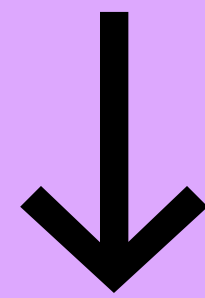


**THE STATE
OF BRAZILIAN**

**LGBT+
POLITICS**



**BETWEEN POWER
AND OBLITERATION**

EXECUTION



SUPPORT



Google.org



WHO ARE WE?

 #VOTELGBT

#VoteLGBT is an organization that since 2014, seeks to increase the representation of LGBT+ people in all spaces, especially in politics. We understand that democracy only exists when there is diversity, therefore, we also see representativeness in an intersectional way with gender and race issues. Since 2016, we have carried out research on the LGBT+ population, comprehending that this data is fundamental for a complex reading of this part of the population and for the creation of public policies aimed at our needs.

WHO SUPPORTS US?



ERA FUND

Democracy is more likely to develop and endure when all segments of a society are free to participate without suffering discrimination or reprisal. Recognizing the fundamental rights of all citizens, the National Democratic Institute has launched the Equal Rights in Action Fund (ERA Fund) to provide small grants to local organizations around the world who work to promote and defend the human rights of marginalized groups.



VICTORY INSTITUTE

Based in the US, it is an organization dedicated to elevating openly LGBTQ leaders who can further equality at all levels of government. Through our training and professional development programs, each year Victory Institute assists hundreds of individuals who go on to influential careers in politics, government, business and advocacy. Many of our trainees join the more than 1,000 openly LGBTQ elected and appointed officials now serving around the world.

Google.org

GOOGLE.ORG

Google's philanthropic arm, Google.org supports humanitarian nonprofits and applies scalable data-driven innovation to solve the world's biggest challenges. Aiming to support the greatest diversity of voices in Brazilian politics in 2022, Google.org has selected non-governmental organizations that develop projects aimed at empowering candidates from politically underrepresented groups.

"Today, this position that I occupy resulted from a building process that began many years ago, it started from a shared vision of what we stand for, showing that we don't need to hide what we want, and it's been very nice to see the result of that."

cis woman
bisexual
black
LGBT+ representative

"Picture a travesti manager, a travesti councilor. Society doesn't accept that so easily, but we resisted and we keep resisting."

travesti
heterosexual
white
LGBT+ representative

"There are no limits to our dreams, to our desires, to our goals. Whenever I have the opportunity in the House, I say to myself 'my place is where I want to be!'. I always say that, always. My place is not where society wants to put me, I decide where I belong."

cis man
gay
white
LGBT+ representative

"We build the mandate from the worker's perspective, because we are workers. None of us managed to dedicate ourselves fully to doing just the campaign because we were poor and black, and in addition, the sustainability of our movement depended on our income as well. Our work today comes from this, from the perspective of this working class."

cis woman
lesbian
black
LGBT+ representative

"If we want to seek new outcomes in politics, it is necessary to introduce new actors in politics, specifically those who represent the LGBT agenda. We have never been placed at the center of the political movements of the right, the left, the center or any other political spectrum. Quite the contrary, agendas linked to the LGBT community have always been used as a bargaining chip."

trans woman
lesbian
white
LGBT+ representative

PART 1

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+LGBT, MORE DEMOCRACY

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AN ACRONYM IN DISPUTE

LGBT, LGBTQIA+, LGBTQQIP2SAA... The acronyms that represent us are evolving and in dispute. There is an understanding that the more letters we put in the acronym, the more inclusive it would be. This argument collides with the issue of access and communication. When we talk to people during our field research (conducted at Brazil's biggest pride parades since 2016), we continuously find that many of them do not know what it means to be a trans or LGBT person. Now picture what the understanding of our community is outside those pride parades!

Every time we change or put more letters in the acronym, we distance ourselves a little more from the non-activist population, who is a very important part of our audience. #VoteLGBT understands that the transformation of society where all people can fully and equally participate in requires the contribution of many people and, as an institution, we've chosen to solidify the acronym "LGBT+" because, on one hand, it appeals to something better known ("LGBT") and, on the other hand, it shows that there are more people to consider ("+").

Adding "+" to the acronym is important because there are not only intersex people, nor only asexual people. Non-binary people, for example, are excluded from all acronyms in dispute and, like other identities not represented, they occupy political spaces and make a very important contribution to the entire movement. The full range of human diversity does not fit into any acronym.

L G E B T +

AN ACRONYM IN DISPUTE

Lesbians

Gays

Bisexuals

Travestis*, Transexual
and Transgender people

Intersex, asexual, non-binary
and other sexual orientations,
gender identities and expressions



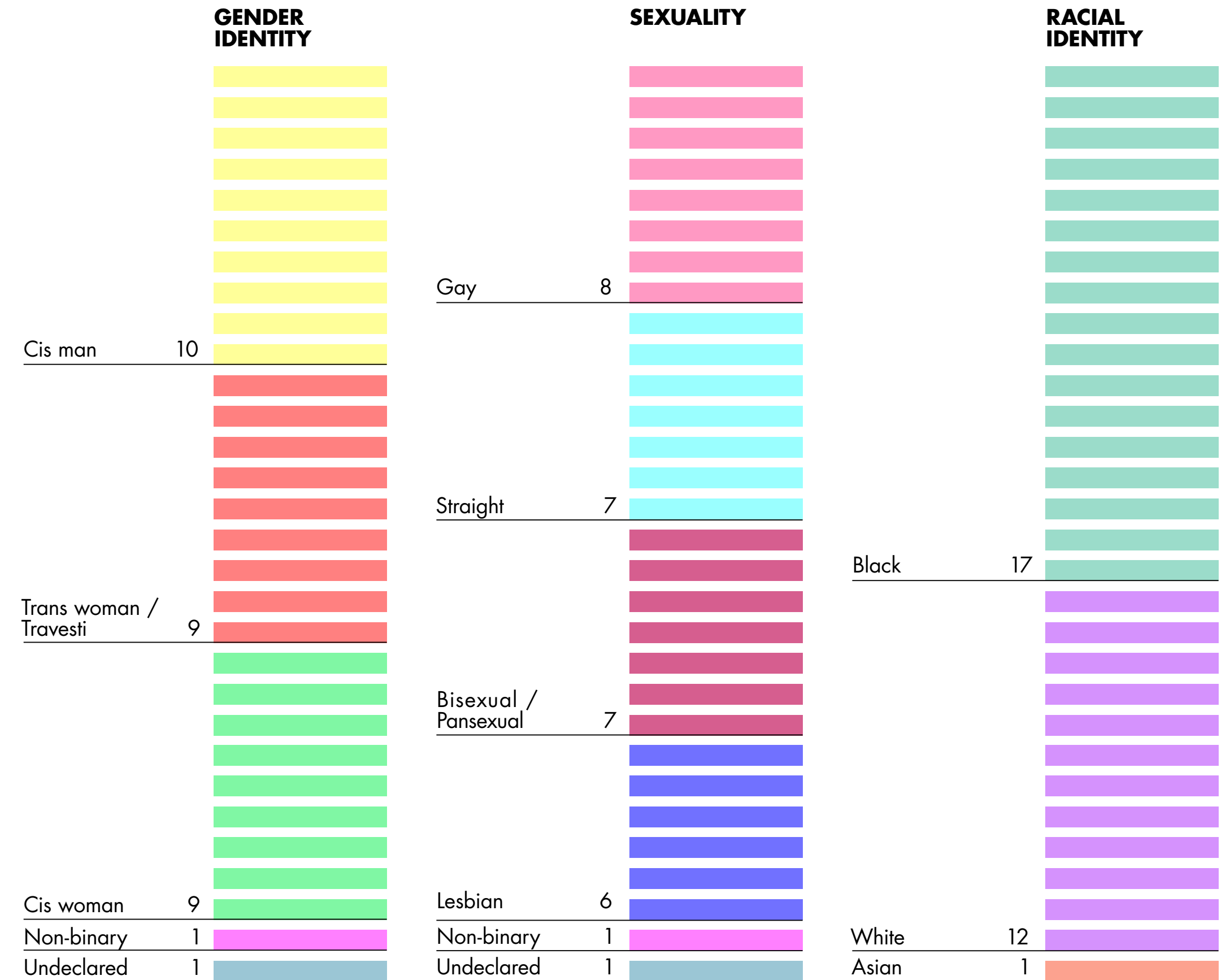
* Travesti, an expression which does not directly translate to English, is how some individuals from the trans community identify. Once used as a slur, travesti has been reclaimed by many key figures, among them Elected officials, as a powerful political identity.

PRESENTATION

The report “The State of Brazilian LGBT+ Politics: between power and obliteration” is part of the *+LGBT in Politics* project that aims to understand, analyze and disseminate information about LGBT+ political representation in Brazil. Since May 2021, with the support from the ERA Fund, the LGBTQ Victory Institute and Google.org, the project has been carrying out extensive and in-depth research to understand the LGBT+ political context in Brazil, as well as promoting leadership training and creating participation tools.

The first stage of research used semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. In order to do this, we used three main phases. The first approach consisted of mapping 30 people (26 elected and 4 non-elected) who ran for office in 2020 to carry out interviews with an average duration of one hour. In this mapping, we sought to ensure diversity of identities, territories and political parties. The interviews were conducted on condition of anonymity and, in the quotes that illustrate this report, we chose to describe only a few identity markers for context purposes. Materials including the interview questions and script, as well as more details on how we collected and processed the data in this report, can be found on the [Methodological Appendix](#) (in Portuguese only).

PROFILE OF THE 30 LGBT+ LEADERS INTERVIEWED



12 parties
22 cities
14 states

diversity of identities,
territories and
political parties

Based on the information gathered from the first phase of the research, the second step consisted of the elaboration of a questionnaire that was sent to all 33 political parties in the country. This online and anonymous survey provided an opportunity to understand the true state of LGBT+ politics by reaching beyond elected representatives to other LGBT+ people who are party members. The third phase aimed to analyze which factors could have influenced the electoral performance of the more than 500 LGBT+ candidates mapped by civil society based on official data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).

In the second stage of the project, which took place between October 2021 and February 2022, we sought to cross-reference quantitative and qualitative research. To complement the data collected, an additional research on campaign finance was done by the author of this report. At this moment, the project is in the stage of systematization and dissemination of the acquired knowledge from the previous phases, either through webinars or booklets, aimed at LGBT+ leaders who work or want to work in politics, or through materials aimed at the press and public debate, as is the case with this report.

As you read this report, you will notice that we have segmented data according to gender and race markers, as LGBT+ candidates, like the entire population, cannot be analyzed as a block. These markers help determine their experience in politics. We believe that diversity is a fundamental value for democracy and, therefore, this is a challenge we must take on collectively.



PART 1/ RESEARCH OVERVIEW

WHY TALK ABOUT LGBT+ POLITICS?



The erasure of LGBT+ people, and the neglect of our rights and needs, has always been what has motivated LGBT+ people to demand our space in society. The LGBT+ struggle has always existed, it has lived and evolved through every life who dared to live in their truth defying society's standards as a form of political resistance. However, it wasn't until more recently that the LGBT+ movement has managed to organize political agendas to increase representation through the electoral democratic political branch. This progress is due to numerous initiatives that have intensified in recent years, especially with the diffusion of digital media and resources that allowed greater organization of people and their agendas.

Brazilian politics has historically been occupied by white, cis, straight, not young, rich and conservative men. It was only after re-democratization in 1984, that we began to have more visible changes in representation, gradually including women, black people, indigenous people, the working class and also LGBT+ people. These political actors, joined by social movements, are responsible for the small advances in LGBT+ rights in recent years. LGBT+ rights' demands have entered the political debate due to popular pressure combined with strategic articulation from activists.

For the LGBT+ population, being in office is important and strategic to guarantee the hard won rights over the years, and that society keeps increasingly advancing in its democracy, assuring full living conditions for these people.

