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## PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND THE COMMITMENT OF BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS DIVERSITY: THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THEORY IN PRACTICE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study has attempted to identify how Brazilian companies disclose their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitment to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transvestite, transsexual and transgendered individuals (LGBT) in their workforce, by comparing practices to models existent in literature. The research had an exploratory nature, affiliated to a post-critical perspective. Document analysis was conducted in the websites of 66 sustainable companies identifying the ones which formally publish their diversity-fostering policies that benefit LGBT workers specifically. Despite the growth in the theme of diversity in literature in the last few years, the efforts directed to the human rights of LGBT individuals in companies considered to be socially responsible and committed to human rights has not increased in the same rate. Results show little to no action being carried out, if compared to global expectations and, in national terms, the road is still long for progress on the theme to be achieved.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility – Human Rights – Diversity – Inclusion of minorities – LGBT*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, the workers, who are considered by the Ethos Institute to be one of the most important stakeholders of companies, have been increasingly involved in organizations' strategic decision making (ETHOS, 2014). For organizations to be acknowledged as Socially Responsible, their managers must create the appropriate conditions for workers to feel accomplished in that environment through participative management, where innovation, creativity and individual talents may thrive (ASHLEY, 2005). Therefore, the necessity of respecting local cultures and keeping an "ethical and responsible relationship with minorities and with the institutions that voice their interests" (ETHOS, 2014), is a growing expectation. In this study, the dynamics of these relationships, specially the one between the LGBT minority and the demand for ethical and corporate social responsibility action in companies, will be dealt with so as to justify the current relevance of investigating such a theme within organizational strategy for improvement of performance for those in the market.

Maggiolini's (2006) research demonstrates that promoting and putting human values at the centre of business is especially important nowadays (MAGGIOLINI, 2006). The statement matches with Ethos' one, in which it is said that "acting in a socially responsible manner with the internal public means more than just respecting their fundamental rights guaranteed by the law" (ETHOS, 2014).

Despite social advances on the topic (CAPRONI NETO et al, 2014; MELLO, 2012), specially the ones obtained by identifying and utilizing expressions such as 'homoaffectivity', 'heteronormativity', 'social name' and 'homophobia' through the media, and several spheres of society, thereby decreasing the strangeness associated with them (MELLO, 2012), more work focusing on sexual orientation from an inclusiveness perspective worth being investigated and done (THEODORAKOPOULOS; BUDHWAR, 2015). Even at the global level, LGBT minorities still seem to have a long way to go before fully incorporating their rights to companies' inclusion policies, as we can observe in the universe of naturalized heterosexuality, 'automatically perceived' to be true, both in gender and in sexuality (GOULART; HENNIGEN, 2014, p. 3). According to Fullerton (2013),

The fact is that promoting gay policies is not enough; employers have to actually be gay friendly and create an environment whereby your sexual orientation is an open part of who you are when you walk into work in the morning... if an employee feels comfortable being out, and is able to discuss who they are with colleagues without fear of discrimination or judgment, they become more productive. (FULLERTON, M. 2013, p. 2)

Almeida and Alves (2015), in their research which spanned 25 of the Brazilian companies featured by the Revista Exame according to results of annual revenue, in a 2013 Editora Abril issue, it was found that only two of these companies' websites did not bring up results for Social Responsibility or "Corporate Social Responsibility", or still "Business Social Responsibility". On guaranteeing Human Rights to minorities in the way suggested by ISO 26000, however, it became clear that said rights were only mentioned in the sense of respecting others, respecting individualities, and people in general, despite these organizations being regarded as spaces that are constantly intersected by gender and sexuality relations (CAPRONI NETO et al, 2014). In a general manner, the text revealed care for diversity, mostly on issues concerning gender and race (ALMEIDA and ALVES, 2015).

Taking the commitment towards promoting LGBT rights and the precepts proposed by the UN on sexual orientation and gender identity in international human rights law as thoroughly publicized, as well as supposing that the "organizational leaders are paying greater attention to diversity and inclusion in the workplace" (DAHLING et al, 2016, p. 12), this study has attempted to identify how globally acknowledged Brazilian companies operate and promote these commitments towards the LGBT minorities in their employ. In order to do so, the scores attributed to the Social Dimension Performance was analyzed, within the Human Rights indicator of the 66 most sustainable companies according to the 2016 Exame Guide for Sustainability, published by Revista Exame.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The present research, of an exploratory nature, is affiliated to a post-critical perspective, while focusing on the issue of inclusion on a wider perspective (YIN, 2016; CRESWELL, 2007).

