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**STUDY OF THE PERCEPTION OF INCLUSION OF EMPLOYEES
RECRUITED BY EXCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESSES**

SÃO PAULO

2021

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Thesis presented to Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo of Fundação Getulio Vargas, as a requirement to obtain the title of Master in International Management (MPGI).

Knowledge Field: Internationalization of Companies

Adviser: Prof. Dr. Ligia Maura Costa

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ABSTRACT

As a key element towards social progress, enhancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace have been the main subject of many management approaches over the last decades. One of the most recent illustration of such tendency are exclusive recruitment processes. Exclusive recruitment processes are recruitment processes organized by organizations and opened for candidates who identify with one or several diversity criteria: women, black, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities... (among the most common ones). Only people identifying with the criteria will be able to apply for the position and participate to the interviews. The Brazilian employment market has been a pioneer in the organization of such practices often leading to numerous controversies or public debates around the morality or alleged efficiency of such programs. Nevertheless, as few research was focusing on the perception of inclusion of the people who had participated to exclusive recruitment programs, the role of this study is to give an overview and analysis of this set of perception to understand the true impacts of such processes on workers' feelings.

A qualitative method was used to interview six different Brazilians who had all participated in exclusive recruitment processes to enter their current positions and corresponded to a representative sample of the reality of exclusive processes to date. The results reflect the views of those who participated to exclusive recruitment processes and not companies' perspectives. The results show that participants of the study were unanimously positive regarding their perception of inclusion in the company not only at work but in their interactions with other colleagues. No major pattern of discrimination has been identified in the case of workers who participated in exclusive recruitment programs. To the contrary, results tend to show that workers tend to feel better in their companies if they entered through a program which celebrated their diversity. Finally, the findings reveal that the phenomenon is growing in Brazil giving access to the employment market to previously excluded or under-represented communities in a country with deep structural inequalities.

KEY WORDS: Diversity, Inclusion, Recruitment processes, Affirmative action

RESUMO

Como elemento chave para o progresso social, a diversidade e a inclusão no local de trabalho têm sido o tema principal de muitas abordagens de gestão nas últimas décadas. Uma das ilustrações mais recentes de tal tendência são processos de recrutamento exclusivos. Processos de recrutamento exclusivos são processos de recrutamento realizados por organizações e abertos a candidatos que se identificam com um ou vários critérios de diversidade: mulheres, negros, LGBTQIA+, pessoas com deficiência, dentre outros. Somente pessoas que se identificam com os critérios poderão se candidatar ao cargo e participar das entrevistas. O mercado de trabalho brasileiro tem sido pioneiro na organização de tais práticas, levando frequentemente a numerosas controvérsias ou debates públicos em torno da moralidade ou eficiência de tais programas. No entanto, como poucas pesquisas estavam realmente focalizadas na percepção concreta da inclusão das pessoas que haviam participado de programas exclusivos de recrutamento, o papel deste estudo é dar uma visão geral e análise deste conjunto de percepção para compreender os verdadeiros impactos de tais processos sobre os sentimentos dos funcionários.

Um método qualitativo foi utilizado para entrevistar seis brasileiros que haviam participado de diferentes processos de recrutamento exclusivo para ingressar em seus cargos atuais. Essa amostra é representativa da realidade de processos exclusivos no panorama brasileiro hoje. Os resultados refletem as opiniões daqueles que participaram de processos de recrutamento exclusivos e não as opiniões das empresas mencionadas. Os resultados mostram que os participantes do estudo foram unanimemente positivos em relação a sua percepção de inclusão na empresa, não apenas no trabalho, mas em suas interações com outros colegas. Nenhum padrão importante de discriminação foi identificado no caso de funcionários que participaram de programas exclusivos de recrutamento. Pelo contrário, os resultados tendem a mostrar que os funcionários se sentem melhor em suas empresas se entrarem através de um programa que celebra as suas diversidades. Finalmente, os resultados revelam que o fenômeno está crescendo no Brasil, dando acesso ao mercado de trabalho a comunidades anteriormente excluídas ou subrepresentadas em um país com profundas desigualdades estruturais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Diversidade, Inclusão, Processos seletivos, Ação afirmativa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Diversity and inclusion are two words that have emerged in public debates and social discussions as a cornerstone of social development and global progress. An inclusive society aims at “*empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all citizens, irrespective of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion, sexual orientation, economic, or another status*” (United Nations, Vision for an Inclusive Society). To reach these global goals, the discussions on the issue of diversity and inclusion have naturally shifted to the professional environment. Fostering diversity and inclusion at workplaces has therefore become a major stake for many companies.

To address this subject, it is first necessary to define inclusion and diversity. Those two notions are usually brought up together, but they have different meanings. Diversity can be defined as a “*measure of the distribution of personal characteristics within a group of people*” (Forbes). In other words, diversity within a group refers to the representativeness of the group compared to the real plurality of the word. Diversity is therefore most of the time a quantitative measure. Inclusion, on the other hand, is much more difficult to define for it is invisible and qualitative. Inclusion is a “*philosophy that urges organizations to welcome and value everyone, regardless of differences*” (Renzaglia, Karvonen, Drasgow & Stoxen, 2003). To illustrate the difference between these two notions, Vernā Myers, VP of Diversity and Inclusion at Netflix, is known for coming up with this sagacious metaphor: “*diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance.*” When applied at the workplace context, the difference between the two words makes perfect sense. Referring to the diversity of one company’s workforce alludes to the assessment that minorities are correctly represented inside this workforce in comparison with the diversity of society. Inclusion at work refers to the absence of negative incidents that would result in discrimination or exclusion. Its measurement is difficult and results from a perception of several factors such as tangible integration and participation in the decision-making processes, as well as equalitarian treatments (wages, promotions etc.). As a result, there is no direct cause / consequence relationship between diversity and inclusion at a workplace. One company can have employees from very diverse minority groups but not provide them with the same benefits and opportunities as the rest. In that sense, such company could pride itself from being diverse, but not inclusive.

Firms have used several strategies to improve diversity within their teams and foster inclusion. Such strategies are generally included in a practice called diversity management. The most

famous examples used by companies are affirmative action, mentoring and affinity groups or diversity training programs. Nevertheless, if those programs enable representation and empowerment within the firm of diversity employees, they are not always bold enough to overcome structural inequalities in the employment market. This is particularly illustrated by the fact that diversity management has started in the 1960's. Though during those decades huge progress has been done, inequalities in the employment market are still very high. This is even more accurate in Brazil, a country whose overall population is one of the most diverse in the world but whose employment market is still very fragmented and discriminative. As a result, some firms have recently begun to implement bolder measures in diversity management. One of them is exclusive recruitment programs. Exclusive recruitment programs are recruitment processes organized by organizations and opened for candidates who identify with one or several diversity criteria: women, black, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities... (among the most common ones). Only people identifying with the criteria will be able to apply for the position and participate to the interviews. Such processes can be organized for all kinds of positions in an organization. However, traditionally and in majority, they are organized for entry level positions or interns. Those programs have gained clout lately in the employment landscape and are described by many as the most effective driver of diversity. Firms in Brazil have been particularly avant-gardist and early adopters of such diversity recruitment programs.

Nevertheless, such programs and initiatives have been largely criticized. Several examples of such programs usually raise scandal in the press. For instance, the co-founder of Nubank (a Brazilian digital bank) was heavily criticized in October 2020 when promoting a recruitment process mainly directed to black students and job seekers¹. The controversy laid on the apparent underlying racist behavior when the co-founder announced that the company “would not level down its expectations” during a recruitment process reserved for black students. Moreover, those programs are often reserved for trainee or entry level positions and do not ensure any kind of diverse and inclusive management board when it is commonly acknowledged that diversity at the top of the hierarchy speaks volume about a firm's inclusion capacity. Additionally, the direct consequence of such programs is to improve diversity standards and does not account for a more inclusive firm. Focusing on diversity rather than inclusion is inefficient for it causes people to be labeled and, in some way, fosters stereotypes.

¹ Link of the interview during the Brazilian TV show *Roda Viva*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vYX8B-Ro7M> – 35 min

Ultimately, many studies and research focus on morality, the implementation strategy or the consequences of programs fostering diversity and inclusion. Few studies, however, has been focused on the underlying perception of employees participating in such programs. Few knowledge is available regarding short and long-term implications for those employees in terms of integration, reputation, well-being, responsibilities, or capabilities. In other words, there is a gap in the research on diversity and inclusion which does not give the floor to the primary people concerned. The objective of this research therefore consists in relating and analyzing the perception of inclusion at the workplace of employees who participated in exclusive recruitment programs in Brazil. What is the set of perceptions of inclusion of employees who have been recruited through exclusive recruitment programs in Brazil?

The objective of this research is to reflect the views of those who participated to exclusive recruitment processes and not companies' perspectives. To answer this question, this study is based on a qualitative analysis which presents the perception of inclusion of six Brazilians who currently work at a company in which they entered through an exclusive recruitment process. The experiences are collected thanks to semi-structured interviews based on seven parts which, together, give a clear overview of the participants' perceptions: personal information, perception during the recruitment process, perception during the integration phase, perception of reputation, perception of access to responsibilities and opportunities, perception of well-being and happiness, and ultimately perception of the challenges induced by the pandemic on inclusion. The structure of this method will enable to have a deep understanding of the feelings and perceptions of each participant, compare them to one another and therefore draw usable conclusions to answer the research question.

This paper organized as follows. Part I reviews the main literature concerning the concepts of diversity and inclusion, their impact on business performances and global theories of diversity management as well as a detailed analysis of the Brazilian case for diversity and inclusion. Part II is dedicated to explaining the methodology of this research as well as giving more elements to understand the challenges associated to exclusive recruitment programs in Brazil. Part III presents and analyzes the results given by the participants. Ultimately, Part IV gives an overview of the findings and presents the concluding remarks.

In a nutshell, the results of this study will show that the set of perception of inclusion of the participants are truly positive. Seven aspects addressing all the phases of integration of a candidate applying to an exclusive recruitment program were analyzed: personal information,

perception during the recruitment phase, perception during the integration, perception of reputation, perception of access to responsibilities and opportunities, perception of well-being and perception of impacts of the pandemic on inclusion at the workplace. In all the seven aspects analyzed no major discrimination or exclusion issues has been brought up. As a result, the testimonies and experiences related in this research do not evidence deep failures or negligence from companies when it comes to guarantee inclusion to diversity employees.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity and inclusion are two different concepts and are defined separately. It is therefore necessary to clearly understand the definitions of these two concepts, how they differ and how they both raise different challenges.

There are naturally a lot of different definitions of diversity. The general definition of diversity refers to the discrepancies of characteristics within a group of people. Such characteristics can usually be divided into two groups. First, what defines our identity as an individual: gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, origin. Then, it can also refer to our cognitive skills and our personalities (temperaments, feelings, thoughts...). Diversity represents the “multitude of differences and similarities that exist among people” (Wellner, 2020). In other words, “diversity is the variation of traits, both visible and not, of groups of two or more people” (McGrath, Berdahl, and Arrow, 1995). Additionally, it can be considered that the definition of diversity within society equally applies to the scale of an organization, namely a workplace.