“The Senate's first women's restroom was built in 2016. Look at the scale of this violence! It's an environment that was not really made for us. This environment is structured so that we do not feel comfortable or a sense of belonging, that is an undeniable fact. Unfortunately, that's how the legislative and executive houses were organized, weren't they? From this place of colonial heritage, thinking only of those who have always been in power — a very unfriendly structure for us indeed.”

cis woman
lesbian
white
LGBT+ representative

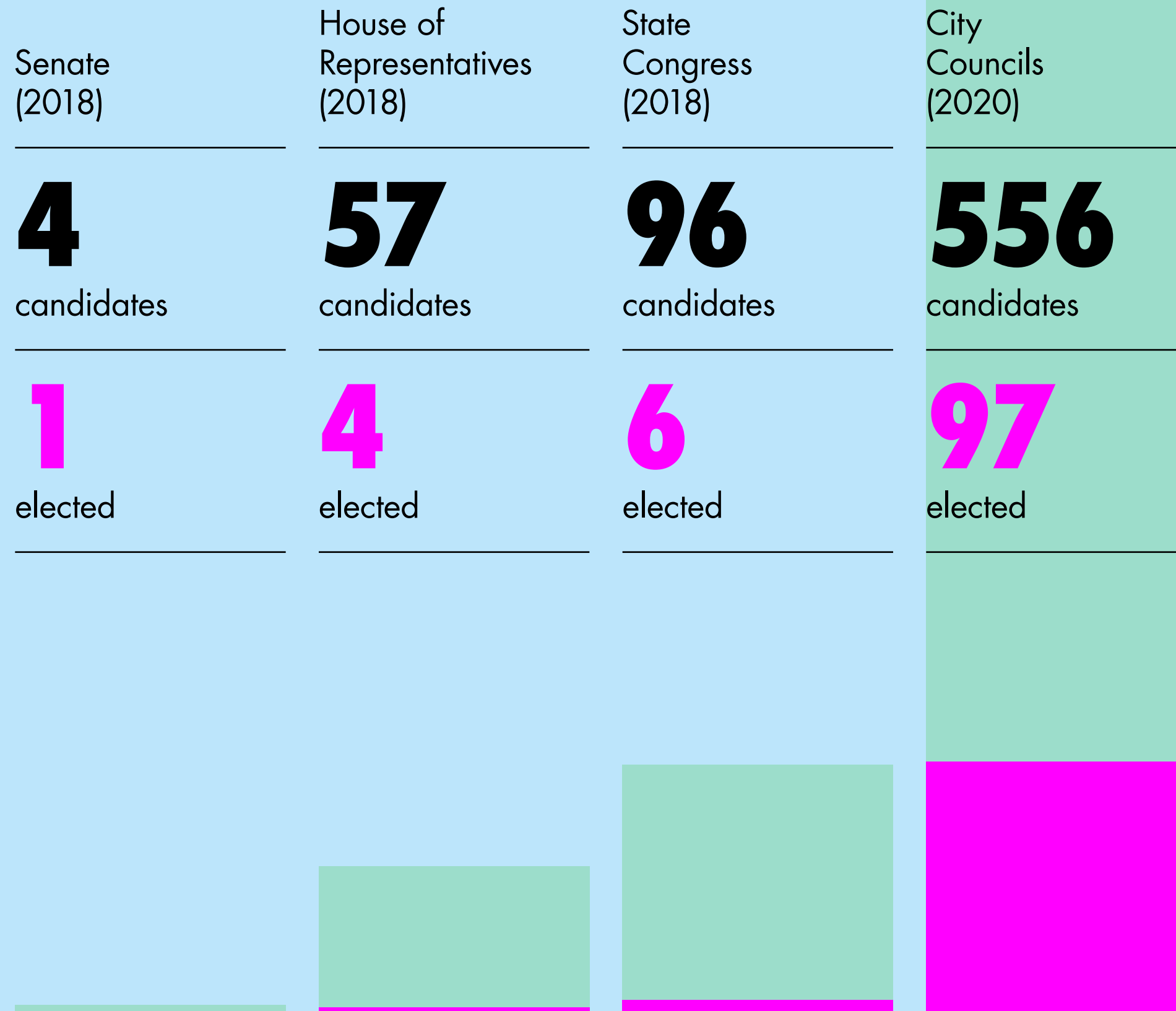
LGBT+ POLITICS BY THE NUMBERS

Since 2014, #VoteLGBT has been dedicated to mapping LGBT+ and pro-LGBT candidates in the Brazilian Legislature. The highly polarized campaigns for executive positions (presidency, state government and city halls) tend to be averse to agendas that are considered "controversial", as parties need more than half of the valid votes to win elections. Thus, the Legislature ends up becoming a more fertile space for the LGBT+ agenda and representation of LGBT+ people. Furthermore, increasing LGBT+ representation in the Legislature provides opportunities for long term impact as the body who creates laws, then through the executive with mandates that can easily be reversed.

We believe that the vulnerabilities of our population are complex and need continued public policy solutions. Thus, the focus of this report, like our actions over these eight years, is on political representation in the Brazilian Legislature.

The chart below shows LGBT+ representation in legislative houses since 2018.

LGBT+ IN THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH*



(*) In any survey on the LGBT+ population, self-attestation is the most appropriate way to gather this type of information. However, the Electoral authority in Brazil does not collect data on LGBT+ identities. For this research, we had the support of other initiatives that also work to identify this data, which includes: ABGLT, ANTRA, Aliança Nacional LGBTI and #MeRepresenta, to whom we are thankful for their efforts and collaboration with #VoteLGBT. We also sought various avenues and strategies (interviews, social media, etc.) to confirm the gender identity and sexual orientation of LGBT+ representatives. However, it is not always possible to confirm this information. For more detailed information, check the "Methodological Appendix".

556 LGBT+ candidates were mapped by an intersectional consortium of civil society organizations in the 2020 campaign*. 97 of them were elected, 17% of the total number of openly LGBT+ candidates.



2020 ELECTIONS: METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The research was carried out on three work fronts, between the months of May and September 2021:



#VOTELGBT

A

INTERVIEWS WITH LGBT+ REPRESENTATIVES

Semi-structured interviews applied to 30 LGBT+ candidates, in the 2020 elections, most of whom were elected, from different political parties and regions of the country.

B

ANALYSIS OF LGBT+ CANDIDATES PERFORMANCES

Data collection on funding, geographic distribution and electoral performance of the 556 LGBT+ candidates mapped in the 2020 elections, based on Electoral Justice and IBGE databases.

C

+LGBT IN POLITICS CENSUS

Online questionnaire applied to LGBT+ candidates or people affiliated with political parties, totaling 545 respondents:

- 331 party members, who did not run
- 174 candidates for City Councils
- 19 candidates for State Congresses
- 11 candidates for the House of Representatives
- 8 candidates for Mayor
- 2 candidates to Governor

LGBT+ CANDIDATES' PROFILE

The data refer to the research carried out from the last local election cycle in 2020 and included candidates for mayor and city council.

A IDEOLOGICAL PROFILE

In Brazil, there is some difficulty in classifying political parties among traditional ideological spectrums. The rules of the electoral context and political participation change all the time, causing parties to build momentary alliances depending on specific interests. It is true that there is no consensus among experts in the field on the subject, however, Codato, Berlatto and Bolognesi (2018) propose a cataloging and grouping of parties based on

their ideological axis (left-center-right). For the purpose of simplification and creating a shared understanding, we use their classification structure in this report, and applied the same criteria to include new parties created or renamed between 2018 and the 2020 elections. As stated,, the existing 33 parties are in a continuous process of transformation, mergers and rebranding, but we chose to keep the names they used in the 2020 elections.