In the first stage, the research conducts a documental analysis of the Revista Exame issue of Editora Abril, featuring the 66 listed companies of the 2016 Guide for Sustainability. According to the magazine's editors, the research and data analysis methodology "are conducted by the Center for Studies in Sustainability of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (GVces), a renowned institution in strategy, policy and tool development for public and corporate management for sustainability in the country" (GUIA, 2016, p. 2).

Ten themes were emphasized by the magazine: sustainability governance, human rights, relationship with suppliers, relationship with community, water management, waste management, biodiversity management, climate change, relationship with clients and transparency and the fight against corruption. Among them, the authors chose to delve into the theme of Human Rights. By consulting the websites of each one of the listed companies, it has been attempted to identify how they are committed particularly to human rights and the inclusion of LGBT minorities. The segment of analysis is the theme of inclusion of these individuals in the perspective of the diversity movement.

Corporate reports obtained through these websites were crossed with the appropriate literature in order to identify the philosophical and epistemological assumptions compatible with the inclusivist perspective present in these organizations. In this manner, the study has aimed to identify not only visible elements of organizational culture, such as mission, vision and organizational goals statements, but the organization's history of communication with its public as well, through the Sustainability and Ethical Code Report, for any signs which may indicate alignment between speech and practice in the organizations (YIN, 2016; GRAY, 2012).

The data treatment process has utilized the Content Analysis method (BARDIN, 2010). This method consists in an investigative and systematic technique for supporting the interpretation of available information which allows for the codification, categorization and segmentation of the object of analysis. In this manner, the selected data is interpreted by the authors "*a posteriori*", through constructs devised specifically for the study (BARDIN, 2010, p.15). In this case, the technique sought to identify how Brazilian companies promote their commitment towards LGBT minorities. In order to do so, it has been based on the 2016 Exame Guide for Sustainability, and the scores attributed to the Social Sphere Performance criteria, out of the pool of the 66 most sustainable companies in the country, spanning 20 different segments. The companies classified as 'above average', 'average' and 'below average' of the key indicator Human Rights, chosen for the study, were identified and analysed in an exploratory manner in order to develop a new outlook which could be systematically tested in future investigation (BARDIN, 2010; GIL, 2007).

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section offers an overview on the following topics: Demands of Organizational Social Responsibility aligned with diversity, LGBT Human Rights in Brazil and in the USA and the commitment of Companies and LGBT Human Rights.

#### *3.1. Demands of Organizational Social Responsibility aligned with diversity*

By analysing the corporate social dynamics in human capital, Barbieri (2014) states that people management and knowing how to act responsibly and admittedly are fundamental aspects for organizational social responsibility. According to Fullerton (2013), the

"Bank of America Merrill Lynch recognizes that its most valuable asset is its people, who deliver every day for its customers, clients and shareholders. The company values the differences of its people, understanding that diversity and inclusion are good for business and make the company stronger. Diversity means business" (FULLERTON, 2013, p. 121).

Therefore, it is up to organizational managers to develop an appropriate work environment for their followers, by making it responsive, warming and inspiring, so that laboral activities may be conducted. To do so, however, requires skilled, clear and communicative leaders who can provide feedback, recognize values and individual differences, as well as foster self-development of their teams (MAGGIOLINI, 2006; ARNAUD, 2008; FULLERTON, 2013; BARBIERI, 2014; DAHLING et al, 2016).

For Barbieri (2014), the Code of Ethics which is disassociated from clear and reachable goals for all workers makes no sense and does not promote adherence to the organizations.

The social environment, often moved by the ambition of people for their personal goals is an inseparable factor from the ethical perspectives of an organization. In this sense, strategic people management prioritizes and strives for professionals aligned with their perspectives, who are experienced, but nonetheless potentially open to a future not just for the company but for the whole environment it operates in.

In order to achieve this, it is up to managers to meet what Marras (2011) calls 'the macronecessities of workers', so that they may be able to offer the most of their dedication and disposition, bringing their whole selves to the workplace, trying to be individuals that are at their most productive and innovative conditions, creating cohesive and effective teams, which are considered the valued intellectual capital of organizations (MORAES; OLIVEIRA, 2011; MARRAS, 2011; FULLERTON, 2013).

According to Keissling & Harvey (2005), human capital, as stated in the context of globalization, may be a significant advantage for organizations to remain competitive and attractive to the market, and to keep a healthy, supportive and socially responsible internal environment (ARNAUD, 2008).

The Social Responsibility organizational processes comprise the promotion of some social welfare, aside from the interests of the company and of what is required by law (McWILLIAMS; SIEGEL, 2001). They stem from policies that promote interaction between the organization and its stakeholders, spanning a criteria of limitations for environmental and production issues (ANDRADE et al. 2010). These interrelations, for Kahreh et al. (2013) are promoted through the conversation the company establishes with its stakeholders concerning the duties of the organization and the expectations of the stakeholders. According to Oberseder et al. (2013), however, Organizational Social Responsibility (OSR) is an ethical and social obligation of the stakeholders. According to Maignam & Ferrell (2004), however, Organizational Social Responsibility (OSR) is a social obligation of stakeholders which offers support to organizational strategy in the managerial process.

