

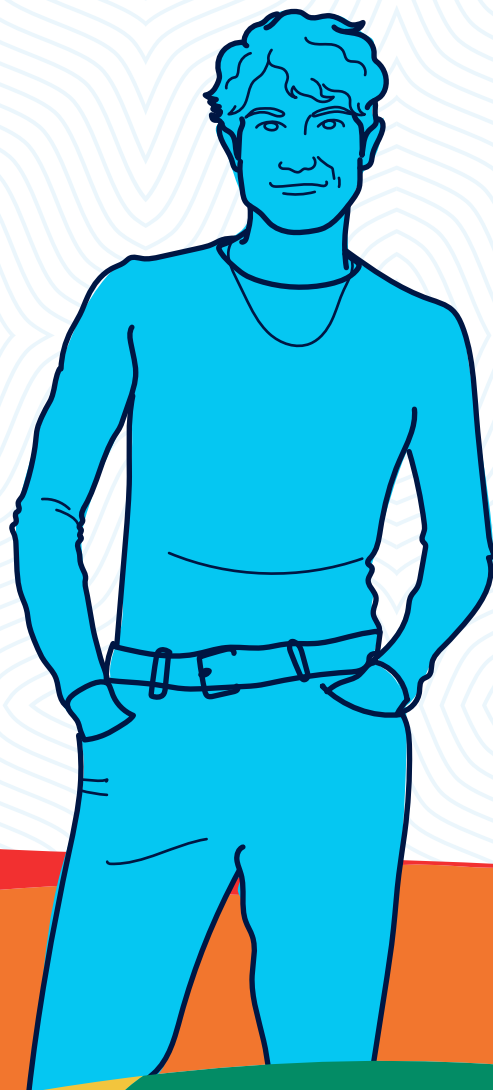


**LGBTIQ+ Political
Participation
Observatory**

In the Americas and the Caribbean

DEMOCRACY DEMANDS EQUALITY

*Mapping strategies and experiences
of LGBTIQ+ political participation in
Latin America and the Caribbean*





LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory

In the Americas and the Caribbean

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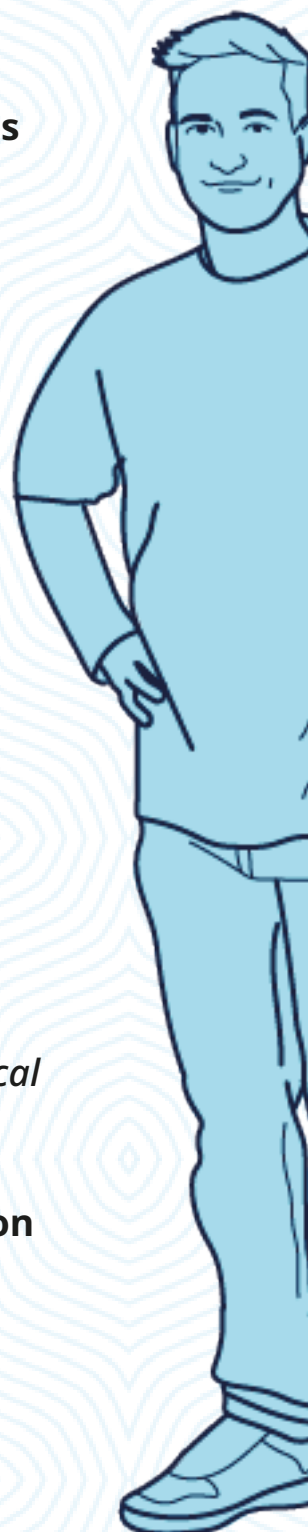
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INTRODUCTION: REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACIES IN TIMES OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES



This report was created to document the political participation of LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2020 and 2024. Over these years, we have witnessed historic progress, innovative strategies, courageous leadership, and democratic victories emerging from the margins — reimagining politics in pursuit of justice and inclusion. And yet, we now face an increasingly hostile global landscape, marked by the rise of authoritarianism, the erosion of democratic institutions, and a coordinated attack on human rights and the civil society actors who defend them.

Across the world and throughout our region, hate speech and regressive legal frameworks are spreading — deliberately designed to obstruct, restrict, or even criminalize the political participation of those who have long been excluded. This threat is neither circumstantial nor isolated; it is part of a transnational political project intent on restoring or preserving exclusionary hierarchies. In response, we affirm, unequivocally: politics must be a space for all. If democracy is to be real, it must include us.

Politics can — and must — be the art of building and reconciling. But it must never come at the expense of questioning anyone's fundamental rights. There can be no negotiation when the starting point is the denial of some people's humanity for the glorification of others. The democratic promise can only endure if it ensures the full recognition of all identities, bodies, and life paths that shape our societies.

In today's context, we cannot overlook the fact that the most vicious and widely echoed attacks have targeted trans people. The political, legal, and symbolic violence they face is systemic. We hope this report honors their role in defending human rights — protecting the vote, leading campaigns, denouncing exclusions, and inspiring new ways of engaging in politics. Their example — and that of thousands of lesbian and bisexual women, nonbinary individuals, other LGBTIQ+ people, and those whose identities have long been pushed to the political margins — compels us not to retreat, but to keep fighting for a democracy that not only tolerates diversity, but celebrates it and places it at the heart of its structure.

Democracy Demands Equality is both a timely declaration and a call to action. There is no meaningful response to today's challenges without collective organizing — building power not only to resist, but to dream, to imagine, and to believe that another world is possible. Now more than ever, we must remember this truth, uphold it, and defend it — with every act of participation, every alliance built, and every right secured.

Alhelí Partida Rodríguez

Senior Director of Global Programs
LGBTQ+ Victory Institute



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



Study approach and objectives

This report responds to the urgent need to document and make visible the political participation of LGBTIQ+ people across Latin America and the Caribbean between 2020 and 2024. Drawing on document analysis, survey data, and interviews, our goal is not only to generate knowledge but to help build a collective memory of resistance and the ongoing struggle for equity.

At its core, this report maps the barriers, milestones, and strategies that have shaped the pursuit of a more inclusive and participatory democracy. More than an analytical exercise, it is an advocacy tool — designed to expose the dynamics of power, exclusion, and resilience that define the political lives of our communities.

The **LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean** (the Observatory) leads this effort with the conviction that political participation goes far beyond voting or running for office. From activism to electoral observation and party organizing, every form of engagement is an act of advocacy that strengthens democracy. With that in mind, this report offers evidence and concrete recommendations to help ensure that diversity is recognized as a core pillar of democratic systems.

The report is guided by three primary objectives:

- * To document and validate the diverse ways in which LGBTIQ+ people engage in political life — including activism, civil society advocacy, electoral observation, and voting.

- * **To provide practical tools and recommendations** for political actors, organizations, and allies working to advance the full inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in decision-making spaces.
- * **To counter misinformation and hate speech** aimed at excluding LGBTIQ+ people from political participation.

The analysis is structured around five key questions:

1. What structural, institutional, and social barriers have LGBTIQ+ people faced in achieving meaningful political participation between 2020 and 2024 — and how do these barriers vary across identities and contexts?
2. What have been the most significant advances in LGBTIQ+ political representation across Latin America and the Caribbean, and what political or social conditions enabled them?
3. How have activism, party involvement, electoral observation, and candidacies reshaped what it means to participate in politics from an LGBTIQ+ perspective?
4. What tactics, alliances, and strategies have proven most effective in influencing political systems from the margins and building more inclusive democracies?
5. How does political violence against LGBTIQ+ people manifest in different national contexts, and what responses — from the State, political parties, or civil society — have been, or could be, most effective?

An intersectional lens is central to this report. Factors such as gender identity, race, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, and migration status all shape access to — and experiences within — political spaces. Rather than simply identifying gaps in participation, this report seeks to support democratic transformation: working toward a future in which representation is not a privilege, but a guaranteed right for all.

Documentary review and analytical framework

This report is grounded in a comprehensive document review process that draws on a wide range of key national and international sources. Our aim was not merely to collect data, but to construct an informed and nuanced overview of the political realities and challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people across Latin America and the Caribbean. From news coverage to reports by international institutions, this analysis allowed us to explore the complex intersections of political participation, discrimination, and resistance throughout the region.

In total, we reviewed more than **360 documents**, including resolutions and reports from the Inter-American Human Rights System and the United Nations Human Rights System. We also analyzed legal documents such as court rulings and electoral laws, as well as research produced by civil society organizations and academic institutions. The review was supported by search engines and academic databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Redalyc, and Dialnet, ensuring the use of up-to-date information from diverse perspectives.

The keywords used in our research included: LGBTIQ+ political participation, affirmative action, sexual orientation and gender identity, political violence, trans voting rights, online violence, hate speech, discrimination, and LGBTIQ+ elected officials. These terms helped us shape a broad and inclusive analysis of the multiple factors influencing LGBTIQ+ political engagement.

Based on this review, we developed three key databases:

- 1. Openly LGBTIQ+ congress members:** This dataset includes 61 openly LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to congress, 9 of whom have been re-elected, accounting for a total of 73 legislative terms. Variables include country, year of election, type of election, name, political party, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- 2. Affirmative Action Measures:** Categorized into four main types, these measures are designed to ensure access to elected office, voting rights, and administrative inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals. We identified 29 measures, organized by country, year of implementation, and target population.
- 3. Political violence against LGBTIQ+ candidates and officeholders:** This database documents 60 cases of political violence from 2012 through the first half of 2024, underscoring the persistent vulnerability of LGBTIQ+ people in political spaces.

One of the main challenges in this process was the limited availability of detailed data in some countries — particularly in the Caribbean — where documentation remains scarce. We also faced difficulties with aggregated data that prevented disaggregated or case-by-case analysis. In certain instances, cross-referencing multiple sources was necessary to address inconsistencies or bias. When verification was not possible, we opted to exclude the data to maintain integrity.

This research not only compiles critical information but also highlights serious gaps in knowledge production around LGBTIQ+ political participation in the region. We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for future research, advocacy, and efforts to strengthen democratic representation for LGBTIQ+ people.

Survey design and implementation

As part of the work of **the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean**, we conducted a regional survey to better understand the experiences, barriers, and opportunities related to LGBTIQ+ political participation across Latin America and the Caribbean.

The survey was implemented between April 11 and May 28, 2024, through a comprehensive digital outreach strategy that combined social media, mailing lists, and strategic partnerships.

This effort was made possible through collaboration with key allied organizations, including the Latin American and Caribbean Observatory on the Political and Electoral Rights of Trans People and the GRINDR platform. These partnerships enabled broad outreach — especially to communities that are often excluded from traditional research efforts.

As a result, we collected **4,762 responses** from across the region, generating a robust and diverse dataset that reflects the lived realities of LGBTIQ+ political participation.

The questionnaire, composed of 267 items, was designed to capture the wide range of political engagement among LGBTIQ+ individuals. It covered the following key areas:

- * **Sociodemographic characteristics:** including age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, education level, occupation, and more.
- * **Interest in political participation:** motivations and personal histories of political involvement.
- * **LGBTIQ+ political engagement:** involvement in movements, political parties, campaigns, and voter participation.
- * **Voting experiences:** personal accounts of the voting process, including perceived barriers and motivations.

- * **Participation in elections (2020–2024):** detailed insights into political engagement across multiple electoral cycles.
- * **Experiences while voting:** how participants' gender identity or sexual orientation shaped their experiences at polling places.
- * **Electoral observation:** roles played by LGBTIQ+ individuals in defending democratic rights through election monitoring.
- * **Campaign team experiences:** perspectives from those who participated in campaign efforts in various capacities.
- * **Internal political party practices:** perceptions and testimonies about inclusion and exclusion within political party structures.
- * **Candidate profiles:** data on openly LGBTIQ+ individuals who ran for elected office.
- * **Discrimination and violence during campaigns:** incidents of direct violence or discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ candidates.
- * **Campaign strategies:** tactics and approaches used to promote LGBTIQ+ candidacies.
- * **Discrimination and violence while in office:** insights from elected officials on the challenges faced during their terms.

The survey employed conditional logic, adapting questions based on participants' earlier responses. This allowed us to gather more precise information on electoral experiences across different roles and political contexts. The questionnaire combined multiple-choice items, Likert scales, and open-ended questions, enabling both quantitative analysis and the collection of compelling narratives and testimonies.

This mixed-methods approach allowed us not only to identify trends and patterns in LGBTIQ+ political participation, but also to conduct a deeper, context-rich analysis — one that reflects the diversity of experiences shaping democracy across our region.

Key informative interviews

To complement the document review and survey findings, we conducted **19 semi-structured interviews** with LGBTIQ+ individuals and allies engaged in diverse forms of political participation. These conversations offered deeper insight into the barriers, strategies, acts of resistance, and aspirations of those working to transform our democracies—both from within and beyond formal institutions.

More than just a data collection tool, the interviews served as spaces for active listening and collective memory-building. Although anonymized for safety reasons, the testimonies are interwoven throughout this report, enriching the analysis with the depth and nuance that only lived experience can provide. The insights gathered were organized thematically and integrated into various chapters, reinforcing the intersectional and regional lens that guides this work.

Interviewees came from a range of political roles: 7 were political leaders, candidates, or elected officials; 6 were from civil society organizations or activist spaces; 4 were experts with a regional or international focus; and 2 were current or former members of electoral authorities. This diversity allowed us to capture perspectives from multiple fronts—from those contesting power through elections to those shaping it through advocacy, monitoring, and activism.

Geographically, the interviews spanned **12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean:** Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. Several interviewees also offered regional or comparative perspectives informed by transnational work and experience, contributing to a more contextualized and comprehensive understanding of LGBTIQ+ political participation across varying legal, social, and political environments.

In terms of **sexual orientation and gender identity**, interviewees included 9 trans individuals (3 trans women, 3 trans men, and 3 non-binary people), 5 gay men, 1 lesbian woman, 3 cisgender heterosexual individuals (2 women and 1 man), and 1 intersex person. The inclusion of the latter is particularly significant, as intersex voices have been historically excluded from political participation research. Their contributions, rooted in civil society activism, add a vital dimension to this report and reinforce our commitment to broader and more inclusive representation of sex and gender diversity.

Despite these efforts, we recognize that the interviews cannot fully capture the vast range of experiences shaping our democracies. Limitations related to time, resources, access, and security — especially in certain contexts — constrained our ability to include more voices from the Caribbean and from additional identities and perspectives. Nonetheless, we hope this work helps expand the space for LGBTIQ+ people to be heard, acknowledged, and recognized in all their diversity and political power.

Scope and limitations of the research

While this report marks a significant step forward in documenting LGBTIQ+ political participation across Latin America and the Caribbean, it is important to acknowledge the limitations that shaped both data collection and analysis. These constraints reflect not only the methodological challenges of conducting a regional, intersectional study, but also the structural inequalities embedded in our political, social, and technological landscapes.

- * **Overrepresentation of cisgender gay men:** One key limitation arose from the use of GRINDR as a primary platform for survey dissemination. While this strategy allowed us to reach a wide array of LGBTIQ+ individuals across the region, the platform's user base is predominantly composed of cisgender gay men. This likely contributed to their overrepresentation in the dataset. Throughout the report, we disaggregate findings by gender identity and sexual orientation to ensure a more balanced and representative analysis.
- * **Unequal digital access:** The survey was distributed primarily through online channels, which may have excluded individuals with limited access to the internet or digital devices — particularly in rural areas or parts of the Caribbean. This digital divide restricts our ability to fully reflect the diversity of LGBTIQ+ experiences and highlights the need for more inclusive research strategies in low-connectivity settings.
- * **Limited data from Caribbean countries:** Our document review revealed a stark absence of information on LGBTIQ+ political participation in several Caribbean nations. This lack of data impedes a truly comparative regional analysis and underscores the urgency of expanding documentation and visibility efforts in these territories.

- * **Participation bias:** The digital nature of our outreach — relying on virtual platforms and partner networks — may have skewed participation toward individuals already connected to political or activist spaces. Those facing greater systemic barriers or disconnected from organized forms of participation may be underrepresented in the data.
- * **Underrepresentation of specific groups:** Despite the overall size of the sample, certain populations— such as intersex people and trans men — remain underrepresented. This limits the extent to which we can offer a fully equitable and intersectional analysis of all sex-gender identities in the region.
- * **Timeframe of the study:** Although this report focuses on the 2020–2024 period to provide a detailed picture of recent electoral cycles, we recognize that this scope does not capture the full historical trajectory. Nevertheless, we have incorporated references to earlier events, including a historical mapping of LGBTIQ+ elected officials and a record of political violence that dates back to 2012.

Despite these limitations, the findings presented here offer a critical tool for understanding the current dynamics of LGBTIQ+ political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Rather than a static snapshot, this report charts an ongoing and evolving story — one of struggle, progress, and continued resistance. We hope it will serve as a foundation for future research that expands and deepens this work, and that it contributes to building more just, inclusive, and transformative forms of political representation.



DEMOCRACY DEMANDS EQUALITY

Mapping Strategies and Experiences of LGBTIQ+ Political Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean

This report documents the experiences of LGBTIQ+ political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2020 and 2024, highlighting historic milestones, persistent barriers, innovative strategies, and forms of resistance that have strengthened our democracies.

We identify seven key pathways through which LGBTIQ+ people engage in political participation: **community work**, advocacy from **civil society**, **voting**, engaging within **political parties**, **running for office**, electoral **observation**, and **holding public office**. These pathways are not mutually exclusive — they intersect and reinforce one another.

The report also includes a regional mapping of **affirmative action measures**. In Latin America, **29 affirmative actions** have been identified, grouped into **four main categories**: legal name and gender marker change on identity documents; access to elected office; the right to vote; and institutional adjustments to strengthen inclusion. Although implementation is advancing, these measures face resistance in contexts of democratic backsliding, making their defense and expansion an urgent priority.

For the first time at the regional level, this report documents the election of **61 openly LGBTIQ+ individuals to national congresses** across Latin America and the Caribbean between 1997 and 2024, holding a combined total of 73 terms. Strikingly, **nearly half (49%) of these victories occurred between**

2021 and 2024, signaling an unprecedented surge in LGBTIQ+ political representation. Among those elected, **56% have been lesbian, bisexual, and trans women**

We identify **seven main barriers to LGBTIQ+ political participation**: the presence of **hate speech** in political spaces; the proliferation of **regressive laws** that perpetuate discrimination; the **lack of legal recognition of gender identity**; **exclusion from political parties**; physical **violence and threats against LGBTIQ+ candidates**; **hostility toward LGBTIQ+ individuals in public office**; and **state impunity** in cases of political violence. Overcoming these barriers is essential to building truly inclusive democracies.

Findings from the regional survey highlight a profound mismatch between political discourse on inclusion and actual practices on the ground.

88% of respondents view the absence of political representation as a major obstacle to the effective recognition of rights.	82% of LGBTIQ+ political party members, candidates, and elected officials do NOT feel protected from discrimination by their party.	86% of LGBTIQ+ candidates report not receiving equal funding for their electoral campaigns.
Just 23% of LGBTIQ+ political party members say they have a voice in party decision-making .	48% of LGBTIQ+ party activists believe there is little to no opportunity to access senior leadership positions within their parties.	49% of LGBTIQ+ candidates experienced violence or discrimination — and in 43% of those cases, the perpetrators were members of their own party .

The report outlines a comprehensive roadmap to transform political systems into more just and inclusive models, with specific actions for key stakeholders:

- * **Political parties:** make explicit commitments to LGBTIQ+ rights; create internal inclusion bodies; ensure competitive placement of LGBTIQ+ candidates; provide equitable funding and safety for LGBTIQ+ leadership; and prevent fraudulent practices in affirmative actions.
- * **Electoral authorities:** ensure inclusive voter registries and documentation; train their staff; monitor political violence and compliance with affirmative actions; and provide safe channels for reporting abuses.
- * **Elected officials:** promote laws supporting LGBTIQ+ political participation and comprehensive recognition; create legislative committees; and strengthen international networks.
- * **Civil society:** develop leadership, document violence, combat disinformation, collaborate with authorities and the media, and support LGBTIQ+ individuals in public office.
- * **Electoral observation missions:** incorporate a sexual and gender diversity lens, train staff in LGBTIQ+ rights, and partner with specialized organizations to document barriers and political violence.
- * **Media outlets:** promote respectful and stigma-free coverage, highlight positive stories, combat hate speech, and ensure fair and full political representation.

These recommendations constitute an urgent call for collective political transformation. The safety, visibility, and representation of LGBTIQ+ people in politics can no longer be treated as optional—they are essential pillars of any truly inclusive democracy.

CHAPTER 1: LGBTIQ+ POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN





1.1

Understanding political participation

At the **LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean** (Observatory), we understand political participation as a holistic and transformative process that extends far beyond traditional centers of power. The personal is political, and the struggle for equity and justice must always be intersectional and deeply connected to political action. **Participation is not limited to voting or holding office; it includes a wide range of actions and forms of resistance aimed at reshaping the political, social, and economic structures that have historically produced exclusion.**

LGBTIQ+ political participation is fundamentally rooted in an intersectional approach. At its core is the goal of redistributing power equitably — addressing structural inequalities while engaging in collective resistance and affirmation. This process affirms that all forms of participation are valid, and that politics must be a contested space where every voice, in all its diversity, is heard, respected, and represented.

In a context where social, economic, and cultural barriers continue to restrict the full participation of many LGBTIQ+ individuals, political engagement becomes a powerful act of resistance. LGBTIQ+ people have the capacity to reshape political systems and confront historical exclusion — standing as a testament to collective resilience. But progress for its own sake is not enough; the goal is to ensure that every voice — particularly those of trans people, women, Black and Indigenous people, intersex individuals, and those living in conditions of economic or social vulnerability — is meaningfully included in decision-making spaces.

This movement for political participation is deeply anchored in human rights, community organizing, and the defense of public policies that promote equality, justice, and non-discrimination. Every act of participation can challenge dominant narratives, open new spaces of influence, and ensure that our struggles are not only acknowledged, but become catalysts for structural change.

LGBTIQ+ leaders have forged diverse pathways into political life — through civil society activism, party organizing, electoral observation, and roles in public administration. These contributions have been vital not only in defending fundamental rights, but also in resisting democratic backsliding, discriminatory rhetoric, and the criminalization of activism. In this sense, LGBTIQ+ political participation is not simply about inclusion — it is an active form of resistance against erasure and repression.

Despite notable progress, structural forces such as racism, classism, poverty, and violence remain persistent obstacles for many LGBTIQ+ individuals. The fight for full participation is therefore not just a matter of visibility — it is a call to transform the very systems that oppress us. LGBTIQ+ people are present on all fronts of resistance, from the streets to the institutions, and it is essential that our strategies be collective, coordinated, and rooted in solidarity to maximize impact.

At the Observatory, documenting LGBTIQ+ political participation is not merely an academic endeavor — it is a means of building collective memory. This report seeks not only to highlight the barriers we face, but also to celebrate the achievements and progress of our communities — with the aim of inspiring, mobilizing, and informing concrete strategies to overcome ongoing injustices.

The power of LGBTIQ+ political participation lies in its ability to transform systems, demand recognition, and shape public policies that fully affirm our humanity.

To offer a comprehensive understanding of the diverse ways in which LGBTIQ+ people exercise political agency, the Observatory has identified seven key pathways of political participation — each playing a vital role in building inclusive and representative democracies:

Table 1: Main pathways of political participation.

Pathway	Description
Community-based and grassroots participation	Political engagement rooted in local, territorial, or community spaces — often outside formal institutional structures. This includes care networks, neighborhood leadership, popular assemblies, and other forms of everyday organizing. This pathway has been essential in sustaining resistance and building power from the ground up, especially in contexts marked by exclusion and structural violence.
Civil society advocacy	Actions led by human rights organizations and grassroots collectives working to advance LGBTIQ+ rights. This includes public mobilizations, awareness campaigns, strategic litigation, and other advocacy efforts. These initiatives have been crucial in securing major legal and social gains across the region.
Electoral participation through voting	Voting is a fundamental expression of political power. LGBTIQ+ individuals exercise this right not only by casting their vote, but also by advocating for affirmative action measures, inclusive voting procedures, and the visible recognition of diverse identities in official documents and voter registration systems.
Political party membership and electoral campaigns	Participation in political parties, social movements, and electoral campaigns allows LGBTIQ+ people to directly promote their agendas and policy priorities. This pathway is essential for opening spaces for representation and supporting diverse candidacies.
Running for office and holding elected positions	Running for and serving in elected office is one of the most visible and direct forms of institutional political engagement. LGBTIQ+ candidates face multiple challenges, including structural barriers and social stigma. However, their presence in decision-making spaces carries significant political and symbolic weight, setting historic precedents and opening new doors.
Electoral observation and the defense of political rights	LGBTIQ+ individuals and organizations actively engage in electoral monitoring, denouncing exclusionary or discriminatory practices. Their participation in electoral observation promotes democratic transparency and advances reforms for more inclusive electoral systems.

Public administration and governance	Working within public institutions enables LGBTIQ+ individuals to drive structural change from inside the state. Their presence is critical for designing and implementing inclusive public policies that respond to the needs and realities of sex- and gender-diverse populations.
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The political participation pathways of LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean are not isolated tracks. It is at the intersections of these pathways that movements grow stronger — creating opportunities for meaningful political transformation. Lasting change depends on the ability of each area of participation to collaborate, complement, and reinforce the others.

Intersectional struggles have empowered LGBTIQ+ individuals to confront the power structures that sustain exclusion. In response to the systemic violence they have endured, social mobilizations and political advocacy efforts have taken shape — pushing the boundaries of democracy throughout the region.

These mobilizations have played a critical role in turning demands for justice into concrete action, confronting structural inequality head-on. From the first cries of protest to coordinated advocacy strategies, these efforts not only expose exclusion but also build pathways toward tangible policy change.

The ability of LGBTIQ+ people to influence the development of laws and public policies that reflect their lived realities is closely tied to their political representation. The greater the presence of LGBTIQ+ individuals in positions of power, the higher the likelihood of advancing legislation that protects their rights¹.

However, this connection is not guaranteed. It depends on multiple factors — including the willingness of political parties to listen and respond to LGBTIQ+ demands, and the capacity of LGBTIQ+ organizations to build and mobilize support, both within legislative institutions and beyond them.

¹ Reynolds, A. (2013). Representation and rights: The impact of LGBT legislators in comparative perspective. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 259–274.

1.1.1

Political and social context in Latin America and the Caribbean

In recent years, Latin America has experienced a wave of social mobilizations sparked by diverse triggers — such as a tax reform in Colombia or public transportation fare hikes in Chile — but rooted in a shared backdrop: widespread frustration with democratic systems that have failed to deliver on their promises of equity or to guarantee fundamental rights. These uprisings have revealed a deep disconnect between social expectations and institutional responsiveness, particularly among young people and historically marginalized groups, including working-class communities and LGBTIQ+ populations. The mass protests that erupted between 2019 and 2021 in countries like **Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Chile** show that citizens are demanding more than economic stability — they are calling for genuine political inclusion and social justice².

The **COVID-19 health crisis** did not suppress these demands; on the contrary, it intensified existing precarity and laid bare the fragility of the social fabric. In this context, youth and diverse social sectors —including LGBTIQ+ collectives — spearheaded protests that challenged both state repression and the hegemonic narratives that have long excluded them³. This wave of mobilizations created not only spaces for protest, but also for political visibility. In the midst of this social unrest, LGBTIQ+ individuals emerged as key actors in the defense of a more participatory and representative democracy — challenging traditional power structures and asserting their right to take part in public decision-making.

One of the most significant outcomes of this cycle was the progress made in political representation. In **Chile**, for example, the 2019 protests led to a 2020 referendum in which voters overwhelmingly supported the drafting of a new constitution through an elected constitutional convention. Although the final proposal was rejected in the 2022 ratification vote, the process itself marked a historic milestone in LGBTIQ+ representation, with at least eight openly LGBTIQ+ delegates elected in 2021 to serve in the convention.

2 Murillo, M. V. (2021). *Protestas, descontento y democracia en América Latina*. Nueva Sociedad, (294), julio-agosto. <https://nuso.org/articulo/protestas-descontento-y-democracia-en-america-latina/>

3 Statista Research Department. (2021). *Levantamientos sociales en América Latina - Datos estadísticos*. <https://es.statista.com/temas/8783/levantamientos-sociales-en-america-latina/>

Subsequent elections in Chile brought further breakthroughs, including the election of LGBTIQ+ individuals to mayoral and municipal council positions, and the historic election of openly LGBTIQ+ congresswomen such as **Marcela Riquelme**, **Camila Musante**, and **Francisca Bello**. The election of **Emilia Schneider Videla** — the country's first trans congresswoman — symbolized a major step forward for LGBTIQ+ political representation⁴.

In other countries, including **Peru**, **Colombia**, **Honduras**, and **Ecuador**, the erosion of public trust in traditional political parties and growing demands for new leadership created openings for LGBTIQ+ candidates. In **Colombia**, the 2022 elections resulted in the formation of the largest openly LGBTIQ+ legislative caucus in the region, with seven individuals elected to Congress. This achievement took place within a broader context of progressive political shifts, driven in part by presidential figures committed to inclusive governance.

In Peru's 2021 elections, two prominent LGBTIQ+ candidates stood out: **Gahela Cari**, an Indigenous trans activist, and **Susel Paredes**, a lesbian lawyer and activist who was elected as a congresswoman for Lima and emerged as one of the most-voted women in the race.

Despite these advances, political violence and the criminalization of activism continue to be major obstacles. The structural violence faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals in countries like **Brazil** — where the number of trans candidates for elected office has grown significantly — illustrates a stark paradox: as political representation increases, so too does the violence against trans people.

According to the **National Association of Travestis and Transsexuals (AN-TRA)**, Brazil's 2022 elections saw 78 trans candidates—a 47% increase compared to 2018⁵. In the 2024 local elections, that number surged to 611 trans candidates⁶. Yet Brazil remains one of the most dangerous countries for trans people, with 321 murders reported between October 2020 and September 2023⁷.

4 MOVILH. (2022). *XX. Informe Anual de Derechos Humanos de la Diversidad Sexual y de Género en Chile*. <https://www.movilh.cl/documentacion/2022/XX-Informe-Anual-DDHH-MOVILH.pdf>

5 Asociación Nacional de Travestis y Transexuales - ANTRA. (2022). *Candidaturas trans em 2022*. <https://antrabrasil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/candidaturas-trans-em-2022-05set2022-2.pdf>

6 Vote LGBT. (2024). *Candidaturas LGBT+ para as Eleições de 2024*. <https://lookerstudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/3d4ca58a-15f3-41dd-9461-93f867ec5089/page/QZF3D>

7 According to the information documented by the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide (TvT) initiative and its Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM), project, which is recorded in the following reports::

Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide. (2021). *Trans Murder Monitoring: Trans Day of Remembrance 2021 - Table*. https://transrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/TvT_TMM_TDoR2021_SimpleTable.pdf

Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide. (2022). *Trans Murder Monitoring: Trans Day of Remembrance 2022 - Table*. https://transrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TvT_TMM_TDoR2022_Table.pdf

Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide. (2023). *Trans Murder Monitoring: Trans Day of Remembrance 2023 - Table*. https://transrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/TvT_TMM_TDoR2023_Table.pdf

Even within this context of structural violence, historically excluded populations — particularly Black and trans communities — have developed collective strategies to contest power. In the 2024 municipal elections, **17 of the 18 trans individuals elected were Black**, underscoring how intersectional political agency can challenge the boundaries imposed by the system. While barriers remain, new forms of organizing, alliance-building, and political adaptation are emerging, advancing leadership from the margins of institutional politics.

One of the region's most notable achievements has been the ability of LGBTIQ+ social movements to engage with political parties and gain elected office. Leaders like **Michelle Suárez** and **Valeria Rubino** in Uruguay, **Esteban Paulón** in Argentina, **Sandra Morán** and **Aldo Dávila** in Guatemala, **Emilia Schneider** in Chile, and **Gahela Cari** and **Susel Paredes** in Peru demonstrate how strategic alliances between civil society and political parties can lead to lasting progress on inclusive agendas.

Some of these leaders have even gone on to found their own political parties — showing that when existing spaces are unwelcoming, but institutional frameworks allow for the creation of new ones, LGBTIQ+ individuals will seize the opportunity to build alternatives. These examples reaffirm that political participation is not only about winning office — it is also about transforming the very structures of political power.

Between 2020 and 2024, 36 LGBTIQ+ individuals were elected to national legislatures in eight countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. This represents an important step toward the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ voices in political decision-making, while also highlighting the challenges that remain. Since the historic election of Elsa Patria Jiménez in Mexico in 1997 — the first openly lesbian federal congresswoman in the region — a total of 61 LGBTIQ+ individuals have been elected through 2024. Of these, 9 were re-elected, accounting for a total of 73 legislative terms. These figures reflect not only progress in representation, but also the growing political visibility of LGBTIQ+ leaders who are advancing inclusive policy reforms and shaping cultural change.

Some notable milestones along this trajectory include **Tamara Adrián**, the first trans woman elected to a national legislature in Latin America, who recently ran as a presidential pre-candidate in Venezuela; and **Salma Luévano**, who, after being elected to Congress in Mexico, was appointed National Coordinator for Inclusive Economy within the federal government. These examples form part of a broader trend: LGBTIQ+ politics is increasingly shaping national decision-making agendas.

Despite this progress, serious challenges remain. The criminalization of activism and the shrinking of civic space continue to be major obstacles in countries such as **Nicaragua**⁸, **Venezuela**⁹, and **El Salvador**¹⁰, where state repression has severely restricted the ability of LGBTIQ+ movements to operate and advocate for their political agendas.

This repression not only undermines the ability of civil society to organize, but also limits access to decision-making spaces — curbing the potential of LGBTIQ+ communities to influence public policy. As a result, exclusion deepens and meaningful political representation is further constrained, reinforcing patterns of marginalization.

Political and electoral violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals remains underexamined and lacks a clear conceptual framework. Emerging research underscores the urgency of addressing the intersection of political and electoral violence with LGBTIQ-phobia¹¹ in politics — defined as the discrimination and aggression individuals face when exercising their political rights based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. These attacks often manifest through biased or discriminatory rhetoric designed to discourage the political and civic participation of LGBTIQ+ people.

A key civic initiative that helped shape the **Declaration on Political-Electoral Rights**¹² introduced the principle of the “Right to a life free from violence and to a political environment conducive to participation.” This declaration defines political violence as any act or omission—whether direct or indirect—that limits or nullifies the effective exercise of political rights, the freedom of association, decision-making, or access to and exercise of public office¹³.

8 United Nations, Human Rights Council.(2023). *Informe del Grupo de Expertos en Derechos Humanos sobre Nicaragua* (A/HRC/52/63). Asamblea General, 52º período de sesiones. <https://docs.un.org/es/A/HRC/52/63>

9 Amnistía Internacional. (2024, 16 de agosto). Venezuela: Aprobación de ley anti-ONG castiga asistencia a víctimas y defensa de derechos humanos [Venezuela: Approval of anti-NGO law punishes assistance to victims and human rights defense]. <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2024/08/venezuela-aprobacion-ley-anti-ong-castiga-asistencia-victimas-defensa-derechos-humanos/>

10 Amnistía Internacional. (2023, 5 de diciembre). El Salvador: Políticas, prácticas y legislación arbitraria y abusiva transgreden los derechos humanos y amenazan el espacio cívico [El Salvador: Arbitrary and abusive policies, practices, and legislation violate human rights and threaten civic space]. <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2023/12/el-salvador-policies-practices-legislation-violate-human-rights/>

11 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2023). Building inclusive democracies: LGBTI+ political and electoral processes. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-11/undp-building-inclusive-democracies-lgbti-political-electoral-processes_0.pdf

12 On August 17, 18, and 19, 2022, a group of experts met in Mexico City to draft the *Declaración sobre derechos político-electorales de la población LGBTTTIQA+ en el continente americano* [Declaration on the Political-Electoral Rights of the LGBTTTIQA+ Population in the Americas]. The board of the Declaration was chaired by Congresswoman Salma Luevano, and the coordinator of the initiative was Magistrate Jesús Ociel Baena Saucedo (R.I.P.).

13 *Declaración sobre derechos político-electorales de la población LGBTTTIQA+ en el continente americano*. (2022). México. <https://www.moe.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Declaracion.pdf>

However, current definitions of political violence have yet to incorporate critical concepts such as **heteronormativity** and **cissexism**—both of which, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), are essential to understanding the violence faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Heteronormativity¹⁴ refers to the cultural and institutional bias that privileges heterosexual relationships, presenting them as “normal, natural, and ideal,” while same-sex or same-gender relationships are often cast as “wrong, unnatural, or deviant.” This concept encompasses the legal, social, and cultural norms that enforce dominant heterosexual standards.

Cissexism, on the other hand, is defined as a system of symbolic and material exclusion and privilege rooted in the belief that cisgender people are superior, more legitimate, or more authentic than trans people¹⁵. Within this hierarchy, cisgender identities are afforded protection and status, while trans identities are devalued or erased.

Analyzing political violence through the lenses of heteronormativity and cissexism allows us to recognize how discriminatory actions—carried out by electoral actors such as political parties, authorities, voters, and candidates—reflect deeper structural patterns that privilege cisgender and heterosexual individuals. This framework not only identifies overt acts of violence but also exposes the underlying systems that enable and sustain exclusion.

Political violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals can also be understood through the dimension of visibility. Some forms are overt and easily identifiable, while others are more subtle yet equally damaging — often leaving long-lasting psychological and institutional effects.

- * **Visible violence** includes physical assaults, homicides, death threats, and online attacks—forms that are highly visible and frequently reported.
- * **Partially visible violence** encompasses symbolic or psychological harm such as misgendering, hate speech, harassment, and public delegitimization. While perceptible, these forms are not always recognized or treated as violence within political contexts.

14 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). (2015). *Violencia contra personas lesbianas, gay, bisexuales, trans e intersex en América* (OEA/Ser.L/V/II.rev.2, Doc. 36). Organization of American States. <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/ViolenciapersonasLGBTI.pdf>

15 Radi, B. (2020). *Notas (al pie) sobre cisnormatividad y feminismo [Foot(notes) on cisnormativity and feminism]*. Ideas: Revista de Filosofía Moderna y Contemporánea, (11), 23–36. https://ri-conicet.gov.ar/bitstream/handle/11336/143756/CONICET_Digital_Nro.261771fa-99da-4cfa-9a47-c147136f51f0_A.pdf

* **Invisible violence**, often structural or institutional, operates through laws, policies, or electoral practices that systematically exclude LGBTIQ+ individuals—such as the absence of legal gender recognition, discriminatory candidacy rules, or barriers in voter registration systems. Though less apparent, these mechanisms uphold power structures that marginalize our communities.

As the number of openly LGBTIQ+ candidates and public officials continues to grow across the region, political violence has emerged as a primary barrier — affecting not only electoral campaigns, but also the early stages of nomination and candidate selection, and persisting during their time in office.

Between 2019 and 2023, at least 1,804 LGBTIQ+ individuals were murdered across 10 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁶. These homicides are part of a broader pattern of structural violence—sustained and reproduced through legal frameworks, institutional practices, and sociocultural norms that reinforce the perceived superiority of heterosexual and cisgender people. In such contexts of discrimination, stigmatization, and systematic violence, LGBTIQ+ individuals face significant restrictions in exercising their rights, including political and electoral rights.

The UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI) has emphasized that “violence, hate speech, and derogatory rhetoric” targeting LGBTIQ+ people represent serious barriers to political participation. These conditions are exacerbated in polarized political environments, where some politicians resort to “hostile rhetoric” against LGBTIQ+ communities to boost their popularity—fueling prejudice and disinformation¹⁷.

The absence of official data and systematic records poses a major challenge to properly characterizing political violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals. This information gap limits efforts to identify patterns, root causes, and the specific contexts in which violence occurs. To address this, an analysis was conducted using cases documented by the media, civil society organizations, and international institutions.

16 Sin Violencia LGBTI: Red Regional de Información LGBTI. (2023). Informe anual: Homicidios de personas LGBTI+ en América Latina y el Caribe, 2023 [Annual Report: Homicides of LGBTI+ People in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023]. https://sinviolencia.lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Situacion-de-homicidios-de-personas-LGBT-2023_30ag_Ok.pdf

Sin Violencia LGBTI: Red Regional de Información LGBTI. (2022). Ser LGBTI+ en la región más violenta del mundo: Informe anual 2022 [Being LGBTI+ in the Most Violent Region of the World: Annual Report 2022]. <https://sinviolencia.lgbt/informe-2022-ser-lgbti-en-la-region-mas-violenta-del-mundo/>

17 United Nations, Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. (2024). Participación electoral y protección contra la violencia y la discriminación por motivos de orientación sexual e identidad de género [Electoral Participation and Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity] (A/79/151). <https://docs.un.org/es/A/79/151>

From this document review, 60 cases of political violence were identified between 2012 and the first half of 2024, across Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Peru. Most data came from Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia, which together accounted for half of all documented incidents. Trans women were the most affected group, with 33 reported cases, and were also the most frequent targets of death threats (11 cases), followed by gay men (5 cases).

These acts of violence ranged from threats, attacks, and assassinations to non-physical but equally harmful practices that hinder LGBTIQ+ political participation. Such acts include misgendering, denial of legal gender recognition, barriers to candidacy registration, discriminatory speech in legislative chambers, and social media harassment. These behaviors directly impair the full exercise of political rights.

This hostile climate affects not only electoral campaigns, but also broader spaces of political engagement and public mobilization. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has noted that LGBTIQ+ leaders and human rights defenders¹⁸, experience “double vulnerability” — both for advocating on behalf of marginalized groups and for the stigma, discrimination, and attacks they face based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Latin America remains the most dangerous region in the world for human rights defenders, and LGBTIQ+ activists are frequently targeted by anti-rights and fundamentalist actors using tactics such as arbitrary detention, torture, criminalization, unfair trials, stigmatization, extortion, threats, sexual violence, and murder¹⁹.

