

BETWEEN DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE: (IN)EFFECTIVENESS OF INCLUSIVE POLICIES FOR LGBTQIAPN+ PEOPLE IN COMPANIES

ENTRE O DISCURSO E A PRÁTICA: (IN)EFETIVIDADE DAS POLÍTICAS INCLUSIVAS PARA PESSOAS LGBTQIAPN+ NAS EMPRESAS

ENTRE EL DISCURSO Y LA PRÁCTICA: (IN)EFECTIVIDAD DE LAS POLÍTICAS INCLUSIVAS PARA PERSONAS LGBTQIAPN+ EN LAS EMPRESAS

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Abstract: This article aims to investigate public policies and organizational practices directed toward the inclusion and exclusion of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in companies located in northern Minas Gerais, Brazil. The study sought to identify the main challenges faced by this population and to understand how inclusive practices can benefit both individuals and the workplace. A qualitative method with an exploratory, cross-sectional approach was used. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with LGBTQIAPN+ employees and former employees from companies in the region. Data were interpreted through Pêcheux's Discourse Analysis, enabling a detailed understanding of participants' statements and the identification of patterns and recurring themes related to inclusion and exclusion in the workplace. The results show that the organizational climate strongly influences the acceptance or marginalization of these individuals, especially in environments with rigid corporate cultures resistant to diversity. Although some companies adopt inclusive policies, many fail to implement them consistently, generating dissatisfaction. Empathic listening and respect for individual experiences were essential to understanding the emotional impact of exclusion. The study reinforces the importance of corporate environments that welcome diverse identities with respect and authenticity.

Keywords: Diversity; Equity and inclusion; Sexual and gender minorities; Organizations; Organizational culture.

Resumo: Este artigo visa a investigar as políticas públicas e as práticas organizacionais voltadas para a inclusão e exclusão de pessoas LGBTQIAPN+ em empresas do norte de Minas Gerais. Buscou-se identificar as principais dificuldades enfrentadas por esse público e de que forma as práticas inclusivas podem beneficiar tanto os indivíduos quanto o ambiente de trabalho como um todo. Para esse fim, utilizou-se o método qualitativo com abordagem exploratória e em corte transversal. Foram realizadas dez entrevistas, a partir de um roteiro semiestruturado, com a participação de colaboradoras(es) e ex-colaboradoras(es) LGBTQIAPN+ de empresas da região. Os dados foram interpretados a partir dos princípios da Análise do Discurso de Pêcheux, que permitiu uma compreensão detalhada das falas das pessoas entrevistadas para identificar padrões e temas recorrentes relacionados à inclusão e à exclusão no ambiente de trabalho. Os resultados evidenciam que o clima organizacional tem forte influência na aceitação ou marginalização dessas pessoas, principalmente em locais com culturas empresariais rígidas e resistentes à diversidade. Apesar de algumas empresas adotarem políticas inclusivas, muitas não as aplicam de forma coerente, o que gera insatisfação. A escuta empática e o respeito às vivências individuais foram fundamentais para se compreender o impacto emocional da exclusão. O estudo reforça a importância de ambientes corporativos que acolham identidades diversas com respeito e autenticidade.

Palavras-chave: Diversidade; Igualdade e inclusão; Minorias sexuais e de gênero; Organizações; Cultura organizacional.



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Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo investigar las políticas públicas y las prácticas organizacionales orientadas a la inclusión y exclusión de las personas LGBTQIAPN+ en empresas del norte de Minas Gerais. Se buscó identificar las principales dificultades enfrentadas por este grupo y de qué manera las prácticas inclusivas pueden beneficiar tanto a las personas como al entorno laboral en su conjunto. Para ello, se utilizó un método cualitativo con enfoque exploratorio y de corte transversal. Se realizaron diez entrevistas a partir de un guion semiestructurado, con la participación de colaboradoras(es) y excolaboradoras(es) LGBTQIAPN+ de empresas de la región. Los datos fueron interpretados a partir de los principios del Análisis del Discurso de Pêcheux, lo que permitió una comprensión detallada de los discursos de las personas entrevistadas para identificar patrones y temas recurrentes relacionados con la inclusión y la exclusión en el entorno laboral. Los resultados evidencian que el clima organizacional tiene una fuerte influencia en la aceptación o marginación de estas personas, especialmente en contextos con culturas empresariales rígidas y resistentes a la diversidad. Aunque algunas empresas adoptan políticas inclusivas, muchas no las implementan de manera coherente, lo que genera insatisfacción. La escucha empática y el respeto por las experiencias individuales fueron fundamentales para comprender el impacto emocional de la exclusión. El estudio refuerza la importancia de entornos corporativos que acojan identidades diversas con respeto y autenticidad.