As a conceptual counterpoint, Kahreh et al. (2013) states that the absence of objective definitions on OSR issues generates complexity for the acknowledgement of an organization as socially responsible, since the different interpretations of the concept span environmental aspects, public relations, people management, and even the relationship with the surrounding community. Thus, to work on social issues cannot be mistaken for defining the best strategy for increasing sales, as it must overcome the idea that the organization exists solely based on its economic character (KAHREH et al., 2013; ASHLEY, 2005).

Nevertheless, the demands created by the Human Rights policies, when originated from LGBT minority-inclusive action, become strongly connected to the OSR assumptions, since they are also necessary conditions for their proper implementation, involving the necessary dialog between practices and duties of the organization; the expectations and duties of the stakeholders; people management and relationships of these with the community (OBERSEDER et al. 2013; KAHREH et al. 2013).

Therefore, the interdisciplinary nature of the OSR proposes, among various aspects, respect to human rights, which arises from the interaction of transparent dialog with internal and external groups that the organization interacts with in the management of their processes (RED PACTO MUNDIAL, 2013). In this manner, the implementation of the OSR, as defined by the European Commission Green Paper (GREEN PAPER, 2001), is directed towards the internal and external dimensions.

The external dimension of the OSR states that other stakeholders must have their voices heard, not just the organization and its investors (OBERSEDER et al, 2013). According to these authors, only careful listening to these various groups is capable of formulating action strategy for OSR, since proper communication between these social agents may guide the ethics of the organization towards the morals of different stakeholders, promoting legitimacy to the organization's' decision-making (OLIVEIRA, 2008).

It is in this context that the responsible and ethical action promotes balance in an organization's environmental, social and economic levels, which make up the Triple Bottom Line pillars proposed by Elkington (2004).

The internal dimension of the OSR, however, involves the issues of quality of life in the workplace. The sole concern of organizations with market competitiveness contrasts the healthy values to be produced by workers (MARRAS, 2011). Companies must act based on fundamental rights in the social, economic and environmental levels, as well as on values connected to human rights of workers and interest groups, whatever they may be. For the internal groups, the issues connected to workers' and human rights, remuneration programs and profit participation, healthcare, training investment and worker development and internal environment management, and general conditions of laboral activity management represent some of the main practices of internal OSR which aim to improve the wellbeing of employees and their dependents (CRUZ et al. 2012).

### 3.2. LGBT Human Rights in Brazil and in the USA

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched in Brazil, in 2013, the Booklet "Born free and equal: sexual orientation and gender identity in international human rights law", available in Portuguese for download in the institution's website (OHCHR, 2013).

It contains the five duties of the State, which are: protect against homophobic violence, prevent torture, decriminalize homosexuality, prohibit discrimination and defend civil freedom. Entitled "Born Free and Equal", the booklet stresses the need of offering protection to victims of homophobic and transphobic violence, preventing torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading behavior towards Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites, Transexual and Transgender individuals, repealing law which criminalizes homosexuality, prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and protecting freedom of speech, association and peaceful assembly to intersex and LGBT individuals.

Also in Brazil, four documents cover the promotion of human and citizenship rights to the LGBT community. These are: "Brazil Without Homophobia Program", the "Annals of the First National LGBT Conference", the "National Plan of Support to Citizenship and LGBT Human Rights" and the "National Human Rights Program 3" (MELLO, 2012). According to the author, there is an understanding that

Despite the relative abundance of governmental and eventual documents that provide a conversation between the government and civil society, the greatest challenge is to turn the crude public policies, gestated throughout the last few years, specially as of 2004, into effective State policies not at the mercy of the will of governing politicians and of the uncertainties deriving from the non-existence of a legal landmark for fighting homophobia and for the promotion of LGBT citizenship (MELLO, 2012, p.1)

Mello (2012) states that aside from the difficulties in achieving what has been promised by the plans and programs, these have little normative force and their guidelines impose a negative conduct by the State, by "not doing, not saying, not sorting and not deciding anything against what has already been established" (MELLO, 2012, p.6).

It is worth noting that, generally, public policies on sexuality are permeated by peculiarities, since their formulation and implementation govern the need of changing beliefs, values and traditions deeply rooted in collective imagination (MELLO, 2012).

