forms of discrimination), equity, and gender equality (men and women, as well as those who express sexual orientations and gender identities different from the majority shall receive equal rights and opportunities)
Verde	It describes itself as a party of trends with respect to majorities and minorities, supporting equity and gender equality. Men, women, and other gender/sexual identities will have equal rights and opportunities.
Liberal	In the statutes, gender equity and equality and non-discrimination is supported by its members on grounds of sex. All other gender/sexual identities are included in the political activities of the party and in its organization. They are given conditions for political representation based on the precepts of full equality of rights and opportunities.
Conservador	It is opposed to any discrimination, including on grounds of sex.
U	Among the postulates, there is pluralism of gender.

Opción Ciudadana	It defines itself as a participatory and pluralistic party and accepts other sexual options as subjects to have full equality of rights to participate in overall political activities.
ASI	Supports other LGBT sexual options having full equality of rights and opportunities to participate in political activities, to lead the organization, access electoral debates and to obtain political representation.

Source: Own compilation taken from the organization Caribe Afirmativo.

• **Internal organization:** Within the statutes and basic guidelines, political parties recognize the importance of LGBTI people's participation for the internal organization of the party.

Party	Description
Polo Democrático	Ensures that at least 10% of the members are LGBTI at all levels of the party (National Congress, assemblies and local directories).  There is a fraction of the party known as Polo Rosa, formed by LGBTI people.
Liberal	It has a Committee called the "Committee on Sexual Diversity."
Unión Patriótica	To ensure affirmative action in favor of equity, the party secures the participation of a 10% of LGBT people within the organs of participation and control; and in turn, these people can create organizations attached to the party.  It specifies that the budget will be appointed, among others, to provide guarantees of participation for LGBTI people.
Verde	The LGBTI Sectoral Conference is created and it will include delegates of the sectoral committees of each municipality and Department.

Source: Own compilation taken from the organization Caribe Afirmativo.

• **Inclusion of LGBTI lists**: To ensure the internal party democracy and the effective participation of LGBTI people, parties implement a differential approach in the lists.

Party	Description
Polo Democrático	LGBTI lists are implemented in the internal consultations held prior to the national assemblies to ensure that they will be at least 10% of the participants.

• Position of the 2014 presidential candidates regarding the LGBTI issues: Based on the answers given by the candidates within the framework of Caribe Afirmativo and Colombia Diversa campaign "Vote for Equality."

Party	Description
Polo Democrático - Unión Patriótica	Presidency: Clara López Obregón. (Polo) Vice-presidency: Aida Avella (UP) She is in favor of the marriage between partners of the same sex, considering it a historical debt that the country owes, and she is committed to promoting respect for diversity. She is in favor of the adoption of same-sex couples. She proposes the creation of a Ministry of Sexual Diversity.
Alianza Verde	Presidency: Enrique Peñalosa Vice- presidency: Isabel Segovia He is in favor of marriage between same-sex couples, and equal rights for all couples. He is in favor of the adoption of same-sex couples.
Unidad Nacional (U, Cambio Radical, Liberal)	Presidency: Juan Manuel Santos (U) Vice-presidency: German Vargas (CR) He said that he would respect the measures taken by the Constitutional Court and the recognition and respect of LGBTI people.

Source: Own compilation taken from the organization Caribe Afirmativo.

#### • Openly LGBTI candidates running for Senate of House of Representatives

Party	Description
Verde	Angélica Lozano
Liberal	Elizabeth Castillo Jack García Jeanne Carolina Bonilla (Janca)
Polo Democrático	Julio Cesar Mancera Lina María Palacio

### • Relationship with civil society and openly LGBTI spaces: It supports and encourages openly LGB-TI expressions through actions and concrete strategies with great impact on society.

Party	Description
Polo Democrático	It has supported and managed the accomplishment of the Gay Pride marches through Polo Rosa in different cities of the country.
Liberal	Committee on sexual diversity, which cooperates with the youth and women's groups to create change in society.
Conservador	It has created a group on Facebook called Azul Clarito (Light Blue) formed by LGBT activists, but the groups did not count with the support of conservative directives.

Source: Own compilation taken from the organization Caribe Afirmativo.

#### •Promoters of laws that recognize the rights of LGBT people:

Party	Description
Liberal	In 1999, Senator Margarita Londoño introduced the first Bill in favor of equal marriage entitled as "Bill draft recognizing the rights of gay and bisexual men and women."  The former Senator Juan Fernando Cristo was the promoter of the Act of Victims and Restitution of Land (#1448 of 2011).
U	Senator Armando Benedetti presented a Bill in 2013 in favor of equal marriage.
MIRA	This political party was the architect of the Anti-Discrimination Act (#1482 of 2011), which penalizes any form of discrimination because of race, ethnic group, sex, sexual orientation, etc.
Verde	It submitted and promoted Act 1719 of 2014 through Senator John Sudarsky and representative Angela Robledo, 'by which measures are taken to ensure access to justice for victims of sexual violence, in particular sexual violence during armed conflict.'
Polo	It promoted Act 1719 of 2014 through the representative Iván Cepeda, 'by which measures are taken to ensure access to justice for victims of sexual violence, in particular sexual violence during armed conflict.'

 Members of Congress who voted for the Bill that sought to legalize the egalitarian marriage (April 2013).

Party	Description
U	Armando Benedetti
Polo Democrático	Parmenio Cuellar Gloria Ramírez Jorge Robledo Camilo Romero Luis Carlos Avellaneda
Alianza Verde	Jorge Londoño John Sudarsky
Liberal	Arleth Casado Juan Fernando Cristo Jaime Duran Juan Manuel Galán Guillermo García Eugenio Prieto Camilo Sánchez Luis Fernando Velasco
Opción Ciudadana (Former PIN)	Hemel Hurtado

#### • Members of Congress serving terms from 2014-2018 supporting bills in favor of LGBTI people:

Party	Description
U	Armando Benedetti: Author of the bill draft defending egalitarian marriage and the adoption of same-sex couples. Andrés Felipe Zuccardi: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage and gender identity law. Marta Cecilia Curí: She supports the draft bill on equal marriage and gender identity law.
Polo Democrático	Wilson Arias: He defended the project in favor of equal marriage. Germán Navas: He defended the project in favor of equal marriage. Luz Stella Ramírez: She defended the project in favor of equal marriage. Alba Pinilla: She defended the project in favor of equal marriage. Iván Cepeda: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage and gender identity law.  Jorge Robledo: He initiated a draft law in favor of social protection for couples of the same sex.
Alianza Verde	Ángela Robledo: She defends the project in favor of equal marriage and supports the law of gender identity.  Angeliza Lozano: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage and gender identity law.  Navarro Wolf: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage.  Claudia López: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage and gender identity law.
Liberal	Guillermo García: He supports initiatives in favor of LGBTI people. Luis Fernando Velasco: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage. Horacio Serpa: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage.
Cambio Radical	Carlos Fernando Galán: He supports the draft bill on equal marriage.

It is worth highlighting good practices implemented by Polo Democrático in favor of LGBTI people. This political organization has been committed to inclusion and equal and effective participation to the point of such commitment not only something from the conventional point of view (laws and philosophies), but also reflected by the implementation of relevant mechanisms that ensure compliance with the rights and duties constitutionally established. Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is the affirmative actions of Partido Liberal. From a practical perspective, the party is open to the inclusion of LGBTI people in their ranks and many of the affiliates advocate for the rights of this population. However, the statutes could be considered soft, since there is not direct reference to LGBTI people. Therefore, it would be suitable to include the topic in the statutes and to become part of the active life of the party. Finally, it is worth mentioning the inclusion of an LGBTI agenda in the parties Alianza Verde and Unión Patriótica. Partido Verde who have achieved not only the inclusion of these issues, but also the positioning of their LGBTI candidates (or those who are in favor of the LGBTI population) in the political life of the country. On the other hand, Unión Patriótica is in the process of once again achieving a relevant space within public and electoral scenarios at a national level. The party has gone almost 10 years without actively participating in the political scene; therefore, the impact of the inclusion of LGBTI people within the party has not been as great as in other cases already mentioned.

#### The voice of the parties

In 2014, the Observatory of Political Participation, attached to the Caribe Afirmativo organization, requested the political parties of greater electoral relevance of Colombia to have semi-structured interviews. The parties appointed their most representative members and/or members of their board, people who had the ability to speak on behalf of the party since their profile represented the partisan ideology.

These are the results of those interviews; however, the names of the interviewees have been omitted since they did not respond based on their own title, but on behalf of the party they represent.

Comparative chart
Interviews with Colombian Political Parties

Party	The party includes LGB' issues on the agenda	In public documents it includes LGBT issues	The party is willing to include LGBT issues	It considers that LGBT people may have participation	It has internal structures LGBTI	A future plans to have structures LGBTI
ASI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	no	Yes
Conservador	no	no	*	*	*	*
CR	no	no	no	Yes	no	
Liberal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MIRA	no	no		Yes	no	no
OC	no	Yes	Yes	Yes	no	Yes
Polo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
U	no	no	Yes	Yes	no	no
UP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Verde	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Information not available in the empty boxes

#### ·ASI:

Two delegates commented on the formation process of the party and about the inclusion of LGBT people: 'To make a greater coverage of the territory, we have created gender, afro, and indigenous secretariats. The party supports groups such as the LGBT, and that LGBTI people have all the rights and are important for us.' The party is a pluralistic option, seeking to include historically excluded minorities in public sectors. Although the party recognizes that it is undergoing a process of learning and addressing these issues.

They said it could be difficult to include the LGBT agenda into the agenda of the representative to the chamber of the party given the fact that the representative is part of the indigenous people, so he had other priorities. On the issue of indigenous groups and the LGBT agenda, the ASI spokesman considered the need to educate people on the acceptance of new topics and new citizenships. He understands the indigenous leaders should have, "a broader vision of the real meaning: a gain for the party, because LGBT people are smart, with leadership potential, and they are also an electoral strength." Another party delegate considered that the inclusion of these topics in the agenda could be easier if it is done from urban sectors, because the approach to people of rural areas -considered as more conservative – could be more complicated.

In terms of the recognition of their openly LGBT candidates, there were two different responses; one of the delegates acknowledged that he did not know if they were any LGBT candidates; while the other answered as follows: "Yes, there are people already involved, this topic is quite new for us; in the valley, in Cali, there are openly LGBT people getting involved in the party, and a girl from Palmira...; in another region there is an openly bisexual woman as president of the Committee. We have been working and making the issue visible to all."

#### ·Conservador:

The Conservative Party, ideologically and programmatically builds political principles based on Christian traditions around the triad of traditional family, customs, and obedience to the lawfully constituted authority guiding social order; that does not recognize LGBTI people as political actors within their social movement, as they contradict their party principles.

According to spokespersons from the youth movement of the party, however, the experience of modernization that the party established, after the constitution of 1991, led him to act as a standard bearer and propose social agendas that moved more towards the center than towards the right; this meant the beginning of viewing population groups as key actors in their social bases; women, youth, and ethnic groups were the first ones on the stage of the conservative force.

However, the "jóvenes azules" warn that this oxygenation proposal by the population groups did not give space to LGBTI agendas; basically because their ideals of rights, plurality, and participation, according to the party itself, put the values of the party in jeopardy, as their principles are more oriented toward religion as the rule of law, conception of life, and marriage and self-determination.

In the 2000s, the renovation of the party and the spaces they themselves opened for youth allowed them to temper their positions regarding LGBTI people, and progress was made on a minimal agenda on issues such as respect for life (reproach to violence), inclusion in social life, and putting aside their demands (claims) of mutual recognition regarding everything that pertains to the relationships of couples, marriage equality, and homo-parental adoption.

During this same period, the interviewed youth documented that the more moderate

version of Conservatism opened space in the party cadres for members with direct sympathy for LGBTI agendas, some of them even tried to assume public militancy within the party, a situation that allowed the collective, between 2002 and 2009, to have discussions about the rights of LGBTI people that led some to make their previously radical opinions more moderate and even shuffled the block in voting against bills in favor of LGBTI people, because many favored giving it a positive vote. This was a situation known within the party as "azul clarito" (light blue), a caricature that the most radical within the party described as casting doubt on the traditional strength of the party.

#### · Cambio Radical:

Cambio Radical is one of the pro-government political parties and it has supported President Santos and the peace process. The results of the interview with the party delegate showed that the LGBT topic is not immersed in the agenda because it is not considered a priority (there are some other topics of more relevance) and also because the party considers that there is no relationship between the armed conflict and LGBT people; however, Bill 1448 or Victims Act (Ley de Victimas) recognizes LGBT people as victims from the perspective of a differential approach.

When the delegate was asked if after an eventual post-conflict or post-agreement, the possibility of a reform to ensure greater political participation to the LGBT people could be considered. The delegate answered, fundamental argument is about core things. Afro-descendant groups, indigenous minority groups, groups who decide the free development of their personality, I would not say, especially the latter, that they are fundamental for one simple reason: because in the country there are more important things than this. Peace is a more important issue and that is what the discussion should be about. Women's issues are different because the case of rural women is considered a case of victims, and the violence that can be exercised against this type of minority is not embodied within the main conflict; and from that point of view, I think that they are especially entitled to have representation as a minority, [unintelligible]; however, it is not the case, for example, of afro-descendants and indigenous people because they are involved in the conflict." He considers that this issue is not "fundamental within the conflict," and added that "precisely, there is an unleashed violence (against the LGBT people) which is not exactly that of the armed conflict. The global world has developed another type of violence generated by the attitude of the being versus society."

Regarding the question of whether the parties in general, and Cambio Radical in particular, could be open to encourage leadership of LGBT people, the delegate answered that it is relative because "to the extent that people are able and have leadership, they will conquer spaces and there always will be people who will give them recognition (...), I cannot imagine that because this person or that other one is gay, that they should be chosen as a minority." The delegate concluded by saying that we must always look for the qualifications of the people involved in politics.