The Four Layers of Diversity Model (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1994) is a framework of the characteristics that constitute the concept of diversity. It designs four different dimensions that list the elements by which we differentiate or identify ourselves to a group of people:

- *First layer (outer level): Organizational dimensions.* They consist of characteristics such as functional level or division department. Characteristics associated with this dimension directly depend on the organization the subject works. As a result, there is little room for self-determined change in this layer as such characteristics are mainly controlled by the organization.
- *Second layer: External dimensions.* They refer to the characteristics relative to the personal choices of individuals such as marital status, religion, habits... Many elements of this layer are direct consequences of a cultural heritage.
- *Third layer: Internal dimensions.* This category indicates characteristics over which the individual has no control whatsoever since they were designated by birth: race, physical ability, sexual orientation.
- *Fourth layer (core level): Personality.* Personality is the set of attributes (thoughts, feelings, behavior) that defines the uniqueness of everyone. By its position in framework, personality is directly shaped and affected by each element of the outer layers.

Finally, another type of framework frequently used in research considers two different types of levels at which diversity can be observed: the surface-level and the deep-level.

- The surface level diversity refers to what is dubbed as relational demography (Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992) and encompasses traits such as gender, race, or physical attributes. This type of diversity will mainly serve for inclusion practices in organization.
- The deep level diversity refers to inner characteristics that are not – initially – related to surface ones and therefore cannot be inferred without a stronger relationship with the individual. This level encompasses personal values and beliefs, behavior, and attitudes.

It is also interesting to notice that the parameters used to quantify or measure diversity largely depend on the type of diversity considered. For instance, internal dimension diversity can be easily defined by an objective numerable parameter such as gender, race, sexual orientation etc. On the other hand, when it comes to evaluate deep-level diversity, measurements are much more difficult and subjective since personalities, opinions or values constitute an infinite list and cannot be exhaustively numerated.

It is therefore clearly visible that there are many ways to define and structure the concept of diversity. This stems from the fact that individuals are by nature complex entities composed of many layers of characteristics deeply entrenched one to another: demography, sociology, psychology, or economic conditions – among others. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research, we will mainly focus on attributes that could be integrated into the internal dimension (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1994) or placed to the surface level. Indeed, when it comes to diversity recruitment programs, the parameters used by firms are in principle race, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, or educational background. It would make no sense to organize recruitment programs for groups who share opinions or values, especially since for companies, diversity of thoughts is a critical goal (Deloitte, 2011).

Inclusion is a much more subjective concept than diversity. A general definition of inclusion is “a philosophy that urges organizations to welcome and value everyone, regardless of differences” (Renzaglia, Karvonen, Drasgow & Stoxen, 2003). This definition is inherited from the normalization principle (Nirje, 1969) who studied inclusion for people with disabilities. Nirje defined inclusion initiatives as means of fostering the implementation of an environment which ensures that people with disabilities can live with the same “norms and patterns” as

mainstream society. This concept can easily be applied to other under-represented groups. The concept of inclusion also refers to the idea that everyone can fit in, diversity should be positively valued, and that plurality of thoughts enhances global knowledge (Renzaglia & al, 2003). Those theories study inclusion as a general concept and therefore sometimes lack precision or down-to-earth application. When applied to the workplace, inclusion responds to more tangible criteria and parameters that allow to narrow the extent of the concept.

Broad definition of inclusion in the workplace defines it as the “degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by other in a work system” (Pelled, Ledford & Mohrman, 1999) or “the removal of obstacles to the full participation and contribution of employees in organizations” (Roberson, 2006). Nevertheless, the definition that best serves this research is given by Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart and Singh (2011). They consider inclusion in the workplace as “the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness”. The idea of individual perception is inherently related in the definition of inclusion. Inclusion is not a concrete measure as diversity can be, such as a list of parameters and their number of occurrences.

As a result, there are two main layers in the concept of inclusion: an active process of integration (to include) as well as an emotional outcome (I feel included) (Nair & Vohra, 2015). Concretely, this means that for employees to feel included, they need to be treated with respect and be considered as any other individual in the group: their voices should be heard but also listened to.

The study of the two concepts clearly outlines how diversity and inclusion differ. To sum up, diversity reflects the differences of demographic components in groups and inclusion focuses on improving the participation of employees within such groups.

2.1. Diversity, Inclusion, and Business Performances

Now that the concepts of diversity and inclusion have been clearly exposed, it is relevant to understand how they affect business performances.

Naturally, one of the main reasons that motivates the development of diversity measures and the improvement of inclusion in a company is because it stands as a moral and ethical duty. Indeed, no consistent argument could support the fact that discrimination and exclusion are positive values that need to be supported by companies. Furthermore, lack of discrimination,

which consists in only a small part of inclusion practices as detailed previously, is forbidden by law in many countries. In Brazil, the Article 1 of Law n. 9,029 of 13/05/1995 literally stipulates the prohibition of the adoption of any kind of discriminative practices based on sex, origin, race, color of skin, civil status, deficiency, or age amongst other relative to distinction of salaries, duties, or admission criteria. Therefore, there is a legal motivation and duty for company to tend towards inclusion practices. However, such incentives are generally not sufficient to force companies to adopt diversity and inclusion measures. Indeed, history has shown that companies usually tend to take the impact on overall performance as the main reason for change in practices. That is why many scholars and researchers have focused on studying the consequences of implementing diversity and inclusion measures on companies' performances.

The pioneer research when it comes to establishing a positive connection between diversity and competitiveness was made by Blake and Cox in 1991. They draw a framework of the possible favorable outcomes that result from including diversity in a company's strategy. The underlying conclusion is that "organizations' ability to attract, retain, and motivate people from diverse cultural backgrounds, may lead to competitive advantages in cost structures and through maintaining the highest quality human resources." (Blake & Cox, 1991, p. 54). To enter in more details, the scholars' model is based on 6 main advantages that justify how diversity enhances competitiveness:

Figure 1

1. Cost Argument	As organizations become more diverse, the cost of a poor job in integrating workers will increase. Those who handle this well, will thus create cost advantages over those who don't.
2. Resource-Acquisition Argument	Companies develop reputations on favorability as prospective employers for women and ethnic minorities. Those with the best reputations for managing diversity will win the competition for the best personnel. As the labor pool shrinks and changes composition, this edge will become increasingly important.
3. Marketing Argument	For multi-national organizations, the insight and cultural sensitivity that members with roots in other countries bring to the marketing effort should improve these efforts in important ways. The same rationale applies to marketing to subpopulations within domestic operations.
4. Creativity Argument	Diversity of perspectives and less emphasis on conformity to norms of the past (which characterize the modern approach to management of diversity) should improve the level of creativity.
5. Problem-solving Argument	Heterogeneity in decision and problem solving groups potentially produces better decisions through a wider range of perspectives and more thorough critical analysis of issues.
6. System Flexibility Argument	An implication of the multicultural model for managing diversity is that the system will become less determinant, less standardized, and therefore more fluid. The increased fluidity should create greater flexibility to react to environmental changes (i.e., reactions should be faster and at less cost).

Exhibit 2. Managing Cultural Diversity Can Provide Competitive Advantage

Model explaining the six main competitive advantages that companies can enhance by leveraging diversity amongst the workforce

Blake & Cox, 1991; *Managing cultural diversity: implications for organizational competitiveness*. 47

Recent studies also outline the positive impact of diversity and inclusion on companies' competitive advantage. There are four main domains in which fostering diversity and inclusion is positively correlated with companies' competitive advantage: financial performance, innovation, talent attraction and monitoring & advisory competences.

- *Financial performance*. McKinsey published in 2020 the results of a study that proved the correlation between diversity and inclusion practices in the workplace and firm's financial performances. The report analyzes data from 1,000 companies in 2019 covering 12 countries which could justify its relevance for most workplaces. The main insight of the report is that financial performances are largely superior in firms that

support diversity and inclusion. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams are 25% more likely to outperform their peers in terms of profitability (EBIT margin). The percentage for financial profitability rises to 36% for ethnic and cultural diversity. Those numbers are in constant growth since 2014 (when McKinsey published its first report on the correlation of diversity and inclusion and financial performances). Moreover, studies prove that a growing number of consumers consider companies' responsibility regarding social issues in their consumption habits. In a study realized in Brazil in 2012, Pereira showed that a large part of women and black people considered management models which bring value to their respective socio-cultural groups before making purchases. Diversity practices can therefore have a direct impact on sales growth and diversification of customer bases.

- *Innovation.* Another report from Forbes highlights that having a diverse workforce and ensuring the inclusion of all its employees fosters innovation. It creates an ecosystem that favors the mixing of different backgrounds, profiles and thoughts thereby increasing the richness of brainstorming and innovative solutions. This idea echoes the McGrath & al. (1994) definition of diversity. Indeed, by recruiting people from different external and internal dimensions, companies naturally end up with a mixture of personalities which fosters the pooling of diverse ideas. Moreover, a diverse workforce is a guarantee to improve customer orientation, namely the development of relevant products that match the demand. The more diverse a team is, the more insights on customer's need will be brought up thereby improving the product-market-fit.
- *Talent attraction.* According to Forbes' report, companies are also implementing processes to retain and attract diverse talent. Along with globalization, access to higher education and specialization has been skyrocketing. Access to universities have been largely opened for previously under-represented groups. Those groups represent a qualified workforce that can bring a lot of value for companies. To attract top talents, companies need to be reflective of the talents who are disponible in society.
- *Monitoring & Advisory.* Demographically diverse boards of direction are more likely to deliver better monitoring and advisory performances (Aggarwal, Jindal & Seth, 2019). Having better advisory capabilities at the top-management enhances a firm's

performances because it delivers better insights and recommendations regarding the strategy.

Those studies are highly relevant in the context of this research because they were made based on real company data. They prove to top management that investing in diversity practices can have positive impacts and are worth the investment.

Mainstream scholars also investigated the individual-level inclusion and defined the concept of “collective experience of inclusion” (Ferdman, Avigdor, Braun, Konkin & Kuzmycz, 2010). The collective experience of inclusion refers to the “degree to which members of a group feel valued by, engaged with, and able to express themselves authentically within their work group, both as individuals and as members of multiple identity groups”. This concept is highly relevant to this study as it focuses on the experience, the feeling, and the perception of employee within a group. It narrows down the scale of investigations when it comes to evaluating the link between diversity, inclusion, and company performance. They argue that implementing collective experience of inclusion will enhance the company performance thanks to 5 main elements: greater contribution, identification to the goals and objectives, motivation to perform better, positive energy and increased knowledge. Moreover, they argue that the correlation between collective experience of inclusion and firm performance as a whole is enhanced by the degree of diversity within the work group.

Additionally, considering the issue from an employee perspective and focusing even more on the individual-level, it is necessary to understand the psychological aspects of employees regarding inclusion and diversity. When diversity is supported by inclusion measures, employees' well-being and satisfaction tend to increase thereby improving the commitment to business activities (Findler, Wind & Mor Barak, 2007). To further understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion for firm's performances from an employee perspective it is relevant to study the consequences of the opposite sentiment: exclusion (Abrams, Hogg & Marques, 2005). Exclusion triggers several negative reactions for employees such as anger, frustration, low self-esteem. The natural responses to exclusion can consist in questioning legitimacy and authority, expressing hostility to the organization. Consequently, results can be detrimental for companies' activities since they can lose the engagement of the workforce. In the worst cases, they can face serious backlash resulting from employee's revenge motivation.