Reynolds (2013) states that "there is clear evidence to suggest that the inclusion of marginalized groups is correlated with policy benefits for that group" (REYNOLDS, 2013, p.5). If so, in Brazil, the issue of guaranteeing the compliance to plans and programs relating to LGBT human rights is in even more jeopardy. Here, the evidence of obstacles to

hierarchical ascension to higher positions by homosexuals can be noticed, especially when they are openly so, or present effeminate behavior (CAPRONI NETO et al, 2014).

LGBT congressmen are also notoriously absent from the acting environment of the Legislative Branch. According to Reynolds (2013), the impact of openly LGBT legislators, the presence of even a small number of them, is associated with the future of the national legislatures, the passage of enhanced gay rights and the existence of equality laws focused on sexual orientation. In Brazil, in over 100 years of republican rule, only in 2010 has a gay man been elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and one who is openly committed to LGBT issues, deputy Jean Willys (MELLO, 2012).

Despite the political struggle for guaranteeing civil rights to LGBT individuals in Brazil being far from over (MELLO, 2012), it is worth noting that the United States, a country regarded as developed and democratic, as well as acknowledged as one of the most important world players, are still not an example to be followed in that regard.

In a publication entitled “Reducing LGBT inequality in the Obama era”, Egan (2009), in the website of the University of New York, reports that one in every six lesbians or gay men have experienced discrimination either in their workplace or at home, in their adult lives. It points out also that firing someone for being gay is still a legal practice in 29 of the 50 American states; that one in every four homosexual men reports having been fired, attacked, physically assaulted or sexually harassed at some point of his life simply for being gay. In the United States, according to the author, 22% of homosexual students feel unsafe in their schools, compared to 7% of heterosexual ones. In the U.S., gay couples find larger problems in how law is applied to them concerning taxes, insurance and other regulations if compared to heterosexual couples (EGAN, 2009).

Despite the right to marriage, in the U.S. many workers still lack basic protection from sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace. Consequently, “people still find themselves confronted with perspectives on LGBT equality that come from the top of the organization and that may not align with their own experiences or feelings” (DAHLING et al, 2016, p.1).

The policy entitled “Don’t ask, don’t tell”, which personally requested gay and lesbian soldiers to resign from their service, resulted in the resignation of over 14 thousand members of the American armed forces since its enacting by Bill Clinton, in 1993. For those who did not resign, life goes on with much hardship, facing the constant fear of having their private lives being officially investigated (EGAN, 2009).

To Clark (2012), largely due to social media, the frontiers are being broken. Privacy has become a mirage, and people see themselves in a world in which they are expected to be authentic. To the author, in companies, it is worth ‘coming out’, since the ones who openly declare their sexual preferences waste less time in concerning over hiding their secrets and are able to focus on their jobs (CLARK, 2012). Aside from being more effective, by assuming their sexual preferences in an increasingly diverse world and providing visibility to and challenging the hegemonic sexual discourse, the LGBT worker can contribute to creating deeper connections with clients, developing new insights, improving morale, as well as employee retention (CLARK, 2012; CAPRONI NETO et al, 2014;).

According to Clark (2012), the expectations of the corporate world are changing rapidly. It suggests that this is the time for everyone to come out, whoever it may be. Schraeder (2017) affirms that “when a corporation institutes new nondiscrimination protections or updates its benefits and diversity practices to be more inclusive, it sends a powerful signal to an entire generation that the company cares about what’s right” (SCHRAEDER, 2017, p. 1). In conclusion, the author assures that when a company reaches the LGBT community and demonstrates its genuine support, this fact impacts tremendously on its business and equality all at once (SCHRAEDER, 2017).

### 3.3. *The commitment of Companies and LGBT Human Rights*

In Maggiolini and Nanini's view (2006), it is clear that corporations adopting the same behaviors, even when considered socially responsible by stakeholders and society, do not necessarily have the same meaning. That is because they are not based upon "the same motivations, do not respond to equal scheme of incentives, do not maintain the same relationship with the mission of the corporation" (MAGGIOLINI; NANINI, 2006, p. 2).

Fullerton (2013) assures that promoting gay friendly policies is not enough. The author says that employers must not only have to actually be gay friendly but also create an environment whereby sexual orientation is an open part of who the employees are when they walk into work. For her, being a gay friendly employer is not something which should be viewed as a must do as well as should not be viewed as a "box-ticking exercise" (FULLERTON, 2013, p.3). She states that taking their role as inclusive employers they would get seriously real rewards and benefits on the bottom line.

Discussing the relationship between sexuality and the workplace is an organizational, yet public, issue, since it allows the identification of behavior of men and women, building expectations, defining positions and roles, accesses, and even certain privileges (IRIGARAY, 2010). Maybe the challenge for companies, specially the global ones, is to tackle the ideas and discrimination about LGBT people that have existed for so many decades.

