ARTICLES

ON THE MARGINS OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT? TRAVESTIS, TRANSSEXUALS AND THE WORLD OF WORK.

À margem da gestão da diversidade? Travestis, transexuais e o mundo do trabalho

¿Al margen de la gestión de la diversidad? Travestis, Transexuales y el mundo del trabajo

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ABSTRACT

Although research on LGBT+ diversity in Administration has gained visibility, studies about the transgender population are still scarce. This essay presents a literature review of the experiences of travestis and transsexuals at work. The analysis of the literature led to the creation of four categories of meaning: (1) the construction of trans research agenda in Administration; (2) the places and non-places of travestis and transsexuals in the world of work; (3) trans pedagogy as an organizational diversity category and (4) strategies of transgender expression in the workplace. The categories discussed in this paper indicate possible ways to consolidate a trans research agenda in Brazilian studies on organizational diversity.

Keywords: diversity, inclusion, gender identity, travestis, trans women.

RESUMO

Embora as pesquisas sobre diversidade LGBT+ tenham ganhado visibilidade na Administração, os estudos sobre a população transgênero ainda são escassos. Este trabalho apresenta uma revisão da literatura organizacional sobre as experiências de travestis e transexuais no mundo do trabalho. Foram construídas quatro categorias de significado: (1) a construção da agenda de pesquisa trans em Administração; (2) os lugares e não lugares das travestis e transexuais no mundo do trabalho; (3) a pedagogia trans como categoria da diversidade organizacional e (4) estratégias de expressão de gênero trans no ambiente de trabalho. As categorias debatidas neste trabalho sinalizam caminhos possíveis para consolidação de uma agenda de pesquisa trans nos estudos brasileiros em diversidade organizacional.

Palavras-chave: *diversidade, inclusão, identidade de gênero, travestis, mulheres trans.*

RESUMEN

Aunque las investigaciones sobre diversidad LGBT+ han ganado visibilidad en Administracion, los estudios sobre la población transgénero aún son escasos. Este trabajo presenta una revisión de la literatura organizacional sobre las experiencias de travestis y transexuales en el trabajo. Se construyeron cuatro categorías de significado: (1) la construcción de la agenda de investigación trans en Administración; (2) los lugares y no lugares de los travestis y transexuales en el mundo del trabajo; (3) la pedagogía trans como categoría de la diversidad organizacional y (4) estrategias de expresión de género trans en el ambiente de trabajo. Las categorías debatidas en este trabajo señalan caminos posibles para la consolidación de una agenda de investigación trans en los estudios brasileños sobre diversidad organizacional.

Palabras clave: *diversidad, inclusión, identidad de género, travestis, mujeres trans.*

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers in the Brazilian or international fields of administration have recently been addressing the debate about people who are members of groups historically constituted as LGBT (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, travestis, transsexuals, and transgender people) in organizations and contexts of work and consumption (Baggio, 2017; Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Garcia & Souza, 2010; Irigaray, Saraiva, & Carrieri, 2010; Irigaray & Freitas, 2011; Köllen, 2013, 2018; McFadden, 2015; Moura, Nascimento, & Barros, 2017; Natt, Saraiva, & Carrieri, 2015; Ng & Rumens, 2017; Paniza, Ichikawa, & Cassandre, 2018; Pereira & Ayrosa, 2012; Pereira, Ayrosa, & Ojima, 2006; Rumens, 2017; Siqueira & Zauli-Fellows, 2006). The literature, however, reveals a disparity in representing these groups and their identities in the organizational world and, consequently, in scientific research (Baggio, 2017; Carrieri, Souza, & Aguiar, 2014; Paniza, 2020).

In this sense, transgender people are the least well-represented in research in administration, including travestis and transgender women. As an umbrella concept, transgender (trans) people are those who do not identify, in different degrees, with the gender compulsorily assigned to them at birth (Jesus, 2012; Schwartz, Esch, & Bilimoria, 2017). Baggio (2017) explains that "the best-known non-binary identity is that of the travestis . They identify themselves using female names and pronouns, and express characteristics that are socially understood as being feminine" (p. 365), however, they will not necessarily want to undergo the transexualization process, which constitutes a set of bodily and social changes transition from the assigned gender (biologically) to the identified one (to which the subject recognizes its belonging) (Bento, 2006). Although there are distinctions in the literature with regard to the gender experience of transsexuals and travestis, these boundaries are not always demarcated by transsexuals and travestis themselves.