Left-wing Parties

- ← PCB
- ← PC do B
- ← PDT
- ← PSB
- ← PSOL
- ← PSTU
- ← PT
- ← UP
- ← PCO

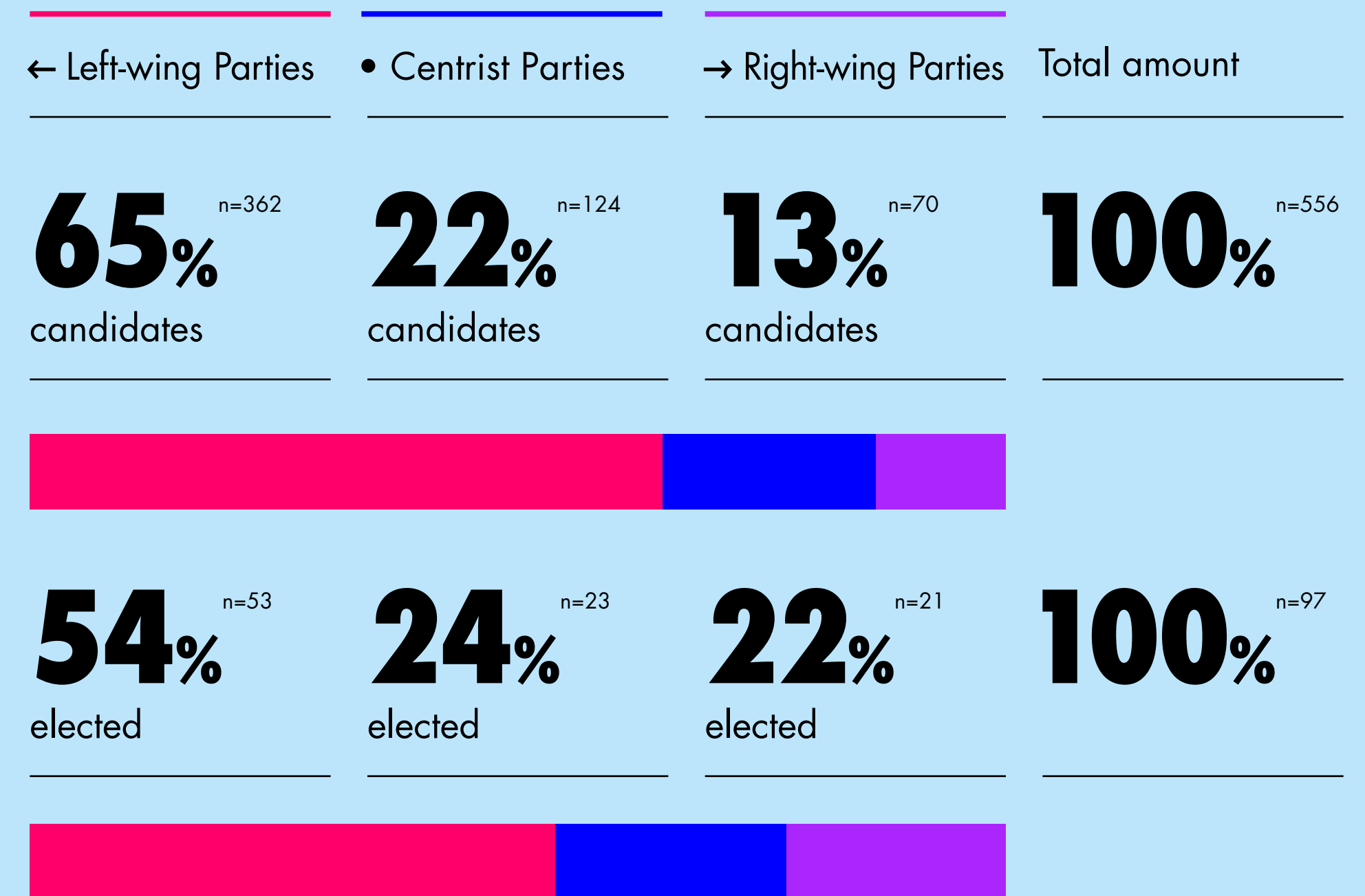
Centrist Parties

- CIDADANIA
- MDB
- PMN
- PSDB
- PV
- REDE
- SOLIDARIEDADE
- PMB
- PROS
- REPUBLICANOS

Right-wing Parties

- AVANTE
- DEM
- NOVO
- PATRIOTA
- PL
- PODE
- PP
- PSC
- PSD
- PSL
- PTB
- PRTB
- DC
- PTC

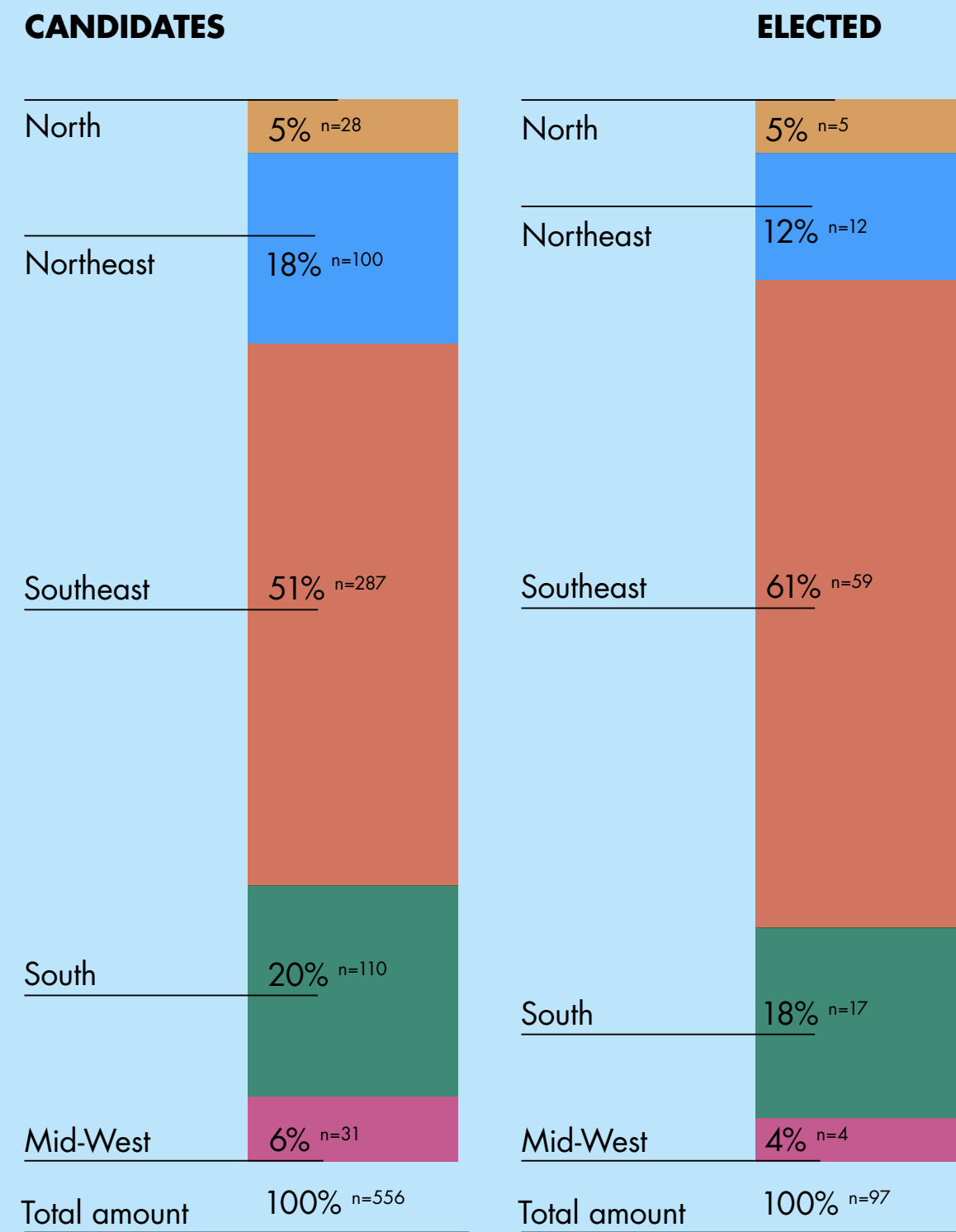
In this sense, the chart below presents the identified ideological axes of LGBT+ representations.



In the 2020 elections*, we did not find any openly LGBT+ candidates in five parties (15% of the registered political parties).

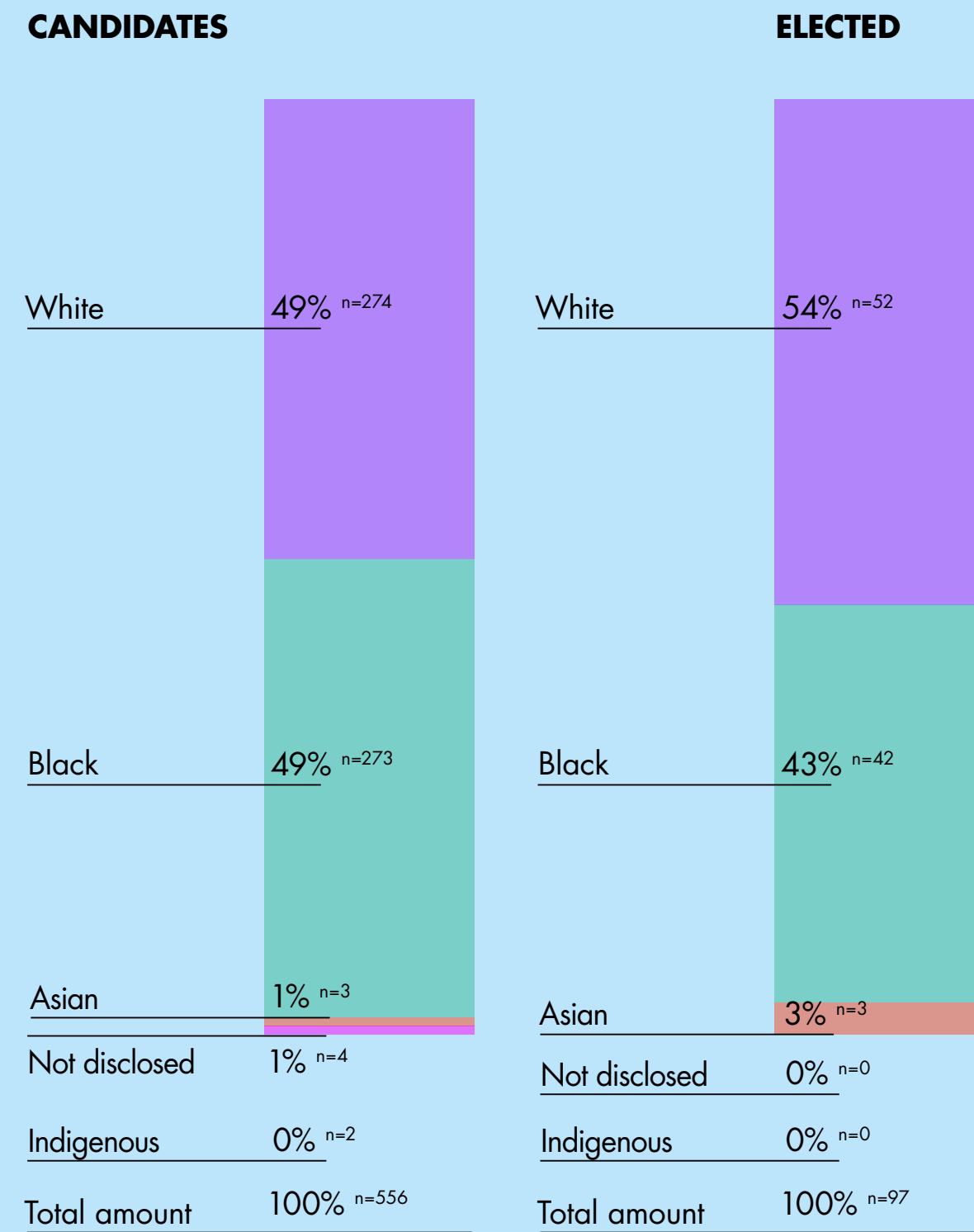
(*). During this period, there were 33 parties registered in Brazil.

B GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE



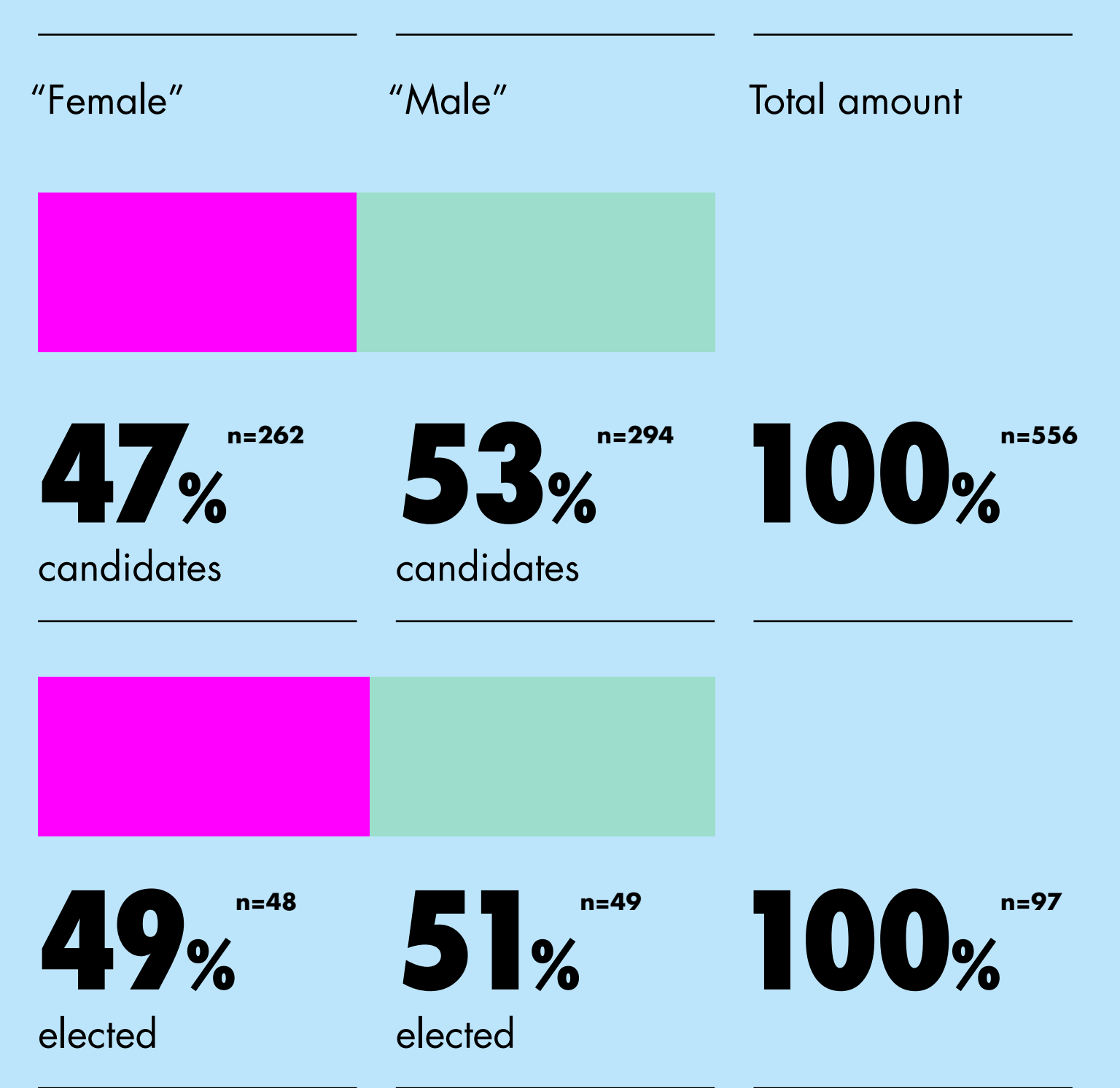
61% of the LGBT+ representatives elected in Brazil are concentrated in the Southeast region.

C ETHNIC-RACIAL PROFILE



This one region alone has more LGBT+ candidates than all the other four regions combined.

D GENDER IDENTITY PROFILE*



(*). According to data from the TSE, candidates are only classified as "female" and "male". Among them, there may be cis, trans and travestis candidates according to the gender identity marker on their documentation or in their social name recognized in the voter registration card. However, we have heard of several trans, travestis and non-binary candidates who faced discrimination due to their gender identity by the Electoral Office during the 2020 elections.

E **SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROFILE**

sexual orientation	candidates	elected
lesbian		
gays		
bisexual/ pansexual		
heterosexual		
asexual		
total amount		

In Brazil, there is a gap in data collection regarding the LGBT+ population: the Demographic Census, the largest survey carried out in the Brazilian territory, does not include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. There is a minimal effort by the IBGE to capture this data, which, in a limited way, only considers couples of the same gender who live in the same household, when one of them is the primary provider for the household.