In this context, many LGBTIQ+ individuals and organizations are forced to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid public attacks rooted in prejudice²⁰. Moreover, impunity or inadequate institutional responses to violence against LGBTIQ+ activists often lead to disengagement from political life²¹. This creates a vicious cycle in which the fear of violence perpetuates exclusion — undermining political participation, weakening grassroots and civil society organizing, and stalling broader efforts toward justice and equality.

18 Front Line Defenders. (2024). Global analysis 2023/24. https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/1578_fld_ga23_online_u03.pdf

Note for contextual use:

According to the most recent report, in 2023 at least 300 human rights defenders were killed. Seventy-nine percent of recorded murders occurred in the Americas, led by Colombia, followed by Mexico, Brazil, and Honduras.

19 Sin Violencia LGBTI: Red Regional de Información LGBTI. (2023). Muertes violentas de personas LGBT defensoras de derechos humanos [Violent deaths of LGBT human rights defenders] (Boletín temático No. 02). <https://sinviolencia.lgbt/muertes-violentas-de-personas-lgbt-defensoras-de-ddhh/>

20 Pabón, M. (2023). *Elementos para pensar en la violencia política contra las personas LGBTIQ+* [Elements for Reflecting on Political Violence Against LGBTIQ+ People] (Documento de Trabajo No. 27). <https://zenodo.org/records/7730610>

21 United Nations, Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. (2024). *Participación electoral y protección contra la violencia y la discriminación por motivos de orientación sexual e identidad de género* [Electoral Participation and Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity] (A/79/151). <https://docs.un.org/es/A/79/151>



1.2

Understanding affirmative action

Affirmative action measures are exceptional and temporary policies aimed at correcting structural inequalities by promoting the inclusion of groups that have historically been excluded or marginalized. These actions are grounded in the principle that genuine equality cannot be achieved simply by treating everyone the same — but rather by recognizing and addressing the specific barriers certain groups face due to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other social characteristics.

The concept of affirmative action originated from civil and human rights struggles, particularly in contexts where long-standing discrimination severely limited access to opportunities and rights for certain populations.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) affirms that affirmative action must guarantee, under conditions of equality, the full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms for individuals or groups in situations of vulnerability — such as LGBTIQ+ populations. The main goal of these measures is to reduce or eliminate the obstacles that have historically led to discrimination, ensuring equitable access to rights, so long as such measures do not result in permanent privileges or parallel systems of rights²².

In the political and electoral sphere, affirmative action has become a vital tool to ensure representation and participation for historically excluded groups. For LGBTIQ+ people, these measures not only aim to guarantee access to public office, but also to address additional barriers — such as discrimination based on gender identity — and to increase their visibility and influence within political institutions.

22 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). (2019). Compendio sobre la igualdad y no discriminación: Estándares interamericanos [Compendium on Equality and Non-Discrimination: Inter-American Standards]. <https://repositoriocdim.esap.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.14471/25938/Compendio-IgualdadNoDiscriminacion.pdf>

Clear examples of affirmative action in this context include **gender quotas** or **reserved seats**, which seek to ensure that women, trans and nonbinary individuals, and other gender-diverse people are not only visible, but meaningfully represented within democratic systems. In addition, the implementation of **trans voting protocols** in several countries constitutes another key form of affirmative action. These protocols aim to protect trans individuals' right to vote and run for office, free from discrimination and violence throughout the electoral process.

Affirmative action did not emerge in a vacuum — it arose as a response to centuries of oppression and systemic exclusion. During the 20th century, civil rights movements pushed governments to adopt measures to counter structural inequality and promote equal opportunity. The IACHR has emphasized that affirmative action measures are **transitional** by nature. Their objective is not permanence, but to achieve substantive equality and eliminate discrimination over time.

It is essential to understand that affirmative action is not about creating permanent advantages, but about leveling the playing field — ensuring that the most marginalized groups can participate on equal terms. These measures do not confer special or exclusive rights; rather, they seek to correct the consequences of historic exclusion and structural violence that continue to disproportionately affect certain communities.

However, in today's context — marked by democratic backsliding, electoral manipulation, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the shrinking of civic space²³ — affirmative action measures face significant challenges. While these tools are crucial for advancing inclusion, their implementation has been slow and fraught with difficulties, particularly in increasingly hostile environments where conservative actors — including religious institutions and political leaders — promote restrictive narratives that undermine the ability of LGBTIQ+ organizations and leaders to mobilize and shape public policy.

Despite these challenges, several countries in Latin America have introduced affirmative action measures to promote the political inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals. These include **Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay**. Initiatives range from the adoption of “rainbow quotas” in Mexico, to the inclusion of nonbinary gender markers on voter ID documents, and mechanisms for monitoring political violence — all designed to support the meaningful participation of LGBTIQ+ people in democratic processes.

To date, a total of 29 affirmative action measures have been identified that directly impact the political and electoral rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals. These measures have been implemented through legislation, judicial rulings, or administrative policies, and fall into four main categories:

23 V-Dem Institute. (2024). *Democracy report 2024: Democracy winning and losing at the ballot*. University of Gothenburg. https://www.v-dem.net/documents/47/V-Dem_DR_2024_Spanish_lowres.pdf

1. Legal gender recognition and identity document changes (11 measures):

This category includes policies that allow individuals to update their name, photo, sex, and gender markers on official identity documents without being required to undergo medical procedures or obtain court rulings. Aligned with international human rights standards, these measures uphold the right to gender identity and expression, and are essential for accessing rights such as voting and running for office. Countries that have adopted such policies include Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay.

While Bolivia and Costa Rica are also part of this category, both face implementation challenges. In Bolivia, a judicial decision has significantly limited the scope of the Gender Identity Law. In Costa Rica, protections remain incomplete, as individuals are still unable to change the “sex” marker on their official IDs.

2. Access to elected office (3 measures):

These measures aim to improve access to political office for LGBTIQ+ individuals. They include mechanisms such as reserved seats or “rainbow quotas” — as seen in Mexico — and the legal recognition of self-identified gender, rather than sex assigned at birth, for candidacy in gender-based quotas, such as in Brazil. These policies seek to reduce barriers to candidacy and ensure inclusive representation in elected positions.

3. Ensuring the right to vote (10 measures):

This group consists of measures designed to protect and facilitate voting rights for trans individuals. Examples include the implementation of trans-inclusive voting protocols in countries like Mexico, Peru, Colombia, and Chile. In Brazil, voters can use their social name at the polls, and in Colombia, electoral authorities have adopted institutional procedures to ensure respectful treatment of trans individuals during the voter registration process.

4. Institutional adjustments (5 measures):

Although not always labeled explicitly as affirmative action, these institutional adjustments are crucial for addressing the data gap surrounding LGBTIQ+ political participation. Countries like Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico have implemented mechanisms to gather reliable data on LGBTIQ+ candidacies and participation, helping to better understand existing barriers and to inform more inclusive electoral and political practices.

Table 2. Affirmative action measures in Latin America to promote the political and electoral participation of LGBTIQ+ people.

Category	Country	Year	Recognizing Authority	Approval Instrument	Affirmative Action	Beneficiary Population
Legal gender recognition	Argentina	2012	National Congress	Law	Legal gender identity recognition for trans people	Trans people
Legal gender recognition	Colombia	2015	Executive – Presidency	Administrative measure	ID document modification	Trans people
Legal gender recognition	Bolivia	2017	National Congress	Law	Legal gender identity recognition for trans people	Trans people
Legal gender recognition	Ecuador	2017	Constitutional Court	Judicial ruling	ID document modification	Trans people
Legal gender recognition	Uruguay	2018	National Congress	Law	Legal gender identity recognition for trans people	Trans people
Legal gender recognition	Chile	2019	National Congress	Law	Legal gender identity recognition for trans people	Trans people
Legal gender recognition	Costa Rica	2019	Supreme Electoral Tribunal	Judicial ruling	ID document modification	Trans people
Legal gender recognition (Nonbinary)	Argentina	2021	Executive – Presidency	Administrative measure	Legal gender identity recognition for nonbinary people	Nonbinary people
Legal gender recognition (Nonbinary)	Colombia	2022	Constitutional Court	Judicial ruling	ID document modification for nonbinary people	Nonbinary people

Category	Country	Year	Recognizing Authority	Approval Instrument	Affirmative Action	Beneficiary Population
Legal gender recognition	Ecuador	2023	National Congress	Law	ID document modification	Trans people
Legal gender recognition (Nonbinary)	Mexico	2023	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Administrative measure	ID document modification for nonbinary people	Nonbinary people
Access to elected office	Brazil	2018	Superior Electoral Court	Judicial ruling	Trans candidacy registration	Trans people
Access to elected office	Brazil	2018	Superior Electoral Court	Judicial ruling	Gender quota	Trans people
Access to elected office	Mexico	2018	Electoral Court of the Federal Judiciary	Judicial ruling	Representation quotas	LGBT+ people
Voting rights	Ecuador	2016	National Electoral Council	Administrative measure	Voting rights for trans people	Trans people
Voting rights	Brazil	2018	Superior Electoral Court	Judicial ruling	Use of social name on voter ID	Trans people
Voting rights	Mexico	2018	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Administrative measure	Trans voting protocol	Trans people
Voting rights	El Salvador	2019	Supreme Electoral Tribunal	Administrative measure	Voting rights for trans people	Trans people
Voting rights	Colombia	2020	National Electoral Council	Administrative measure	Trans voting protocol	Trans people
Voting rights	Chile	2020	Electoral Service of Chile	Administrative measure	Trans voting protocol	Trans people

Category	Country	Year	Recognizing Authority	Approval Instrument	Affirmative Action	Beneficiary Population
Voting rights	Peru	2021	National Office of Electoral Processes	Administrative measure	Trans voting protocol	Trans people
Voting rights	Peru	2022	National Office of Electoral Processes	Administrative measure	Trans voting protocol	Trans people
Voting rights	Peru	2022	National Office of Electoral Processes	Administrative measure	Trans voting protocol	Trans and nonbinary people
Voting rights	Colombia	2021	National Civil Registry	Administrative measure	Protocol for trans individuals during voter registration	Trans people
Candidate registration data	Peru	2020	National Jury of Elections	Administrative measure	LGBT+ candidate registration	LGBT+ people
Candidate registration data	Peru	2022	National Jury of Elections	Administrative measure	LGBT+ candidate registration	LGBT+ people
Candidate registration data	Colombia	2023	National Civil Registry	Administrative measure	LGBT+ candidate registration	LGBT+ people
Candidate registration data	Mexico	2024	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Administrative measure	LGBT+ candidate registration	LGBT+ people
Candidate registration data	Brazil	2024	Superior Electoral Court	Administrative measure	LGBT+ candidate registration	LGBT+ people

Source: Compiled by the authors, based on the review of judicial rulings, laws, and administrative resolutions, as well as the comparative table "Actions for the Recognition of Political Rights of LGBT People by Electoral Authorities" from the *Observatorio de Reformas Políticas en América Latina*²⁴.

24 López Sánchez, E., & Pabón Castro, M. D. (2022). *Observatorio de Reformas Políticas en América Latina (1978–2022)* [Observatory on Political Reforms in Latin America (1978–2022)]. Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM & Secretaría para el Fortalecimiento de la Democracia de la OEA. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GcrUpSf33OmPmW8Y3YL_FcRAE4OWisyC/view

1.2.1

Critical analysis and implementation challenges

Of the 29 identified affirmative action measures, 23 focus on trans and nonbinary individuals. However, only 12 of these specifically address the removal of political and electoral barriers, and they are concentrated in just seven countries: Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Peru. The remaining 11 measures pertain to gender identity laws that facilitate legal self-recognition—an essential precondition for the effective exercise of political rights, including the ability to vote and run for office.

The focus on trans people can be attributed to several factors. First, the LGBT+ movement and allied activists have prioritized trans exclusion in their advocacy and strategic litigation efforts. Second, documented evidence of discrimination—bolstered by reports from international bodies such as Electoral Observation Missions—has created external pressure on electoral authorities to reform exclusionary legal frameworks.

While these measures represent progress, they remain insufficient. Stronger commitments are needed from states, civil society, and political parties to fully guarantee the political rights of trans individuals. On March 31, 2024, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued a statement²⁵ on Trans Day of Visibility calling on states to:

1. Ensure equal access to the right to vote.
2. Guarantee access to public office and elected positions.
3. Encourage participation in public and political life.
4. Prevent political violence and protect trans individuals already in office.
5. Recognize gender identity in official documents as a prerequisite for exercising political and other human rights, and for affirming trans people's dignity.

25 Organización de los Estados Americanos. (2024). CIDH insta a los Estados a promover la participación política de personas trans [IACHR urges States to promote the political participation of trans persons]. Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2024/065.asp>

Although most countries in the region are bound by international treaties such as the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** and the **American Convention on Human Rights**, which prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, meaningful measures to implement these commitments did not emerge until Ecuador in 2016 and in most countries after 2018.

Progress has been largely driven by civic action and advocacy from LGBTIQ+ civil society, often in the face of institutional resistance or inaction. **Of the 29 affirmative action measures, only five were passed by national legislatures** — and none of these explicitly address political rights. Instead, they focus on gender identity recognition laws.

Due to the lack of legislative support, many advances have come through **legal mobilization and strategic litigation**, especially before electoral bodies and judicial courts.

Resistance from political parties is a recurring obstacle. Parties often reject affirmative measures by appealing to principles like “self-determination” and “freedom of political organization.” This reluctance results in weak institutional backing and inconsistent implementation. Still, civil society has demonstrated its power to shift the political landscape. Advocacy coalitions between LGBTIQ+ groups and allies from other sectors have proven particularly effective in pressuring parties to adopt more inclusive practices.

In Mexico, for example, sustained advocacy before judicial and electoral authorities led to rulings that compelled political parties to reform their internal procedures to include LGBTIQ+ candidates. However, implementation gaps persist. Monitoring and documenting discriminatory practices is therefore essential to hold institutions accountable and push for full compliance.

In the absence of legislative mandates, most measures have relied on **administrative or judicial rulings**, which introduces key risks:

- * **Fragility of administrative policies:** Without legislative anchoring, policies can be easily overturned or weakened by incoming administrations²⁶.
- * **Transactional politics:** Political elites often concede only minimal reforms to maintain existing power structures, offering piecemeal or symbolic measures rather than addressing the full extent of inequality²⁷.

Despite varied contexts and institutional frameworks, one constant remains: the central role of LGBTIQ+ civil society. These internal “push factors” are essential drivers of reform and bulwarks against regression throughout the policy development, approval, and implementation processes.

Additional conditions — such as alliances with political parties, engagement with the state, the ruling government’s ideology, independent courts and electoral bodies, and the influence of religious institutions — also shape the success or failure of these measures. However, the relative importance of each factor depends on the specific type of action and the institutional pathway through which it is advanced.

26 San Martín, P., & Sepúlveda, D. (2022). Diagnóstico de las normas y prácticas para la garantía del derecho al voto de las personas trans: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras y Panamá [Assessment of Norms and Practices to Guarantee the Right to Vote for Trans People: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama] (p. 464). Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Electoral – CAPEL. https://www2.iidh.ed.cr/cafel/media/1989/diagnóstico-de-las-normas-y-prácticas-para-la-garantía-del-derecho-al-voto-de-las-personas-trans_cr-guatemala-hnd-panamá.pdf

27 Garza López, L. R., & López Sánchez, E. (2021, 22 de junio). Acciones afirmativas en materia electoral: Del regateo de derechos al oportunismo de los partidos políticos [Affirmative action in electoral matters: From bargaining away rights to political opportunism]. Animal Político. <https://animalpolitico.com/analisis/invitades/acciones-afirmativas-del-regateo-de-derechos-al-oportunismo-de-los-partidos-politicos>



1.3

Highlight cases of LGBTIQ+ political participation

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, various initiatives and expressions of political participation have played a crucial role in advancing the inclusion and rights of LGBTIQ+ people. These cases have not only increased the visibility of LGBTIQ+ communities in political spaces, but have also helped dismantle long-standing structural barriers that have limited their access to decision-making arenas.

The following section highlights six of the most significant examples that have had a profound impact on political representation and the advancement of LGBTIQ+ rights in the region. These cases underscore the work of activists and organizations, as well as the legislative and social changes they have driven to ensure visibility and full participation in democratic processes.

Each of these examples reflects a vital dimension of the struggle for social and political justice for LGBTIQ+ people. They have set important precedents for future generations of LGBTIQ+ activists and political leaders. Through these experiences, both the opportunities and the persistent challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals in political life have come into sharper focus.

This section presents just a few of the many powerful actions shaping political transformation in the region today.

1.3.1

Vote for Equality campaigns

The **Vote for Equality** campaign is a flagship initiative of the **LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean**. It was designed to strengthen the political participation of LGBTIQ+ people and ensure their voices are heard in electoral processes and political decision-making. The campaign specifically targets the structural and historical barriers that have long limited LGBTIQ+ representation in politics²⁸.

Since 2012, this campaign has been promoted by **the LGBTQ+ Victory Institute** in partnership with key organizations in Peru (**Promsex**), Honduras (**SOMOS CDC**), the Dominican Republic (**Diversidad Dominicana**), Mexico (**Yaa! México**), and Colombia (**Caribe Afirmativo**). Its main objectives include:

- * Educating and informing the public about political party platforms and LGBTIQ+ candidates.
- * Promoting active participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in elections, both as voters and as potential candidates.
- * Ensuring that LGBTIQ+ rights are clearly reflected in political agendas through concrete and committed policy proposals.

Over the years, the campaign has mapped more than 1,600 openly LGBTIQ+ candidacies across five countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. But *Vote for Equality* is more than just a visibility campaign — it has become a key tool for promoting informed voting and inclusive political representation. Its work shows that, despite persistent structural barriers, visibility and monitoring initiatives are expanding the political space and creating opportunities for more LGBTIQ+ people to access elected office. At the same time, the campaign continues to exert pressure on political parties to address the needs and rights of LGBTIQ+ communities.

The campaign follows a comprehensive framework based on three strategic pillars: **Observe, Inform, and Act**. Through observation, it monitors candidates, political discourse, and platforms. Through information, it promotes electoral education and raises awareness about the importance of LGBTIQ+ political participation. Finally, through action, it mobilizes voters, strengthens alliances with political parties, and promotes affirmative policies and inclusive electoral protocols.

28 Observatorio de Participación Política LGBTIQ+ de las Américas y del Caribe. (2024). *Manual de Voto por la Igualdad: Observa, informa, actúa* [Vote for Equality Manual: Observe, Report, Act]. <https://liderazgoslgbt.com/es/voto-igualdad-2/>

The campaign's ultimate goal is not only to increase the number of LGBTIQ+ people in elected office, but also to strengthen democracy by ensuring that LGBTIQ+ rights and visibility are politically recognized and respected.

We invite organizations and grassroots groups in other countries to adopt and adapt this campaign using the tools and strategies outlined in the *Vote for Equality Manual: Observe, Inform, Act*. With the support of this guide, they can implement their own versions of *Vote for Equality* and contribute to a more inclusive and representative political landscape.

1.3.2

Electoral observation and trans voting rights

Electoral observation has been a key tool in the fight for the political rights of LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean — and even more so for trans and gender-diverse individuals. This tool is part of a broader process of collective organizing, in which LGBTIQ+ organizations have played a crucial role by making visible and denouncing the specific barriers we face when exercising our electoral rights. Electoral observation is the result of years of struggle and organized resistance by communities that have demanded to be heard and respected in democratic processes.

The experience of trans people in electoral processes is radically different from that of cis lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. The barriers they face are not only related to voting access but also to structural discrimination, institutional violence, and the lack of recognition of their gender identity. For years, trans people have been excluded, rendered invisible, and in many cases subjected to violence on election day. This reality has pushed trans organizations to critically focus on developing mechanisms that ensure trans political participation is equal and free from discrimination.

In countries such as **El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, and Colombia**, electoral observation exercises led by trans people have not only documented acts of discrimination and violence, but have also been essential to the process of demanding rights. Electoral observation has helped bring attention to the forms of violence they face — such as being denied the right to vote due to mismatches between gender expression and ID documents, or experiencing verbal and physical abuse at polling stations²⁹. These efforts are not isolated achievements, but part of an ongoing process of advocacy and pressure to transform the structures that exclude us.

In **Guatemala**, the **Red Multicultural de Mujeres Trans (REDM-MUTRANS)** led an electoral observation mission in 2015 that focused on denouncing and making visible the violence trans people face when

29 Asociación Solidaria para Impulsar el Desarrollo Humano (ASPIDH ARCOÍRIS). (2014). Informe de observación electoral presidencial, 2 de febrero de 2014: Por el derecho al voto sin discriminación por orientación sexual, identidad/expresión de género [Presidential Electoral Observation Report, February 2, 2014: For the Right to Vote Without Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity/Expression]. <https://es.slideshare.net/slideshow/informe-lgtbi-al-tse-13022014-versional-final-42492138/42492138>

Asociación Solidaria para Impulsar el Desarrollo Humano (ASPIDH ARCOÍRIS). (2014). Informe de observación electoral LGBTI: Segunda vuelta, 9 de marzo de 2014 [LGBTI Electoral Observation Report: Second Round, March 9, 2014]. <https://es.slideshare.net/slideshow/informe-de-observacion-electoral-segunda-vuelta-9-de-marzo-2014/42492291>

voting³⁰. This work not only documented abuses but also sparked public dialogue about the need for structural reforms in electoral systems.

In **Peru**, the “**Voto Trans**” campaign launched in 2016 was a crucial initiative to document transphobic violence at polling places³¹. It served as an urgent call for authorities to recognize that trans people not only face barriers at the ballot box but are also subjected to direct aggression and institutional harassment. In 2022, **Rosa Rabiosa** published a report containing testimonies of misgendering and discrimination by polling station officials and law enforcement, creating a public impact that could not be ignored.

Voting is a fundamental right, yet its implementation remains a challenge for trans people. Across the region, protocols to guarantee trans people’s right to vote have been driven by civil society, not by institutional initiatives. Countries like **Mexico**³², **Colombia**³³, **Perú**³⁴ y **Chile**³⁵ have adopted protocols that emerged from the mobilization and advocacy of LGBTIQ+ organizations. These protocols document the obstacles trans people face during elections and provide recommendations

30 Red Multicultural de Mujeres Trans de Guatemala. (2016). *Informe del Observatorio para la Promoción del Voto de las Mujeres Trans Guatemaltecas* [Report from the Observatory for the Promotion of Trans Guatemalan Women’s Voting Rights] (p. 7). <https://www.redmutransgt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2015-Informe-del-Observatorio-para-la-Promocio%CC%81n-del-Voto-de-las-Mujeres-Trans-Guatemaltecas..pdf>

31 No Tengo Miedo, Féminas, & Diversidades Trans Masculinas (DTM). (2016). *#VotoTrans: Elecciones generales 2016* [*#TransVote: 2016 General Elections*].

32 The development of the protocol was supported by two specialists: one external, Dr. María Teresa González Luna Corvera, and one internal, Mtra. Luisa Rebeca Garza López, who at the time served as the Electoral Training and Civic Education Officer of the Oaxaca State Executive Board. It also involved officials from the National Council to Prevent Discrimination (CONAPRED) and the Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (COPRED), as well as trans individuals, activists, and civil society organizations from various Mexican states. This protocol was approved by the National Electoral Institute (INE) in 2017.

For a detailed account of the process and political context in which these protocols were approved, see:

López Sánchez, Ericka. (2023). *Los protocolos para el Voto Trans en América Latina* [Protocols for Trans Voting in Latin America].

San Martín, P., & Sepúlveda, D. (2022). Diagnóstico de las normas y prácticas para la garantía del derecho al voto de las personas trans – Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras y Panamá [Assessment of Norms and Practices to Guarantee the Right to Vote for Trans People – Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama]. https://www2.iidh.ed.cr/capel/media/1989/diagnóstico-de-las-normas-y-prácticas-para-la-garantía-del-derecho-al-voto-de-las-personas-trans_cr-guatemala-hnd-panamá.pdf

33 In Colombia, the Mexican experience was adapted to the national context. The proposal was developed by the Electoral Observation Mission (MOE), the Trans People Support and Action Group Foundation (GAAT), and Caribe Afirmativo, with the participation of various civil society organizations, activists, embassies, and international cooperation agencies. The protocol was submitted to the National Electoral Council and approved in 2020.

34 In Peru, the approval of the protocol was preceded by the work of the collectives *No Tengo Miedo*, *Féminas*, and *Diversidades Trans Masculinas* (DTM) — now known as *Rosa Rabiosa* — who had documented violence and discrimination faced by trans people during voting since the 2016 elections.

35 In Chile, the protocol was adopted by the Electoral Service (SERVEL) following requests made by the organization OTD – Organizando Trans Diversidades.

to electoral authorities to ensure they can vote without discrimination³⁶.

The findings of these observation efforts have led to concrete recommendations to electoral authorities, contributing to the adoption of measures that protect the political rights of LGBTIQ+ people. For instance, in **El Salvador**³⁷, the electoral authority began hiring LGBTIQ+ individuals as temporary “electoral facilitators” to train poll workers and improve the treatment of voters on election day. This strategy was repeated in the 2019 and 2024 elections, demonstrating a growing commitment to inclusion.

In **Perú**³⁸, monitoring efforts that documented violence against trans voters played a key role in the approval of the 2021 Protocol to Promote the Right to Vote for Trans People.

In **Colombia**³⁹, the Electoral Observation Mission, together with Caribe Afirmativo and Fundación GAAT, conducted monitoring in 2022 and 2023 to assess the implementation of the **“Protocol to Guarantee the Right to Vote for Trans People.”** This work, which began in the pre-electoral phase, aimed to identify and document any obstacles limiting trans people’s right to vote. Based on the recommendations submitted by these organizations, electoral authorities made adjustments to their educational materials and developed a specific guide to ensure respectful and appropriate treatment of trans individuals during voter registration and other key stages.

Through electoral observation, civil society organizations have created a pathway to continue advocating for the protection and promotion of LGBTIQ+ political rights — ensuring that their voices and lived experiences are integral to the democratic discourse.

36 López Sánchez, Ericka. (2023). Los protocolos para el Voto Trans en América Latina [Protocols for Trans Voting in Latin America].

37 Tribunal Supremo Electoral. (2018). Memorial especial de elecciones 2018: Diputaciones a la Asamblea Legislativa y Concejos Municipales [Special Electoral Report 2018: Deputies to the Legislative Assembly and Municipal Councils].

Tribunal Supremo Electoral. (2019). Memorial especial de elecciones 2019: Presidencial [Special Electoral Report 2019: Presidential Elections].

38 Balvi, S., & Bazán, A. (2024). Vigilando nuestro voto: Experiencias de personas trans y no binarias del Perú en las elecciones regionales y municipales 2022 [Watching Our Vote: Experiences of Trans and Non-Binary People in Peru’s 2022 Regional and Municipal Elections]. https://raceandequality.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Informe_Vigilando-Nuestro-Voto.pdf

39 Misión de Observación Electoral (MOE). (2023). Una observación trans del voto trans: Informe sobre la primera implementación del Protocolo de Voto Trans en Colombia durante las elecciones de Congreso y Presidencia en 2022 [A Trans Observation of the Trans Vote: Report on the First Implementation of the Trans Voting Protocol in Colombia During the 2022 Congressional and Presidential Elections]. <https://www.moe.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Informe-VT-Diseno.pdf>

Misión de Observación Electoral (MOE). (2024). Votar desde y por una experiencia de vida trans: Informe sobre la implementación del Protocolo de Voto Trans en Colombia [Voting From and For a Trans Life Experience: Report on the Implementation of the Trans Voting Protocol in Colombia]. <https://www.moe.org.co/votar-desde-y-por-una-experiencia-de-vida-trans-informe-sobre-la-implementacion-del-protocolo-de-voto-trans-en-colombia/>

1.3.3

LGBTIQ+ legislative caucuses in Chile, Colombia, and Brazil

In countries like Chile, Colombia, and Brazil, the creation of LGBTIQ+ legislative caucuses has marked a significant step forward in ensuring the political representation of LGBTIQ+ people. These caucuses — made up of openly LGBTIQ+ legislators and their allies — have been essential in promoting and defending LGBTIQ+ rights within legislative bodies.

In **Chile**, the ***Bancada por la Diversidad*** (Diversity Caucus) was formed in 2019 following a brutal homophobic attack, with the goal of ensuring representation for LGBTIQ+ people in Congress⁴⁰. With participation from legislators across multiple political parties, the caucus has championed legislation such as marriage equality and the Gender Identity Law, while also pushing for reforms to the Anti-Discrimination Law. This caucus emerged in response to the urgent need to strengthen LGBTIQ+ visibility and influence within a historically conservative Congress.

Following the 2022 congressional renewal, a new group known as the ***bancada disidente*** (“dissident caucus”) also emerged, comprised of the first four openly LGBTIQ+ congresswomen in Chile’s history. These parliamentarians — Emilia Schneider (the first trans woman elected to the Chamber), Marcela Riquelme (the first lesbian congresswoman), and Camila Musante and Francisca Bello (the first bisexual congresswomen) — have formed an informal bloc to amplify the voices and demands of sexual and gender diversity from within the legislature.

This visible LGBTIQ+ caucus in Chile’s Congress complements the broader cross-party allies caucus, bringing directly representative voices into legislative debates and expanding the reach of pro-equality advocacy.

In **Colombia**, the ***Comisión Accidental por la Diversidad*** (Accidental Commission for Diversity) was created in 2022, composed of 11 congress members, including 6 openly LGBTIQ+ legislators. It was one of the first formal efforts within Congress to address LGBTIQ+ rights. Through this commission, initiatives such as the prohibition of conversion therapies have been advanced, along with legal protections for trans individuals.

The commission has also emphasized the need to monitor the implementation of Colombia’s LGBTI Public Policy, adopted in 2018 but largely unful-

40 Fundación Iguales. (2019, julio 3). Fundación Iguales respalda la creación de una bancada transversal por la diversidad [Fundación Iguales supports the creation of a cross-party caucus for diversity]. Fundación Iguales. <https://iguales.cl/fundacion-iguales-respalda-creacion-una-bancada-transversal-la-diversidad/>

filled in subsequent years⁴¹. Members of the caucus have highlighted the importance of tracking specific measures for LGBTIQ+ populations within the National Development Plan and the newly created Ministry of Equality, ensuring that the policy's provisions translate into effective actions.

This joint effort between diverse legislators and heterosexual allies has been key in building majorities and legitimizing the agenda on the legislative floor. The commission has worked closely with expert organizations such as Caribe Afirmativo, whose director advised on the legislative roadmap⁴². The formation of this commission was crucial in creating institutional space to debate and advance LGBTIQ+ rights in Congress.

In **Brazil**, the **Frente Parlamentar Mista pela Cidadania LGBTI+** (Mixed Congressional Front for LGBTI+ Citizenship) was first launched in 2011 to address human rights violations against the LGBTIQ+ community. In more recent years, under conservative governments and legislatures (2019–2022), the caucus faced challenges and saw its formal activity diminished. However, with the start of the new 2023 legislature, the caucus was revitalized. In September 2023, trans Congresswoman Érika Hilton (PSOL-SP) led the official relaunch of the **Frente Parlamentar Mista pela Cidadania e Direitos LGBTI+** in the National Congress, securing the support of more than 260 lawmakers from both chambers.

This caucus has been instrumental in advocating for labor rights for trans people, marriage equality, and the prohibition of conversion therapies. One of its primary driving forces has been the political resistance to setbacks in LGBTIQ+ rights⁴³.

These caucuses have proven to be effective tools for political advocacy, bringing the demands of the LGBTIQ+ community into the heart of legislative debate. Through their work, they have helped secure significant legal victories and have contributed to building more inclusive democracies. **There are also promising subnational experiences, such as LGBTIQ+ caucuses in Bogotá (Colombia) and Minas Gerais (Brazil), which serve as replicable models for advancing inclusive policies in other local contexts.**

41 El Espectador. (2022, septiembre 15). Once congresistas integrarán la nueva comisión accidental por la diversidad [Eleven members of Congress will join the new ad hoc commission on diversity]. El Espectador. <https://www.elespectador.com/politica/once-congresistas-integran-la-nueva-comision-accidental-por-la-diversidad/>

42 Infobae. (2022, julio 27). Las tres iniciativas de la bancada LGBT+ que serán presentadas en el Congreso de la República [The three initiatives of the LGBT+ caucus to be introduced in Congress]. Infobae. <https://www.infobae.com/america/colombia/2022/07/27/las-tres-iniciativas-de-la-bancada-lgbt-que-seran-presentadas-en-el-congreso-de-la-republica/>

43 Câmara dos Deputados. (2023, setembro 19). Participantes do seminário LGBTQIA+ criticam tentativa de deputados de proibir união homoafetiva [Participants in the LGBTQIA+ seminar criticize deputies' attempt to ban same-sex unions]. Câmara dos Deputados.

1.3.4

Legal precedents in LGBTIQ+ rights

Strategic litigation has been a fundamental tool in advancing LGBTIQ+ rights across Latin America. Through this approach, activists, civil society organizations — and in some cases, academic institutions and international bodies — have driven legal transformations with broad social impact. Strategic litigation not only seeks to address abuses and acts of violence, but also to generate legal precedents that can trigger structural reforms in public policy and reshape how justice is understood.

Strategic litigation is characterized by the combination of legal action with political advocacy, communication strategies, and social mobilization. Its goal is to amplify the impact of judicial decisions and raise public awareness of issues that were previously absent from public debate — fostering both legal and cultural change. This approach benefits not only the direct victims of rights violations, but also contributes to shifting public opinion and strengthening human rights protections⁴⁴.

In **Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, and Costa Rica**, strategic litigation has played a key role in securing changes to official documents that impact LGBTIQ+ people's ability to vote and participate politically. Through judicial action, electoral and civil registry authorities have been compelled to adopt administrative procedures allowing individuals to update their names, photos, and sex/gender markers on voting credentials and other official documents. In Mexico, for example, legal activism has pressured the National Electoral Institute (INE) to adopt affirmative measures for trans people, despite resistance from some political parties and local authorities. This progress has been driven by organizations such as Fundar and activists like former Congresswoman Salma Luévano, who have fought for these changes through the courts.

In **Brazil, Mexico, and Chile**, LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to public office have pursued legal action in response to political violence, including discrimination and harassment based on gender identity. In many of these cases, court rulings have not only held perpetrators accountable but also set regional precedents for how political violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals should be investigated and sanctioned. A landmark example is **the case of Vicky Hernández in Honduras**, where the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that gender identity can intersect with gender-based violence⁴⁵. The

44 López Sánchez, E. (2021). *Las cortes supremas y los derechos LGBT en América Latina [Supreme Courts and LGBT Rights in Latin America]*. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8180124>

45 Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. (2021). *Caso Vicky Hernández y otras vs. Honduras. Fondo, reparaciones y costas [Case of Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras. Merits, Reparations and Costs]* (Judgment of March 26, 2021, Series C No. 422). https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_422_esp.pdf

ruling also expanded the interpretation of the **Belém do Pará Convention** to include trans women within the framework of violence against women.

This type of litigation has not only resulted in specific sanctions for political violence, but also led to a paradigm shift in how gender-based political violence is understood — firmly positioning the rights of trans people within international human rights frameworks. As established by the Inter-American Court, intersectional justice is now a key component in addressing violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals, particularly trans women, in Latin America.

Strategic litigation has had a profound impact on transforming judicial systems across the region, setting new legal precedents and driving reforms that promote greater inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in political and social spaces. While challenges remain, litigation continues to be a driving force toward inclusive justice and the elimination of legal barriers that have historically excluded LGBTIQ+ individuals.

1.3.5

“Rainbow quotas” and the implementation of affirmative action in Mexico

Mexico is one of the pioneering countries in Latin America in adopting specific affirmative action measures for LGBTIQ+ populations. During the 2017–2018 electoral cycle, the Electoral Institute of the State of Oaxaca introduced the *Guidelines on Gender Parity*, a policy that recognized the right of trans, intersex, and muxe individuals to participate in politics based on gender self-identification⁴⁶. However, the initial implementation faced challenges, as some political parties nominated candidates falsely claiming to be part of these communities to gain representation and circumvent gender parity rules. Following complaints from civil society⁴⁷, several fraudulent candidacies were canceled.

In the 2021 elections, Mexico’s National Electoral Institute (INE) introduced “rainbow quotas” at the national level, aimed at ensuring the representation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in elected office. The Superior Chamber of the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (TEPJF) upheld the INE’s authority to implement measures that promote equality within the electoral system⁴⁸, despite initial resistance from some political parties, which argued that such quotas infringed upon their autonomy and flexibility in candidate selection.

46 Instituto Estatal Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana de Oaxaca (IEEPCO). (2017). *Acuerdo IEEPCO-CG-76/2017 [IEEPCO-CG-76/2017 Agreement]*. <https://www.ieepco.org.mx/archivos/acuerdos/2017/IEEPCO-CG-76%3A2017.pdf>

Instituto Estatal Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana de Oaxaca (IEEPCO). (2017). Anexo: Lineamientos para el registro de candidaturas con el principio de paridad de género [Annex: Guidelines for Candidate Registration under the Gender Parity Principle]. <https://www.ieepco.org.mx/archivos/acuerdos/2017/ANEXO%20LINEAMIENTOS.pdf>

47 Instituto Estatal Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana de Oaxaca (IEEPCO). (2018). *Resolución del expediente CQDPCE/POS/005/2018 [Resolution of Case File CQDPCE/POS/005/2018]*. <https://www.ieepco.org.mx/archivos/acuerdos/2018/RESOLUCI%C3%93N%20IEEPCORCG042018.pdf>

48 Sala Superior del Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación (TEPJF). (2020). Juicio para la protección de los derechos político-electorales del ciudadano, expediente SUP-RAP-121/2020 y acumulados [Judgment for the Protection of the Political-Electoral Rights of the Citizen, Case SUP-RAP-121/2020 and related cases]. https://www.te.gob.mx/EE/SUP/2020/RAP/121/SUP_2020_RAP_121-945532.pdf

At the local level, **the implementation of rainbow quotas faced numerous obstacles**: only 21 of Mexico's 32 states adopted this measure during the 2021 electoral process⁴⁹. Key challenges included inconsistent interpretations between local and national electoral bodies, institutional resistance, time constraints that affected legal certainty, and a lack of prior research or data.

In 2024, these challenges intensified as all political parties introduced a legislative proposal to amend the electoral law in ways that would restrict these affirmative actions. However, resistance from civil society and intervention by the Supreme Court of Justice ensured the continuation of these measures for that electoral cycle.

Additionally, the INE implemented a self-identification system for LGBTIQ+ candidates, affirming that candidates' gender identities would be based on their self-definition. **Under this policy, political parties could nominate up to three nonbinary candidates without having to count them within either of the traditional gender categories**⁵⁰.

The implementation of rainbow quotas has demonstrated both the importance of strong affirmative action measures and the difficulties of putting them into practice in a politically resistant environment. While the quotas have enabled historic levels of LGBTIQ+ political representation in Mexico, legal challenges and uneven adoption across states highlight the ongoing need for stronger institutional support and cohesion.

The political resistance from parties and the fragmented implementation across the country underscore the importance of strengthening alliances with civil society to push for a more uniform and effective adoption of affirmative actions nationwide.

49 El Colegio de México. (2022). Estudio especializado sobre la efectividad en la aplicación de las acciones afirmativas y las barreras que enfrentan los grupos en situación de discriminación en la representación política en el proceso electoral federal 2020-2021 [Specialized Study on the Effectiveness of Affirmative Action Measures and the Barriers Faced by Discriminated Groups in Political Representation During the 2020-2021 Federal Electoral Process]. <https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/147274/CGex202212-14-ip-22.pdf>

50 Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE). (2021). Acuerdo del Consejo General INE/CG18/2021 [General Council Agreement INE/CG18/2021].

1.3.6

Trans political innovation: Disruptive ways of doing politics in Latin America and the Caribbean (2020–2024)

Between 2020 and 2024, trans people did more than just participate in electoral processes — they profoundly transformed the way politics is done in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through candidacies that crossed party lines, narrative strategies that redefined representation, and organizing practices rooted in community activism, trans leaders introduced what many activists and candidates have called “**trans technologies**” to contest political power.

This concept, which originated in trans movements from the Global South and gained traction in Brazil’s electoral context, refers to how trans people engage in politics through embodied experience, networks of care, and the ability to create political solutions beyond conventional frameworks.

Brazil has been fertile ground for this kind of innovation. In 2018, the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) interpreted Law No. 9.504/97 — which governs gender quotas — to ensure the inclusion of trans people on candidate lists. The ruling allowed trans men and women to be registered and counted according to their gender identity, rather than their assigned sex at birth. The court also recognized the right to use a person’s chosen name (*nome social*) on voting documents, which became a cornerstone for the full inclusion of trans people in electoral processes. By 2022, 37,646 people had used their chosen name on their voter ID — a 373.83% increase from 2018⁵¹. In the 2024 elections, 967 trans candidacies were registered (representing 0.2% of all nominations), 341 of which requested to use their chosen name on the electronic ballot⁵².

This institutional framework has allowed figures like **Thabatta Pimenta**, **Robeyoncé Lima**, **Dani Balbi**, **Erika Hilton**, and **Benny Briolly** to bring long-ignored issues into the public arena, such as abortion rights, structural anti-racism, and transjustice. They did so through strategies like collective candidacies, relying on community networks rather than party machines, and deploying political messaging that centers tenderness and the body as tools of resistance and power.

51 Tribunal Superior Eleitoral. (2022, julho). Eleitorado com nome social aumentou 373,83% entre 2018 e 2022 [Electorate Using Social Name Increased by 373.83% Between 2018 and 2022]. <https://www.tse.jus.br/comunicacao/noticias/2022/Julho/eleitorado-com-nome-social-aumentou-373-83-entre-2018-e-2022>

52 Folha de S.Paulo. (2024, agosto). Eleições 2024 terão ao menos 967 candidatos transgênero [2024 Elections Will Have at Least 967 Transgender Candidates]. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2024/08/eleicoes-municipais-deste-ano-tem-967-candidatos-registrados-como-transgeneros.shtml>

In Peru, **Gahela Cari** made history in 2021 as the first trans woman to run for Congress. She ran as part of the founding slate of Juntos por el Perú and led a campaign grounded in anticolonial and feminist legacies, placing care, territory, and the recognition of diverse identities at the heart of her platform.