Palabras clave: Diversidad; Igualdad e inclusión; Minorías sexuales y de género; Organizaciones; Cultura organizacional.

Introduction

The contemporary organizational environment faces significant challenges related to diversity, particularly regarding the inclusion of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals. Recognizing the variety of gender identities and sexual orientations in the workplace is not only an ethical imperative, but also a strategic element for developing more equitable, innovative, and collaborative corporate environments. Research shows that companies implementing inclusive policies for LGBTQIAPN+ employees not only increase worker satisfaction but also stand out in innovation and performance (Cascardo, 2024).

Despite advances in public policies and institutional regulations, labor relations still reveal symbolic and structural forms of exclusion that directly affect the organizational climate. According to the LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work Survey (Deloitte, 2023), approximately 57% of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviors in the workplace, feeling exposed to situations of professional exclusion. A significant portion chose not to report such practices due to fear of retaliation. Furthermore, only 25% of LGBTQIAPN+ people were able to secure formal employment in the previous year — an indicator of the substantial barriers faced by the queer community in accessing the labor market (Lima, 2024).

In this context, topics such as diversity, equity, and inclusion have gained increasing relevance, fueling discussions across multiple fields of knowledge worldwide. These debates reflect decades of social mobilization and demands from civil society. Consequently, issues such as racism, ableism, sexism, and LGBTphobia have been addressed in various spheres of social life, as they affect not only corporate environments but the whole society. Thus, the debate on diversity and inclusion is closely tied to broader social changes (Teixeira et al., 2021).

Gender diversity directly impacts organizational culture by introducing different perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. The organizational climate — understood as the combination of perceptions, values, and attitudes shaping the work environment — is influenced by gender diversity and affects employees' well-being and productivity. However, many organizations still struggle to promote genuine inclusion. Women and individuals with non-normative gender identities often face invisible barriers, such as unconscious bias and lack of advancement opportunities (Bispo, 2023).

Understanding how gender affects the organizational climate is therefore crucial not only for promoting gender equity, but also for maximizing human potential within companies. It is equally important to explore how stereotypes shape expected workplace behaviors and limit the full participation of different groups in certain roles and functions.

Furthermore, understanding how exclusion operates and how the presence (or absence) of inclusive practices shapes the daily experiences of LGBTQIAPN+ employees is essential. Thus, this article aims to

analyze the dynamics of gender-based inclusion and exclusion in companies in northern Minas Gerais, identifying existing challenges, coping strategies adopted by individuals, and the role of organizations in promoting a more inclusive work environment.

Materials and Methods

This qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive study sought to understand social phenomena involving gender identities and sexual orientations within organizational contexts. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who self-identified as LGBTQIAPN+ and who currently work or previously worked in companies in northern Minas Gerais, Brazil. Participants were selected through intentional sampling, with invitations distributed via social media and in person. Those who agreed to participate accessed an online form created on Google Forms.

Data collection was divided into two phases. The first included the Free and Informed Consent Form and a sociodemographic questionnaire, with the approval to continue the research. The second consisted of a semi-structured interview addressing experiences of discrimination, perceptions of organizational respect for gender identity and/or sexual orientation, the presence or absence of diversity policies, interactions with colleagues and leadership, coping strategies, feelings of belonging or isolation, and the impact of organizational culture on mental health and professional performance.

Interviews were conducted remotely, according to participants' availability. They were asked to choose a private, quiet location to ensure confidentiality. To preserve anonymity, participants were identified using alphanumeric codes (P1, P2, P3, etc.). All potentially identifiable information was removed during transcription.

Data were analyzed using Michel Pêcheux's Discourse Analysis, which enabled the identification of meanings produced by participants and highlighted tensions between institutional discourse and everyday practices (Brasil, 2011).