Although they converge as gender identity categories of people who were identified as male at birth, but who were later recognized as being woman (the reason for the frequent use of the generic term trans), the difference between the terms "travesti" and "transsexual" is that the word travesti has historically been offensive, because it frequently refers to trans people working in the sex market, or to the media construction of travestis, who are usually represented in situations involving crime and violence. The word transsexual, on the other hand, is a sanitized term that is representative of trans women who have undergone sex reassignment surgery. The term became popular in Brazil in the early 1980s when the first surgical procedure of this type was performed in the country, "leading to media and academic debates" (Barbosa, 2013, p. 360, our translation). There is, therefore, a contingency with regard to the meaning and use of the two words (travesti and transsexual) in Brazil, as expressed in Barbosa's ethnography (2013), which demonstrates a performative use of these two identity categories. Nevertheless, many intellectuals and activists from the trans movement defend the use of the term travesti as being political (York, Oliveira, & Benevides, 2020) and used to provide visibility for the viewpoint that is necessary for understanding the advances and achievements of the Brazilian trans community. On its official Instagram page the *Associação Nacional de Travestis e Transexuais* - ANTRA (Brazilian Association of Travestis and Transsexuals), stresses the importance of recognizing travestis for

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their historic contribution to the struggles and the demands they made of the state to guarantee the rights of the LGBT+ population. Whenever possible in this work, therefore, we will use the term trans and travesti to refer to the text's target audience.

Despite attempts to attribute concepts, authors such as Thanem and Wallenberg (2016) also perceive that tran categories are not stable. This is evidenced by the recognition that some travestis perceive themselves as transsexuals, or transsexuals who choose not to undergo sex reassignment surgery. There are also trans people who prefer to be called by very generic terms, such as "transgender person", regardless of their specific category. These dissonances, which were much theorized on by Butler (2016), led her to say that gender is a fictional fabrication, and the instability of these categories lies precisely in their nonconformity and attempts to oppose gender binarism, calling into question the very idea of gender as natural and self-evident. But despite being unstable, gender is still binary and heteronormative in relation to the subject's existential, cultural, and social attribution.

Muhr, Sullivan, and Rich (2016), however, state that not all trans people want to be seen as a man or a woman, and emphasize the transgression potential of the transgender body by challenging the man-woman, homosexual-heterosexual binaries, and the subversion of the male – penis, and female – vagina. This fluidity in trans terms and their meanings has been recognized as being a challenging point when it comes to proposing and operationalizing organizational policies in people management (Beauregard, Arevshatian, Booth, & Whittle, 2018; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). A growing number of organizations are interested in constructing inclusive policies aimed at the trans/travesti population.

Based on a study that was carried out in Turkey, Ozturk (2011) wrote that studies involving the LGBT+ population indicate that "the hegemonic violence perpetrated against the transgender minority operates at an entirely different (far higher) order of magnitude. As such, a separate study would be appropriate for reviewing the employment experiences of transgender individuals" (p. 1102). Caproni *et al.* (2014) confirm the argument, and indicate that the barriers that limit access to the labor market are much stronger and very difficult for transsexuals and travestis to overcome. Carrieri et al. (2014) also reflect that "the social exclusion process of these categories does not operate in the same way, which makes the union of all these categories in a single movement and acronym (LGBT+) even more complex" (p. 81, our translation), thus corroborating international authors (Köllen, 2018; Ng & Rumens, 2017; Ozturk, 2011). Another challenging aspect is that organizational perspectives on gender in organizational literature and diversity practices emphasize cisgender men and women (Köllen, 2018). Further studies are, therefore, needed to analyze the world of work from the exclusive perspective of trans people, particularly women.

The focus of our essay is to debate the literature produced and applied in administration, particularly in people management and organizational studies. But the epistemological genesis of the debate on trans identities needs to be contextualized. We start from the understanding that gender is a malleable repetition of acts, and sex, desire, sexual practices, and the body are similarly produced by often diffuse discursive and performative acts, from the power and

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normativity relations that are present in meanings, institutions, social practices, behaviors, representations, and discourses (Butler, 2016). In turn, identities are characterized as unstable and fickle. They also occur repeatedly, destabilize the unitary subject in different theoretical fields, and call into question the notion of the universality of bodies and the homogeneity of the experiences of sexuality and gender (Butler, 2016, 2018). The questions that Butler (2016) raises with regard to essentialism and foundationalism are significant for critiques of identity politics (but not identities). They are also beneficial for resisting the truth and binary normalization regimes, such as male/female, masculine/feminine, homo/hetero, transgender/cisgender etc., such as queer politics, which enables the ambiguity, multiplicity, and fluidity of sexual and gender identities to be thought about, and suggests that we also think about culture, knowledge, power, education, and work (Louro, 2001).

Given this scenario, the aim of this article is to contextualize the literature published in the field of administration with regard to the experiences of trans and travestis women in the world of work, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that exist in this research agenda. The articles studied enabled us to construct four categories of meaning, which are presented in the following sections: (1) the construction of a trans research agenda in Administration; (2) the places and non-places of travestis and transsexuals in the world of work; (3) trans pedagogy as a category of organizational diversity; and (4) transgender expression strategies in the workplace. The final considerations present some of the points of similarity and dissimilarity between the findings of Anglophone and Brazilian literature.