These experiences reflect a distinctly trans approach to politics — one that goes beyond simply gaining access to candidacies and instead pushes toward reimagining how power is exercised. These candidacies often grow out of activist trajectories, prioritize accountability to their communities, and treat visibility not as an end in itself but as a tool to open doors for others.

Beyond the ballot box, trans political innovation has also manifested in the creation of candidate networks, the promotion of electoral protocols that recognize gender identity, and the strategic use of institutional language to demand structural reform. This strategy of “institutional hacking” — as **Benny Briolly** calls it — has demonstrated that trans people are not only participating, but actively reshaping the political playing field from the margins.

In a region where being trans continues to be a high-risk condition, the political presence of these leaders is, in itself, a radical act of democratic innovation. Their way of doing politics expands what is possible — not just for trans people, but for all those historically excluded from power.



CHAPTER 2: PROGRESS IN POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND PERSISTENT CHALLENGES



2.1

Mapping nationally elected LGBTIQ+ Officials (1997–2024)

Since the historic election of **Elsa Patria Jiménez in Mexico in 1997** as the first openly lesbian congresswoman in Latin America, a total of **61 LGBTIQ+⁵³ individuals** have been elected to national congresses and parliaments across the region through October 2024. Of these, **nine have been re-elected** on more than one occasion, bringing the total number of terms served to **73**.

⁵³ It is important to clarify that this group includes four congresswomen from Mexico whose sexual orientation or gender identity has not been publicly disclosed, but who were nominated through diversity quota mechanisms. However, some of them have been publicly questioned in the media for allegedly misrepresenting or appropriating this affirmative action measure.

Table 3. Distribution of openly LGBTIQ+ members of congress elected in Latin America between 1997 and 2024, by country and sexual orientation.

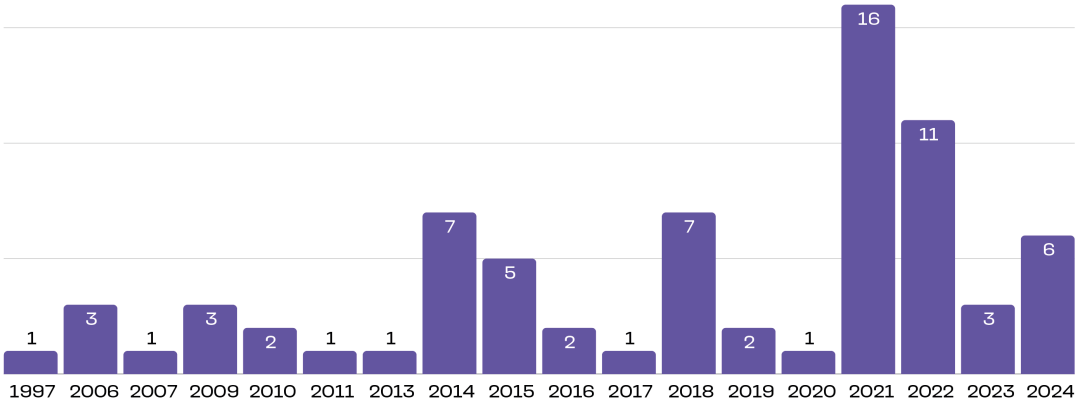
Country	Gay men	Lesbian women	Bisexual women	Trans women	Non-binary people	N/A	Total
Mexico	3	7	1	3	—	4	18
Colombia	3	3	2	—	1	—	9
Brazil	2	1	1	2	—	—	6
Chile	1	1	2	1	—	—	5
Argentina	3	1	—	—	—	—	4
Peru	3	1	—	—	—	—	4
Uruguay	2	1	—	1	—	—	4
Ecuador	—	1	1	1	—	—	3
Costa Rica	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Guatemala	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Venezuela	1	—	—	1	—	—	2
Bolivia	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Honduras	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total	22	18	7	9	1	4	61

Source: Compiled from media reports, civil society organization documents, and the “Vote for Equality” campaign.

According to this monitoring, only one openly LGBTIQ+ person was elected during the 1990s. However, between 2006 and 2011, this number rose to 10 representatives across seven of the thirteen countries with LGBTIQ+ representation.

Initial entries primarily included cisgender gay men: **David Sánchez** (Mexico, 2006), **Carlos Montes de Oca** (Peru, 2006), **Clodovil Hernandes** (Brazil, 2006), **Osvaldo López** (Argentina, 2007), **Valeria Rubino** (Uruguay, 2007), and **Sandra Álvarez** (Ecuador, 2007) — the latter two entering as alternates. In 2010, Costa Rica elected **Carmen Muñoz Quesada**, and Brazil elected **Jean Wyllys**.

Graph 1. Timeline of openly LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to national congresses or parliaments (1997–2024).



Source: Compiled from media reports, civil society organization documents, and the “Vote for Equality” campaign.

Between 2013 and 2016, the number of elected LGBTIQ+ officials increased from 10 to 15. These elections began to include multiple LGBTIQ+ candidates being elected simultaneously, such as two openly lesbian women in Colombia. Venezuela and Peru also each saw two elected LGBTIQ+ representatives, while Uruguay elected three.

During this period, most elected officials were cisgender gay men (9), followed by cisgender lesbian women (4), and trans women (2). A defining feature of this period was the election of the first trans politicians in Latin America: Michelle Suárez as senator in Uruguay and Tamara Adrián as congresswoman in Venezuela.

This growth correlates with increasing social acceptance and recognition of LGBTIQ+ rights from 2010 onward, including gender identity and marriage equality laws⁵⁴. The period also saw the rise of more prominent LGBTIQ+ leaders advocating not only for human rights but also for labor rights and anti-corruption measures, broadening their appeal to voters⁵⁵.

Between 2017 and 2020, elections took place in at least 15 countries, but openly LGBTIQ+ individuals were elected in only seven: Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala, and Peru. Notable elections include Aldo Dávila Morales in Guatemala and Enrique Sánchez Carballo in Costa Rica—the first openly gay congressmen in their respective countries—as well as Colombia’s first openly gay congressman.

This period also saw a rise in the number of diverse women elected: of 11 elected officials, six were cisgender lesbian women and one was a trans woman—Diane Rodríguez in Ecuador. Four of these women were elected to Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies.

There was also a clear uptick in re-elections of LGBTIQ+ candidates, including **Alberto de Belaunde** in Peru and **Angélica Lozano** in Colombia — demonstrating the increasing strength of these leaders.

Between 2021 and 2024, there was a marked surge in LGBTIQ+ political representation. Nearly half (49%) of all national-level LGBTIQ+ elected officials from 1997 to 2024 were elected during this period. While 36 LGBTIQ+ individuals were elected in the first 20 years of the 21st century, the same number were elected in just four years (2021–2024). Elections were held in 15 countries, but LGBTIQ+ representation was observed in eight: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru.

This cycle saw the consolidation of diverse women’s representation: of the 36 mandates, 28 were held by women (78%). This included nine lesbians, eight bisexual women, and six trans women, with five additional women elected in Mexico whose sexual orientation was unknown.

A notable development was the rise in trans women’s representation — from only three between 2013 and 2020 to six between 2021 and 2024 — elected in Mexico, Brazil, and Chile. Overall, Mexico had the highest number of women elected (13), followed by Brazil (4), Chile (4), Colombia (4), Ecuador (2), and Peru (with Susel Paredes becoming the first openly lesbian congresswoman).

54 López Sánchez, Ericka (2021). Las reformas orientadas a los derechos LGBTIQ+ en América Latina y sus mecanismos de aprobación [Reforms Oriented Toward LGBTIQ+ Rights in Latin America and Their Approval Mechanisms]. Working Paper No. 15. <https://reformaspoliticas.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-DT-Lopez-Sanchez-Reconocimiento-derechos-de-las-diversidades-1.pdf>

55 According to information gathered during the interviews.

In Mexico, the implementation of “rainbow quotas” (cuotas arcoíris) had a substantial impact on LGBTIQ+ political representation. According to *Between LGBT**⁵⁶, 72 LGBTIQ+ candidates ran in the 2021 elections. In 2024, the organization YAAJ⁵⁷ documented at least 1,212 LGBTIQ+ candidacies, representing 2.79% of total candidacies⁵⁸.

Of those, 14 were elected in 2021. Four won office through affirmative action measures: **Brenda Espinosa López**, **Kathia María Bolio**, **Fuensanta Guadalupe Guerrero**, and **Salma Luévano**. **María Clemente García**, one of the first trans women elected to the Chamber of Deputies, did not win under an affirmative action measure⁵⁹. **Celeste Ascencio**, elected under the quota for Indigenous peoples, advocated for both Indigenous and LGBTIQ+ rights and became the second openly lesbian woman to serve in the Mexican Senate, following **Jesusa Rodríguez** (2018, alternate senator).

In the 2024 elections, six LGBTIQ+ individuals were elected to Mexico’s national congress.

In Peru, **Susel Paredes Pique** and **Alejandro Caverro Alva** were elected to Congress in 2021, marking a milestone for LGBTIQ+ representation.

Brazil also saw significant growth. In 2022, 356 LGBTIQ+ candidates ran for office⁶⁰. Four were elected as federal deputies, and 14 won seats at the state and district levels.

This growth can be attributed to factors such as Brazil’s political transition from Bolsonaro’s hostile government to Lula da Silva’s more progressive administration, and increased civic mobilization. In 2024, civil society efforts led to the Superior Electoral Court taking steps to collect data on candidates’ sexual orientation and gender identity.

56 *Between LGBT**. (2022). Candidaturas LGBT+: elecciones México 2021 [LGBT+ Candidacies: Mexico Elections 2021]. <https://www.betweenlgbt.com.mx/candidaturas-lgbt-elecciones-2021/>

57 Although the data collected by *Between LGBT** and YAAJ are not directly comparable due to differing data collection methodologies, they offer an approximation of the evolution of LGBTIQ+ political participation.

58 Fuentes Carreño, M. A., & Aguilar López, B. A. (2024). Voto por la Igualdad: Informe pre-eleitoral de las candidaturas LGBTTTI+ en México 2024 [Vote for Equality: Pre-Electoral Report on LGBTTTI+ Candidacies in Mexico 2024]. Ciudad de México: YaaJ México - Victory Institute.

59 El Colegio de México. (2022). Estudio especializado sobre la efectividad en la aplicación de las acciones afirmativas y las barreras que enfrentan los grupos en situación de discriminación en la representación política en el proceso electoral federal 2020-2021 [Specialized Study on the Effectiveness of Affirmative Action Measures and Barriers Faced by Discriminated Groups in Political Representation During the 2020–2021 Federal Electoral Process]. <https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/147274/CGex202212-14-ip-22.pdf>

60 Vote LGBT. (s.f.). 18 LGBT+ elegidos [18 LGBT+ Elected Officials]. <https://www.votelgbt.org/eletes>

Table 4. Openly LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to national congress in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1997 and 2024.

Full name of elected official	Country	Election year	Office	Upper/Lower house	LGBTIQ+ status
Osvaldo Ramón López	Argentina	2007	Senator	Upper House	Gay
AnaLuz Ailen Carol	Argentina	2015	National Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Maximiliano Ferraro	Argentina	2019	National Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Esteban Paulon	Argentina	2023	National Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Maximiliano Ferraro	Argentina	2023	National Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Jose Manuel Canelas Jaime	Bolivia	2014	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Clodovil Hernandes	Brazil	2006	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Jean Wyllys	Brazil	2010	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Jean Wyllys	Brazil	2014	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Daiana Santos	Brazil	2022	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Dandara Tonantzin	Brazil	2022	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Bisexual
Duda Salabert	Brazil	2022	Deputy	Lower House	Trans
Erika Hilton	Brazil	2022	Deputy	Lower House	Trans
Claudio Arriagda Macaya	Chile	2013	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Camila Musante	Chile	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Bisexual
Emilia Schneider	Chile	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Trans
Francisca Bello Campos	Chile	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Bisexual

Marcela Riquelme	Chile	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Angelica Lozano	Colombia	2014	Representative	Lower House	Lesbian
Claudia Lopez	Colombia	2014	Senator	Upper House	Lesbian
Angelica Lozano	Colombia	2018	Senator	Upper House	Lesbian
Mauricio Toro	Colombia	2018	Representative	Lower House	Gay
Alejandro García	Colombia	2022	Representative	Lower House	Gay
Andrés Cancimance	Colombia	2022	Representative	Lower House	Gay
Angelica Lozano	Colombia	2022	Senator	Upper House	Lesbian
Carolina Giraldo	Colombia	2022	Representative	Lower House	Bisexual
María del Mar Pizarro	Colombia	2022	Representative	Lower House	Lesbian
Susana Boreal	Colombia	2022	Representative	Lower House	Bisexual
Etna Tamara Argote Calderón	Colombia	2022	Representative	Lower House	Non-binary
Carmen María Muñoz Quesada	Costa Rica	2010	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Enrique Sanchez Carballo	Costa Rica	2018	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Sandra Álvarez	Ecuador	2009	National Assembly Member	Unicameral	Lesbian
Diane Rodriguez	Ecuador	2017	National Assembly Member	Unicameral	Trans
Jahiren Noriega Donoso	Ecuador	2021	National Assembly Member	Unicameral	Bisexual
Jahiren Noriega Donoso	Ecuador	2023	National Assembly Member	Unicameral	Bisexual
Sandra Morán Reyes	Guatemala	2015	Deputy	Unicameral	Lesbian

Aldo Davila Morales	Guatemala	2019	Congresista	Unicameral	Gay
Victor Manuel Grajeda	Honduras	2021	Deputy	Unicameral	Gay
Elsa Patria Jimenez	Mexico	1997	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
David Sanchez	Mexico	2006	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Elizabeth Morales Garcia	Mexico	2009	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Benjamin Medrano	Mexico	2015	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Celeste Ascencio	Mexico	2018	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Jessusa Rodriguez	Mexico	2018	Senator	Upper House	Lesbian
Lucia Rojas Martinez	Mexico	2018	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Wendy Briceño Zuloaga	Mexico	2018	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Brenda Espinoza Lopez	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Celeste Ascencio	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Fuensanta Guerrero Esquivel	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	N/S
Katia Bolio Pinelo	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	N/S
Maria Clemente Garcia Moreno	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Trans
Maria Fernanda Felix Fregoso	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Trans
Salma Luevano Luna	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Trans
Wendy Briceño Zuloaga	Mexico	2021	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Alma Rosa De la Vega Vargas	Mexico	2024	Deputy	Lower House	N/S
Celeste Ascencio	Mexico	2024	Senator	Upper House	Lesbian
Jaime Lopez Vela	Mexico	2024	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Gay

Fuensanta Guerrero Esquivel	Mexico	2024	Deputy	Lower House	N/S
Laura Hernandez García	Mexico	2024	Federal Deputy	Lower House	Bisexual
Veronica Perez Herrera	Mexico	2024	Deputy	Lower House	N/S
Carlos Bruce Montes de Oca	Peru	2006	Congress Member	Unicameral	Gay
Carlos Bruce Montes de Oca	Peru	2011	Congress Member	Unicameral	Gay
Alberto de Beláunde de Cárdenas	Peru	2016	Congress Member	Unicameral	Gay
Carlos Bruce Montes de Oca	Peru	2016	Congress Member	Unicameral	Gay
Alberto de Beláunde de Cárdenas	Peru	2020	Congress Member	Unicameral	Gay
Alejandro Caverro Alva	Peru	2021	Congress Member	Unicameral	Gay
Susel Paredes	Peru	2021	Congress Member	Unicameral	Lesbian
Valeria Rubino	Uruguay	2009	Deputy	Lower House	Lesbian
Martin Couto	Uruguay	2014	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Mathias Dutra	Uruguay	2014	Deputy	Lower House	Gay
Michelle Suarez	Uruguay	2014	Senator	Upper House	Trans
Rosmit Mantilla	Venezuela	2015	Deputy	Unicameral	Gay
Tamara Adrián	Venezuela	2015	Deputy	Unicameral	Trans

2.1.1

Representation of lesbian, bisexual and trans women

According to the data collected, LBT women account for 56% of all openly LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to national congresses and parliaments in Latin America and the Caribbean⁶¹. Among them, 18 identify as lesbian, 7 as bisexual, and 9 as trans women. This trend may be partly explained by the historical relationship between feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements.

Lesbian and bisexual women — often aligned with feminist agendas — have found spaces for struggle, visibility, and mutual support, which in turn have enabled them to articulate their demands, mobilize politically, and succeed in elections⁶². Additionally, the influence of transfeminist movements and the alliances they've forged have played an important role in the increased presence and political impact of trans women in decision-making spaces.

It is important to note, however, that not all lesbian, bisexual, and trans women candidates are aligned with feminist agendas. Some have emerged from different political contexts or platforms, illustrating the diversity of approaches and motivations that shape their pathways into politics.

Some countries show a marked tendency toward electing LBT women. In Mexico, for instance, only three gay men have been elected as deputies, compared to 11 LBT women — an even starker contrast when analyzed by electoral cycle. In the 2024 elections, just one gay man was elected, while five diverse women won seats. In 2021, all eight LGBTIQ+ individuals elected were LBT women.

Chile's 2021 elections also resulted exclusively in the election of LBT women, including Emilia Schneider, the country's first trans woman elected to Congress. A similar pattern appeared in Brazil, where four LBT women were elected. In Ecuador, all openly LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to public office have been diverse women as well.

By contrast, countries like Bolivia and Honduras have only elected gay men. In Peru, of the four openly LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to Congress, three were gay men — two of whom were re-elected—while only one openly lesbian woman has ever held a congressional seat.

61 This figure could increase if the sexual orientation or gender identity of the four elected officials in Mexico — about whom no public information is available — were known.

62 According to information gathered through interviews.

*Interviews conducted as part of this study revealed that the “**masculinization of politics**” plays a distinct role in shaping LGBTIQ+ candidacies. While in cisgender heterosexual contexts this dynamic typically favors men and marginalizes women due to stereotypes about leadership, in the case of LGBTIQ+ individuals, it can sometimes have the opposite effect — opening space for LBT women while placing additional barriers on gay or bisexual men, depending on the context.*

2.1.2

Trans representation

The political representation of trans people in Latin America remains deeply insufficient. Despite overall progress in the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals in regional politics, trans people account for only 16% of all LGBTIQ+ individuals elected to national congresses and parliaments across Latin America and the Caribbean. This stark figure highlights the disconnect between the political sphere and the lived reality of trans communities in the region, who continue to face significant barriers to fair and equitable representation.

The obstacles to trans political representation are complex and multifaceted. Structural political violence — both physical and symbolic — limits not only access to elected office but also the ability of trans people to remain in political spaces. Many face transphobia and misgendering within their own political parties, and their leadership capabilities are often dismissed or undervalued. This exclusion is not merely interpersonal — it is institutionalized in electoral systems that fail to adequately recognize gender identity, perpetuating a hostile environment in which running for office becomes an uphill battle.

One dimension of this exclusion is the near-total absence of trans men in elected office. While trans women have emerged as prominent figures in trans rights movements, trans men remain largely invisible in both activism and politics. This invisibility is compounded by patriarchal structures that not only limit the visibility of trans men but subject them to a dual burden of transphobia and machismo, effectively excluding them from decision-making spaces.

The case of **Tuss Fernández**, a candidate for deputy in **Mexico's** 2023–2024 elections, illustrates the challenges trans men face. Despite his active advocacy for trans rights, Tuss was incorrectly registered as a woman on official candidate lists — a clear reflection of the lack of awareness and sensitivity within political parties when it comes to trans rights.

These issues are not new. In 2017, Honduran trans activist and candidate **Rihanna Ferrera** experienced a similar situation: she was misgendered on the ballot, with her legal name used instead of her chosen name⁶³ effectively erasing her gender identity from the public eye⁶⁴. Such incidents reveal a structural failure within political parties and electoral systems to respect and uphold the political rights of trans individuals.

⁶³ In Honduras, there is currently no administrative or legal mechanism that allows trans people to change their name and gender marker on official documents. This deepens their political exclusion and limits their effective participation in electoral processes.

⁶⁴ Teen Vogue. (2017). *Rihanna Ferrera ran for office in Honduras*. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/rihanna-ferrera-ran-for-office-in-honduras>

The lack of protocols to protect trans people in electoral processes underscores the absence of institutional mechanisms to ensure that their political participation is both respectful and equitable. This not only reflects glaring gaps in the protection of trans political rights, but also sheds light on the systemic difficulties trans people face in accessing, being accepted in, and becoming visible within political life. As long as patriarchal structures remain a dominant force, it is imperative to transform political norms and ensure electoral processes are truly inclusive.

The political representation of trans people is not only a matter of inclusion — it is a matter of social justice. While some sectors of the LGBTIQ+ population have made gains in political visibility, trans people remain marginalized by the structural violence that persists across society and within institutions. This reality underscores the urgent need to reform political systems and to guarantee electoral processes that fully respect gender identity, especially for trans people. Moving forward, it is essential that all sectors of society come together to build a more inclusive and respectful political environment—one in which trans people can participate fully, without fear of exclusion or violence.

2.1.3

Continuity and re-election of LGBTIQ+ political leaders

The re-election and sustained presence of LGBTIQ+ individuals in political office is a crucial indicator of success in the electoral arena. It reflects growing public acceptance and a recognition of their capabilities as leaders. Factors such as strong legislative performance, the ability to forge strategic alliances, collaborative work with civil society organizations, media visibility, and a focus on issues beyond LGBTIQ+ rights have all helped these leaders connect with a broader electorate⁶⁵.

However, it's important to note that re-election is also shaped by each country's political climate. In contexts where social acceptance is higher and significant rights have been secured, LGBTIQ+ individuals find more favorable ground to continue their political careers. Conversely, in countries with intense political polarization or strong resistance to sexual and gender diversity, remaining in office can be an uphill battle.

LGBTIQ+ politicians often face stigmas that restrict their perceived legitimacy in addressing broader political issues. The tendency to pigeonhole them as advocates solely for LGBTIQ+ issues can undermine their credibility in key areas such as economics, public health, and social justice. Prejudice — whether from the public or from legislative colleagues — creates yet another barrier to full political integration.

While there is no comprehensive data on how many LGBTIQ+ politicians have sought re-election, nine notable cases have been identified. Among them are current senators Angélica Lozano of Colombia and Celeste Ascencio of Mexico, both of whom have been re-elected across three consecutive terms. Another example is Jahiren Noriega from Ecuador, who first served as an alternate assembly member before assuming the full position. In the 2023 elections, she ran as a lead candidate and was elected.

It is worth noting that among these nine re-elected officials, five are lesbian and bisexual cisgender women, while the remaining four are cisgender gay men. This latter group includes former Peruvian congressmen **Carlos Bruce Montes de Oca** and **Alberto de Belaunde**.

Despite these achievements, it is significant that Mexico's first two trans women elected to Congress were not re-elected. This highlights the ongoing challenges trans individuals face in political life. Their absence in subsequent terms underscores the need to confront and dismantle the structural and cultural barriers that continue to limit the political representation and continuity of LGBTIQ+ leaders.

⁶⁵ According to information gathered through interviews.



2.2

Ongoing regional challenges

LGBTIQ+ political participation is persistently met with multifaceted violence. Political violence targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean is neither new nor isolated — it is a structural form of exclusion that manifests with varying degrees of intensity, from symbolic discrimination to physical aggression and murder. Throughout this report, we have documented patterns of harassment, threats, stigmatization, and direct violence aimed at deterring LGBTIQ+ leaders from participating in politics.

The following is a compilation of documented cases between 2006 and 2024. It includes public records of political violence against LGBTIQ+ people in the exercise of their civic and electoral rights or while serving in public office. This data, drawn from public complaints, media reports, and civil society organizations, should be understood as a partial and non-exhaustive snapshot, as many cases go unreported, unacknowledged, or insufficiently investigated. The persistence of fear, impunity, and the lack of effective reporting mechanisms prevents a full understanding of the scope of the issue.

This documentation aims to underscore the severity of the situation and the urgent need to establish prevention, protection, and reparation mechanisms to ensure that no one is excluded or attacked for exercising their right to political participation.

Table 5. Documented Cases of Political Violence Against LGBTIQ+ Individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean (2006–2024).

Name	Country	Year	SOGIE	Type of violence
Marielle Franco Da Silva	Brazil	2018	Lesbian	Homicide
Jean Wyllys	Brazil	2018	Gay	Threats
Jean Wyllys	Brazil	2019	Gay	Threats
Benny Briolly	Brazil	2020	Trans woman	Threats
Erika Hilton	Brazil	2021	Trans woman	Threats
Carol Iara	Brazil	2021	Trans woman	Threats
Samara Sosthenes	Brazil	2021	Trans woman	Threats
Benny Briolly	Brazil	2022	Trans woman	Threats
Benny Briolly	Brazil	2022	Trans woman	Transphobia / racism
Erika Hilton	Brazil	2022	Trans woman	Threats
Duda Salabert	Brazil	2022	Trans woman	Threats
Duda Salabert	Brazil	2022	Trans woman	Threats
Duda Salabert	Brazil	2023	Trans woman	Institutional discrimination
Erika Hilton	Brazil	2023	Trans woman	Institutional discrimination
Erika Hilton	Brazil	2023	Trans woman	Institutional discrimination
Valentina Verbel	Chile	2013	Trans woman	Misgendering
Alejandra Gonzalez	Chile	2017	Trans woman	Misgendering
Emilia Schneider	Chile	2022	Trans woman	Institutional discrimination
Emilia Schneider	Chile	2022	Trans woman	Institutional discrimination
Emilia Schneider	Chile	2023	Trans woman	Misgendering
Mauricio Toro	Colombia	2021	Gay	Institutional discrimination

Taliana Gómez	Colombia	2023	Trans woman	Threatening calls
Jonier Alberto Quinceno Ceballos	Colombia	2023	Gay	Death threats
Edwin Rubio Rivas	Colombia	2023	Gay	Death threats
Fred de la Rosa	Colombia	2023	Gay	Death threats
Lina Marcela Muñoz Méndez	Colombia	2023	Bisexual woman	Threats
Claudia Patricia Rodríguez Romero	Colombia	2023	Lesbian	Threats
Jorge Gonzáles	Colombia	2023	Non-Binary	Intimidating messages
Aleska Montoya	Colombia	2023	Trans woman	Threats
Patricia Galindo	Colombia	2023	Lesbian	Threats
Tatiana Céspedes Guependo	Colombia	2023	Trans woman	Threats
Jhonathan Navarro	Colombia	2023	Trans man	Violence within political party
Paloma Ruckminy Cadavid Rojas	Colombia	2023	Lesbian	Violence against campaign materials
Fanny Dinora Pachón	Colombia	2023	Pansexual woman	Discrimination during public events
Claudia Spellman	Honduras	2013	Trans woman	Misgendering
Arley Gómez	Honduras	2013	Trans woman	Misgendering
Rihana Ferreira	Honduras	2017	Trans woman	Misgendering
Victor Grajeda	Honduras	2023	Gay	Institutional discrimination
Jakeline Barrientos	Mexico	2016	Trans woman	Misgendering
Salma Luevano	Mexico	2022	Trans woman	Institutional discrimination
Samantha Gomes	Mexico	2024	Trans woman	Homicide

Miguel Angel Zavala	Mexico	2024	Gay	Homicide
Galilea Garcia	Mexico	2024	Trans woman	Attempted murder
Barbara Fox	Mexico	2024	Trans woman	Online threats
Paola Suarez	Mexico	2024	Trans woman	Death threats against her and her family
Dulce Gudiño	Mexico	2024	Lesbian	Intimidation and threats
Tuss Fernandez	Mexico	2024	Trans man	Violence within political party
Mayté Regina Gudea	Mexico	2024	Trans woman	Misgendering
Héctor Mora Zermelo	Mexico	2024	Gay	Violence within political party
Gahela Cari	Peru	2021	Trans woman	Misgendering
Gahela Cari	Peru	2021	Trans woman	Misgendering
Unnamed	Peru	2006 - 2020	Trans woman	Misgendering
Unnamed	Peru	2007 - 2020	Trans woman	Misgendering
Unnamed	Peru	2008 - 2020	Trans woman	Misgendering
Unnamed	Peru	2009 - 2020	Trans woman	Misgendering
Unnamed	Peru	2010 - 2020	Trans woman	Misgendering
Unnamed	Peru	2011 - 2020	Trans woman	Misgendering

This collection of violent incidents illustrates the stark reality: political participation for LGBTIQ+ individuals in the region continues to be marked by risk, discrimination, and silencing. The recurring threats, attacks, and murders against those who dare to raise their voices or challenge power call into question the democratic commitments of our States and expose the deep failures in institutional protection and justice.

Beyond the names and dates, this list is also a reminder of the stories we do not know — of the violence that was never reported, of the individuals who chose not to run, not to speak, or not to be visible for fear of retaliation. These absences are also a form of political violence.

Building a truly participatory and democratic society demands more than simply opening the doors of political institutions — it requires transforming the structures that make those spaces dangerous for people who embody diversity. Each case listed here is not only a warning signal but also a call for collective and institutional action to ensure that politics is never again a threat to living with pride.

From the Observatory, we have identified seven key patterns that continue to hinder the full inclusion of the LGBTIQ+ population in political processes:

- * **Hate speech:** Electoral campaigns often exploit hatred toward sexual and gender diversity, fostering environments of polarization and violence.
- * **Explicitly anti-LGBTIQ+ policies:** Several countries have advanced referendums and legislation aimed at undermining LGBTIQ+ rights, weaponizing fear and misinformation as political tools.
- * **Lack of legal recognition of gender identity:** Institutional discrimination continues to affect trans and nonbinary individuals, limiting their ability to fully engage in electoral processes.

- * **Discrimination and harassment within political parties:** While some parties have adopted inclusive measures, internal discrimination and lack of meaningful support remain persistent barriers to LGBTIQ+ participation.
- * **Physical violence and direct threats:** Political violence against LGBTIQ+ candidates has intensified, with direct threats and physical attacks aimed at eliminating their presence in the electoral arena.
- * **Hostility and isolation of elected LGBTIQ+ officials:** Even after being elected, LGBTIQ+ individuals often face harassment and discrimination within legislative bodies, limiting their ability to perform their duties effectively.
- * **Impunity and lack of state protection:** The impunity surrounding acts of political violence, combined with inadequate protection mechanisms, continues to worsen the situation.

Recognizing and addressing these challenges is essential to ensure meaningful political participation and build a truly inclusive democracy in the region. Governments, political parties, and civil society must act together to dismantle the violence, legal obstacles, and discriminatory practices that still pervade politics in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the following section, we explore each of these challenges in greater depth, highlighting strategies of resistance and issuing urgent calls to action.

2.2.1

Hate speech in political discourse

In recent decades, hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ people has become a recurring tactic in electoral campaigns, manifesting through inflammatory statements by candidates and advertisements portraying the community as a threat to morality and family values.

This rhetoric is built on fear, ignorance, and prejudice, presenting sexual and gender diversity as an imminent risk. These narratives aim to polarize the electorate, constructing a line between “us,” the defenders of “traditional values,” and “them,” who represent difference and change (perceived as a threat).

The use of hate as a political tool is neither new nor isolated; it forms part of a transnational strategy that connects conservative movements across regions. The concept of “gender ideology” has been central to these narratives, allowing political and religious sectors to frame LGBTIQ+ rights as a threat to social stability. This strategy has evolved to fit local contexts, emerging in many countries with similar characteristics.

In **Colombia**, during the 2016 plebiscite on the Peace Agreement, opponents falsely claimed the agreement promoted “gender ideology,” contributing to its rejection by large conservative sectors⁶⁶. In Guatemala’s 2023 elections, several candidates publicly pledged to oppose same-sex marriage and abortion, weaponizing morality as a political tool⁶⁷. Similarly, in Brazil, a candidate accused his opponent of distributing a “gay kit” in schools, reinforcing stigma around inclusive education⁶⁸.

These narratives not only shape the tone of electoral campaigns but also create a climate of fear and violence. In some cases, LGBTIQ+ candidates have abandoned their campaigns due to threats or attacks, reflecting a hostile environment that undermines their participation and visibility.

Stigmatizing remarks and public statements by elected officials foster conditions ripe for violence and discrimination — not only against the LGBTIQ+ community, but also against gender activists and hu-

66 Human Rights Watch. (2022, septiembre 6). *How targeting LGBTIQ+ rights are part of the authoritarian playbook*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/06/how-targeting-lgbtq-rights-are-part-authoritarian-playbook>

67 Nodal. (2023, junio). Elecciones en Guatemala: 18 binomios presidenciales firman declaración contra el aborto y el matrimonio igualitario [Elections in Guatemala: 18 presidential tickets sign declaration against abortion and same-sex marriage]. <https://www.nodal.am/2023/06/elecciones-en-guatemala-18-binomios-presidenciales-firman-declaracion-contra-el-aborto-y-el-matrimonio-igualitario/>

68 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). (2021). *Situación de los derechos humanos en Brasil [Situation of Human Rights in Brazil]*. Organization of American States. <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/Brasil2021-es.pdf>

man rights defenders. In countries like **Paraguay**⁶⁹, **México**⁷⁰ y **Venezuela**⁷¹, the impunity surrounding homophobic comments has encouraged a culture of hate that normalizes violence and exclusion.

These hostile narratives have surfaced across various contexts:

- * In **Bolivia**, a candidate suggested that LGBTIQ+ individuals should receive “psychiatric treatment” and religious guidance to “correct” their identity⁷².
- * More recently, in **Argentina**, President Javier Milei and members of his party used opposition to LGBTIQ+ rights as a central element of their electoral messaging across media and social platforms⁷³.
- * In **Paraguay**, a 2017 resolution by the then Minister of Education banned any mention of gender in schools. In 2023, a bill was introduced to expand these restrictions⁷⁴. It was also reported that religious organizations, publicly funded, conducted workshops that spread misinformation about contraception and homosexuality⁷⁵.

69 Agencia Presentes. (2024, marzo 1). Paraguay: dichos homofóbicos de un ministro se suman a la avanzada antigénero del gobierno [Paraguay: Homophobic remarks by a minister add to the government's anti-gender offensive]. <https://agenciapresentes.org/2024/03/01/paraguay-dichos-homofobicos-de-un-ministro-intensificaron-la-avanzada-antigeno-del-gobierno/>

70 Homosensual. (s.f.). Funcionarios políticos, diputados y gobernadores con posturas anti-LGBT [Political officials, legislators, and governors with anti-LGBT stances]. <https://www.homosensual.com/lgbt/funcionarios-politicos-diputados-gobernadores-con-posturas-anti-lgbt/>

71 No más discriminación. (2023). LGBTIQfobia del Estado: fiscal general emitió comentarios discriminatorios contra personas trans en un podcast [State LGBTIQphobia: Attorney General made discriminatory comments against trans people on a podcast]. <https://nomasdiscriminacion.org/alertas/fiscal-trans-discurso-de-odio/>

72 Erbol. (2019). Candidato del PDC plantea tratamiento psiquiátrico para personas LGTB [PDC Candidate Proposes Psychiatric Treatment for LGBT People]. <https://erbol.com.bo/nacional/candidato-del-pdc-plantea-tratamiento-psiqui%C3%A1trico-para-personas-lgtb>

73 Agencia Presentes. (2023, noviembre 10). ¿Qué piensa La Libertad Avanza sobre la diversidad sexual? 10 frases [What Does La Libertad Avanza Think About Sexual Diversity? 10 Quotes]. <https://agenciapresentes.org/2023/11/10/que-piensa-la-libertad-avanza-sobre-la-diversidad-sexual-en-10-frases/>

74 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias. (2017). Resolución N.º 29664/2017: Por la cual se prohíbe la difusión y utilización de materiales impresos como digitales referentes a la teoría y/o ideología de género en instituciones educativas dependientes del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias [Resolution No. 29664/2017: Prohibiting the Use and Distribution of Printed or Digital Materials Related to Gender Theory and/or Ideology in Educational Institutions Under the Ministry]. <https://www.mec.gov.py/sigmec/resoluciones/29664-2017-RIERA.pdf>

75 Amnesty International. (2023, septiembre). Paraguay: Senado debe rechazar proyecto de ley que prohíbe educación con perspectiva de género [Paraguay: Senate Should Reject Bill That Bans Gender Perspective Education]. <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2023/09/paraguay-senate-bill-prohibits-education-gender-perspective/>

- * In **Brazil**, during the Bolsonaro administration, far-right political figures and religious leaders promoted disinformation campaigns targeting the LGBTIQ+ population⁷⁶.
- * In **El Salvador**, President Nayib Bukele has curtailed LGBTIQ+ rights by invoking “family” and “life” values. One example was the dismissal of 300 Ministry of Culture employees for allegedly promoting “incompatible agendas,” which was celebrated by some as a defense of the “traditional family.” Bukele also attacked the inclusion of gender perspectives in education. Similarly, Argentina’s Milei banned inclusive language and closed the Ministry of Women, Genders, and Diversity — steps that reflect a significant regression in acquired rights⁷⁷.

Hate speech not only targets LGBTIQ+ individuals but also undermines democracy itself. By promoting fear and division, these narratives exclude entire segments of the population from political debate and obstruct the development of inclusive public policies. The use of hate during electoral campaigns perpetuates inequality and reinforces power structures that marginalize the LGBTIQ+ community, making it harder to advance real and equitable representation.

Countering hate speech is essential to strengthening democracy. Embracing diversity as a source of opportunity — not a threat — is key to building more just societies where all people can fully participate and live with dignity. The fight against hate is, at its core, a fight for the right to equality and dignity for all, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

76 Open Democracy. (2023). Grupo antiabortista de Brasil difunde desinformación usando dinero público [Anti-Abortion Group in Brazil Spreads Disinformation Using Public Funds]. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/es/5050-es/brasil-sao-paulo-anti-aborto-dinero-p%C3%BAblico-desinformaci%C3%B3n/>

77 France 24. (2024, julio 5). *El Salvador de Bukele cierra espacios a la diversidad sexual* [Bukele’s El Salvador Shuts Down Spaces for Sexual Diversity]. <https://www.france24.com/es/minuto-a-minuto/20240705-el-salvador-de-bukele-cierra-espacios-a-la-diversidad-sexual>

2.2.2

Explicitly Anti-LGBTIQ+ Policies

In recent years, the promotion of openly anti-LGBTIQ+ laws and policies has become a recurring tactic in several countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. These initiatives often emerge during electoral cycles or periods of institutional crisis, when certain political actors seek to capitalize on fear and misinformation by framing LGBTIQ+ rights as a threat to children, families, or national values.

In **Argentina**, President Javier Milei's government is a paradigmatic example of institutional regression in terms of rights. Since taking office in 2023, Milei has dismantled the Ministry of Women, Genders, and Diversity; suspended the implementation of the Travesti-Trans Labor Quota Decree; defunded public policies for trans memory and justice; and championed a so-called "cultural battle" against feminism and sexual diversity⁷⁸. His party, La Libertad Avanza, has used platforms like X (formerly Twitter) to directly attack inclusive language, gender identity, and public policies that recognize LGBTIQ+ people as rights-holders.

In **Paraguay**, a ministerial resolution enacted in 2017 remains in force, prohibiting any mention of gender in the national education system⁷⁹. In 2023, a bill was introduced to further entrench this prohibition and penalize those who promote content deemed "contrary to traditional morals." These measures have been accompanied by public campaigns — often supported by religious groups and funded by the state — that spread false information about sexual health, trans identities, and diverse family structures.

Similarly, in **El Salvador**, President Nayib Bukele has weaponized ultra-conservative rhetoric within the state apparatus. In 2021, he dismissed 300 employees from the Ministry of Culture for allegedly promoting "ideological agendas," reinforcing a governance model based on the "traditional family" and the elimination of diversity policies⁸⁰. His administration also banned the use of inclusive language and has halted any reform efforts aimed at recognizing the rights of trans and nonbinary people.

78 Amnistía Internacional. (2024). *12 meses de gestión, 12 derechos perdidos [12 Months of Governance, 12 Rights Lost]*. <https://amnistia.org.ar/noticias/alerta-sobre-el-deterioro-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-argentina-tras-el-primer-ano-de-gestion-del-gobierno-de-javier-milei>

79 Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias. (2017). Resolución N.º 29664/2017: Por la cual se prohíbe la difusión y utilización de materiales impresos como digitales referentes a la teoría y/o ideología de género en instituciones educativas dependientes del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias [Resolution No. 29664/2017: Prohibiting the Distribution and Use of Printed and Digital Materials Related to Gender Theory and/or Ideology in Educational Institutions]. <https://www.mec.gov.py/sigmec/resoluciones/29664-2017-RIERA.pdf>

80 Associated Press. (2024, junio 28). Cuestionan despido de 300 trabajadores del Ministerio de Cultura de El Salvador [Dismissal of 300 Workers from El Salvador's Ministry of Culture Draws Criticism]. AP News. <https://apnews.com/world-news/general-news-423b848bb19f239c212ee-96f3f276e60>

In **Peru**, the ultraconservative movement “Con Mis Hijos No Te Metas” (“Don’t Mess With My Kids”) has had a significant impact on the country’s political and educational agenda. Since its emergence in 2016, the movement has led large-scale campaigns against the inclusion of gender perspectives in school curricula, framing it as a threat to the traditional family and moral values⁸¹.

In 2022, the social movement supported Bill 904/2021-CR, which sought to give parents the power to veto educational content related to comprehensive sex education. The bill was passed by the Peruvian Congress, prompting concern from human rights organizations, which condemned it as an act of censorship and a threat to equality and inclusive education⁸².