The TSE does not collect data on sexual orientation and is still lacking in the collection of data on the gender identity of registered candidates.

This data collection is critical to bring the need for representation and inclusion to the forefront of democracy building, since the inexistence of these numbers leaves the LGBT+ population out of consistent planning, and data is fundamental for the development of targeted and responsive public policies.

Since the 2018 elections, the Brazilian Electoral Office made progress in recognizing a persons chosen name in their official voter registration card. #VoteLGBT was part of this effort, coordinating the petition that gave rise to this right to self-identify. Since then, 9,900 voters and candidates have been able to have their names and gender identity respected at the time of voting and being voted for. However, self-attested changes to names and gender markers are only accepted during the voter registration period that closes before the candidate filing deadline which is when candidates can provide self-attested identifiers regarding race and other identities. As a result, countless trans, travestis and non-binary candidates had their identities violated during the 2020 elections. Greater dissemination of information and an expansion of rights are, therefore, still necessary.

Although the TSE has made progress in respecting gender identity, today it is still not possible to say how many candidates are trans, travestis or non-binary people through their data collection methods. TSE discloses information in its database only about the candidates that used a chosen name if different than their legal name, without the appropriate consent structure for the disclosure. In addition to being problematic from an ethical point of view, this practice provides incomplete and inaccurate data, as it does not include trans candidates who have already changed their legal name and gender marker on their official documents. Regarding sexual orientation, there is no collection of information by the Electoral Office. We believe that both gender identity and sexual orientation should be able to be publicly self-disclosed in the Electoral Court by those candidates who wish to do so for any reason - whether to dispute politics based on their identities, or to have official data about who we are, or to fight for policies for LGBT+ representation in Brazilian elections.



PART 2/ BEING/ DOING LGBT+ POLITICS IN BRAZIL

EMERGENCE OF LGBT+ POLITICS

For the candidates we interviewed, the biggest cause that drives LGBT+ people into politics is necessity. The recent increase of candidates and the record number of openly LGBT+ elected representatives reflect not only the rise of public debate about the need for public policies for LGBT+ people, but also a sense that our rights and lives are at stake. Many people reported that recent events in Brazilian politics are the motivators for running for office – from the conservative push of the evangelical caucus in the House, 2016 Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and, especially, Bolsonaro's elections in 2018. Nonetheless, interest in politics is rooted in their lived experiences and those of their families and communities.

For the interviewees, entry into political life happened gradually, before running for political office, and their political identities developed through an exploration of the social differences that have marked their lives.

“From a very young age, we limit ourselves to some things that white children don't limit themselves to. There is some level of constraint that is imposed on us. It exists throughout life. This can result in silencing, but it can also foment resistance towards the status quo, can't it? I'm glad I was able to make my voice heard.”

cis man
gay
black
LGBT+ representative

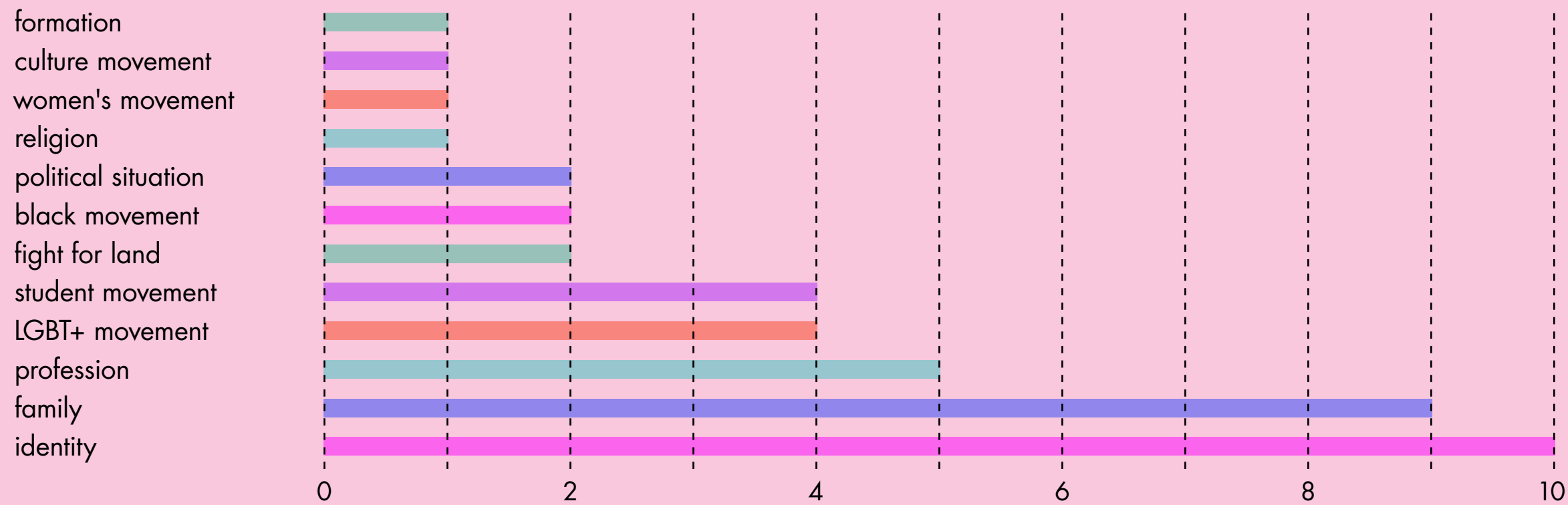
“I come from a family of public servants, so whenever there was a political process, whenever there was an election, I would go to the front of a palace in my city with my family so that we could fight for our rights. I was already part of politics, so we say that my life started to be political when I was 5 or 6 years old, so it's been a long time.”

cis woman
lesbian
white
LGBT+ representative

“What brought me to politics? It was the outrage! I was part of the Child Protection and Welfare Office and I believed that we could make public policies without getting involved with politics, can you imagine that? I was super radical, I thought all politics was a deception... But as I ended up having more contact with it, I understood that without dialoguing with politics I was beating a dead horse and not creating effective public policies that took children out of those conditions they lived in. That's when I realized how important the political process in my city really was, both in the Legislative branch and in the Executive.”

cis man
gay
black
LGBT+ representative

**INTERVIEWS:
WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO ENTER POLITICS?**



Several people interviewed reported that their family's participation in unions, participation in student strikes and in social movements were important markers that motivated them to participate in politics. Another common experience is that of professionals in social services fields such as health, education and social work, finding motivation to transform public policies in order to overcome obstacles they face and correct the injustices they observe.

Social movements are predominantly the main base of political formation: of the 30 people interviewed, only five did not report having participated in social movements throughout their trajectory. This number portrays another characteristic of LGBT+ candidates: social agendas at the center of political mandates. This is because LGBT+ candidates are vying for the interests of society as a whole by centering the needs of the most vulnerable. Many of them do

not participate in the broader LGBT+ movement and some have not even disclosed their LGBT+ identity in their campaigns. It is necessary to understand that, in addition to the LGBT+ fight, people are complex and also interact with other social movements, which are often more salient in their political agendas. Other interviewees also mentioned that they were and are pioneering LGBT+ mobilization efforts in their territories, founding collectives, NGOs, pressing city councils to create health policies aimed at the LGBT+ population, organizing the Pride Parade in their cities and also resisting conservative attacks in state legislative houses, before they even thought about running for office themselves.

“We've been around since 2011. At that time, there was a congressman, Feliciano, who made those terrible speeches against gay people, it was the peak of the "gay cure" project, so we took a lot of stands as a collective, as a movement against this project of the "gay cure" and against the issue of violence suffered by LGBT people.”

cis woman
bisexual
black
LGBT+ representative

“My election was won as a trans woman living in the outskirts. I was chosen and am here to represent my people from a different perspective. I seek to align my ideology with allies and colleagues who will join me in this journey, and I'm certain I will. Politics is the right place, it's the right place for me to be. Mainly living through everything that we are experiencing in Brazil since 2018, right? The huge setbacks we've seen. A country where we do not, in fact, have a representative who thinks about the lives of our population. A country that starves us, that effectively kills us because we don't have access to a vaccine... Our country kills us because we can't get access...”

trans woman
heterosexual
white
LGBT+ representative

CHALLENGES FOR LGBT+ CANDIDATES



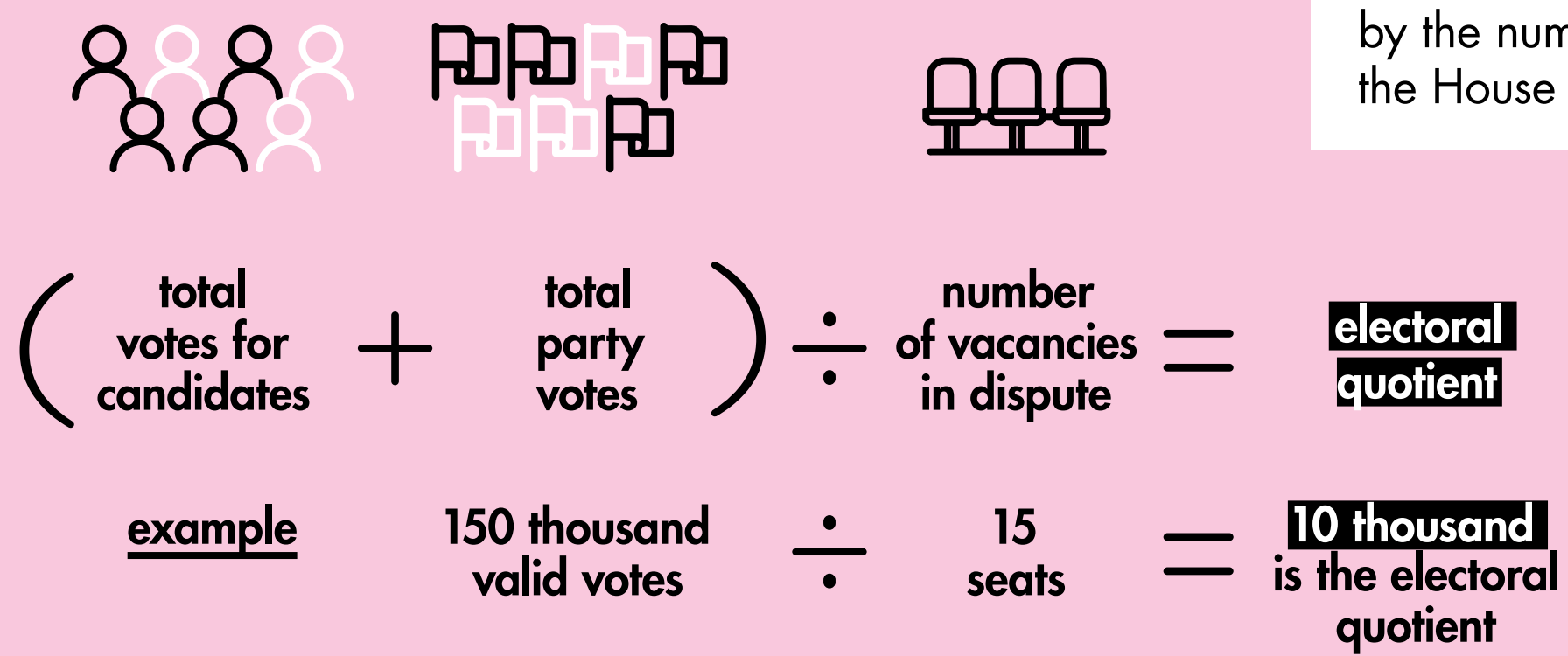
The success of LGBT+ candidates in major urban cities is not reflective of the daily lived experience for LGBT+ people in small towns and rural areas, where elections can be determined by one vote. In addition to regional differences that affect the level of LGBT+ acceptance and party support, eligibility* conditions also present financial barriers.

The Brazilian electoral system is complex and difficult to understand, especially in legislative elections. To be elected, it is not enough that the candidate be among the most voted among its competitors. The total votes obtained by each party will determine how many seats the party will be granted. And those seats will be distributed among the candidates with the most votes within that party. Thus, if a candidate receives a large number of the votes for the seat they are running for, they may still not be elected if their party does not get the minimum number of votes to occupy a seat: the so-called “electoral quotient” — a term you will find many times throughout the report.