Changing cultures means to ensure that it is not acceptable an inappropriate behavior, even if that behavior is coming from someone senior. According to Fullerton (2013), "if someone in a senior position makes an inappropriate joke, or uses a derogatory term to refer to someone's sexual orientation, he or she needs to be challenged without fear of recrimination" (FULLERTON, 2013, p.4). The support from the top as well as training and well communicated organizational policies on LGBT inclusion is essential to create an inclusive workplace. It is important to say that of equal importance is to give to the employees a voice (FULLERTON, 2013).

In Brazil, during the 8th Forum of Companies and LGBT Rights, in December 2014, 14 companies formalized their engagement in promoting human rights t LGBT individuals. In the occasion, such companies signed the commitment of "improving management practices in companies and influencing the corporate and social environment for adopting practices that respect LGBT human rights" (ETHOS, 2014). It is one more step towards expanding the adoption of internal policies which encompass people of different sexual orientations.

The Forum of Companies and LGBT Rights aims not just to improve corporate management practices for adding value to their brands, but also to fight homo-lesbo-transphobia and their negative effects on business, people and society. Another objective is to influence the corporate environment and society through the adoption of practices that respect LGBT human rights (FÓRUM, 2013). In order to do so, it has devised the "10 Commitments for Promoting LGBT Rights" which express the role the companies should adopt, as well as a work agenda. These are:

- Board and executives commit to respect and to promote LGBT rights;
- Promote equal opportunity and fair treatment to LGBT individuals;
- Promote respectful, safe and healthy environment for LGBT individuals;
- Create awareness and education on LGBT rights;
- Stimulate and support the creation of LGBT-affinity groups;
- Promote respect to LGBT rights in communication and marketing; Promover o respeito aos direitos LGBT na comunicação e marketing;
- Promote respect of LGBT rights in the planning of products, services and customer service;
- Promote professional development action for the LGBT segment;
- Promote economic and social development of LGBT individuals in the value chain;
- Promote and support action towards LGBT rights in the community.

Source: Ethos, 2014

In conclusion, this means that not only have Americans already found, but also Brazilians are starting to understand, that a company which attracts, retains and develops all employees is a company that has the key to its business success. Creating a diverse workforce where people can be brought from all backgrounds together produces a more dynamic and cohesive team, and more innovative goods and services. It allows organizations to better represent the clients and their needs, and serve them more effectively. Seen at this perspective, diversity really does mean business.

#### 4. RESULTS

Annually, Editora Abril, through its magazine Exame, publishes a Guide of companies that act within Brazil which have distinguished themselves in the field of Sustainability. In the 2016 Sustainability Guide, 66 companies were listed, and they served as the basis for this study. Through consulting the websites of each company, the authors aimed to identify how committed Brazilian companies are to human rights and to the inclusion of LGBT minorities.

Once listed and ranked, the following stage would be to access each company's websites and checking for the ones that formally publish their human rights and diversity-promoting policies particularly including LGBT minorities. However, despite the general ranking of the Social Dimension Performance presented in the Guide, these authors have verified that the classification would have been different if the issue's editors had taken the equally publicized Human Rights indicator as their basis. In some cases, it has been verified that, despite the high performance in the Social Dimension, the corporate level of the Human Rights indicator is considered to be below average, which highlights a divergence between the practice and the perception of the Corporate Social Responsibility actions among the interviewed groups.

Thus, before moving to the corporate website research stage, the authors proposed a new ranking based on the 'above average', 'average', and 'below average' scale of the Human Rights indicator. The general and final classification of the listed companies in these new criteria is demonstrated as follows:

##### 4.1. Companies with an 'above average' comparative level in the Human Rights Indicator

Taking the Human Rights Indicator into account, 13 companies were considered to be 'above average'. The performance scores in the Social Dimension obtained by this group vary between 97.6 (being the highest among the 66 companies) and 82.1 (the lowest score in this group). From a total of 5 (five) of the listed companies in the Health segment, it is worth noting that only one of them is featured in the 'above average' chart of the Human Rights Indicator, specially being a medium-small sized company (SMC), as follows in Chart 1:

COMPANY	SECTOR	SCORE ON SOCIAL DIMENSION PERFORMANCE	COMPARATIVE LEVEL OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS INDICATOR
Laboratório Sabin (SMC)	Healthcare	97,6	above average
Celesc	Energy	93,8	above average
Basf	Chemical	93,1	above average
Klabin	Pulp and Paper	92,5	above average
Beraca (SMC)	Chemical	91,7	above average
Nestlé	Consumer Goods	90,5	above average
AES Brasil Energia	energy	89,1	above average
Weg	Capital Goods	88,6	above average
CPFL	Energy	87,6	above average
Precon Engenharia (SMC)	Civil Construction	87,0	above average
Novartis	Pharmaceuticals	84,3	above average
Unilever	Consumer Goods	83,2	above average
Duratex	Construction Material	82,1	above average

Chart 1: Companies listed according to the 'above average' comparative level of the Human Rights indicator

Source: 2016 Sustainability Guide, Revista Exame - Adapted by the authors.