BUILDING A TRANS RESEARCH AGENDA IN ADMINISTRATION

In December 2004, the journal, Group & Organization Management, published a special issue entitled "Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender workplace issues." In the call for papers, the editor invited the academic community to share its experiences of workers from the then so-called LGBT groups, recognizing that, in the Academy of Management community, researchers had started to incorporate these themes in administration (Creed, 2004).

The vocabulary used in the call for papers confirms the novelty of the topic for administration academia. It presented what today might be considered conceptual errors (when compared with the current terms and categories used in the field). Among the arguments used to support the call for papers was the need to understand "organizations as the context for sexual prejudice" (Creed, 2004, p. 705). Almost 20 years later, there is a consensus in the literature that gender identity (transgender) is a different experience from the better known (at that time) sexual identity terms – gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (Baggio, 2017; Köllen, 2018; O'Shea, 2018). Despite this blurring of the lines between sex and gender identity, which would probably not go unnoticed by a journal reviewer these days, the editor recognized the diversity of the professional experiences of the social groups represented by the acronym (Creed, 2004).

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The special issue of Group & Organization Management was published with four articles that mentioned the LGBT public, except for the "T" (trans) public. This public remained excluded from the research agenda, which indicates an absence of studies examining the formal work environment, and its marginalization (Creed & Cooper, 2008). The debate about the LGBT+ public in this field of Brazilian academia started in the mid-2000s. The first studies were presented at events organized by Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Administração (ANPAD) and later published in journals of the field. As in the English-speaking context, discussions began with a focus on experiences of sexuality in the workplace (Siqueira & Zauli-Fellows, 2006), with issues such as the construction of a research agenda relating to gay workers, and survival strategies for this population in the organizational environment.

The agenda of events held by ANPAD at that first moment included gay consumption experiences and construction of the gay identity (Pereira et al., 2006), and recognized the need to expand research in order to understand other homosexual segments. The research so far had focused on highly educated gays with high purchasing power. It is worth pointing out that unlike in the North American context, the first Brazilian studies did not mention the existence of an LGBT+ group, although (Pereira et al., 2006) suggested further research (from the perspective of consumption) to include groups such as "older men, couples, people from lower economic classes, transsexuals, lesbians, and 'bears.' The audience is extremely diverse, and the characteristics of these different groups can be equally very different" (p. 14, our translation).

After the 2010s, the development of both Brazilian organizational literature and organizational literature in English demonstrates that researchers have focused on internal differences within populations that are represented in the LGBT+ acronym. Some studies, however, have only mentioned transgender people as an element of the acronym, and included them in the references, which suggests that the trans travesti group was absent as a category of organizational diversity in work environments compared to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, & Sürgevil, 2011; Carrieri et al., 2014; Köllen, 2018; Ng & Rumens, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2017; Theodorakopoulos & Budhwar, 2015).

PLACES AND NON-PLACES FOR TRAVESTIS AND TRANSSEXUALS IN THE LABOR MARKET

Few works have been published in Brazilian journals of administration about travestis, transsexuals, and lesbians – about female sexuality and gender identities – when compared to the number of research projects involving gay men, for example (Carrieri et al., 2014; Paniza, 2020; Teixeira, Oliveira, Diniz, & Marcondes, 2021). In the six articles addressing the issue of travestis and transsexuals that have been published in Brazilian journals (Baggio, 2017; Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Carrieri et al., 2014; Ferreira & Pereira, 2020; Muller & Knauth, 2008; Paniza et al., 2018) and in administration books (Irigaray, 2012; Prado & Freitas, 2016), professional spaces are demarcated, revealing limitations and constraints as to what a trans travesti woman does (or can do) in the work dimension. It is important to stress, however, that many of these experiences do not occur in the formal labor

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market, as shown in the literature (Baggio, 2017; Beuaregard *et al.*, 2018; Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Carrieri *et al.*, 2014; Irigaray, 2012).

Another relevant point for contextualizing these places in the world of work is the different life experiences of those who identify as travesti or transsexuals (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014). Both genders have experiences – especially in the case of travestis – that destabilize the female-male binarism because they trigger other possible ways of thinking about body, gender, and sexuality. The medical-psychological discourse established the need to produce a "real" transsexual person of the appropriate sex by way of surgical intervention and hormone therapy, making it essential for them to "own" this real sex. This was accompanied by a name change and physical and performance expressions, according to the gender they identify with and that represents them (Santos, 2017).

Some gays and lesbians can `hide' their sexual identity, despite the difficulties they have in accessing and/or staying in the labor market, as long as lesbians do not adopt not feminized appearance and gays do not perform in a feminine way; gender-centered performances must respond to the stereotypes and norms of cis-heterosexuality. For travestis and a large proportion of transsexuals, however, there is no possibility of remaining in the "closet", except in cases where there is passability, that is, others who perform in a similar way to cisgender people (in gestures, appearance, clothing, voice, hormone therapy, etc.). The situation that trans travestis face in companies and the world of work becomes even more critical (Baggio, 2017; Caproni & Saraiva, 2014). Even though in countries such as the UK and the US, legal mechanisms have emerged in recent years to help expand the possible places in the labor market for trans travestis people, no significant advances have been noted in terms of expanding their access to the professional place (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016; Rudin, Ruane, Ross, Farro, & Billing, 2014). But barriers to accessing the labor market begin long before a travesti woman can apply to undergo a recruitment and selection process.