* Eligibility is what allows a person to appear on the ballot and eventually be elected. There are numerous formal rules for someone to run, including: minimum age limit, Brazilian nationality, presenting all the necessary documentation within the deadlines. In addition to these formal rules, there are also a set of conditions that make it easier for a person to be elected, such as: money and other resources to invest in the campaign, party support, dedicated team, time and resources to talk to the electorate, etc.

electoral quotient

The electoral quotient changes with each election, because it is calculated based on the number of valid votes from that election in a city or state. Valid votes are votes cast directly to a candidate or party legend. The number of valid votes in a territory (city or state) divided by the number of seats in dispute in the House is the electoral quotient.



ONLY 33% OF CANDIDATES WHO IDENTIFY AS BLACK LGBT+ WOMEN DECLARED PERSONAL ASSETS.

74%
of elected black LGBT+ men declared assets.

In the same vein, if a candidate receives an absurd number of votes that exceeds the electoral quotient, they alone win several seats for their party. The electoral quotient varies according to each city or state and also depends on the number of people who voted in that election. Thus, the fewer people go to the polls, the fewer votes are needed to elect someone. The removal of people from political participation ends up influencing the electoral campaign: the fewer people who vote, the lower the electoral quotient, the lower the cost of the campaign.

Another aspect that does not help is that the electoral rules can, and do, change every cycle. Relatively subtle changes can have enormous consequences for election results. Most of the time, these changes happen in an attempt to keep the same groups in power.

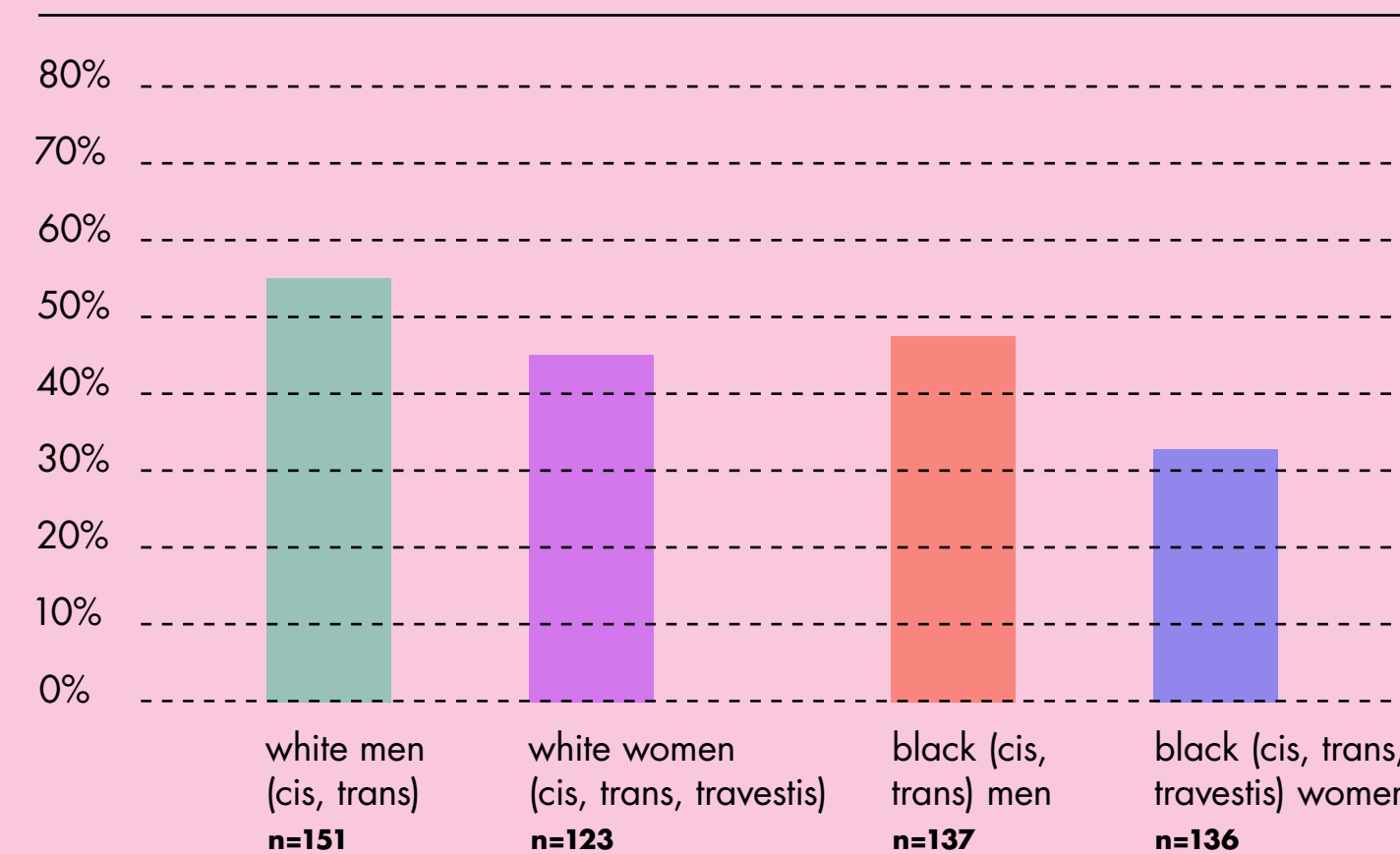
In 2020, one in three LGBT+ candidates ran for parties that did not reach the electoral quotient. Some of them were very well voted, but were not elected because the sum of the party's votes did not reach the minimum to occupy a seat in the city council. In addition to being in parties that reached this minimum number of votes, according to the 2020 rules, it was necessary for candidates to obtain, alone, 10% of the electoral quotient. This was the case for only 29% of the candidates we mapped, and from the candidates that managed to reach this minimum, 71% were elected. This shows that when LGBT+ candidates are afforded minimal access to elections, with some access to funding and party support, for example, they are able to win and get elected. The lack of access to resources under these conditions is what most harms LGBT+ candidates, aside from the social inequality and lack of party support that greatly impact eligibility.

Although black LGBT+ women are the candidates with the least declared assets, the impact on their eligibility could have been even worse had it not been for the affirmative policies adopted by the Electoral Office, that established a set distribution of resources for black women's campaigns, and the initiative of some parties to also support LGBT+ candidates.

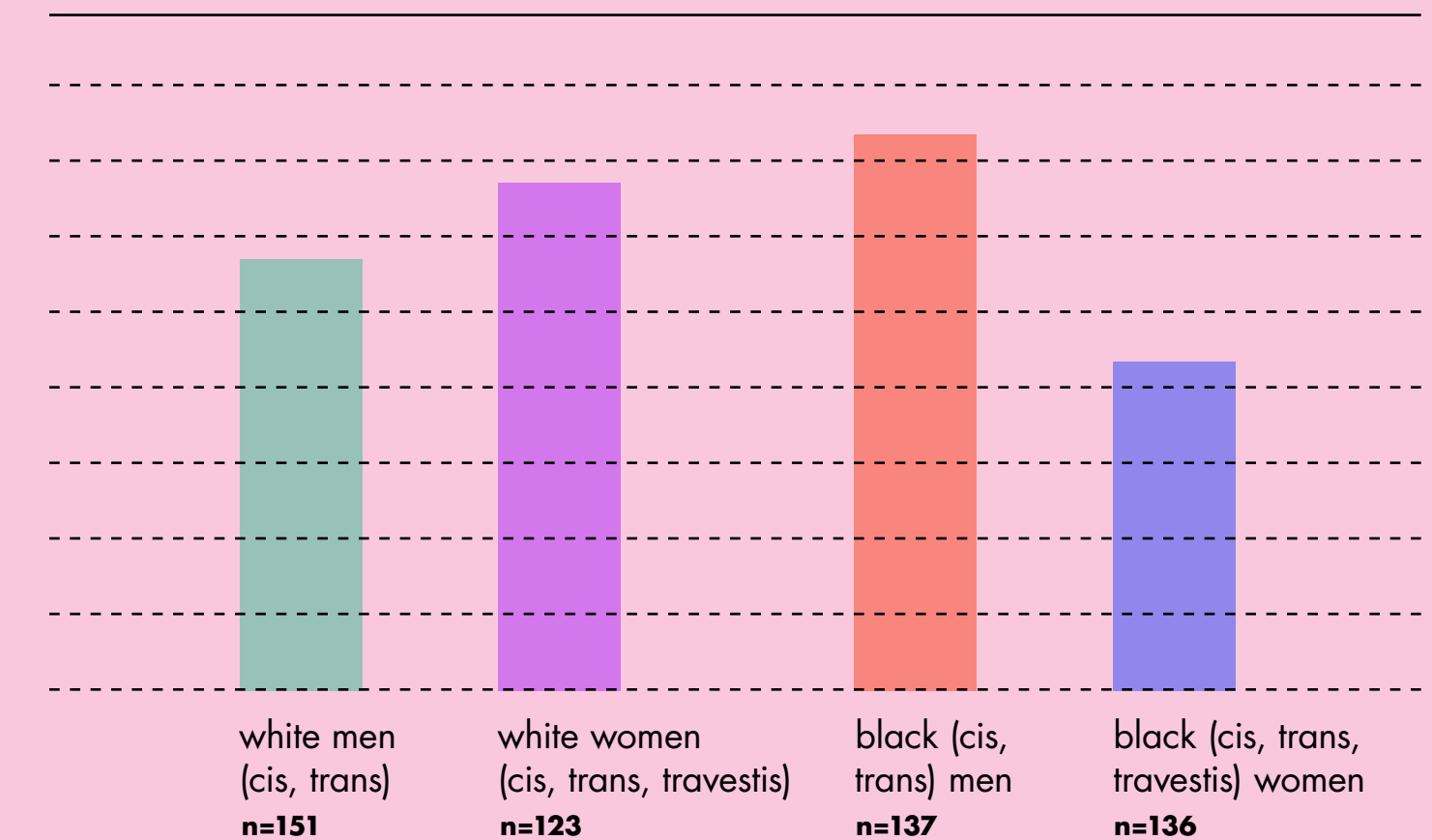
LGBT+ candidates are also impacted by the vast social inequality that manifests itself in Brazil. People from the outskirts, women with children, black women, unemployed or even those who have to combine full working hours with the campaign face enormous difficulties in carrying out their campaigns. Additionally, enhanced visibility often results in greater vulnerability, especially among candidates

who are trans and travestis. For many of these candidates, entering politics represents greater security in the form of stable work and a possibility of financial stability due to the salary of councilors.

PROPORTION OF LGBT+ CANDIDATES WITH DECLARED ASSETS* IN THE 2020 ELECTIONS



PROPORTION OF ELECTED LGBT+ CANDIDATES WITH DECLARED ASSETS* IN THE 2020 ELECTIONS



* Existence of any asset declared to the Electoral Office, of any value or nature.

LGBT+ candidates are also impacted by the vast social inequality that manifests itself in Brazil. People from the outskirts, women with children, black women, unemployed or even those who have to combine full working hours with the campaign face enormous difficulties in carrying out their campaigns. Additionally, enhanced visibility often results in greater vulnerability, especially among candidates who are trans and travestis. For many of these candidates, entering politics represents greater security in the form of stable work and a possibility of financial stability due to the salary of councilors.



“In 2016, I was transitioning and I decided that I didn't want to live my life relying on sex work for survival. The political climate of the 2016 campaign made me afraid of being on the street and suffering any kind of violence. I ended up leaving sex work, but I left it without being able to find a different job. I have a partner that I'm married to, but he was also unemployed at the time. The campaign lasted for 45 days, and for those 45 days all we ate was rice and beans, but we made it through holding on to the belief that at least we would make it alive through the election.”

trans woman
heterosexual
white
LGBT+ representative

“The financial part took a toll on me, because I was unemployed, there came a time when I didn't even have money to eat. I was eating meals at a campaign colleague's house, because money was getting short and I had to be able to pay rent until December or so, and I thought: 'So what? And if I don't get elected, what do I do with my life? What am I going to eat, what am I going to do?'”