Within the website of each organization, the research was made through accessing the Sustainability Reports and Code of Ethics, and by searching the keywords Human Rights, Diversity and LGBT. Out of the companies which ranked 'above average', only 3 (three) publish explicit policies that value diversity and inclusion of LGBT individuals in their internal groups.

In CELESC, an Energy sector company, the program Incentiva aims to ensure the compliance to laws and specific norms of inclusion and difference appreciation, including diversity in gender, race, sexual preference and age. In the company's perspective, diversity provides the Organization with a collective skill that enables the identification of new possibilities, solutions and perspectives for conducting business. The company claims to have policies that guarantee equality in treatment for all employees in the benefits offered by the company, and to possess internal means for harassment, discrimination and violence complaints against LGBT collaborators, which allows one to assume that the principles announced by the OHCHR have been well understood and put into practice by the CELESC managers.

In BASF, it is believed that diversity contributes to building a more inclusive environment. In their website, it is clear that the company values and respects the singularities, opinions and experiences of each collaborator. Being a participant of the Forum for Companies and LGBT Rights since 2013, it has signed the 10 Commitments for companies towards promoting LGBT rights and claims to be committed to fostering friendliness and inclusion in their workplaces. Such facts support the understanding that, once integrated and welcomed, the LGBT minority contributes positively to client relationship and to developing new ideas (CLARK, 2012; CAPRONI NETO et al, 2014).

Ranked 9th in the Social Dimension performance and formally committed to LGBT Human Rights, CPFL, from the Energy sector, also claims to believe that diversity creates conditions for innovation. Its main goal is to enforce an "organizational culture that expresses care and respect for others". In their Code of Ethics, it reiterates its rejection of all and any form of prejudice, discrimination and harassment, and it establishes its commitment to investigate and address "situations of inequality, humiliation, ridicule, intimidation, hostility and embarrassment on the grounds of color, race, gender, ethnic origin, language, age, economic status, nationality, physical mental or psychic state, kinship, religion, sexual orientation, ideology affiliation or political beliefs".

#### *4.2. Companies with an 'average' comparative level in the Human Rights Indicator*

The 'average' comparative level comprises 42 out of the 66 listed companies. This segment's relevance stems from the presence of 11 companies with higher performance scores in the Social Dimension than the previous score attributed to companies classified as 'above average'. This results in the conclusion that a company which ranks high in the Social Dimension performance may not be equally acknowledged in the Human Rights indicator and vice-versa - companies considered to be 'above average' in the Human Rights indicator not always rank high in the Social Dimension performance score.

By analysing the group, it can be inferred that Alcoa, from the Mining/Steel/Metallurgy industry, despite being among the six companies with the highest Social Dimension score, distinguishes itself among the 'average' ones in the Human Rights indicator, while Ultra, from Retail, is the company with the worst performance result in the Social Dimension, as demonstrated by Chart 2 below:

COMPANY	SECTOR	SCORE ON SOCIAL DIMENSION PERFORMANCE	COMPARATIVE LEVEL OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS INDICATOR
Alcoa	<i>Mining/Steel/Metallurgy</i>	90,6	average
Dow	<i>Chemicals</i>	88,8	average
Elektro	<i>Energy</i>	88,6	average
Votorantin Cimentos	<i>Construction Material</i>	86,6	average
Algar Telecom	<i>Telecommunications</i>	86,4	average
Grupo Volvo	<i>Automotive industry</i>	86,1	average
Zanzini (SMC)	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	85,8	average
Siemens	<i>Electronics</i>	85,6	average
EDP	<i>Energy</i>	85,2	average
Termotécnica	<i>Chemicals</i>	84,8	average
Enel	<i>Energy</i>	83,7	average
Embraco	<i>Electronics</i>	82,0	average
Cargill	<i>Automotive industry</i>	80,8	average
Bunge	<i>Agricultural business</i>	80,5	average
Fibria	<i>Pulp and Paper</i>	80,5	average
Hospital Sírio-Libanês	<i>Healthcare</i>	80,0	average
Copagaz	<i>Retail</i>	79,7	average
Natura	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	79,5	average
Grupo Rio Quente (SMC)	<i>Hotel</i>	79,3	average
Eurofarma	<i>Pharmaceuticals</i>	78,9	average
Itaú Unibanco	<i>Financial Institution</i>	77,6	average
Masisa	<i>Construction Material</i>	77,1	average
Santander	<i>Financial Institution</i>	76,7	average
HP	<i>Electronics</i>	76,6	average
Clareant	<i>Chemicals</i>	76,6	average
CCR	<i>Infrastructure</i>	76,3	average
EY	<i>Consulting/Management/IT</i>	76,0	average
Grupo BBB e Mapfre	<i>Financial Institution</i>	75,6	average
Avon	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	75,5	average
Amaggi	<i>Telecommunications</i>	75,3	average
Grupo Boticário	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	75,1	average
Telefonica Vivo	<i>Telecommunications</i>	75,0	average
Grupo Malwee	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	74,5	average
Votorantin Metais	<i>Mining/Steel/Metallurgy</i>	74,3	average
Yamana	<i>Mining/Steel/Metallurgy</i>	74,3	average
Baterias Moura	<i>Automotive industry</i>	74,0	average
Light	<i>Energy</i>	73,9	average
Brasil Kirin	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	73,4	average
White Martins	<i>Healthcare</i>	72,9	average
Ecorodovias	<i>Infrastructure</i>	72,4	average
Firmenich	<i>Chemicals</i>	71,2	average
Ultra	<i>Retail</i>	62,0	average