Education is a bottleneck in the lives of tran travestis because, since childhood, social life has been very hostile to them in collective environments, making it difficult for them to remain in school. But as the social exclusion mechanisms in the lives of trans travestis do not operate alone, even if they have a high level of education, few transsexual and travesti employees hold prominent positions in the organizational hierarchy. This argument of the inaccessibility of trans travestis to more powerful jobs is emphasized by Beauregard et al *et al.* (2018) and by Irigaray (2012) in one of the first Brazilian texts on trans travestis, which exemplifies the case of a professional who, despite having all the technical and educational requirements, was unable to access jobs for better qualified people. Precisely for this reason, civil service examinations often end up being one of the only possibilities for the professional insertion of trans travestis (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014).

As previous studies have shown, the sector in which trans travestis professionals work has an effect on whether they have a more positive or negative experience. The path in which this phenomenon operates is relatively similar to the fact that some organizational segments are more receptive to cisgender women (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Irigaray (2012) highlights that the most receptive work contexts for trans travestis are the beauty, entertainment and art segments. Consequently, the work context of trans travestis is largely defined by self-employment, underemployment,

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informality, or even by exclusion from the labor economy. Beauregard *et al.* (2018) claim that transsexual people lack power and status in most work environments. Furthermore, since there are few trans travestis in mid-level operational professional roles, their low representation as leaders in the management of companies means that they have no representation in companies (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018).

Many employers are not interested in opening up to the issue of trans travestis identities. In the study by Ozturk and Tatli (2016), an interviewee pointed out that trans women receive fearful looks and are subtly passed over in the recruitment process. That is why legal protection mechanisms are not always as effective as expected in guaranteeing access to the labor market. Consequently, the justifications for a trans or travesti not receiving a job position are never known because it is impossible to discover if it was due to their technical inadequacy, or because of transphobia, which is understood as aa "generalized distaste for all those who transgress gender norms" (Rudin *et al.*, 2014, p. 729), which are here understood from the binary point of view – male/female. In this context, prejudice is the main reason for the low rates trans travestis in occupations. And even when the barrier of prejudice is overcome, and they can access employment, some work contexts become so intolerant of transgenderism that the professional ends up choosing to resign (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018; Clark, 2015).

The nuances of the trans travesti life experience have an impact on professional careers because not always a person who was compulsorily designated a boy at birth may want a female gender identity as a final destination, in the fixed molds of what society recognizes as a woman (O'Shea, 2018). In this perspective, people who want to achieve a normatively-fixed destination gender tend to experience environments that accept them more readily, and where they experience social respect; for example, trans women who undergo the full gender transition process, including hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016; Rudin et al., 2014).

The justification some transsexuals have for gaining access to the job market in companies also lies in the fact that their bodies are more appropriate to the social norms established for the female body. But what makes this social experience less uncomfortable is hiding their transsexuality, that is. as well as having a body that is socially interpreted as being female, they also need a legal female name (ID). In this context, "the visibility of the dual social and birth identity harms transsexuals in their search for work, and actually working" (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014, p. 90, our translation). Concealment of trans condition in line with the appearance of the gender presented in the identity document expresses passability, the degree to which transgender people are interpreted as cisgender people (Baggio, 2017).

Gender transition itself is an experience that exposes trans people to career risks when the transition starts while the person is in employment, regardless of the professional context n which they work. The experience of the only trans woman interviewed by Baggio (2017) – she was working in three different jobs during the transition process – indicates a way of managing the impact of the process on the person's career. After disclosing the transition to two of her employers, she was dismissed on the same day: she kept her third job by not mentioning it! Schwartz *et al.* (2017) add that when professionals in this situation are not dismissed, they may

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be discriminated against and become the victims of microaggressions for a period until they are eventually dismissed (Schwartz *et al.*, 2017).

Other strategies for the self-inclusion of trans travestis women in the labor market include working from home by only accepting jobs that can be performed in this private environment. This choice often stems from the experience of having worked in traditional work environments in the past in which bad experiences were unavoidable because they have no control over the peers they must relate to. Being able to work autonomously, therefore, is also a way for trans travesti to shield themselves from toxic relationships, but it is worth noting that this can be a strategy of exclusion and confinement of this worker from the public space. (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018).

