

INTERESTING STATISTICS

Tolerance of LGBT Rights-A Mixed Bag in the Americas

September 1, 2015

This week's stat shot uses data from Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) to analyze tolerance of LGBT rights and the LGBT community. In its 2014 surveys LAPOP included two questions that we focus on here: popular support for marriage equality for LGBT individuals and for the right of openly LGBT individuals to run for public office.

The data presented below are the averages by country, disaggregated by gender. The questions ask respondents to register their level of approval on a 10-point scale, with 10 being most supportive.

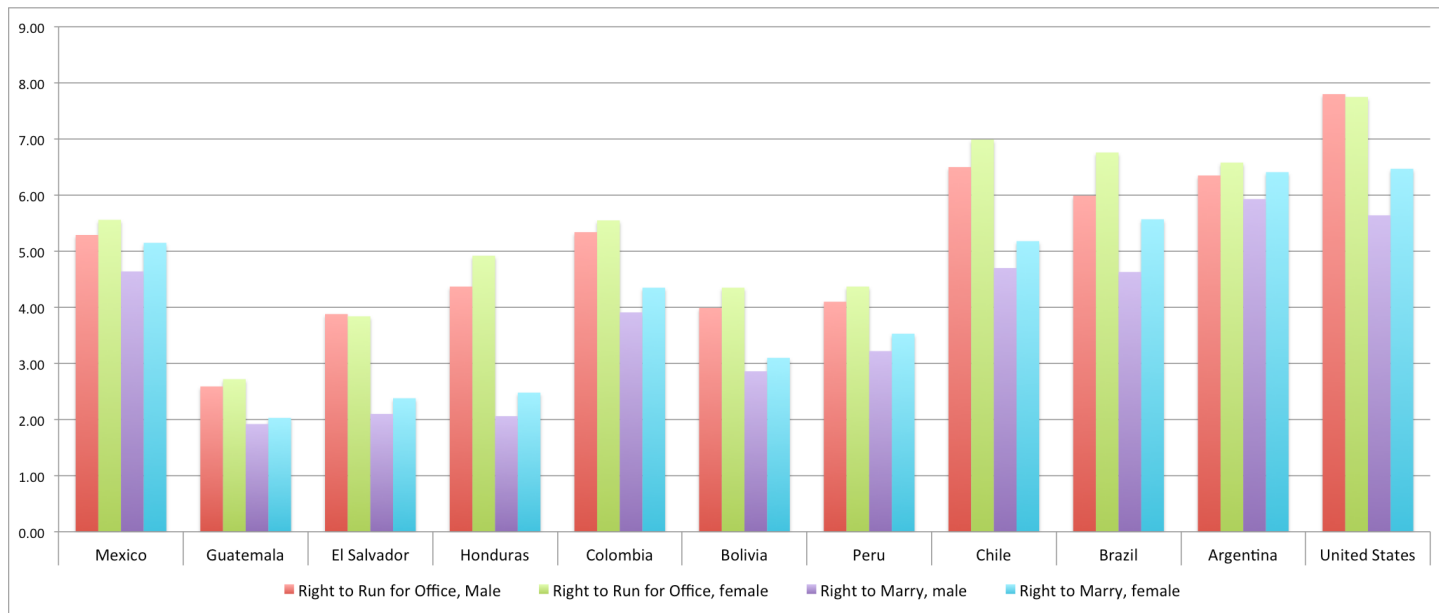
Though still hotly debated, even in the United States, for progressives the right of homosexuals to marry has become a defining point for discrimination against the LGBT community. Guatemala has the lowest

level of support for the right to marry, among both male and female respondents. Honduras and El Salvador, the two other Central American countries included in the data, also show levels nearly as low as Guatemala. The highest level of support from female respondents is in the United States, while the highest level of support from male respondents is in Argentina, with Argentina edging out the United States for the highest average support across all respondents (averages not shown in the graph).

The next question on the right of an LGBT individual to run for political office is based on the standard question to measure tolerance of minority political rights. Here we see greater support for the rights of LGBT individuals to compete in elections. Again, the lowest support is in Guatemala with El Salvador and Honduras showing only slightly higher support. The United States stands out from the other countries with significantly higher support for the right of LGBT individuals to run for political office among both male and female respondents. Following the U.S., the next highest acceptance rates come from Argentina, Chile and Brazil.

Comparing the results for both questions across the region reveals a pattern. Tolerance for the political rights of LGBT leaders and marriage equality largely correlates with higher levels of income and size of the middle class. Chile, Argentina and Brazil, all middle-income countries, show a higher level of acceptance than Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Bolivia, and Peru. Mexico and Colombia fall in the middle, while the U.S., as an upper-income country, shows the highest rate of acceptance of all, at least in the right to run for office. The effect of income is much stronger for running for office than for the right to marry: middle-income Argentina edges out the upper-income United

States in its acceptance of the right to marry.



These results are based on LAPOP's 2014 survey, and analyzed for Latin America Goes Global for its forthcoming 2015 Inaugural Inclusion Monitor. The original data for the LAPOP survey can be found at Vanderbilt University's [Latin American Public Opinion Project](#).

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