



Q1 Human Resources and Organizations

1 About the relation between transgender people and the organizations:
2 new subjects for studies on organizational diversity

3 *Da Relação Entre Pessoas Transgêneras e a Organização: novos sujeitos para os estudos sobre*
4 *diversidade organizacional*

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8 **Abstract**

9 The “Organizational Diversity” field concentrates studies on the experiences of groups that are different from the archetypical male, white,
10 heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied and western worker. When analysing the studies regarding gender relations, however, one perceives their
11 concentration on the dynamics between men and women localized in developed western countries. Transgender persons are persons whose
12 identity and/or gender expression differs from what is socially attributed to their bodies, breaking with the heteronormative logic. In Brazil,
13 where only the bodies within this discourse are legitimate, this group is systematically excluded from a myriad of spaces including the formal
14 job market. Therefore, the experiences of these people at and with work are invisible to organizational diversity’s theory and practice.
15 To explore this issue, this study analyses the perceptions that the transgender person maintains about their relations (1) with their profes-
16 sional history, (2) with other people in their work environment, and (3) with organizational policies and practices. Face-to-face semi-structured
17 interviews were made with six transgender persons that work in organizations. From these narratives, it was found that the person’s level of
18 passing usually influences their relations and that the ignorance regarding transgenderity permeates all three domains of relations. The conclu-
19 sions are: (1) the relations with work are marked by opportunity restrictions; (2) the relations in the job hold the person responsible for their
20 on intelligibility and safety; and (3) the relations with the organization vary according to the way it faces transgenderity and its own voice
21 systems.

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23 **Keywords:** Organizational diversity; Gender relations; Transgender people

24 **Resumo**

25 O campo “Diversidade nas Organizações” concentra estudos sobre vivências de grupos diferentes do trabalhador arquetípico homem, branco,
26 heterossexual, cisgênero, capacitado, ocidental. Analisando-se os estudos sobre as relações de gênero, contudo, percebe-se sua concentração na
27 dinâmica entre homens e mulheres e em países ocidentais desenvolvidos. Pessoas transgêneras são pessoas cuja identidade e/ou expressão de gênero
28 difere do esperado socialmente a partir de seu corpo, rompendo com a lógica heteronormativa. No Brasil, onde apenas os corpos dentro desse
29 discurso são legítimos, esse grupo é sistematicamente excluído de diversos espaços, incluindo o mercado de trabalho formal. Assim, temos que as
30 vivências dessas pessoas com e no trabalho são invisibilizadas na teoria e prática da diversidade organizacional. Para explorar essa problemática,
31 este estudo analisa as percepções que a pessoa transgênera mantém sobre suas relações [1] com sua história profissional, [2] com as outras pessoas
32 no ambiente de trabalho e [3] com as políticas e práticas da organização. Realizaram-se entrevistas presenciais semiestruturadas com seis pessoas
33 transgêneras que trabalham em organizações. A partir das narrativas obtidas, constatou-se que o nível de passabilidade da pessoa geralmente

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influencia suas relações e que a ignorância sobre a transgêneridade permeia os três âmbitos de relações. Conclui-se que [1] as relações com o trabalho são marcadas pela restrição de oportunidades; [2] as relações no emprego entregam à pessoa a responsabilidade pela própria inteligibilidade e segurança; e [3] as relações com a organização variam de acordo com a maneira como esta encara a transgêneridade e os sistemas de voz.

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Palavras-chave: Diversidade nas Organizações; Relações de gênero; Pessoas transgêneras

Introduction

Equal treatment for the different groups that make up organizations became a subject of study in Human Resources Management in the 1970s. With the increase in the number of women, immigrants, elderly and intellectuals employees (Martinez, 2013), the typical worker studied since the dawn of management as a discipline could no longer be seen as “a worker without body, without sex and without emotions [. . .] but a man” (DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2007, p. 208). Studies on Workplace Diversity thus aim to break with “the concept of a worker as being a white male” which “has permeated the academic field of management and organizational studies” (Carrieri, Diniz, Sousa, & Menezes, 2013, p. 287). This is done by identifying and studying groups of workers with ‘diverse’ characteristics, different from those of the archetypal “white, western, heterosexual, middle/high class, able-bodied, male” worker (Nkomo & Cox, 1999, p. 351).

Studies on gender dynamics in organizations focus mostly on relations between women and men (Martinez, 2013, pp. 38–39; Nkomo & Cox, 1999). Transgender people, the focus of this study, are often forgotten under the category of “diversity”.

Transgender people are those whose gender identity or expression is different from the one typically associated with their assigned sex at birth (Grant, Mottet, & Tanis, 2011, p. 181). When an individual is born, society interprets their body as belonging to a particular gender – in Brazilian society, female or male – and socializes them in accordance with the customs seen as pertaining to that body – respectively, femininity or masculinity. In other words, a person is assigned a gender according to their body. Transgenders do not identify with the gender they were assigned or with the way society expects them to express such gender through clothes, gestures, mannerisms, and others characteristics (Grant et al., 2011, p. 180).

The way transgender people understand and express their gender, therefore, breaks with the binary logic – also called heteronormativity –, which deterministically links body, sex, gender identity and gender expression, i.e., vagina/female/woman/femininity and penis/male/man/masculinity (Souza & Carrieri, 2015). Historically, western societies in general and their organizations in particular have only perceived as legitimate those bodies that adhere to this dichotomous gender schema

(Souza & Carrieri, 2015, p. 2; Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016, p. 2). Brazilian society is no different (Souza & Carrieri, 2015, p. 4). Consequently, transgender people constantly face structural prejudice and discrimination (expressed through the term transphobia) in all sectors of society for not fitting into dominant gender discourses (Grant et al., 2011; Mitchell & Howarth, 2009). The way discrimination acts as an obstacle to the entry and permanence of transgender people in the formal labor market is of special concern in this study, as it spurs the overwhelming majority of transgenders into informal economic activities (Souza & Carrieri, 2015, p. 7). Therefore, the number of transgender employees in Brazilian organizations – especially private companies – is small (Souza & Carrieri, 2015; TV Brasil Central, 2014). Adding to this the almost complete lack of studies focusing on this population in the work environment, I conclude that their experiences and relationships at work are erased by the theory and practice of organizational diversity (Souza & Carrieri, 2015, p. 1; Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016, p. 3). In addition, the few studies about transgender people in organizations are limited to developed western countries, which do not capture the particular experiences of Brazilian context.

In an effort to address these issues, I propose the following questions: what perceptions do transgenders have of their relations (1) with work, (2) with others in the workplace, and (3) with the organization?

To answer this question, this study heard six transgender individuals and sought to analyze through their narratives:

- (1) Their relationship with their professional history.
- (2) Their relationship with other individuals in the work environment (manager, colleagues, clients).
- (3) Their relationship with the organization’s policies and practices.

In order to complete this task, the next section will outline the relevant concepts to understand diversity management, transgender people, and their position in the labor market. The following section will focus on the methodological approach employed. Finally, the collected narratives will be exposed and analyzed, followed by final considerations.

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