In May 2024, the Peruvian government issued a decree classifying transsexuality as a mental illness, arguing that this classification would improve access to healthcare for trans individuals. The move was widely criticized by LGBTIQ+ organizations and human rights defenders, who argued that it perpetuates the stigmatization and pathologization of trans identities⁸³.

Similar trends have emerged in other countries, including **Guatemala**⁸⁴ and **Honduras**⁸⁵, where legislative proposals have sought to ban gender-inclusive education, restrict gender-focused content, or prevent legal recognition of same-sex parent families.

These legal and symbolic setbacks not only undermine the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals, but also weaken the fundamental principles of democracy. The use of state power to marginalize, silence, or punish historically excluded populations threatens political pluralism, the rule of law, and the universality of human rights.

The weaponization of anti-LGBTIQ+ policies does not happen in a vacuum — it is part of a broader authoritarian restoration strategy aimed at reinstating traditional hierarchies of gender, race, and sexuality. As noted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

81 Martínez Osorio, M. (2017, 15 de mayo). *¿Con mis hijos no te metas: no a la ideología de género!* Dejusticia [Don’t Mess With My Children: No to Gender Ideology!]. <https://www.dejusticia.org/con-mis-hijos-no-te-metas-no-a-la-ideologia-de-genero/>

82 Wayka.pe. (2022). Con Mis Hijos No Te Metas reaparece para presionar que se promulgue ley contra la educación sexual integral [“Don’t Mess With My Children” Reappears to Pressure for the Passage of a Law Against Comprehensive Sexual Education]. <https://wayka.pe/con-mis-hijos-no-te-metas-reaparece-para-presionar-que-se-promulgue-ley-contra-la-educacion-sexual-integral/>

83 La Diaria. (2024). “Perú: un decreto firmado por la presidenta Dina Boluarte catalogó a la transexualidad como enfermedad mental” [Peru: A Decree Signed by President Dina Boluarte Classified Transsexuality as a Mental Illness].

84 BBC Mundo. (2022, 9 de marzo). Guatemala: el Congreso aprueba una ley que prohíbe el matrimonio homosexual y eleva la pena de prisión por aborto [Guatemala: Congress Approves Law Banning Same-Sex Marriage and Increasing Prison Terms for Abortion]. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-60677336>

85 ZENIT Noticias. (2023, 1 de septiembre). Honduras: presidenta veta ley que implantaba la ideología de género a través de educación [Honduras: President Vetoes Law That Imposed “Gender Ideology” Through Education]. <https://es.zenit.org/2023/09/01/honduras-presidenta-veta-ley-que-implantaba-la-ideologia-de-genero-a-traves-de-educacion/>

(IACHR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), denying rights based on sexual orientation and gender identity is incompatible with states' international obligations⁸⁶.

Overcoming these policies requires collective resistance. Defending LGBTIQ+ rights is not a niche cause — it is a cornerstone of democratic governance. It is imperative to strengthen alliances among civil society, international organizations, and political leaders to stop these rollbacks and ensure that democratic systems serve not as tools of exclusion, but as spaces for advancing equality and justice for all.

86 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). (2023, March). *Boletín LGBTI Enero - Marzo 2023* [LGBTI Bulletin, January–March 2023]. https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/r/dlgbti/boletines/boletin-2023_01_03.html

2.2.3

Lack of Legal Recognition of Gender Identity

The absence of legal recognition for the gender identity of trans and nonbinary people remains one of the most blatant forms of institutional violence within electoral systems. This reality stems from outdated laws and practices that fail to align with international human rights standards, perpetuating inequality rather than promoting inclusion. In the absence of clear procedures that enable gender identity recognition, **electoral authorities often force the use of incorrect names and pronouns in voter rolls and ballots — undermining both the dignity and electability of trans candidates.**

Misgendering — the use of incorrect names or pronouns — becomes a tool of symbolic violence. It causes emotional distress and shapes public perception of trans candidates. When political opponents or media outlets engage in misgendering, they reinforce prejudice and hate speech, further delegitimizing trans participation in politics. In some cases, this level of symbolic violence is so severe that trans individuals withdraw from their campaigns altogether.

Trans and nonbinary people also face **structural barriers in electoral processes**, such as their exclusion from gender quotas, which compounds the discrimination they experience. While some progress has been made through affirmative action initiatives⁸⁷, recognition from international bodies like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)⁸⁸ offers an important opportunity to advocate for legal reforms that address systemic exclusion and promote equitable participation in elections.

Despite some advances, many countries in Latin America have yet to adopt comprehensive gender recognition laws. Administrative hurdles, cultural discrimination, and a lack of training among officials continue to invisibilize and marginalize trans and nonbinary individuals, limiting their access to fundamental rights and full participation in political and electoral life.

87 San Martín, P., & Sepúlveda, D. (2022). Diagnóstico de las normas y prácticas para la garantía del derecho al voto de las personas trans: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras y Panamá. Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos – CAPEL [Assessment of Norms and Practices to Guarantee the Right to Vote for Trans People: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama]. https://www2.iidh.ed.cr/capel/media/1989/diagnostico-de-las-normas-y-practicas-para-la-garantia-del-derecho-al-voto-de-las-personas-trans_cr-guatemala-hnd-panama.pdf

88 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). (2024, March 31). *CIDH insta a los Estados a promover la participación política de personas trans* [IACHR urges States to promote the political participation of trans people] (Press Release 65/24). <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2024/065.asp>

The Observatory identified the following progressive legal frameworks in the region:

- * **Argentina:** A regional pioneer, Argentina enacted a 2012⁸⁹ law that allows trans people to change their name, photo, and gender marker on official documents without medical or judicial requirements — thanks to the advocacy of leaders like Lohana Berkins and Diana Sacayán⁹⁰. In 2021, the country added an “X” gender marker option to national IDs, expanding recognition for nonbinary identities⁹¹.
- * **Chile:** The 2018 Gender Identity Law permits changes to names and gender markers on official documents. However, during the national plebiscite, civil society organizations like **OTD-Chile** flagged issues with voter rolls that still displayed outdated personal data. In response, the Electoral Service (SERVEL) implemented an update protocol to mitigate the harm in future elections.
- * **Ecuador:** A 2016 law enabled changes to gender markers, though it initially required witness statements. In 2024, the process was streamlined, allowing trans individuals to make changes without needing third-party administrative support⁹².
- * **Bolivia:** While the 2016 Gender Identity Law⁹³ allows changes to name, image, and gender, a 2017 Constitutional Court decision restricted certain rights, creating a fragmented legal status for trans individuals and limiting their full access to fundamental rights.

89 Argentina. (2012). *Ley 26.743: Ley de identidad de género* [Law 26.743: Gender Identity Law]. *Official Gazette of the Argentine Republic*, May 24, 2012. <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/70106/20120524>

90 Presidencia de la Nación Argentina. (2023, May 9). *11 años de la Ley de Identidad de Género: un hito que cambió la vida de miles de personas* [11 Years of the Gender Identity Law: A Milestone That Changed Thousands of Lives]. <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/11-anos-de-la-ley-de-identidad-de-genero-un-hito-que-cambio-la-vida-de-miles-de-personas>

91 Presidencia de la Nación Argentina. (2023, July 21). *DNI no binario: en dos años más de mil personas modificaron la nomenclatura* [Non-Binary ID: Over One Thousand People Changed Their Gender Marker in Two Years]. <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/dni-no-binario-en-dos-anos-mas-de-mil-personas-modificaron-la-nomenclatura>

92 Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Género (CNIG). (n.d.). Comunicado oficial Nro. 13: El CNIG exhorta al Consejo Nacional Electoral a respetar el derecho a la identidad de género e igualdad y no discriminación de las personas transfemeninas y transmasculinas en las Elecciones Generales 2020-2021 [Official Statement No. 13: CNIG Urges the National Electoral Council to Respect the Right to Gender Identity, Equality, and Non-Discrimination for Transfeminine and Transmasculine People in the 2020–2021 General Elections]. <https://www.igualdadgenero.gob.ec/comunicado-oficial-nro-13/>

93 Absi, P. (2020). *El género sin sexo ni derechos: la Ley de Identidad de Género en Bolivia* [Gender Without Sex or Rights: The Gender Identity Law in Bolivia]. *Debate feminista*, 59, 31–47. <https://doi.org/10.22201/cieg.2594066xe.2020.59.02>

- * **Colombia:** Decree 1227 of 2015 established an administrative process for changing the “sex” marker on civil records, thanks to a combination of judicial actions and rulings by the Constitutional Court.
- * **Mexico:** Since 2015⁹⁴, the country has introduced policies allowing voter IDs to reflect individuals’ gender identity. In 2023, an “X” gender marker was added to the voter ID system following a court ruling, marking progress in the recognition of nonbinary identities.

Legal gender recognition can profoundly impact the lives of trans and nonbinary individuals by facilitating access to essential rights and enabling full public and electoral participation. A clear legal framework helps reduce violence and discrimination in elections and encourages trans and nonbinary individuals to exercise their right to vote in safe and respectful environments⁹⁵.

However, legal recognition alone is not enough. The uneven implementation of these laws and persistent cultural barriers demand a holistic approach to ensure that legal progress translates into tangible improvements in people’s lives.

Beyond legal frameworks, administrative obstacles continue to prevent effective political participation for trans and nonbinary individuals. These barriers reflect institutional violence, further exacerbated by the lack of access to electoral justice and the absence of procedures that affirm gender identities during official processes. Examples include:

94 Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE). (2017). Acuerdo INE/CG321/2017: Acuerdo del Consejo General del Instituto Nacional Electoral por el que se aprueba el cronograma de actividades para la elaboración del protocolo para adoptar las medidas tendientes a garantizar el derecho al voto de las personas cuya expresión de género no coincida con la información contenida en la credencial para votar [INE/CG321/2017 Agreement: General Council Agreement Approving the Timeline to Develop the Voting Protocol for People Whose Gender Expression Does Not Match Their ID Information]. https://www.ine.mx/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CGex201707-14-ap_14.pdf

95 Observatorio Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Derechos Políticos y Electorales de las Personas Trans. (2022). *Medidas para garantizar el derecho al voto de las personas trans en los países de América Latina y el Caribe* [Measures to Guarantee the Right to Vote for Trans People in Latin America and the Caribbean]. <https://promsex.org/publicaciones/medidas-para-garantizar-el-derecho-al-voto-de-las-personas-trans-en-los-paises-de-america-latina-y-el-caribe/>

- * **Chile:** In 2012–2013, trans woman **Valentina Verbal** was denied the right to register under her chosen name by electoral authorities⁹⁶.
- * **Mexico:** **Jakelyne Barrientos** was denied the ability to appear on ballots under her correct name, despite efforts to assert her rights⁹⁷.
- * **Honduras:** **Arley Gómez** and **Claudia Spellman**⁹⁸ were forced to register under the names on their birth certificates⁹⁹. **Rihanna Ferrera**, another trans leader, was denied registration under her gender-affirming name by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, harming her visibility and triggering hate speech during her campaign¹⁰⁰.
- * **Peru:** Between 2006 and 2020, six trans women were registered under their legal names despite being allowed to campaign using their chosen names — ultimately limiting their chances of being elected¹⁰¹.

In response to institutional violence, several countries have developed protocols to safeguard the rights of trans people in electoral contexts. These protocols aim to ensure gender-affirming treatment at polling places and to train election staff in respectful, non-discriminatory practices.

96 Dinamo. (2013, May 22). *Candidata trans se baja de primarias tras negativa del Tricel a inscribir su nombre de género* [Trans Candidate Withdraws from Primaries After Electoral Tribunal Refuses to Register Her Gender Name]. *El Dinamo*. <https://www.eldinamo.cl/pais/2013/05/22/candidata-trans-se-baja-de-primarias-tras-negativa-del-tricel-a-inscribir-su-nombre-de-genero/>

97 Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary, Guadalajara Regional Chamber. (2016). Sentencia SG-JDC-0270/2016 [Judgment SG-JDC-0270/2016]. <https://www.te.gob.mx/salasreg/ejecutoria/sentencias/guadalajara/SG-JDC-0270-2016.pdf>

98 Reportar Sin Miedo. (2021, May 27). Claudia Spellman huyó de la violencia en Honduras y ahora aspira a un reinado de belleza [Claudia Spellman Fled Violence in Honduras and Now Aspires to a Beauty Pageant Crown]. <https://reportarsinmiedo.org/2021/05/27/claudia-spellman-huyo-de-la-violencia-en-honduras-y-ahora-aspira-a-un-reinado-de-belleza/>

99 Instituto Nacional Demócrata. (2017). Reflexiones sobre la participación política de las personas LGBTI en Honduras [Reflections on the Political Participation of LGBTI People in Honduras]. <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Reflexiones%20Políticas-LGTBI.pdf>

100 Agencia Presentes. (2017, November 9). Honduras: La candidata trans que pelea contra la discriminación y la violencia [Honduras: The Trans Candidate Fighting Discrimination and Violence]. <https://agenciapresentes.org/2017/11/09/honduras-la-candidata-trans-que-pelea-contra-la-discriminacion-y-la-violencia/>

101 Rojas, P. (n.d.). Lineamientos para garantizar la participación política de las personas LGBTI [Guidelines to Ensure the Political Participation of LGBTI People]. Observatorio de Igualdad, Jurado Nacional de Elecciones del Perú.

- * **Mexico:** The National Electoral Institute (INE), in collaboration with civil society organizations, developed the *Protocol to Guarantee Voting Rights for Trans People on Equal Terms*¹⁰². It ensures that trans voters are addressed according to their gender identity and includes ongoing training for poll workers.
- * **Peru:** The 2021 *Protocol to Guarantee Voting Rights for Trans and Non-binary People*¹⁰³ allows for the use of social names and omits gendered language unless consented to. It also includes a complaint mechanism and educational resources on gender identity.
- * **Colombia:** In 2020, the National Electoral Council approved the *Protocol to Promote Measures Ensuring the Right to Vote for Trans People on Equal Terms*¹⁰⁴. It includes the presence of staff from the Ombudsman's Office and Attorney General's Office at polling stations, along with public awareness campaigns to reduce discrimination.

Recommendations for enhancing electoral inclusion:

- * **Simplify procedures:** Create accessible administrative processes for modifying legal documents for trans and nonbinary people.
- * **Include nonbinary markers:** Ensure accurate representation of nonbinary individuals in voter registration systems.
- * **Train electoral staff:** Implement continuous training on gender diversity and human rights to prevent discrimination.

102 Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE). (2018). Protocolo para adoptar las medidas tendientes a garantizar a las personas trans el ejercicio del voto en igualdad de condiciones y sin discriminación en todos los tipos de elección y mecanismos de participación ciudadana [Protocol for Adopting Measures to Ensure Trans People's Right to Vote on Equal Terms and Without Discrimination in All Elections and Citizen Participation Mechanisms]. <https://www.ine.mx/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DECEyEC-Protocolo-Trans.pdf>

103 Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales (ONPE). (2020). Protocolo para garantizar el derecho al voto de las personas trans y no-binarias en la jornada electoral [Protocol to Guarantee the Right to Vote of Trans and Non-Binary People on Election Day]. <https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/3711888/protocolo-trans.pdf?v=1664555399>

104 Consejo Nacional Electoral. (2020). Protocolo para promover medidas que garanticen el derecho al voto de las personas trans (transgénero, transexuales y travestis) en igualdad de condiciones y libre de discriminación [Protocol to Promote Measures That Guarantee the Right to Vote of Trans People (Transgender, Transsexual, and Travesti) on Equal Terms and Free from Discrimination]. <https://caribeafirmativo.lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Protocolo-para-voto-trans.pdf>

- * **Monitor and evaluate:** Establish mechanisms to identify gaps and update laws based on the lived experiences of trans and nonbinary communities.
- * **Foster regional cooperation:** Share best practices across countries to promote coherent legal recognition of gender diversity.
- * **Enact anti-discrimination laws:** Implement comprehensive protections for trans and nonbinary individuals, including within electoral systems.

Guaranteeing gender identity recognition in electoral processes is not only a legal necessity — it is a political imperative. Only by ensuring the dignity, safety, and visibility of trans and nonbinary people can democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean be truly inclusive.

2.2.4

Discrimination and harassment within political parties

In many cases, political parties not only neglect the rights of LGBTIQ+ people — they also become active agents of political violence. This violence manifests in the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals from power structures and decision-making spaces, leaving them more vulnerable to discriminatory practices. Even when parties adopt inclusion mechanisms, these are often symbolic or ineffective, allowing discrimination to persist without consequences.

One of the most common forms of political violence is **tokenism**, where LGBTIQ+ candidates are used to project an image of diversity without any real backing¹⁰⁵. Instead of transforming internal structures, some political parties exploit these candidacies to boost their public image while failing to provide the financial, logistical, and political support necessary for fair competition. This undermines the campaigns of LGBTIQ+ candidates and limits their influence within the party¹⁰⁶.

In other cases, parties place LGBTIQ+ individuals in **non-viable positions on electoral lists**, or when required to comply with affirmative action mandates, **seek legal loopholes to avoid implementation**¹⁰⁷.

A paradigmatic case is that of **Tuss Fernández**, a trans candidate in Mexico, who was registered by his party as a “woman” despite his male identity. Although he initially secured the top position on the party list, he was demoted to 22nd — rendering his election virtually impossible. Fernández reported the incident along with the online harassment he endured, but authorities dismissed the case, claiming that political violence protections applied only to women. This highlights a deep institutional misunderstanding of gender diversity.

The exclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals from internal party processes is further evidenced by the lack of access to strategic decision-making spaces beyond elections. The absence of transparent nomination procedures allows internal rules to be manipulated to exclude LGBTIQ+ leaders and perpetuate structural discrimination. As a result, even when LGBTIQ+ people participate as party members, they are denied meaningful opportunities to influence party direction.

This exclusion is not an isolated occurrence — it reflects a **systemic pattern**, where vague or non-existent rules enable parties to manipula-

105 Lluís, J. (2023). Building inclusive democracies: A guide to strengthening the participation of LGBTI+ persons in political and electoral processes. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). <https://www.undp.org/publications/building-inclusive-democracies-guide-strengthening-participation-lgbti-persons-political-and-electoral-processes>

106 According to information gathered during interviews.

107 According to information gathered during interviews.

te internal processes to the detriment of LGBTIQ+ members. The lack of clear mechanisms to challenge internal decisions or report political violence further entrenches this invisibility within democratic institutions.

These practices are often **exacerbated by electoral authorities' inaction**, either by failing to issue clear guidelines for implementing inclusion measures or by not responding to reports of fraudulent candidacies¹⁰⁸ or political violence against LGBTIQ+ people in a timely and effective manner.

The fraudulent appropriation of candidacies reserved for LGBTIQ+ individuals is another form of political violence. It undermines inclusion efforts and manipulates electoral systems for political gain. This occurs when individuals falsely claim LGBTIQ+ identities to benefit from affirmative action quotas, eroding public trust in these mechanisms and excluding genuine leaders from the community. Far from being a mere administrative irregularity, such practices distort the purpose of inclusion and deny space to authentic voices.

In **Mexico**, this issue has been present even before the formal introduction of “diversity quotas” in 2021. As early as the 2018 elections in Oaxaca, there were reports of candidates fraudulently registering as Muxe trans women to occupy diversity-reserved positions. Similar incidents occurred in the 2021 and 2024 elections, where candidates falsely claimed lesbian, gay, or trans identities to meet quota requirements. The absence of effective sanctions¹⁰⁹ and the complicity of political parties in validating these candidacies without proper verification have sustained the structural exclusion of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Political parties must make a genuine commitment to the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ candidates by providing them with the political, financial, and logistical support required to ensure equitable participation. Diversity quotas must not be treated as a bureaucratic checkbox, but as a serious responsibility. At the same time, **electoral authorities must develop and enforce clear mechanisms** to investigate and sanction manipulation and violations of LGBTIQ+ political rights.

It is essential for political parties to implement **transparent internal processes** that guarantee LGBTIQ+ individuals access to competitive positions and decision-making roles. Internal democracy must be the foundation for ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

108 Observatorio Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Derechos Políticos y Electorales de las Personas Trans*. (2024, June 19). Comunicado de prensa: Se deben investigar y sancionar casos de suplantación de candidaturas LGBTIQ+ [Press Release: Cases of LGBTIQ+ Candidacy Fraud Must Be Investigated and Sanctioned].

109 López Sánchez, E. (2024, October 11). Candidaturas fake impunes [Impunity for Fake Candidacies]. Observatorio de Reformas Políticas en América Latina, in El Universal. <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/opinion/observatorio-de-reformas-politicas-en-america-latina/candidaturas-fake-impunes/>

Moreover, **regulatory bodies must adopt norms** that prevent the misuse of quotas and address political violence firmly and proactively. Structural exclusion will persist unless authorities act decisively in response to complaints. While it's important to strengthen oversight mechanisms to prevent fraud, **solutions must not lead to surveillance or intrusive questioning of individuals' identities.**

Ultimately, both political parties and electoral authorities must adopt **more transparent and accountable candidate selection practices**, avoiding the instrumentalization of LGBTIQ+ candidacies for electoral gain. People's identities must be respected without invasive scrutiny, and their participation must be genuine and protected.

2.2.5

Physical violence and direct threats against LGBTIQ+ candidates and political leaders

Violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals in politics is not random. These attacks occur within a context that has been carefully cultivated, where political and social actors weaponize hatred toward sexual orientation and gender identity to achieve specific objectives: eliminate political competition and secure control over power. Silencing happens through assassinations, threats, and coercion that forces candidates to withdraw from races. This violence is not incidental—it is strategic and often organized.

In 2012, **Erick Martínez Ávila**, a journalist and LGBTIQ+ rights activist, ran as a pre-candidate for Congress in the department of Francisco Morazán, Honduras, under the Libertad y Refundación (LIBRE) party¹¹⁰. He was part of the Asociación Kukulcán and the Movimiento de la Diversidad en Resistencia¹¹¹. Just days after announcing his candidacy, he was tortured and murdered—part of a broader wave of killings of human rights defenders that had already been flagged by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)¹¹².

In Brazil, **Marielle Franco**—a prominent politician, sociologist, feminist, and human rights defender—was elected to Rio de Janeiro’s city council in 2017 and became known for denouncing police violence in the favelas. She was assassinated in 2018, sparking national protests and mourning.

During Mexico’s 2023–2024 electoral cycle, **Electoral Magistrate Ociel Baena** and their partner, trans activist and Senate pre-candidate **Samantha Gomes Fonseca**, were murdered—alongside **Miguel Ángel Zavala**, a physician and mayoral pre-candidate. Congressional candidate **Galilea García** also survived an assassination attempt.

110 Caribe Afirmativo, Instituto Nacional Demócrata, Somos CDC & Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute. (2017). Reflexiones sobre la participación política de las personas LGBTI en Honduras [Reflections on the Political Participation of LGBTI People in Honduras]. <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Reflexiones%20Políticas-LGTBI.pdf>

111 Europapress. (2012, May 8). Encuentran muerto a un periodista hondureño vinculado al partido de Zelaya [Journalist Linked to Zelaya’s Party Found Dead in Honduras]. <https://www.europapress.es/epsocial/noticia-encuentran-muerto-periodista-hondureno-vinculado-partido-zelaya-20120508155605.html>

112 Organization of American States (OAS). (2012, May 7). Comunicado de prensa: Relatorías de libertad de expresión, de defensores y defensoras de derechos humanos y la Unidad para las personas LGBTI condenan asesinato de activista y comunicador en Honduras [Press Release: Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression, Human Rights Defenders, and the LGBTI Unit Condemn the Murder of an Activist and Journalist in Honduras]. <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/expresion/showarticle.asp?artID=894&IID=2>

Another concerning pattern is the widespread use of **death threats**, which often escalate into physical aggression—especially during electoral campaigns or while LGBTIQ+ individuals are in public office. In many instances, threats also target their families, increasing psychological pressure and vulnerability.

In the 2024 Mexican elections, **Bárbara Fox** received online threats, while **Paola Suarez** was subjected to death threats targeting both her and her family. **Dulce Gudiño** was reportedly forced by an armed man to leave a campaign area controlled by a political rival¹¹³.

In Colombia's 2023 elections, **Caribe Afirmativo** documented 10 threats against LGBTIQ+ candidates—many of which explicitly demanded withdrawal from political competition. These threats came via social media, phone calls giving deadlines to leave the city or country, and included acts of vandalism against campaign materials, intimidation by third parties, surveillance near candidates' homes, and the circulation of defamatory pamphlets by illegal armed groups. These acts severely limited the public visibility and political viability of affected candidates¹¹⁴.

Such violence reflects **a systematic effort to remove LGBTIQ+ individuals from public life**, not only by targeting them physically but by restricting their political and social participation. This was evident in the cases of **Jean Wyllys** and **Benny Briolly** in Brazil, who were both forced into temporary exile for security reasons.

Jean Wyllys, a federal deputy from the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL), received numerous death threats throughout his political career. After the assassination of his party colleague Marielle Franco in 2018 and following his own re-election in 2019, he resigned and left the country due to escalating threats.

113 Fuentes Carreño, M. A., & Aguilar López, B. A. (2024). Voto por la Igualdad: Informe pre-electoral de las candidaturas LGBTTTI+ en México 2024 [Vote for Equality: Pre-Electoral Report on LGBTTTI+ Candidacies in Mexico 2024]. Yaaj México & LGBTQ+ Victory Institute.

114 Caribe Afirmativo & Misión de Observación Electoral (MOE). (2024). Participar para transformar: Informe poselectoral sobre las candidaturas LGBTIQ+, elecciones territoriales 2023 [Participating to Transform: Post-Electoral Report on LGBTIQ+ Candidacies, 2023 Territorial Elections].

Benny Briolly, a trans politician and activist, has faced threats since the beginning of her political career. Elected to the Niterói city council in 2020, she began receiving threats steeped in transphobia and racism shortly after taking office¹¹⁵.

In 2021, three trans women politicians in Brazil were victims of violent attacks within the same month. **Carol Iara**, a co-councilwoman with the PSOL's Feminist Caucus in São Paulo, was targeted when gunfire erupted outside her home while she was inside with her family. Days later, **Samara Sosthenes**—from the Quilombo Periférico collective mandate—experienced a similar attack. Meanwhile, **Erika Hilton**¹¹⁶, then a São Paulo city councilwoman, endured fascist and transphobic verbal assaults within the city council chamber.

During the 2022 legislative campaign, both Hilton and **Duda Salabert**, also a city councilwoman and congressional candidate, received **death threats marked with Nazi symbols**. Due to the severity of the threats, both women conducted their campaigns with full-time bodyguards¹¹⁷.

In **El Salvador**, congressional candidate **Erick Iván Ortiz** reported that he faced harassment for his sexual orientation, making it unsafe to campaign publicly. As a result, he shifted his campaign to gay bars and nighttime events. Several advertising companies also **refused to run his campaign ads**, claiming the content was “immoral”—a decision Ortiz called hypocritical, pointing out the same companies regularly accepted ads featuring hypersexualized portrayals of women¹¹⁸.

The violence and threats documented in this report are not isolated incidents. They form part of a **systemic pattern of exclusion** aimed at erasing those who challenge patriarchal and heteronormative norms from the political landscape. Yet each act of violence also exposes the **fear that conservative actors**

115 Público. (2021, May 6). La agresividad de la ultraderecha provoca el exilio de otra política brasileña: Benny Briolly, negra, trans y socialista [The Aggressiveness of the Far Right Forces Another Brazilian Politician into Exile: Benny Briolly, Black, Trans, and Socialist]. <https://www.publico.es/internacional/ultraderecha-brasil-agresividad-ultraderecha-provoca-exilio-politica-socialista-trans-negra.html>

Organization of American States (OAS). (2022, July 15). CIDH otorga medidas cautelares a Benny Briolly Rosa da Silva Santos, concejal travesti, afrodescendiente en Brasil [IACHR Grants Precautionary Measures to Benny Briolly Rosa da Silva Santos, Travesti and Afro-descendant Councilwoman in Brazil] (Press Release 159/22). <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2022/159.asp>

Brasil de Fato. (2021, May 14). Benny Briolly, concejal trans de Niterói, abandona el país tras amenazas [Benny Briolly, Trans Councilwoman from Niterói, Leaves the Country After Threats]. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2021/05/14/rj-benny-briolly-primeira-vereadora-trans-de-niteroi-sai-do-pais-apos-ameacas>

116 Open Democracy. (2021, July 22). Ataques a políticas negras LGBT en Brasil: ¿Qué hace el gobierno? [Attacks Against Black LGBT Politicians in Brazil: What Is the Government Doing?]. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/es/ataques-politicas-negras-lgbt-brasil-que-hace-el-gobierno/>

117 Euronews. (2022, September 21). Las candidatas trans de Brasil se enfrentan a amenazas e intimidaciones en polarizadas elecciones [Brazil's Trans Candidates Face Threats and Intimidation in Polarized Elections]. <https://es.euronews.com/2022/09/21/elecciones-brasil-trans>

118 VICE. (2021, February 25). Político salvadoreño abiertamente gay no puede hacer campaña en las calles [Openly Gay Salvadoran Politician Cannot Campaign in the Streets]. <https://www.vice.com/es/article/el-primer-politico-abiertamente-gay-de-el-salvador-no-puede-hacer-campana-en-las-calles/>

have toward change and the growing visibility of LGBTIQ+ leadership.

In the face of such intimidation and violence, political parties, institutions, and civil society must come together to **guarantee safe and accessible spaces** for all voices. Fear must not define the future of our democracies.

To counter this violence, it is critical to:

- * Strengthen **protective measures** for LGBTIQ+ candidates and political leaders.
- * Publicly **denounce all forms of discrimination or violence** during campaigns and in public office.
- * Build **strategic alliances** with parties and organizations that are genuinely committed to inclusion.

History shows that those who attempt to silence diversity always fail. The path forward must be one of courage, solidarity, and resolve.



2.2.6

Isolation and hostility toward elected LGBTIQ+ officials

Being elected to public office does not put an end to the violence faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals. On the contrary, once in office, many are subjected to attacks that have little to do with their legislative performance and everything to do with their gender identity or sexual orientation. Their public visibility challenges traditional norms and triggers smear campaigns, institutional exclusion, and hate speech — often protected under parliamentary immunity or disguised as freedom of expression.

These are not isolated attacks. Discriminatory rhetoric in legislative chambers seeks not only to delegitimize elected officials but also to undermine the rights of the broader LGBTIQ+ community. Such acts normalize violence and generate a hostile environment where advancing a rights-based agenda becomes increasingly difficult.

In **Chile**, trans councilwoman **Alejandra González Pino** was publicly humiliated by a mayor who questioned her gender identity during a city council session. The Chilean Supreme Court later ruled that this constituted discrimination without reasonable justification¹¹⁹. In Congress, a deputy used transphobic slurs to attack Congresswoman **Emilia Schneider**, mocking her gender identity — a moment that was amplified on social media¹²⁰, further exposing her to hate campaigns without accountability.

In **Colombia**, former Congressman **Mauricio Toro** was verbally attacked by a colleague who shouted, “lay off the hormones”¹²¹. In **Guatemala**, former Congressman **Aldo Dávila** was subjected to slurs such as *maricón* and *hueco*¹²². Des-

119 El Diverso. (2017, April 17). Corte Suprema de Chile aplica Ley Zamudio contra alcaldesa por discriminación a concejala trans [Supreme Court of Chile Applies Zamudio Law Against Mayor for Discrimination Against Trans Councilwoman]. <https://www.eldisenso.com/corte-suprema-de-chile-aplica-ley-zamudio-contralalcaldesa-por-discriminacion-a-concejala-trans/>

120 MOVILH. (2022, December 7). Denuncian violento ataque contra la diputada Emilia Schneider [Violent Attack Against Congresswoman Emilia Schneider Reported]. <https://www.movilh.cl/denuncian-violento-ataque-contrala-diputada-emilia-schneider/>

121 Homosensual. (2020). Congresista denuncia burla homofóbica hacia colega gay Mauricio Toro [Congressperson Denounces Homophobic Mockery Toward Gay Colleague Mauricio Toro]. <https://www.homosensual.com/lgbt/congresista-denuncia-burla-homofobica-hacia-colega-gay-mauricio-toro/>

122 Prismas. (2020). Continúan ataques contra Aldo Dávila dentro del Congreso [Attacks Continue Against Aldo Dávila Inside Congress]. <https://prismas.lgbt/noticias/continuan-ataques-contra-aldo-davila-dentro-del-congreso/>

Prismas. (2020). Diputados rechazan investigar ataques contra Aldo Dávila [Lawmakers Refuse to Investigate Attacks Against Aldo Dávila]. <https://prismas.lgbt/noticias/diputados-rechazan-investigar-ataques-contra-aldo-davila/>

pite the public nature of these incidents, no formal investigations were launched to sanction the perpetrators. In **Honduras**, a congressman delivering a speech on LGBTIQ+ rights faced homophobic attacks from fellow legislators — prompting a statement of condemnation from the Congressional Board of Directors.

In **Brazil**, in 2022, councilwoman **Benny Briolly** filed a complaint against state deputy **Rodrigo Amorim** for political gender-based violence¹²³. The Electoral Court ruled that Amorim had deliberately humiliated her, denying her gender identity and undermining her dignity as a woman and elected official¹²⁴. That same year, Congressman **Nikolas Ferreira** faced national outrage for mocking transgender women in the lower chamber on International Women's Day, putting on a wig and introducing himself as "Congresswoman Nikole"¹²⁵. Ferreira, a Bolsonaro ally, was denounced for inciting hate and violating LGBTIQ+ rights¹²⁶.

In **Mexico**, Congresswoman **Salma Luévano** brought a case before the Electoral Tribunal against Congressman **Gabriel Quadri** for transphobic comments made both online and during parliamentary sessions. The Tribunal ruled that his remarks constituted political gender-based violence and were not protected under freedom of expression. The decision recognized the statements as psychological, sexual, and digital violence — setting an important precedent on the limits of discriminatory speech in democratic institutions.

This type of violence not only violates the rights of LGBTIQ+ elected officials but also erodes democratic legitimacy by perpetuating exclusionary power structures. It demands urgent and coordinated responses from political parties, electoral bodies, and civil society to ensure that LGBTIQ+ officials can serve without fear of reprisal.

Political parties must make public commitments to protect their LGBTIQ+ representatives by developing protocols that ensure their safety and denounce all forms of discrimination. In parallel, parties should promote **mentorship initiatives** connecting experienced LGBTIQ+ politicians with emerging candidates, facilitating the exchange of survival strategies in politically hostile environments.

123 DW. (2022, August 24). Brasil abre acción penal por violencia política de género [Brazil Opens Criminal Case for Gender-Based Political Violence]. <https://www.dw.com/es/brasil-abre-prime-ra-acci%C3%B3n-penal-por-violencia-pol%C3%ADtica-de-g%C3%A9nero/a-62905574>

124 Tribunal Regional Electoral (TRE-RJ). (2024, May). TRE-RJ condena al diputado estadual Rodrigo Amorim por el delito de violencia política de género [TRE-RJ Convicts State Deputy Rodrigo Amorim for the Crime of Gender-Based Political Violence]. <https://www.tre-rj.jus.br/comunicacao/noticias/2024/Maio/tre-rj-condena-deputado-estadual-rodrigo-amorim-por-crime-de-violencia-politica-de-genero>

125 La W Radio. (2023, March 9). "Hoy me siento mujer": critican posible ataque de diputado de Brasil a mujeres trans ["Today I Feel Like a Woman": Brazilian Congressman Criticized for Possible Attack on Trans Women]. <https://www.wradio.com.co/2023/03/09/hoy-me-siento-mujer-critican-posible-ataque-de-diputado-de-brasil-a-mujeres-trans/>

126 Correio Braziliense. (2023, April 19). Nikolas Ferreira debe pagar 80.000 reales a Duda Salabert por transfobia [Nikolas Ferreira Ordered to Pay 80,000 Reais to Duda Salabert for Transphobia]. <https://www.correiobraziliense.com.br/politica/2023/04/5088578-nikolas-ferreira-e-condenado-a-pagar-rs-80-mil-a-duda-salabert.html>

Electoral authorities also have a responsibility to **sanction political violence**, especially when it originates from within legislatures. Parliamentary immunity cannot serve as a shield for hate, and freedom of expression must not be used as an excuse for speech that promotes discrimination and exclusion.

2.2.7

Impunity and State inaction

Impunity surrounding crimes against LGBTIQ+ leaders and candidates is a critical factor that exacerbates political violence and discrimination. Landmark cases, such as the murders of **Marielle Franco** in Brazil and **Ociel Baena** in Mexico, illustrate how the absence of justice perpetuates these crimes and sends a dangerous message of abandonment to communities fighting for equality.

Marielle Franco, a Rio de Janeiro city councilwoman, human rights defender, Black lesbian, and feminist, was assassinated in March 2018 along with her driver. While two former military police officers were convicted in 2024 as the perpetrators, the alleged intellectual authors—reportedly including politicians and a former police chief — were only recently arrested, reflecting years of delays, obstruction, and systemic failure in the investigation¹²⁷.

In **Mexico**, **Magistrate Jesús Ociel Baena** — the first openly nonbinary person to hold a judicial position in the country — was found dead alongside their partner in November 2023. Authorities issued conflicting narratives about the case, and to date, the murder remains unsolved. This has raised widespread concern over the state's inability — or unwillingness — to guarantee protection and justice for LGBTIQ+ individuals in public office¹²⁸.

Despite repeated threats and systemic violence, state institutions and electoral bodies have **failed to consistently implement effective protection mechanisms**. LGBTIQ+ candidates and public officials often face these dangers without adequate institutional support. This inaction amounts to a **form of complicity** that sustains a hostile political environment and undermines democratic participation.

127 El País. (2024, October 31). Condenados a 78 y 59 años de cárcel los policías que asesinaron a la concejala Marielle Franco en Brasil [Police Officers Sentenced to 78 and 59 Years for the Murder of Councilwoman Marielle Franco in Brazil]. <https://elpais.com/america/2024-10-31/condenados-a-78-y-59-anos-de-carcel-los-policias-que-asesinaron-a-la-concejala-marielle-franco-en-brasil.html>

128 Los Angeles Times en Español. (2023, November 14). Autoridades mexicanas envían mensajes contradictorios sobre la muerte de figura LGBTQ+ Ociel Baena [Mexican Authorities Send Contradictory Messages About the Death of LGBTQ+ Figure Ociel Baena]. <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/mexico/articulo/2023-11-14/autoridades-mexicanas-envian-mensajes-contradictorios-sobre-la-muerte-de-figura-lgbtq-ociel-baena>

Governments and electoral authorities must take immediate action to **design and implement security protocols tailored to the realities of LGBTIQ+ leaders**. Without concrete measures, violence and exclusion will continue to restrict LGBTIQ+ people's access to decision-making spaces, deepening inequality and reinforcing systemic discrimination.

Establishing **specialized protection programs** is a necessary first step. These initiatives must respond to each leader's specific risks and vulnerabilities, offering timely and robust support in high-risk situations. Electoral authorities must also develop **clear, enforceable protocols** to address threats and acts of aggression, ensuring swift institutional responses that protect those who dare to challenge the status quo.

Another essential element is the implementation of **monitoring and accountability mechanisms**. These will ensure transparency in hate crime investigations and force state institutions to uphold their responsibilities in protecting the rights and safety of LGBTIQ+ leaders. Equally critical is the **training and sensitization of law enforcement and electoral officials** on the unique risks and needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals, fostering a more responsive and inclusive system.

Strategic collaboration among governments, civil society organizations, and international human rights bodies is not optional — it is urgent. Strong support networks must be built to **protect LGBTIQ+ leaders from the inherent risks of their political engagement** and ensure their continued visibility and participation.

If no immediate action is taken, **violence and exclusion will continue to silence voices that are essential to democratic renewal**. LGBTIQ+ people have the right to live free from fear and to participate fully in political life. This is not a symbolic gesture — it is a democratic obligation.

A just and participatory democracy cannot exist where hate and discrimination go unpunished.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF THE LGBTIQ+ POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SURVEY IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN





3.1

About the LGBTIQ+ political participation survey (2020-2024)

This chapter draws on the results of the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Survey, developed by the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean. The goal of the survey was to generate evidence about how LGBTIQ+ people engage politically during electoral processes between 2020 and 2024. It was designed as both a research and political action tool, grounded in an intersectional and regional approach, aiming to capture both participation trajectories and the structural conditions that affect this population.

The survey began with a common section for all respondents, collecting key sociodemographic data (sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, disability status, nationality, migration status, education level, and employment situation), as well as general perceptions about political participation barriers and motivations. This section also explored the relationship between LGBTIQ+ individuals and political institutions, and gathered opinions on inclusion mechanisms such as quotas, legal gender recognition, and political violence prevention measures.

Starting from question 54, the questionnaire used conditional logic to activate specific pathways based on the role each person had during an election. This design enabled the construction of a detailed map of political participation experiences. Respondents who identified as voters or activists answered a block of questions focused on voting experiences, access to information, polling station safety, and informed voting campaigns. Those who participated as election observers or campaign team members accessed distinct sections addressing observation conditions, discrimination experiences, and internal campaign dynamics.

Additionally, respondents who identified as political party members, candidates, or elected officials accessed a third set of questions focused on internal party practices, nomination processes, political violence, access to resources, campaign strategies, and their experiences once in office. Each pathway combined closed-ended questions with open narrative prompts to allow for nuance and self-expression.

At the end of each section, respondents had the option to record up to two additional electoral experiences, for a total of three per person, allowing for a deeper understanding of cumulative political trajectories.

The present analysis organizes the findings into five main thematic blocks:

- * **Experiences of voters and activists**
- * **Experiences as election observers**
- * **Experiences as part of campaign teams**
- * **Experiences within political parties**
- * **Experiences as candidates and elected officials**

This structure highlights the diverse ways in which LGBTIQ+ people in the region participate, resist, and transform political spaces. Each block offers critical evidence to understand both the barriers and the opportunities they face, and serves as a foundation for developing recommendations to strengthen their political representation under conditions of equality.