If recruiters prevent trans people from competing for positions in the formal environment, the stigma attributed by society to travestis and transsexuals will lead to their professional life's conditions becoming naturalized, so they will choose only to work in sectors that are socially constructed as female workspaces, such as the beauty sector, as Baggio (2017) observes. The social perception of the bodies of travestis and transsexuals, however, means that, for the most part, they move "naturally" into prostitution (Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Paniza*et al.*, 2018). Their experiences tend to be markedly more negative in developing countries than in developed countries (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). There is also the physical violence that trans and travestis suffer in public spaces, making the streets a constant danger, especially if they do not express themselves in a cis-heterosexual way, and because they break with the structural patterns of hegemonic masculinity, which subordinate any dissonant gender expressions of the cisgender male/cisgender female binary (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014; Diniz, 2016).

Beuaregard *et al.* (2018) state that trans voices are inaudible in the workplace due to their negative experiences in the work context. This subordinate condition takes away the power of a group that does not have a voice. We can say, therefore, that there are many more non-places than places in the work environment for travestis and transsexuals. This scenario suggests the need for a teaching effort to make trans travestis agendas more visible to the professionals and students involved in management activities in organizations, an issue that will be discussed in the next section.

TRANS PEDAGOGY AS A CATEGORY OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY

The emergence of a transgender pedagogy in literature reveals that travestis and transsexuals are a "new" group for organizations and the (formal) work environment. The very titles of some of the published articles lead to this interpretation. For example, Baggio (2017) introduces trans people as "new subjects for studies into organizational diversity" (p. 360). But we should reflect on the use of the adjective 'new.' Trans and travestis people have always existed socially, but they did not express their transgenderism because it was not permitted, especially in business organizations. Furthermore, given the historical and structural character of marginality and

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exclusion, this population frequently avoided applying for work in an organization, even on a voluntary basis, because they would probably be rejected.

Two of the studies published in Brazil are teaching cases, which have the common objective of preparing students and work teams to learn about the social experiences of acceptance and exclusion of travestis and transsexuals in the workplace (Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Paniza *et al.*, 2018). On the agendas of these teaching cases, there are issues such as: the acceptability and receptivity of travestis and transsexuals in organizations and companies, prejudices, stigma, the violence suffered/experienced in the work context, and actions, possibilities, and alternatives for achieving effective inclusion of this population in society and the world of work. With regard to the pedagogical character of some of the proposed debates, the scenario is little different internationally. In the American and European context, Schwartz *et al.* (2017) propose "bringing transgender issues into management education" (p. 300), Beuaregard *et al.* (2018) invite readers to "listen carefully [to] transgender voices in the workplace" (p. 1), Rudin et al *et al.* (2014) explore the "hostile territory: employers' unwillingness to accommodate transgender employees" (p. 721). Thus,

> [...] students need to be prepared to understand and leverage differences in their current and future coworkers, employees, and clients across the multiple dimensions of diversity, including how a person identifies, experiences, and expresses their gender (Schwartz et al., 2017, p. 301).

The pedagogical gap between training management students and LGBT+ sexual and gender identities, including transgender identities, had already been noticed a few years earlier (Rudin *et al.*, 2014; Rumens, 2016). Rudin *et al.* (2014) presented a case to students on an organizational behavior course of an undergraduate program. The case refers to a trans female employee in a company and the negative reaction of a cisgender co-worker with regard to sharing the bathroom with this colleague, who was in the process of gender transition. The students offered suggestions of what the CEO should do to address the issue. The authors considered that the most inclusive suggestion students could give to the CEO was to adopt the use of unisex bathrooms in the company, but only 27% of the almost 200 students offered this suggestion. Compliance (i.e., complying with the current rules regarding respect for trans identity) was the most recurring decision (38%) – in this case, the students suggested instructing co-workers to respect the trans identity of their peers, thus ensuring that the trans could use the bathroom. The most hostile response to the situation presented in this case, however, had a high adherence rate (30%) from students, with students deciding that the transsexual female worker should be barred from the women's restroom due to the absence of laws protecting female workers in this situation (Rudin *et al.*, 2014).

The indices of hostile reactions toward transgender individuals by management students indicate that when many of these students find themselves in managerial positions, they will continue to behave transphobically in the work environment, and so not comply with existing

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anti-discrimination laws (Rudin *et al.*, 2014). This reverberation of violence from professionals who have already graduated is a reflection of the constitution of management education practices. As Rumens (2016, p. 47), explains "business schools can be hostile places of work for LGBT academics, and much progressive work needs to be undertaken in that respect to address the issue." In this sense, there is an evident need for (trans)pedagogical practices to go beyond undergraduate education and be adopted in other contexts in order to reach managers and other audiences that are immersed in business practice (Schwartz *et al.*, 2017).

On the executive education agenda, journals such as the Harvard Business Review have carried articles to guide managers towards an understanding of the context of inclusion of trans people in the work environment (Clark, 2015; Hull, 2015; Thoroughgood & Sawyer, 2017). These articles addressed issues such as using the bathroom, how co-workers should react vis-à-vis a colleague who comes out as a trans, and the issue of addressing the trans person using the correct pronoun and name. The very lack of participation of trans people in leadership positions in organizations, however, is also included in this managerial debate.