Chart 2: Companies listed according to the ‘average’ comparative level of the Human Rights Indicator

Source: 2016 Sustainability Guide, Revista Exame - Adapted by authors.

Out of the 42 companies listed under ‘average’, only 3 (three) present formal and explicit policies towards Human Rights and internal LGBT collaborators. DOW, a company in the Chemicals sector, claims to believe that “a company that is diverse in its experiences, points of view, cultures and talents is able to deliver equally varied solutions to society”. For this purpose, it keeps a Diversity and Inclusion Policy which “advocates for respect and appreciation of differences, prohibiting any discrimination on the grounds of gender, disability or sexual orientation”. According to the company, it has, for 15 years now, been pioneering the discussion of good practices for inclusion of LGBT individuals in the workplace. Moreover, the company provides equal civil and working rights for same-sex partners, acknowledges survival benefits for pension plans for LGBTs and offers benefits to transsexuals since 2010. For its commitment to the welfare of the LGBT community, DOW has received awards and acknowledgements in Brazil as well as abroad.

Natura, a company nationally regarded for its commitment to environmental issues, is ranked as ‘average’ in the Human Rights indicator, despite occupying the 32th place in the Social Dimension performance score. In their website, the company claims to celebrate the “beauty of diversity”. The only reference to LGBT human rights is the initiative of expanding the 40-day paternity leave for same sex couples since 2016.

On the other hand, White Martins’ website, despite not mentioning any action towards guaranteeing LGBT rights in internal groups, features an article by the O Globo newspaper, in its Boa Chance section, of 31/01/2016, which reports on how the company “has been mobilizing itself in the search for more diverse and inclusive work environments that welcome groups such as blacks, the disabled and LGBTs”. In the words of their CEO, White Martins has a high potential for change in terms of raising awareness, and it assures that a diverse workplace brings more innovation and representativeness.

#### 4.3. Companies in the ‘below average’ comparative level of the Human Rights Indicator

Eleven companies were considered to be ‘below average’ in the comparative level of the Human Rights indicator. It is worth noting that IBM, despite being featured in this group, possesses a higher Social Dimension performance score than the lowest one from the ‘above average’ group. Another point of interest observed was the fact that two Health-sector companies with Social Dimension performance scores higher than the last 12 which ranked ‘average’ have been ranked as ‘below average’ in the Human Rights dimension.

These conclusions allow one to infer that, having the OSR issues defined and the organization acknowledged as socially responsible does not necessarily imply that it is working towards the given social issue and guaranteeing Human Rights in the same way or in the same intensity.

Chart 3 contains the ranking of companies classified as ‘below average’ in the Human Rights indicator:

COMPANY	SECTOR	SCORE ON SOCIAL DIMENSION PERFORMANCE	COMPARATIVE LEVEL OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS INDICATOR
IBM	<i>Consulting/Management/IT</i>	82,2	below average
Schneider	<i>Electronics</i>	77,5	below average
Aperam	<i>Mining/Steel/Metallurgy</i>	76,3	below average
Grupo Fleury	<i>Healthcare</i>	76,0	below average
Hospital Albert Einstein	<i>Healthcare</i>	75,2	below average
DuKe Energy	<i>Energy</i>	74,7	below average
Novelis	<i>Mining/Steel/Metallurgy</i>	73,9	below average
Lojas Renner	<i>Retail</i>	70,2	below average
Whirlpool	<i>Energy</i>	69,6	below average
Ambev	<i>Consumer Goods</i>	69,1	below average
Even	<i>Civil Construction</i>	65,8	below average

Chart 3: Companies listed according to the 'below average' comparative level on the Human Rights indicator

Source: 2016 Sustainability Guide, Revista Exame -Adapted by authors.