3.2

Demographic profile of respondents

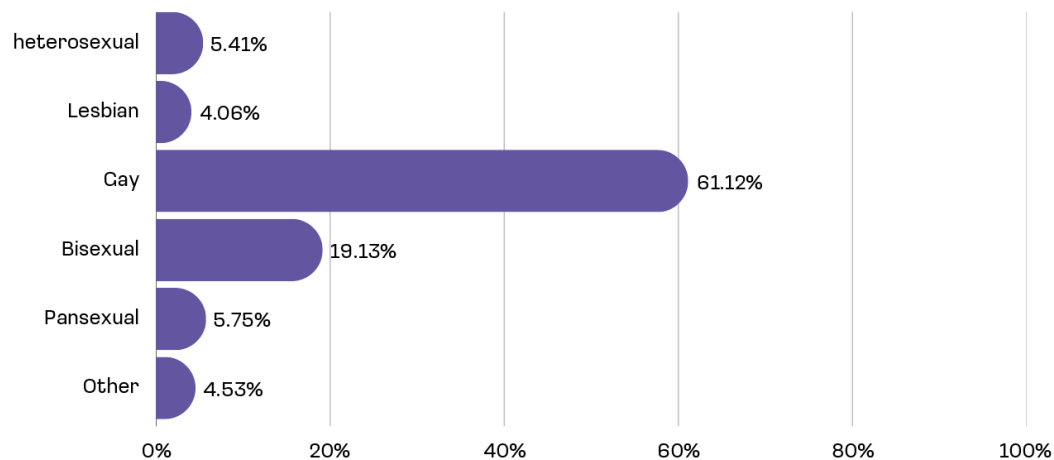
The regional survey captured the voices of 4,762 individuals, of whom 3,863 provided complete and meaningful responses. This group forms the basis of the current analysis. The richness of these responses allows us to better understand the political participation trajectories, conditions, and challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people across Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.2.1

Diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities

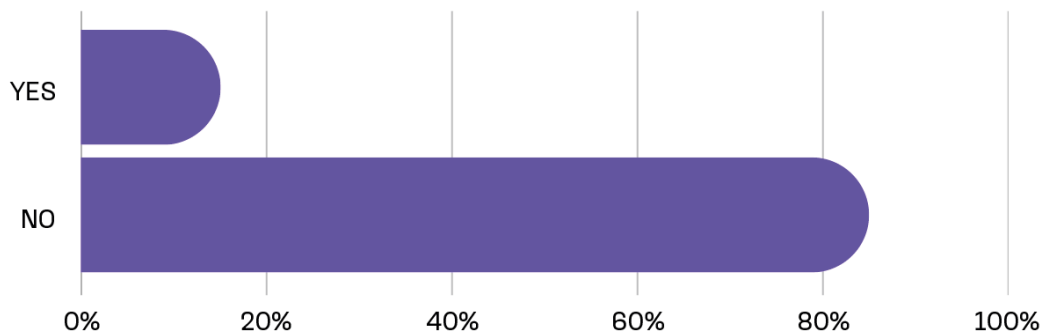
An overwhelming majority — **92.88%** of survey respondents — identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ population. Among them, the most common sexual orientation was **gay** (2,361 people, **61.12%**), followed by **bisexual** (739 people, **19.13%**), **pansexual** (222 people, **5.75%**), and **lesbian** (157 people, **4.06%**).

Graph 3. Gender identity of participants.



Regarding gender identity, the majority of respondents identified as **men** (2,753 people, **71.27%**), followed by **women** (776 people, **20.09%**) and **non-binary individuals** (238 people, **6.16%**). This overrepresentation of men may be partially attributed to the survey’s distribution via the GRINDR app, which facilitated higher participation from gay men and male-identified respondents.

Graph 4. Trans/travesti participants.



A notable **15.04%** (581 individuals) of all respondents identified as **trans or travesti**, reflecting a diverse composition:

- * 39.76% (231) were trans women/travestis,
- * 32.19% (187) were trans men/travestis, and
- * 18.59% (108) were non-binary trans/travestis.

*Additionally, **637 respondents (16.49%)** identified as **intersex**, highlighting the presence and visibility of identities that are often overlooked.*

3.2.2

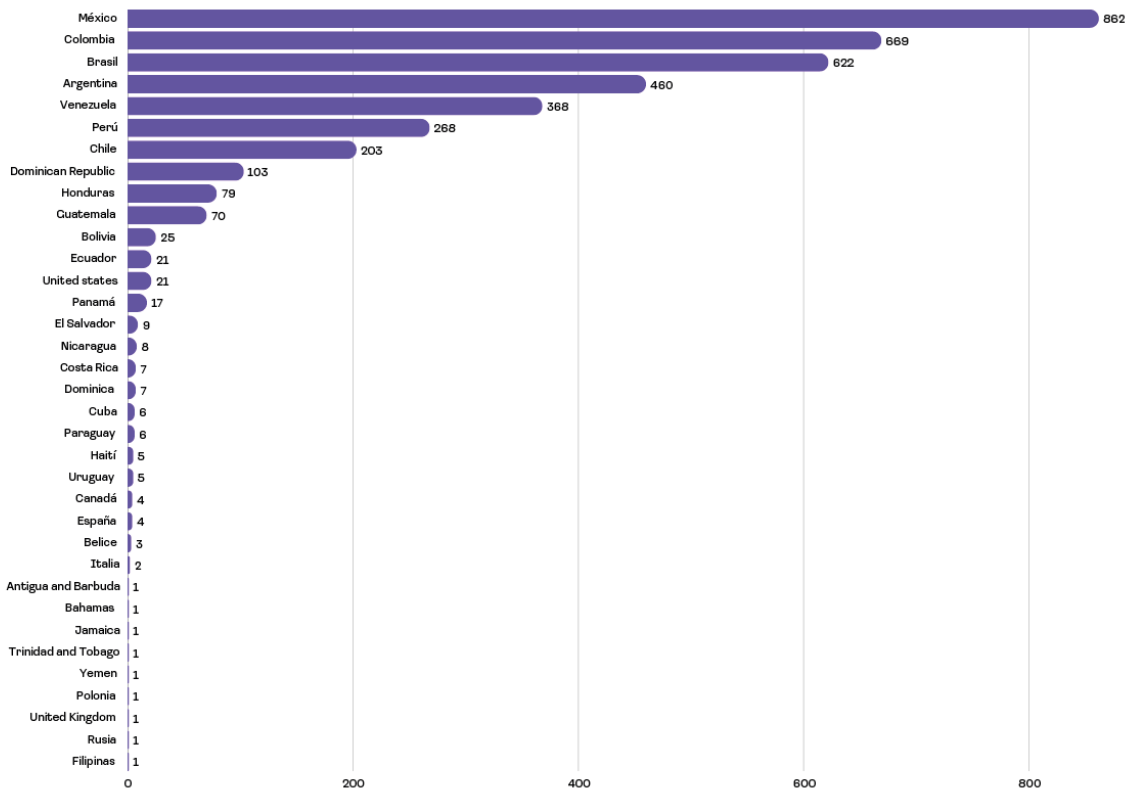
Geographic reach and migration dynamics

Respondents represent a wide range of countries: a total of **3,851 individuals from 28 Latin American and Caribbean nationalities** completed the survey. The majority of responses came from:

- * **Mexico** (862 people, **22.38%**)
- * **Colombia** (669 people, **17.37%**)
- * **Brazil** (622 people, **16.15%**)
- * **Argentina** (460 people, **11.94%**)
- * **Venezuela** (367 people, **9.53%**)

These were followed by countries such as **Peru, Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras.**

Graph 5. Nationality of participants.



Responses were also recorded from 32 individuals with nationalities outside the region, including the United States (21), Spain (4), Italy (2), and one respondent each from Yemen, Poland, the United Kingdom, Russia, and the Philippines.

Migration emerged as a key theme: **342 respondents (8.88%)** identified as **migrants**. Among Venezuelan nationals, over one-third (132) currently reside in other countries, mainly:

- * Colombia (67.40%)
- * Peru (13.66%)
- * Chile (7.92%)

The main reasons cited for migrating included:

- * Seeking better **job opportunities** (126 people, **37.06%**)
- * Escaping violence, threats, or discrimination related to LGBTIQ+ identity (69 people, 20.29%)
- * Pursuing **academic studies** (45 people, **13.24%**)

Among **trans/travesti migrants** (55 in total), **29.09%** migrated due to **violence or discrimination**, and another **23.64%** left in search of **employment**, underscoring the intersectional vulnerabilities faced by this group.

3.2.3

Ethnoracial identity and territorial context

The survey also captures the ethnic and racial diversity of the respondents: **431 individuals (11.19%)** identified as Indigenous and **596 (15.48%)** as Afro-descendant. This diversity is also reflected among trans/travesti respondents, with **110 Afro-descendant trans individuals** and **107 Indigenous trans individuals** reporting their participation.

The majority of respondents reside in urban areas (**3,446 or 89.48%**). However, among those living in rural areas (**405 or 10.52%**), Indigenous people (**98 or 22.37%**) and Afro-descendants (**77 or 12.92%**) are notably represented, highlighting how structural barriers to access and political participation are even more pronounced in these contexts.

3.2.4

Disability, age, and educational background

Other factors such as disability, age, and education also significantly influence the political participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals.

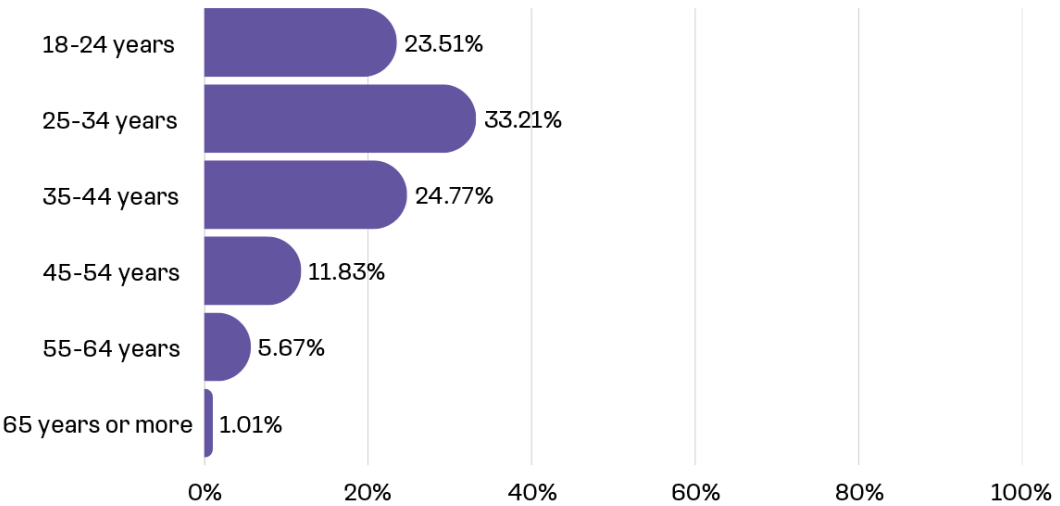
Of all respondents, **10.95% (423 people)** identified as living with a disability. Among them:

- * 262 (61.94%) were men,
- * 86 (20.33%) were women,
- * 52 (12.29%) were non-binary, and
- * 111 (26.24%) identified as trans/travesti.
- * Most (87.23%) lived in urban areas.

Despite the unique barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities, **61.70% (261)** reported actively participating in political spaces.

In terms of age, most respondents were between **25-34 years old (1,283 or 33.21%)** and **35-44 years old (957 or 24.77%)**, indicating strong representation from young adults.

Graph 6. Age of participants.



Moreover, **1,786 people (46.23%)** had completed or partially completed university-level education, and **646 (16.72%)** had pursued postgraduate studies — reflecting a high level of academic achievement in the sample.

However, this academic qualification does not always translate into access to well-paid formal employment, especially for trans and non-binary people, who continue to face structural exclusion in the labor market.

3.2.5

Employment status

The employment status of respondents shows diversity, although it is marked by patterns of precarity:

- * 22.72% (878) work in the private sector,
- * 17.99% (695) are self-employed or independent workers,
- * 14.75% (570) are employed in the public sector,
- * **12.32%** work in **civil society organizations** (paid: 323; unpaid: 153),
- * 13.64% (527) are unemployed.

Among trans and non-binary people, **41.31% (240)** fall into the categories of self-employment (**107**), unemployment (**85**), or unpaid NGO work (**48**), reflecting higher levels of exclusion and labor precarity.

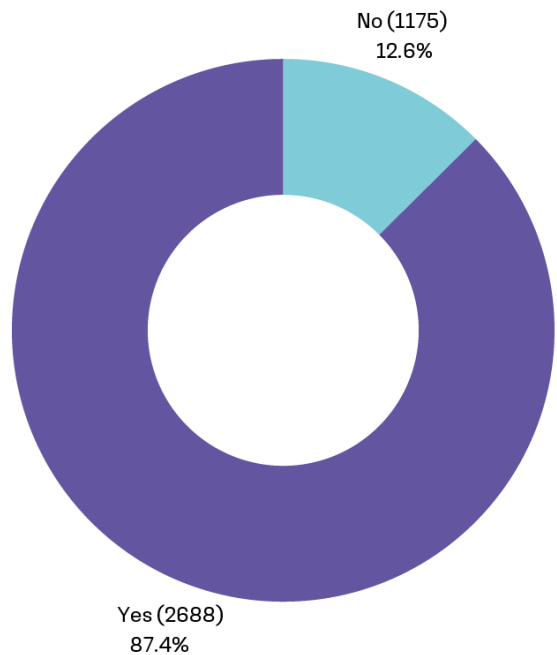
3.2.6

Visibility and political engagement

LGBTIQ+ visibility also involves complex circumstances that shape how — and whether — individuals can be open about their identities. Being visibly LGBTIQ+ is not always a choice; non-normative or non-hegemonic life experiences often carry a risk of violence and discrimination.

Among respondents, **69.58% (2,688)** identified as visibly LGBTIQ+, while **30.42% (1,175)** reported not being publicly out.

Graph 7. Visibly LGBTQ+ participants.



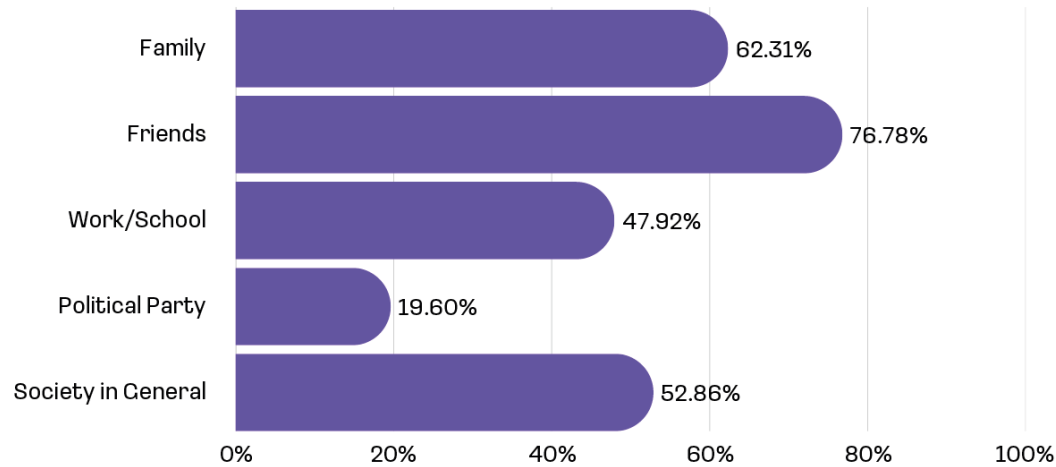
The visibility analysis reveals a clear difference between men and women: **men** had a lower visibility rate (**64.22% or 1,768**) compared to **women (81.19% or 630)**.

Trans/travesti, non-binary, and intersex individuals reported particularly high visibility:

- * **89.50%** of trans/travesti respondents,
- * **86.97%** of non-binary respondents, and
- * **65.46%** of intersex respondents identified as visibly LGBTQ+.

However, visibility is not always voluntary, nor does it automatically translate into increased inclusion or political power.

Graph 8. Visibility across social sectors.



Most respondents (**76.78% or 2,966**) reported being out to their **friends**, followed by **62.31% (2,407)** to their **family**, and only **19.60% (757)** to their **political parties**. Notable differences emerge when visibility is analyzed by sexual orientation:

- * **Lesbians (157)** had the highest visibility rate (**95.54%**) and reported the greatest openness in all contexts, particularly in society (**99.19%**) and within political parties (**100%**).
- * **Pansexual people (222)** also had high visibility (**84.68%**), especially within their family (**92.09%**) and broader society (**96.48%**).
- * **Gay men (2,361)** reported a visibility rate of **71.37%**, with high recognition in political parties (**90.11%**) and society at large (**88.71%**).
- * **Bisexual people (739)** had a more moderate visibility rate (**52.23%**), with higher recognition among friends (**93.85%**), but much lower visibility in political parties (**23.81%**) and in society (**23.38%**).

LGBTIQ+ visibility across Latin America and the Caribbean also varies by country, reflecting national differences in sociopolitical context, culture, and legal protections. For example, countries like **Nicaragua (8 people)**, **Antigua and Barbuda (1)**, **Bahamas (1)**, and **Trinidad and Tobago (1)** reported 100% visibility among their small samples.

Among countries with larger samples:

- * Mexico (672 of 862, 77.96%),
- * Colombia (458 of 669, 68.46%),
- * Brazil (429 of 622, 68.97%),
- * Peru (185 of 268, 69.03%),
- * Chile (144 of 203, 70.94%), and
- * **Honduras (65 of 79, 82.28%)** showed high visibility levels.

In contrast, **Venezuela (218 of 367, 59.40%)**, **Guatemala (43 of 70, 61.43%)**, and the **United States (12 of 21, 57.14%)** showed lower visibility despite having notable numbers of respondents. These contrasts suggest that national contexts—such as safety, discrimination, political representation, and legal progress — heavily influence whether individuals feel safe or willing to be visibly LGBTQ+.

These findings reveal a complex and diverse landscape: LGBTIQ+ political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean is shaped by the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, migration, disability, and geography. Understanding this complexity is essential to building more inclusive and equitable political processes.

The next section will explore in greater depth how these life trajectories influence perceptions of political participation, the barriers encountered, and the opportunities for advocacy identified by LGBTIQ+ respondents.



3.3

What perceptions do LGBTIQ+ people have about political participation?

The political participation of LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be shaped by deep tensions between progress achieved and persistent barriers. This section explores the perceptions collected in the survey, revealing how the experience of participation is influenced by disparate national contexts, multiple identities, and dynamics of structural discrimination.

3.3.1

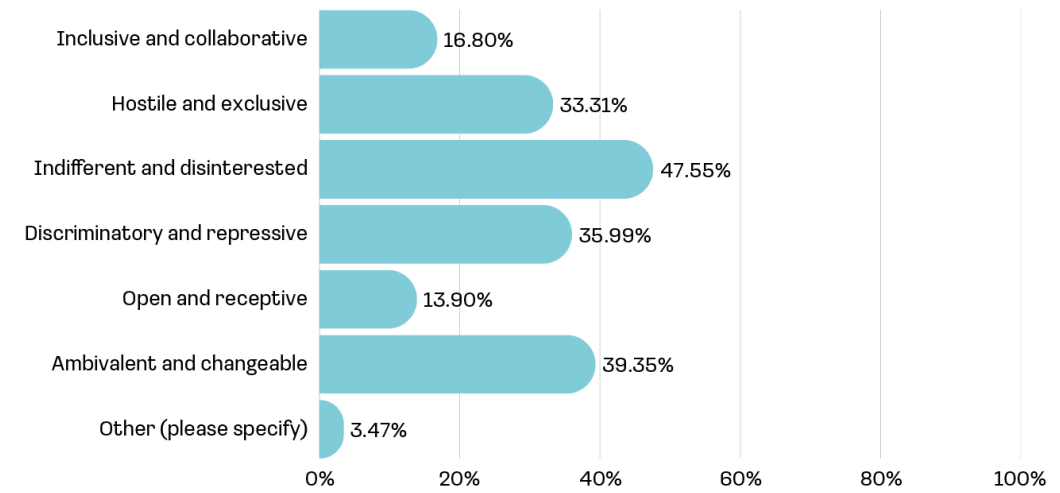
Participation still limited by barriers

The relationship between political institutions and LGBTIQ+ people is mostly perceived as indifferent (835 votes, 47.55%) or ambivalent and shifting (691 votes, 39.35%), reflecting a context where progress is fragile and subject to political fluctuations. However, a considerable portion perceives the relationship as hostile and exclusionary (585 votes, 33.31%) or even discriminatory and repressive (632 votes, 35.99%), indicating deep-seated barriers to full participation.

In contrast, only a minority reports perceiving inclusive or open relationships: 16.80% (295) view the relationship as collaborative, and only 13.90% (244) as receptive. These figures underscore the persistence of closed or unsafe political environments for LGBTIQ+ people across much of the region.

Graph 9. Participants’ Perception – Relationship between LGBTIQ+ people and political institutions.

How would you describe the relationship between LGBTIQ+ people and political and governmental institutions in your country? (Choose your top 3)



3.3.2

Perceptions by country: Polarization and varying contexts

Country-level analysis reveals important nuances:

- * **Mexico (862 respondents)**, the country with the highest number of responses, shows a deeply polarized perception: 27.2% describe the relationship as hostile and 24.8% as ambivalent, evidencing ongoing uncertainty about the institutions’ stance.
- * In **Brazil (622 respondents)**, hostility (21.5%) and repression (18.8%) dominate, alongside a significant perception of ambivalence (18.8%).

- * **Colombia (669 respondents)** reflects a complex situation, with high levels of perceived hostility (24.3%) and ambivalence (20.7%), as well as perceived discrimination (11.4%).
- * **In Argentina (460 respondents)**, although there is a strong perception of change (24.5%), barriers persist, with 18.8% perceiving the relationship as discriminatory.
- * **Venezuela (368 respondents)** reveals a predominantly hostile outlook (28.4%), although small signs of political fluctuation and ambivalence emerge.
- * **Chile and Peru** show similar situations, with perceptions mainly of ambivalence or institutional hostility.

In countries such as **Bolivia and Ecuador**, perceptions are more neutral, with institutional indifference and disinterest prevailing. These patterns suggest that, while exceptions exist, the regional trend still leans toward exclusion or indifference, rather than genuine inclusion.

3.3.3

Main barriers to political participation

The survey identifies multiple barriers limiting the political participation of LGBTIQ+ people:

- * **Social discrimination and prejudice (16.07%) is the most prominent barrier.** This obstacle particularly affects non-binary people (19.1%) and women (18.6%). Countries such as Colombia (15.5%), Mexico (16.8%), Brazil (16.5%), and Venezuela (12.4%) report high levels of social discrimination.
- * **Other significant barriers include fear of physical aggression (10.57%) and fear of threats (7.01%),** particularly pronounced in Brazil and Colombia. The fear of having one's gender identity or sexual orientation exposed also remains a major barrier (8.7%), reflecting widespread concerns about stigmatization and public discrimination.

- * **Discrimination by electoral authorities — especially the non-recognition of gender identity (12.61%)** — mainly affects trans people (18.4%). This challenge is most evident in Mexico (16.1%) and Colombia (12.1%). Despite the presence of trans voting protocols in both countries, this may have contributed to the visibility and assertion of these rights.
- * **Lack of economic resources (8.12%) and political training (7.95%)** are particularly challenging for women (10.4% and 9.4%, respectively) and trans people (12.5% and 11.7%, respectively), who face greater structural exclusion compared to cisgender counterparts.
- * Lack of family support (1.37%) and the fear that their proposals will be dismissed (2.76%) also emerge as key barriers, pointing to a lack of social backing both in family and party circles. **Additionally, the lack of support within political parties (12.61%) contributes to ineffective political representation of LGBTIQ+ individuals** in several countries, such as Mexico (16.8%) and Colombia (15.5%).

3.3.4

Proposals to improve political inclusion

In response to these challenges, respondents proposed various measures to strengthen political participation:

- * Adoption of protocols against political violence targeting LGBTIQ+ people is the most widely supported measure (877 people, 19.03%).
- * Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals in political party leadership structures (743 people, 16.14%) also stands out as a priority.
- * Other important measures include:
 - Internal party quotas (6.30%) and public office quotas (12.81%),
 - Equitable campaign funding distribution (11.82%),
 - Recognition of trans identities in electoral records (12.61%),
 - Inclusive political training programs (9.77%).

These proposals aim not only to eliminate barriers, but to establish equitable and safe mechanisms for LGBTIQ+ political participation.

3.3.5

Expectations for political representation

Perceptions about the role of LGBTIQ+ people in politics also reflect tensions and aspirations:

- * **87.96%** believe that the lack of political representation is a key obstacle to the recognition of their rights.
- * While there is strong support for diverse policy agendas (78.37% reject limiting LGBTIQ+ candidates to only sexual and gender diversity issues), **72.57%** recognize that such limitations are often imposed.
- * **68.40%** of respondents call for transparency regarding candidates' sexual orientation or gender identity, while **88.22%** believe LGBTIQ+ candidates should make **explicit commitments to defend rights**.
- * Additionally, 79.06% support the idea that non-LGBTIQ+ allies should also be able to lead causes in favor of diversity.

3.3.6

Willingness to foster political participation

Finally, the commitment to strengthening representation is reflected in the high willingness to promote political participation among peers: **91.46%** of respondents said they would invite other LGBTIQ+ people to get involved in politics. Top reasons include:

- * Increasing diversity in representation (20.23%),
- * Defending LGBTIQ+ rights (17.96%),
- * Diversifying decision-making perspectives (15.78%).

However, 8.54% expressed reservations, mainly due to distrust in political institutions and fear of violence.

Despite persistent barriers, the perceptions gathered also show a collective desire for transformation. LGBTIQ+ people's push for political participation is not limited to symbolic representation but aspires to challenge exclusionary structures and build more diverse, just, and inclusive democracies.

In the following section, we explore the ways LGBTIQ+ people engage in politics — not only as voters or activists, but also as party members, campaign staff, public officials, and human rights advocates — highlighting the spaces where their participation has strengthened, as well as areas where significant challenges to effective inclusion in decision-making remain.



3.4

How do LGBTIQ+ people participate in politics?

The political participation of LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean has evolved significantly in recent decades, reflecting notable advances alongside persistent limitations. This section examines how LGBTIQ+ individuals engage with the region's political systems — from social activism to involvement in electoral campaigns, political parties, and public office. Through this lens, we identify both the opportunities and the challenges for achieving more comprehensive and diverse political participation.

3.4.1

Beginnings of political participation: youth and social commitment

A remarkable pattern among respondents is that the majority (2,041 individuals, 71.87%) began their political participation between the ages of 18 and 24, followed by 17.61% (500) who started between the ages of 25 and 34. Though less common, 109 respondents (3.84%) began their involvement after age 45, showing that political engagement can emerge at various stages of life.

The main motivations driving this engagement include:

- * Advocacy for social issues such as inequality, civil rights, and abortion (749 people, 26.37%),
- * Defense of LGBTIQ+ rights specifically (713 people, 25.11%),
- * A sense of civic responsibility (577 people, 20.32%),
- * The desire to create positive social change (526 people, 18.52%).

These findings show that LGBTIQ+ political participation is not limited to gender or sexuality-related issues but is embedded in broader social justice agendas.

3.4.2

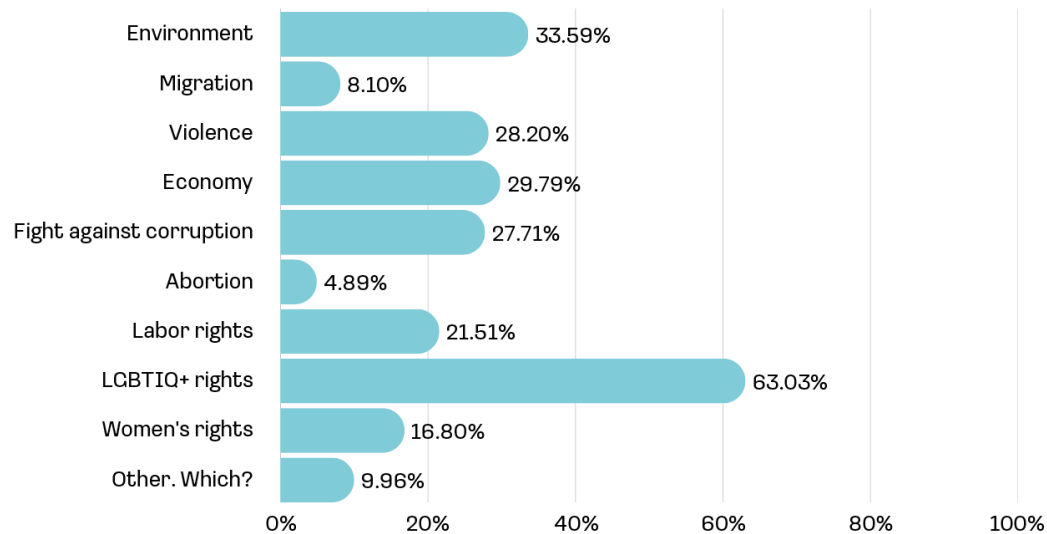
Political priorities: rights, environment, and the economy

When asked about the issues that most interest them in political campaigns, respondents highlighted:

- * LGBTIQ+ rights (1,790 people, 63.03%),
- * Environment (954 people, 33.59%),
- * Economy (846 people, 29.79%),
- * Violence (801 people, 28.20%),
- * Anti-corruption efforts (787 people, 27.71%).

Graph 10. Participants’ Political Issue Interests.

What are your main issues of interest in a political campaign? Choose your top three.



A comparative analysis of LGBTIQ+ political priorities by country reveals that topic emphasis varies significantly, reflecting both structural differences and prevailing national narratives.

*** LGBTIQ+ rights: A transversal yet uneven agenda**

- Bolivia (80.0%, 20 respondents), Chile (44.8%, 91), Brazil (43.2%, 269), Colombia (47.8%, 320), and Venezuela (38.0%, 140) show high prioritization of LGBTIQ+ rights — likely due to heightened violence, criminalization, or legislative setbacks.
- In contrast, Argentina (28.5%, 131 of 460) and the United States (57.1%, 12 of 21) reflect moderate or high levels — though the U.S. sample is small and should be interpreted cautiously.

* Violence and insecurity in crisis contexts

- Violence was prioritized by 31.7% in Honduras (25 of 79), 28.0% in Bolivia (7 of 25), and 22.8% in Peru (61 of 268) — countries facing insecurity, militarization, or repression. In these contexts, political engagement is shaped by immediate risks and survival.

* Economy and corruption: Structural crisis priorities

- In Argentina, 35.7% (164 of 460) prioritized the economy; in Venezuela, 29.6% (109 of 368) did. Economic instability appears central to LGBTIQ+ political decisions.
- Corruption was prioritized by 141 respondents in Colombia (21.1%), 162 in Mexico (18.8%), and 97 in Brazil (15.6%), reflecting widespread institutional distrust and a demand for public integrity.

* Women's rights and abortion: Feminist tensions

- In Uruguay (a small sample), 4 of 5 respondents (80.0%) prioritized women's rights, consistent with a strong gender equality policy environment.
- In Mexico, 158 people (18.3% of 862) prioritized this issue, and in Chile, 27 people (13.3% of 203).
 - Abortion remained below 10% across most countries — even in Mexico (33 people, 3.8%) — suggesting that despite being a longstanding feminist demand, it remains politically sensitive or marginalized within LGBTIQ+ circles.

* Environment and Migration: Secondary yet notable themes

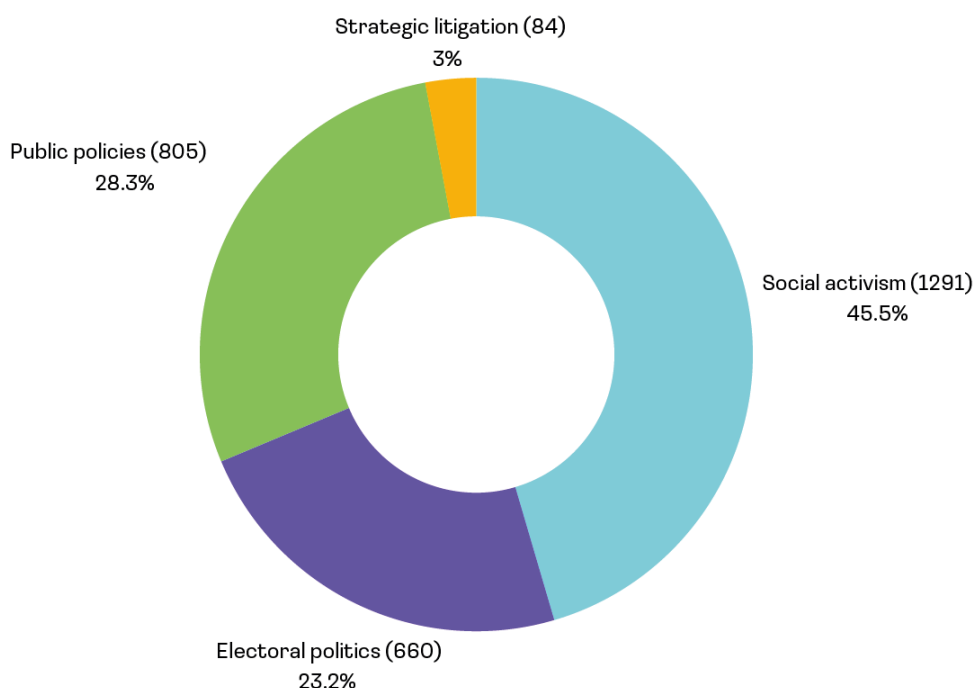
- Environmental concerns were prominent in Mexico (233 people, 27.0%), Brazil (193, 31.0%), and Colombia (173, 25.9%), correlating with environmental crises and strong ecological movements.
- Migration, while generally secondary, stood out in Venezuela (71 people, 19.3%), Chile (20 people, 9.9%), and Honduras (16 people, 20.3%) — countries marked by dynamics of emigration, transit, and reception, respectively.

3.4.3

Areas of political participation: activism and public policy as predominant spaces

Graph 11. Distribution of participants by area of political participation.

Which of the following policy areas best defines your involvement?



When asked in which area their political participation was most situated, respondents reflected a wide range of advocacy strategies. The most common form of participation was social activism, identified by 1,291 individuals (45.46%) as their main sphere. This confirms that, in many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, collective, community-based, and non-institutionalized action remains the most accessible and direct pathway for political influence, especially for historically excluded populations such as LGBTIQ+ people.

The second most common area was work in public policy, cited by 805 individuals (28.35%). This reflects significant growth in participation within or alongside the state apparatus, through policy proposals, design, and implementation of legal frameworks and programs. Unlike activism, this form of participation typically requires higher levels of institutional access or alliances with the state, suggesting an advancement in the professionalization of LGBTIQ+ leadership.

Electoral politics was prioritized by 660 individuals (23.24%), indicating a noteworthy, though still limited, presence in formal political spaces such as elections, candidacies, political parties, and campaigns. This figure invites reflection on the structural barriers LGBTIQ+ people still face in accessing positions of formal power, as well as the opportunities to strengthen their impact within representative systems.

Lastly, strategic litigation was the least cited area, with only 84 individuals (2.96%). Although numerically marginal, this channel is critical for advancing rights through the courts. Its low frequency may be linked to the technical, legal, and institutional requirements this form of participation entails.

An analysis by gender identity reveals important differences that demonstrate how gender conditions not only access but also how political engagement is exercised.

- * Among those identifying as men (1,970 in total), areas of participation are more evenly distributed, though social activism leads with 823 individuals (41.78%), followed by public policy (587, 29.80%) and electoral politics (502, 25.48%). Strategic litigation, while minor, was selected by 58 men (2.94%), the highest absolute number in this category. This distribution suggests that men have a transversal presence across all participation spaces, potentially linked to higher levels of representation and institutional access.
- * Among women (605 respondents), social activism was markedly higher: 305 women (50.41%) identified this area as their main form of participation, followed by public policy (172, 28.43%) and electoral politics (112, 18.51%). This concentration in activism may reflect both the historical role of women in social mobilization and the structural barriers they still face in formal power spaces such as political parties or the state.
- * Individuals identifying as nonbinary (193 in total) reported the highest rate of activism in the entire sample: 123 individuals (63.73%), followed distantly by electoral politics (33, 17.10%) and public policy (30, 15.54%). This suggests that nonbinary participation continues to be constructed on the institutional margins, via more flexible, horizontal, and community-based spaces such as activism, where there is greater agency and lower risk of exclusion.

- * Those selecting “other” gender identity (72 individuals) also showed a strong inclination toward social activism (40 individuals, 55.56%), with lower levels in public policy (16, 22.22%) and electoral politics (13, 18.06%). Though smaller in number, the pattern mirrors that of nonbinary respondents — a preference for less formalized and more identity-affirming spaces of participation.
- * Trans and travesti respondents (463 individuals) also predominantly engaged in social activism, with 272 individuals (58.75%) identifying it as their main form of participation. They were followed by 103 in public policy (22.25%) and 74 in electoral politics (15.98%). Although only 14 trans individuals selected strategic litigation, they represent 16.67% of all who cited litigation as their primary participation area — meaning one in six strategic litigants is trans. This indicates that, while few, trans people are significantly leading this specialized legal advocacy channel, often as a direct response to institutional violence, legal erasure, or denial of rights.

These data confirm that gender identity and trans/travesti self-identification profoundly shape political participation trajectories. While cisgender men access a more balanced range of spaces, women, nonbinary, and trans people concentrate mostly in activism, reflecting both historical roles in social movements and persistent barriers in institutional access. Nonetheless, their notable presence in strategic litigation demonstrates that, even in restrictive environments, these groups exercise political power through creative, resilient, and transformative strategies.

A cross-analysis of age and education levels reveals how these factors distinctly shape how LGBTIQ+ people participate politically—whether through activism, institutional routes, or litigation.

- * **Social activism is clearly predominant among younger groups:** 302 out of 608 individuals aged 18 to 24 (49.67%), and 430 out of 966 aged 25 to 34 (44.51%) identified this space as their primary form of participation. This trend is also seen among those with intermediate levels of education, such as those with incomplete university studies (301 out of 591 individuals, 50.93%) or completed technical studies (158 out of 325, 48.62%). This indicates that activism continues to be an accessible and legitimate entry point into political life, particularly for individuals in formative stages or with fewer institutional credentials.

- * **As age and academic background increase, there is a shift toward institutionalized spaces**, particularly public policy. For instance, 51 out of 165 individuals aged 55 to 64 (30.91%) and 14 out of 35 individuals over 65 years old (40.00%) reported participating primarily in this area. Educationally, those with completed postgraduate studies (142 out of 409, 34.72%) or incomplete postgraduate studies (41 out of 124, 33.06%) stood out, suggesting that over time, many individuals build trajectories that allow them to engage from within the state or formal policy-making processes, thanks to educational access and accumulated experience.
- * **Strategic litigation remains rare across most age groups** but gains traction among those with postgraduate education, peaking among those with incomplete postgraduate studies (9 out of 124 individuals, 7.26%) and followed by those with completed postgraduate studies (10 out of 409, 2.44%). This pattern reaffirms that this form of participation requires high levels of technical expertise, which are generally inaccessible to individuals with lower levels of schooling.
- * **Electoral politics maintains relatively stable percentages across age and education groups** — for example, 142 out of 608 individuals aged 18 to 24 (23.36%) and 236 out of 966 aged 25 to 34 (24.43%) — suggesting that this type of participation does not depend exclusively on age or education, but rather on other factors such as party networks, public visibility, or access to resources for running for office.

Age and education not only influence participation individually but also shape distinct political pathways. Activism stands out among younger people and those still studying; public policy, among older individuals with more academic capital; strategic litigation, among technical elites. Recognizing this diversity of trajectories helps better understand how LGBTIQ+ people access political life and where strategies are needed to democratize access to all levels of influence.

Finally, comparing political participation areas across identity groups and geographic contexts helps clarify how structural conditions and national frameworks shape how LGBTIQ+ people engage politically. In addition to exclusion patterns linked to gender, ethnicity, disability, or location, national sociopolitical conditions also play a key role.

- * **Among individuals who identify as Afro-descendant or Black** (432 people, 15.21% of the sample), social activism is the primary channel of participation, with 181 individuals (41.90%), slightly below the overall average (45.46%). Notably, 162 Afro-descendant individuals (37.50%) reported involvement in public policy, a proportion significantly above the sample average (28.35%). This overrepresentation may point to community leadership trajectories that have successfully engaged with institutional processes or state dialogue. Meanwhile, only 82 Afro individuals (18.98%) reported participation in electoral politics, and 7 (1.62%) in strategic litigation, reflecting continued limited access to party or legal arenas.
- * **Among Indigenous individuals** (334 people, 11.76% of the sample), activism also dominates, with 160 individuals (47.90%) — slightly above the overall average. Public policy participation was noted by 91 people (27.25%), and electoral politics by 72 (21.56%). Although representation in strategic litigation remains low (11 people, 3.29%), it is slightly above the average. Together, these findings suggest that Indigenous political engagement is largely rooted in community organizing, while access to formal structures remains limited.
- * **Among people with disabilities** (330 individuals, 11.62%), social activism was selected by more than half (167 individuals, 50.61%) — one of the highest rates across all groups. This confirms that activism serves not only as a channel of visibility but also as a tool for survival and collective resistance in the face of persistent barriers. Comparatively, 79 individuals (23.94%) participated in public policy and 73 (22.12%) in electoral politics. While slightly below average, these figures still show institutional engagement despite accessibility challenges. In strategic litigation, 11 individuals (3.33%) were involved — slightly above average — which may reflect efforts to enforce rights through legal avenues.
- * **People living in rural areas** (280 individuals, 9.86% of the sample) reported the highest level of activism across all groups: 149 individuals (53.21%) selected it as their main form of participation. This figure is well above the general average and may be linked to the limited presence of the state in rural territories, where community organizing becomes the most immediate channel for political action. Only 69 people (24.64%) reported engagement in public policy and 51 (18.21%) in electoral politics — both below average — highlighting unequal access to institutional structures. Strategic litigation was selected by 11 individuals (3.93%), a modest but above-average percentage, possibly tied to collective legal actions in response to state neglect or abuse in rural contexts.