Schwartz *et al.* (2017) argue that knowing the personal experiences of trans people is a first step toward trans pedagogy in management education. Another step forward for this agenda is to indicate practices in the workplace that favor the construction of a more inclusive environment. Regarding the use of restrooms, Rudin *et al.* (2014) assess that although it may seem a trivial experience for cisgender people, it is a considerable source of suffering for trans people. It is even common for them to avoid using this space in public places as a way of protecting themselves from aggression (Paniza *et al.*, 2018).

Since not all trans people choose to go through or complete the gender transition process (O'Shea, 2018), Beauregard *et al.* (2018) recognize the need for organizations to act on behalf of those trans people whose gender performances are more visible, those with less passability, or those who have difficulty being recognized for the gender with which they identify. This repeatedly occurs in the Brazilian context, especially with those who identify as travesti. Practices that promote a broader inclusion of this population can act as a mechanism for spreading more knowledge about transgender experiences and enabling increased social acceptance. Two elements reinforce the degree of passability according to Baggio (2017): the name (changed to follow the gender transition, known in Brazil as the "social name"), and the appearance or expression of gender. If the trans person is unable to change their birth name, passability reduces. On the other hand, as any name change requires time and money in Brazil – since it involves legal issues – the author observes that passability also involves a class dimension.

With regard to the lack of preparation of the cisgender public and the convergence of the literature regarding the need for trans organizational pedagogy, it is not always bad intentions that lead to incorrect grammar when addressing trans and travestis. In some situations, the professional does not have the necessary knowledge to act appropriately. But cruel and intentionally disrespectful treatment by peers is a frequent occurrence due to the refusal to recognize the existence and life of the trans travesti (Baggio, 2017; Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). An organization's teaching actions may be sufficient for protecting trans travesti

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employees from the violence that is practiced by internal members of the organization, but not to protect them from its external public, such as clients. One Brazilian transsexual interviewed by Paniza *et al.* (2018) reported that they routinely receive a more sexualized approach from clients than their cisgender coworkers in the same environment. The professional has even been followed on the street because the client thought she was a call-girl. Another recurring situation experienced by the professional was the organization's customers refusing to be attended by her.

Although many managers, workers, and companies are making an effort to treat trans with respect and acceptance, a transsexual interviewed by Ozturk and Tatli (2016) realized that her organization's commitment to diversity was only superficial. She reported that the only measure adopted for educating new employees about diversity was to submit them to an online course, which they could pass by responding to a multiple-choice test. This illustrates that a genuine commitment from organizations is paramount in allowing trans travesti employees to be themselves. However, the attitude of some companies is to adopt a superficial organizational practice rather than promoting significant structural changes in terms of building a more inclusive work environment (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016; Saraiva & Irigaray, 2009). Researchers in the field of communication have questioned this mismatch between the representations and practices of corporate diversity, calling it 'diversity washing' (Carrera & Torquato, 2020).

In this sense, the criticism of simply offering an online course on the trans issue reveals the need for an integrated approach, as Schwartz *et al.* (2017) argued. Adopting a basic initial repertoire on transgender/travesti issues in the organization is an important initiative, but is only a first move, and other education actions must occur simultaneously. Building a friendly organizational climate for trans people requires measures in terms of insertion and inclusion in the work environment, and an adjustment of the physical and behavioral structures. Concerning sexual identities, this pedagogical movement has already ensured advances in terms of a greater understanding of the life experiences of gays and lesbians in the workplace, which has resulted in better representation and more visibility in employment positions, and even in the extension of rights and benefits that were previously granted only to heterosexual couples, for example (Siqueira & Andrade, 2012). For gender identities, however, this teaching approach needs to be given more space in management education. Workplaces today are generally hostile to the trans and travesti identity, and generally speaking, when participation occurs in these contexts it is guided by a repertoire of coexistence strategies that need to be activated to make the experiences of trans/travesti less negative.

TRANSGENDER EXPRESSION STRATEGIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Trans people share the same experience of expecting a negative and violent reaction from others wherever they are in day-to-day life (O'Shea, 2018). They consequently adopt a repertoire of strategies when interacting with colleagues in the workplace to manage their subordinate position within the heteronormative binary gender matrix, as shown in several articles (Baggio,

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2017; Beuaregard *et al*, 2018; Muhr et al, 2018; Muhr *et al.*, 2016; Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Many trans people even choose to hide their identity, in a process that is similar to being "in the closet." It is worth remembering that a large number of Brazilian trans travestis are unable to hide their identity due to their mixture of characteristics that are socially interpreted as being either male or female (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014). Some of the travestis interviewed by Thanem and Wallenberg (2016), however, hide their female characteristics in the workplace as much as possible in order to pass off as male workers, and so their co-workers do not perceive their travesti identity.