The study followed the guidelines of Resolutions No. 466/2012 and 510/2016 of the Brazilian National Health Council. All participants signed the Informed Consent, and the research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Centro Universitário Funorte, under Opinion No. 7.486.341, issued on March 22, 2025.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the interviews allowed for the identification of multiple experiences related to gender inclusion and exclusion in the organizational environment. In this process, based on the content of the reports, four main categories were constructed according to the thematic cores that emerged from the participants' discourses: (1) Symbolic inclusion and institutional discourse; (2) Subtle and structural expressions of exclusion; (3) Gender, power, and legitimacy in hierarchical relationships; and (4) Resistance, coping strategies, and support networks.

Based on the reports, it became evident how the corporate environment can function both as a space of potential inclusion and as a site for reinforcing symbolic and structural forms of violence against LGBTQIAPN+ individuals. These people are socially classified as sexual minorities not merely due to their numerical representation, but, above all, because heterosexuality has been historically constructed and naturalized as an enforced social norm. As problematized by Rich (1980), heterosexuality operates as a normative and compulsory regime that regulates bodies, affections, and relationships, producing the marginalization of identities and desires that deviate from this norm. In this sense, the analyzed experiences reveal how such a heteronormative pattern permeates everyday organizational life, guiding practices, discourses, and hierarchies, as will be discussed throughout this section.

It is important to emphasize that the term "minority" should not be understood from a strictly numerical perspective, but rather as a social and political category. It refers to social minorities, that is, groups that, regardless of their quantitative representation, occupy subordinated positions within power relations and have been historically marginalized, stigmatized, or deprived of full access to rights, recognition, and social

legitimacy.

In this context, LGBTQIAPN+ individuals are classified as a minority not because they are numerically smaller, but because they are embedded in a social structure that privileges heteronormativity and cisgender identity as dominant standards. Consequently, these individuals may face various forms of social harm, such as prejudice, discrimination, and both symbolic and material exclusion, with impacts extending across different spheres of life, including work, family relationships, social interactions, and physical and mental health. For LGBTQIAPN+ sexual minorities, culture constitutes a space of resistance and visibility for their demands for fundamental rights, including personal rights, which are often denied by the cis-heterosexual majority (Mazaro; Cardin, 2024, p. 2136).

Hence, it becomes evident that organizational environments, by ignoring or naturalizing discriminatory practices, contribute to the maintenance of structural inequalities. As highlighted by Figueira et al. (2023, p. 125), "it was observed through the action carried out and the theoretical research that the consequences of prejudice experienced in the workplace are numerous, impacting, including, mental health." This finding underscores that the psychological suffering generated by exclusionary corporate environments extends beyond the professional sphere, directly affecting individuals' quality of life. Therefore, it is essential to re-think institutional practices to promote a truly inclusive culture, ensuring not only representation but also the well-being and recognition of dissident bodies and identities.

Symbolic inclusion and institutional discourse

Although many companies have adopted diversity and inclusion policies, it is evident that these actions often remain merely symbolic. In practice, there is a clear mismatch between institutional discourse and concrete actions. This ultimately weakens genuine commitment to organizational transformation, characterizing what has been termed "performative inclusion," which focuses solely on institutional reputation and marketing, without producing real structural changes (Ferreira, 2024).

The accounts of the professionals who participated in the study clearly reveal this gap between what is advocated and what is practiced, as can be observed in P1's statement:

Well, and I have already witnessed things like: 'Oh, she must be on her period.' 'Oh, she is very sensitive...' So, like, though it is a company that has this appreciation of the illusion of diversity, there are still people who promote this discourse of gender inequality and value more men, straight, cis.

This statement reveals how gender stereotypes continue to circulate freely, even in organizations that officially claim to be committed to equity. Through this account, it becomes evident that organizational culture remains permeated by misogynistic attitudes, invisible to management but highly visible and impactful in the daily experiences of those who endure them. This reality is further illustrated in another excerpt from P1's report, which highlights the subtle yet corrosive nature of certain behaviors: "And then I remember saying like: 'Wow, but I'm not going to get a lollipop.' He said: 'Well, if you want, I can give you my lollipop.' And then it was something that everyone realized there was something malicious behind what he said."