#### · Liberal:

A woman and a man were separately interviewed; they were part of the collective. Each of them has different perspectives about the relation between the party and the LGBT people. The first interview made a historical account about how Partido Liberal was a pioneer in the inclusion of LGBT people and LGBT issues in the agenda and in the organization, making a difference from the political as well as from the legal arena. He claimed that, "the party not only began to defend them in the Congress, but also initiated the opening of participatory spaces not only in their organization or structure, but also in the National Coordination Committee of Youth, and from each coordination committee, and from the Sexual Diversity Coordination Committee."

On the other hand, about the issue of the involvement of LGBT people, the delegate considered that: "Spaces are open and if they are not taking advantage of them, it is responsibility of this population itself. Lists

are made public for the people to participate when there are public election positions; remember that historically the parties used to close the spaces, that is the imaginary, but the Partido Liberal has always given rise to participation." Understanding at the same time that the process of political participation of LGBT people is starting, and that gradually they have earned their spaces within the political parties.

When making reference to those representatives of the party who openly oppose the LGBT agenda, such as the case of the Senator Viviane Morales, the interviewee believes that within the plurality of opinions, it must be taken into account not only those who are in favor of the LGBT people, but also those that are not.

By reminding the delegate about the creation of the LGBT Secretariat within Partido Liberal when Piedad Córdoba was the Director of the party, and asking about the possibility to create an instance of this type, the delegate commented, "Positions can be created, but if they do not stay or there are not any advances, we disappoint a lot of people; if women or young people do not defend their spaces, they will hardly be stepping into the next level, that is why changes arise within processes that the groups lead."

Finally, the spokesperson of Partido Liberal considers that: "This population group (LGBT) has much to contribute to society with, to teach that a sexual, cultural or racial condition does not preclude in any way and, in fact, it enables the construction of the country we want, and even more now that we are on the road to peace and the post-conflict, and it would be wrong if we do not include all sectors of society."

The other delegate that was appointed by Partido Liberal to carry out the interview was a woman, who currently holds a position of popular election. Throughout the interview, she made it clear that her personal

priority, and the party's in general, did not revolve around the LGBT topic, whereas there are other priorities within the partisan agenda, such as the topic the peace (as if it were possible to separate the issue of inclusion and equality of rights from peace). When she was asked about the possibility of an eventual reform within the party for the inclusion of more clauses for the LGBT population, she replied that: "There are other people who are also lining up. Then, for example, talking about the issue of victims, there is so much need for the issue of Havana, and also women and the most vulnerable social groups; then, it worries me because then, what should I do? Eventually they need more representation and greater representation." Similarly, when she was asked about the inclusion of this topic in her work schedule, she replied that she already had an agenda to follow.

As for the specific question of how partisan good practices could be resumed, those practices that once put Piedad Cordoba as director of Partido Liberal, this person considered that "we are in a process; we have the peace issue as a priority. Mainly, I have as commitments the peace issue and the women issue, but I do know that there are people interested in supporting it, that seems fine to me." Regarding the Havana issue, she says: "Well, the most interested party are the victims, and on the other hand, well, I think that by means of gender subcommittees or other types of committees, other issues could be covered in order to provide participation, because that I think it is important; and I think right now as there many issues on the table, makes it difficult to put something in practice."

#### MIRA:

MIRA designated a spokesperson for this interview who was avoiding direct responses to what she was asked. She was evading the LGBT issues and focusing on replying to issues less controversial (MIRA is the

political platform of a religious group).

She was asked about the opening of spaces for LGBT issues within the partisan agendas and she replied that, "there has been progress on this issue, and in the same way they are part of this society; and we believe as well they should be part of a scenario as important as political activity, and we believe in their contribution to the construction of what we have, in the construction of this new society." Then, she added that this should not only be applied to specific issues, but also to those which are more complex such as the peace process.

On the timely issue of inclusion of LGBT people becoming part of the political scenarios, she replied: 'I insist on the issue of integrating all sectors of society, and it is important that a space has already been opened for these related sectors; and about this, I think there is a topic we have insisted on for many years now, and I am talking about the women's issue and how the parties become aware that they are part of society, and therefore, the parties should assist in this process and those groups should be considered as representative groups. It is relevant that parties train all their members. not only about the election issue, but also about the importance of the work itself instead of the sexual orientation of the person doing that work. Finally, considers that the conformation of the new Congress could lead to the opening and the inclusion of these topics.

#### ·Opción Ciudadana:

The conversation carried out with the delegated person for the interview did not end up with great results, commitments or reflections due to lack of knowledge and the obvious bias shown before the topic; to the point of not knowing what "transwoman" means. Regarding the organizational structure of the party, the person answered in the following way: "The party is a little

ambiguous about that, a little rough on that topic; what happens is that someone comes along to the Secretariat, that Secretariat is responsible for working on issues of gender, women and other population groups, and that's very checkered; the Bill 1445 began to decant the subject so the same people cover those spaces. Now you also have to understand that the party has suffered many blows and has had to be restructured, and this time the party opens itself a space in the subject of afro-descendants, women, and youth, and has presented projects on issues against the abuse of women, among others. But yes I see that there are some flaws, not by the party, but because there isn't anyone who does it" (referring to LGBT issues)."

When he was asked a series of questions about the inclusion of the LGBT agenda within the party platform, he said that while within the party there have been talks about sexual diversity and the issue of pluralism, the party is divided since although LGBT people are welcome, they consider that there are aspects they should constrain.

The representative does not know if there are LGBT people from the party actively participating in politics in any of the regions of Colombia, although he tells the story of a friend of his who happens to be gay (in the closet, in his own words) and gave him the endorsement since he needed his votes.

Another issue covered on the interview refers to the discussions recently conducted on issues that directly affect the LGBT population, and what the position of the party towards that. The is representative, the delegate, said: "To some extent, the party takes distance about the issue, while are many LGBT there homosexuals that are worthy; there are others that all they do is an extreme degradation to society. You know that a heterosexual couple sticks to fidelity, but a homosexual couple does not, look, it has happened here in Chapinero, there is much stigma because of that; that same problem

will get to the party and yes, there must be a limit; we are not in favor of equal marriage if it has the same thing, because it makes sense, but the marriage campaign is a silly one, marriage is a solemn union and that's it."

In addition, he continues saying that the party is not in accordance with equal marriage because "the solemn union is not equal in real life and even with that clarity, the party would not support it. Another word may be used, but not marriage, and the thing is that the meaning of the word itself and the concept cannot be extended, and it is related to the mother, to the woman, and how are you going to come across that with a union of two men?" At the same time, he expressed the party refusal in regards to the adoption by same-sex couples as it is considered that it would create chaos in the life of the child, without any other explanation in that regards. Similarly, regarding an eventual law in favor of transwomen, this person did not know anything about them, and after "I imagined a explanation, he said, transsexual as that person whose dressing is exaggerated, I think that yes; yes, my party would support them, and they must be respected."

At the same time, he stated that there might be a possibility of creating an office within the party for LGBT issues, despite the fact that there is not clear strategy to achieve an effective rapprochement with the LGBT movement. He acknowledged that opening that opportunity to include LGBT people would strengthen them for the elections to be held in October; however, right now the party is focused on pursuing the quotas for women.

Regarding how the party observes an openly LGBT candidate profile, he said that "there are LGBT people who have a very good political exercise, these people can woo an elector very easily, a gay person has left

stigmas behind, these people are open to anything. The advantage is that they are people with good leadership, they can do good campaigns, but it is the stigma of Christian radicalism that would be the disadvantage within the party because we could lose people."

Finally, he states that these sectors should empower themselves on their topics, such as women and afro-descendants have done.

#### · Unión Patriótica:

Having a conversation with a representative of Partido Unión Patriótica, he made it clear that first and foremost, the party respects the Constitution with regards to article 13, that reads: "all people are born free and equal before the law (...)," and UP considers that "this (making reference to the LGBT movement) is a movement that takes much force in the country, and that they are as equal as any other citizens," adding that when these people have been in a public office, they have demonstrated a great sense of responsibility.

Regarding the party's internal organization, he stated that, "we have one (LGBT) person that is part of the leadership, he is also an ideologist and he does his work in detail, but we also have LGBTI people collaborating in all departments on our activities, but likewise they will be candidates."

Furthermore, the UP considers the efforts that LGBT movements have made in terms of ability to mobilize as very relevant, creating the opening of spaces at the national level, and it is necessary that they have the right to participate, not only because they are part of a list, but also because they can be chosen.

#### Polo Democrático Alternativo:

Polo Democrático has been characterized as being an inclusive party organization, where the participation of LGBT people has been very representative. Below are the most relevant aspects of the interviews with two delegate members the party designated to speak on their behalf.

For one of them, the Constitution of 1991 was key to support the LGBT movement, in turn "to take into account what has been the impact of the Constitution of 1991 in the construction of the social discourse of the LGBTI movement -let's say very limited to the legal discourse-; I believe that, obviously, having a social movement opens up the possibilities to strengthen the political exercise because, obviously, the political processes are normally accompanied by processes of social mobilization, and that happens not only to LGBTI people, but in general that happens to all political leaders." At the same time, it is to be taken into account that before the Constitution, some LGBTI leaders had already made themselves visible. For this candidate, the presence of regional LGBT leaders it is very important where "there has not been a documentation exercise of the systematization of that leadership."

This person affirms that the presence of openly LGBTI men and women candidates has turned into a "great appeal for political parties since at an international level, the LGBTpopulationhashadmorerepresentation and it is a precious electoral niche" despite that, what we can see on the national agenda for these topics is disarticulation and depoliticization because "there have not been moments of national articulation to enabling articulating a few points, and the result is a movement that has different political perspectives on society."

By acknowledging that the political spectrum is very broad and varied in terms of the approach to the issues related to the mobilization, and despite that, "these approaches have to do with their ideological plant, or their societal plan, then I ask myself, what does the political participation

of LGBT people mean? I mean, what are they aiming for?"

The other interviewee "thinks it is important that political parties begin to understand the topic and when I say to understand I mean that there are some nuances of that understanding. I think there are political parties that recognized this as a result of a struggle of ideas and a construction of postures to recognize this is part of a social struggle and a political struggle. I also believe that there are sectors in the parties that saw it as an opportunity to grow and to have more force to within their parties." Finally, he stated that, "in general, these movements of homosexual liberation in Argentina, Brazil, and in Colombia were closely linked to an exercise in the construction of left-wing parties; in fact, that debate on the homosexual issue was an interesting discussion that was taking place in some left parties in Europe and Latin America, and along with the debate on this revolutionary initiative to transform society, also comes the recognition transformation."

#### Partido de la U:

In the conversation with the party delegate for the interview with Observatorio de Participación Política, the delegate said that the party lost many votes because of the inclusion of the LGBTI agenda in the discourse and actions of Senator Armando Benedetti, and he added, "the biggest difficulty was to ask LGBT people to vote for a community which, in its entirety, does not represent the LGBT agenda, presenting first the image of Benedetti, and last mentioned was the party." He argued that although the profit was "recognition that one of the flags of this campaign were LGBT rights," there were a number of attacks through social networks for this same reason.

As for the subject of the vote, the party found

that "in the past, the movement was characterized by abstention. Today, the picture has changed. The community has been given account that social activism has to go one step further, that it needs to be in positions of representation, where standards, guidelines and resources are handed down."

In regards to the upcoming discussions in Congress, he considered that "equal marriage is worn out, the issue of the gender identity law needs to positioned in the Congress, but I do not think that it will pass (lack of maturity in terms of the project and it should include a regional point of view regarding the needs of men and women)." In addition, he added the need to "strengthen the issue of the anti-discrimination law that is inoperative, and also strengthen what is known as inclusive work environments. In

the next Congress, the division of the Partido Conservador (some of them will vote against some initiatives, but some others will vote in favor) and twenty-two Senators of the U will play a key role in terms of LGBT issues. It is not a very favorable outlook." In addition, he added that the main issues that must be addressed in this new Congress would be gender identity, decent work, antidiscrimination law, and education for LGBT people.

Finally, the party believes that is necessary to strengthen the local political movement, strengthen the LGBT movement, make greater political and social control for elected officials to comply with an LGBT agenda promised and accomplish a link between the LGBT population with politics, fostering mechanisms of political participation.

# 4. LGBTI individuals' perceptions on political participation



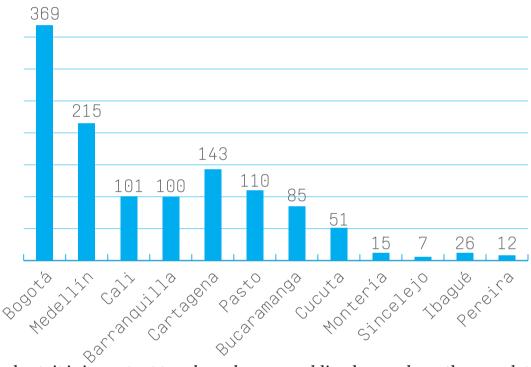
This section shows the results of a data gathering process on the LGBTI community's perceptions and ideas about political participation. The twelve cities where it was conducted were carefully selected according to the visibility of the groups that work through social, legal and political activism to promote and advocate for their rights. This research aims at identifying and describing the LGBTI individuals' impact on and participation in the country's political

spheres and policymaking as well as how their participation in these areas is fostered since they have become key areas to bring about change in the situations that usually affect them.

Chart 1 presents the cities where this perception research was conducted as well as the amount of LGBTI participants in that process.

CHART 1. CITIES - CITIES OF RESIDENCE AND AMOUNT OF LGBTI PARTICIPANTS

Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)



Out of this chart, it is important to acknowledge that there is a relation between the visibility of the LGBTI population in the cities and the amount of participants; that is to say, the higher the visibility of the LGBTI population in the public sphere, the more participants. As a result, Bogotá was at the top of the list with 369 interviewees out of 1234 interviews carried out throughout the country, accounting for 29.9% of the interviewed people.