Other scholars tend to defend the opposite argument, namely that diversity does not serve a company's benefits. The main concept behind that is the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971). According to this idea, the plurality of attributes such as age, opinion, behaviors, or personalities in work groups would hinder the social cooperation and therefore enhance conflict, turnover, and lack of cohesion. This would ultimately lead to worsen the company's performance.

Ultimately, other researchers tend to show that there might be no direct correlation (nor positive or negative) between inclusion and performance (Kochan, Bezrukova, Ely, Jackson, Joshi, Jhen, Leonard, Levine & Thomas, 2003). They denounce the groundless enthusiasm regarding the business case of diversity and advocate for more nuanced perspectives. They analyze data from firms belonging to different sector (retail, IT, financial services) and do not find evidence of a positive correlation.

We can clearly see the lack of coherence and unity between scholars and studies in this field. Moreover, the disparity between the theories tend to discredit the overall affirmations and outlines the difficulty to identify tangible results. Nevertheless, majority of the studies tend to advocate for the implementation of diversity and inclusion practices especially since it stands as a win-win situation for the company and society. Even if tangible results can be difficult to prove, there is a large incentive to adopt such practices in terms of reputation and overtime competitiveness. Moreover, it can be inferred from this analysis that simply improving the diversity in a work group may not be a sufficient cause to gain in performance. This stems from the fact that positive results of diversity will only be observed when supported by inclusion measures aiming at organizing the diversity within the group. Those inclusion measures should enhance cohesion, integration, equality, and fairness.

2.2. Diversity & Inclusion Management

After examining the concepts of diversity and inclusion and how they affect business performances, we exposed the different theories of scholars about how diversity and inclusion may affect company performance and firm's competitive advantage. It was shown that diversity is a necessary but not sufficient cause to establish positive correlation with performance. Inclusion of a diverse workforce is the ultimate stage that guarantees the apparition of positive effects. To improve diversity and reach inclusion, companies need to implement specific management practices. The literature about the forms of diversity and inclusion management is

large. In this part, we try to expose a representative spectrum of the theories that have been defended until today.

To begin with, it is important to understand why diversity management is needed. Corporations in the way they have traditionally functioned have left little space for diversity. The structure of interpersonal relations at work has shown a lot of intolerance (Barreto & Heloani, 2015). Intolerance in work relations has been expressed through violent, discriminatory, ironic, unhealthy, and recurrent attitudes, which justifies labor harassment stimulated by the way capitalism organizes work in contemporary times. Barreto and Heloani (2015) acknowledge that new ways of organizing work which do not disorganize and negatively affect the lives of workers need to be drawn, since labor or sexual harassment are processes that everyone experiences and witnesses, even when their practical manifestation directly affects only a few. That is why it is necessary to alter work processes that unreasonably seek productivity and profitability and to think of practices that restore autonomy, friendship, respect, mutual help, generosity, recognition of knowledge, and social bonds.

The leading work Multicultural Organizational Development Model (Sue, 1995) gives a framework that allows to classify companies according to their performances in terms of diversity. The model gives 3 different classifications of organizations. The mono-cultural organization, which excludes or segregate employees who do not belong to dominant groups. Then, the non-discriminatory organization which acknowledges the importance of diversity from a moral standard but is not fully committed to inclusion practices. Ultimately, the multicultural organization values diversity and takes concrete measure to ensure that employees are treated equally. This framework is particularly interesting for this research because it clearly shows that accepting diversity is different from embracing it. In other words, some firms can accept candidates from under-represented groups but not fully value their works (non-discriminatory firms). This kind of practice should have a strong impact of employee perception and feelings.

Then, organizational theories design structures that influence the behavior of an organization when it comes to tackling the diversity issue within the workforce. They are relevant frameworks that can be used by firms to assess their performances and support decisions in terms of diversity.

Yang and Konrad (2011) highlight two different theories. First, institutional theory that analyzes the company's actions in terms of diversity regarding the contextual, society or peers' pressure. This theory claims that an organization will implement diversity measures only if it is expected to do so by its environment. Secondly, resource-based theory analyzes the company itself and what measures it can possibly deploy given its resource constraints and goals. This theory claims that organizations will implement diversity measure only if they grant the firm a competitive advantage and generate benefice for the firm.

Another relevant theory designs a framework to analyze the decisions which directly affect multiple stakeholders: The Organizational Justice Scale (Colquitt, 2001). The theory gives four different natures of organizational justice. First, distributive justice that asses the fairness of the outcomes. Secondly, procedural justice that assess the fairness of processes. Thirdly, interpersonal justice which assess the respect granted to the stakeholders. Fourthly, informational justice which assess the fairness of the distribution of information. Colquitt states that the perception of employees regarding each of those justices will directly affect their performance within the firm and its intention to stay. It is an interesting framework that firms can use to prevent any adverse and undesired consequences stemming from a lack of perception of inclusion.

Ultimately, a very relevant concept when it comes to assessing diversity and management practices is the concept of "employee engagement" (Itam & Bagali, 2018). Employee engagement measures the "employee's emotional commitment toward the job and organization" (Waldman, 2016). It refers to a psychological set of feelings which drive its willingness to perform at the job. Enhancing employee engagement is therefore a direct mean of success. It is related to the idea that organization should actively ensure that employees connect physically, emotionally, and cognitively with their position, goals, and colleagues. In their framework (Itam & Bagali, 2018) consider employee engagement as the measurable variable that is affected by diversity and inclusion practices as well as internal and external factors. It is the prime driver of enhanced performance. This concept is also relevant for this analysis as employee engagement is defined by the perception and feeling of the employee.

Enhancing diversity and inclusion within the firm demands the skills of a "culturally competent manager" (Borrego & Johnson, 2012). Such manager will be able to understand the needs of its team members and better address the challenges of its mission. She or he will ultimately gain in intellectual authority and recognition from its peers. These two scholars develop a set of

competencies that a culturally competent manager should possess and should be able to transmit to the workforce: respect and understanding of employees from different culture, adaptability, encouraging inclusiveness to create collaboration, result-driven focuses, and the creation of common grounds.

Another managerial practice that has been largely adopted during the last decades inside large firms is the creation of affinity groups, namely groups that gather one specific type of employees so that they can express their feelings and experiences in a safe place. Thomas (2005) raises doubt on the multiplication of such groups as that exclude other employees and might create a sense of resentment. He advocates for the adoption of “core groups” which are transversal groups within an organization (not specifically for one category of employee). Those groups give the possibility to a higher number of people to learn about diversity and inclusion and generalize positive cohesion practices. The mentoring groups, which are usually dedicated to juniors and the exchange of best practices with some top management, are an example of core groups.

Nevertheless, many scholars criticized the way diversity management practices were implemented and outlined the lack of tangible results. A starting point is that 75% of the largest firms in the US claim to have diversity and inclusion practices. The total of expenses for those programs reaches \$10 billion annually (Hays-Thomas & Bendick, 2013). Unfortunately, the two scholars claim that those practices are not suited for the reality of the problems they intend to solve such as conscious or unconscious discrimination against under-represented groups. Those practices do not produce sufficient employee engagement to be considered as efficient. Indeed, taken apart the companies who implement such practices solely for communication purposes, the weak performances result from a lack of evidence-based strategies that define the diversity and inclusion measures. Worse, the authors argue that diversity awareness programs tend to create frustration amongst the workforce and widen the gap between social groups of employees. Some companies also tend to be focused on ensuring that new employees from under-represented group assimilate the current work culture – which are usually discriminatory – rather than creating new ones. The authors also remind that diversity management is an ongoing process and should continuously be improved and evolve to be effective.

Others argue that we are in a transitional period and after many years of diversity management efforts, organization should shift their model on “leveraging the differences” (Davidson, 2011). He outlines that diversity management has failed to produce and bring change to corporations.

Interestingly enough, he questions the term “diversity management” for it implies that diversity consists in a problem that would need to be managed. The leveraging model difference would better promote synergy and harmony within a diverse workforce. The model is based upon three main criteria: seeing difference, understanding difference, and engaging difference. Implementing those three principles with all stakeholders as well as with managers and leaders is the most effective way to produce positive performance gains.

Mc Kinsey (2020) designs an interesting framework that reconcile previously studied scholars and helps firms to implement diversity. According to the consulting firm, the most effective way to foster diversity and inclusion in the workplace is to combine a systematic approach and bold steps. The first systematic and business-led approach to inclusion and diversity is to increase the representation of under-represented communities, especially in top management roles. This is a traditional practice that has proved to be an essential driver. The second one is to strengthen leadership accountability and capabilities for diversity and inclusion. In other words, practices should be institutionalized, and all the leaders should be held accountable for improvement in the field. Those two measures should be supported by 3 bold measures: enable equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency, promote openness and tackle microaggressions (zero-tolerance policies) and foster sense of belonging for all employees (redesign a company culture suited for all the diverse workforce).

Ultimately, there are thousands of best practices for inclusion depending on the category of under-represented group, the firm, the sector, the manger etc. Nevertheless, an interesting study conducted by Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly (2006) ranked the efficacy of inclusion practices that lead to an actual increase of numbers of women and black people in managerial roles, with data coming from 708 employers between 1971 and 2002. Their results showed that “diversity training and diversity evaluation” – when implemented alone – had virtually no effect in increasing the managerial diversity. Networking and mentoring proved to be a more effective way since it helped to prevent social isolation. The most effective practice to increase managerial diversity was to enlist it as corporate social responsibility and implement measures such as designation of diversity committee or staff member in charge as well as affirmative action programs. They showed that the most effective way for firms to increase managerial diversity is to institutionalize it at the firm level, and not only at the individual level. The results of this study serve our research and raise a very important and controversial issue when it comes to diversity management: affirmative action.

Along with globalization and the fight for equal rights and representation of minorities in society since the 1960, the first active diversity management practice was affirmative action. Affirmative action consists in actively promoting the participation of under-represented groups or minorities who suffer a systemic and institutionalized discrimination in areas of employment, education, or culture. The practice was first implemented in the US in the 1960's and was a direct consequence of the Civil Rights Movement. From the very beginning, it has been very controversial and has raised many debates around its legitimacy and its consequences. In the workplace, the most common representation of affirmative action has been targeted recruitment programs or special treatments inside corporations for traditionally disadvantaged groups.

Scholars who advocate for affirmative action argue that it is a necessary measure to integrate under-represented groups in social structures – and especially the workplace. Affirmative action is a measure that allows to activate processes that are legally established (no discrimination at entry), but which do not have tangible results because of systemic discriminatory bias from employers. Moreover, a common argument used to justify affirmative action is the necessity not to limit individual's context of choice (Moses, 2001). The unspoken discrimination practices hinder individuals in the pursue of self-determination as they are not valued to their true reality by institutions. Affirmative action is therefore a tool to fight oppression and grant freedom.

An interesting study for this research on affirmative action was made by Nacoste in 1990. He studied the psychological aspect of affirmative action on both beneficiary and non-beneficiary subjects. He wanted to test the common belief against affirmative action that beneficiaries of such practices could suffer from self-doubt and non-beneficiaries could feel frustration which would, eventually, not serve social cohesion. His findings did not give credit to this common belief. Nacoste concluded that if people were clearly explained the underlying realities that justified the adoption of affirmative action practices (racism or any kind of exclusion), the results were quite the opposite. Beneficiaries did not feel self-depreciated at all, and non-beneficiaries felt good and comprehensive about the need for such practice to make up for past social injustice. The result of this study is particularly interesting because it could be the premises of a conclusion of our own study – in a different time frame and context.