Like gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, the emotional effort demanded by trans travestis employees to hide their real gender identity can lead to considerable consequences, such as constant feelings of fear, or even suicide (Clark, 2015). "Coming out of the closet" in itself is not a safeguard for well-being at work. It is common for trans to be stigmatized when clients, co-workers, or managers learn of their gender identity (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Although remaining in the 'closet' is possible for many trans and travestis, and concepts such as passability corroborate this dynamic, Beuaregard *et al.* (2018) point out that it is not an option for all of them. Consequently, these "non-invisible" people are unable to build facades to hide their identities. What is expected from the findings in the field of people management research is that the most frequently recognized practices respond to the challenge of respecting transgender employees, regardless of their choice as to whether to reveal or hide their transsexual or travesti identity (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018).

Another common experience in the gender expression management of trans women employees is the loss of power over their careers. As many industries and sectors of the economy are traditionally adopt a restrictive attitude to trans travesti, choice of career often ignores issues such as increasing professional capital by aiming for career advancement, or becoming more experienced. The common attitude is to look for a professional environment that has at least minimal receptivity (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016).

Moving away from the transgender community is also a strategy adopted by trans travesti for managing their identities. After gender transition, many trans prefer to remain anonymous, thus avoiding being perceived as different in the social environment (Baggio, 2017; Carrieri *et al.*, 2014). Prudence with regard to disclosing their transgender identity can be related to the intensity with which they perceive themselves as being a "new" member of a gender that is now authentic – the experience of feeling fully like a woman or a man. Discretion to the point of pretending to be cisgender also avoids the stigmatization of people who are socially understood as transsexuals. The consequence is that trans professionals who opt for anonymity in relation to their gender identity implies that the binary gender discussion – trans man/trans woman – drowns out many trans voices and conceals their agendas (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018).

Pre-transition identity exclusion is another strategy used by trans people for managing their new personal constitution as a member of another gender. However, this strategy jeopardizes the person's professional life because, by "erasing" her work past, relevant professional experiences that are valued in recruitment and selection processes may be left behind, and the applicant may be disregarded as if she did not have the required professional experience (Beauregard *et al.*, 2018). But Muhr *et al.* (2016) criticize individualizing approaches to transgender experiences because

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many of the issues that affect trans career choices in work contexts are naturally interactive, and the appearance of their body cannot be considered. In this sense, the constraints experienced by trans and travestis are contingent on the occupations and types of organizations in which they work. For example, the subjectivity of trans and travestis is often "softened" in culture and art workplaces, whereas manual labor environments that require a lot of personal contact with clients presuppose greater caution with regard to transgender performance. In this sense, trans people experience a process in which they are constantly negotiating their gender performance. They build references with which to explain or hide the different possibilities of gender expression (Muhr *et al.*, 2016).

To enable the contingent and contextual analysis of trans identities, Muhr *et al.* (2016) proposed the concept of situated transgression. While transgender identity is considered a transgression of gender and binary norms (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016), the authors advocate a more localized approach for situating these experiences of gender subversion. Although only one trans woman was the subject of the authors' research, their results demonstrated the mobilization of degrees of transgressiveness that were contingent on the three work contexts in which the trans woman who was the subject of the research worked. The formal work context was the environment in which she used her transgressor gender repertoire sparingly, whereas in the environment in which she acted as a trans rights activist she used her right to express her trans gender performance intensely.

Although much of the transgender literature focuses on the potential for the gender transgression of bodies, Thanem and Wallenberg (2016) argue that the gender transgression of the trans person needs to be seen as a process that can also occur subtly. Paradoxically, while trans and travestis voluntarily challenge traditional gender roles, they tend to incorporate these roles when interacting with their peers (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016). In short, this incorporation of traditional gender roles also seems to be a strategy adopted by trans for dealing with their gender expression and in order to be more readily "accepted" in their professional environments.

When a worker undergoes gender transition, the meanings assigned by peers can also be interpreted through the lens of binary gender norms. In this sense, when a trans man is with his male peers, he experiences an increase in his capital and feels more valued and respected, and starts being listened to more in decision-making processes. On the other hand,, when a trans woman is placed in the feminine category, she experiences the negative reactions that cisgender women experience, such as being interrupted in meetings. These examples signal both the difference of the trans experience in terms of masculinity and femininity and the fact that trans bodies are also disciplined by heteronormativity and sexism, which require them and cisgender people to be congruent in their actions and expressions (Muhr *et al.*, 2016).

One issue to be noted, however, is that slotting trans and travestis into binary categories is only facilitated when transsexuality does not express masculinities or femininities outside the socially perceived standards. For example, trans women with a high degree of passability do not have any great difficulty in carrying out activities that are only performed by cisgender women. When a trans woman expresses an alternative femininity (mixing elements that are

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regarded as masculine, for example), in order to have a minimum degree of stability in social relationships she needs to "make" herself participate in rituals to reinforce the stereotypically traditional gender roles (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016). Therefore, a transsexual or travesti who does not submit to the norms of the sex-gender-body system is often placed on the sidelines of the conjectured hegemonic expressions for the feminine and masculine (Louro, 2001). The disparity in their difficulties and experiences intensifies when touched by other social markers, such as race/ethnicity, class, or disabilities.