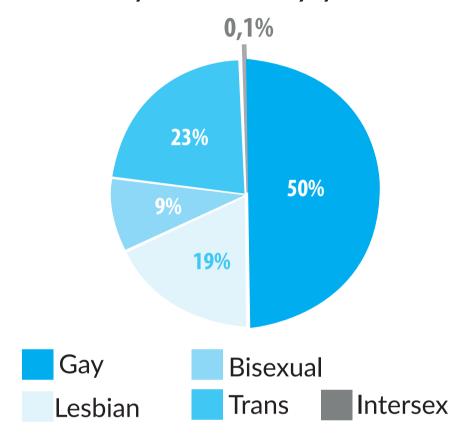
The chosen places to conduct the interviews

are public places where the population can make themselves socially and politically visible through expressions such as demonstrations, pride parades and Interagency Labor Committees.

Consequently, it is relevant to mention that, within the LGBTI category, men that define themselves as gay are far more present in those spaces and are more open to share their experiences and perceptions, as observed in chart 2:

#### CHART 2. WAYS OF IDENTIFYING WITHIN THE LGBTI CATEGORY

### How do you identify yourself?



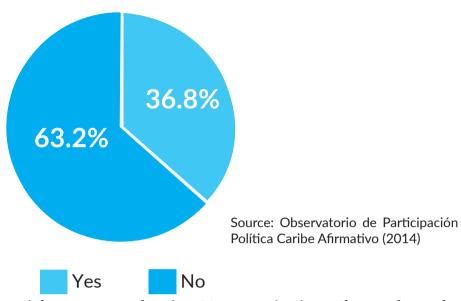
Source: Observatorio de Participación Política Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

As for the second chart, it is essential to point out that 50% of the LGBTI population define themselves as gay men, followed by 23% who consider themselves trans (20% trans women and 3% trans men), 19% lesbian women, 9% bisexual and a person (0.1%) who claims to be intersex. 100% out of the interviewed trans men live or reside in the city of Bogotá since, in other parts of the country, they do not define themselves as such but as "butch" lesbian women. Likewise, the interviewed trans women were mostly found in parades and demonstrations while less likely to be found in areas of interagency participation with the exception of Bogotá, Cali and Medellín where they participate more actively in groups and organizations.

Apart from measuring the LGBTI participation in political parties, this research also aims at identifying their involvement participation areas such as civil society. In this respect, only 36.8% of the interviewees answered positively about their participation or belonging to any group or social organization while, as it can be observed in chart 3, 63.2% claimed not to belong in any way to an organized LGBTI group because they do not consider them significant spaces that could allow them to assert rights. Moreover, they consider them closed spaces which are served by particular interests; in this sense, many lesbian women and trans individuals state that, in many occasions, the groups are run and "even manipulated" by gay men.

CHART 3. LGBTI INDIVIDUALS PERCENTAGE WHO BELONG TO ORGANIZED LGBTI GROUPS

Do you belong to a LGBTI organized group?



Out of the interviewees, it is mainly gay men who admit to participating in or belonging to LGBTI organizations or groups, followed by trans people and, in the third place, lesbian women who, in many cases, claim to be members of and more active in feminist organizations (either women or gender related organizations)

than in LGBTI organizations. Chart 4 shows the participation percentage of individuals according to their self-definitions within a LGBTI category who belong to or participate in organizations and groups focused on the promotion and advocacy of their rights.

CHART 4. PERCENTAGE BY POPULATION SECTOR OF INDIVIDUALS WHO BELONG TO LGBTI ORGANIZATIONS OR GROUPS.



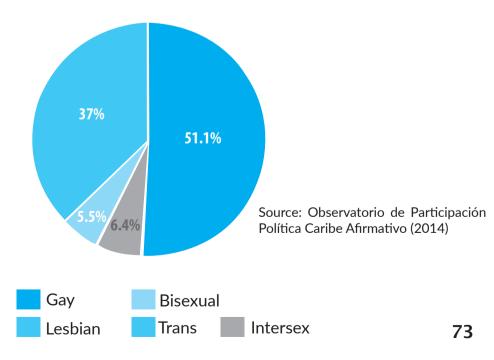


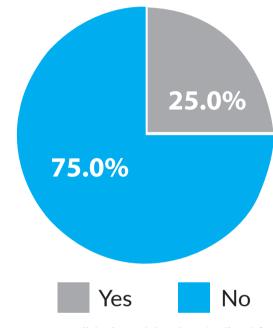
CHART 4. PERCENTAGE BY POPULATION SECTOR OF INDIVIDUALS WHO BELONG TO LGBTI ORGANIZATIONS OR GROUPS.

As regards the electoral processes in the country and the right to vote as a key mechanism for modern democracies, high abstention levels have been found during this investigation process, where just 25% admitted to voting for presidential elections. Bogotá is one of the cities with the highest voting levels, accounting for 57% of the interviewed population, followed by

Pasto and Cali, with 54% and 52.4% respectively. The other cities levels are below 40%. When asked about the reasons why they do not engage in election processes, many of the interviewees have claimed to be uninterested in what they call "politics," highlighting corruption and the fact that "it is always the same ones" as reasons to support their disinterest.

#### Did you vote in the presidential elections

CHART 5. PERCENTAGE OF LGBTI INDIVIDUALS WHO VOTED IN THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN 2014.



Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

It is significant to highlight in qualitative terms and, according to obtained accounts, that the highest abstention rates have been found among trans people as well as gay men. The former claim a lack of knowledge about the electoral process, such as a previous registration of their IDs, in addition to their transhumance<sup>38</sup> whereby they move from one city or place of residence to another, while the latter claim their reasons for not voting as such: 'there were no worthy

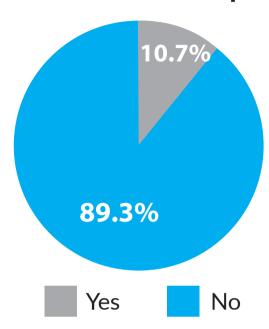
candidates', 'they are all thieves', 'they do not represent us as homos'.

If the abstention rates of the LGBTI population (75%) are a concern during presidential elections, when it comes to local elections such as mayor, governor, assembly or council elections, figures are much more alarming given that only 10.7% of the LGBTI interviewees admitted to voting during the most recent elections, as evidenced in chart 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>. Many of the interviewed trans women have to get by with their jobs, usually related to informal work conditions like sex work or hairdressing which forces them to migrate non-stop to seek for better income opportunities to live by.

CHART 6. PERCENTAGE OF LGBTI INDIVIDUALS WHO VOTED DURING THE LOCAL ELECTORAL PROCESSES (MAYORS, GOVERNORS, COUNCILS AND DEPUTIES) IN 2011

#### Did you vote in local electoral processes?



Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

The previous chart displays an increase of 14.6% in the abstention percentage regarding local elections (89.3%) as opposed to presidential elections (75%). According to the interviewees, this lack of participation results from a locally existing mistrust in political leaders. They consider that many of these politicians represent historic local party bosses ("caciques" in Spanish), are corrupt and are not interested in addressing their issues as citizens but that they act in response to the economic interests of their family monopolies. The next statement shows some recurrent characteristics of local candidates in the social imagery during the interview process, such as lack of competence and training to govern, haymaking and corruption:

'I didn't vote and thankfully I didn't! Today I'd be ashamed of having given my vote to an incompetent and haymaker such as that mayor of ours. I've got no idea about the Council: there, it is always the same people who get elected, usually by buying votes, and not to mention their homophobia! I think that's why nobody goes out

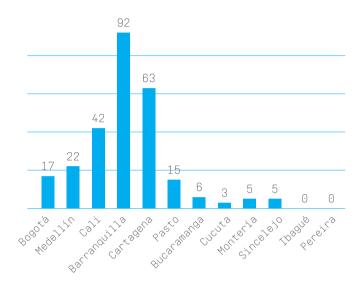
there and votes, let alone us, the homos.' Interview in Medellín with a 30-year-old gay man, professional.

In relation to participation as an essential right and as an exercise of full citizenship, the LGBTI interviewees acknowledge that homophobia and prejudice towards their practices are still present in the country, which leads them to being victims of jokes, finger-pointing and mocking in many social spheres. These infringements of their rights are expressed both through physical and symbolic violence: it goes from invisibility and derogatory language to physical abuse and harassment. Chart 7 shows the percentage by city of the individuals who feel that they are being denied their rights to political participation because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38.</sup> Many of the interviewed trans women have to get by with their jobs, usually related to informal work conditions like sex work or hairdressing which forces them to migrate non-stop to seek for better income opportunities to live by he case of Polo Rosa will be explained in the next section.

## CHART 7 PERCENTAGE OF DENIAL OF PARTICIPATION RIGHTS DUE TO BEING PART OF THE LGBTI POPULATION, BY CITY.

## Citizens with more cases of denial of the right to participation, allegedly for belonging to the LGBTI population



Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

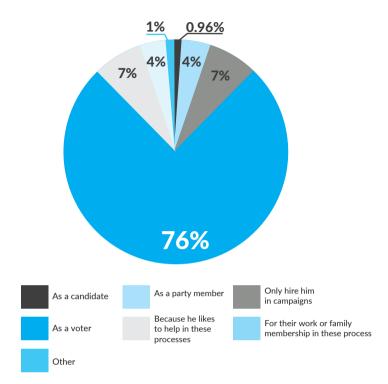
In this chart, it is important to acknowledge that the higher the visibility, the higher the participation, but also the higher the risk of being victims of violence because of their sexual orientation, identity or whatever their gender expression is that does not meet the established standards of a culture ruled by patriarchy.

This is the case in the major cities of the Caribbean coast of Colombia, where it is striking that the amount of cases of LGBTI people being denied in any way their rights to participate in politics just because of defining their identities within this social and political acronym (LGBTI) is higher than in the rest of the cities where this research was conducted. Barranguilla is located at the top of the list with 92%, where, despite their gain in social areas and visibility, it is possible to assert, thanks to these figures, that when it comes to political participation areas, there is still a long way to go for this community, who has historically been a victim of violation to their human rights, to achieve full recognition of their status as citizens. Following Barranquilla, the city of Cartagena ranks in second place with 63%. Some of the interviewed leaders in the Caribbean coast of Colombia agree that politics can be defined as racist, sexist, misogynistic and patriarchal and this can be observed in political speeches and practices, which fail to acknowledge diversity in all its forms.

This research also inquired about the ways of participation that LGBTI individuals have historically had in the cities where it was carried out. Thus, it is important to point out that 76% of the interviewees state that their right to participation was only exercised through the right to vote. However, this exercise is not continuous and systematic but an action that, according to them, is more biased by emotions and particular interests than by political convictions. Chart 8 evidences the historical ways of participation of the LGBTI interviewees.

FIGURE 8. FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LGBTI COMMUNITY.

#### How has your political participation been?



In the previous figure it is possible to highlight how the popular voting process continues for the majority of participation on behalf of the LGBTI community in the country. It is notable that 7% of this population answered that they only participated because they were hired for political campaigns, but that when the process was finalized, on many occasions, the same happened with their ties to participation. However, it is important to note that in an environment full of prejudice and regardless of the incipient nature that sexual diversity has on a political level in the country, 4% of people questioned take part actively as activists in political parties.

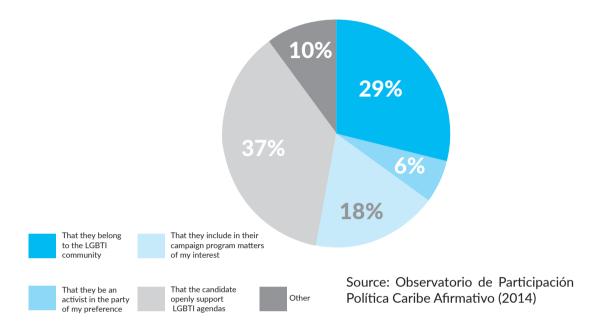
During this information gathering process, it was also found that despite the fact that it does not represent a high number of individuals in comparison to other population segments, of all the LGBTI people questioned, 1% answered that that they have participated as candidates for a political post.

On the other hand, before their motives to

register their vote and their preference for a particular candidate and political leader, the interviewed people consider it is important, firstly, that the candidate be someone who openly supports LGBTI agendas that are being launched in the country, secondly, that it be a person who self-identifies themselves as part of the LGBTI community, and thirdly, that they include in their agenda matters of interest to the populace. Among the matters of interest, individuals mention education free of sexual prejudice, impulse for public policies, marriage equality and the importance of a gender identity law. Figure 9 represents the traits that the interviewed sector considers a candidate should have to count on their support.

FIGURE 9. CHARACTERISTICS A CANDIDATE SHOULD HAVE TO COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF LGBTI POPULATION

Which of the following characteristics do you consider is the most important for a candidate to have your support?

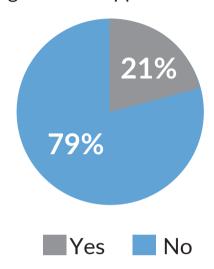


It's also important to recognize the value of the traits a candidate must have to expect the support from a specific populace and one that has been victim of constant violation of their human rights, which contrary to other people, need special attention and restitution regarding their human rights. Because of this, as one of the most important characteristics identified in this investigation process by the participating individuals, 37% affirm that for a candidate to have the LGBTI people's backing, they must openly support this sector's agenda; from this it is important to emphasize that support of the LGBTI agenda is of greater interest than the candidate, mandatorily or not, publicly belong to this sector, as this option was only backed by 29% of the participating people, followed by the option that the campaign program include matters of interest to LGBTI people with 18%, that the candidate run in the political party of preference with 6% and miscellaneous traits with 10%.