On the contrary, opponents highlight the legal contradiction that stands from the concept of affirmative action. They focus on the fact that such practice is by definition discriminatory as well and cannot solve the problem.

One of the main takeaways that we can learn from affirmative action is that it is the first form of diversity management measure which has been massively implemented by companies. It is undeniable that years later, the representation of discriminated groups has largely grown in corporations. Still, the percentages of participation of discriminated groups in companies are far from representing the diversity of the social reality – in the US as in all Western countries and Brazil. Moreover, affirmative action is not enough and needs to be combined with integration measures that create a sense of common participation of employees in the workplace and deliver results (Estlund, 2005).

The types of diversity management practices we are studying is directly related to affirmative action. Exclusive recruitment programs are the ultimate stage of an unveiled and opened affirmative action. According to the past analysis, such programs could therefore be one of the main drivers for enhanced diversity in workforces – provided it is combined with inclusion measures.

Most companies have tried to tackle the issue of diversity and undertaken diversity programs. However, it is important to remind that there is not one best practice when it comes to diversity: it varies according to the firm's activities, resources, objectives, and nature (Arrendondo, 1996). The practices should be carefully chosen by organization so that they match a social and business reality. Ultimately, diversity and inclusion strategies ought to be constantly reassessed: it is a process over time, an ongoing process. (Carnevale & Stone, 1994).

Moreover, as previously explained, employee perception is a critical criterion when it comes to assessing and analyzing a firm's performance on diversity and inclusion. The differences of perception of diversity management practices among companies differ largely according to the individual and the context, namely its position, department, or identity (Bacouel-Jentjens & Yang, 2018). In many cases, employees coming from a majority social background tend to be skeptical or indifferent to diversity management practices because most of the time, they do not perceive the necessity of it. On the other hand, employees coming from minority naturally tend to perceive such initiatives positively as they are the one benefiting from the results (Pierce, 2012). Research made on the workforce of French company studied the perception of diversity management amongst two groups: production workforce and R&D workforce (Bacouel-Jentjens & Yang, 2018). The results showed that production workers, who statistically are more diverse in terms of ethnicity, are aware of diversity initiatives, more likely to participate to it and generally more attentive to these initiatives compared to the R&D teams where most

employees are from traditional majority backgrounds. Such R&D employees tend to question the relevance of such initiatives as personal evaluation should be based of work competences only.

Ultimately, very few studies have focused on the perception of employees regarding diversity management in their employees. However, as previously shown, this is a critical indicator to monitor such initiatives and assess reality. It is therefore an important gap to fill for further studies.

2.3. The Brazilian Case for Diversity and Inclusion

After having analyzed the international literature about diversity and inclusion management, it is relevant to focus our study on the Brazilian case for diversity and inclusion. This study will help us to have a local understanding of measures taken in a particular context such as the Brazilian socio-economic situation.

Racial discrimination

Brazil is known for being a very culturally diverse country. Nevertheless, people tend to forget where this diversity stems from. Today, 54% of the population self-identifies as black and 43% as white (IBGE, 2020). The rest is composed of indigenous or Asian citizens. Black people in Brazil are descendants of a population who was brought by force during slavery whereas white people are descendant mainly European communities who arrived voluntarily in Brazil. Indigenous communities are autochthone communities who suffered massive repression and were decimated by European immigration. This harsh reality has been softened and muted during many years because of the delusional concept of “racial democracy” (Conceição & Spink, 2013). Racial democracy is a concept designed by Freyre in the 1930’s maintaining the “presumed absence of legal segregation mechanisms and in the affirmation that there are no barriers to upward mobility for black people, given the absence of prejudice and discrimination” (Machada, Bazani & Mantovani, 2018). This concept has masked an opposite reality: prejudice against black people have been perpetuated based on former slave relations and structural social inequalities fostered by white people (Conceição & Spink, 2013). Consequently, the participation of black people in the market remains low and discriminations high. A study of The Economist realized in 2013 showed that on average Afro-Brazilians were half as likely to go to university, studied two years less than national population and earned three-fifths of the salaries of white people with the same level of education. The biggest milestone to overcome

this inequality might have been the adoption of the ProUni program in 2005 which generalized the adoption of affirmative action and quotas for black people in universities across the country. Nevertheless, the rampant racism in Brazilian society has largely grown in more direct manifestation since the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 (Silva & Larkins, 2019). Indeed, through his campaign and actions, Jair Bolsonaro has not hidden his opinions regarding under-represented groups and mostly black people. His very explosive and virulent discourses have encouraged supporters to normalize racist practices such as insults and discrimination which resulted in a surge of aggressions (physic and verbal). Moreover, Bolsonaro has publicly attacked diversity initiatives who favored the integration of black people in society (universities or jobs).

Discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ population

The LGBTQIA+ population accounts for approximately 10% of the Brazilian population (20 million individuals). Nevertheless, this proportion is hard to define as many individuals prefer not to declare their identification to the community by fear of reprisal. In the Brazilian economic landscape, top managers usually have a very strong religious background (catholic, evangelist or Judaic) which are traditionally the most severe persecutors of LGBTQIA+. The workplace in Brazil has traditionally been profoundly heteronormative. In fact, society in general feels a certain discomfort with the presence and manifestation of any non-heterosexual feeling (Herek, 1995; Sears, 1997) which explains, for example the almost total exclusion of gays and lesbians from the media, from advertisements. Homophobia has therefore grown as a socio-political instrument of domination and power in society (Silva, 2008). Consequently, a large part of the LGBTQIA+ community suffers from the minority stress (Cochran, 2001) which suggests that sexual discrimination is a source of stress that can cause psychosomatic damages to the victims. The concept of minority stress can easily be applied to all the minorities studied in this research. It is therefore the role of organizations and diversity management practices inside companies to reach a sufficient level of inclusion that levels down such stress. The LGBTQIA+ population faces a double discrimination in the workplace. First, a discrimination at entry or of equal treatment for people who are “out”. A second discrimination comes from the price of “coming-out” in the workplace (de Freitas, 2017). Many employees or candidates chose not to declare their affiliation to the LGBTQIA+ community because of the price they would have to pay if they assumed themselves: unequal treatment, discrimination, mocking...

In that sense, gay and bisexual men have undergone strategies of survival in the workplace (Irigaray & de Freitas, 2013; Irigaray, Goldschmidt & Queiroz, 2017) which consist in natural or fake permanent attitudes and behaviors endorsed by the subjects at the workplace. There seems to be three types of survival strategies: completely out (a minority), partially out (majority, out to some workers only or friends only) and in the closet (Irigaray & de Freitas, 2013). The out and partially out category suffer from the same kind of daily discriminations (insults or mocking). Partially out tend to show deep level of anxiety, panic or even physical chronic pain at work resulting from the fear of being “outed”. Workers in the closet either tend to adopt machos and homophobic attitudes to prevent anyone from suspecting their sexual orientation or try to be as invisible as possible. In both cases, such workers prove to be inapt to work in teams and automatically activate defense mechanisms resulting in poor performances. The conclusion of the research (Irigaray & de Freitas, 2013) points out that:

- Gays who work in organizations that lack diversity policies and do not condemn discriminatory practices observed more intense discrimination in the workplace.
- Most out homosexuals were observed among employees who work in companies that effectively guarantee non-discriminatory organizational policies and practices
- In the perception of the interviewees, being gay in the workplace is associated with discrimination and consequently with lower chances of promotion and social exclusion.

Moreover, each sub-community gathered under the acronym LGBTQIA+ suffers from different types of discrimination and violence in the workplace (Carrieri, Aguiar & Diniz, 2013). Homosexual and bisexual men earn on average 11% to 27% less than heterosexual men with the same level of experience and the probability to suffer from physical or verbal aggression or to be dismissed is two times higher (Irigaray, 2008). In comparison to gay or bisexual men, lesbians, transexual or travesties are most likely to suffer discrimination and physical violence (even sometimes by member of the LGBTQIA+ community). This violence stems from the binary heterosexual and patriarchal matrix that is imposed in the Brazilian society, and consequently at the workplace. The public and institutionalized situation which tends to discredit women and queer individuals doubly applies to female members of the LGBTQIA+ in the workplace. Amongst those under-represented communities, travesties are the community who most struggle to find formal jobs (Carrieri, Aguiar & Diniz, 2013).

Discrimination against women

Women began their path to emancipation in the Brazilian society in the 1980's thanks to greater access to university and qualified jobs (de Freitas, 2017). However, this movement did not change the cultural belief that the woman should stay at home and take care of the family. Alongside, women continued to assume domestic tasks which creates hurdles to their professional carriers (de Freitas, 2013). Unequal pay, discrimination at entry or for internal promotion and sexist aggressions (verbal and physic) are recurrent and almost daily problems in the workplace for many women. This lack of representation is also visible in public institutions – which usually serve as an example or best-practice for the private sector. In 2020 in Brazil, only 9 women are mayor among the 96th biggest cities, there is only one female governor of state (27 governors in total) and only 15% of the Federal deputies are women. Moreover, situations differ according to companies' sizes (Saeed, Belghitar & Yousaf, 2016). It seems that in Brazil, the firm's size is the main determinant to the presence of women on boards of direction. The bigger the company, the bigger the proportion of women. This results from the fact that small and medium business are less impacted by reputation costs and can therefore allow themselves to remain male-centered. Nevertheless, it should be reminded that those results do not conclude that large companies are doing fine when it comes to gender equality, but that they are doing better than their smaller counterparts. Ultimately, many difficulties in the workplace for women can also be explained by identity overlaps (de Freitas, 2017) such as black or LGBTQIA+ women who suffer even greater discrimination.

Discrimination against people with disabilities

When it comes to integrating people with disabilities, schools and education are the main vectors. Nevertheless, the situation is far from being acceptable and too few qualified professionals exist to accompany such students. A law passed in 1991 in Brazil imposed quotas on companies with more than 100 employees obliging them to have at least 2% of positions filled by worker with disabilities. Nevertheless, this regulation has been bypassed or simply ignored in many cases (Borges, 2012).

Eventually, it is worth pointing out Fleury's study (2000). It is generally considered as the base research in the field of diversity management in Brazil. She unveils the paradox of a Brazilian society which value its diversity in terms of origins and its resonance in music or food on one side, and the structural discrimination of a very "stratified society" on the other. When it comes to implementing diversity management practices, Fleury shows that the emergence of the

phenomenon can be explained to the necessity for companies to gain competitive advantage rather than the necessity to abide by legal regulations (as was the case in the US or Canada).

Regarding literature on diversity management in Brazil, three different studies (Fleury, 2000; Jabbour, Gordon, Oliveira & Batistelle, 2011; Pereira, 2016) have analyzed the diversity management practices of 15 companies (both Brazilian and foreign subsidiaries) in Brazil. Although it is probably not the same set of companies that have been studied, it is interesting to assess the evolution of adoption of diversity management practices in Brazil over the last two decades.