This account demonstrates how corporate environments can become sites of microaggressions, malicious remarks, and so-called jokes that reinforce inequalities related to gender, power, and respect. Even when such actions do not directly target a specific individual, they affect the entire group to which that individual belongs, generating an organizational climate that limits belonging and reinforces inequality. These experiences indicate that, although diversity-oriented initiatives exist, they do not necessarily ensure recognition, appreciation, or professional advancement for historically marginalized groups.

Therefore, it is undeniable that Brazilian companies must move beyond discourse and implement concrete, continuous, and structural actions that promote genuine inclusion. This includes the creation of dedicated departments with autonomy and resources, the genuine engagement of leadership, the establishment of clear and measurable goals, and the development of an organizational culture that not only tolerates, but

actively values diversity in all its dimensions, including gender, race, sexual orientation, and gender identity, among others.

In this regard, Garollo and Silva (2024, p. 45) point out that, although many organizations recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion, significant gaps remain in policies related to gender, racial recruitment, and support for people with disabilities. This highlights the need for a more effective and structured commitment from companies to promote truly inclusive environments. Similarly, Lima et al. (2022, p. 6) emphasize that public environments still reproduce heteronormative patterns and that “the discrimination experienced by LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in public spaces reflects the absence of inclusive policies, directly affecting their mental health and well-being.”

Thus, only through real and continuous commitment will it be possible to overcome symbolic inclusion and achieve effective and lasting transformation in corporate environments, ensuring not only representation but also dignity and equity for all professionals.

Subtle and structural expressions of exclusion

Contemporary forms of exclusion in the workplace go beyond explicit acts of discrimination, often manifesting through microaggressions or subtle and everyday expressions that perpetuate structural inequalities. These manifestations, frequently naturalized under the guise of “jokes” or “harmless comments,” reveal organizational dynamics that disqualify dissident identities and reinforce normative standards of gender and sexuality (Machado, 2024).

An emblematic example of this reality is the inappropriate use of transgender individuals’ chosen names. Although institutional policies may formally recognize the use of a chosen name, in practice there is often recurring disrespect toward individuals’ gender identities, as reported by P3: “The company said it accepted the chosen name, but they kept referring the person ‘he’. This behavior highlights the discrepancy between institutional discourse and everyday practice, resulting in symbolic violence that undermines the dignity and well-being of transgender professionals (Zimmer; Santos; Nascimento, 2023).

Moreover, sexual orientation is frequently used as a marker of fragility, perpetuating harmful stereotypes. Participant P2, for instance, reported hearing a colleague say: “‘Don’t joke with him like that because he is gay,’ as if that was a fragility.” Such comments reinforce the association between masculinity and strength while attributing vulnerability to sexual dissidence, thereby sustaining a normative model that marginalizes non-hegemonic identities (Sales; Bezerra; Agra, 2024).

Gender dimension is also shaped by discourses that perpetuate stereotypes about women in the workplace, as illustrated by P1: “Oh, that coordinator is like that because she is on her period, she is very sensitive.” Statements of this nature, grounded in gender stigma, delegitimize women’s professional performance by reducing their behavior to biological factors, suggesting that their presence in leadership positions is incompatible with rationality and stability, attributes historically associated with masculinity (Maia; Quirino, 2021).

Furthermore, the imposition of norms of conduct and expression that render dissident sexual identities invisible has significant effects on the psychological well-being of LGBTQIAPN+ workers. In one account, P2 stated: “My boyfriend, that I told you about, for a long time, he had to hold himself back, you know? He couldn’t express himself at work, he couldn’t be who he was, he couldn’t talk openly with someone.” This experience reveals that identity surveillance is not occasional, but systematic, as further illustrated in another excerpt: “For a long time, from what he told me, he had to hide, you know? Because they made sexist jokes, gags, because, well, we are in a group of men.”

These statements demonstrate how organizational culture is permeated by a logic of complicity with objectification and exclusion, in which belonging to certain groups is conditioned upon conformity with misogynistic and homophobic practices (Sales; Bezerra; Agra, 2024). However, such practices are not merely incidental: they are embedded in a structural logic that denies dissident subjectivity, requiring individuals to constantly self-regulate and censor their expression. The lack of full recognition of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations reinforces marginalization and negatively impacts not only professional performance

but, above all, the psychological, emotional, and existential well-being of workers (Machado, 2024; Maia; Quirino, 2021).