As mentioned above, support from the questioned individuals is divided in a majority by the acknowledgment of the LGBTI agenda in their localities and in the country, however, it seems contradictory that only 21% (See Figure 10) of people express knowledge of agendas in reference to LGBTI matters existent or presented by politicians in their city. According to the notes from the interviewers, this could be interpreted as the absence of a generalized political culture in the country and because many politicians still feel that LGBTI rights are not as much of a priority as other population groups.

FIGURE 10. PERCENTAGE OF LGBTI INDIVIDUALS THAT KNOW OF POLITICIANS WITH LGBTI AGENDAS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CITIES.





Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

The LGBTI community makes up a strong electoral niche on an international level, taking the USA's experience and Santos' support as an example; in North America's case, in the 2012 elections after President Obama expressed to be in favor of same-sex marriage, his campaign had a great amount of support from social to financial mobilizations (although the sexual orientation and gender identity of all voters cannot be known, the names of many famous LGBTI people were known to give their economic support to Obama's campaign).

For Colombia's 2014 presidential elections, many LGBTI sectors decided to back President Juan Manuel Santos' campaign because his opponent in round two, Oscar Iván Zuluaga, was against the rights for this populace, as he referenced on more than one occasion during his campaign by defending more traditional preconceptions than Santos.

In Colombia's case and using the investigation process as a base, it is important to note that the abstentionism formerly described for presidential and local elections is not characteristic of other sectors and population groups in the country and lack of credibility in institutions and the

little amount of transparency citizens have in regards to democratic processes. However, it must be factored in that LGBTI matters are unseen and when they are addressed they are mediated by moralist lectures, by scared candidates who don't adopt a clear position, which is pointed out by the interviewed individuals as unfinished business and historical debt. Due to this situation, when asked the question "Do you plan on voting in the coming elections?" 56% affirms conclusively that they will. However, in conversation with leaders of the collective acknowledge the importance of voting and the demand of LGBTI agenda, at the time to place said vote, many people do not do so out of "pure laziness" or because they are skeptical of the democracy and the promises aspiring candidates make to the public. In this regard, some of the interviewed people believe not voting is a way to punish the candidates.

5. Voice of Experience in political participation for LGBTI people (Conversation and analysis with LGBTI leaders who have participated in politics)



In the interviews conducted, the individuals agreed that political participation spaces are circumscribed to traditionalist logic, which rarely allows the inclusion of new citizen profiles and does not become an organization with focus on many collective interests, and these are environments that are ignorant to other forms of participation closer to the practices and symbolic universe of the LGBTI community.

"One can see that the political activism that is promoted in this country is manipulated by formalisms. For example, for a local course on social politics, people must be summoned every three months because that is what the decree states, and as in this specific case, this is how participation is built, just by accomplishing what is merely normative; spontaneous agendas, such as the alternative spaces the LGBTI people develop on a daily basis, are set aside" (Interview with a Trans. Leader from Cartagena)

The trajectories of political participation of the LGBTI people in Colombia had a strong origin in the leftist democracy, achieving their position through the experience of Planeta Paz (Peace Planet), as mentioned previously, and from there it accomplishes consolidation of the significant experience from the sector Polo de Rosa (Pink Polo) in the interior of the democrat pole. In this origin, the ideological position close to the ideals of the leftist democrat coexist and reform with many of the ideas that were not consistent with those of the left and promoted LGBTI mobilizations in the country. This process, as expressed by some of the interviewed leaders, has given way to a space where the ideological bias of people is surpassed by the fight for the recognition of the LGBTI collective.

"From the activist experience I have had in my life, I feel it is important for political parties to start understanding the subject, and when I mean understand, there is a difference in matrixes. There are political parties that consequently understood it as a fight for ideas and building of positions, in other words, recognizing this makes it partly a social battle and partly a political battle; I also believe that there are sectors of the parties that saw it as an opportunity to grow and have more interior strength in their parties, mostly because of the same structure these have, for example the Ley de Cuotas (Quota Law).

(...) From my experience with the Polo de Rosa, I can see at this time the political impact unravelling far more than just the ideological, because there was a period of time when there was the said bias, and this does not mean that people cannot assume an ideological position; but for example, we, in the Polo de Rosa, said: "What we are is not instilled in favor of any party, people can make them, but not the organization, precisely because if we decided to have a political impact, we had to know how to relate to the Cambio Radical and to El Partido de la U and, in part, that ideological bias did not allow it, or maybe there were moments when we thought the only party that could speak for the LGBTI was the Polo. That is what was believed, but when other parties start, when the Polo and the Polo de Rosa are divided, those people will go on to other parties (...)" (Interview with a political leader in Polo Democrático, Bogotá 2014)

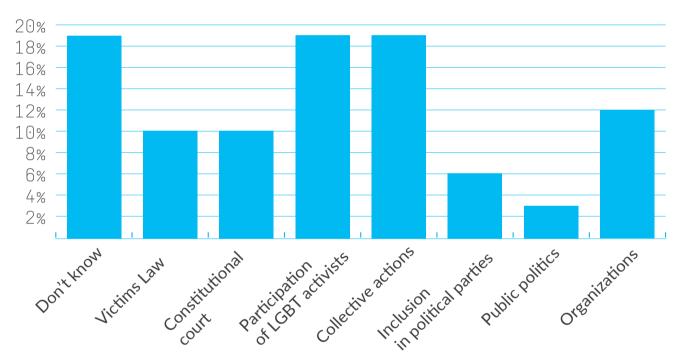
From the experiences narrated by the interviewed individuals, it is suggested that nowadays other than the Polo Democrático, there are others in existence like Partido de la U or Cambio Radical that, some way or another, are giving visibility to the LGBTI agenda now, even though they are identified as a weak participation space for this populace, its considered they are vital scenarios that have potential and must be taken advantage of for the different leaderships in the country. Many parties are nowadays including and creating ties to candidates that are openly lesbian or trans, but the problem with this inclusion is when the aforementioned candidates are not provided with the resources or are given the same possibilities as other candidates.

"There is a problem here and it is that, contrary to a few years back, political parties in today's day and age, except for the Partido Conservador, and it can be verified in past elections, would include even trans to appear inclusive towards a minority that could possibly not determine their election but only generate a few votes" (Interview with an activist woman, Boqotá, 2014)

According to the interviews conducted towards various activists and political leaders, the totality (100%), expressed they knew the mechanisms and citizen participation spaces that can be accessed to influence democrat and political participation in the country from the LGBTI rights representation and participation. In the

interviews with them, the various obstacles, possibilities, changes, and opportunities of the political participation in the country and the interior of the parties were analyzed; the results of the information gathered are grouped in categories and are accompanied by a statistical view that shows in percentage some tendencies and perceptions.

FIGURE 11. LGBTI POLITICAL PARTICIPATION PROGRESS



Source: Observatorio de Participación Política Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

The identified progress is complemented by an analytical map created by the interviewed subjects that allows visibility to the before and after situation in regards to political participation of LGBTI individuals in Colombia and in table No. 1 are the aspects identified by them.

FIGURE 12. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED THE LEGAL PROGRESS THAT HAS ALLOWED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TO THE LGBTI COMMUNITY

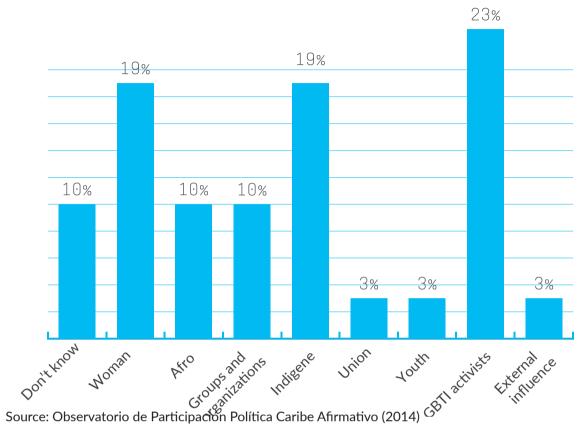
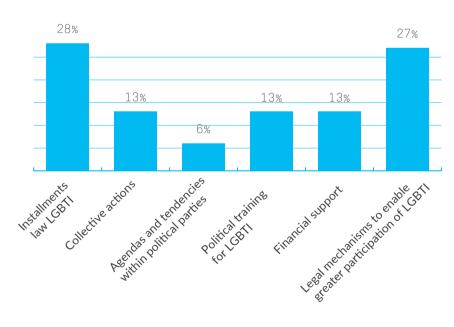


FIGURE 13. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED THE LEGAL PROGRESS THAT HAS ALLOWED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TO THE LGBTI COMMUNITY

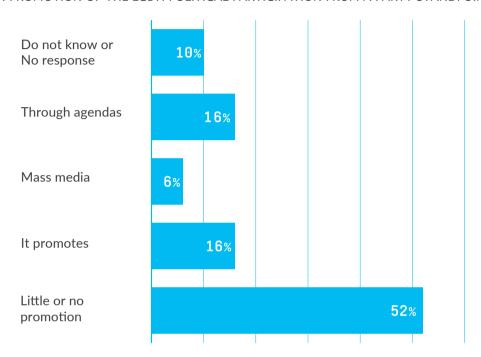


Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

The LGBTI individuals interviewed that exercise leaderships in political participation in the country consider it is necessary to generate mechanisms for information, institutionalism and credibility in the Sate's institutions, which make it possible to promote participation in these sectors. On this subject, in Figure 16, 52% confirms that, in their party, it is little advertised or not stimulated at all, and only 6% recognizes

that it's promoted by the media and in some cases by the bigger agendas from parties. Finally, 16% identifies themselves as Polo Democrático, Partido Liberal and the Partido Verde.

FIGURE 14. PROMOTION OF THE LGBTI POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FROM A PARTY STANDPOINT



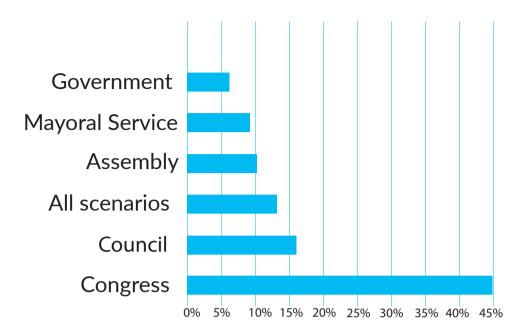
Source: Observatory political participation Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

The political and sociopolitical peak in which the LGBTI actors' political campaigns developed in the country in 2014 took place in the period that hosted a strong national discussion regarding marriage equality, a decision that marks and important aspect in the agenda of lesbian and gay people, but omits the trans sector. It is also identified as an important element in regards to the leftist democrat strength in cities such as Bogotá. Another key factor is considered to be the collective actions, boom and staging from different organizations in which many collectives and sectors are registered. In the same sense, it is identified for its difficult aspects in the exercise of their campaigns and mobilization such as: homophobia within political parties, which influences aspects such as difficulties to work as part of a team, and most of all, the lack of resources to finance their campaigns.

Additionally, the interviewed group expresses that the leaders that take on a political representation in the LGBTI sector must have significant qualities and characteristics in the following order of priority: Coherence in their practices with LGBTI rights acknowledgment, argument and speech capabilities, training or formation, strong convictions and an obliging attitude.

On the other hand, the most favorable political scenarios for the LGBTI community participation, according to the interviewees, are the Republican Congress, with 45% and in second place, the Municipal Council with 15%. Only 13% claims that all scenarios are important and, interestingly, just 8% feels the Mayoral service is, while 6% agree it is the Government. Figure 17 illustrates this relation.

FIGURE 15. IMPORTANCE OF THE SCENARIO FOR LGBTI POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



Source: Observatorio de Participación Política Caribe Afirmativo (2014)

Congress is identified as the most significant scenario for LGBTI participation, as this is where the normative that permits a higher inclusion and social recognition of sexual and gender diversity is defined.

To finish this section, it is key to point out that 100% of activists and leaders interviewed used their right to vote in 2014 and their motives were the following: 65% voted for the inclusive proposition of the candidate rather than their registered party, 17% voted for the candidate that represented their party, 6% voted per the criteria of the party rather than the candidate, another 6% voted to support a peace agenda and the final 6% did so on their criteria that voting can influence the decisions made in the country. According to this, it is also important to point out that 60% of the interviewed people follows up with their vote and subsequently the candidate, since this allows guarantee that the agendas are being fulfilled and take responsibility for an effective participation.

# Recommendations for openly LGBTI campaigns that rise from the experience of LGBTI activists who have participated in politics.

- 1. It is necessary to have transformative strategies to face attacks and respond, not with attacks as well, but with democratic propositions and increase the level of visibility of candidates as much as their agendas.
- 2. It is important to take on a campaign as if it were a long term project with the objective of electoral triumph along with a risk analysis (electronic, physical and media variables, etc.) and the creation of electoral mapping (to know how many votes you need to win, who your political opponents are, highest averages, etc.)
- 3. Strengthen and reinforce non-conventional participation, discussion and voting spaces to bolster them as new electoral niches; at the same time, identify a political mapping of allies and strategic allies from other social movements and citizens in search of equality that can bring together and surround your campaign.