Fleury (2000) analyzed the behavior in terms of diversity management practices in 15 companies in Brazil. Amongst this slot, only 6 accepted to participate in the research. The results evidence that companies were at the premises of implementation of diversity programs. Moreover, the majority chose to address only the gender inequality issue in the first stage and justified it because of the level of education qualification, namely black people were considered as not as competent because of smaller qualification. Ultimately, an interesting result evidence the deep and shocking lack of awareness of the reality of discrimination in the workplace by employees who do not identify with under-represented groups. Such employees do not perceive the relationship between human resources policies and training with the contribution to a diverse environment. They also tend to focus on their personal objectives as workers when other under-represented groups mainly feel prejudiced and discriminated in their evaluation process. This reveals all the importance of education of workforce in the field of diversity management and the reality of inequalities. It also proves that basing inclusive practices on employee perception and feeling can be an efficient way to improve its standards.

The next study (Jabbour & al, 2011) consisted in analyzing 15 top companies in various sectors (food, automotive, cellulose and paper, metal-mechanics, plastics, chemicals, sugar-alcohol) when it comes to diversity management. Among the 15 companies, four only had relevant diversity management practices. At the time of the study (2011), results showed that few CEO's had full awareness of the perspectives offered by diversity management and therefore lacked in incentives to implement it at the human resource level. An interesting finding of the study also showed that most of the positions occupied by under-represented groups were operations or maintenance, namely without great responsibilities which questions the level of involvement of companies in diversity management. Ultimately, most companies were focusing on one group

at a time, therefore not abiding by the recommendation that diversity management should be implemented for various under-represented groups simultaneously. (Loden & Rosener, 1991).

Ultimately, a study realized in 2016 by Pereira analyzed the communication and practices in terms of diversity management of 15 top-ranking companies in Brazil (both national and subsidiaries). The results showed that all companies with headquarter in Brazil but with an international activity could be classified in the “leveraging difference” (Davidson, 2011) model where diversity measures are the most proactive. Paradoxically enough, foreign corporations with foot in Brazil did not show equal proactive diversity measures. Ultimately, results were highly diverse amongst Brazilian corporations with national activity. The results of this study prove that the challenges of diversity have been mainly understood by companies since the 2000’s and Fleury’s research. However, one should not forget that communication is only the tip of the iceberg and does not guarantee results or success of diversity programs. Communication is a first step that demonstrates the awareness of companies relative to this subject. The reality though remains very complex, and inequalities are so deeply entrenched in the Brazilian employment system that it might need more than communication to overcome them.

Additionally, scholars (Filho & al, 2020) analyzed the literature review concerning diversity management in Brazil over the last two decades. The result show that there is a growing interest of scholars for the subject, especially regarding gender and sexual diversity management. Those results are encouraging and evidence that in the medium or long term, such research will have tangible results in organization practices’ effectiveness.

A relevant study from Saraiva and Irigaray (2009) analyzed the effectiveness of the implementation of policies to encourage diversity in the Brazilian subsidiary of a multinational company. Official documents were researched, and minority and non-minority employees were interviewed. The main results show that the corporate discourse in the company, although expressed in organizational policies, is not very effective due to the prejudices that employee have against each other, a certain managerial permissiveness, and the absence of a collective sense of diversity. All kinds of employees showed pre-conceptions and discriminatory attitudes among themselves, evidencing difficulties in respecting their differences. Although policies assign them a specific role in the process, managers manifest explicit or veiled prejudice, undermining the effectiveness of the policies in these units. There is dissonance between the discourse and the reality of diversity practices. Moreover, the invisibility that some minorities

complain of may reflect the internalization of stigma. The "invisible" segments probably hide to remain employed, keeping silent about discrimination and excluding themselves from topics that may highlight their differences (Saraiva & Irgaray, 2009).

The backwardness of diversity measures in Brazilian companies can also be explained a structural discrimination and lack of awareness at different levels of society (Conceição & Spink, 2013). The scholars analyze the cause of this race inequality in companies using the framework designed by Syed and Özbilgin in 2009: the macro-national, meso-organizational, and micro-individual level. At the macro-national level, namely institutions, inequalities can be mainly explained by a lack of determination. Since 1965, Brazil signed the C111 Convention of International Labor Organization (ILO) which committed the country to elaborate anti-discriminatory and equalitarian treatments in terms of employment. The 1988 Constitution required the equality of opportunity and treatment for all citizens and engaged the states to proactively reach this objective. However, this was no sufficient incentive for companies and no affirmative action practices were implemented until the 2000's. The first "significant" measure was the adoption of the Program for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for All (*Programa de Promoção da Igualdade de Oportunidade para Todos – PPIOT*) which required underperforming companies in terms of diversity to take bold measures and increase the participation of under-represented groups. At the meso-level (the organization level), race inequalities at the workplace have been perpetuated by non-commitment to a very loose regulation. PPIOT had very little effect on companies' behavior and most managed to bypass the legislation. Many efforts were made to enhance performances in the integration of people with disabilities, but very few for black people which underline the structural racism in the Brazilian society. Ultimately, at the micro-individual level, discrimination can be observed by the representation of black people in higher education. Despite a significant growth of participation of black people in higher education, top universities remain predominantly white. This argument of "lack of competence or qualification" is often used by recruiters to justify the lack of black people in the workforce (Fleury, 2000; Myers, 2003). The causal implication of the argument is wrong for it tends to set aside the reality of discrimination in Brazil. The scholars conclude by advocating for stronger (in intensity and scope) and harder (in terms of legal obligation) diversity management practices in the workplace in Brazil.

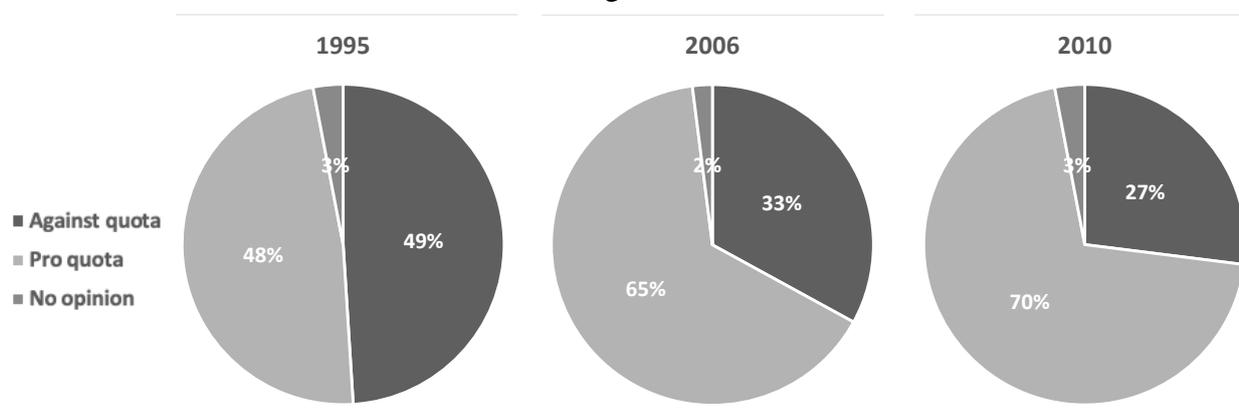
Nevertheless, contrary to common opinions, Brazilian firms are not the last in the race to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. A comparative study between Sweden and Brazil clearly showed that Brazilian companies are more likely to implement CSR measures

(employment quality, health & safety, training, diversity, human rights) compared to their Swedish counterparts (Mazboudi, Sidani & Al Ariss, 2020). This stems from the fact that in Sweden, the public sector is strong and clearly a leader in the implementation of inclusive initiatives. As a result, companies are less expected to show the example to society and have therefore less incentives. In Brazil, the situation is quite opposite, and the burden of social progress relies heavily on private initiatives. It can be inferred that Brazilian companies are more inclined to adopt bold diversity measures, as is the case for exclusive recruitment programs as further discussed in this research.

Due to the growing globalization and capitalization of the economies, companies have had to develop mechanisms to transform issues that might imply instability to their favor (de Freitas, 2017). They seek to mitigate image risks and costs into opportunities consisting of positive social responsibilities so as not to appear as villains. This highly explains the growing interest of companies – in Brazil and in the world – in implementing diversity management practices. However, this motivation sometimes leads to flawed practices as they focus on reactions mainly based on communication and discourse rather than concrete actions. This is also evidenced by a study realized by Ethos in 2010 in 500 of the biggest companies in Brazil. Only 105 companies accepted to participate to the study – which is by itself already good picture of the actual poor situation. The surveys showed that the perception of human resource management team regarding what they do for under-represented or discriminated communities is much higher than the perception of the concerned employees. Nevertheless, de Freitas (2017) mentions the launch of the “Valuing Diversity Program” in 2007 by the FEBRABAN (Brazilian Federation of Banks). This program aimed at improving the working conditions of women and black employees and applicants in an industry which has been traditionally pointed out for perpetuating discriminatory practices. The results of the program are encouraging as it has been observed that 50% of the banks integrated diversity formation and special programs were designed and implemented for the different under-represented groups (committees to map out female talent for promotion, awareness-raising to racist and homophobic practices, opening of special positions reserved to under-represented groups etc.). Moreover, scholars point out the importance of the implementation of mentor or sponsor in the workplace to encourage women not to depreciate themselves (Henderson, Ferreira & Dutra, 2016). Such practices also ensures that we will not tend towards a “masculinization of women” but rather an adaptation of company’s culture to embrace differences.

A form of affirmative action (and therefore diversity management practice) that has been largely adopted in Brazil is the quota system. Quotas have been adopted mainly in universities and for public sector positions. Quotas are a very similar practice to exclusive recruitment processes and therefore studying the perception that the population has about quotas can bring interesting insights on the perception of exclusive recruitment processes. A study pointed out the evolution of the perception of the population about quotas (Lloyd, 2015). A poll realized in 1995 showed that 49% of the respondents were against the adoption of quotas and 48% were in favor. The same study realized in 2006 showed that 65% of the population was now in favor of such practices. The proportion rose to 87% in favor of the adoption of quotas for poor people. Ultimately, a study realized by Smith in 2010 showed that 70% had a positive view on quota adoption. However, Smith shows that the 18% of the population who were strongly reluctant to such measures were a powerful minority of Brazilians who had access to the best levels of education. Therefore, they represent a group who has political clout and is capable of pressuring local universities, authorities, or deputies to influence the measures. Smith warns that this minority can be much stronger than the overwhelming majority who is in favor of quotas. This shows the complexity of the Brazilian socio-economic context where power is concentrated in the hands of a small minority who calls the shots for the entire country.

Figure 2



Evolution of the opinions about quotas in Brazil between 1995 and 2010

Based on studies by Lloyd (2015) and Smith (2010)

As we have shown previously in this study, perception is one of the main attributes of the evaluation of inclusion. Considering a student or employee perception gives highly relevant insights about the actual dynamic of inclusion of diversity within a group. Regarding students who benefited from the quota system in universities, results of a study tend to show that

socioeconomic inequality and its consequences reappear in university and create different forms of exclusion (Resende, Queiroz & Faria, 2012). Some students interviewed relate the growing isolation (in this case referring to the fact of being one of the very few black person) they feel when rising socially: “the higher I get, the less chance I have of finding someone like me”. This statement is truly representative of a reality in which the social mobility system is broken, and it might need more than quotas or diversity management practices to reboot it. Even if those results were concluded after a study realized in universities and the quota system, it can be easily imagined that the same perception of inclusion would occur in the workplace after an employee participated to an exclusive recruitment program.