Thus, recognizing these subtle forms of violence as part of a broader organizational structure is a fundamental condition for promoting inclusion policies that are genuinely transformative rather than merely rhetorical. Deconstructing these mechanisms requires more than institutional campaigns: it demands profound changes in organizational culture, in how subjects and their relationships are constituted, and in an active commitment to equity across all spheres of corporate life.

Gender, power, and legitimacy in hierarchical relations

Power structures within organizations continue to privilege cis-heteronormative masculinities, hindering both the advancement and legitimacy of women and LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in leadership positions. Even when these individuals attain positions of authority, they often encounter resistance in having their decisions recognized as legitimate, frequently being subjected to stricter scrutiny and selective listening.

The sexual division of labor, for instance, extends beyond the distribution of tasks, manifesting also in the valuation of voices and the occupation of leadership spaces. In this regard, P1 reported: "I also noticed this need for them to be more objective, it almost gets to the point of rudeness so that they can be heard or needing that their request be reinforced by a man." This account highlights the need for women to perform authority more intensely in order to gain recognition, a demand that generates additional emotional strain and reflects the psychosocial costs faced by female professionals.

In this context, the intersection between gender and power emerges as a central axis in corporate hierarchical relationships. Even when individuals perform their roles competently, they still face situations in which they must conform to specific social expectations to access higher-level positions, as emphasized by P3: "We have to delegate functions and, like, I saw that she delegated a task to an employee and he did not do it, the person did not respect her at that moment." This reality points to the existence of what P4 describes as a "patriarchal brotherhood that keeps cis men in positions of power," perpetuating the masculinization of authority.

Additionally, institutional resistance to diversity becomes evident when complaints of disrespect are not properly addressed. Regarding this issue, P5 shared: "We would send complaints to HR, but nothing would happen. [...] The priority is profit. [...] We try to deal with it internally, like, by arguing, but that's the only way it works." This illustrates how hierarchical structures and economic dependency hinder the implementation of meaningful changes.

Most individuals are positioned in operational or mid-level roles, where networking plays a crucial role in professional advancement, as noted by P1: "...it worked a lot based on networking, so, to take someone down, it takes more than your bad experiences." This dynamic reinforces the exclusion of individuals who do not belong to privileged circles of power, such as women and LGBTQIAPN+ groups.

The experiences reported by participants in this study align with the literature on the sexual division of labor and the masculinization of authority. Several studies indicate that leadership continues to be associated with cis-heterosexual masculinity, and the underrepresentation of women and LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in leadership roles reflects institutional resistance to diversity. As an illustration, according to the Women in Business 2025 report, only 34% of leadership positions in mid-sized companies worldwide are held by women, demonstrating that gender equality remains distant (Grant Thornton Brasil, 2023).

In Brazil, the situation is similar. A survey by Folha de S. Paulo revealed that 58% of Brazilian companies have no women in leadership positions, and only 14.7% of leadership roles are occupied by women (Garcia; Ungaretti; Beneducci, 2022). Furthermore, black women face additional barriers, resulting in even greater underrepresentation in top leadership positions (SGP, 2024). In line with these findings, Carvalho (2023) notes that gay and lesbian leaders often experience tensions between identity and professional performance, being required to modulate their behavior to meet normative expectations within corporate environments. Consequently, the need for constant adaptation may lead to significant emotional strain and a sense of non-belonging within organizations.

This reality is further compounded by the discrepancy between discourse and effective action on the part of companies, which intersects with what Irineu (2025) identifies as “diversity marketing,” in which organizations project an inclusive image in professional networks while failing to transform internal power structures. According to the author, even in the presence of inclusive discourse, symbolic discriminatory practices persist, while experiences of exclusion – such as the silencing of dissident voices and the obstruction of professional advancement – remain part of the everyday lives of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals and women.

Therefore, it is crucial that organizations adopt concrete policies to promote gender equity and diversity within their hierarchical structures. This includes the implementation of mentorship programs, the establishment of clear diversity goals for senior management, and the strengthening of retention policies for female and LGBTQIAPN+ talent. Only through structured actions will it be possible to overcome existing barriers and build more inclusive and equitable work environments.