- 4. Convince and exercise the first gathering in the interior of the political party or process so the individual campaign may have a collective backing and representation with ideas and strategies according to the political project.
- 5. Understand that LGBTI agenda interests are not exclusive to the left wing, profoundly valuing its commitment and at the same time carry it towards a more democrat agenda that will give centrism and right wing individuals the opportunity to support LGBTI, who in their collectivities wish to make an impact in politics.
- 6. The importance of resources; the support of the political party must transcend symbolism and make itself effective with resources and access to them in equal conditions.
- 7. It is important to spread initial concrete messages that show the electorate that the leader LGBTI can be a society leader and arrange equality matters rather than just subjects related to sexual orientation and gender identity; create activist synergy with these and other agendas.
- 8. It is important to unite with other LGBTI candidatures, even other parties in search for a minimum of basic agreements to defend your mutual agenda and impact from a different standpoint in the same sense; true equality.
- 9. Break the high abstention of LGBTI people and other significant citizen groups that disbelieve the strategies for renovation that could be nurtured from a social movement. People must feel that politics summons and represents them. Activism must be linked to politics.
- 10. Work with community and local leaderships that can help transform political methods.
- 11. In the interior of the party, it is key to work with the gender legislators and the minorities of the party, as this could be a strategic entry to take possession of agendas.
- 12. Propose subjects that, apart from supporting LGBTI battles, are not exclusively so, as this can segment the electorate. It is key to propose from comprehensive agendas, such as public politics, statutes against discrimination and real equality practices.

13. Be allies of structural agendas for society that still lack progress, or that must be strengthened; like education, health, propositions that trans people, who have the most difficulties, have inclusive and equal offers, family diversity laws, etc.

## Beginning of LGBTI political participation in Colombia

The elections for Senate and House representative for 2014 constituted a historical milestone for the LGBTI movement in Colombia. For the first time in history, an openly lesbian woman achieved a seat in Congress, which is the case of the current representative of the Alianza Verde party, Angélica Lozano, whose great leadership skills and good management throughout her career in public sectors helped her carry out said accomplishment.

Although said triumph was great progress in the positioning of the LGBTI agenda in a legislative area, the work of those who made way for the political participation of LGBTI people in Colombia by running for candidacy and overcoming many obstacles must be taken in to account. Below is a list of pioneers in the political participation of the LGBTI sector in the country.

•Pedro Fayad – Barranquilla Council Candidate In the year 1997, a short 6 years after the approval of the 1991 Constitution, this native from Barranquilla decided to launch one of the first openly LGBTI candidacies in the country, making him one of the forefathers in LGBTI political participation.

Amidst a traditionalist and misogynist society like this one is, Fayad who was the owner of a then important Baco discotheque, dared to break the patriarchal stereotypes and at that time nominated himself to be on the Barranquilla District Council.

He was a follower of the Barranquilla ex-Mayor, Bernardo Hoyos' proposals, and with the support from a great amount of his clientele and friends, decided to compete for a Council seat, seeking materialization of the LGBTI community's rights in the city and the creations of an organized gay movement in Baranquilla and La Costa.

Although he did not achieve the amount of votes

he needed to be elected (191 votes), Fayad continued his work in politics throughout the years, subsequently being a pre-candidate for the Atlantic Government and is currently a minor Mayor of the South-West locality.

#### •Ramón Rojas – Chaparral Tolima Councilor (2007 – 2011 & 2012 – 2015)

Rojas has been the Chaparral (Tolima) Councilor since 2007, when he launched his candidacy as a gay man committed to his municipality. At that time, he obtained 220 votes in his favor, with which he managed to be Councilor for the first time and in this first campaign the people of the community recognized him as a social leader, not a politician. During his first stay in the position he stood out for his multiple actions in favor of areas like Barrio El Rocío, where he fought against common delinquency and drug consumption. For his second period as Councilor, he achieved the second highest amount of votes of his list with the Partido Liberal, with a total of 465 votes.

Ramón has had great support, not just from the LGBTI community, but with citizens of the metropolitan area in Chaparral. In both campaigns he has presented himself as a gay man, which has not caused him any major problems in his political life, since his main trait is the work commitment he has with his community; he is recognized not because of his gender or sexual preference, but for his work with the community, thus earning the respect of the citizens of Chaparral.

His campaign is characterized for being door-to-door, speaking directly with the municipal citizens; with this strategy he achieved votes from people from all social strata.

Some of his biggest concerns as Councilor are matters such as infrastructure, improvement of roads, streets and their lighting and social projects for the construction of houses.

•Manuel Bermudez – Medellin Council Candidate He is an ex-candidate for the Medellin Council, who proclaims himself as "leftist, Medellin supporter, queer and of marginal attitude". He's been an activist since 1991 and decided to run for Councilor of his city in 1997, inspired by the story of an openly gay candidate who would participate in the Barranquilla Council elections. In context, he found himself in a Latin-American process in which various transwomen had managed to accomplish different positions in public corporations.

For his campaign, Bermudez was clear that he did not wish for votes due to his sexual orientation, but for his ideas and proposals, although he did want to be a gay reference, but he did not want his campaign to revolve around this fact.

In regards to obtaining support, at some point it was offered to him with the Regina 11 movement, followed by the negritude and movement of indigenous authorities; he denied the first two considering the public opinion and the closeness of the movements but thought there was an approach in the social battles and the recognition of rights of the third, despite this he requested support from the conservative party and his candidacy ran with double support: Partido Conservador and the indigenous authorities.

Throughout his campaign, Bermudez had great presence in social media (for being the first candidate in Medellin to be openly gay) and among the difficulties he encountered, mostly due to economic precariousness and armed conflict actors.

Although he was not elected Councilor, for him it was a great triumph to reach his goal, which was social mobilization and achieving (with support from the Governor and Mayor he followed) the first LGBTI march in Medellin.

#### •Manuel Velandia – Bogotá Council Candidate He was the first homosexual to enter the Unique Victims Registry due to the multiple threats and hazards that came to be, due to his sexual orientation. He is a college professor, writer and was exiled to Spain in 2007.

This activist and LGBTI rights advocate was one of the founders of the LGBTI movement in Colombia and was a candidate for the Bogotá Council in 2003, attaining a total of 808 votes.

During the "social cleansing" process that was set underway by militia groups, Velandia suffered an attack against his house, leading him to decide to leave his country and relocate in Spain, where he continued his social activism and academic development.

#### ·Darla Cristina González – Pasto Council Candidate

Darla Cristina is the first transwoman who aspired to a position selected by popular election in Nariño. In the year 2011 she decided to nominate herself in aspiration to the Pasto Council, where although her vote count was one of the lowest (256 votes), she managed to set a precedent in the country and her party, Cambio Radical, whose agenda had always been unaffiliated to matters specific to LGBTI.

González has proved herself throughout the years as an active woman in the political field, by being the Director of the Fundación Género Trans del Sur (South Transgender Foundation), being a part of the municipal territory planning council and the Pasto victim board while she was also one of the consultants for LGBTI public politics in Pasto.

Among her ideals, the promotion of campaigns to avoid sexual transmitted diseases amidst the sex workers in Pasto and the impact on public politics in favor of the LGBTI community are the most distinguished.

#### •Erika del Río – Popayán Council Candidate

Erika del Rio was the first Trans woman in Popayán, a city which has led the fight to defend the rights of people diagnosed with HIV for over 20 years, via the foundation she leads; Eres (You Are), which supports sick individuals whether they be LGBTI or not.

Seeking to create a political impact, she decided to run as a candidate for the Popayán Council, becoming the first Trans woman to lead a party to council to defend the LGBTI community's rights and even though she did not obtain the necessary amount of votes to be a part of said council, she managed to situate the matter in the public's opinion.

Erika has also formed part of the collective for Popayán's sexual diversity and was an impulse for a legal project to hold health entities accountable for attending to patients affected with VIH and AIDS in a timely manner.

#### ·Sebastián Romero - Chapinero Mayor

He was one of the founders of Polo de Rosa (2002), the LGBTI faction within the Polo Democrático. In the year 2008 he became the first openly gay politician to hold a popular election position by being named Mayor of the Chapinero locality in Bogotá with a total of 1060 votes (the highest amount on his list).

Even though his campaign and governmental ideals were of LGBTI matters, he did not limit himself to only these by defending the rights of women and the use and enjoyment of public spaces at the same time; his work on recovering the ravines in the Chapinero locality is especially distinguished.

He was one of the most visible Mayors in his community, always well known for his discipline, legislative decision making and his closeness with the citizens he represented, working a political and social activist life side by side. Furthermore, he was the first gay man to register his partner for social security in 2009.

#### •Edgar Robles – House of Representatives Candidate

Robles was a candidate for the House of Representatives for Bogotá in the 2010 elections for the Polo Democrático, being the only openly LGBTI candidate on the list. However, his 2,263 vote count did not give him a seat in Congress. This ex-candidate considers that he first began in politics and then in LGBTI activism because his family is of a Liberal lineage; first initiating with Galan's Nuevo Liberalismo, followed by Samper's Poder Popular and thereafter the processes in progress by Piedad Córdoba and Horacio Serpa, who subsequently formed the Planeta Paz platform, which aimed to follow up with the peace talks set forward by the Pastrana's government.

His advocacy for the concession of LGTBI people's rights in the country was openly noted in his campaign proposals as he aimed to be a promoter of an anti-discrimination law, gender identities (following Spain's example) and a sexual and reproductive rights law; for which political control debates were held whenever an official did not respect the rights of the sexual minority specifically, and of all Colombian citizens. Furthermore, he would seek to defend

the less represented sectors, as in the case of stylists.He considered that openly LGBTI candidates should join with the purpose to work for justice, social equality and diversity; his advocated for peace through the acknowledgment of differences (Interview with Revista Semana (Week Magazine), 2010)

#### •Mauricio Garces -Cali Council Candidate

By the year 2010, Cali was going through a period of strong tension and homophobia, where a high number of transwomen were being murdered, this being the epicenter of the LGBTI matters to be handled.

In light of this, Mauricio Garces decided to run for a seat in the Cali Council with the backing of Alianza Social Independiente, with the intention to present LGBTI population not only as individuals demanding rights, but as people with duties to the State.

The strategy implemented by Garces was to combine various agendas with candidates from other public corporations, without creating an alliance with governmental or mayoralty candidates; at the same time receiving great support from the media and forming action strategies through social networks.

One of the weaknesses of his campaign was the lack of support from some Cali LGBTI collectives, who preferred to support heterosexual candidates instead of him.

Even though he only obtained 501 votes, he was satisfied with this result, since his objective was positioning LGBTI and diversity matters in Cali's local agenda (which was reflected in the approval of LGBTI public policy by the Valle de Cauca Department)

#### •German Rincón Parfetti – House of Representatives Candidate

The LGBTI rights defense lawyer, German Rincón, nominated himself as a Bogotá House of Representatives candidate in 2002 for the 2003 election, with the support of the Partido Liberal achieving a total of 5,318 votes.

Germán is a lawyer who graduated from the Military University of Granada, specializing in Human Rights studies, studies on Social Control, and performances in front of different judicial authorities, the Constitutional Court of Colombia, the Committee on Human Rights of the United

Nations Organization, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. He received an award for Academic Excellence as a professor at Universidad Manuela Beltran, where he was a prominent speaker on issues of Health and Social Security and Citizen Participation in health. He has been highlighted as a columnist for the newspaper Registro Medico and the magazine Revista Indectetable. He is the Founder and Director of the electronic bulletin of Proyecto Agenda (Project Agenda) and of the bulletin of the Red Hispana de Derechos Humanos (Hispanic Network of Human Rights) on HIV-AIDS and sexual minorities. He was the Director of the Department of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Fight Against AIDS. He was the Counsel of the Colombian National Association of Pediatric Endocrinology, the National Association of Transplants, the Association of Users and Family of Patients of the National Cancer Institute. He was also the workshop leader for the National Association of Hematology-Oncology and of the College of Medicine of Cundinamarca, and the Colombian League of Hemophilia. (Information provided on the website of the Organization of Lawyers is a leader and pioneer in exercises of advocacy in Latin America.

#### Jhosselyn Pajaro – Arjona (Bolivar) Council Candidate

Jhosselyn was the coordinator of the Trans women collective "Mujeres de mi Tierra" (Women of my Land), professional stylist and nurse assistant. She was a candidate in her municipality (Arjona, located in the Bolivar department) in the year 2011 with the Partido Liberal support, where she only obtained 63 votes.

In 2012 she was victim of a homophobic attack. The candidates of the opposing parties, with their irreconcilable ideologies, joined together to discredit Jhosselyn's candidacy, and therefore her team, in their races. Indicating that her gender identity was an impediment and a risk to the integrity of that municipality north of Bolivar. On various occasions, people motivated by these criticisms came to places where her campaign was concentrated to jeer and throw transphobic attacks that they repeated again at the polls on election day.

#### Openly LGBTI Campaign Experiences (Congress of the Republic, 2014)

In the month of June in 2014, the Observatorio de Participación Política (Political Participation Observatory) for LGBTI people in Colombia summoned those who were openly LGBTI and who during the electoral process in 2014 aspired for a seat in the Congress of the Republic; of these people, the only one chosen was the present-day representative from the Bogotá

House of Representatives, Angélica Lozano.

For the next section, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 of the 6 openly LGBTI candidates that ran in the elections for a seat in the Congress of the Republic, people close to one of the candidates and the Unidad de Trabajo Legislativo (Legislative Work Unit) of the only elected candidate and finally completing this information with press checks and data generated by the registry.

3CV

#### Comparative Chart on Experience of Openly LGBT Candidates

Frame#4 Comparative experience openly LGBT candidates

\* no available data

Candidate	Politic party	Elected	Significant vote	Did not have the resources necessary	Risk campaign	Enough party support	Aspires to a future candida	High media presence
Angélica Lozano	Verde						*	
Julio Cesar Mancera	Polo							
Lina Maria Palacio	Polo							*
Elizabeth Castillo	Liberal							
Jeanne Bonilla	Liberal						*	
Jack Garcia	Liberal			*	*	*	*	

Source: own calculations from information Caribe Afirmativo

- Angélica Lozano - House of Representatives: Native of Bogotá, she has been an advisor for politicians such as Ingrid Betancourt and Antonio Navarro, and subsequently elected as Bogotá Councilor and minor Mayor for a Chapinero locality. She is an LGBTI rights activist and of citizen's benefits of public spaces.