Ultimately, only a very small number of research have been focusing on employee perception when it comes to assessing and improving diversity and inclusion practices in the workplace. There is therefore a void to fill.

To sum up, it can be inferred that diversity practices have gained strength in the last two decades in Brazil. The awareness of companies has been growing and the number of diversity management practices have significantly raised to include under-represented groups. However, one could argue that Brazil is only in the first stage of its transformation process. Many inequalities and discrimination practices are still deeply entrenched in work cultures, especially regarding salary, opportunity of promotion or employment. Black, female, LGBTQIA+ or disabled talents are still not considered to their true value and white straight men still represent an overwhelming majority of top-management positions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The focus of our research is to understand the perceptions of inclusion of employees who entered their company through an exclusive recruitment process. Perceptions refer to a personal set of feelings and impressions that one may have in the workplace. Therefore, it was naturally decided that a qualitative research method will be used. Indeed, qualitative research is particularly well designed to relate complex and multi-dimensional phenomena that reflect the feelings, perception, or testimonies of individuals. In this study, the research question calls for experience testimonies, insights, opinions, or points of views and does not require numerical data analysis (proper to quantitative analysis).

The study was based on a list of questions thought in a way that would allow to have a general understanding of the perceptions of the subject. The complete questionnaire can be found in the annex (annex 1). It was divided into seven parts: personal information (1); the recruitment process (2); integration (3); reputation (4); responsibilities and opportunities (5); well-being and inclusion in the workplace (6); covid-19 and home-office impacts (7). These seven elements will give a sufficient base to understand the perception of inclusion in the workplace of people who passed through an exclusive recruitment program. Indeed, these seven elements cover all the different steps that a candidate who passes an exclusive recruitment process can experience.

Personal information (1) was asked to get to know better the candidate and understand its background. Most of the information do not appear in the final analysis for privacy purpose. Relevant information of this part is the sector of the company, the diversity group to which the interviewee identifies, and the nature of the recruitment process she / he participated to (internship, trainee, for black people only, for women...). Information regarding the city of living and city of work is also asked to try to map and find a pattern in the opportunities offered by exclusive recruitment processes. For instance, it helps to understand if such processes exist only in economic capitals or if candidates coming from poorer regions of Brazil can use such processes to find a job and raise the social ladder.

Information regarding the recruitment process (2) first aim at understanding the perceptions of the candidate during the recruitment process in terms of consideration by recruiting teams. It also aims at understanding the connection of the candidate with exclusive recruitment processes: if the candidate had already participated to one in the past and understand if the candidate perceived some difference in terms of experience between exclusive recruitment

processes and traditional ones. Ultimately, it also consists in understanding how the candidate heard about such processes to know how companies communicate about such initiatives.

To assess the perception of integration within the firm (3), i.e., once the candidate passed the process and begins working at the company, we focused on two parts. First, questions regarding the interviewee's feeling during integration. It is relevant to know if the interviewee felt that she / he got a special treatment (positive or negative) because coming from a special recruitment process and if the HR teams actively integrated or presented the interviewee to the rest of the firm. Secondly, it is relevant to understand the first perception of the interviewee regarding the diversity performance of the firm, namely knowing if the diversity is visible in top-management, if other employees coming from the same under-represented group appear significantly within the workforce. Such information will help to understand at what stage of their process of diversity management companies usually decide to organize exclusive recruitment processes.

Questions regarding the reputation (4) of the interviewee are at the heart of the perception issue. Indeed, reputation is something that is individually perceived and experienced. Getting to know how the interviewee assessed her / his reputation within the firm (as an individual or as coming from an exclusive recruitment process) highly relevant to assess the inclusion performance of the company.

Asking for the perception in terms of responsibilities and opportunities (5) aims at knowing the level of perceived integration of the interviewee in the daily work life, namely his implication in group projects, meetings... It also aims at analyzing the perception of the candidate regarding his evaluation process and criteria when compared to other employees. It helps to analyze the equality within the firm's workforce in terms of promotion, salaries or project allocation and determine if there is a potential bias by management teams. Ultimately, this part also gives the opportunity for the interviewee to speak out about any tangible or perceived discrimination she / he might have been victim of.

Focusing on the well-being and inclusion of the candidate (6) gives the opportunity to have overall feedback of the candidate regarding his journey in the company when it comes to perception of inclusion. It also gives the opportunity for the interviewee to reflect over the difference between expectation when she / he applied and her / his current situation and set of perception within the firm.

The last part focuses on understanding the impacts of covid-19 (7) and related measures such as home office in the perceptions of inclusion of a candidate coming from an exclusive recruitment process. As explained, covid-19 poses new challenges to companies, and it is highly relevant to understand how interviewees feel regarding the measures that are being taken to ensure the continuity of their inclusion.

Interviews were conducted via virtual meetings. The interviews were conducted in Portuguese since all candidates were Brazilians and using native language helps to better translate one's perception. Moreover, not all participants were fluent in English. For data-analysis, notes were taken down during the interviews to better analyze and compare the answers given by the different interviewees. Additionally, all interviews were conducted following the structure previously defined, but a lot of space was opened for discussion, interaction, and personal comments to be able to catch more representative and accurate perceptions of the participants.

Participants were reached out through three main ways for this research. First of all, being a jobseeker this year, I was participating into several online groups of students or recently employed (WhatsApp or Facebook). I activated the groups that focused on diversity and was able to contact two people. Secondly, I also talked about my research to friends who had friends or connections which had participated to this kind of program and accepted to answer my interview. I reached two people like that as well. Ultimately, I also managed to interview two colleagues of personal connections that I had contacted because I knew they were working in a company that organized exclusive recruitment processes. Participants were naturally casted because they had successfully passed an exclusive recruitment process in their current companies.

The interviews were made either via Zoom or WhatsApp phone call because of the pandemic. Each interview lasted for approximately twenty minutes. The interviews were not recorded, as agreed with the Ethic Committee of the Fundação Getulio Vargas. The purpose of not recording the interviews was also to preserve the anonymous aspect of the conversation and let participants speak their minds without external pressure. Only notes were taken down during the interviews. All interviews were held between May 2021 and July 2021.

The following table gives an overview and a summary of the characteristics of the participants cited in this research. As previously mentioned, and as agreed in the research methodology all data were anonymized, namely names of participants and names of companies will not be

included in this research. The names chosen are therefore fictive and chosen by me. All other answers or information gathered during the interview have not been altered in any kind.

Table 1

<i>Name (fictive)</i>	<i>Company</i>	<i>Company's Sector</i>	<i>Diversity group</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Position of entry</i>	<i>Date of entry in c^{ie}</i>	<i>City of work</i>
Pedro	A	Consulting	Black community	21	Internship	January 2021	São Paulo
Juliana	B	Banking	Women	25	Internship	February 2021	São Paulo
Marina	C	Real Estate	Black community	28	Associate Project Manager	January 2021	São Paulo
Leticia	D	Retail - Luxury	Black community	29	Press Relation Coordinator	February 2020	São Paulo
João	E	Consulting	Black community	24	Internship	January 2021	São Paulo
Isabella	F	Retail	Women	27	Project Manager	August 2020	Rio de Janeiro

I am truly happy to have had the opportunity to interview the people cited in this study. They were selected to provide a representative sample that allow to answer our research question, namely, to have a clear image of the perception of inclusion of people who participated in exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil for the following reasons:

- *Participants work in different sectors.* This gives a large overview of the different behaviors observed in the market. It also shows that many different companies are engaging in bold practices for diversity and inclusion. Companies casted were all “publicly” known, namely known by many people in Brazil. I believe this is an important element as big companies usually serve as role models for other companies in the future when it comes to best practices – be it regarding diversity and inclusion or purely economic aspects. Selected companies were all leaders in their sectors which could imply that, in the coming years, the same research could be done using a large data base if the transmission of diversity practices continues in each sector.

- *Participants belong to different diversity groups.* All participants participated to programs either focused on the employment of women or black community which are – to date – the most popular. Indeed, according to our previous analysis identifying the existence of exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil (Table 1), black and women programs were the ones which appeared the most. As a result, it can be inferred that the results of our analysis will be narrowed mainly to people who participated to programs for the black community or women. Nevertheless, it is relevant to point out that several people interviewed also identified as members of other under-represented groups. For instance, Pedro participated to a program enhancing black employment, but also identified as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Leticia and Marina, who passed a program for employment of black people also identified as women. This echoes the previously cited idea that the divisions of diversity within companies are blurred and sensitive. Programs implemented by companies should therefore tackle inclusion and diversity as a general concept and should not limit down to one type of diversity effort, at the risk of producing counterproductive results.

- *Participants have different positions in their companies.* Among the participants, three hold an internship position and three hold a permanent contract position. This proves that our sample is representative of the current state of exclusive recruitment programs existing in Brazil. Indeed, according to our precedent study (Table 1) most programs are conducted for trainee, internships, and entry-level positions. Our sample therefore corresponds to such distribution. Obviously, critics could be made regarding the absence of top-management executive interview. But I believe these results more from a lack of existence of programs for top-management positions, rather than a personal mistake.

There were several personal motivations to focus my master thesis on this subject. First, questions regarding diversity and inclusion interest me a lot. I am personally a member of the LGBTQIA+ community so challenges regarding social progress for less discrimination and more inclusion resonate particularly with me. Secondly, the subject of exclusive recruitment processes is a hot topic in Brazil. This motivated me in the sense that it allowed to explore a new phenomenon resulting from years of global ongoing inclusion movement. By basing my study on a qualitative methodology, I knew I would have the opportunity to interview people and learn a lot from their experiences.

4. RESULTS

The first part of this chapter is a contextualization of our research. We will focus on analyzing the challenges related to exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil and how they are currently integrated in companies' diversity strategy. Then, we will argue why keeping on focusing on diversity and inclusion during the covid-19 crisis is critical for Brazilian companies. Then, to transcribe, compare and analyze the results of the study, I will follow the structure of the interview questionnaire used in the research (Annex 1). Therefore, I will first outline elements of personal information given by respondents (1), then elements of perception relative to the recruitment process (2), to the perception of integration (3), the perception of reputation (4), the responsibilities and opportunities (5), the perception of well-being and inclusion in the workplace (6) and aspects related to the Covid-19 crisis and home-office measures (7). These seven elements will give a sufficient base to understand the perception of inclusion in the workplace of people who passed through an exclusive recruitment program.

4.1. Contextualization

What is it?

Exclusive recruitment processes are recruitment processes organized by organizations and opened for candidates who identify with one or several diversity criteria: women, black, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities... (among the most common ones). Only people identifying with the criteria will be able to apply for the position and participate to the interviews. Such processes can be organized for all kinds of positions in an organization. However, traditionally and in majority, they are organized for entry level positions or interns.

What is it for?

Such recruitment processes aim at improving diversity within an organization by directly targeting a desired type of individuals. Traditionally, organizations fail to attract diverse talents. There can be several many reasons to this

- *Self-censorship*. Some candidates who identify with an under-represented community tend to practice self-censorship when applying to a job position. They feel they are not adequate for the position because they are not good enough, qualified enough or because they do not belong or identify to such organization. This stems from the fact that in many organizations, some communities (women, blacks, LGBTQIA+, disabled...) are

not represented. As a result, candidates disqualify themselves prior to the recruitment process and do not file the application.