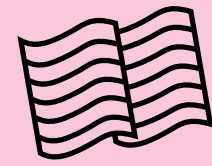
cis man
gay
white
LGBT+ representative

Faced with these complex scenarios, which span across race, gender and social class, even among LGBT+ candidates, affirmative measures to correct these inequalities and promote these candidates are necessary. Funding for campaigns is crucial, but it is still not distributed very clearly. Parties tend to favor those candidates that they consider to be a priority, “which are more likely to win”, “to bring in more votes” or “to attract greater political capital to the party”. With this in mind, candidates that are closer to party leaders or who have already held office end up with a large advantage. Another frequently mentioned point is that parties typically favor candidates for the executive branch, while candidates for Legislative roles, such as those for city council, receive little attention and support.

“I competed with candidates who were actively supported by the business and financial sectors, and I competed with a candidate who was excessively sponsored by the mayor and by sectors of management. So, we had to climb Everest in order to get elected.”

man
gay
black
LGBT+ representative

6 parties did not transfer resources to LGBT+ candidates.



Left-wing parties invest twice as much on average in LGBT+ candidates as center and right-wing parties combined.

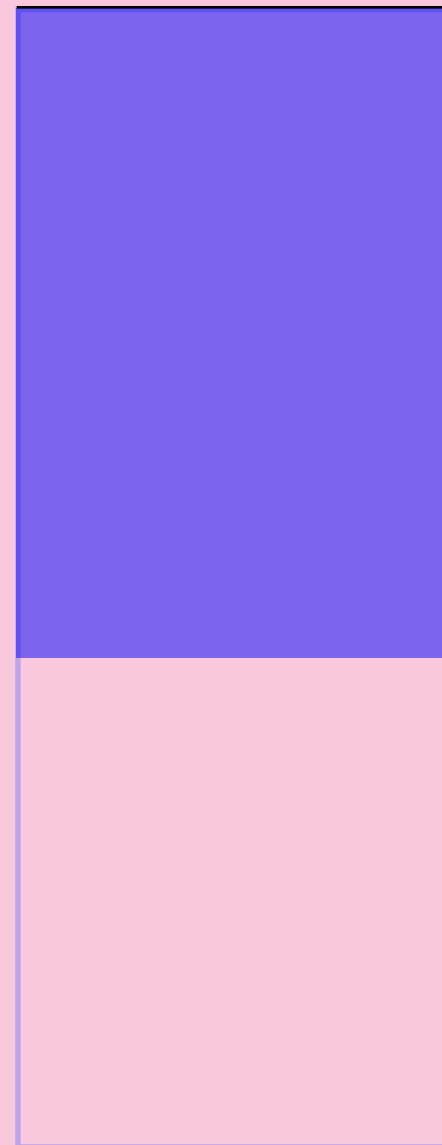
AVERAGE CAMPAIGN FUNDING* BY PARTY LINE

← Left-wing Parties • Centrist Parties → Right-wing Parties

71% n=19.908
party resources **

57% n=6.015
party resources **

25% n=3.916
party resources **



29% n=8.159
own revenue ***

43% n=4.584
own revenue ***

75% n=12.025
own revenue ***

100% n=28.067

100% n=10.599

100% n=15.941

* Average financing values obtained per year described in the methodological appendix.

** Resources received from the political party as the Special Campaign Financing Fund (FEFC) or Party Fund (FP).

*** Resources collected by the candidate, such as donations from individuals, crowdfunding, own resources, etc.

The participation of public campaign financing, distributed to candidates by the party† leadership is fundamental in structuring the campaign, since in Brazil there is not much of a culture around individual donors for political campaigns.

The wealth disparity and distribution of income in the country do not provide a democratic context for this more popular type of financing.

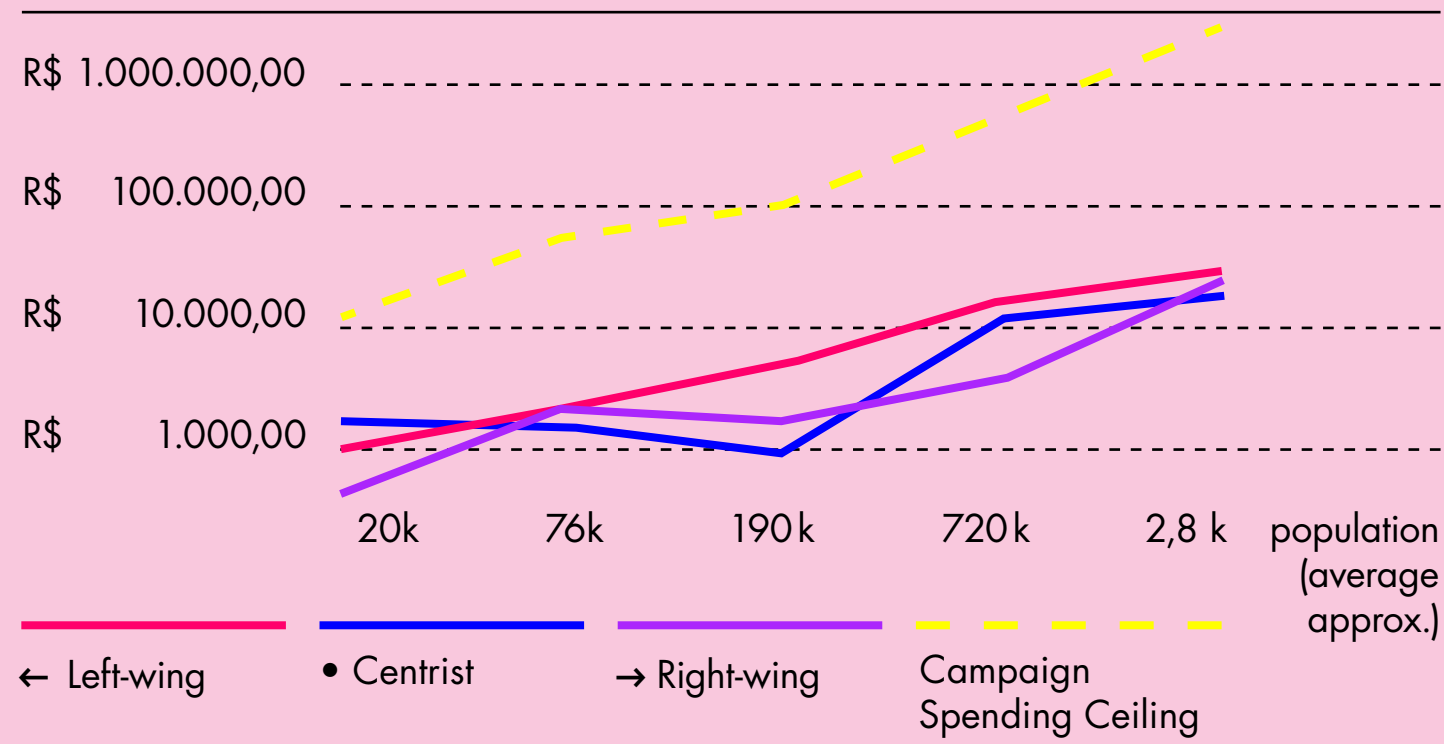
Left-wing parties are the ones that invest the most in LGBT+ candidates for city council, in cities of all sizes, except the smallest, with around 20,000 inhabitants. In these cities, centrist parties invest more.

† Among the 556 LGBT+ candidates that we mapped in the survey, 6 parties did not transfer resources, they are: 1 centrist party (PROS) and 5 right-wing parties (Avante, Novo, Patriota, PRTB, PSL).

The Electoral Office establishes a ceiling on campaign expenses for each city. On average, LGBT+ candidates receive less than 6% of the total from parties. In cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, parties' investments in LGBT+ candidates are no more than 2% of the total.

Taking into account the spending ceiling, party investment is inversely proportional to the size of the city. The larger the city, the lower the percentage of funds transferred by the parties.

**DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY RESOURCES FOR
LGBT+ CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL BY CITY SIZE**



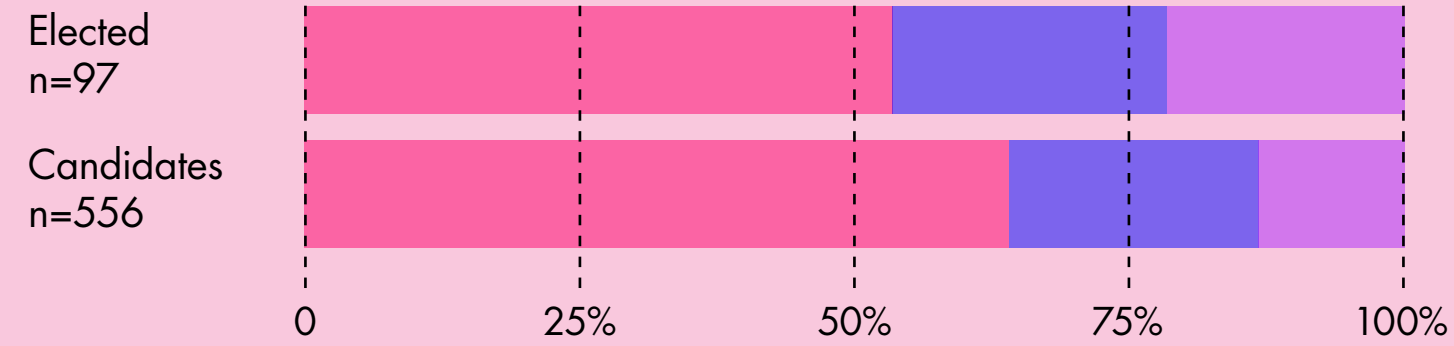
In the graph, we can see that investment in campaigns are far below the limit established by the Electoral Office.

**65%
of LGBT+
candidates
are in left-wing
parties**

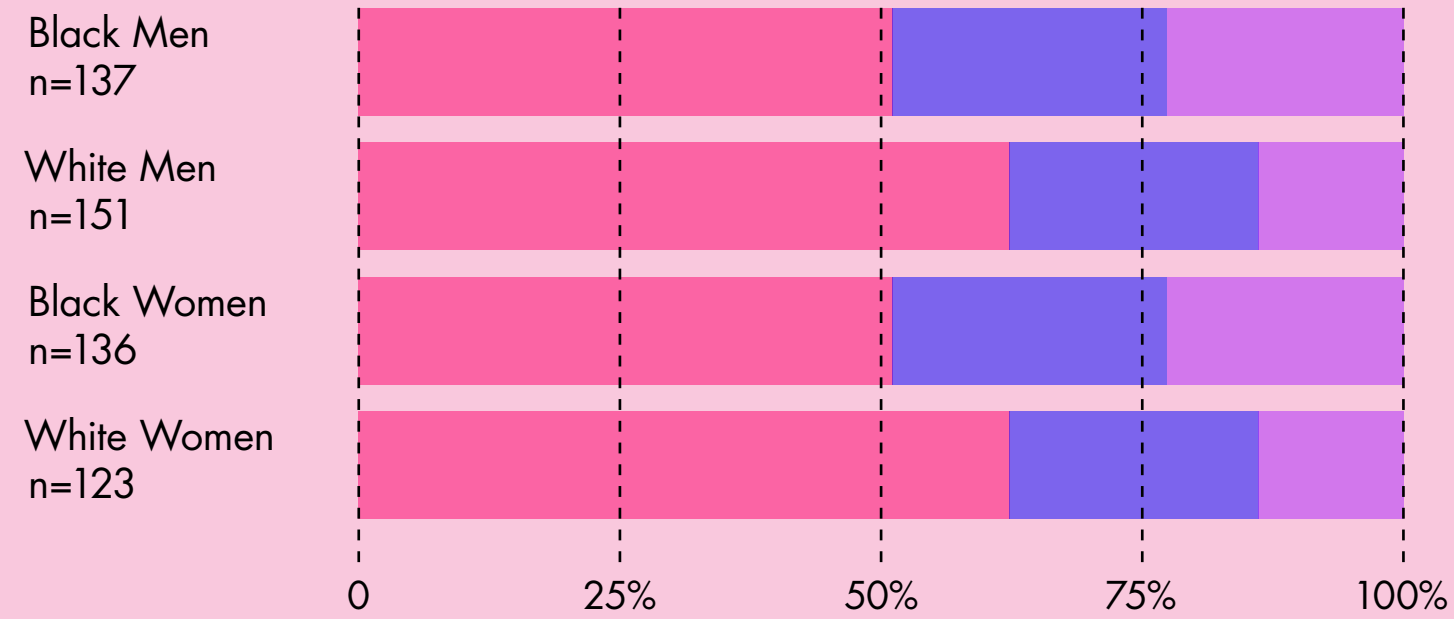
**Left-wing parties
elected more LGBT+ women:
87% of black women,
58% of white women**