Therefore, in the process of "doing" gender, the subjects manage the gender expressions by which peers can perceive their behavior in the environment as being either appropriate or inappropriate. For Thanem and Wallenberg (2016, p.250), understanding this process helps us understand "how women and men in organizations "do" gender appropriately by constructing, expressing and maintaining binary gender roles and identities through everyday social practices."

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Advances in trans travesti organizational literature are much more theoretical than empirical. McFadden (2015) lists some factors that explain the low representation of this population in literature: (1) large groups of research subjects are hard to access; (2) there is a mismatch between the visibility and voice of transsexual people, especially in organizational contexts; (3) it is not always easy for researchers to gain access to this public, especially since many studies on LGBT+ adopt convenience as the criterion for selecting subjects, and consequently they approach those closest to them; 4) stigmatization and society's prejudiced perception of trans people often make them unwilling to participate in research into LGBT+; and, finally, 5) after the end of their gender transition, many subjects decide to maintain a discreet position in their organizations, hiding the fact that they are trans.

No texts refer to the experience of transgender/travesti in work contexts in a positive way. On the contrary, they all indicate how completely marginalized trans and travesti are, which leads to physical and/or interpersonal violence, and frequently results in them working in prostitution (Caproni & Saraiva, 2014; Carrieri *et al.*, 2014; Irigaray, 2012). From this perspective, marginalization and social exclusion are greatly reinforced by Brazilian literature. Brazilian authors emphasize that vulnerability and stigmatization are central for understanding the living conditions of trans travesti. One of the stigmas they experience in the context of health care is the perception, on the part of professionals in the area, that they all carry the HIV virus. This understanding occurs because of the automatic link that has been established between identifying as a trans or a travesti and prostitution (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014; Muller & Knauth, 2008; Paniza *et al.*, 2018). The issue of the costs associated with changing their name and acquiring a new legal identity was also raised and discussed by Baggio (2017). This is crucial for enabling transsexual people to have better social experiences, thereby reinforcing the social class dimension in the life of Brazilian trans women.

In both contexts, carrying out research with large groups of participating subjects is a challenging task. The seminal Brazilian article – from the point of view of the fact that it was written exclusively by authors from the field of administration – attracts our attention because, when they characterized the research subjects (lesbians, travestis, and transsexuals), the researchers emphasize the fact that the trans public was the most cautious about taking part in the project, thus reinforcing the difficulties encountered in accessing this population (Carrieri *et al.*, 2014).

The pedagogical interest in tran agendas is common to both Brazilian and international literature, either because the trans population represents the inclusion of a "new audience" for organizational diversity (Baggio, 2017), or because management students need to be prepared to deal with different gender identities (Schwartz *et al.*, 2017). The debate undertaken in this work expresses the authors' efforts to mobilize the vocabulary, particularities in terms of life experiences, and professional careers of trans travesti. The importance of including these themes in management education environments is highlighted by the argument that, even if a manager's personal beliefs do not allow them to accept a trans person, "they have a moral imperative to consider human dignity (...) and a legal imperative to ensure that discrimination does not exist" (Schwartz *et al.*, 2017, p. 306).

Future research should be anchored in transfeminist epistemologies and knowledge (Jesus, 2015) and address "the voice of transgender workers to ascertain if current voice mechanisms, such as LGBT networks, are adequate for representing transgender workers, or if employee-specific groups should exist" (McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2018, p. 21). It is worth noting that the creation of networks of workers from LGBT+ groups and allied people (heterosexuals and cisgender people who support the LGBT+ cause) in companies has been a strategy adopted by multinational companies in Brazil, as evidenced by the business media (Rossi, 2015). The presence of Brazilian travestis and transsexuals in the formal work environment of large companies is not very representative of daily life. Efforts are still needed to ensure effective social recognition of trans lives, since this population still lacks access to the most basic social rights and public policies (Muller & Knauth, 2008), such as access to health and education systems, even though we have a significant number of travestis and trans women who exercise different professions and work in different organizational segments.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Maurício Donavan Rodrigues Paniza and Marcielly Cristina Moresco worked on the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach. The theoretical review was conducted by Maurício Donavan Rodrigues Paniza and Marcielly Cristina Moresco. Data collection was coordinated by Maurício Donavan Rodrigues Paniza and Marcielly Cristina Moresco. Maurício Donavan Rodrigues Paniza and Marcielly Cristina Moresco participated in the data analysis. Maurício Donavan Rodrigues Paniza and Marcielly Cristina Moresco participated in the writing and final review of the manuscript.