- *Internal discrimination.* In other cases, candidates identifying to an under-represented category can suffer from discrimination during the recruitment process. Recruiters or managers may disregard the application or the performances of some candidates for the sole reason of physical or personal attributes. It is worth reminding that this is a crime under Brazilian law (as well as under much Western economies law systems), but it still happens a lot, especially since such occurrence is always difficult to prove.
- *Social inequalities.* Historically, many social groups have been massively discriminated. Even if a new movement for social rights and equality of opportunities has grown for the last decades, the inequalities within society remain strong, especially in Brazil. In 2020, according to the *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* (Ipea), in Brazil, 36% of white youngsters between 18-24 were enrolled in a university whereas only 18% of black youngsters within the same age range – and so despite the numerous social plans implemented since 2000 to increase the participation of black students in Brazilian universities such as ProUni (2005). Similarly, in the Brazilian society, women are still expected to focus on the family or the house prior to their professional carrier. These are only two examples amongst the diversity of type of inequalities and discriminations in Brazil. All those elements result in an over-representation of white straight male at the entry of recruitment processes and therefore a lack of diversity in organizations.

For these reasons, many organizations fail at attracting diverse talents. Communication, diversity training or standards are practices that may not be sufficient enough to overcome such hurdles. Therefore, exclusive recruitment processes appear as a bold measure for organizations to enhance attractivity of a diverse workforce, as theorized by McKinsey's diversity management report (2020). Indeed, exclusive recruitment processes can ease self-censorship of candidates by clearly demonstrating that diversity is welcome in the organization. Moreover, provided organizers of the program are free from personal bias, they should leave no space for discrimination. Ultimately, they participate in the solving of historical inequalities by enhancing participation of under-represented groups in the employment market.

Where is it implemented?

Brazil is one of the first markets which started to implement exclusive recruitment programs. This stems from the fact that they are particularly well tailored to the social reality of the country. Therefore, paradoxically enough, even if Brazilian corporations are often pointed out for the lack of diversity initiatives, some are front runners and innovators in this field. Follows a listing the companies who have announced the implementation of exclusive recruitment programs in Brazil, until September 2021. This list was made based on personal research related to the announcement of companies. This is not an exhaustive list and do not necessarily represent the reality of the phenomenon in Brazil. First, because some companies may have been unintentionally forgotten in the research. Secondly, because some companies may be organizing such programs without communicating about it or organize it internally for promotions, top-management recruitment (which are usually not communicated about in the same way as entry level positions).

Table 2

<i>Company</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Nature of the process</i>	<i>Related position</i>	<i>Starting year</i>
Magazine Luiza	Retail	For blacks	Trainee	2021
Bayer	Pharmaceutics	For blacks	Trainee	2021
Gerdau	Industry	For women	Trainee	2020
Ambev	Consumption Goods	For women & for blacks	Internship	2020
Banco BV	Bank	For women	Internship	2021
P&G	Consumption Goods	For blacks	Internship	2021
Natura	Cosmetics	For blacks	Internship	2021
TIM	Telecommunications	For blacks, LGBTQIA+, elderly (45+ years)	Internship	2020
Nubank	Bank	For blacks	All levels (only IT department)	2021
Accenture	Consulting	For women, blacks, people w/ disabilities	Internships & employees	2020
Carrefour	Retail	For women, blacks, transgenders, people w/ disabilities	Internship	2021
Will Bank	Bank	For blacks	Employee (junior & senior)	2020
Itaú	Bank	For people w/ disabilities	Employee (junior)	2020
Quinto Andar	Real Estate	For blacks, women	Manager	2021
Burger King	Consumption Goods	For people w/ disabilities	All levels	2021
B2W	Retail	For women	All levels	2021
Eaton	Industry	For women	Internship	2021
99 Jobs	Service	For blacks	Employee	2021
Google	Service	For blacks	Internship	2020
Bank of America	Bank	For blacks	Trainee	2021
Bain	Consulting	For blacks	Internship	2020
JHSF	Real Estate - Luxury	For blacks	All levels	2020

Sources: companies' portals, LinkedIn, 99Jobs, Vagas.com, press articles

Such analysis allows to understand a pattern used by companies when implementing exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil. First, the majority only involves entry-level positions such as internship or trainee. This shows that there is a gap between company's communication and the reality. Companies justify such processes by expressing their need to increase diversity especially in top-management. However, opening exclusive recruitment programs only for entry-level positions does not answer such need. This could therefore appear as somehow hypocritical and reveals the dubious priority that companies give to individuals who represent diversity. True, this could be a long-term strategy, and, in the future, such employees could

become top executives. But in the short-term, tackling the problem from this angle does not appear as the best solution. Secondly, the study reveals that no priority is given to the LGBTQIA+ community. Only one company opened a process for such individuals. Naturally, the massive adoption of such initiatives for the black and female community is a motive of celebration. However, this shows that companies are still not ready to encompass all kinds of diversity at the same time, whereas it was recommended by scholars (Loden and Rosener, 1991).

Controversies

The organization and existence of exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil were massively commented, be it to praise or criticize them.

As previously explained, promoters of exclusive recruitment processes argue that it is the boldest measure to date to improve diversity within organization. It appears as a necessary means to invert a situation where the lack of participation of under-represented groups have been stagnating for years because of rampant discrimination. Magazine Luiza was one of the companies which received the harshest critics from the press and public opinion after announcing the organization of such programs (although they were not the firm to do so). The company justified its move pointing out that half of their 40,000 employees were blacks, but only 16% were occupying management positions. Therefore, the initiative aimed at rebalancing the proportion. Overall, thinking about historical reparation may be the key to this process. This is because, even with social advances, the nearly four centuries of slavery in Brazil still impact the lack of representation of black people in decision-making positions within organizations. It is worth saying that the same IBGE survey showed that only 30% of managerial positions in Brazilian companies in 2018 were held by black people compared to 68.6% held by white people. Prioritizing the recruitment of black people is not "reverse racism". The expression, in fact, is a distorted concept, because reparation actions do not exclude or discriminate against white people. They equalize opportunities and make the selection of candidates a fairer stage in the labor market. The same argumentation could be supported for other types of recruitment processes: for women, LGBTQIA+ community or people with disabilities, who have been traditionally moved aside the employment market.

The main critics against exclusive recruitment processes basically seize upon the set of criticism already exposed against all kinds of affirmative action initiatives. They denounce the fact that it is not legal as it recreates discrimination dynamics which are forbidden by law. A federal

deputy even expressed his disagreement after Magalu's announcement by accusing the company of racism.

Controversies also appeared against companies who organized exclusive recruitment processes but communicated badly about it. In October 2020, Cristina Junqueira, co-founder of Nubank, was highly criticized after an interview where she commented on the implementation of exclusive recruitment processes for black individuals by her company². She explicitly said that the company will not "level down" its standards in the recruitment process (amongst other comments), slightly if opening job positions for black candidates would naturally require the level down of recruitment standards, namely black candidates were not as good as others. After massive backlash on social media, the cofounder apologized, and the company announced the development of internal inclusion initiatives (such as training) to overcome the problem.

Eventually, many companies have been implementing exclusive recruitment processes in the past months, proving that critics have not that much of a clout in companies' decision

Challenges

Exclusive recruitment processes are bold functioning initiatives that improve diversity within a firm. However, as previously explained in the literature review of this study, diversity is not synonym with inclusion. Indeed, such initiatives do not guarantee whatsoever the well-being of the employees involved once they passed the recruitment stage. Therefore, it is necessary for companies to implement complementary internal process that ensure that such exclusive recruitment processes enhance inclusion performances. Consequently, the perception of inclusion of involved employees appears as a relevant indicator of actual firm performances. The purpose of this study is to analyze the reality behind such recruitment processes and try to identify a pattern of perceptions that better depicts reality.

Another challenge faced was the difficulty to contact people who participated in exclusive recruitment processes. I found it harder than I thought it would be for two main reasons. First, in many companies, it seems that there is a very profound assimilation process of such employees. Therefore, only a very little number of people working at the company would know who passed a traditional or exclusive recruitment process. This is obviously a good thing for it suggests that integration of such employees is fast and efficient. Nevertheless, it made my research harder as I needed to have a direct connection or recommendation to approach people

² Link of the interview during the Brazilian TV show *Roda Viva*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vYX8B-Ro7M> – 35 min

who participated from exclusive recruitment processes. Asking for a contact to members of my network who worked at a particular company which I knew had organized such process did not deliver expected results. Secondly, as previously mentioned, exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil are a recent phenomenon. Many companies implemented their first exclusive recruitment processes during the year 2020. Consequently, participants to the study all entered their company between September 2020 and January 2021, which narrowed the time frame and the potential number of respondents. Ultimately, I also narrowed my interviews to people working in the private sector, in relatively large companies. I did not include public sector or non-profit sector participants as I believe the HR dynamics in such fields respond to different criteria as those developed in the literature review (namely productivity, gain in competitive advantage etc.). Further studies would be needed to answer the research question in those sectors and could then be compared to the results of this analysis.

Inclusion and diversity initiatives during the covid-19 crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic jeopardized many businesses and companies. Over the last months, many companies have had to cut on expenses and reduce activity. They need to reinvent themselves and change business models. Client and customer behaviors have changed, so companies need to adapt. Given such circumstances, many would advocate for setting diversity and inclusion initiatives at the bottom of the priority list, thereby jeopardizing the progress made over the last years.

According to McKinsey, the Covid-19 crisis will separate two types of companies. The ones who still acknowledge the importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives as a medium- and long-term strategy to ensure the company's competitive advantage. Others will resign themselves to pursuing (or starting) their efforts in the field claiming an unnecessary expense that they cannot afford in hard times. Only time will tell which group adopted the best strategy. But according to the previous analysis, diversity and inclusion is a powerful tool to enhance firm's performance and transformation. Diverse teams have proven to be a driver of innovation and help companies to be better prepared to new consumption behaviors. Therefore, keeping on investing in diversity and inclusion could be a winning strategy for businesses to reinvent themselves.

Moreover, analyzing the situation from an employee perspective, the Covid-19 crisis could trigger adverse consequences for companies and the well-being of their workforce. Studies have shown that home office can negatively impact the working conditions of employees who represent diversity. Indeed, it can make discrimination and exclusive practices more difficult to

counter by reducing control over internal interactions and therefore jeopardize inclusion. Additionally, women can suffer the consequences of homeschooling as they are traditionally considered to be responsible for taking care of the home and children. Consequently, home office could overcharge women and put them at a disadvantage. If companies do not foresee such impact, they could lose the engagement of an entire part of the workforce, which would result undermine performance.

Eventually, Mc Kinsey points out the fact that keeping on implementing diversity and inclusion practices in such difficult times is a “win-win” situation for companies: it ensures a company’s competitive advantage over time while doing what is morally and socially right.