**67%
of elected black
LGBT+ people are
from left-wing
parties**

CANDIDATE AND ELECTED

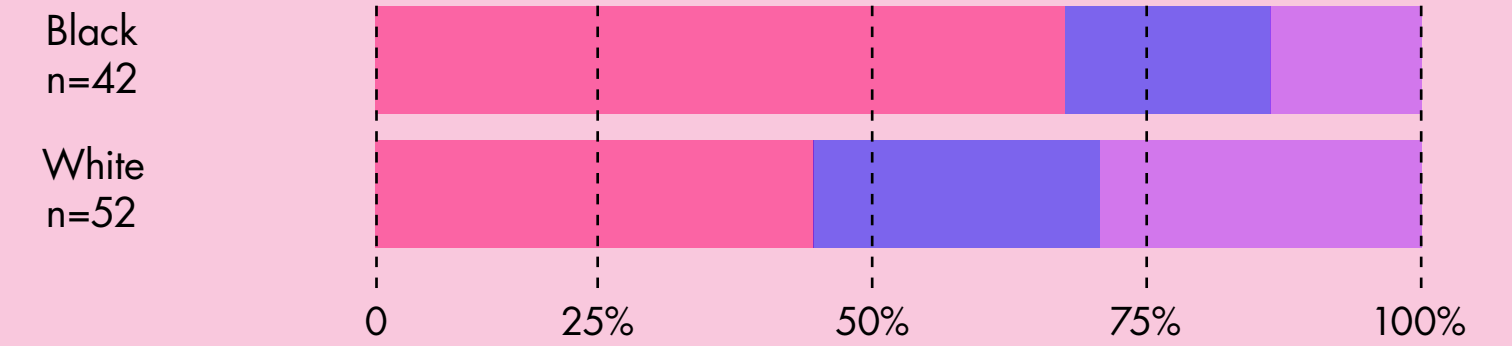


DISTRIBUTION OF LGBT+ CANDIDATES

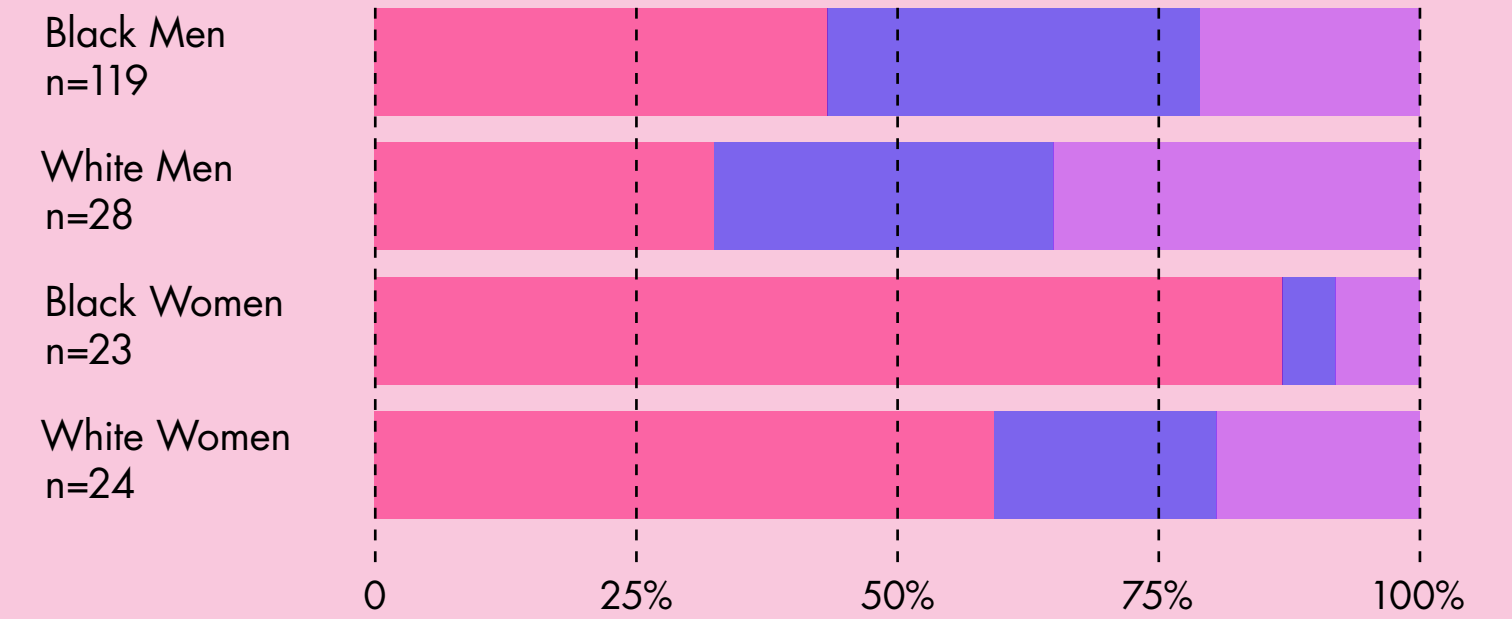


← Left-wing • Centrist → Right-wing

CANDIDATE AND ELECTED

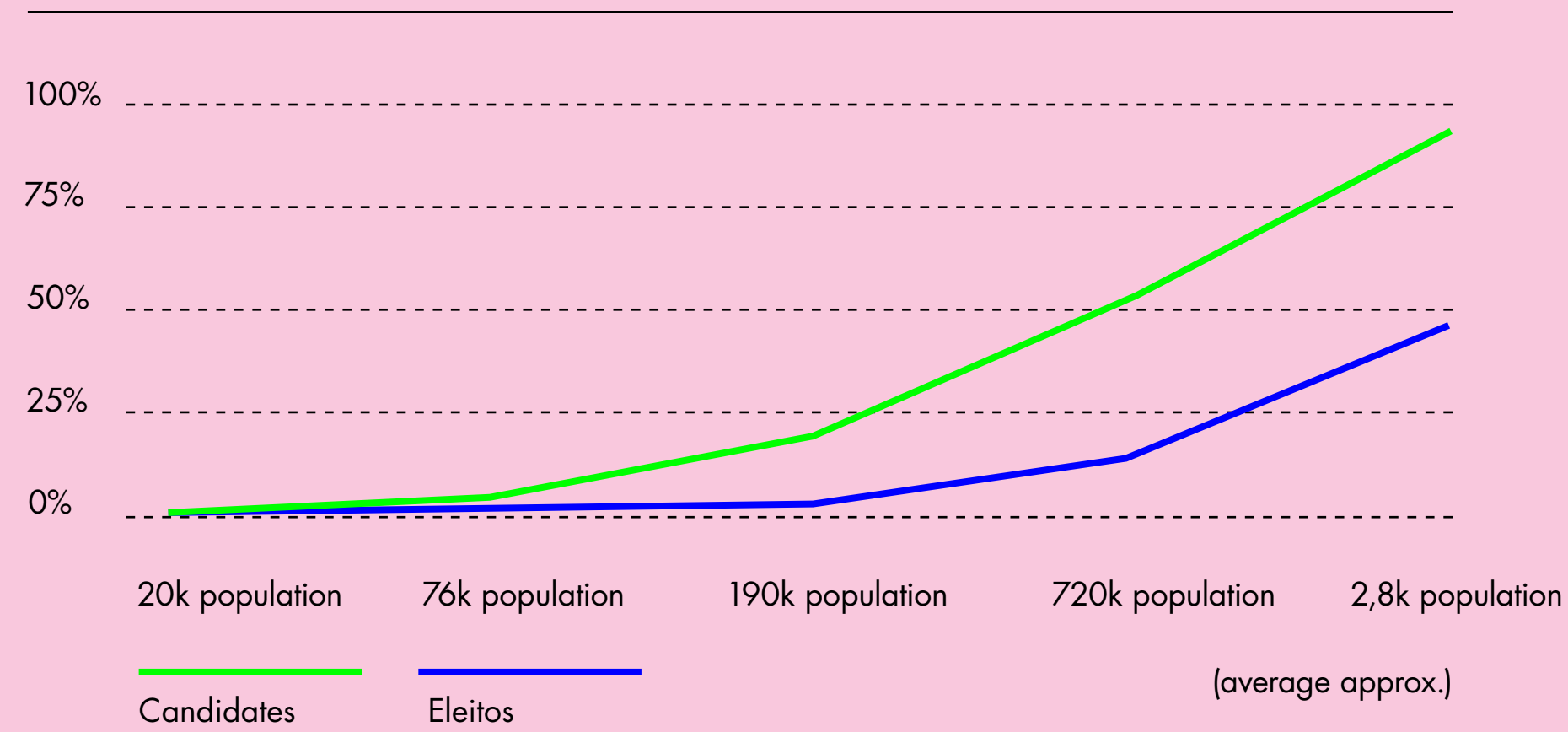


DISTRIBUTION OF LGBT+ VOTERS



← Left-wing • Centrist → Right-wing

PRESENCE OF LGBT+ POLITICIANS IN BRAZILIAN CITIES



92% of candidates included LGBT+ agendas in their campaigns, only 10% did not openly disclose being LGBT+ – primarily out of concern for their personal lives.

The choice of party affiliation is one of the most cited challenges, especially for LGBT+ candidates from small towns, where there are not many parties and where they do not always have a very defined political ideology. The candidates most favored by the parties are the usual ones: traditional politicians of the city, people who have already been elected or have already run in the past, favoring those who, in the evaluation of the party leadership, can offer a greater number of votes to add to the electoral quotient.

Our mapping revealed the presence of LGBT+ candidates in all regions of the country. In the 2020 elections, LGBT+ candidates were distributed in 5% of Brazilian cities and were elected in 1% of cities. The larger the cities, the greater the presence of LGBT+ people in politics, both as candidates and as elected officials.

2 out of every 3 elected candidates we mapped are the only openly LGBT+ representatives in their cities.

Political territorial isolation is a very common phenomenon in countries with the continental size and span like Brazil, and it happens when people who fight for a cause are isolated in their regions and cannot integrate with other groups from other regions making social mobilization difficult. This type of phenomenon hampers the debate in small towns and limits the progress of agendas in the region, since most of these cities already suffer from strong conservative and often biased thinking. As a result, some candidates choose not to center LGBT+ agendas in their campaigns, but once elected, seek to insert them into their actions. Hiding your LGBT+ identity and withdrawing from public debates is often not an option, as being LGBT+ crosses every part of people's lives, from private to social and professional life.

“In the first candidacy, I had not yet publicly disclosed my bisexuality. In the last one, I was already living with my current partner, so I ended up having to assume this publically, and I feel that we suffered a lot of violence because of that, but that political stand is also very important, even if just so people feel represented, for people to be there dedicating their effort to vote, to help in the campaign for a project they see themselves in too.”

cis man
bisexual
black
LGBT+ representative

RAINBOW VOTE

Thinking about the future of LGBT+ politics, the expectation is that, with the evolution of discussions on diversity, people will be able to recognize the full political potential of LGBT+ candidates. One of the main complaints is that both the mainstream media and party leaders try to confine LGBT+ leaders to LGBT+ related issues. The reality is that these candidates and mandates have developed innovative public policies in health, education, housing, food, transportation, culture, among many other issues relevant to the public interest. Facing discrimination within the parties themselves, these LGBT+ leaders who launch themselves into institutional politics tend to be great political speakers.