Resistance, coping strategies, and support networks

Despite these challenges, LGBTQIAPN+ individuals and women develop various strategies of resistance and coping to deal with exclusion in the workplace. These strategies include the creation of support networks, the reporting of discriminatory behaviors, and the adoption of assertive postures to affirm their identity and competence. In this sense, the planning of action and resistance presented by these individuals aligns with Barbiero (2024, p. 5), for whom “the construction of solidarity and mutual care offers a pathway for mobilization and survival in times of crisis.” Such initiatives are essential for promoting more inclusive corporate environments and reducing the stressors associated with marginalization resulting from insufficiently addressed discriminatory practices.

In this context, despite the environment of exclusion and stress, the reports also reveal forms of active resistance, as illustrated in the following statements:

“I see myself in the need to always be ahead to prove my capacity” (P3).

“In these environments, I learned very fast and maybe it is wrong, probably, but I learned very early that if I don’t put a posture, like very manly, that man that is expected, probably people will not listen to me” (P5).

“And then like, you could see the difference when we spoke harshly, also speaking harshly with the guys and the respect they treated us, and you could see the difference, if we gave a little sign that we are gay or something like that, stop there, when the signal changed their posture changed completely” (P5).

The strategies adopted by the participants range from the adoption of more assertive and forceful behaviors, such as “speaking harshly,” to the use of formal complaint channels and the construction of peer support networks. These coping mechanisms not only enable individuals to remain within corporate environments, but also foster senses of belonging and mutual recognition, which are essential for maintaining the mental health of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals and women in oppressive contexts. Furthermore, social support functions as a protective factor that can mediate the effects of stressors and reinforce feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem, even in the face of institutional adversity.

To academically support the discussion on resistance and coping strategies adopted by LGBTQIAPN+ individuals and women in the workplace, it is relevant to refer to Ordinance No. 88, of February 27, 2024 (Brazil, Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, 2024), which establishes the National Strategy for Decent Work, Education, and Income Generation for LGBTQIAPN+ People. This public policy aims to promote inclusion and combat discrimination in the labor market, as highlighted by Froemming and Larrat (2024):

Published in February 2024 (Ordinance No. 88 of February 27, 2024), the National Strategy for Decent Work, implemented by the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, is a social public

policy aimed at promoting the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals for their integration into the worlds of work, education, and income generation (Froemming; Larrat, 2024, n.p.).

This initiative acknowledges the historical exclusion faced by LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in educational spaces and in the formal labor market, proposing intersectoral actions to foster the economic and social autonomy of this group. However, to better understand experiences of active resistance in the workplace, it is also important to consider studies that examine these individuals' experiences in professional contexts. For instance, Wassouf Jr. et al. (2025) investigated the experiences of LGBTQIAPN+ developers in agile software development teams³, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and safe environments for the well-being and productivity of these professionals.

In line with this perspective, the importance of such environments is reaffirmed in the statements of the participants in this study, which demonstrate how exclusion can operate even in contexts that claim to be inclusive. P1, for example, notes: "Even though it is a company that has this appreciation, of the illusion of diversity, there are still people who promote this discourse of gender inequality and value more men, straight, cis." And he adds: "I have already witnessed things like: 'Oh, she must be on her period. Oh, she is very sensitive'. So, even though most of the management there is female, this difference in treatment is still very explicit."

P2 also highlights how stereotypes shape inclusion experiences: "The LGBT public, especially the gay man, he doesn't even try to enter this path, we are kind of biased to choose some paths more directed to fashion, beauty." Meanwhile, P3, a transgender woman, emphasizes that acceptance is often superficial:

I saw that she was prevented from doing some things, up to a certain point, in quotes, let's say, commanding, because today, in our role, we have to delegate functions and like, I already saw, right, witnessed, where she delegated a task to an employee and he did not do it. So, like, I saw that it was not because the person didn't want to do it. It was because the person did not respect her at that moment, did not respect her as a person at that moment.

P4, in turn, points out the limits of inclusion policies in private companies: "This policy is only to get a job, not for that person to develop inside there. So, she is only included, you know? She does not have the chance to grow."