For the 2014 - 2018 Congress elections, she was backed by a total of 30,950 votes, the highest of

the list given to the House of Representatives by the Alianza Verde for said elections, achieving her seat; it is key to observe she is the first Colombian woman to obtain a seat in the Congress of the Republic.

It is important to note that thanks to Lozano's campaign, the re-emergence of the LGBTI movement was evident, proving her electoral

potential and ability to impose herself in political scenarios. Throughout her campaign, she set out to influence gender identity laws' visibility.

Currently, Lozano is in charge of working on projects that make inclusion of LGBTI matters possible, such as schools without homophobia and insisting on the approval of marriage equality, knowing ahead of time that a higher media and social mobilization impact will be achieved before a legislative one in short term.

A big part of Angelica's success on an electoral level is recognized due to the fact that she does not focus solely on LGBTI matters, but at the same time the representative is a supporter of social control over the agendas that are carried out in Congress, recognizing the work of the trans movement in Bogotá, who demanded recognition from Lozano when she was part of Bogotá's council.

Many people belonging to different political parties, militants and delegates, see in Angelica Lozano a woman with many capabilities, agreeing that she reached her seat thanks to her potential and not due to being an openly lesbian woman.

#### - Julio Cesar Mancera - Senate Candidate:

This candidate for the Senate of the Republic who obtained the not very significant amount of 1,278 votes considers that his candidacy has the same problems as any other, even though he had complete support from his party, the Polo Democrático.

He understands the political participation of the LGBTI community in the country as an interesting panorama for the future, where emphasizing the work done by various people must be continued, and at the same time, creating alliances with the different movements within gender diversity and even non-LGBTI individuals.

He asserts he found political support in non-traditional regions for the inclusion of LGBTI or the Polo Democrático.

In this moment, the list that is in the lead for the VI Congress of the Polo Democrático, obtained the highest number of voting among the LGBTI lists that were introduced at a national level, in regards to internal consults conducted on the

19th of April, 2015. Mancera is working on his candidacy for the 2018 – 2022 Senate elections.

#### - Lina María Palacio - House of Representatives Candidate:

Lina María was a candidate for the House of Representatives on behalf of the Antioquia department and with the support of the Polo Democrático. She did not obtain a seat due to the low vote count of 869 votes, representing a 0.05% of the departmental voting.

Palacio considers that her campaign was very dangerous, since she received many threats and attacks. Despite this, she considered it daring, but rewarding, as she initiated the visibility of LGBTI people's rights on a local level.

Palacio obtained her seat through the Polo de Rosa and her finances were based on a loan granted by the party of approximately one million pesos, with this budget she carried out a door to door campaign and LGBTI socialization zones (such as El Parque de los Deseos) achieving a good reception from the populace.

As for the media, the party offered commercial ads in Teleantioquia, which were aired without any major inconveniences, contrary to the case with the radio, where there were obstacles such as certain stations not allowing the mention of LGBTI matters.

This campaign, only executed in Medellin due to the lack of resources, was supported by the leaders of different Medellin communities, who collaborated influentially and in the summons processes, having on only one occasion, an altercation with a leader.

At the reading of the vote results the first time, the candidate felt somewhat disappointed in the low count; after analyzing it in a detailed manner, however, she has come to consider it a triumph, since it was a new campaign lead by someone without experience.

As for the future of political participation, Lina observes is as a difficult situation, where it is recommended to start by launching a campaign and make it known in an appropriate amount of time. It is also recommended to conduct and rigorous analysis of the population's needs to be able to organize propositions.

#### - Elizabeth Castillo - Senate Candidate:

This woman who aspired to reach the Senate through the Partido Liberal, obtained a total of 2,063 votes over the entire country, insignificant amount in comparison to the person who obtained the majority of votes for said party (129,974 votes). Castillo considers her campaign was less dramatic than what was imagined; a risk analysis was conducted prior to running. She assumed the campaign as if it were a project, in which there were no inconveniences; despite this, she considers it appropriate that before initiating a campaign, candidates must conduct a risk analysis. It is important to note that Elizabeth considers that she received support from non-traditional sectors (those where LGTBI matters are not as acceptable).

On the other hand, she considered that being an openly LGBTI candidate is different outside of a leftist party, feeling more pressure but at the same time, quite comfortable. Her biggest challenge was the attainment of resources for the execution of her campaign, considering the support provided by the party as symbolic (limiting herself to practically surrender) and found that access to the media was equally complicated. The main benefits and teachings of this candidacy process for her were that she found the importance of spreading the three initial messages and to build synergies with activists from the entire country who expressed their support to the campaign and their disposition to help, as with the support from other candidates who handled LGBTI agendas, which makes it interesting (and something to keep in mind for a future candidacy) that at least one meeting previous be held between said candidates to find a minimum of basic agreement between LGBTI candidacies to defend their agenda.

As for her relationship with the party, she asserts there was great acknowledgment and care (in all aspects of the party), with a nice manner, receptivity and appreciation from the board of directors.

For Elizabeth, the LGBTI community is not active (its majority) in the political sense, because they do not feel represented by those who have access to popular election positions. It is necessary that this sector understands that mobilization goes

hand in hand with politicization.

As for the results, she considers that the votes obtained were less than expected, assuming it was due to the Senator Claudia López's appropriation of the LGBTI agenda and a lack of strategy through the media; although this campaign did not imply any economic loss, she considered that it was highly energy consuming. Despite this, Castillo does not dismiss the idea of aspiring for the senate again, albeit under more feasible economic conditions.

According to Castillo, for the immediate future of the LGBTI community's political participation in Colombia, it is necessary to mention the subject of sexual orientation, however not that this be the only subject in the agenda; taking in to consideration as well, respect for the minorities.

### - Jeanne Carolina Bonilla (Janca) - House of Representatives Candidate:

Bonilla took interest in the Partido Liberal due to personal reasons and closeness to some of the party's activists, rather than because of party affiliation, developing over the course of the campaign a greater affinity for its ideologies. For the Bogotá House of Representatives elections, she obtained the lowest amount of votes on her list; 1,299 votes, which corresponds to 0.07% of the total votes submitted.

She developed a campaign that could be considered independent considering she did not have the direct support from different groups from within the party. The lack of resources and inability to create social consciousness is highlighted. Although she had the support of the party for certain specific actions, it was expected they would be more solidary in other aspects of the campaign. Jeanne did not have a way to reach the Senate that would have served as electoral support.

#### - Jack García:

Contact with this candidate or individuals close to him was not achieved. His voting for the Senate for Partido Liberal was the second lowest of his list, with a total of 417 votes, a number that represents 0% of total votes.

Name	Vote	Elect	Date	Position
Pedro Fayad	191	no	1997	Council
Manuel Bermúdez		no	1997	Council
German Rincón	5.318	no	2002	House of R.
Manuel Velandia	808	no	2003	Council
Erika del Rio		no		Council
Sebastían Romero	1.060	yes	2008	Edil
Ramón Rojas	220/465	yes/yes	2007/2011	Council
Edgar Robles	2.263	no	2010	House of R.
Mauricio Garcés	501	no	2011	Council
Jhosselyn Pájaro	63	no	2011	Council
Darla C. González	256	no	2011	Council
Angélica Lozano	30.950	yes	2014	House of R.
Julio Mancera	1.278	no	2014	Senate
Lina Palacio	869	no	2014	House of R.
Elizabeth Castillo	2.063	no	2014	Senate
Jeanne Bonilla	1.299	no	2014	House of R.
Jack García	417	no	2014	Senate

## Comparative Chart of distinguished LGBTI Candidates in Colombia.

After referencing the candidates that paved the road for LGBTI people in popular elections and conducting a brief analysis of the political map of LGBTI people in the Congress elections in 2014, it is necessary to create a comparative chart highlighting their vote count, aspired position, date of candidature and whether they were elected or not.

Detailed below is said comparative, indicating in yellow the three LGBTI people in the country who have been democratically elected for their position.

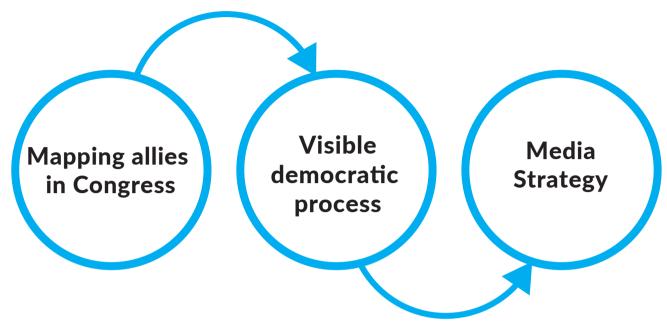
With this, we can observe that for LGBTI nominations, it is common to see a low vote count to achieve the popular election positions they aspire to; it is also common to hear that these candidates consider that their main objective was not to win, but to create an impact.

Given the above, it is necessary to create a new political culture in the LGBTI movements that wish to nominate themselves, understanding that although the power of mobilization is strong, it is necessary to influence directly at the time of making decisions to make their rights matter and to reach an effective inclusion of LGBTI matters in different public spaces.

The example set by the three openly LGBTI candidates is very important because although they have defended the populace's cause, they have not focused solely on this, but through actions of various natures they have accomplished an impact to improve the conditions in their communities, seeking to address different social problematics in their proposals.

#### Positioning of the Agenda

The legislative agenda is what determines which matters are prioritized to be addressed in the current legislative term. To be able to position a matter in said agenda, it is not enough for it to simply be a socially constructed problem, but CHART # POSITIONING THE AGENDA.



Source: Elaborated based on information from Caribe Afirmativo

requires a series of strategies to be taken in to consideration. Next we have briefly presented a series of tools that will help position the LGBTI agenda in Congress, the institution which they depend on for a long list of matters, such as marriage equality, same-sex couple adoption and gender identity laws.

In a conversation with the congressmen that defends LGBTI people's rights, one of the issues is that at the moment of positioning their subjects, they tend to do it from closed platforms, where only other LGBTI people assist, or relative to them; this makes it necessary to present the speech in front of other activists and politically relevant sectors.

It is necessary to create a map where it can be identified who are the allies in Congress, knowing with certainty that the Conservatives and Christian groups will not be part and analyzing in detail if there are any congressmen in the Democratic Center that can be counted on.

It is recommendable to hold a previous meeting to compare the expectations of LGBTI people towards the congressmen that defend their rights are, taking into account the possibility that in the previous congress (2010–2014) there were more members prepared to support said agenda, than in the current one, where the presence of traditionalist sectors is noticeable.

Given the above panorama, it is necessary to not only incorporate the LGBTI perspective, but also social mobilization, taking advantage of the tools of the masses such as social networks, through which some ideas can become deconstructed, like divergence; communication would be the best strategy to be able to transform society's positivism.

Finally, it is necessary to learn in the political praxis, making it known that the battle is being carried out by democratic mechanisms and in a modern democratic space, but at the same time it is fundamental to invite people who could be interested to be a part of it.

## Voto por Igualdad Campaign (Vote for Equality)

The Voto por Igualdad (Vote for Equality) campaign is an initiative launched by Caribe

Afirmativo in the setting of the Observatorio de Participación Politica (Political Participation Observatory) of LGBTI people in Colombia, Sentiido and Colombia Diversa with the support of the Victory Institute and Astraea Foundation. The objective of this project was to promote the free, informed and transparent vote, and in second place promote participation and LGBTI community's rights in the country. This campaign in favor of the democracy and free political participation was first introduced during the elections to determine the members of the Senate and House of Representatives for the period 2014-2018 and subsequently for the election of President and Vice President for the same period.

To guarantee freedom at the moment of choosing, the campaign promoters were not affiliated to any parties, political movements or candidates, limiting themselves to only know the names, proposals and ideals of those candidates, political parties and/or movements that defend LGBTI rights. In this space, mention of candidates, leaders, political parties and/or movements that were opposed or not in favor of LGBTI people was strictly avoided.

In these processes to inform about proposals and candidate profiles, the following criteria had to be taken in to consideration (Caribe Afirmativo 2014)

Candidates that belong to parties that have not expressed their rejection of LGBTI equality

Senators (current or previous) that run again and have expressed to be in favor of LGBTI equality.

- Candidates that have occupied public positions and have executed actions in favor of LGBTI people.
- \* Candidates that come from the Non-Governmental Organizations and social movements that have expressed commitment to the LGBTI community.
- Openly LGBTI candidates.
- Senators that have voted in favor of samesecouples rights, including civil marriage.
- New candidates that occupy significant positions in closed lists and whose position in LGBTI equality is unknown.
- House Representatives that aspire to the Senate and have supported the LGBTI agenda.
- House Representatives; cities with over 800,000 citizens were chosen plus the Santander department to cover the oriental zone.

Among the multiple strategies that were carried out by the Voto de Igualdad, it is important to note the questionnaire done to the presidential candidates of the republic about matters such as marriage equality, children adoption and protection, gender identity law, policies against violence and school discrimination. The questionnaire was carried out by four of the five presidential candidates, which produced the following results regarding the two subjects that have generated the most controversy in the past few years:

,		,	
Name	Party	In favor of equal marriage	in favor of the adoption of s
luan Manuel Santos	U, Liberal y CR	(court decisions support)	(court decisions support)
Oscar Ivan Zuluaga	CD	*	*
Marta Lucia Ramirez	Conservador	No answer	No answer
Clara López	Polo, UP	*	*
Enrique Peñalosa	Verde	*	*

Source: Prepared with campaign data from Voto por la Igualdad.