The acknowledgment of political potential is also a struggle for LGBT+ people within parties. Just as the feminist movement has discussed important economic issues (income distribution, wage equality); the black movement, the public security

model (mortality of black youth, drug policy); the indigenous movement, environmental issues (use of pesticides, preservation of forests, expansion of health care for communities); the LGBT+ movement has been discussing education (university grants, initiatives against prejudice in educational institutions). The innovations carried out by these social groups are relevant to society as a whole, even if this connection is not always clearly presented.

27% of candidates report that they are not invited or considered by the parties to discuss issues other than LGBT+ ones.

In the 2020 elections, the capacity for LGBT+ candidates to secure votes was astounding. Many representations were among the most voted (in the history) of their cities, of their parties, and among the most voted women. Some reached the electoral quotient almost with their votes alone. In most cases, electoral success was achieved through a creative and popular campaign, and with only a fraction of the funding of other candidates. What also made LGBT+ candidacies a phenomenon was the capacity for social mobilization. LGBT+ candidates communicate powerfully with other audiences who have also normally been alienated from institutional politics.

LGBT+ politics brings parties closer to more innovative ways of managing and doing politics. A large part of these candidates came from within social movements and are encouraged to compete by organized collectives for popular initiatives, both on the right and on the left. In some cases, their collectives are brought into the party itself. In fact, 9% of the LGBT+ candidates mapped in the 2020 elections appeared at the polls as members of collective mandates.

collective mandate

A collective mandate is an innovative format of political action that has helped bring people linked to excluded groups, such as women, black, indigenous and LGBT+ people into the legislative houses. These people were elected within different collectives and have acted, with greater or lesser autonomy, in the House and City Councils. Together, the political capital and votes directed to each member of the collective make it possible to win a mandate. Brazilian electoral laws, however, still only allow one person from the collective to be officially elected, even if the collective's name is on the ballot box. Other members of the collective, depending on the size of the city, may be hired to compose the elected person's cabinet, but they are understood to be parliamentary advisors and do not have many of the rights and protections of a person representing the people.



There is no denying that LGBT+ candidates and mandates have a lot to add to the parties, leaving them more well-rounded and amplifying relevant discussions for society as a whole. However, the response of the political environment to all this potential goes against what LGBT+ politics offers to society.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

“My city is small and conservative, so we are taking baby steps, we are doing the job from the bottom to the top, we’re actually having conversations and exposing people to each other's experiences. The 2018 elections are still very much on people's minds and fake news especially, so this is precisely what conservatism looks like in small towns.”

cis woman
bisexual
white
LGBT+ representative

“In 2018, we had very explicit attacks like having my car windows being broken or the tire being slashed. At the time my car was full of campaign stickers, a couple of times my tire was punctured, people (voters) broke its glass, and they were attacking us like that. There was one point during which our team was leafleting in front of a private university and a guy who was wearing a Bolsonaro shirt came close to us, showed a gun and told the people on our team: “I don't like to go to the my university and see a lot of feminists, faggots, lesbians, handing out flyers”.

cis woman
bisexual
black
LGBT+ representative

“Getting here was challenging because I also face violence, persecution, attempts to break into my office, and I also have to dodge all the attacks and threats I receive. It's a mix of challenge and anguish, because we keep thinking how far we are from where we need to be and how much we have to build to actually make a difference.”

travesti
heterosexual
black
LGBT+ representative

“It was a tense process, but I already kind of knew how it was because I used to follow other candidates and mandates, I knew it was a difficult environment, I knew it was an environment that was not used to seeing black women, women in general (laughs), in a position of power, and I knew it was going to be difficult and it certainly was.”

cis woman
bisexual
black
LGBT+ representative

As we already know, politics is a space of power, so it is strategic for the LGBT+ population to occupy this space and help contribute to making Brazilian society more democratic. However, inclusion and representation are not always welcome, as most people who have been in power for a long time do not want things to change and do not want to share power. These groups express their dissatisfaction with the LGBT+ presence in politics through political violence.

Political violence affects LGBT+ representatives from their candidacy to everyday life in parliamentary houses and manifests itself physically, psychologically and economically and is experienced in the following ways:

**Very poor party
funding in campaigns**

*

**The use of symbolic women
candidates by parties
to fulfill the mandatory
minimum gender quota**

*

Smear campaign

*

Promotion of misinformation;

*

**Hate messages and attacks
on social media**

*

**Intimidation through
gestures or words**

*

**Discriminatory and abusive
comments**

**Questioning
clothing and appearance**

*

**Questioning the authorization
to be present in the spaces
of the legislative house**

*

**Frequent interruption
and silencing in public
environments**

*

**Disqualification of work in
mandates**

*

**Absence or chatter when
speaking in plenary**

*

**Whispers
and laughter orchestrated
in groups**

**Institutional
silencing of the proposals
presented**

*

**Sexual
harassment**

*

Property damage

*

**Threats and attempted
murder**

*

**Inexistence or scarcity
of women's restrooms in
legislative houses**

*

**Disrespect for gender
identity in the bathrooms
of legislative houses**

Most of these violent attacks happen by attacking their gender or sexuality. In the survey, candidates stated that:

Parties still do not provide the appropriate support for LGBT+ candidates who experienced violence:

49%
were targeted
because of their sexual
orientation;

32%
were targeted for
being a woman;

29%
were targeted for their
gender identity.



**Part of these
attacks still come from
within the party itself:**

26% reported
having experienced
violence from people
from their own party.

**54% of candidates
who experienced
violence sought help
from the party, but in
56% of those cases,
the parties did nothing.**

Another form of political violence against LGBT+ candidates that the people interviewed brought up is the lack of acceptance of participants in collective mandates as legitimate representatives. Some campaigns had their constitutionality questioned, even after being elected with significant votes. On a daily basis, members of the mandate are continually invalidated as legitimate representatives by their peers.

For the people interviewed, all this volume of events added makes politics a threatening and a slightly hopeless environment, since in the routine of electoral processes and public work, political violence even comes from allies.



“Our collective mandate is a black, “favelada” and LGBTQIA+ proposal. There were many attacks, mainly from people who hate us for nothing, people from the internet. There are many conservative people who cannot visualize this collective format as something important and meaningful to so many people. They always try to delegitimize this construction of collective mandates even after we win and are sworn in. So not only did we have to experience this violence during the campaign, we continue experiencing this kind of violence today, even after taking office.”

cis woman
lesbian
black
LGBT+ representative

FROM VOTERS TO CANDIDATES: BARRIERS FOR LGBT+ LEADERS

“People who invite us into the conversation, they indeed give us this space, but they are not prepared to listen to what we have to say, because we are going to talk about the problem and unfortunately these people also perpetuate the problem. ”

travesti
heterosexual
white
LGBT+ representative

“I've already received threats, I've even had an attack from a political opponent with intolerant and discriminatory speeches. The party didn't even object to the opponent's action. I thought that the party should have at least released a statement or done some kind of demonstration, but the party took no side in this discussion, in fact, by not acting on that matter, they effectively sided with my opponent.”

cis male
gay
black
LGBT+ representative

Even within parties or between colleagues, violence is reproduced. This is because the presence of LGBT+ people in these spaces is still considered out of the norm, and no measures are taken to ensure the dignity or respect for LGBT+ people. This pattern results in trans people and black people with unpleasant comments, invalidation of their work or position, making them need to reaffirm their presence in these spaces every day. This violence is not only felt by the chosen representative, but by the entire team that usually also brings a lot of diversity to the people's Houses. With their party colleagues, many people interviewed reported that they feel a certain level of resistance and that respect is something that comes much more from their role in party hierarchy, which values the fact that they have an elected mandate, but at the same time they are not brought in for the creation of laws and party platforms. This makes representing an LGBT+ mandate often a lonely experience, especially when there are no other mandates from groups with low representation such as women, black women, indigenous people, people with disabilities.

The lack of support to deal with the constant threats from all sides is also a constant concern. It is constantly necessary to seek judicial justice, since there is neither collaboration within the Houses to provide security or recourse. The reports show us how the political experience is loaded with violence against LGBT+ people. Even for those with a large profile or position in society, LGBT+ people are not spared from being attacked in different ways.

Despite all this happening, they feel the need to offer the best possible service to the population, in addition to leaving the paths open so that more and more LGBT+ people can occupy these spaces and contribute to the transformation of the country.

“I realize the quality of the work that our mandate has been delivering, especially the mandate that people consider a “movement mandate”. So, we have been very concerned about not losing the essence as a movement mandate.”

cis woman
lesbian
black
LGBT+ representative

“We have a highly qualified team to build this process. I think this has been a really cool thing. We have a data team, which is built with statistics in mind, analyzing possibilities, militants and at the same time highly skilled people. We are delivering work of great excellence, with great quality, with great respect, including dialogue with every who represents the House.”

cis woman
lesbian
black
LGBT+ representative

“We implemented a lot of things here, the LGBT Reference Center, now we are going to implement the Trans Ambulatory, anyway... we have advanced a lot in the LGBT agenda. Some like it or not, we managed to do what we were willing to do and now as a councilor we hope to do much more.”

travesti
heterosexual
white
LGBT+ representative



PART 3/ +LGBT, MORE DEMOCRACY



A democracy is only possible when every citizen has access – and feels safe – to achieve positions with decision making power and leadership. From the discussions produced by the gathering of reports and the analysis of the data produced, we understand that there are concrete actions that can be carried out by different institutions. In the short and medium term, we believe that the measures listed below can contribute to a democratization of access to political representation.

**Map gender identity
and sexual orientation** in the
registration of candidates
in elections

**Allow self-attestation of
gender identity and social
name for trans, travestis
and non-binary** candidates
at the time of application
registration, as is allowed for
self-attestation of race

**Investigate allegations of
political violence against
LGBT+ candidates** and hold
perpetrators accountable

ELECTORAL OFFICE

**Regulate and guarantee funding
reserved for LGBT+ candidates**, a group that,
like women and black people,
is underrepresented in politics

Carry out a **communication campaign publicizing
the possibility of including a social name in
the voter registration card**, allowing for the full
expression of citizenship in a non-discriminatory
way for trans, travestis and non-binary people

Ensure the **presence of LGBT+ candidates** in all electoral cycles

Create **internal procedures for receiving and investigating complaints of political violence against LGBT+** within party structures

Offer **training and capacity building for LGBT+ candidates**, in accordance with the rules in force in each electoral cycle

Regionalize LGBT+ committees or units to reduce the isolation of LGBT+ representatives who face prejudice in their territories

POLITICAL PARTIES

Map gender identity and sexual orientation among affiliated persons

Offer support (legal, psychological and personal safety) to LGBT+ representatives who suffer political violence

Create and **strengthen LGBT+ committees or units as an instrument for amplifying the LGBT+ agenda**, and for strengthening LGBT+ candidates inside the party system

Create **internal affirmative party policies** for funding LGBT+ candidates

Establish positions for LGBT+ members within the party's management and leadership bodies

Create a reporting channel
for practices of political
violence, together with
accountability initiatives for
anyone who carries out the
practice

LEGISLATIVE HOUSES

CITY, STATE AND FEDERAL COUNCILS AND FEDERAL SENATE

Ensuring respect for the use
of the bathroom by trans,
travestis and non-binary
people, as well as making
changing tables available
for young children

Offer diversity training
to parliamentarians and people
working in the legislative house

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We appreciate the generosity of all the LGBT+ representatives interviewed, who entrusted us with sensitive and delicate information. The collaboration of advisors within the different mandates was fundamental to make the interviews possible. Thank you very much.

We thank the activists, in and outside of political parties and structures, that helped us in this difficult task of understanding the state of LGBT+ political representation in Brazil.

We thank the people who are part of or have passed through #VoteLGBT, who, despite not having participated directly in this report, have built together the accumulation for the development of our organization since 2014.

We thank the ERA Fund who selected our project among hundreds of applications, believing in a young Brazilian organization. We thank the LGBTQ Victory Institute that has been a partner in the day-to-day construction of our project and our organization. And finally, to Google.org for putting us together with other institutions so respected and powerful in the effort of a more diverse electoral cycle.

We also appreciate your reading. We work to ensure access to as many people as possible about the political reality of LGBT+ people. When looking at the portrait from a distance, it is remarkable that much has already been done, in a very short period of time. A closer and attentive look, however, shows how we still need to guarantee not only the presence, but the permanence and security of these leaders who courageously offer themselves to be our representatives.

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