These accounts demonstrate that resistance often occurs in subtle ways, through everyday actions that challenge an organizational culture still marked by hierarchies of gender and sexuality. It is precisely in this space, between institutional discourse and lived experience, that the need for genuine and transformative inclusion becomes most evident.

Final Considerations

This study highlighted the multiple forms of exclusion and resistance experienced by LGBTQIAPN+ individuals within organizational settings in the northern region of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The interviews revealed discriminatory practices, such as the misuse of social names, derogatory jokes, hierarchical invisibilization, and barriers to career advancement, reflecting both symbolic and structural mechanisms of marginalization.

From this perspective, although diversity and inclusion initiatives exist, many are superficial and oriented more toward institutional marketing than toward the genuine transformation of power structures. In this sense, the absence of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals and women in leadership and decision-making positions reinforces exclusion and undermines the mental health of these professionals, perpetuating normative frameworks.

³ In organizational contexts, the term *agile teams* do not refer exclusively to speed or rapid delivery, but rather to an approach grounded in values and principles that prioritize people, interactions, and collaboration among team members, as well as the continuous delivery of value. This perspective underscores the centrality of safe, inclusive, and respectful work environments as a condition for performance and innovation.

Despite these challenges, relevant forms of resistance emerge, expressed through demands for affirmative action, the formal reporting of discriminatory practices, and the development of peer support networks. These strategies demonstrate the agency and capacity for reconfiguration among these individuals, even within organizational contexts marked by exclusion and inequality. However, such coping mechanisms largely arise as responses to the organizations' own shortcomings in fostering genuinely inclusive environments.

Beyond these individual and collective initiatives, the study identified a persistent structural tension between institutional discourses of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the concrete practices adopted by organizations. Although public policies aimed at the inclusion and retention of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in the labor market exist, such as Ordinance No. 88/2024, effective inclusion in everyday organizational life remains limited, particularly due to the absence, fragility, or low institutionalization of sustained internal actions. For instance, there is often a lack of continuous training and awareness programs for leaders and teams, insufficiently accessible and trustworthy reporting channels, weak accountability mechanisms for discriminatory practices, and the absence of indicators to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such policies.

Within this scenario, inclusive initiatives tend to be restricted to sporadic, symbolic, or reactive actions, often mobilized only in response to conflicts, complaints, or external pressures, without producing substantive transformations in organizational culture or existing power structures. As a result, microaggressions, symbolic exclusions, and institutional barriers persist, disproportionately affecting trans women, bisexual individuals, and other identities that diverge from heteronormativity. This dynamic reinforces, in the everyday experiences of these workers, the gap between institutional discourse on inclusion and the practices effectively lived in corporate spaces.

Therefore, it can be concluded that organizational change depends on robust institutional actions and the construction of a critical, horizontal organizational culture committed to social justice. To achieve this, it is necessary to move beyond symbolic inclusion and promote equity that is materially realized through the adoption of structured and sustained internal policies.

Among such measures, the following may be highlighted: the implementation of ongoing training and awareness programs for leadership and teams on diversity and human rights; the creation of accessible and secure reporting and listening channels, accompanied by clear accountability mechanisms; the critical review of recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, and career progression processes to mitigate structural biases; the adaptation of internal policies to recognize gender identity, social names, and gender expression; and the systematic monitoring of indicators related to diversity, retention, turnover, and career advancement.

Furthermore, the active involvement of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in the design, implementation, and evaluation of organizational diversity policies constitutes a central element in ensuring that such initiatives move beyond discourse and produce effective transformations in institutional dynamics. Thus, this study contributes to debates on work and diversity by emphasizing the urgency of transforming discourse into practice, recognition into valuation, and symbolic inclusion into effective participation.

Finally, future research may further explore intersectionality and the concrete impact of public policies on the lives of these professionals. As a limitation, it is important to note that, as a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive study, the findings cannot be generalized to other organizational contexts. Additionally, the intentional and regionally bounded sample limits the scope of the conclusions. Therefore, further studies employing quantitative or mixed methods, across different sectors and regions, are recommended to compare patterns, assess the effectiveness of public policies, and deepen the understanding of intersectionality in the everyday work experiences of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals.

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