Among the Senate and House of Representative elections, for this survey, 276 candidates were contacted at these public corporations, of which only 38 responded. The questionnaire consisted of three questions which were:

- 1. Would you support or encourage any other proposition or law project for the guarantee of LGBTI people in the 2014-2018 period?
- 2. Would you support or encourage a law project to recognize in equal conditions the rights of families composed by couples of the same sex in the 2014-2018 period?
- 3. Would you support a gender identity law project in the 2014–2018 period? Below are the names of the candidates that responded and their respective answers are listed:

## FRAME #5 RESPONSES SENATE / HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO VOTE CANDIDATES FOR EQUALITY

Name	Party	Corporation	1.	2.	3.
Omar Rodríguez Preciado	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
María Del Carmen Sarria Materon	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
William Henao Cardona	ASI	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carlos Arturo Piedrahita	Partido de la U	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alejandro Posada	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mauricio Villabona	Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fernando Forero Cruz	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jeferson Banguera Betancur	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diego Hernan David Ochoa	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oswaldo Figueroa Rodriguez	Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes

Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
ASI	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alianza Verde	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	No	No	No
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	No	Yes
Partido de la U	Senate	Yes	Yes	Yes
ASI	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partido de la U	Senado	Yes	Yes	Yes
	la U Partido de la U Alianza verde Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de la U Alianza verde Partido de la U ASI Alianza Verde Partido de la U ASI Alianza Verde Partido de la U ASI Alianza Verde Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de la U ASI Asi Dertido de la U Partido de la U	Partido de la U Partido de la U Alianza verde Alianza verde Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de la U Alianza verde Alianza verde Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de la U Partido de Senate Partido de Senate Partido de Senate Ia U Partido de Senate Partido de Senate Ia U Partido de Senate	la U Partido de Senate	la U Partido de la U Partido de la U Alianza verde House of R. Yes Yes Partido de la U Alianza verde House of R. Yes Yes Partido de la U Partido de Senate Yes Yes ASI House of R. Yes Yes Partido de Senate Yes Yes

Willson Arias	POLO	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maria Isabel Urrutia	ASODEPORTE	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jesus Enrrique Piñacue	ASI	Senado	Yes	Yes	Yes
Angela Maria Vargas	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Angelica Lozano	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Antonio Dager	Alianza verde	House of R.	Yes	Yes	Yes

Fuente: Voto Por la Igualdad.

After the electoral results were known, Voto por la Igualdad (Vote for Equality) took up the task to meet each person, according to their proposals and profile. Below is a chart of possible allies in Congress.

Elected senators	Position	Party	Elected
Antonio José Navarro Wolff	Senate	Alianza Verde	Yes
Claudia Nayibe López	Senate	Alianza Verde	Yes
Carlos Fernando Galán Pachón	Senate	Cambio Radical	Yes
Juan Manuel Galán Pachón	Senate	Partido Liberal	Yes
Guillermo García Realpe	Senate	Partido Liberal	Yes
Luis Fernando Velasco Chaves	Senate	Partido Liberal	Yes
Eugeni Enrique Prieto	Senate	Partido Liberal	Yes
Arleth Patricia Casado De López	Senate	Partido Liberal	Yes
Jorge Enrique Robledo Castillo	Senate	Polo	Yes

Jesús Alberto Castilla Salazar	Senate	Polo	Yes
Armando Alberto Benedetti	Senate	Partido De La U	Yes
Andrés Felipe García Zuccardi	Senate	Partido De La U	Yes
The elected house of representative	House of representative	Party	Elected
Angélica Lisbeth Lozano Correa	Bogotá	Alianza Verde	Yes
Ángela María Robledo Gómez	Bogotá	Alianza Verde	Yes
Juan Carlos Lozada	Bogotá	Partido Liberal	Yes
Carlos German Navas	Bogotá	Polo	Yes
Alirio Uribe Muñoz	Bogotá	Polo	Yes
Marta Cecilia Curí Osorio	Bolívar	Partido De La U	Yes
Juan Fernando Reyes Kuri	Valle	Partido Liberal	Yes

Fuente: Voto Por la Igualdad.

With the Voto por Igualdad (Vote for Equality) campaign, easy access to the information through its web page www.votoporlaigualdad.com, development and follow ups of proposals and debates, the insertion of LGBTI matters in the political-electoral agenda of the country was sought after.

# 6. Recommendations for good practices within political parties and movements.



#### **Recommendations**

The point of view this investigation proposes allows us to venture to suggest some recommendations that allow leaders of parties to face the changes in the political regimen that have been highlighted in this article, just as the technological transformations that must be set forth to guarantee a better relationship with this electoral niche.

#### **Organized Innovation**

The parties must redesign the organizational structure on a way that allows manifestation of new social expressions, in this case, those that defend a new sexual option, in a manner that allows the collective to adapt to new sociocultural demands, and in this way, stand up to the challenges imposed by a society that is more prone to new rights.

Innovation consists of creating committees or organizations parallel to the party's structure. but subordinates to the directive body, in a way that the representatives of these expressions or those who feel identified with defending these rights, have a private space to deliberate or develop a political socialization process, or even new forms of political activism that strengthens the relationship with the party organizations. Part of organized innovation is to provide tools so this new voice can be heard inwards and out towards the collective, in other words, it requires that the directive body allocate resources so that the member of this renewed structure can make the established political purposes and ideologies possible.

Other organized innovations are the structuring of closed party list ballots or quota assignment lists as an affirmative action measure. These new methods allow higher possibilities of social sector interest representation, internal and externally.

The zippered list allows gender parity in the lists that seats in directive bodies or State associations dispute. Although it is not differentiated by sexual preference and is a successful way to nominate candidates, it could present limitations if men and women that are chosen follow a homophobic ideology, however, it is a practical

way to resolve who can integrate a list, since the gender criteria is universal.

As for the assignment of quotas, this has been a method that under the principle of positive discrimination, allows us to recognize political rights of the excluded minority, be it by gender, ethnicity or even religious beliefs. The problem is that determining the percentage of the quota depends on the reciprocity of the forces that exist in the interior of the collective as much as in the general society among decision and social movement spaces. Nonetheless, and despite its inconveniences, this method has become the best tool to guarantee representation of those sectors that could not auto-represent themselves, quantitatively speaking.

These types of alternatives are framed very well in the issued regulations of the last decade and since 2003 have been pressuring for democratization of political parties, primarily the legislative act 01 of 2003 and recently law 1475 of 2011; especially article 4 which talks about gender equality in which it stipulates the need to deepen gender equality, as seen below:

"Art. 4. Gender equality and equity. In virtue of the gender equality and equity principle, men woman and all other sexual options will enjoy true equality of rights and opportunities to participate in political activities, manage political organizations, access to electoral debates and obtain political representation".

Consequently, in development of these regulatory principles, parties can take on actions that carry out the purpose this law inspires, on the road to democratizing internal life of political collectives.

#### **Environment Assimilation**

The socio-cultural changes that have been occurring in the world and in Colombia, encompassing the configuration of an electoral niche anchored to respect for sexual rights and free personality development, invite parties to adapt their language and program planning to fit the expectations and necessities of this type of electorate.

Feminism made way for understanding that the materialization of women's rights occurs fundamentally because of cultural transformations and not just legal or material

changes. Consequently, it is necessary to transform the language, since this builds realities or constitutes individuals. (Van Dijk, Rokan, Laclau).

From this, an important recommendation for parties to be able to connect with this new electorate is to transform or rebuild their speech, that by following Wodak we understand as "a complex combination of simultaneous and sequentially interrelated linguistic acts, acts that manifest over the course of social action environments as semiotic examples (oral, written and thematically interrelated) and frequently as texts. The most distinguished characteristic of the definition of a "speech" is the macro subject, for example; unemployment" (2001, page 105).

In sum, Vand Dijk comprehends speech "in the sense of <communicative event>, that includes interaction, conversation, written text and associated gestures, cover design, typographical disposition, images and any other dimension or semiotic/multimedia significance. In a similar manner, cognition implies personal and social cognition, along with any other structure, representation or mental process." (2001, page 147).

For these two authors, speech goes far beyond programmatic propositions, written text or other ways to express language. As Vand Dijk points out, the sum of three aspects; cognition, in other words the manner of thinking, social context, as in the manner in which society thinks, and speaks, that is to say, the manner in which the individual and society expresses what they think. These two authors also consider that a speech is determined by the macro subject or macro semantic structures, which in the case of LGBTI, is marked as abnormal, unnatural, dangerous or sick.

In summary, the recommendation bases itself on the fact that directors or leaders of the collective must assume a change in cognitive, discursive and social structures that contribute to the exclusion and segregation of the LGBTI community. First, by fighting the above mentioned conceptions fed by religious speech, through the installation of new guides that direct their conception, as an acknowledgment of their rights, anchored to the values of freedom, diversity and democracy that are those that any human, no matter where they are, possess.

Secondly, by generating consciousness in its members, but also in society, of the derogatory terms to refer to the LGBTI community as something negative, harmful and against social order, inviting them to recognize this gender condition as something natural and worthy of acknowledgment and equal for human rights. Thirdly, by promoting changes in those regulative, institutional and fiscal structures that currently produce inequality in sexual conditions and by deepening the transformations that have allowed the LGBTI community to make their human rights a reality.

These types of reforms can only be accomplished if the partial bodies start training schools that allow their members to comprehend the LGBTI conditions, as well as go in depth on the roots of liberal and democratic principles, in a way that it configures an erudite citizenry that has more guides to assume a political position in this cultural recognition. Additionally, formative processes will allow to prepare a generational relief of the LGBTI collective prepared to lead the party.

At the same time, the party requires the structure of a legislative agenda that prefers to expand the regulatory space to allow free exercise of the constitutional principle of free personality development, as well as the acknowledgment of social and civil rights such as pension, adoption and even marital equity. But also, a legislative management that contains the processes against the reform or partial to not knowing the rights already obtained by the LGBTI community.

Finally, convert the proactive language into an educational strategy that allows ethical and moral questioning to those who use the LGBTI condition as a linguistic reference to defame, mock or use as a synonym of mental or physical incapacity, or even as an excuse to exert violence.

#### Preparing for international changes

The Colombian society, and therefore the political parties find themselves, as the rest of humanity, increasingly linked to the democratic principles that global civil society defends and established as minimal principles for coexistence. Therefore, it is necessary for political parties to update their programmatic agendas and commence their organized reforms if they want to be in sync with the global demands of society.

The changes in the manner of approach of the LGBTI conditions in leftist, centrist and even rightist parties in the US and even more so in Europe, have pressured transformations in some party's international federations, just as the international institutions of the United Nations system. This will demand adaptation from Colombian parties to these new coexistence, tolerance and respect parameters with the demands of the LGBTI social movement, more democracy, more representation and more equality in their rights both in the interior of the collective and the core of society.

Thus, the creation of mixed delegations inside the parties is suggested, made up by the LGBTI sectors and heterosexual members as to initiate dialogue with the LGBTI sectors of other countries in the world that are implementing said reforms or that already have them in place, whether to facilitate learning that can be of a pedagogical level for the LGBTI representatives as much as the sectors that consider themselves heterosexuals, as cooperation resource to guarantee development of programs oriented towards this purpose.

#### Post Conflict Challenges

The negotiation process launched by the national government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Ejército del Pueblo -FARC.EP- (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army), have placed five subjects of discussion on the table; agricultural development, political participation, putting an end to conflict, illegal drugs and victims. In a few of them, the political parties can present different standpoints to defend the LGBTI community's rights and become the voice for this sector.

As mentioned previously in this article, it is necessary for spokesmen/women or party representatives to recognize the right to define sexual choice based on the principles of freedom and personal determination, and not under religious principles. Parting from this ideological notion would contribute to understand and deepen previous political, civil, commercial, social and cultural regulatory developments.

The negotiation agenda can be summarized in three points: Achieving reconciliation, more

political and social democracy and materialization of rights. With this, it can be recommended that the parties establish concrete actions allowing the LGBTI movement to express their voice, as exampled below:

#### **Achieving Reconciliation**

Reconciliation demands that the opposing factions give up the use of violence against homosexual, bisexual and intersexual individuals if it's only justification is the rejection of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

According to the Unidad Nacional de Víctimas (National Victims Unit), the violence phenomenon has a high level of under registration, which is why they have had to adjust their information collection tools, to make it easier for people who want to freely express their sexual orientation or gender identity and to do so without any restrictions. This was made clear in an official statement in September 2014:

"Acknowledgment of sexual orientation and gender identity in the victims registry initiated in the year 2012. Before then, no victims declared their gender identity or sexual orientation as anything else than their biological sex, as this was not a variable on the declaration form. The result of this was under registration. To this we add the difficulties the people of this sector face in answering honestly at the time of the declaration due to the lack of awareness of the subject, social stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination that the dynamic of the issue itself is aggravating and causes fear of self-recognition.

We have concretely adapted two of the most important tools to capture information for the use of SNARIV (Sistema Nacional de Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas – National Victims Attention and Reparation System), FUD (Formato Único de Declaración – Unique Declaration Format) and PAARI (Planes de atención, asistencia y reparación integral – Integral attentions, assistance and reparation plans) This has been done though the information from the variables that allow us to identify separately sex, sexual orientation and gender identity".

The above suggests the necessity to institutionally

adjust the Colombian State, especially victim attention entities that are in charge of postconflict reparation programs, in a way that those who identify themselves as sexually diverse can have proper attention.

In this manner, parties must demand from the national government the acknowledgment of conflict victims that are a part of the LGBTI community, so that the Unidad Nacional de Víctimas (National Victims Unit), as the rest of the national state's bodies, can initiate integrative reparation processes on victim's families and people who have been subject to displacement and are located in regions far away from their land of origin.

More qualified work in the configuration of cases that go to trial is also required from justice and truth access programs, even sentences that determine the guiltiness of perpetrators in crimes against LGBTI people, so they will not be revoked and in second instance, remain under impunity. This was established by Colombia Diversa (Diverse Colombia, 2012) in their report "When prejudice kills. Report of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people's human rights in Colombia 2012a" in which they assert:

"Homicides: When it comes to crimes against LGBTI people, the State has a differentiated obligation to determine the circumstances in which the incident occurred and make the aggressor's motives clear.

