



@Jmwiehl via Twenty20

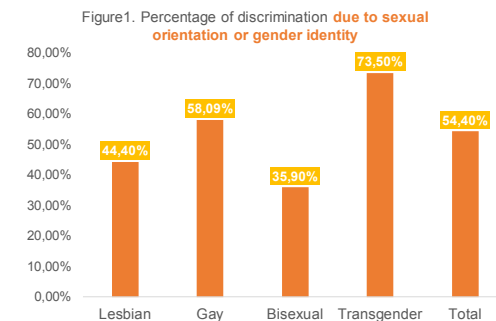
## THE RISK OF BEING TRANSGENDER IN COLOMBIA



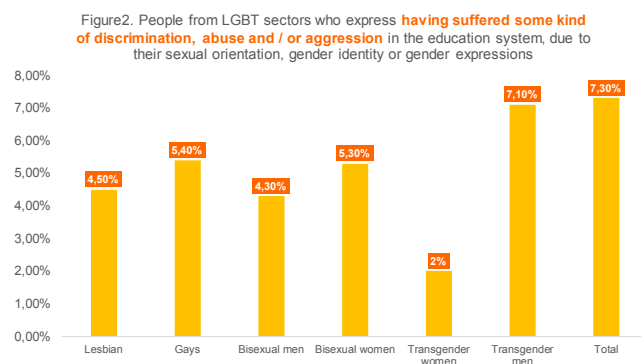
**Pablo Valbuena**  
Research Analyst - Public Affairs

*"Uniformity is death; Diversity is life".*  
Mijail A. Bakunin

According to figures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the life expectancy for transgender people in the Americas - that is, in all countries included in the Americas - is 35 years<sup>7</sup>. This information, although it is an estimate, is close to the average age of fatalities reported by human rights organizations in Colombia, including Colombia Diversa<sup>8</sup> and the Santamaría Foundation in el Valle<sup>9</sup>. And it is within the LGBTIQ + collective, that the trans population<sup>10</sup> is the most exposed to acts of violence and discrimination (see figure 1).



even from educational institutions (see figure 2).



To review this situation, it is important to begin by clarifying the concept of gender identity, which refers to the personal perception and/or manifestation of gender itself <sup>11</sup>, and which may or may not coincide with the sexual characteristics of individuals.

That manifestation in some cases implies physical transformations that differ from the established social order. These bodily changes can often lead to situations of discrimination in which access to work, education and personal development is limited, as is the case with the trans population.

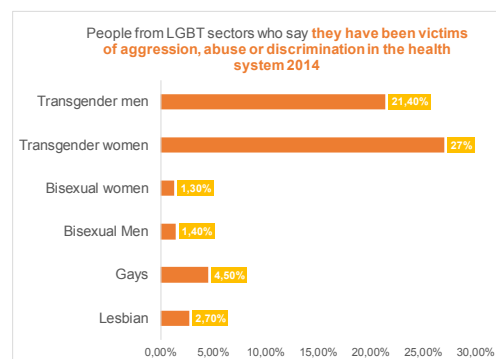
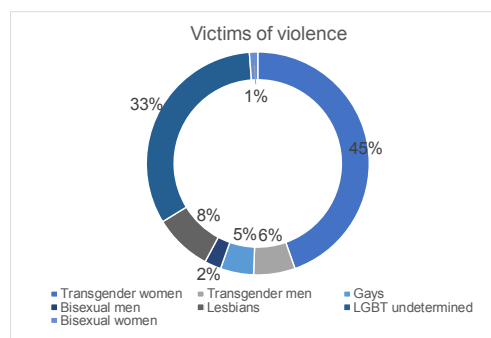
According to the Demographic, Population and Diversity Report of Bogotá (2013), there is an unfavourable towards the citizenship of the trans population, regarding their ability to exercise certain right such as forming a family (59.6%), getting married (37.5%), showing affection in public (52.5%), among others. Given these circumstances, we can determine that one of the main causes of discrimination against this population in Colombia would be the low recognition of diverse gender identity.

Actions that Colombians say should not be allowed for different gender identities (%)				
	Lesbians	Gays	Bisexuals	Transgenders
Raise or adopt children	58,22	57,62	57,42	59,60
Public kisses	49,50	49,38	50,15	52,50
Marry each other	36,49	36,76	36,74	37,54
To teach as teachers or professors	25,93	27,77	27,61	31,63
To be part of the Military Forces	24,87	26,52	24,03	26,82
To exercise leadership (at work or in the community)	19,81	21,81	21,65	23,73
To hold public office	17,80	19,72	18,84	20,58
Frequent public places	14,49	16,42	15,07	15,80
Go to churches to practice their religious faith	13,82	14,86	15,01	14,92

Source: Demography, Population and Diversity Report - Bogotá-2013<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, Colombia is a country where ideologies that validate discrimination based on sexual orientation and diverse gender identity persist, and are promoted. This can be seen in social movements, some religious<sup>13</sup>, in which the exclusive validation of “socially define”<sup>14</sup>, gender roles are promoted. This disqualification and invalidation of minority groups has repercussions in aggression scenarios:

- 37 registered cases of police violence against trans woman (2008-2017),
- 27% from all victims of aggressions in the health system, were trans people<sup>15</sup>



Similarly, other causes would be the lack of documentation and classification of cases of violence against this population and the low promotion and effectiveness of existing complaint mechanisms.

By contrast, the Colombian State has undertaken considerable initiatives through public policy guidelines to protect the trans population<sup>16</sup>. However, it is necessary to create a gender identity law such as the one passed by Chile<sup>17</sup>, in which minimum standards of protection for this minority was established, taking into account that their needs differ greatly from those they have for the other members of the LGBTIQ + community.

For Ipsos, as expert consultants in the area of public opinion, we have a very important role in these processes of social and regulatory changes.

In the first instance, by acting as a thermometer for society through our citizen perception surveys, and thus determining how we are doing in the fulfilment of the rights of this population, how their social acceptance is progressing and in what sense should efforts be combined.

In this way, it is recommended that the information gathering instruments include aspects of significant relevance for the trans population, such as access to health, education and their mechanisms for social inclusion.

As a second measure, we have a fundamental role in supplying information and providing statistical tools to decision makers for the eventual construction of health, labour, social, legal and regulatory policies, as the case may be. All this should work to guarantee social inclusion to some extent and thus reduce the high rates of discrimination and violence towards this minority sector.