A nationality-based analysis shows significant variations reflecting both democratic participation conditions and historical LGBTIQ+ mobilization paths

- * **In Mexico**, which accounts for a significant portion of responses (686 individuals), social activism was the main form of participation (342 people, 49.85%), followed by public policy (166, 24.20%) and electoral politics (154, 22.45%). Participation in strategic litigation (3.50%) was slightly above the general average, possibly reflecting legal access and litigation efforts led by civil society organizations.
- * **In Brazil** (408 responses), participation appears more institutionalized: public policy leads (177 individuals, 43.38%), followed by activism (139, 34.07%) and electoral politics (88, 21.57%). This suggests a greater insertion of LGBTIQ+ leadership into state structures, likely linked to legal reforms and sustained political organizing in recent decades.
- * **In Guatemala (48 responses), Honduras (61), and Ecuador (17)**, activism holds greater weight: 64.58% in Guatemala, 57.38% in Honduras, and 76.47% in Ecuador, indicating that LGBTIQ+ political participation in these countries is still primarily channeled through community-based, non-institutionalized spaces, with very low presence in parties or state structures.
- * **Argentina**, with 318 respondents, presents another notable case. While activism remains the most common form (137 individuals, 43.08%), participation in public policy (105 individuals, 33.02%) and electoral politics (21.70%) is also significant—reflecting a strong tradition of state-movement articulation.
- * **In Colombia** (491 individuals), the profile is similar: 218 people (44.40%) in activism, 129 (26.27%) in public policy, and 134 (27.29%) in electoral politics. The latter is notably above the regional average, likely tied to a recent surge in openly LGBTIQ+ candidacies and the consolidation of diverse political platforms.
- * **In Peru (190 people) and the Dominican Republic (89)**, activism also emerges as the most common form of engagement (47.37% and 50.56%, respectively), although both countries also show considerable participation in electoral politics and public policy, indicating a gradual entry into institutions—albeit still from unequal footing.
- * **In countries with fewer responses**, such as Uruguay, Panama, Nicaragua, or El Salvador, participation is almost exclusively concentrated in activism, which may be due both to sample size and the difficulty of sustaining visible leadership outside major urban centers or capitals.

This comparative overview reveals that LGBTIQ+ political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean is deeply shaped by material, geographic, and structural conditions. While activism remains the most common and accessible channel, its prominence is even more pronounced among Indigenous, disabled, Afro-descendant, and rural individuals—groups that face multiple barriers to accessing institutional, party, or legal participation avenues.

At the same time, some groups — like Afro-descendants — or national contexts — like Brazil and Argentina — show significant insertion into public policy, suggesting that LGBTIQ+ political professionalization is possible where institutional openness, state recognition, or organizing tradition exists. However, in many countries — especially those with fewer democratic safeguards or closed party systems — activism remains not only a form of participation but also a strategy of resistance, collective care, and defense against institutional neglect.

Ultimately, these findings remind us there is no single way to do politics from sexual and gender dissidence. Any effort to promote more equitable participation must recognize and support the plurality of contexts, trajectories, and strategies sustaining the LGBTIQ+ political struggle in the region. Only then will it be possible to advance toward a truly representative democracy — one that not only includes more voices but transforms the rules of the game so that everyone can participate with dignity, safety, and recognition.

3.4.4

Voting Behavior: Reasons, barriers, and democratic convictions

Voting is one of the most visible and widely recognized forms of political participation. However, its practice is neither uniform nor a guarantee of full democratic inclusion — especially for LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean. Survey data reveal both the motivations that drive people to vote and the structural, personal, and institutional obstacles that hinder this right in practice.

- * Among the 1,603 individuals who answered the question about their primary motivation for voting in their country's most recent election, most did so out of civic and democratic convictions. The most common reason was "I believe in democracy," cited by 407 people (25.39%), followed by "to exercise my right to vote" (370 people, 23.08%). An additional 12.73% (204 individuals) voted because they felt it was a citizen's duty. These responses reflect strong identification with democratic values and with voting as an exercise of rights and collective responsibility.
- * At the same time, a significant portion voted with hope for change: 207 people (12.91%) said they voted "to make things change," showing that voting is still seen as a tool to transform unjust realities. Notably, 75 people (4.68%) voted specifically "to support an openly LGBTIQ+ candidate," highlighting the importance of political representation as a driver of participation.
- * However, 211 individuals (13.16%) reported not voting, and their reasons underscore structural barriers and institutional distrust. The most common reason was not meeting legal voting requirements, with 69 people (33.50%), followed by distrust of electoral authorities (43 people, 20.87%) and lack of official ID or documents (21 people, 10.19%). Additional barriers included distance from the voting center (14 people, 6.80%), territorial insecurity (5 people), and experiences of violence or discrimination for being trans while voting (5 people, 2.43%).

These data reveal that while many LGBTIQ+ people vote out of conviction, others face structural, legal, and social conditions that complicate or outright prevent electoral participation. Additionally, levels of distrust in institutions, document barriers, and experiences of violence and discrimination create a landscape where the right to vote is not always guaranteed or safely exercised.

Breakdowns by nationality further clarify how LGBTIQ+ people's motivations to vote vary by political, institutional, and social context, while also exposing reasons for abstention that illustrate patterns of inclusion or exclusion in electoral processes.

- * **Argentina (164 responses):** Most respondents voted “because I believe in democracy” (45 people, 27.44%) or “to exercise my right to vote” (34 people, 20.73%). Others voted “to bring change” (29 people, 17.68%) or “because voting is mandatory” (21 people, 12.80%). Only 2 people (1.22%) reported voting to support LGBTIQ+ candidates. Among the 12 non-voters, 3 cited lack of trust in authorities (25%) and another 3 did not meet legal requirements (25%).
- * **Brazil (183 responses):** 71 people (38.80%) voted for democratic conviction, 21 (11.48%) to exercise their right, and 20 (10.93%) to bring change. Notably, 15 people (8.20%) voted to support an LGBTIQ+ candidate. Among the 20 who did not vote, 7 didn't meet legal requirements (35%) and 4 lacked trust in the system (20%).
- * **Mexico (456 responses):** 145 people (31.80%) voted to exercise their right, 105 (23.03%) for democracy, and 74 (16.23%) out of civic duty. Only 11 people (2.41%) voted for LGBTIQ+ representation. Among the 55 non-voters, 19 didn't meet legal requirements (34.55%) and 12 lacked proper documentation (21.82%).
- * **Colombia (247 responses):** 63 people (25.51%) voted for democracy, 61 (24.70%) to exercise their right, and 43 (17.41%) for change. Another 15 (6.07%) voted to support LGBTIQ+ candidates. Of the 26 who did not vote, 12 were legally ineligible (46.15%) and 4 lived too far from their polling place (15.38%).
- * **Peru (125 responses):** Voting was driven by the right to vote (40 people, 32.00%), democracy (19 people, 15.20%), and legal obligation (16 people, 12.80%). Nine people (7.20%) voted for LGBTIQ+ representation. Among the 14 non-voters, 5 lacked trust in authorities (35.71%) and 3 were legally ineligible (21.43%).

- * **Dominican Republic (65 responses):** Voting was most commonly motivated by democracy (22 people, 33.85%), civic duty (7 people, 10.77%), and LGBTIQ+ representation (6 people, 9.23%). Among the 15 non-voters, 4 cited disinterest (26.67%), 4 lived far from polling centers (26.67%), and 3 lacked trust in the system (20%).
- * **Chile (83 responses):** Respondents were mainly motivated by civic duty (20 people, 24.10%) and the right to vote (16 people, 19.28%). Five people (6.02%) voted for LGBTIQ+ representation. Only 4 people abstained, 3 of whom did not meet voting requirements.
- * **Venezuela (126 responses):** 36 people (28.57%) voted for democracy, and 19 (15.08%) for their right to vote. Only 2 (1.59%) voted to support LGBTIQ+ candidates. However, 37 people did not vote (30.16%), with 12 citing distrust in the system (32.43%) and 10 citing legal ineligibility (27.03%).
- * **Guatemala (23 responses):** Six people each voted for change (26.09%) and democracy (26.09%). Among the 3 non-voters, one cited distrust, one was legally excluded, and one gave no reason.
- * **Honduras (43 responses):** Voting was primarily motivated by change (12 people, 27.91%) and LGBTIQ+ representation (5 people, 11.63%). Of the 3 who did not vote, 2 were legally ineligible.
- * **Ecuador (15 responses):** Most people voted because voting is mandatory (5 people, 33.33%) or to exercise their right (4 people, 26.67%). Among the 3 non-voters, one lacked documentation and another was legally excluded.
- * **United States (11 responses):** Three people (27.27%) voted for change, three for civic duty, and one for LGBTIQ+ representation. Of the three who did not vote, one cited distrust, one legal exclusion, and one an unspecified reason.

This analysis of voting behavior among LGBTIQ+ individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean clearly shows that electoral participation is neither an isolated nor neutral act—it reflects a complex mix of democratic commitment, political context, levels of representation, and structural conditions that either facilitate or block access to the ballot.

On one hand, many people vote out of a sense of civic duty, hope for change, or support for LGBTIQ+ candidates, demonstrating active citizenship and a desire to transform institutions from within. On the other hand, this intent does not always translate into participation. In many countries, LGBTIQ+ individuals still face legal, documentary, geographic, and safety-related barriers that prevent them from voting, even when voting is compulsory.

High rates of abstention due to structural issues, along with recorded instances of violence and discrimination during voting (particularly toward trans people), show that the right to vote is not fully guaranteed or safe for everyone. Moreover, widespread distrust in electoral authorities indicates an urgent need to strengthen transparency, inclusion, and the legitimacy of democratic systems across the region.

In this context, encouraging LGBTIQ+ electoral participation must go beyond generic calls to vote. It requires concrete actions to eliminate barriers, ensure safe conditions, and increase visibility of diverse leadership. Full participation begins when voting is neither a risk nor an exception, but a right exercised with dignity and freedom.

3.4.5

Political education and party membership

Effective political participation depends not only on the will to engage, but also on access to knowledge, tools, and networks that enable informed and strategic action. Training in public policy and political participation is therefore a key factor in democratizing access to power and strengthening the impact of LGBTIQ+ leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Of the 2,840 people surveyed, 1,703 (59.96%) reported not having received specific training in public policy or political participation, compared to 1,137 (40.04%) who had. This gap highlights how LGBTIQ+ activism in the region is often driven by practical experience and self-taught effort, without systematic access to technical or institutional training.

Training access varies significantly by area of participation. Those engaged in strategic litigation reported the highest level of training (51.19%, or 43 of 84 people), followed by those working in public policy (46.58%, 375 of 805). In contrast, participants in social activism—the most common form of engagement—had the lowest rate: only 36.56% (472 of 1,291) received training. A similar trend appears in electoral politics, where 62.58% (413 of 660) had no training, despite the technical challenges involved in running for office or supporting campaigns.

Training access also varies across gender identities. Among men (1,970 surveyed), only 38.02% (749) had received training. Women (605 total) reported a slightly higher rate at 44.96% (272), possibly reflecting feminist networks for political empowerment. Non-binary individuals (193) and those who marked “other” (72) also reported higher-than-male averages at 44.04% and 43.06%, respectively. While encouraging, these figures suggest continued reliance on activism and collective effort over formal mechanisms.

Trans and travesti respondents (463) were the only group close to parity: 49.03% (227) had received training, and 50.97% had not. This balance may reflect sustained efforts by trans networks, feminist organizations, and regional projects aimed at strengthening trans leadership. However, expanding the reach and sustainability of these initiatives remains a pressing need, so that political professionalization does not rely solely on grassroots activism.

Party affiliation is another key factor influencing training access. Only 629 of the 2,840 respondents (22.15%) reported being active in a political party, while the vast majority (2,211 people, 77.85%) were not. Among party members, 71.22% (448) had received political training, compared to only 31.16% (689) among non-members. This 40-point gap confirms that, despite

widespread distrust, political parties remain a privileged channel for accessing training spaces.

In terms of participation areas, party members are mainly involved in social activism (38.47%), public policy (32.11%), and electoral politics (25.76%). Non-members show a different distribution, with a heavier concentration in social activism (47.44%) and slightly less involvement in public policy (27.27%). Party involvement thus appears to facilitate more institutionalized political engagement.

The reasons for not joining a party shed light on this low level of involvement. Among non-members, 880 people (39.80%) said they did not see the need to belong to a party; 634 (28.67%) cited distrust of parties; 313 (14.16%) reported lack of interest; 186 (8.41%) disagreed with party policies; and 175 (7.91%) chose “other” reasons. These varied motivations point to an informed disengagement rather than apathy and reflect disillusionment with structures that have historically been exclusionary or exploitative of LGBTIQ+ leadership.

Party involvement remains low across all gender identities, with minor variations: 21.52% among men, 24.96% among women, 20.21% among non-binary individuals, and 23.76% among trans and travesti respondents. These figures reinforce the conclusion that while there are ongoing efforts to professionalize and strengthen LGBTIQ+ political leadership, much broader investment is still needed in accessible training and inclusive, sustainable participation mechanisms—both within and beyond political parties.

3.3.6

Appointed public service: Progress and ongoing challenges

The participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals as appointed public officials is a key indicator of access to power and decision-making spaces. Despite advances in visibility and representation, the data show that this presence remains proportionally limited and deeply shaped by gender, identity, and racial inequalities.

Of the 1,533 respondents to this section, 371 (24.2%) reported having held a non-elected public service role between 2020 and 2024. While this figure represents a notable presence, it is essential to analyze who is gaining access to these spaces and under what conditions.

In absolute terms, men make up the majority of those who have held public service office (237 people, 63.88%), followed by women (98 people, 26.42%), non-binary individuals (25 people, 6.74%), and respondents who marked another gender identity (11 people, 2.96%). However, when examining relative proportions within each group, notable differences emerge:

- * Of the 1,013 men surveyed, 23.40% served in public office.
- * Of the 352 women, 27.84% held public positions.
- * Of the 122 non-binary individuals, 20.49% served in public office.
- * Of the 46 people who selected another gender identity, 23.91% also held public roles.

These figures reveal that while men dominate in absolute numbers, women exhibit a slightly higher proportionate access to public office. Non-binary and other gender-diverse individuals also show comparable percentages, although their overall numbers remain small.

Among trans and travesti individuals, of the 463 respondents who identified as such, 68 (14.68%) held public office. Within this group:

- * 29 were trans women (42.65%),
- * 17 were trans men (25.00%),
- * 13 were non-binary trans individuals (19.12%),
- * and 9 identified with another gender identity (13.24%).

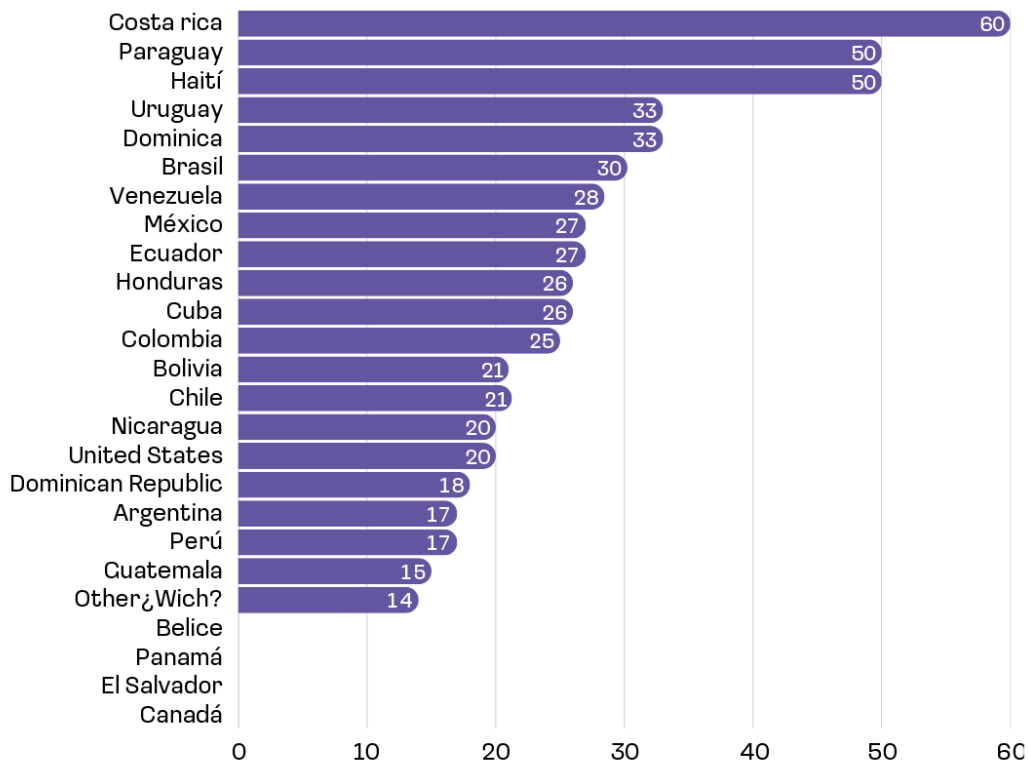
While these figures may appear small in absolute terms, their relative proportion within the surveyed trans population reflects a significant level of access, especially given the historically high levels of institutional exclusion faced by trans communities.

Representation of intersex individuals is also notable: 44 of the 371 public officials (11.86%) identified as intersex. This group remains largely invisible in most public spaces, making their documented presence in public office a noteworthy data point deserving further attention and research.

Structural inequalities are also evident in ethno-racial data. Only 58 public officials (15.63%) identified as Afro-descendant or Black, and 39 (10.51%) as Indigenous. Participation of people with disabilities was also low: just 36 public officials (9.70%) identified as such. These figures highlight persistent underrepresentation in institutional access for historically marginalized groups.

Geographically, Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia account for the highest numbers of LGBTIQ+ public officials, with 118, 52, and 55 individuals respectively. While participation percentages in these countries range between 23% and 30%, their absolute numbers stand out due to the size of their national samples. This could reflect the impact of affirmative action policies, institutionalization of diversity agendas, or the work of organized networks of LGBTIQ+ public servants.

Chart 12. Distribution of respondents who served as public officials by nationality.



In Costa Rica (60%), Paraguay (50%), Haiti (50%), and Dominica (33%), the percentages are high but based on small samples, and should therefore be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, their visibility deserves to be highlighted as signals of opportunity or contexts in which some individuals have managed to access positions of state power.

Brazil (30.23%), Venezuela (28.45%), and Chile (21.25%) also report significant percentages, reflecting diverse scenarios where LGBTIQ+ leadership has managed to enter government structures. In Venezuela, for example, this participation could be read as a political response within a context of prolonged crisis, while in Chile, it may be linked to recent waves of social mobilization and institutional renewal.

On the other end of the spectrum, countries such as **El Salvador, Panama, and Belize** either had no public officials recorded in the sample or reported minimal proportions. This may reflect structural restrictions on LGBTIQ+ public participation, whether due to legal frameworks, institutional discrimination, or a weak organizational base.

Taken together, the data show that LGBTIQ+ access to public office in Latin America and the Caribbean is increasing — both in volume and in the diversity of identities represented. However, this progress is not evenly distributed. It still depends on factors such as national political context, the existence of inclusive public policies, and the strength of social movements.

For this institutional access to be truly transformative, it will be essential to ensure dignified conditions for continuity in office, protection against discrimination, and robust training and support mechanisms. Only then can LGBTIQ+ presence in public institutions move beyond anecdotal or isolated cases to become structural, legitimate, and sustained.

The political participation of LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean is still largely grounded in social activism, but it shows clear signs of expanding into formal decision-making spaces. Nonetheless, unequal access, structural barriers, mistrust in traditional institutions, and ongoing violence continue to limit full inclusion.

The challenge now is to strengthen institutional channels for participation, guarantee safety and recognition for all identities in political processes, and promote diverse representation that goes beyond sexual diversity issues to encompass all dimensions of democratic life.

In the next section, we examine the specific electoral participation experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals during the 2020–2024 cycle, analyzing the different roles they assumed and the dynamics they faced as voters, activists, election observers, campaign staff, and candidates.



3.5

LGBTIQ+ political participation pathways during the 2020–2024 electoral cycle

During the 2020–2024 electoral period, LGBTIQ+ people not only participated as voters but also played a variety of essential roles in electoral processes across Latin America and the Caribbean. **The survey allowed each respondent to record up to three different experiences, capturing a total of 1,371 participation records from 1,154 respondents (75.28% of the total).**

The majority of these experiences were as voters or activists (940 records, 68.56%), reinforcing the idea that voting and civic mobilization remain the most common forms of political engagement for LGBTIQ+ people. These were followed by experiences as election observers (124, 9.04%), candidates (96, 7.00%), campaign team members (95, 6.93%), party members or leaders (88, 6.42%), and elected officials (28, 2.04%).

Analysis by gender identity reveals key differences:

- * Although **men recorded the most experiences overall (875)**, most were as voters or activists (617, 70.51%), with lower levels in candidacies (52) and elected positions (20).
- * **Women registered 345 experiences in total**, with a higher proportion of participation as candidates (34, 9.86%) and campaign staff (30, 8.70%) compared to men.
- * **Non-binary individuals (110 experiences)** and those who selected “other” gender identities (41 experiences) showed significant involvement as election observers (14.55% and 12.20%, respectively), suggesting that these roles may offer more opportunities for influence without the visibility or strain of candidacy. However, these identities also appear in high-visibility roles like candidacies and elected office, demonstrating that their political engagement transcends the margins.
- * **Among trans and travesti individuals, 287 electoral experiences were recorded**, 197 (68.64%) of which were as voters or activists. They were also well-represented as observers (32, 11.15%) and candidates (24, 8.36%), reflecting a strong commitment to democratic processes even amid structural barriers. While only 4 trans individuals reported being elected (1.39%), this number is notable given the historic levels of institutional exclusion faced by this population.
- * **Intersex respondents, with 153 records**, also yielded important findings: 101 experiences were as voters or activists (66.01%), but also included 22 as observers (14.38%) and 6 as elected officials (3.92%) — a significantly higher percentage than the general average (2.04%) for this category. This relative overrepresentation suggests that, although their overall presence remains limited, intersex people are occupying political representation spaces with often-overlooked strength.

Ethno-racial, disability, and territorial perspectives further underscore the importance of viewing electoral participation from the margins:

- * **Among the 165 experiences registered by Indigenous people (12.04% of the total)**, most were in voting or civic mobilization (107, 64.85%). However, their involvement in diverse roles also stands out: 17 as observers (10.30%), 12 as candidates (7.27%), 12 in campaign teams (7.27%), 13 in party leadership (7.88%), and 4 as elected officials (2.42%). This profile shows meaningful presence in various stages of the electoral cycle, although still based on a small group — highlighting the need to further strengthen institutional access routes for these leaders.
- * **The 200 experiences recorded by Afro-descendant people (14.59% of the total)** show a similar distribution but with stronger presence in institutional roles. Sixty-one percent (122) participated as voters or activists, while 25 were observers (12.50%), 16 were candidates (8.00%), and 6 were elected (3.00%). Additionally, 18 Afro participants were involved in party leadership (9.00%) and 13 in campaign teams (6.50%). These data suggest that while activism remains central, there is significant engagement in more formal political arenas — potentially driven by Afro-organizing networks and anti-racist agendas in the region.
- * **Among people with disabilities (165 experiences, 12.04%)**, 72.12% (119) reported participating as voters or activists—the highest proportion in the entire sample. This supports the hypothesis that accessibility barriers — both physical and attitudinal — continue to limit access to more institutional roles. Still, 14 people with disabilities ran as candidates (8.48%), 16 were observers (9.70%), 8 joined campaign teams (4.85%), 6 held party leadership roles (3.64%), and 2 were elected (1.21%). The low representation in elected office highlights ongoing challenges to ensuring full democratic inclusion.
- * **Territorial differences also reveal significant gaps.** Of the 122 experiences registered by people living in rural areas (8.90% of the total), 68.03% (83) were as voters or activists, while only 11 were observers (9.02%), 11 candidates (9.02%), 8 in campaign teams (6.56%), 6 in party leadership (4.92%), and 3 elected (2.46%). While this pattern is similar to urban settings, leadership participation is notably lower — likely due to institutional absence, political centralization, and limited infrastructure in rural areas.

- * In contrast, the 1,249 urban experiences (91.10%) show a more balanced distribution: 857 as voters or activists (68.61%), 113 as observers (9.05%), 87 in campaign teams (6.97%), 85 as candidates (6.81%), 82 in party leadership (6.57%), and 25 elected (2.00%). These figures clearly demonstrate how territorial context directly affects opportunities for political participation, with access to formal power still concentrated in urban areas.

These cross-sections reveal that the roles LGBTIQ+ individuals take on are not uniform, but deeply shaped by social, identity, and geographic contexts. **Altogether, this panorama shows that LGBTIQ+ people are not only voting — they are also observing, organizing, mobilizing, running for office, and, to a lesser extent, being elected.**

Each of these roles represents a step forward in consolidating their political citizenship and reclaiming power spaces historically denied to them. At the same time, the data highlight persistent gaps in access to candidacy and elected office, underscoring the need to create fairer conditions for the full and effective participation of all identities.

Table 6. Experience records by role and sociodemographic characteristics.

Participation Role	Voter / Activist	Electoral observer	Campaign staff	Party leadership or militant	Candidate	Elected official
Total	940 (68.56%)	124 (9.04%)	95 (6.93%)	88 (6.42%)	96 (7.00%)	28 (2.04%)
Man	617 (65.64%)	73 (58.87%)	56 (58.95%)	57 (64.77%)	52 (54.17%)	20 (71.43%)
Woman	224 (23.83%)	30 (24.19%)	30 (31.58%)	23 (26.14%)	34 (35.42%)	4 (14.29%)
Non-binary	71 (7.55%)	16 (12.90%)	5 (5.26%)	7 (7.95%)	9 (9.38%)	2 (7.14%)
Trans / Travesti	197 (20.96%)	32 (25.81%)	14 (14.74%)	16 (18.18%)	24 (25%)	4 (14.29%)
Intersex	101 (10.74%)	22 (17.74%)	8 (8.42%)	9 (10.23%)	7 (7.29%)	6 (21.43%)
Indigenous	107 (11.38%)	17 (13.71%)	12 (12.63%)	13 (14.77%)	12 (12.50%)	4 (14.29%)
Afro-descendant	122 (12.98%)	25 (20.16%)	13 (13.68%)	18 (20.45%)	16 (16.67%)	6 (21.43%)

Participation Role	Voter / Activist	Electoral observer	Campaign staff	Party leadership or militant	Candidate	Elected official
Person with a disability	119 (12.66%)	16 (12.90%)	8 (8.42%)	6 (6.82%)	14 (14.58%)	2 (7.14%)
Urban area	857 (91.17%)	113 (91.13%)	87 (91.58%)	82 (93.18%)	85 (88.54%)	25 (89.29%)
Rural area	83 (8.83%)	11 (8.87%)	8 (8.42%)	6 (6.82%)	11 (11.46%)	3 (10.71%)

Between 2020 and 2024, LGBTIQ+ individuals participated in at least 50 distinct electoral processes across 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These experiences spanned presidential, legislative, regional, and local elections, as well as exceptional events like Chile’s constituent election. A total of 1,371 electoral participation experiences were recorded, offering insight into political engagement patterns by country, territory, and role type.

At an aggregate level, the countries with the highest volume of participation were Mexico (371 experiences, 27.06%), Colombia (244, 17.80%), Brazil (170, 12.41%), and Argentina (145, 10.58%). These four countries accounted for 67.85% of all records, reflecting both the size of their electorates and the presence of organized LGBTIQ+ networks and public policies (or electoral contexts) that have enabled various forms of participation.

Legislative elections (such as Mexico 2021, Colombia 2022, Argentina 2021, and Peru 2020), along with regional or local elections, accumulated the most participation experiences. These types of elections served not only as common spaces for activism and electoral observation but also as arenas where more LGBTIQ+ individuals ran for office and were elected. For example:

- * In **Mexico's 2021 legislative** and local elections, 238 experiences were registered, including 17 party militants, 24 candidacies, and 4 elected individuals.
- * In **Colombia's 2023 regional elections**, there were 15 candidacies and 4 individuals elected—the highest number of elected officials in a single event.
- * In **Chile's 2021 regional and local elections**, there were 3 candidacies and 1 elected position.

In contrast, presidential elections provided greater opportunities for participation as electoral observers or activists/voters, but fewer for candidacies or political party engagement. This may be due to the highly competitive and polarized nature of presidential contests. For instance:

- * In **Argentina's 2023 presidential runoff**, 38 experiences were recorded, but none were candidacies.
- * In **Brazil, the two presidential rounds in 2022** accounted for 105 experiences, 91 of which were as voters or activists.

Looking at the distribution by role:

- * **Voter or activist** experiences predominated across all election types and countries, showing that this remains the primary gateway to political engagement for many LGBTIQ+ individuals.
- * **Candidacies** were more common in legislative and local elections, where party engagement is more viable or where affirmative actions exist, such as in Mexico or Brazil.
- * **Elected positions** were only recorded in legislative or regional/local elections, never in presidential elections, reflecting both structural limitations and the types of positions currently pursued by LGBTIQ+ leaders.
- * **Electoral observation roles** were more evenly distributed but showed greater incidence in national-level elections.

This landscape illustrates that LGBTIQ+ participation during the electoral cycle extends beyond voting, encompassing a diverse set of roles that vary depending on the election type, country, and political moment. The next section delves deeper into each of these roles to better understand the trajectories, motivations, challenges, and achievements of those who participated.

Table 7. Distribution of LGBTIQ+ Political Experiences by Role in National and Local Elections (2020–2024).

ARGENTINA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 – Legislative	30 (2.19%)	24	1	-	1	3	1
2023 – Presidential 1st Round & Legislative	60 (4.38%)	46	4	3	6	1	-
2023 – Presidential Runoff	38 (2.77%)	28	5	-	5	-	-
2023 – Regional and/or Local	17 (1.24%)	10	1	3	1	2	-
Country total	145 (10.58%)	108	11	6	13	6	1

BOLIVIA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2020 – Presidential and Legislative	10 (0.73%)	8	-	-	1	1	-
2021 – Regional and/or Local	11 (0.80%)	10	-	-	-	-	1
Country total	21 (1.53%)	18	-	-	1	1	1

BRASIL	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2020 - Regional and/ or Local	53 (3.87%)	37	6	3	-	4	3
2022 - Presidential First Round and Legislative	68 (4.96%)	59	6	2	1	-	-
2022 - Presidential Second Round	37 (2.70%)	34	1	1	1	-	-
2024 - Regional and/ or Local	12 (0.88%)	9	-	-	2	1	-

Country total	170 (12.41%)	139	13	6	4	5	3
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CHILE	# Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Constitu- tuent Assem- bly Members	12 (0.88%)	7	1	4	-	-	-
2021 - Presiden- tial First Round and Legislative	32 (2.33%)	28	2	1	-	1	-
2021 - Pre- sidential Se- cond Round	17 (1.24%)	16	1	-	-	-	-
2021 - Re- gional and/ or Local	7 (0.51%)	1	-	2	-	3	1
2024 - Re- gional and/ or Local	12 (0.88%)	6	2	2	1	-	1
Country total	80 (5.84%)	58	6	9	1	4	2

COLOMBIA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2022 - Legisla- tive	55 (4.01%)	35	4	9	3	3	1
2022 - Presiden- tial First Round and Legislative	83 (6.05%)	69	4	2	4	1	3
2022 - Presi- dential Second Round	60 (4.38%)	53	3	-	3	1	-
2023 - Regio- nal and/or Local	46 (3.36%)	17	4	5	1	15	4
Country total	244 (17.80%)	174	15	16	11	20	8

CUBA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2022 - Regio- nal and/or Local	1 (0.07%)	1	-	-	-	-	-
Country total	1 (0.07%)	1	-	-	-	-	-

COSTA RICA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Regional and/or Local	2 (0.15%)	2	-	-	-	-	-
2022 - Presidential First Round and Legislative	2 (0.15%)	1	1	-	-	-	-
2022 - Presidential Second Round	1 (0.07%)	-	-	-	1	-	-
Country total	5 (0.37%)	3	1	-	1	-	-

ECUADOR	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Presidential First Round and Legislative	2 (0.15%)	2	-	-	-	-	-
2021 - Presidential Second Round	1 (0.07%)	1	-	-	-	-	-

2023 - Presidential First Round and Legislative	4 (0.29%)	3	1	-	-	-	-
2023 - Presidential Second Round	2 (0.15%)	2	-	-	-	-	-
2023 - Regional and/or Local	7 (0.51%)	6	-	-	1	-	-
Country total	16 (1.17%)	14	1	-	1	-	-

EL SALVADOR	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Legislative and regional and/or local elections	2 (0.15%)	1	-	-	-	1	-
2024 - Presidential and legislative elections	4 (0.29%)	2	1	-	-	1	-

2024 - Regional and/or Local	2 (0.15%)	1	-	-	-	1	-
Country total	8 (0.59%)	4	1	-	-	3	-

GUATEMALA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2023 - Presidential first round, legislative, and regional and/or local elections	11 (0.80%)	6	3	-	1	1	-
2023 - Presidential second round	7 (0.51%)	2	4	1	-	-	-
Country total	18 (1.31%)	8	7	1	1	1	-

HONDURAS	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Cam- paign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Presidential, le- gislative, and regional and/or local elections	41 (2.99%)	19	8	3	5	6	-
Country total	41 (2.99%)	19	8	3	5	6	-

MEXICO	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Cam- paign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Legislative and regional and/or local elections	238 (17.36%)	147	15	31	17	24	4
2024 - Presiden- tial and legislati- ve elections	133 (9.70%)	85	11	12	10	13	2
Country total	371 (27.06%)	232	26	43	27	37	6

NICARAGUA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Cam- paign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2021 - Presidential and legislative elec- tions	2 (0.15%)	-	-	-	1	1	-
Country total	2 (0.15%)	-	-	-	1	1	-

PANAMA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Cam- paign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2024 - Presidential, le- gislative, and regional and/or local elections	6 (0.44%)	5	1	-	-	-	-
Country total	6 (0.44%)	5	1	-	-	-	-

PERU	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Cam- paign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2020 - Le- gislative	26 (1.90%)	15	2	1	4	2	2
2021 - Presiden- tial First Round and Legislative	35 (2.55%)	32	1	-	1	1	-
2021 - Presi- dential Second Round	10 (0.73%)	5	4	-	-	-	1
2022 - Re- gional and/ or Local	27 (1.97%)	14	5	1	2	3	2
2024 - Regio- nal and/or Local	11 (0.80%)	9	-	1	-	1	-
Country total	109 (8.03%)	75	12	3	7	7	5

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2020 - Presiden- tial First Round and Legislative	29 (2.12%)	17	8	2	1	1	-
2020 - Regional and/or Local	6 (0.44%)	1	2	1	2	-	-
2024 - Presiden- tial First Round and Legislative	7 (0.51%)	3	3	-	1	-	-
2024 - Regional and/or Local	9 (0.66%)	3	1	1	2	2	-
Country total	51 (3.73%)	24	15	4	6	3	-

URUGUAY	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2024 - Presiden- tial First Round and Legislative	1 (0.07%)	1	-	-	-	-	-
Country total	1 (0.07%)	1	-	-	-	-	-

VENEZUELA	Total	Voter / Activist	Election observer	Campaign staff	Political party member or leader	Candidate	Elected official
2020 - Le- gislative	19 (1.39%)	15	2	1	1	-	-
2021 - Regional and/or Local	29 (2.12%)	21	4	1	2	-	1
2024 - Presiden- tial	22 (1.60%)	12	2	1	4	2	1
Country total	70 (5.11%)	48	8	3	7	2	2

To gain a deeper understanding of how LGBTIQ+ individuals participated in electoral processes between 2020 and 2024, the following subsections organize and analyze the experiences reported according to the main roles they played during election campaigns and voting periods:

- * **940 experiences as LGBTIQ+ voters or activists** across at least 50 electoral processes.
- * **124 experiences as LGBTIQ+ electoral observers** in 35 electoral processes.
- * **95 experiences as LGBTIQ+ campaign staff** in at least 26 electoral processes.
- * **130 experiences within political parties**, reported by party members (53), candidates (64), and elected officials (13) in at least 31 electoral processes.
- * **77 experiences in the development of campaigns as LGBTIQ+ candidates**, reported by party members (10), candidates (58), and elected officials (9) across at least 21 electoral processes.

Each of these areas will be explored in the following sections, with the goal of mapping the various pathways of participation taken by LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the progress, tensions, and challenges they face in claiming spaces historically marked by exclusion.

LGBTIQ+ voter/activist

940
Experiences

Argentina

- ◆ Argentina 2021 (Legislative): 24
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 46
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 28
- ◆ Argentina 2023 Regional and/or Local: 10

Bolivia

- ◆ Bolivia 2020 (Presidential and Legislative): 8
- ◆ Bolivia 2021 (Regional and/or Local): 10

Costa Rica

- ◆ Costa Rica 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 2
- ◆ Costa Rica 2022 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1

Cuba

- ◆ Cuba 2022 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Ecuador

- ◆ Ecuador 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 2
- ◆ Ecuador 2021 (Presidential Runoff): 1
- ◆ Ecuador 2023 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 3
- ◆ Ecuador 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 2
- ◆ Ecuador 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 6

Brazil

- ◆ Brazil 2020 ((Regional and/or Local): 37
- ◆ Brazil 2022 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 59
- ◆ Brazil 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 34
- ◆ Brazil 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 9

Chile

- ◆ Chile 2021 (Constitutional Assembly Members): 7
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 28
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential Runoff): 16
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Regional and/or Local): 1
- ◆ Chile 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 6

Colombia

- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Legislative): 35
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential First Round): 69
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 53
- ◆ Colombia 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 17

El Salvador

- ◆ El Salvador 2021 (Legislative, regional and/or local): 1
- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Presidential and legislative): 2
- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Guatemala

- ◆ Guatemala 2023 (Presidential First Round, Legislative, regional and/or local): 6
- ◆ Guatemala 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 2

Honduras

- ◆ Honduras 2021 (Presidential, legislative, regional and/or local): 19

México

- ◆ México 2021 (Legislative and regional and/or local): 147
- ◆ México 2024 (Presidential and legislative): 85

Panamá

- ◆ Panamá 2024 (Presidential, legislative, regional and/or local): 5

Perú

- ◆ Perú 2020 (Legislative): 15
- ◆ Perú 2021 (Presidential First Round, Legislative): 32
- ◆ Perú 2021 (Presidential Runoff): 5
- ◆ Perú 2022 (Regional and/or local): 14
- ◆ Perú 2024 (Regional and/or local): 9

Other

- ◆ Other: 9

Dominican Republic

- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 17
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 1
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2024 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 3
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 3

Uruguay

- ◆ Uruguay 2024 (Presidential First Round, Legislative): 1

Venezuela

- ◆ Venezuela 2020 (Legislative): 15
- ◆ Venezuela 2021 (Regional and/or local): 21
- ◆ Venezuela 2024 (Presidential): 12

3.5.1

Experiences of LGBTIQ+ voters and activists

This section presents records of political participation by LGBTIQ+ individuals who engaged as voters or activists during the 2020–2024 electoral period in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on data collected through the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean.

In total, 940 experiences of voting and activism were recorded across at least 50 electoral processes in the region.

Of these, 617 entries were submitted by men (65.64%), 224 by women (23.83%), and 71 by nonbinary individuals (7.55%). Additionally, 197 participants identified as trans or travesti (20.96%) and 101 as intersex (10.74%).

Respondents also came from diverse backgrounds and social conditions: 107 individuals identified as Indigenous (11.38%), 122 as Afro-descendant (12.98%), and 119 as people with disabilities (12.66%). The vast majority were from urban areas (857, or 91.17%), while 83 experiences (8.83%) were shared by individuals from rural contexts.

Among those who shared experiences as voters or activists, 521 cisgender individuals (70.12%) indicated that their voting ID recognized their self-perceived gender identity. Among trans individuals, 36 trans men or travestis (58.06%) and 37 trans women or travestis (47.43%) responded affirmatively. In the case of nonbinary individuals, only 17 (42.86%) reported that their ID reflected their identity. This information provides context about the documentation conditions under which these individuals participated in electoral processes between 2020 and 2024.

Regarding access to information about their polling stations, most respondents (765, or 81.38%) said it was easy to obtain and that electoral authorities provided clear information. However, 79 individuals (8.40%) indicated the information was not easily accessible or was hard to understand, and 18 people (1.91%) stated that the information was hidden or particularly difficult to obtain. These figures offer an initial overview of electoral information accessibility for LGBTIQ+ individuals during the period analyzed.

When asked whether they were aware of campaigns promoting LGBTIQ+ electoral participation, 284 people (30.21%) reported knowing of campaigns organized by LGBTIQ+ organizations; 175 (18.62%) cited campaigns led by political parties; and 139 (14.79%) pointed to electoral authorities as the responsible entities. However, the most common response was “I don’t know of any

campaign,” selected by 383 individuals (40.74%), indicating a significant gap in the reach or visibility of these initiatives across the region.

As for perceived safety at polling places, 356 people (37.87%) reported feeling safe, and 318 (33.83%) felt very safe while voting. Meanwhile, 106 (11.28%) felt unsafe, and 82 (8.72%) felt very unsafe.