If the low scores of companies in this group are found to be strange, it is necessary to point out that most formal publications of inclusion and diversity policies with LGBT particularities are from companies featured in this group. There are 4 (four) companies in this group which explicitly publish inclusion policies in their websites.

By surfing on the Corporate Citizenship page in the IBM website, one can read that the appreciation of diversity integrates a global program that involves internal and external groups. With the creation of Diversity Committees, including the LGBT group, initiatives are created for offering opportunities for "all to work towards ending any type of prejudice within the company". IBM is regarded as the first Information Technology (IT) company in Brazil to have recognized the civil union of same-sex couples.

Schneider Electric, in the Electronics segment, announced in December 2016 the launch of a program with inclusion and diversity-promoting activities. It has publicly signed to the 10 commitments proposed by the Forum of Companies and LGBT Rights for its internal group. The actions envision a series of activities that aim to promote the inclusion of these groups, as well as the engagement of all collaborators in discussing the theme. According to the managers, diversity is a priority theme for the company and it is essential for the satisfaction of its collaborators. They note that "an environment that welcomes diversity favors innovation" is a fundamental ingredient for the competitiveness of the company in the market, as stated by Kiessling & Harvey (2005).

In the website of the Lojas Renner, in its Diversity page, it can be read that the "managers and collaborators, regardless of hierarchical position, take the commitment of respecting diversity, exercising their roles based on ethical behavior, without prejudice based on origin, race, gender, color, age, or any other forms of discrimination".

The second last company listed as 'below average' in the Human Rights indicator and third last in the Social Dimension score, AMBEV states that its LAGER (Lesbian and Gay and Everyone Respected) is a "group responsible for promoting a work environment in which people can be themselves". This stance enforces the commitment it has signed with the Forum of Companies and LGBT Rights to respecting and promoting the human rights of these minorities and influencing the corporate environment and society on the theme.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has aimed to identify how Brazilian companies nationally established in Sustainability promote their commitment towards appreciation and inclusion of LGBT minorities in their employ.

The results of the analysis suggests that, out of the 66 Brazilian companies listed in the 2016 sustainability Guide, the pool used for this research, just over 15% express in their websites, in the field of Social Responsibility and/or Human Rights, formal and explicit practices for promoting LGBT rights. It has been likewise evidenced that the numerical representativeness of the companies that do publish these practices has not significantly oscillated in the three levels of classification ('above average', 'average', and 'below average'), even with the proportional distinction of 'below average' companies in the Human Rights indicator, 30.7% of which having explicit publications.

It can be stated, therefore, that corporations which adopt the same behaviors, being socially responsible by stakeholders, do not have the same meaning in people's view. In other words, being Social Responsible does not mean that an organization cares for the Human Rights of the minorities as it is supposed to be. Likewise, despite the abundance of documents and pertinent initiatives for promoting citizenship, inclusion and decreasing homophobia, the political struggle and uncertainties deriving from the non-existence or

from the insufficient normative force of the rights of LGBT minorities still require development and effective consolidation.

However, it must be stressed that there are positive aspects that were observed among the national companies that do promote the inclusion of these groups, especially when such inclusion derives from the managerial perception that, once incorporated, these workers aid in the construction of a promising work environment by adding to individual and collective skills and to innovative initiatives, thereby feeding back the company and society, a principle observed among some authors on the literature review.

The review of the assorted literature and results obtained with the research conducted in this article demonstrated that, not just in Brazil, but in the United States, the discussion of LGBT minority inclusion in companies and the actions effectively implemented are still incipient and require more acceptance from those who advocate against inclusive diversity, defending heteronormative discourses, despite the availability of significant publications for years.

Therefore, it can be concluded that appreciating the human and intellectual capital of a company by including demanding minorities, perceiving them as a competitive advantage in business, is a new challenge for managers, since they are the ones in charge of promoting the appropriate environment for the development of talents originating from people of diverse sexual preferences.

Aligned to the organizational and strategic issue of corporate social responsibility practiced by companies, the theme tackled by this article, the issue of inclusion of LGBT minorities in Brazilian companies analyzed from the source data material for this research has demonstrated the relevance of the investigation, since the study reveals a gap between what the theory advocates for and what Brazilian companies actually practice.

For future research, it is suggested that other indicators be analysed, as well as in other fields, so that a wider perspective on the theme of inclusion of LGBT minorities can be brought to light for various societies, not just in companies, an environment in which new challenges, relationship arrangements and social interactions are constantly posed, but also in other fields of the lives of men as social beings.

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