The failure to fulfill this obligation of first instance on the judge's part cause prejudice crimes to remain under impunity, because they are not recognized as such or that in second instance sentences the decisions are revoked. As what occurred with a case in Antioquia. In the first instance sentence it was established that: "underlying this crime are (sic) motives which are not unaffiliated with intolerance, disrespect for life, lack of (sic) moral sensibility of the performer". But in the second instance the sentence was revoked, since it was considered that the gravity of the crime nor the necessity to impose a major sanction had been thoroughly backed by the first instance's sentence. In other words, in the first instance it was not expressed what had been the motives of intolerance that it references."

Additionally, the report highlights the need to respect LGBTI people's identity, as it's common

that their right of recognition by means of the name the person has chosen is often violated by making use of the name according to the national registry, referring to the chosen one as pejorative or as an alias, see below:

"It's important that the administrative and legal systems be sensitive to transgender identities and that they recognize the name with which the person identifies themselves, without deprecatory connotations. In the cases where the individual has not completed their name change in the civil registry, they may record in the proceedings either their name in the registry –that of the national identification – or their identifying name –that with which the person identifies themselves– always giving prevalence to the latter and guaranteeing the right to privacy" (Colombia Diversa – Diverse Colombia, 2012b)

The parties must demand, in regards to the victim's law, that LGBTI rights organizations can declare themselves victims in cases where the rights of people with this gender identity have been violated, considering that in the study performed by Colombia Diversa (Diverse Colombia) 2012c, only 30% of cases, examined by them, had this possibility, with which impudence increases.

It is also required in political, criminal, and justice matters that the government and justice bodies, especially Colombia's Attorney General Office, to instruct officials to consider prejudice against the victim for sexual orientation or gender identity as a motive or cause of homicide or crimes perpetrated against LGBTI people. This would allow, in many cases, to make progress in investigations of homicidal cases perpetrated in the country. (Colombia Diversa, 2012d)

The parties must protest to the state a lift to update the map of victims, seeing as in June 2014 and since 2012, only 869 people had registered, making displacement the main victimization reason with 70%, followed by threats with 14% and homicide with 8%. Also, note the reply from Unidad Nacional de Víctimas (National Victims Unit) that the departments that most LGBTI people register as victim in armed conflict are: Antioquia with 20%, Bogotá with 13%, followed by Nariño with 4.3%.

In short, we can highlight that in regards to

reconciliation, in the process of negotiation as much as in post-conflict, a differential focus in truth, justice and integrative restoration matters is required for LGBTI victims, in a way that their gender condition is defended in processes such as case registration, investigation, litigation, elucidation of facts and integrative restoration. Involved in this task is the national and regional government actors that receive and register the facts and the legal bodies that are in charge of building legal truth. Additionally, it is required that the government promote the social and historical investigation of the manner in which violence has been carried out on this sector and mostly, building historic truth that allows collective reparation by avoiding repetition of these events.

#### **More Democracy**

More democracy is expressed comprehension that the opposing parties have since they believe the cause of armed conflict has been a product of the institutional closure to political options contrary to the political regimen. The genocide of more than 4,000 Unión Patriótica members, the systematic annihilation of over 3,000 unionists in the country since 1977 to date prove this hypothesis, however, systematic death and abuse of women by these participants as tools in the conflict of war, just as the registry of over 869 people representing the LGBTI movement and anyone who was identified as a victim of conflict, also demonstrate that this conflict had been used to eliminate everything that represents a different pattern in the social, sexist, patriarchal, and religious established.

In this manner, more democracy signifies not only thinking of the opening spaces for the insurgent to express their unconformities and participate in institutional representation, but also, as expressed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, of the possibility that the excluded voices be heard, all of the minorities that have been victims of conflict and whose demands have been silenced by weapons. The intense democracy that is proposed in the negotiation table must materialize acknowledgment of quotas or special spaces for the LGBTI sectors to manifest in different meetings, seminars or participation mechanisms that will be created to get started with

transformations in the agriculture development, the anti-drugs fight and the search for truth, reparation and justice for the victims.

#### Rules of good practices for political parties in regards to affirmative actions for the guarantee of LGBTI people's rights

- 1. Transform the language: Create consciousness between members of the party that words build and shape realities. Consequently, elimination or moral punishment must be dealt to members who use terms such as "fag", "abnormal", "twisted", among others to refer to someone who identifies themselves as LGBTI or as leverage to discredit an argument in a debate or discussion.
- 2. Devise a new speech: Speech is much more than just language it is also idiosyncratic assumptions of an individual as much as society, reason for which, parties must propose to society a new manner of addressing the LGBTI conditions anchored to the subject of free development of personality, diversity and freedom rights.
- 3. Open internal representation spaces: Democracy becomes reality if the tools and settings to execute it are created, this is the importance of parties opening internal representation spaces in directive bodies and/or allow people who identify themselves as LGBTI to self-organize in the interior of the party and anonymous collectives that are subordinates of the group's directive bodies. Committees and special secretary offices can also be created to address the sexual diversity subject and from there organize mobilization of people inside and outside the collective who are self-identified as LGBTI.
- 4. Guarantee to represent the interests of LGBTI sectors in collegiate and executive bodies: Parties must implement positive discrimination policies in the elaboration of the collegiate body lists, since this way the representatives of the LGBTI sectors guarantee their representation in said spaces. It is also important to launch candidates

to popular election positions as this will contribute pedagogically to eliminate social and cultural prejudice that has been built upon this sector.

- 5. Create to transform culture: Set in motion processes or schools for the education of all the organizations activists, in matters about gender diversity in a manner which, through the access to knowledge, transforms religious and pseudoscientific prejudices that have been instilled in the political culture of Colombians. Additionally, make known the advances in legal matters that are happening on an international, regional and national level, to broaden the perspective of rights that exist to be able to determine the sexual option each person wishes to consider.
- 6. International Exchange: The subject of sexual diversity is nowadays part of the global agenda for human rights in international bodies, social organizations and western political parties. From this stems the importance of constructive dialogues through the exchange of experience, which allows us to qualify leaderships in the collectives, which are a result of the prosperity of political reflections and of action techniques and political mobilization around non-violent, affirmative actions favoring the LGBTI community's rights.
- 7. Investigation and follow-up: Parties must supply themselves with "think tanks" that will allow them to present well backed propositions to society and comprehend the accelerated changes it goes through, product of the technologic and economic developments that it experiences. Consequently, it is fundamental that the parties undertake cultural, legal and social investigation projects regarding the different types of citizenship that will help comprehend the expressions that defend sexual diversity and the legal and political field that support them.
- 8. Financial resources: In Colombia, Law 1475 provides political parties with resources for its strengthening and consolidation, inspired by the purpose of democratizing their structures and ideals. It is not possible to undertake the changes proposed here if the party's directives don't allocate specific resources to guarantee the enjoyment of the LGBTI community's rights that

are militants in the interior of their organizations.

9. Affirmative communication: it is suggested to take on information and formation campaigns in the interior of the parties and towards the society that defends the right to freedom, the democracy, the free development of personality and over all, to dismantle the stereotypical, the negative and the ill-intentioned regarding sexual diversity. 10. Policies, laws, regulations and political control: The political party's representatives in the government must promote or deepen policies that tend to improve the LGBTI community's conditions in areas like public health, security, conditions socio-economic and social recognition. It is also important that those members that are in collegiate bodies like the National Congress and/or municipal councils or assemblies, present lawful projects, ordinances or agreements to materialize individual and collective rights established in the National Constitution, such as the right to equality, nondiscrimination, free personality development, dignified work, security, among many others.

On the other hand, practicing political control due to the current government, on all levels, before the decision and regulations that generate a relapse in public policies designed to improve the social conditions of the LGBTI community, and even attempt to reduce their rights.

## The five action routes for the inclusion of LGBTI people and agendas

- 1. Motivate and stimulate a percentage revision of the participation of LGBTI people and agendas in the interior of the political parties, analyzing an ideal percentage for this implementation; in programmatic aspects 35%, organizational 35% and electoral participation 30%.
- 2. Promote quality lecture strategies (improvement on the acknowledgment level of the LGBTI agenda; quantitatively (effective presence of LGBTI people and agendas)) in directive charges, programmatic agendas and political and analytical ideology that evaluate the effectiveness of this inclusion, from affirmative action promotion, public policies, lawful projects and processes of political control on subjects particular to sexual or gender

diversity and on general matters of guaranteeing real equality to include LGBTI people and agendas.

- 3. Build interparty organizational indicators that measure the personal participation of LGBTI people in structure and functionality in parties and political movements, such as:
- Participation in party positions, positions promoted by the party for popular election and positions of government appointment or State responsibilities ahead of other part members.
- An allocated budget for training and formation (15%) that forecasts a percentage for sexual and gender diversity matters to strengthen the party and its militants, as well as a budget for candidate publicity and communicational campaigns.
- The existence of an office, dependence or coordination within the party's structure for LGBTI people and agendas to be maintained permanently with concrete tasks and a clear vision leading in the party's structure and decision making.
- Activities with the LGBTI community that go from strengthening the social basis, to discussion groups, prioritized agendas and an established social support.
- 4. Electoral area, that allows before, during and after the campaign: a) Strategic support to openly LGBTI candidates, b) assume and structurally propose sexual and gender diversity agendas that guarantee real equality and c) generate democratic and affirmative mechanisms within the party, candidacies, candidacy followups and guarantee the continuation of LGBTI candidates. This is verified in:
- LGBTI candidates on their lists.
- Elected LGBTI people in public positions and corporations.
- Expenses for publicity and transfers to LGBTI campaigns.
- 5. Guarantees in programmatic areas: Establishing within the party's organizational chart strategies, action plans and concrete commitments in regards to LGBTI agendas, such as:

- Statutes that promote LGBTI people's participation
- Directive bodies that give a voice to LGBTI people and make them visible.
- Public actions that accompany LGBTI agendas. Based on the results obtained over the course of this report, a series of recommendations for political parties are listed, even though these are not of binding character, they are realistic with the goal to strengthen democracy, inclusion and equality in and eventual post-conflict scenario. The recommendations are listed as follows:
- 1. Foster an approach between LGBTI agendas and the ideologies of other political parties as a presentation card when meeting candidates.
- 2. Candidacies cannot only bear the party's guarantee, it must be the party and the party must serve the candidacy in the ability to generate alliances, directly impacting the statutes where sexual diversity committees exist or the resolution to create such committees. Therefore, there is a legal space and a specific type of participation in the interior of the party, seeking to be more open and solidary to LGBTI people.
- 3. It is vital and supremely important the political framework that is required to win an election is foreseen by the candidacy of the same party by means of the risk and contingency plans and methods.
- 4. Seek to ensure the campaign is not just an exterior transformation strategy for society, but also instigate and raise awareness in the internal structures of the party and be pioneers in creating and demanding internal consultant mechanisms that allow the achievement of the guarantee (especially in regional elections) and make way to establish democratic mechanisms in the interior of the party.
- 5. Identify regional political forces that contributed to consolidate the campaign and expressed their interest in participating in politics.
- 6. Use of language that reflects human rights and the battle against discrimination is strategic

to acquire key affiliates in the interior of the parties and allows coordination of LGBTI agendas and equal rights that are above the interests of different parties.

- 7. In the party's everyday life, it is necessary to promote a great amount of these structures; an example of this is Diversity Committee in the Partido Liberal, as observed in many youth organizations that have great affinity with matters such as sexual diversity, to the extent that this organization has been a school for people now within the parties and that identify themselves as LGBTI.
- 8. Instigate not just the central structure of the party, but also the regional sectors and their representatives and base groups to confirm a clear participation on behalf of LGBTIs in the party and in all its areas, where a process for awareness that all parties need to guarantee their intention is really effective.
- 9. Political work with chosen members must be done, regardless of their disposition and willingness, as there is no other choice once they are chosen and they must answer to the party's programmatic agreements. Therefore, one of the objectives is to identify the open congressmen/women, but also approach each one and talk of different subjects. From here, prioritized matters are established for each sector (health, violence or work that concerns a specific candidate and the LGBTI movement).
- 10. It is key to propose to social organizations investigative and analytical efforts that focus on symbolic law projects and petitions for protection, which from a political scenario, and with the party's responsibility, can achieve true equality.
- 11. Instigate the planning of the legislative agenda, the ordinance and agreement proposals on a territorial level and raising awareness to political actors in different lands.
- 12. The LGBTI agenda, due to its equality emergence, can lead great social processes, as its mobilization produces solidarity in many and allows us to ask ourselves where the biggest recognition should be. It allows us to propose different actions parallel to the LGBTI perspective.

- 13. The LGBTI perspective needs to be incorporated. Moving social networks so that, beyond the electoral, the wrong ideas regarding differences are pleasantly deconstructed. Due to this, the existence of a communicative front is fundamental. Another interesting front is hearing the acceptance of equality and non-discrimination, but also the countries visions of peace and restoration. The point is to come across a diverse country.
- 14. The LGBTI agenda must also focus on country matters (peace, reconciliation, etc.). Propose a meeting where those subjects are discussed. Discuss the dynamic that occurs in war territories.
- 15. Be protagonists of overcoming the crisis of the parties that have served to come into contact with the direct democracy, in the same manner, the movements must recognize the representative democracy procedure. There is a sort of softening, a break that must be taken advantage of because there is an interdependence between diversity and the parties.
- 16. Learn from practice, make your claims and vision of the country visible. Show the battle that has been fought through democratic mechanisms, and over all, the accomplishments (that have been achieved democratically). Map Congress and invite people who may be interested. This is a way to demonstrate that it is possible. Breaking free of war will allow social life to politicize. Look for conclusive actions to show it's possible to find communication niches. Bring attention to the approach that this observatory allows, to the point where it makes parties activities observation possible.

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