- * **By gender identity**, nonbinary individuals reported the highest proportion of insecurity: 23.94% felt unsafe and 5.63% very unsafe. They were followed by trans and travesti individuals, with 17.26% feeling unsafe and 9.64% very unsafe, and intersex individuals with 17.82% and 8.91%, respectively.
- * **Among Indigenous people**, 16.82% felt very unsafe and 15.89% unsafe — higher than the general average. Elevated levels of insecurity were also noted among Afro-descendant respondents (26.23% combined unsafe/very unsafe) and people with disabilities (32.77% combined).
- * **Territorial differences** were also evident: while most experiences were from urban settings, in rural areas only 34.67% reported feeling safe. A higher percentage reported feeling unsafe (20%) or very unsafe (14.67%), reflecting unequal conditions based on geographic context.
- * **Polling station conditions were varied** and reflected both inclusion efforts and persistent challenges related to safety and discrimination:
- * **Only a quarter of respondents (237, or 25.21%) reported visible information about inclusion and non-discrimination** at their polling station, with the highest levels in Peru (34.67%) and Venezuela (30.61%), and the lowest in Colombia (18.39%).
- * By contrast, **a wide majority (70.53%) reported the presence of State security forces** — such as police or military — especially in Peru (90.67%) and Argentina (86.67%). Despite such institutional presence, only 16.28% reported seeing visibly LGBTIQ+ election workers or volunteers, with Brazil leading this category (24.65%).
- * One of the most striking findings is that **43.40% of respondents witnessed visibly armed individuals at their polling places**, with particularly high rates in Peru (70.67%), Venezuela (65.31%), and Argentina (60.95%). These conditions likely affect perceptions of safety and the decision to vote at all.

- * Additionally, **9.89% reported having their gender identity or expression questioned while voting** — most frequently in Venezuela (12.24%) and Peru (12.00%). There were also reports of discrimination by polling staff (7.87%) and intimidation by other voters (17.87%), with Brazil (34.51%) and Venezuela (36.73%) showing the highest rates in these two categories.

These findings reveal that while many LGBTIQ+ individuals are able to exercise their right to vote, they often do so in environments that do not fully guarantee dignity, safety, or freedom from violence.

LCBTIQ+ Electoral observers

124
Experiences

Argentina

- ◆ Argentina 2021 (Legislative): 1
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 4
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 5
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Brasil

- ◆ Brasil 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 6
- ◆ Brasil 2022 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 6
- ◆ Brasil 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 1

Guatemala

- ◆ Guatemala 2023 (Presidential First Round, Legislative, Regional and/or Local): 3
- ◆ Guatemala 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 4

Honduras

- ◆ Honduras 2021 (Presidential First Round, Legislative, Regional and/or Local): 8

México

- ◆ México 2021 (Legislative and regional and/or local): 15
- ◆ México 2024 (Presidential and Legislative): 11

Panamá

- ◆ Panamá 2024 (Presidential First Round, Legislative, Regional and/or Local): 1

Chile

- ◆ Chile 2021 (Constituent Assembly): 1
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 2
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential Runoff): 1
- ◆ Chile 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 2

Colombia

- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Legislative): 4
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential First Round): 4
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 3
- ◆ Colombia 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 4

Costa Rica

- ◆ Costa Rica 2022 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1

Ecuador

- ◆ Ecuador 2023 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1

El Salvador

- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Presidential and legislative): 1

Perú

- ◆ Perú 2020 (Legislative): 2
- ◆ Perú 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1
- ◆ Perú 2021 (Presidential Runoff): 4
- ◆ Perú 2022 (Regional and/or Local): 5

Dominican Republic

- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 8
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 2
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2024 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 3
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Venezuela

- ◆ Venezuela 2020 (Legislative): 2
- ◆ Venezuela 2021 (Regional and/or local): 4
- ◆ Venezuela 2024 (Presidential): 2

3.5.2

Experiences of LGBTIQ+ electoral observers

A total of 124 experiences were recorded from LGBTIQ+ individuals who participated as electoral observers between 2020 and 2024 across 35 different electoral processes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This form of participation — often rendered invisible in traditional political analysis — highlights a key dimension of democratic engagement: citizen oversight of electoral processes.

The majority of these experiences were reported by men (73, or 58.87%), followed by women (30, or 24.19%), trans and travesti individuals (32, or 25.81%), nonbinary people (16, or 12.90%), and intersex people (22, or 17.74%).

The dataset also includes 17 experiences from Indigenous people (13.71%), 25 from Afro-descendant individuals (20.16%), and 16 from people with disabilities (12.90%).

The most common modality of electoral observation was through volunteer work (49 individuals, 39.52%), suggesting that many LGBTIQ+ people engage in this role through grassroots initiatives and civic networks rather than formal institutional channels. They were followed by those directly appointed by electoral authorities (34 people, 27.42%) and party-affiliated observers at polling stations (11, or 8.87%).

Additional experiences came from activist and international cooperation spaces: 11 individuals observed on behalf of **national civil society organizations**, 3 through **international coalitions**, and 4 participated in observation missions with multilateral bodies such as the **UN, OAS, or IACHR**. These varied paths show that electoral observation is a fertile space where activism, institutional legitimacy, and democratic oversight intersect from a sexual and gender diversity lens.

Beyond the institutional frameworks through which they observed, it is also crucial to examine whether LGBTIQ+ observers felt that their sexual orientation or gender identity was visible and/or respected during the electoral process. Of the 124 recorded experiences, 76 individuals (61.29%) indicated that their identity or orientation was visible throughout the day, while 94 (75.81%) reported feeling respected.

However, disaggregated data reveal important disparities. Among trans and travesti individuals, visibility was very high (84.38%), yet only 59.38% said they felt respected—underscoring a significant gap between being recognized and being treated with dignity.

In contrast, intersex individuals reported both high levels of visibility (81.82%) and respect (86.36%). Women reported high visibility (80%) but lower perceptions of respect (66.67%), while men reported lower visibility (52.05%) but higher levels of respect (80.82%). Nonbinary individuals fell in between, with 52.25% reporting visibility and 68.75% reporting respect.

There were also differences based on the role played:

- * Individuals selected by electoral authorities reported higher levels of both visibility (79.41%) and respect (82.35%) compared to those who participated as volunteers (53.06% and 75.51%, respectively).
- * Those who represented their political party at polling stations reported lower visibility (45.45%) but a high perception of respect (81.82%).
- * Among the three **individuals who participated as observers through international coalitions, all reported being visible (100%)**, although only one felt respected. In contrast, all four individuals who took part in official international observation missions stated they felt respected, although one of them was not visibly out.

These findings highlight that visibility does not always equate to respect, and that both institutional context and the specific role played can significantly shape the experience of inclusion and dignified treatment during electoral processes.

A key aspect explored in this section was the connection between electoral observation and the presence of openly LGBTIQ+ candidates. Of the 124 observation experiences recorded, **49 individuals (39.52%) reported that the election they monitored included visibly LGBTIQ+ candidates**. Among them, **30 people (61.22%) considered their observation work to be relevant to those candidacies**.

Disaggregating by role, 100% of those who represented political parties or participated in international coalitions considered their observation relevant to LGBTIQ+ candidacies, as did 75% of those in international human rights missions.

Perceptions of relevance also varied by country and electoral process. For instance, in elections such as **Peru 2020** (legislative), **Guatemala 2023** (presidential and legislative), and **Venezuela 2024** (presidential), all observers who identified LGBTIQ+ candidacies also indicated that their observation contribu-

ted to making those candidacies more visible. In **Brazil 2020** and **Honduras 2021** — contexts with high concentrations of LGBTIQ+ candidates — between 66% and 75% of observers reported focusing their work on those campaigns.

These findings show that electoral observation — often led by LGBTIQ+ individuals — not only helps safeguard the integrity of democratic processes, but can also serve as a form of accompaniment, support, and visibility for diverse candidacies. This underscores the strategic role of election monitoring as a tool for political advocacy, especially in contexts where the legitimacy of LGBTIQ+ candidates remains contested.

Beyond the quantitative data, the testimonies collected in this section offer a more intimate perspective on the conditions under which LGBTIQ+ individuals conducted electoral observation across the region. **Some accounts highlight respectful and welcoming environments, describing “very beautiful” experiences and “peaceful” processes in which their identities were visible and respected without discrimination.** However, other narratives point to persistent challenges: discrimination against voters based on gender expression, hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ candidates, and the instrumentalization of queer agendas during campaigns.

Institutional failures were also reported, such as in Peru, where implementation of the trans voting protocol was undermined by a lack of training among security forces and limited dissemination of information. Additionally, observers reported political obstructions at polling stations and failures to uphold affirmative action measures.

These observers not only worked to ensure electoral transparency — they also bore witness to the state of LGBTIQ+ political rights in their respective contexts. Their reflections, marked by a deep sense of democratic responsibility and political awareness, show that their role as observers was not neutral: it was an active form of advocacy, a mechanism for holding systems accountable, and a stand in defense of fairer electoral processes.

Table 8. Main issues and challenges cited in observer testimonies.

Theme	Selected Testimonies
Social acceptance and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People’s acceptance was broader and the discourse more active.” • “I was never discriminated against for being a trans woman; I was always treated with respect throughout the process.”
Inclusion challenges and discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Some voters were discriminated against at polling stations because of their gender expression.” • “There was hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ candidates, as well as campaign materials that instrumentalized sexual and gender diversity issues. There was also an increase in hate crimes and transfemicides.”
Protocol implementation and institutional shortcomings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The implementation of the trans voting protocol in Peru was full of gaps. There was a lack of public messaging about voting rights and no informative materials at polling stations. Security forces were barely aware of the protocol.”
Institutional and political barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Polling board members created obstacles for observers they didn’t politically align with, refusing to hand over voting records.”
Perception of the democratic process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It was a very beautiful experience — we got to truly understand democratic voting.” • “It was very respectful.” • “It was a peaceful process.”
Ongoing struggle and LGBTIQ+ participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The struggle continues.” • “The candidate who disclosed their gender identity received no support and lost the election.”
Experience as electoral official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I served as an electoral councilor and witnessed how the assigned affirmative action measures were not respected, as well as violence against the LGBT population.”
Reflection on youth and political participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I got involved because I was exhausted by the dictatorship. In my first experience observing, I saw how some parties uphold the patriarchal system and push right-wing agendas by force.”
Reflection on electoral transparency and justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We verified the truthfulness and legality of the elections, making sure the electoral authority followed the rules.”
General Experience and Vote Counting Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There was transparency in the vote counting process.” • “Everything was focused on ensuring a clean vote count.”

LCBTIQ+ Electoral campaigning staff

95
Experiences

Argentina

- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 3
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 3

Brasil

- ◆ Brasil 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 3
- ◆ Brasil 2022 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 2
- ◆ Brasil 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 1

Chile

- ◆ Chile 2021 (Constituent Assembly): 4
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Regional and/or Local): 2
- ◆ Chile 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 2

Colombia

- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Legislative): 9
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential First Round): 2
- ◆ Colombia 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 5

Guatemala

- ◆ Guatemala 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 1

Honduras

- ◆ Honduras 2021 (Presidential, legislative, Regional and/or Local): 3

México

- ◆ México 2021 (Legislative, Regional and/or Local): 31
- ◆ México 2024 (Presidential and legislative): 12

Perú

- ◆ Perú 2020 (Legislative): 1
- ◆ Perú 2022 (Regional and/or Local): 1
- ◆ Perú 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Dominican Republic

- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 2
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 1
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Venezuela

- ◆ Venezuela 2020 (Legislative): 1
- ◆ Venezuela 2021 (Regional and/or Local): 1
- ◆ Venezuela 2024 (Presidential): 1

Other

- ◆ Other: 1

3.5.3

Experiences of LGBTIQ+ people working on electoral campaigns

Between 2020 and 2024, at least 95 experiences of LGBTIQ+ participation were recorded as part of electoral campaign teams in 26 different electoral processes across Latin America and the Caribbean.

While less frequent than other forms of participation, these experiences offer key insight into the roles that LGBTIQ+ individuals play within the internal structures of campaigns — and how they influence politics from strategic, though often less visible, positions.

Of the 95 experiences, most were reported by men (56, or 58.95%) and women (30, or 31.58%), followed by non-binary individuals (5, or 5.26%). In terms of gender and sexual identity, the dataset includes 14 entries from trans or travesti individuals (14.74%) and 8 from intersex individuals (8.42%).

Ethnic and racial diversity was also represented: 12 experiences were reported by Indigenous people (12.63%) and 13 by Afro-descendant individuals (13.68%). Eight entries (8.42%) came from people with disabilities.

Geographically, **participation was overwhelmingly urban**: 87 experiences (91.58%) took place in urban contexts, while only 8 (8.42%) came from rural areas. This mirrors trends seen across other forms of political participation and suggests additional barriers to entering political parties or campaign structures in rural settings.

Of those who worked on campaigns, **19 individuals (20.00%) supported an openly LGBTIQ+ candidate**, indicating that a notable portion of these experiences took place in contexts where sexual and gender diversity were explicitly part of the electoral agenda.

However, campaign work environments were not always safe. Only 25 people (26.32%) reported feeling very safe, while 42 (44.21%) felt safe. In contrast, 18 people (18.95%) felt unsafe, and 4 (4.21%) reported feeling very unsafe.

Feelings of insecurity were especially high among women (26.67%) and trans or travesti individuals (28.57%), as well as among those who identified as Indigenous (25.00%). Intersex individuals also reported elevated levels of insecurity: 12.50% felt very unsafe, and another 12.50% felt unsafe.

Although most of these experiences took place in urban areas (91.58%), these were also the settings where insecurity was most often reported (20.99%), suggesting that urban environments do not necessarily guarantee protection from political violence or discrimination within campaign teams.

Out of the 95 total experiences recorded, 6 individuals (6.32%) reported having experienced violence or discrimination and filed a formal complaint, while 17 others (17.89%) also experienced violence but did not report it. The majority — 66 individuals (69.47%) — stated they did not encounter violence or discrimination in the campaign context.

- * A breakdown by identity reveals that **non-binary individuals reported the highest proportion of violence**: 20.00% filed a complaint, and another 20.00% experienced violence but did not report it.
- * Worrying levels were also observed among trans/travesti individuals (21.43% overall), Indigenous participants (33.34%), and Afro-descendant individuals (23.08%). Among participants with disabilities, although the numbers were smaller, one in four (25.00%) reported experiencing violence without filing a complaint.
- * Geographically, **most of the incidents occurred in urban settings**. However, in rural areas—despite fewer records—25.00% of participants reported experiencing violence without reporting it.
- * By electoral process, Mexico's 2021 legislative elections stood out as the one with the highest number of unreported violence cases (9 incidents, 29.03%). Other incidents were identified during Colombia's 2022 legislative elections, Brazil's 2020 local/regional elections, and Honduras' 2021 general elections. In contrast, no violence was reported during Argentina's 2023 elections, Chile's 2021 elections, or Colombia's 2023 local elections.

These findings highlight that while most LGBTIQ+ individuals working on campaigns did not report incidents of violence or discrimination, a significant portion did experience such events. **The most commonly reported manifestations were intimidation (39.13%) and verbal aggression (also 39.13%), followed by discrimination from political parties (21.74%) and threats (21.74%).** Less common, but still concerning, were sexual innuendos (8.70%) and discrimination from electoral authorities (8.70%).

- * **Disaggregated by identity**, non-binary individuals were disproportionately affected: 100% of those who reported violence in this group mentioned verbal aggression, and 50% also experienced intimidation, sexual innuendos, party-based discrimination, and threats. Women and trans/travesti individuals also reported multiple forms of violence, particularly verbal aggression (42.86% and 33.33%, respectively) and discrimination by political parties (28.57% and 66.67%).

- * **Regarding social and territorial factors**, Indigenous individuals primarily reported verbal aggression (50%) and institutional discrimination (25%). Afro-descendant individuals who experienced violence all reported forms of violence not captured by the listed categories, suggesting complex experiences beyond the available classifications. Among individuals with disabilities, 50% reported discrimination by authorities or experiences marked as “other.”
- * Although most experiences occurred in urban contexts, a higher proportion of intimidation (50%), verbal aggression (50%), and other forms of violence (50%) were reported in rural areas. These findings show that while LGBTIQ+ people are participating in campaign teams, they often do so under conditions of exposure to multiple forms of political, institutional, and symbolic violence.

LGBTIQ+ individuals who reported experiencing violence or discrimination while working on electoral campaigns also identified the perpetrators of these acts.

- * **The most frequently cited sources were voters (30.43%) and attacks via social media (30.43%)**, highlighting how public exposure during a campaign can result in hostility both in physical and digital spaces.
- * Notably, **members of the same political party as the affected individuals were identified in 26.09% of cases**, underscoring that violence does not always come from political opponents — it can also emerge from within the very structures that are supposed to offer support.
- * Other sources of violence included **elected officials from opposing parties (17.39%)**, party staff members (17.39%), and, to a lesser extent, journalists (4.35%) and public officials (4.35%).
- * No incidents were attributed to family members, partners, or criminal groups, suggesting that violence in these contexts is primarily political-institutional or social in nature.

These data show that violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals in campaigns stem from both institutional actors and social dynamics that are triggered by heightened political visibility.

In response to these acts of violence and discrimination, fewer than half of the affected individuals (43.48%) reported receiving support from the candidate or political party they were working with.

This support was even more limited among women (28.57%) and Afro-descendant individuals (33.33%), but notably higher among trans and travesti individuals (66.66%). These discrepancies may reflect differences in how certain leaders and political structures respond to such incidents.

Despite the lack of institutional support, it is critical to note that 47.82% of affected individuals considered withdrawing from the campaign due to the violence they experienced. This illustrates the emotional and political toll these situations can take on LGBTIQ+ political participation. The data underscores the urgent need for political parties to develop effective mechanisms for protection and response to any form of aggression, ensuring minimum standards of safety for campaign staff.

Finally, labor precarity is another factor limiting the full participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in campaign spaces. **Only 35.79% of those who worked on campaign teams reported receiving any form of compensation.** Women (50%) and people with disabilities (50%) had the highest reported rates of remuneration, while only 28.57% of men and 20% of non-binary individuals stated they were paid for their work.

In territorial terms, rural participants were the most vulnerable: only one person (12.50%) reported being paid. While some electoral processes — such as Mexico’s 2024 presidential election and Chile’s 2021 presidential election — demonstrated better practices in terms of compensation, others, like **Colombia’s 2023 local elections, saw no reports of remuneration among surveyed campaign workers.** These findings highlight the need to guarantee fair and equitable working conditions for all individuals engaged in electoral activities, especially those already facing structural barriers due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or other social factors.

Taken together, these experiences reveal both the potential and the tensions LGBTIQ+ individuals face when participating in campaign teams. **While many contribute in strategic roles throughout the electoral process, they do so under conditions marked by insecurity, violence, and labor precarity.** Their presence remains vital — but still lacks the guarantees required for full and dignified participation.

LGBTIQ+ Party members

130
Experiences

Argentina

- ◆ Argentina 2021 (Legislative): 4
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 3
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Presidential Runoff): 3
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 2

Bolivia

- ◆ Bolivia 2020 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 2

Brasil

- ◆ Brasil 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 2
- ◆ Brasil 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 2

Chile

- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Regional and/or Local): 3
- ◆ Chile 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 1

Colombia

- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Legislative): 5
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential First Round): 2
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 2
- ◆ Colombia 2023 (Regional and/or Local): 13

Costa Rica

- ◆ Costa Rica 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 1

El Salvador

- ◆ El Salvador 2021 (Legislative, regional and/or local): 1
- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1
- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Regional and/or Locals): 1

Guatemala

- ◆ Guatemala 2023 (Presidential First Round, Legislative and Regional and/or Local): 1

Honduras

- ◆ Honduras 2021 (Presidential, legislative, regional and/or local): 7

México

- ◆ México 2021 (Legislative, Regional and/or Local): 32
- ◆ México 2024 (Presidential and legislative): 18

Nicaragua

- ◆ Nicaragua 2021 (Presidential and legislative): 1

Perú

- ◆ Perú 2020 (Legislative): 5
- ◆ Perú 2021 (Presidential Runoff): 1
- ◆ Perú 2022 (Regional and/or Local): 4

Dominican Republic

- ◆ Dominican Republic 2020 (Regional and/or Local): 2
- ◆ Dominican Republic 2024 (Regional and/or Local): 2

Venezuela

- ◆ Venezuela 2021 (Regional and/or Local): 1
- ◆ Venezuela 2024 (Presidential): 6

Other

- ◆ Other: 1

3.5.4

Experiences of LGBTIQ+ political party members, candidates and elected officials within the party

Between 2020 and 2024, there were 212 recorded instances of LGBTIQ+ participation within political parties, including roles as grassroots members, candidates, and elected officials. Of these, **130 individuals completed additional questions about their party trajectories, covering at least 31 electoral processes across Latin America and the Caribbean.**

These experiences — which include **53 records of party membership or leadership, 64 candidacies, and 13 elected officials** — offer a deeper look into how sex-gender diverse participation unfolds within party structures, from grassroots activism to decision-making roles.

Most of the responses were completed by men (76, or 58.46%), followed by women (38, or 29.23%) and non-binary individuals (13, or 10%). The sample also includes 29 experiences from trans and travesti individuals (22.31%), 12 from intersex people (9.23%), 16 from Indigenous participants (12.31%), 24 from Afro-descendants (18.46%), and 14 from people with disabilities (10.77%).

When disaggregated by role, several trends emerge:

- * **Trans and travesti individuals** become increasingly represented as the roles become more visible: they make up 15.09% of party members, 26.56% of candidates, and 30.77% of elected officials. This suggests less conventional trajectories, often moving directly from activism into formal representation.
- * **Women** are proportionally more present among candidates (35.94%) than among party members (22.64%), possibly reflecting more direct entry into candidacy processes without sustained involvement in party bases.
- * **Intersex and non-binary individuals** are less represented among elected officials, although they are present: two intersex people (15.38% of elected roles) and one non-binary person (7.69%) reported having been elected.

- * **Afro-descendant and Indigenous** individuals show a relatively even distribution across membership, candidacy, and elected roles, indicating that once inside party structures, these individuals pursue various participation paths, though not without facing persistent structural barriers.
- * Finally, opportunities for formal representation remain highly concentrated in urban contexts: 100% of the records for elected officials come from urban areas, while rural experiences are limited across all roles.

This section explores not only the motivations behind party membership, but also perceptions of inclusion, real leadership opportunities, and obstacles—including manifestations of violence and discrimination within political parties.

Among the 130 LGBTIQ+ individuals who shared details of their party involvement, motivations for joining a political party reflected a range of personal and political reasons:

- * **The most common motivation was the promotion of LGBTIQ+ rights:** 60 people (46.15%) said they joined a party to advance agendas related to sex-gender diversity, reinforcing the idea that for many LGBTIQ+ individuals, party affiliation is also a form of political advocacy. This motivation was especially common among women (65.79%), trans or travesti individuals (62.07%), and intersex people (41.67%), with high response rates also among Afro-descendants (45.83%) and Indigenous participants (25.00%). In contrast, only 21.43% of people with disabilities cited this as their main reason.
- * **Ideological alignment with the party was also a significant factor:** 27 individuals (20.77%) said they were drawn by the party's ideology or platform, particularly among men (25.00%), non-binary individuals (38.46%), and those living in rural areas (40.00%), suggesting a search for spaces where personal values align with a broader political agenda.
- * **Other reasons included the desire to propose ideas and engage in debate (10.77%) or to learn more about politics (8.46%).** These motivations were especially relevant among Indigenous people (31.25% and 25.00%, respectively) and Afro-descendants. A smaller segment joined parties with the aim of building a political career (3.85%), holding leadership positions (4.62%), or running for office (3.85%), indicating that for some, party membership also serves as a personal and professional development strategy.

- * Geographically, people from rural areas prioritized ideological alignment (40.00%) and the ability to present proposals (20.00%) more than other factors, suggesting that their integration into parties may stem from the pursuit of representation in settings where opportunities are more limited.

Taken together, these findings affirm that for many LGBTIQ+ individuals, party membership is not merely symbolic or instrumental — it is a deeply political decision aimed at transforming party structures and agendas from within.

Perceptions of inclusion within political parties reveal a mixed landscape: while many LGBTIQ+ people report feeling recognized and safe in their spaces of activism, challenges remain regarding visibility, equitable participation, and protection from discrimination.

- * **A majority of respondents said they felt comfortable identifying as LGBTIQ+ within the party:** 46.15% said this was “almost always” the case, and 20.77% said “always.” However, 33% still reported that this happens “never” or “almost never.” A more optimistic view appears regarding public representation: 72.31% said they could represent the party “almost always” or “always.”
- * However, when it comes to access to candidacies and senior leadership roles, the perceptions are more divided. **Only 50% believed that LGBTIQ+ people “almost always” or “always” have the same opportunities to run for public office.** Similarly, just **52.3% believed they had real access to senior party roles, while 47.7% said this “never” or “almost never” happens.** This suggests that while public visibility may be more accessible, actual access to power within party structures remains limited.
- * **Perceptions of protection from discrimination are also split:** only 18.46% said their party “always” protects LGBTIQ+ members from negative attitudes, while 13.08% said this “never” happens.
- * Regarding meaningful participation in decision-making, only 23.08% said this occurs “always,” while 49.23% said it happens rarely or not at all. Nevertheless, 66.15% of respondents said their parties promote positive and inclusive messaging — something that may be more reflective of external communication than of internal structural transformation.

- * Finally, the most positive findings were related to self-expression: 44.62% said they could express their gender identity without fear of discrimination, and 46.15% said the same about their sexual orientation. Additionally, 63.31% reported feeling accepted and supported within their party regardless of identity or orientation.

These findings suggest that while there have been meaningful advances in inclusive discourse and symbolic gestures, structural and symbolic barriers still significantly limit the full participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals within political parties across the region.

Perceptions around candidacy nomination processes and internal leadership reveal that, although steps toward inclusion have been taken, LGBTIQ+ people continue to face tangible forms of exclusion within party structures:

- * Only 54.62% of respondents believe that the nomination processes within their party are “almost always” or “always” clear and transparent, while the remaining 45.39% believe these processes are “never” or “almost never” transparent. A similar divide exists in perceptions of access to leadership roles: only 47.69% believe LGBTIQ+ individuals have equal opportunities to assume leadership positions, compared to 52.3% who do not.
- * When it comes to inclusion in internal decision-making, just 17.69% said that LGBTIQ+ voices are “always” consulted or included, while 24.62% stated this “never” happens. These numbers point to an ongoing lack of representation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in key spaces of party deliberation and power.
- * Although 48.47% believe that LGBTIQ+ individuals can run for office without fear of retaliation, 41.54% still perceive barriers to exercising this fundamental political right. Perceptions are similar regarding internal nominations: while 50.77% believe they are possible without fear, this suggests an uneven playing field overall.
- * Perceptions around access to resources and support further underscore structural inequalities. **Only 38.46% believe that LGBTIQ+ individuals have the internal support to carry out strategic initiatives within their party.** This number drops even further regarding access to financial resources — 38.46% say they “never” or “almost never” have access — and support personnel, with 61.54% reporting the same. These figures indicate that LGBTIQ+ organizing and political influence within parties is heavily constrained by the lack of institutional support.

- * Regarding affirmative actions, only 12.31% reported that their party has formal strategies to promote LGBTIQ+ candidacies, and just 8.46% said their party places these candidates in favorable positions on proportional representation lists. Only 13.85% reported that LGBTIQ+ candidates receive equal or greater financial support, and a mere 10.77% noted that parties offer additional protections in contexts of political violence.
- * **Overall, parties appear more willing to support LGBTIQ+ rights rhetorically than to adopt concrete changes:** 63.08% believe their parties “almost always” or “always” support LGBTIQ+ rights initiatives, yet this support does not consistently translate into effective mechanisms for competitive candidacies or equitable conditions.

This landscape suggests that LGBTIQ+ participation in party life continues to be limited by glass ceilings, resource gaps, and informal exclusions—even in contexts where parties outwardly support inclusion.

Despite rhetorical progress, political parties in Latin America and the Caribbean remain spaces where many LGBTIQ+ individuals experience persistent symbolic violence, structural discrimination, and active exclusion. Among the 130 respondents to this section, a significant proportion reported experiencing or witnessing various forms of violence and mistreatment within their political parties.

- * The most frequently reported forms of aggression were derogatory comments about sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression (40.77%) and ridicule for political proposals or comments (33.85%). Additionally, a lack of recognition for merit in internal debates (37.69%) was highlighted, revealing a pattern of delegitimizing contributions—especially when related to human rights or diversity agendas.
- * Equally alarming is the frequency of structural silencing mechanisms, such as being blocked or excluded from submitting proposals (30.77%), denied opportunities to represent the party in public events (30.77%), or lacking access to campaign resources (26.15%). These practices not only inhibit effective political participation by LGBTIQ+ people but also reinforce internal inequalities that hinder the advancement of their leadership.
- * At the symbolic and interpersonal level, being misgendered or having one’s pronouns ignored was reported by one in four participants (25.38%), and 31.54% reported explicit discrimination based on gender identity or expression. This shows that the barriers are not only political or organizational — they are also deeply cultural.

- * Though less frequent, more severe forms of violence were also reported, including online harassment (10%), verbal aggression (13.08%), and physical assault or unwanted sexual contact (both at 3.08%). While these percentages are lower, they raise serious concerns about the risks LGBTIQ+ people face within political parties — including those that publicly present themselves as allies of diversity.

Taken together, these findings underscore that violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals in political parties is neither isolated nor incidental—it is a manifestation of entrenched hierarchies within the very core of power structures. Achieving a truly representative democracy requires more than symbolic inclusion; it requires the transformation of internal practices that perpetuate exclusion, discrimination, and violence.

Although several political parties in Latin America and the Caribbean have begun developing mechanisms to protect LGBTIQ+ members from discrimination, survey responses show that these efforts are still widely perceived as insufficient or inconsistently applied by those inside party structures.

- * **Only a minority of respondents fully agreed with the effectiveness of current measures:** just 28.46% believed that party guidelines effectively prevent discrimination, and only 21.54% said current policies adequately protect LGBTIQ+ individuals from harassment or violence. In both cases, most expressed only partial agreement, suggesting that while formal guidelines exist, their real implementation still leaves significant gaps.
- * Regarding institutional commitments, 24.62% viewed the party's written commitments to ensuring equitable LGBTIQ+ participation as adequate, while 16.15% considered them entirely inadequate. Similarly, only one in five respondents (20.77%) believed professional training effectively addressed LGBTIQ+ discrimination, exposing serious gaps in the training of party staff and leadership.
- * The data also reflect a lack of active monitoring and accountability by parties. Just 19.23% trust that their party responds appropriately to negative actions against LGBTIQ+ individuals, and fewer than 17% believe that parties conduct regular evaluations of statutes to remove barriers to participation. These numbers indicate a general lack of systematic approaches to continuous improvement in inclusion practices.

- * Another key finding is that **only one in four (24.62%) believe threats against LGBTIQ+ candidates are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated** — even though such threats may have direct implications for people’s lives and safety. This low level of institutional response reinforces a widespread perception of vulnerability in high-stakes political environments.

In sum, these findings reveal a significant gap between the formal existence of protective measures and their practical implementation. While there is acknowledgment of the effort by some parties to involve LGBTIQ+ individuals in shaping internal policies (66.15% agree at least partially), the lack of strong action, effective monitoring, and dedicated resources continues to limit their transformative potential.

These perceptions reinforce the urgent need to go beyond declarative commitments and prioritize the concrete implementation of inclusive policies that guarantee full, safe, and dignified political participation for LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Survey responses reveal that dynamics of violence and discrimination within political parties do not stem exclusively from figures of authority. On the contrary, the group most frequently identified as responsible were party members without formal leadership positions (44.62%), indicating that discriminatory behaviors are normalized within the very base of party structures. However, respondents also reported cases where violence came from higher levels: 31.54% mentioned individuals in positions of authority, and 21.54% pointed to elected officials—reinforcing the perception that political leadership does not always guarantee safe and inclusive environments for LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Additionally, reports identifying volunteers (19.23%) and party staff (18.46%) as perpetrators demonstrate that the problem cuts across the entire party ecosystem, regardless of role or rank. This highlights the need for comprehensive prevention and accountability mechanisms that go beyond visible leadership.

Regarding institutional responses to these acts, perceptions of reporting frequency are low across all possible channels. Only 16.15% said that complaints are “always” filed with party authorities, while 60.76% indicated that this “never” or “rarely” happens. Concerning electoral authorities, 73.08% of respondents believe that complaints are rarely or never made. The situation is even more critical within the justice system: 74.62% stated that complaints are almost never filed with the public prosecutor’s office, and the same percentage said the same about the police. These figures reveal systemic mistrust in both internal and external institutional protection mechanisms.

These findings underscore that underreporting and impunity are widespread phenomena within the political engagement of LGBTIQ+ people, and that the available reporting channels largely fail to inspire trust or ensure justice. This reality reinforces the need to strengthen effective mechanisms for prevention, support, and accountability—not only within political parties but also in electoral and judicial institutions.

The reasons why LGBTIQ+ individuals refrain from reporting violence or discrimination within political parties point to a climate of mistrust, fear, and structural vulnerability. **More than half of survey respondents cited fear (53.08%) and fear of retaliation (53.08%) as the main reasons for not reporting.** Additionally, 52.31% believed that authorities would not take their case seriously, and 43.85% directly distrusted the person responsible for receiving complaints within the party. These figures highlight that impunity is not merely the result of a lack of formal mechanisms, but also of the perception that existing ones do not operate fairly or with real guarantees.

This climate of forced silence translates into alarming statistics: 18.46% of respondents said they had experienced violence or discrimination but did not report it, while 15.38% did file a complaint. However, one-third (33.08%) reported having witnessed acts of violence or discrimination without being direct victims — indicating that these situations are frequent and visible within party environments.

Disaggregating by identity, trans and travesti individuals were the group with the highest proportion of both complaints (31.03%) and non-reporting (24.14%), followed by non-binary people, nearly half of whom (46.15%) filed complaints. This suggests that individuals with more visibly dissident gender identities are particularly exposed to violence but also more likely to take action in response.

Territorially, respondents in rural areas reported higher levels of victimization without reporting (30.00%), which may be related to greater isolation, local partisan dependency, or lack of access to formal complaint mechanisms. Reported cases were most concentrated in recent elections with high LGBTIQ+ participation, such as Mexico's 2021 legislative elections, where both formal complaints and direct observations of violence were documented.

Among those who did file complaints of violence or discrimination within political parties, most did not receive a fully satisfactory response. Of the 20 reported complaints, only 7 (35%) were resolved satisfactorily, while another 7 (35%) remained unresolved and 2 (10%) received no follow-up at all. This reflects a persistent institutional weakness that obstructs access to justice and reinforces the distrust many LGBTIQ+ individuals already feel toward formal mechanisms.

Internal party authorities were the most frequently cited recipients of these complaints (70%). Of the 14 cases brought to them, 6 were resolved satisfactorily, while 5 remained unresolved and 1 received no follow-up. Elec-

toral authorities were involved in some cases (30%) and resolved half of them. In contrast, external bodies — such as public prosecutors' offices, civil society organizations, or international mechanisms — showed very limited capacity to resolve these incidents, with lower resolution rates and multiple cases receiving no follow-up.

Together, these findings show that even when LGBTIQ+ individuals take the courageous step of reporting — despite the risks and barriers — response mechanisms remain insufficient or ineffective. This perpetuates a cycle of impunity that undermines safe and full political participation within parties. The urgency of implementing clear protocols, accountability systems, and institutional safeguards to protect LGBTIQ+ individuals — not only from discrimination but also from institutional negligence — is undeniable.

LCBTIQ+ Candidates

77
Experiences

Argentina

- ◆ Argentina 2021 (Legislative): 2
- ◆ Argentina 2023 (Regional and/or local): 1

Bolivia

- ◆ Bolivia 2020 (Presidential and legislative): 1

Brasil

- ◆ Brasil 2020 (Regional and/or local): 2
- ◆ Brasil 2024 (Regional and/or local): 2

Chile

- ◆ Chile 2021 (Presidential First Round and Legislative): 1
- ◆ Chile 2021 (Regional and/or local): 3

Colombia

- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Legislative): 4
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential First Round): 1
- ◆ Colombia 2022 (Presidential Runoff): 2
- ◆ Colombia 2023 (Regional and/or local): 12

El Salvador

- ◆ El Salvador 2021 (Legislative, Regional and/or local): 1
- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Presidential and legislative): 1
- ◆ El Salvador 2024 (Regional and/or local): 1

Honduras

- ◆ Honduras 2021 (Presidential, legislative, Regional and/or local): 5

México

- ◆ México 2021 (Legislative and Regional and/or local): 22
- ◆ México 2024 (Presidential and/or legislative): 7

Perú

- ◆ Perú 2020 (Legislative): 1
- ◆ Perú 2022 (Regional and/or local): 3

Venezuela

- ◆ Venezuela 2021 (Regional and/or local): 1
- ◆ Venezuela 2024 (Presidential): 4

3.5.5

Experiences of LGBTIQ+ candidates and elected officials in campaign development

During the 2020–2024 electoral period, 77 experiences of LGBTIQ+ participation were recorded in connection to campaign development across at least 21 electoral processes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

These experiences were shared by individuals who identified as **party militants or leaders (10), LGBTIQ+ candidates (58), and elected officials (9)**, according to data gathered by the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean.

It is important to note that, due to the survey's conditional logic, this section brings together responses from individuals who initially identified their experience within political parties — as militants, candidates, or elected officials — and who later indicated direct involvement in campaign development.

These 77 experiences offer a more detailed lens into what political participation looks like for those who openly contest electoral power as LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Profile of LGBTIQ+ candidates

In terms of **gender identity**, more than half of the recorded experiences were reported by men (41 in total, 53.25%), followed by 25 experiences reported by women (32.47%) and 11 by non-binary individuals (14.29%).

Trans and travesti individuals represented 27.27% of the total, this figure is maintained among those who ran as candidates (16 out of 58, or 27.59%) and among those who were elected officials (2 out of 9, or 22.22%).

The data also includes 12 experiences shared by intersex individuals (15.58%) and shows meaningful ethno-racial diversity: 10 Afro-descendant individuals (12.99%) and 10 Indigenous individuals (12.99%) reported participating. Additionally, 9 participants (11.69%) identified as living with a disability.

Urban participation was overwhelmingly predominant: 91.38% of experiences came from individuals based in urban areas, while only 8.62% were from those who developed their campaigns in rural contexts. This distribution reflects the persistent inequalities in territorial access, particularly in relation to visibility, resources, and conditions of participation for LGBTIQ+ individuals.

This sociodemographic profile highlights the diversity of political trajectories that converge in LGBTIQ+ electoral campaigns, while also shedding light on the factors of exclusion and resilience that shape their paths toward political representation. The following sections analyze in greater depth the conditions, challenges, and strategies encountered throughout their campaign journeys.

Among the 77 campaign development experiences reported by LGBTIQ+ individuals who participated as candidates, party militants, or elected officials between 2020 and 2024, **most ran for regional and/or local office (53 cases, equivalent to 68.83%)**. This confirms that subnational political processes continue to be a key entry point for sex-gender diverse leaderships, particularly in contexts where national party structures remain resistant.

Only 16 individuals (20.78%) ran for national congress, reflecting an ongoing effort to influence spaces of legislative representation. While less common, there were also **candidacies for the presidency** (2 individuals, 2.60%), **mayoralties** (2 individuals, 2.60%), and **governorships** (1 individual, 1.30%), showing that aspirations to high-profile political roles are also present among LGBTIQ+ individuals.

When disaggregated by identity, several patterns emerge:

- * **Trans women and travestis were overrepresented in presidential races:** both of the reported candidacies for this position were trans women, demonstrating not only bold political ambition but also a demand for visibility at the highest level of executive power.
- * **Non-binary and Afro-descendant individuals were more present in regional/local elections,** accounting for 15.09% and 24.53% respectively—suggesting that these spaces offer greater opportunities or are perceived as more accessible for these groups.
- * **People with disabilities primarily ran in local elections** (11.32%), though they also appeared across other categories at lower rates, reflecting additional barriers to accessing higher-ranking positions.
- * **Indigenous individuals were also concentrated in regional/local contests** (13.21%), though their representation was slightly lower than that of Afro-descendant individuals.

This landscape highlights that LGBTIQ+ individuals are not only running for office, but are doing so across a wide range of positions — with political ambitions shaped by their identities, local realities, and individual trajectories. It also reaffirms that local and territorial levels remain key arenas for political engagement and transformation.

One of the most significant issues for trans and non-binary candidates during their electoral campaigns was the use of their self-identified name, both during the registration process and throughout the public development of their campaign. Among those who responded to this question in the survey, only 52.38% (11 people) indicated that they were able to register using their self-identified name. However, 95.24% (20 people) managed to campaign using their self-identified name, even if only informally or unofficially in some cases.

Institutional barriers, however, remain: 28.57% (6 people) reported being forced to register under their legal or “dead” name, and 14.29% (3 people) indicated that they also had to campaign using that legal name. This creates a dissonance between their public identity and legal recognition, undermining basic identity rights, weakening campaign messaging coherence, complicating voter engagement, and reinforcing stigma against sex-gender diverse identities.

These data underscore the urgent need for legal reforms that guarantee the use of self-identified names throughout the electoral process — from registration to public campaigning — especially in countries where gender identity laws are still limited or nonexistent.

The party support received by LGBTIQ+ candidates in their bids for public office varied widely depending on the position they sought, reflecting the internal dynamics of political parties across the region.

Overall, the most common pathway to nomination was direct appointment by the party, reported by 35.06% of candidates. This mechanism was particularly prevalent among presidential candidates, with 100% of them stating they were appointed by their party. For legislative races, only a quarter (25%) accessed their nomination through appointment, while at the local or regional level, this figure reached 33.96%.

Internal elections were the second most reported access route, cited by 16.88% of candidates overall. This pathway was more common among those running for national congress (37.5%) but was nearly absent at other levels.

Less frequent forms of support included endorsements from party leadership (10.39% from local leaders and only 2.60% from national leadership), as well as external support such as recommendations from civil society organizations (5.19%) and endorsements from other candidates (10.39%).

These figures suggest that while multiple pathways to nomination exist, most LGBTIQ+ candidates relied on centralized appointment structures and, to a lesser extent, participatory mechanisms like internal elections. This dependence may limit the chances of those not aligned with party leadership and signals that institutional pathways for promoting LGBTIQ+ leadership within parties remain unequal and poorly structured, particularly at subnational levels.

The majority of LGBTIQ+ individuals who ran for public office between 2020 and 2024 had received some form of training in public policy and political participation prior to launching their campaigns. In total, 48 out of 77 candidates (62.34%) reported having accessed this type of training, suggesting that political education remains a key tool for strengthening LGBTIQ+ leadership in electoral contexts.

However, this training was not evenly distributed across different identities or types of candidacies:

- * Intersex (85.71%) and non-binary (63.64%) individuals reported the highest levels of access to training, followed by Afro-descendant (60%) and Indigenous participants (60%). In contrast, only 33.33% of people with disabilities reported having accessed training prior to their candidacy.
- * **By gender identity**, men (60.42%) and non-binary individuals (63.64%) reported slightly higher levels of training than women (48%) and trans/travesti individuals (47.62%), possibly reflecting structural inequalities in access to these spaces.
- * **By type of office sought**, all those who ran for the presidency (2) and mayoralties (2) had received prior training. For legislative elections, the figure was 62.5%, and for regional or local elections, it was 60.38%. No training was reported in the single case of a gubernatorial candidacy.

This panorama shows that while many LGBTIQ+ candidates do enter electoral processes with prior training, there are still significant disparities in access based on identity, territory, and social conditions. **Moreover, the data suggest that people with more marginalized identities—such as intersex, non-binary, Indigenous, or disabled individuals—often face an implicit expectation to be “better prepared” or to prove greater legitimacy in order to be seen as viable candidates.**

In contexts where institutional standards do not equally recognize or value all forms of leadership, political training becomes not only a tool for empowerment, but also a condition for survival and legitimacy.

This reinforces the urgent need to expand, diversify, and localize political training spaces through an intersectional lens, ensuring more equitable conditions for LGBTIQ+ electoral participation.

The vast majority of LGBTIQ+ individuals who ran for public office between 2020 and 2024 in Latin America and the Caribbean did so visibly: 72 out of 77 candidacies (93.51%) openly identified as LGBTIQ+ during their campaigns. This visibility marks a significant advancement in terms of political representation, but it also raises questions about the conditions that enable—or constrain—such openness, particularly depending on party affiliation and the candidates' social characteristics.

- * In terms of political orientation, **left-wing (38.89%) and center-left parties (33.33%) accounted for the highest proportion of visibly LGBTIQ+ candidacies**, reinforcing the regional trend that sex-gender diverse leadership more often emerges from progressive spaces. However, there were also 8 visible candidacies in right-wing parties (11.11%) and 8 in center-right parties (11.11%), indicating that while less common, LGBTIQ+ visibility is not exclusively tied to progressive ideologies.
- * By type of office, **visibility was most common in regional and/or local elections (48 cases, 66.67%), followed by legislative races (16, 22.22%)**. Only two visible presidential candidacies were recorded. These figures may reflect varying levels of public exposure and perceived political risk at each level.
- * Disaggregated by various identity, non-binary individuals (54.55%) and trans/travesti individuals (55%) were the most visible within left-wing parties, followed by women (43.48%) and people with disabilities (57.14%). Afro-descendant candidates showed greater ideological diversity, with visible candidacies in both left-wing (20%) and right-wing (26.67%) parties.
- * Visibly LGBTIQ+ Indigenous candidates were primarily affiliated with left-wing parties (62.5%), while visibly intersex individuals were more evenly distributed, including two candidacies within right-wing parties (28.57%).
- * Geographically, most visible candidacies were located in urban areas (90.28%), with only a small fraction coming from rural contexts (9.72%), reflecting a recurring pattern throughout the survey and highlighting the structural barriers to LGBTIQ+ visibility and participation in rural settings.

This analysis reveals that although LGBTIQ+ visibility in electoral campaigns is high, it is shaped by party context, gender identity, geography, and other social factors. It also suggests that for many LGBTIQ+ individuals, the possibility of running openly is not only a matter of conviction, but also depends on the party's openness, institutional protection, and the broader political environment. Strengthening these conditions is key to advancing toward truly equitable and plural political representation across the region.

Most LGBTIQ+ candidates who participated in electoral processes between 2020 and 2024 had some form of professional or political experience prior to running, suggesting that access to candidacy remains mediated by previous institutional or activist trajectories.

Among the 77 cases analyzed, activism was the most commonly reported occupation before running for office, with 23 individuals (29.87%) coming from social movements or other forms of grassroots activism. They were followed by individuals who had worked in the public sector (16 people, 20.78%) and those employed by non-governmental organizations (8 people, 10.39%). A smaller portion reported experience in the private sector (7 people, 9.09%) or as self-employed (9 people, 11.69%).

In terms of previous political experience, 37 individuals (48.05%) had run for office before, while 31 (40.26%) had experience as party members, and 17 (22.08%) had held leadership roles within party structures. Additionally, 17 people (22.08%) had volunteered in previous campaigns, and 9 (11.69%) reported experience in political training or leadership development organizations.

This accumulation of experience shows that many LGBTIQ+ individuals enter the electoral arena after having already held positions of representation, advocacy, or political engagement — although not necessarily in formalized roles. In this regard, activism and work with social organizations appear to be key entry points into electoral politics.

By type of office, 100% of the individuals who ran for the presidency (2) or for mayoralties (2) had been candidates in previous elections. Among those who ran for legislative office, 8 out of 16 (50%) had prior candidacy experience. This pattern was also observed in regional and local races, where 23 of the 53 candidates (43.4%) reported having run before.

Notably, 10 individuals (12.99%) reported previous involvement in student leadership roles, and several candidacies emerged from non-institutional backgrounds such as self-employment or grassroots activism. Experience in party staff roles or in the offices of elected officials was much less common.

Taken together, these findings reaffirm that access to LGBTIQ+ candidacy in the region is far from random: those who manage to run for office typically have a combination of political, professional, and community-based experience that enables them to navigate electoral systems. However, they also highlight that the path to candidacy often requires the accumulation of political capital — frequently built from the margins — which may pose a barrier for emerging leaders without prior networks or experience.

Experiences of discrimination and/or violence during campaigns

The participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in electoral campaigns between 2020 and 2024 not only represented an exercise in political representation but also exposed them to significant levels of insecurity, discrimination, and violence. Data collected by the Observatory helps to illustrate the impact of these factors, depending on the office sought and the individual's identity.

Only 8 out of the 71 respondents to this question (11.27%) reported feeling very safe during their campaign. Most described mid-levels of safety: 26 people (36.62%) felt safe, while 24 (33.80%) felt unsafe, and 13 (18.31%) reported feeling very unsafe.

Insecurity was particularly pronounced among those who ran for national congress: 11 out of 15 individuals (73.34%) reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe. In contrast, both individuals who ran for the presidency reported feeling safe, possibly due to higher levels of institutional support, visibility, or access to resources.

More than half of the candidates (51.02%, or 25 individuals) reported experiencing violence or discrimination during the course of their campaign, although only 11 (22.45%) filed formal complaints. In contrast, 35 individuals (45.45%) stated they did not face such incidents. These figures reveal a high degree of exposure to political, symbolic, and institutional violence, as well as a general climate of vulnerability that discourages reporting.

By type of office, the highest rates of victimization were among those who ran for Congress: 9 out of 15 candidates (60%) experienced violence or discrimination. Similarly, in regional or local elections, at least 21 out of 49 individuals (42.86%) reported the same. While the absolute number of cases was lower for gubernatorial and mayoral races, incidents of violence were still present in both.

Marked disparities also emerged across identities:

- * **Afro-descendant individuals** reported the highest rates of victimization: 11 out of 14 (78.57%) experienced violence, but only 3 filed a complaint.
- * **Persons with disabilities** also faced high levels of unreported violence: 5 out of 8 (62.5%) did not report the incidents.
- * Among **trans or travesti individuals**, 14 out of 21 (66.67%) experienced some form of violence, but only 4 filed a complaint.
- * A similar pattern was observed for **intersex individuals**: 4 out of 5 (80%) reported being victims, yet only one submitted a complaint.
- * In terms of gender, **64% of women** and **63.63% of non-binary individuals** reported being victims, compared to **37.14% of men**.

Territorial context also played a role. Although most experiences came from urban areas, individuals in rural areas reported higher levels of unreported violence: 5 out of 7 (71.43%) experienced violence or discrimination during the campaign, and none filed a complaint.

LGBTIQ+ candidates encountered multiple forms of violence and discrimination during the course of their campaigns, stemming both from institutional structures and social spaces. These acts of violence varied not only in how they manifested, but also in who perpetrated them and where they occurred—revealing a complex web of political exclusion.

The most common forms of violence included **intimidation** (14 individuals, 38.89%) and **verbal aggression** (12 individuals, 33.33%), followed by **threats** (10 individuals, 27.78%) and **denial of economic resources for the campaign** (also 10 individuals, 27.78%). Other frequently reported acts were **misgendering or refusal to use correct pronouns** (8 individuals, 22.22%), **discrimination by electoral authorities** (8 individuals, 22.22%), and **explicit requests to withdraw from the race** (8 individuals, 22.22%). Less commonly reported were **sexual innuendos** (3 cases) and **damage to campaign materials** (5 cases).

The type and frequency of violence varied depending on the office sought:

- * **Presidential candidates** were more likely to experience verbal aggression, threats, and misgendering (both individuals reported these forms of violence).
- * **Congressional candidates** faced the most diverse forms of violence, with a notable emphasis on intimidation, requests to withdraw, and institutional discrimination.
- * **Regional or local candidates** also reported patterns centered around intimidation, misgendering, and denial of campaign resources.

Perpetrators came from both institutional and social spheres. The most frequently identified aggressors included:

- * Party members without formal authority (16 individuals, 44.44%)
- * **Social media users** (14 individuals, 38.89%)
- * **Voters** (12 individuals, 33.33%)
- * **Formal party staff** (7 individuals, 19.44%)
- * Journalists or media outlets (5 individuals, 13.89%)
- * **Public officials** (2 individuals, 5.56%)

In some cases, violence originated from **elected officials within the same party** (4 individuals, 11.11%) or even from **criminal groups** (8 individuals, 22.22%), significantly heightening the political risks for LGBTIQ+ candidates.

The most frequent settings where violence occurred were:

- * **Social media**, where 17 individuals (47.22%) reported being targeted
- * **Public spaces**, such as streets or locations where campaign materials were distributed (15 individuals, 41.67%)
- * Party offices and community meetings (both with 8 reports, 22.22%)

Additionally, cases of violence were reported during **media interviews** (4 cases), **campaign debates** (2 cases), and even in **the candidate's own home** (1 case), illustrating the invasive and pervasive nature of these aggressions.

LGBTIQ+ candidates' responses to violence or discrimination during campaigns revealed a clear pattern: protection overwhelmingly relied on personal or community strategies rather than on institutional mechanisms provided by the state or political parties.

The most common strategy adopted by LGBTIQ+ candidates in response to violence was conducting campaign activities accompanied by teams, family members, or friends (22 people, 61.11%), highlighting a heavy reliance on personal networks to ensure safety. Avoiding confrontations with other candidates (19 people, 52.78%) and publicly exposing the incidents (15 people, 44.12%) were also frequent responses. However, the need to campaign "accompanied" or to self-limit public engagement—as reported by 22.22% who avoided in-person events and 25% who reduced media exposure—illustrates how violence directly shapes the exercise of political rights.

Particularly striking is **that 11 individuals (32.35%) chose to campaign exclusively through social media, avoiding direct contact with voters.** While potentially safer, this limits outreach and electoral competitiveness. Only 4 people (11.11%) reported hiring private security, and just 6 (16.67%) received any form of state protection — revealing the absence of rapid institutional response mechanisms for people at risk due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Institutional failure was also evident in how violence and discrimination reports were handled. Of the 45 people who experienced violence or discrimination, only 11 filed formal complaints. Of these, 7 (63.64%) received no resolution at all, and just 1 (9.09%) had a satisfactory outcome. This sends a dangerous message: victims report, but the system fails to respond.

The most frequently engaged authorities were electoral bodies (4 people) and prosecutors' offices (4 people), but even with these institutions, clear resolutions were absent. Complaints to political parties (3 people) and international organizations (3 people) also went unresolved — demonstrating that neither national nor international mechanisms are functioning as effective protectors of LGBTIQ+ candidates. Many of those affected also turned to civil society organizations (5 people), reinforcing their critical role in contexts where institutional mechanisms fall short.

While political party support could be a direct line of defense, only 14 of the 35 LGBTIQ+ individuals who faced violence or discrimination (40%) reported receiving any support from their party. While support was given to presidential candidates (2 of 2) and the only gubernatorial candidate, it was far more limited at other levels: only 22.22% of congressional candidates and 40% of regional or local candidates received support — despite most cases occurring in electoral contexts.

Support was also uneven across identities. While half of intersex, non-binary, and disabled respondents reported receiving backing, women (31.25%) and Indigenous candidates (25%) were notably left behind. This disparity underscores the lack of robust and sustainable internal party protocols to address political violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

These findings highlight the urgent need to establish internal party mechanisms for response, support, and reparations — so that protection does not depend on a candidate's rank or position within the party hierarchy.

A significant number of LGBTIQ+ candidates considered withdrawing from the race due to violence or discrimination: 15 individuals — 42.86% of those who reported being victims — said they had contemplated this option.

This figure starkly illustrates the emotional toll, fear, and vulnerability faced by many LGBTIQ+ candidates, especially those with more marginalized identities. Indigenous (80%), Afro-descendant (70%), disabled (66.67%), and non-binary candidates (57.14%) were the most likely to consider withdrawal — reflecting how the intersection of gender identity, race, and disability compounds electoral risks.

Additionally, **55% of those running for regional or local office also considered stepping down**, suggesting that these levels — where public visibility and institutional support are typically lower — present particularly precarious conditions for safe and equitable participation.

This underscores the need to create safer environments for all individuals engaging in politics — especially those facing multiple forms of exclusion. Running for office should not entail personal risk, but rather serve as a legitimate and protected pathway to power.

Campaign strategies

LGBTIQ+ candidates who participated in electoral processes between 2020 and 2024 in Latin America and the Caribbean built their campaigns around a diverse agenda of rights, social justice, and development. A total of 77 candidates selected up to three main issues they addressed during their campaigns, revealing significant patterns in their political priorities.

The most prominent issue was the defense of LGBTIQ+ rights, selected by 54 candidates (70.13%). This underscores that many of these candidates not only represent diverse populations but also center their platforms on transforming the living conditions of LGBTIQ+ people.

Other highly prioritized issues included:

- * **Women's rights** (24.68%, 19 candidates), indicating an intersectional integration of feminist agendas within LGBTIQ+ platforms.
- * **Anti-corruption** (27.27%, 21 candidates) and **economic issues** (20.78%, 16 candidates), reflecting concerns over structural social demands, especially amid economic crises or institutional distrust.
- * **Violence** was also a priority for 16 candidates (20.78%), particularly at the local level, where links to community safety and structural violence were more evident.
- * **Labor rights** (16.88%, 13 candidates) and **environmental issues** (31.17%, 24 candidates) featured prominently, showing a broader focus on social and climate justice.
- * **Migration**, despite its relevance in the region, was addressed by only 3 candidates (3.9%), suggesting it was not central in most LGBTIQ+ platforms.

Overall, these responses demonstrate that LGBTIQ+ candidates do not limit themselves to representing an identity. Instead, they advance proposals aimed at transforming the social, economic, and political contexts of their territories. Their agendas are both identity-based and structural, often positioned in direct critique of state-sponsored violence, inequality, and neglect.

When analyzing campaign strategy implementation levels, high levels of community engagement were paired with intensive use of digital platforms. The most frequently used strategies at the highest implementation level (score of 5) included:

- * **Personal social media use** (64.62%), reflecting a direct, personal, and low-cost approach.
- * Distributing flyers and materials in the streets (55.38%) and community meetings (52.31%), showing strong grassroots anchoring.
- * **Meetings with social leaders** (49.23%) and **civil society organizations** (43.08%), demonstrating efforts to connect with social movements.

In contrast, tools requiring more financial investment — such as **mainstream media advertising** (10.77% at high level) and **paying social media influencers** (13.85%) — were far less used, pointing to significant budgetary constraints.

Regarding campaign team size, most strategies were implemented with **small structures**. While 56.92% of candidates reported having more than five people on their campaign team, 27.7% had between one and four. This suggests that, despite significant organizing efforts, many campaigns operated with minimal resources, placing a heavy burden on the candidates and their close networks.

Even in low-resource settings, **intensive use of social media and grassroots presence** were campaign pillars. This reveals not only the resilience but also the strategic capacity of these candidates to advance their agendas, build community, and contest institutional power from the margins.

Beyond campaign design and team size, **LGBTIQ+ candidates between 2020 and 2024 relied on various forms of support and funding** — many rooted in personal relationships and close networks — reinforcing the collective and affective nature of these political efforts.

The main sources of campaign support came from **immediate circles**. Notably, **friends** (32.31% “very high”, 27.69% “high”) and **family** (26.15% “very high”, 21.54% “high”) were key. Campaign volunteers also played a vital role, with 36.92% ranking them as a “very high” support source — highlighting the

weight of activism and community commitment in these candidacies.

By contrast, political party staff were perceived as offering very low support by over half of the candidates (53.85%). Likewise, alliances with elected officials or other candidates were rated “very low” in most cases (44.62% and 58.46%, respectively). This indicates that many LGBTIQ+ candidates ran without strong institutional backing, depending instead on personal and grassroots ties.

Self-funding was the norm: 32.31% reported financing their campaign at a “very high” level with personal funds, and 13.85% at a “high” level. Together, 46.16% personally bore a significant portion of their campaign costs. Financial support from family or partners was moderate; 27.69% rated their partner’s support as “very low.”

Institutional funding was scarce. Only 7.69% reported receiving “very high” support from their political party, and similar proportions from elected officials (3.08%) or fundraising activities (3.08%). Funding from **businesses** (1.54% “very high”) and **civil society organizations** (1.54% “very high”) was also marginal, while 29.23% rated support from civil society as “very low,” reflecting major barriers in accessing external funding sources.

Electoral outcomes of LGBTIQ+ candidacies (2020-2024)

Of the 65 LGBTIQ+ candidates who responded to this question, **21 (32.31%) were elected**, a significant figure that sheds light on both patterns of success and persistent challenges.

- * **Success rates varied by identity.** LGBTIQ+ men had a success rate of 38.71%, followed closely by non-binary people (36.36%) and Indigenous candidates (42.86%). In contrast, only 21.74% of LGBTIQ+ women and 25% of trans or travesti candidates were elected. No victories were reported among intersex candidates. These figures suggest that even within the LGBTIQ+ community, intersections with gender, ethnicity, and other social conditions shape real access to political power.
- * **Geographically**, urban candidates won at rates similar to the overall average (32.20%), while rural candidates had a slightly higher relative success rate (33.33%), though based on a much smaller sample.
- * **Electoral success also depended on the office sought.** Gubernatorial candidates (1 case) and mayoral candidates (1 out of 2 cases) had the highest success rates (100% and 50%, respectively). Legislative candidates won 38.46% of their races, while 28.89% of regional or local candidates were elected. No LGBTIQ+ presidential candidates were elected.
- * **Party affiliation played a key role.** 44% of LGBTIQ+ candidates running with left-wing parties were elected, compared to 29.17% in center-left parties and 42.86% in center-right parties. No LGBTIQ+ candidates were elected from right-wing parties.
- * **Notably, 31.15% of openly LGBTIQ+ candidates won their elections**, showing that visibility was not a barrier to electoral success. However, non-visible candidates had an even higher success rate (50%, 2 out of 4), which may reflect ongoing tensions between authenticity, safety, and political viability.
- * Among candidates who **received prior training in public policy**, 30.23% were elected—underscoring the value of political preparation.

- * While **violence did not automatically reduce electoral success**, the data shows a slight difference: 35.48% of candidates who did not experience violence or discrimination were elected, compared to 29.41% of those who did.

These findings point to a clear conclusion: LGBTIQ+ political participation in electoral campaigns is not just a matter of representation—it is an act of resistance and strategy carried out under unequal conditions. **Electoral success is possible**, but it continues to be shaped by identity, support structures, and the ability to navigate deeply entrenched political barriers.

CHAPTER 4.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD ACCESSIBLE, SAFE, AND REPRESENTATIVE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION





4.1

Recommendations

At a critical moment for our democracies, the need for deep political transformation is more evident than ever. The barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals in political participation not only limit their voice and representation, but also undermine the democratic health of our societies. **We cannot speak of participatory democracy if political structures continue to exclude or marginalize entire sectors of the population.**

Throughout this report, we have explored both the progress and the challenges that LGBTIQ+ people have encountered in Latin America and the Caribbean. While we have witnessed important achievements, much work remains. **Political systems must be transformed to ensure that all people — regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression — can fully exercise their political rights on equal terms.**

Political transformation is not a destination, but a continuous process. It requires reviewing and renewing institutional structures, electoral practices, and legal frameworks that perpetuate exclusion. It means adopting measures that guarantee the full representation of all people in political life and creating spaces where diversity is valued and protected.

This report does not end here; it opens the door to a path of action that must continue. The recommendations we present are not merely suggestions, but tools to build a more just and equitable political system. This is a call to all stakeholders — governments, political parties, civil society organizations, and citizens — to commit to this transformation.

4.1.1

Recommendations for political parties

Political parties play a key role in building inclusive and representative democracies. As central actors in decision-making, they are responsible for ensuring that all people — regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity — have the opportunity to fully participate in political life. The recommendations presented here are intended as a strategic guide for political parties seeking to strengthen their commitment to LGBTIQ+ rights and foster a more equitable and safer political environment. Implementing these affirmative actions will not only promote inclusion but also help consolidate progressive leadership, showing that the party is at the forefront of the fight for justice, equality, and dignity for all people.

1. Clear commitments to LGBTIQ+ rights

Include explicit commitments to defending the rights of LGBTIQ+ people in party statutes, platforms, and guidelines, as well as measures against discrimination and political violence.

2. Internal body for LGBTIQ+ inclusion

Establish a committee, directorate, or working group tasked with developing policies for LGBTIQ+ leadership and candidates. This body must have resources and the ability to influence key party decisions.

3. Affirmative actions for representation

Ensure the representation of LGBTIQ+ people in leadership and decision-making positions within the party through affirmative actions that guarantee their participation in assemblies, executive committees, and other key spaces.

4. Alliances with civil society

Collaborate with civil society organizations and activists to promote legislative initiatives and public policies that advance LGBTIQ+ rights. These alliances should address issues such as health, education, safety, and decent employment, among others.

5. Participation in multi-party spaces

Engage in national and international forums to build alliances aimed at the approval of laws and policies that protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ people.

6. Leadership training

Promote training processes for LGBTIQ+ leaders within the party, as well as for all members, to prevent discrimination and strengthen the party's commitment to equality.

7. Transparent candidate selection

Implement democratic and transparent mechanisms for selecting candidates to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people have equal opportunities to run for office.

8. Eliminate fraudulent practices in affirmative actions

Ensure that affirmative actions for LGBTIQ+ candidates are not faked or misused, and establish internal sanctions for those who manipulate these measures.

9. Inclusion of diverse women in gender quotas

Promote the inclusion of lesbian, bisexual, and trans women in gender quotas, ensuring that such affirmative actions truly reflect the diversity of all women.

10. Strategic positioning for LGBTIQ+ candidates

Place LGBTIQ+ candidates in winnable positions on electoral lists to increase their chances of success.

11. Financial and strategic support for candidates

Provide financial support and strategic guidance to LGBTIQ+ candidates, ensuring they have access to campaign funds, advertising, and electoral strategy consulting.

12. Candidates with inclusive platforms

Ensure that party candidates include clear policy proposals for advancing LGBTIQ+ rights in their campaign platforms.

13. Mechanisms to address political violence

Design and implement mechanisms to prevent, investigate, and sanction political violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals, protecting candidates and party members who face such violence.

14. Security protocols for candidates

Implement security protocols to help LGBTIQ+ candidates and their teams identify and mitigate political violence.

15. Psychosocial and legal support

Establish mechanisms to provide psychosocial and legal support to candidates facing political violence, ensuring they have the necessary backing to continue their political work.

16. Ethical pacts of non-discrimination

Sign ethical pacts of zero tolerance for violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people during electoral campaigns and within the party itself.

Implementing these recommendations will not only strengthen the party's commitment to social justice and human rights, but also drive real political transformation that reflects the diversity and plurality of our societies. By adopting these principles, parties not only take a step toward building a more inclusive democracy, but also send a clear message of leadership and social responsibility: that the fight for LGBTIQ+ rights is a fundamental part of the broader fight for equity, freedom, and dignity for all.

If your organization, political party, or electoral body is interested in receiving technical assistance to implement these recommendations, the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean is available to collaborate in designing and implementing strategies tailored to your needs. Feel free to contact us at Observatorio@victoryinstitute.org or visit www.liderazgosLGBT.com for more information or to schedule a consultation.

4.1.2

Recommendations for electoral authorities

Electoral authorities play a vital role in ensuring inclusive and transparent democratic processes. Their ability to create a safe, accessible, and discrimination-free environment for LGBTIQ+ people is essential to guarantee that all citizens can exercise their political rights on equal terms. The recommendations presented here aim to provide practical tools and guidelines for electoral authorities to implement measures that ensure the active and protected participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals at every stage of the electoral process. Adopting these actions will not only strengthen trust in the electoral system but also contribute to building a fairer and more representative democracy.

1. Training and capacity building

Train all staff (permanent and temporary) to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities throughout all electoral stages. Ensuring that all team members are prepared to respond inclusively and appropriately is essential to a safe electoral environment.

2. Inclusion in strategic planning

Integrate a sexual and gender diversity perspective into all strategic plans, activities, and policies. This perspective should be applied at every stage of the electoral process—from planning to implementation and evaluation.

3. Registration of LGBTIQ+ candidacies

Establish clear procedures for LGBTIQ+ candidates to safely and respectfully register their sexual orientation and gender identity. These processes must be transparent and accessible.

4. Inclusive voting documents

Ensure that trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse people can update their voting documents (such as gender marker, photo, and name) to reflect their gender identity and expression. Inclusive documentation is key to removing barriers in the electoral process.

5. Updating voter rolls

Guarantee that changes made by trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals to their voting documents are reflected in the voter rolls. This measure will ensure that they can vote without complications or discrimination.

6. Protocols for voting rights

Develop and implement specific protocols to guarantee that trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse people can exercise their right to vote under equal conditions. These protocols must be consistently applied throughout the entire electoral process.

7. Monitoring affirmative actions

Establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure that political parties and candidates comply with affirmative actions aimed at promoting LGBTIQ+ participation. Clear sanctions are essential to ensure compliance.

8. Addressing political violence

Implement protocols to prevent, investigate, and sanction political and electoral violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals. All types of violence—physical, verbal, and psychological—must be addressed comprehensively.

9. Reporting channels

Establish safe and accessible channels for LGBTIQ+ individuals to report political violence. Ensure that reports are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, with a focus on victim protection and support.

10. Coordination with digital platforms

Coordinate with digital platforms to disseminate inclusive campaigns, prevent disinformation, and monitor political violence facilitated through digital media. Collaboration with the tech sector is key to combating online violence.

11. Partnerships for research and monitoring

Partner with digital platforms, research centers, and civil society organizations to conduct studies and analyses on digital discourse and disinformation on social media. Identifying patterns of violence is the first step toward preventing and sanctioning such acts.

12. Working groups with civil society

Establish working groups with LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations to collaborate in removing barriers that limit participation. These alliances may include training sessions, forums, and workshops, and are essential to generating lasting and effective solutions.

By implementing these recommendations, electoral authorities will not only fulfill their duty to ensure the full exercise of voting rights but also play a decisive role in building a truly inclusive democracy. Concrete steps must be taken to ensure that LGBTIQ+ individuals can participate in electoral processes without facing barriers, violence, or discrimination. Their commitment to these affirmative actions will be a foundational pillar in the consolidation of an electoral system that respects and represents the full diversity of its citizenry.

If your organization, political party, or electoral body is interested in receiving technical assistance to implement these recommendations, the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean is available to collaborate in designing and implementing strategies tailored to your needs. Feel free to contact us at Observatorio@victoryinstitute.org or visit www.lider-azgosLGBT.com for more information or to schedule a consultation.

4.1.3

Recommendations for elected officials

LGBTIQ+ elected officials and their political allies play a fundamental role in transforming our democracies into more inclusive and representative systems. As leaders in decision-making spaces, they have the capacity to drive real change, ensuring that LGBTIQ+ people are not only visible but also adequately protected and represented at all levels of government. The recommendations below offer concrete steps to strengthen their leadership and advocate for a political framework that promotes the full participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in public life, ensuring that their rights are recognized and defended.

1. Establish LGBTIQ+ legislative commissions

Create commissions within national parliaments and subnational legislative bodies that promote an agenda centered on LGBTIQ+ rights. These commissions can lead the introduction of legislative proposals, monitor public policies, and oversee key areas such as security and access to essential services.

2. Strengthen international networks

Join or support the development of international networks of LGBTIQ+ elected officials to exchange experiences and design strategies that reinforce inclusive political agendas. These networks are essential in countering transnational fundamentalist movements that spread hate and misinformation.

3. Pass comprehensive recognition laws

Champion and pass laws that comprehensively recognize the rights of trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse people, including the right to identity, voting rights, and other political rights. This is vital to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people can fully participate in political and civic life.

4. Promote laws supporting LGBTIQ+ political participation

Advocate for laws that support LGBTIQ+ political participation, including reserved seats, equitable campaign financing, and the allocation of public resources. These measures will ensure effective representation of LGBTIQ+ individuals at all levels of government.

5. Create protocols against political violence

Develop protocols within legislative bodies to prevent, address, investigate, and sanction political violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals. These protocols must ensure effective protection and justice for those affected, allowing a safe environment for political engagement.

By implementing these recommendations, LGBTIQ+ elected officials can lead the way toward a fairer and more equitable political system. Establishing dedicated legislative spaces, strengthening international alliances, and passing laws that fully recognize LGBTIQ+ rights will help consolidate a political environment where diversity is not only respected but celebrated. It is the responsibility of elected leaders to advance inclusive policies that not only protect but also empower the LGBTIQ+ community, guaranteeing their active and effective participation in all aspects of political and social life.

If your organization, political party, or electoral body is interested in receiving technical assistance to implement these recommendations, the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean is available to collaborate in designing and implementing strategies tailored to your needs. Feel free to contact us at Observatorio@victoryinstitute.org or visit www.liderazgosLGBT.com for more information or to schedule a consultation.

4.1.4

Recommendations for civil society organizations

Civil society organizations are key players in the promotion of inclusive and participatory democracy. Through their work and leadership, they have the power to influence political processes, defend human rights, and ensure effective representation of LGBTIQ+ people. The recommendations in this section aim to strengthen the capacity of organizations to create spaces for political advocacy, foster strategic alliances, and monitor the fulfillment of LGBTIQ+ rights in legislative and electoral spheres. This is a call to intensify efforts to build a strong, collaborative, and committed support network for equality and justice.

1. Strengthen leadership and political advocacy

Create training spaces for LGBTIQ+ leaders on political advocacy tools, strategic litigation, and public policy monitoring, promoting their active participation in elected positions.

2. Foster cross-sector alliances

Build and strengthen networks with social, political, and economic actors to expand advocacy capacity and promote LGBTIQ+ rights collaboratively and sustainably.

3. Combat disinformation and hate speech

Design innovative strategies to counter disinformation, hate speech, and discriminatory narratives from fundamentalist groups, both nationally and transnationally.

4. Collaborate with electoral bodies

Establish working groups with electoral authorities to promote the implementation of affirmative actions that guarantee the political and electoral rights of LGBTIQ+ people.

5. Engage in electoral observation missions

Promote participation in national and international Electoral Observation Missions or create observation initiatives with a focus on sexual and gender diversity to analyze LGBTIQ+ political participation.

6. Document political violence

Record and raise visibility of political violence cases against LGBTIQ+ individuals, ensuring that this data informs advocacy strategies and is shared with relevant institutions.

7. Monitor government and development plans

Track the proposals and development plans of elected officials, advocating for the inclusion of policies that guarantee LGBTIQ+ rights. Organizations can collaborate with political monitoring platforms to ensure campaign promises and commitments are fulfilled.

8. Legislative monitoring

Develop strategies for monitoring and legislative advocacy to influence legal and policy reform processes at national and subnational levels, ensuring LGBTIQ+ voices are represented.

9. Support LGBTIQ+ individuals in public office

Maintain and strengthen relationships with LGBTIQ+ leaders who have been elected or appointed, promoting dialogue between civil society and institutional representatives. It is vital that these individuals are not isolated once in power but remain part of collective processes with political, technical, and emotional support.

The recommendations presented here offer a clear guide for civil society organizations to continue strengthening their role as agents of change in the fight for LGBTIQ+ rights. Through leadership training, building cross-sector alliances, and constant monitoring of policies and legislation, organizations have the power to ensure that LGBTIQ+ voices are heard and protected. This work, carried out in collaboration with key allies and international bodies, will be essential in turning promises of equality and non-discrimination into a tangible reality for all LGBTIQ+ individuals.

If your organization, political party, or electoral body is interested in receiving technical assistance to implement these recommendations, the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean is available to collaborate in designing and implementing strategies tailored to your needs. Feel free to contact us at Observatorio@victoryinstitute.org or visit www.liderazgosLGBT.com for more information or to schedule a consultation.

4.1.5

Recommendations for national and international electoral observation missions

Election observation missions have the power to decisively influence the fairness and transparency of electoral processes. By incorporating a perspective of sexual diversity and gender identity into these missions, a more comprehensive and fair assessment of the political participation of LGBTIQ+ individuals can be ensured. This section presents key recommendations to ensure that observation missions not only monitor the electoral process but also highlight and address the barriers and political violence faced by LGBTIQ+ people. Collaboration with international organizations and LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations is essential to strengthen inclusion and protect the rights of this community within the electoral sphere.

1. Incorporate sexual and gender diversity in election observation missions

Integrate a focus on sexual and gender diversity in election observation missions. This will help identify and make visible the barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ people in political participation. It is recommended to work alongside international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), through its Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation, or The Carter Center, both of which have integrated human rights approaches into their missions.

2. Train electoral observers on LGBTIQ+ political rights

Provide training to electoral observers on issues related to the political rights of LGBTIQ+ people. Organizations such as International IDEA and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) can offer resources and training programs on inclusion and electoral rights, ensuring that observers are equipped to assess LGBTIQ+ situations during elections.

3. Include LGBTIQ+ individuals in electoral observation teams

Involve LGBTIQ+ individuals in election observation teams, both as experts and observers. These individuals bring specialized knowledge and lived experiences that enrich missions.

Collaborations can be established with entities like the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which already use inclusive approaches and have supported diverse participation in their missions.

4. Build strategic alliances with LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations

Forge alliances with national and international LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations to ensure their perspectives are reflected in mission analyses and recommendations. Entities such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch can offer technical support and partnerships to strengthen the LGBTIQ+ voice in electoral processes.

5. Monitor political violence and discrimination during campaigns

Monitor and make visible the political violence and discriminatory rhetoric faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals during campaigns and elections. Working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) can help with better documentation and tracking of these cases, ensuring they are properly reported at the international level and that protection mechanisms are pursued.

6. Generate recommendations and follow-up to promote LGBTIQ+ political participation

Issue concrete recommendations and ensure follow-up through relevant actors in democratic processes. Missions should collaborate with international organizations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IFES to share findings and support the implementation of policy and legal reforms that promote greater LGBTIQ+ political participation.

By implementing these recommendations, election observation missions will not only fulfill their role in overseeing electoral transparency but also become active agents of change in the fight for LGBTIQ+ political rights. Involving LGBTIQ+ individuals in observation teams, building strategic alliances, and monitoring political violence will help contribute to a more just and representative electoral system. It is imperative that these missions continue working with human rights organizations and international platforms to ensure that the voices of the LGBTIQ+ community are not only heard but also translated into inclusive policies and practices.

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4.1.6

Recommendations for the media

Media outlets have immense power in shaping inclusive narratives and promoting equality. As key players in shaping public opinion, their responsibility goes beyond simply reporting the news: they must ensure that all voices—especially those of LGBTIQ+ individuals—are represented fairly, respectfully, and free from stereotypes. The following recommendations aim to guide media toward coverage that not only highlights the achievements and challenges of the LGBTIQ+ community, but also actively combats misinformation and political violence, fostering a respectful and equitable information environment.

1. Respectful and non-stereotypical coverage

Ensure that media coverage of LGBTIQ+ candidates, leaders, and elected officials is respectful and avoids reproducing stereotypes and biases. This includes using correct names and pronouns, and respecting the identities of trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals.

2. Training on sexual and gender diversity

Implement training programs for journalists and political editors on sexual and gender diversity to foster a deeper and more sensitive understanding of these topics, and to promote inclusive and fair coverage across media platforms.

3. Combating misinformation and discriminatory speech

Collaborate with civil society organizations, scholars, and activists to develop strategies that counter misinformation and hate speech against LGBTIQ+ people. These partnerships can include verified information campaigns and the monitoring of stigmatizing content.

4. Highlighting positive stories

Showcase positive and successful stories of LGBTIQ+ political participation and representation, highlighting their achievements and contributions to public life. These narratives help shift public perceptions and build affirming models of representation.

5. Reporting on violence and barriers to rights

Report on cases of political violence and highlight the barriers LGBTIQ+ individuals face in exercising their political rights. It is essential that the media act as a check on discrimination and violence, helping to hold institutions accountable.

6. Balanced coverage

Ensure balanced coverage of LGBTIQ+ candidates and leaders, emphasizing their qualifications, policy proposals, and programmatic agendas, along with their perspectives on social and economic issues. This helps prevent coverage from focusing solely on their sexual orientation or gender identity and offers a more complete view of their contributions.

Implementing these recommendations will enable media outlets to become not only agents of change but also defenders of human rights and social justice. Through respectful, balanced, and stigma-free coverage, the media can play a crucial role in building a more inclusive and equitable society. It is vital that they continue to promote accurate and diverse representation of LGBTIQ+ individuals, give visibility to their achievements, struggles, and contributions in political and social life, and ensure that everyone can participate fully without fear of discrimination or violence.

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4.1.7

Ensuring safety of LGBTIQ+ people in politics: A shared responsibility and transformative responsibility

The safety of LGBTIQ+ individuals in politics is not merely a matter of personal protection — it reflects the strength and justice of our democracies. In a context where inclusion remains a constant struggle, ensuring that those who challenge the status quo can do so without fear is a transformative act. This is an urgent call for collective action.

Safety must be understood as an essential right that goes beyond voting or candidacy. It is the freedom to express oneself, organize, and participate in politics without fear of retaliation, violence, or discrimination. **Political violence targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals is a clear sign of a political system that has yet to overcome exclusionary structures.** Those who currently occupy political spaces face the dual challenge of fighting for their rights while simultaneously struggling to secure their safety amid a lack of effective institutional protection.

This responsibility belongs to everyone: political parties, electoral authorities, and civil society. Political parties must adopt inclusive policies and establish clear protection mechanisms for their members and candidates. Electoral authorities have an obligation to ensure a safe and accessible electoral environment for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Civil society, as a guardian of human rights, must demand that LGBTIQ+ individuals be protected in their political participation.

Security policies must be accompanied by an inclusive narrative that goes beyond physical protection — creating symbolic and discursive spaces where LGBTIQ+ people can participate freely, without being stigmatized or attacked. Media outlets, as key actors in shaping public opinion, must ensure fair and respectful representation, highlighting both the challenges and achievements of the community.

For these measures to be effective, a transformative commitment is required. It is not enough to merely react to violence — we must prevent it, establishing protection protocols before, during, and after electoral processes. It is imperative that LGBTIQ+ movements be supported and strengthened in their capacity to organize and resist political violence.

In summary, the safety of LGBTIQ+ individuals in politics is non-negotiable. It is a structural challenge that demands a profound change in how we understand democracy and inclusion. This transformative commitment must be collective — a shared effort by governments, political parties, civil society, and the media. Only then can we ensure that LGBTIQ+ individuals participate in politics with full security, without fear of losing their lives, rights, or dignity.

If your organization, political party, or electoral body is interested in receiving technical assistance to implement these recommendations, the LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean is available to collaborate in designing and implementing strategies tailored to your needs. Feel free to contact us at Observatorio@victoryinstitute.org or visit www.liderazgosLGBT.com for more information or to schedule a consultation.



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This report, the result of collaborative work among multiple voices and visions, marks a significant step toward the political transformation of our democracies—where every LGBTIQ+ person can exercise their rights under conditions of equality and respect. The creation of this resource would not have been possible without the tireless effort, expertise, and dedication of a team committed to social justice and inclusion.

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to **Mateo De La Torre**, Deputy Director of Global Programs at the **LGBTIQ+ Victory Institute** and Coordinator of the **LGBTIQ+ Political Participation Observatory of the Americas and the Caribbean**, whose visionary leadership and steadfast commitment to equality have guided every phase of this project. His dedication has been essential in ensuring that this report is not only a document of analysis, but also a tool for driving participatory policies across Latin America and the Caribbean.

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- * **Diversidad Dominicana**
- * **Yaaj: Transformando tu vida A.C.**

This report stands as a testament to collaboration, shared effort, and the deep belief that participatory democracy is possible. To all who were part of this project, we thank you for your dedication and tireless work to ensure this tool reaches those who need it — and to help make political change a reality for all LGBTIQ+ people.

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