4.2. Data Analysis

i. Personal information

The analysis of personal information given by respondents gives us several insights. First of all, the interviewees either participated to diversity recruitment programs for black people (66%) or for women (33%). Although this percentage might not exactly correspond to the reality of exclusive recruitment processes, it is aligned with the study realized previously (Table 1) which draws the list of current programs in Brazil. Nevertheless, this does not match with the actual diversity of the sample. Indeed, two of the four people who participated to an exclusive recruitment process for black people are also women and one black person identified as LGBTQIA+. This element proves the difficulty to set limits of diversity in the workplace. It confirms the argument of Loden and Rosener (1991) that diversity should be tackled as a whole and at the same time by HR teams. If diversity is considered as the set of different independent categories, there will always be people feeling lack of inclusion. This was surprisingly well addressed by the companies used in this research: even if recruitment programs only for black people or women were implemented, the majority had internal mentoring programs or affiliation groups for a broader part of the diversity workforce (ex: LGBTQIA+ groups, mentoring program for women etc.).

Another point that can be made analyzing personal information given by interviewees is the localization of work / home. First, five out of six respondents work in companies based in São Paulo, and the last one in Rio de Janeiro – namely in the two economic capitals of Brazil. This shows that exclusive recruitment programs are majorly organized in big cities for now. Nevertheless, the pandemic tends to tone down the potential inequalities that would result from such situation. Indeed, all respondents were working from home. As a result, 50% of

respondents were not living in the town they were working. Moreover, since all recruitment processes considered in this study were organized online because of the pandemic, some companies accepted people coming from all over Brazil in their processes. For instance, Isabella's company has no prevision of coming back to all presential activities and is therefore contracting people from all over Brazil – in exclusive recruitment processes as well as traditional ones. To conclude, it seems that localization is not a direct factor of a better perception of inclusion at the workplace.

Ultimately, to comment about the age of the participants of this study, it is relevant to notice that all are under thirty years old. Although older people perhaps benefit from exclusive recruitment programs, the results of this study suggest that they are majorly directed to a younger population. This goes against the recommendation of diversity specialists mentioned in the literature review which criticize the lack of diversity inside companies especially in top-management positions, traditionally held by older people (over thirty).

ii. Perception regarding the selection processes

The first element to analyze about the selection process is the way participants heard about the process and decided to participate. Two different phenomena were observed regarding this matter. First, everyone heard about the process via professional platforms: LinkedIn, Vagas.com or WhatsApp (WhatsApp is included as a professional platform because referring to professional groups of job seekers who share relevant information about processes, companies recruiting etc.). Moreover, the case of Leticia and Isabella is quite interesting. Both participated to the recruitment process not knowing that the position they were applying to be a diversity position – namely reserved for under-represented groups. They only learnt about this when they passed the process and entered the company. It is interesting to notice that both Leticia and Isabella are older than the rest of the interviewees and applied for more senior positions – namely not internships or entry position. It can therefore be inferred that companies communicate differently about their diversity recruitment processes depending on the level of the position. The lower the position, the more direct and transparent companies are about the exclusiveness of the recruitment processes – although this might not be a generality. This echoes the study realized about exclusive recruitment processes in Brazil (Table 1) which showed that many companies listed organize such programs for trainee or internships positions. The study was based on personal research on the Internet about companies organizing such processes. Companies might also organize process for upper positions but communicate less about it and therefore they are harder to identify.

The second relevant aspect for this analysis is the experience of companies with exclusive recruitment processes, in other words, whether they had already organized such processes in the past. It came out that all companies except company A (explained further in this paragraph) were just beginning to implement such programs. Nevertheless, this did not seem to impact negatively the participants concerned as we will see in the next paragraph. Moreover, Juliana knew that her company was thinking about organizing new similar processes (for women in the banking sector) in the coming months, for internships and trainees. In the case of Leticia, her company contracted the Brazilian diversity consultancy to generalize exclusive recruitment processes and created a diversity committee, in which she participates. We therefore learn that exclusive recruitment processes are quite a new phenomenon in Brazil which started, for the majority in 2020. Such process might be happening more frequently in the coming years as new companies might adopt this practice, and companies which already adopted will repeat it. This timing stems from years of public debate about diversity and common progress for more inclusivity in the workplace. Besides that, Leticia mentioned that she clearly perceived an acceleration of the diversity movement in her company after the murder of George Floyd by a policeman in the United States in May 2020. The repercussions about the black community in the world were such that it participated to realization and awareness of some companies about discriminations, and how they could be countered. Company A is different than its counterparts on the question of experience with diversity recruitment. Indeed, company A has been organizing exclusive internship or entry level recruitment programs for black people for three years. They also have a particular organization for the exclusive recruitment program: it first consists in 3 months mentoring program in which students or young job seekers can have a privileged relationships with members of the company to discuss about business, career choices, learn more about strategy consulting, present different projects etc. and at the end of this mentoring program, there is a special selection process for the participants who can thereby enter the company. Company A also organized mentoring programs directed to the LGBTQIA+ community and women, but without the exclusive selection phase at the end. Pedro justified this because *“they are already enough women and LGBTQIA+ in the company, what lacks the most are black people”*³. This echoes a particular situation in the Brazilian employment market: black people represent more than half of the population but have a harder time finding jobs and are less present in top-management positions. They are structurally discriminated against and

³ In Portuguese: *“já tem bastante mulheres e LGBTQIA+ na *nome da empresa*, o que mais falta são pessoas pretas”*

stigmatized because of rampant racism inherited from the slavery system, a problem which was publicly addressed only very recently (Conceição & Spink, 2013).

Additionally, it is relevant to analyze the set of perception and feelings of the participants during the recruitment processes and the different interviews stages. All experiences related in this study were positive. First, regarding the comparison with other traditional processes, we observe different feelings. Naturally, Isabella and Leticia observed no difference with traditional processes as they were not aware they were applying for a diversity position. On the other hand, Juliana perceived plenty of difference with traditional processes. She felt the recruiting teams in company B were much more sympathetic, affective, and dedicated to the candidate. Interviews were much more of an open discussion about the job but also about women in banking, what it is like to be part of a minority during her studies (Juliana studied engineering and was the only woman of her class). She mentioned that for the first time she had the impression of *“not being reduced to a candidate number or curriculum vitae, to feel a sincere preoccupation for the candidate as a person and its well-being”*⁴. Pedro has a similar experience during his process in company A. He felt much more comfortable and freer to be himself. He considered himself in a safe place – which had never happened before. For instance, during the mentoring process, he let his hair grow and had an “Afro hairstyle”. He asked a member of the company in charge of the recruitment process if he should better cut off his hair for the recruiting process as it might be negatively perceived but was immediately reassured that there would be no problem whatsoever regarding this issue. This case images the “culturally competent manager” (Borrego & Johnson, 2012) who respects and understands employees no matter their individual specificities, is adaptable and result-driven – less impacted by bias. João and Marina were also positive about their recruitment experiences. João also recognized that he felt more comfortable than other processes but mentioned that he was happy to notice that the actual content of the process did not change compared to traditional processes – in consulting, recruitment processes are traditionally very codified and similar. He did not want a special treatment. Marina added an interesting aspect about personal feeling during the recruitment process. She felt that for being surrounded by other black candidates, if she failed, she could be certain it was not for the fact of being black but because of her lack of knowledge, a mistake she had made etc. This was a motivational factor during the interviews, she reckons. Marina also noticed a difference between traditional and exclusive processes organized by

⁴ In Portuguese: *“sensação de não ser apenas um número ou um CV, preocupação sincera pelo candidato e focado no seu bem-estar durante o processo”*

company C: traditional ones were in English and exclusive ones for black people were in Portuguese. She was personally pleased with that since she did not have a sufficient level of English at the time of the process. Company C then pays English classes to employees who passed through exclusive recruitment processes and do not have a sufficient level of English. This case embodies the right organization of diversity programs within a company: give opportunities to a larger amount of people but also accompany employees on the run to globally improve the competitiveness of its workforce (Hay-Thomas & Bendick, 2013; Canevale & Stone, 1994). Marina was therefore very grateful to her company and felt a strong motivation to succeed in the tasks she was assigned to because the company had positively bet on her. To conclude, it is relevant to underline that no discrimination was observed during the selective processes passed by the participants. The perceptions of inclusion were either neutral – namely not different compared to traditional processes – or positive.

Ultimately, no respondent was able to give me some numbers regarding the proportion of candidates accepted and applicants nor regarding the comparison of such proportion between traditional and exclusive recruitment processes. Pedro was able to inform me that twenty people were selected for the mentoring process and 6 passed the recruiting process at the end and were now working in company A. Because of the lack of result, no conclusion can be made on this point.

iii. Perception of integration in the company

The first interesting element to consider when it comes to the integration phase in the company is the onboarding process and whether special events were implemented. On this matter, two different types of processes were observed. Marina (company C), Leticia (company D) and Isabella (company F) reckon they were integrated in the company in a similar way as other employees: a few days of traditional integration to get a clear overview of the ongoing projects in the company and get to know their co-workers and teams. In these cases, the diversity factor was not mentioned or at least not directly related to the integration phase. For this reason, the majority of Leticia and Isabella's co-workers do not necessarily know that they entered through an exclusive recruitment program. In the case of Marina, her close team (with whom she works everyday) knew before she arrived, but the rest of the company did not. The fact that some employees do not know who participated to an exclusive recruitment program can be positive to avoid future discrimination or separation inside the workforce. Nevertheless, the three interviewees mentioned that a potential disadvantage of such practice is that it silences diversity matters by not speaking out about them inside the company. For these reasons, both entered or

got closed with the diversity committee and the diversity groups of their companies to participate to a structural change. This echoes the importance of existence of affinity groups (Thomas, 2005) that allow one employee to recognize himself or herself inside the workforce, not to feel isolated and able to participate to the life of his or her company. According to Ferdman, Avigdor, Braun, Konkin & Kuzmycz (2010), this will participate to the constitution of a collective experience of inclusion of employees coming from diversity, enhance their participation and ultimately will serve company's objectives. On the contrary, the rest of the interviewees maintain they had a special integration and onboarding process centered on diversity issues. Pedro (company A) benefited from a special integration because he had participated to the mentoring program. He therefore already knew several members of the company, from all positions. Because he participated to an exclusive recruitment program, he had the opportunity to have an online happy hour with partners and top-management HR employees to discuss about diversity in the company and the importance of such processes. He also had the opportunity to have an online happy hour with members of his diversity group already working in the company (in this case, the black community of company A). Ultimately, all phases of the integration process were in Portuguese when they are traditionally in English: this was perceived as a form of inclusion because many black people did not have access to qualitative English courses in their previous studies. Thanks to all those elements, Pedro believes he was treated differently during the integration process because he participated in an exclusive recruitment process in a very positive way. He believes he was privileged compared to traditional interns, especially for having access and contact with a lot of partners and senior partners (in consulting, such positions represent the top-management position). João (company E) had a very similar experience even if he had not participated to a mentoring program prior his employment in company E. He also was able to create special contact with top-management employees and had an active contact and support by members of his diversity group (the black community). Another interesting element in the case of João is that HR teams made him meet other employees who shared some similar experiences as him, for instance, who went to public university or lived in the suburbs of São Paulo, but not necessary from the black community. João considered this as a very positive measure as it helped to create intersectionality in the company and prevent from raising barriers between communities; echoing Thomas' theory (2005) about core groups discussed in the literature review. Next, Juliana (company B) also had a positive point of view about her integration. The company had organized several presentations with different members of different teams to acknowledge the importance of more women in the banking sector. Afterwards, they also implemented a meeting each two weeks where interns

who entered through the recruitment process could talk to HR and discuss about their well-being in the company, about feminism etc. Just as João and Pedro, Juliana reckons she benefited from a special treatment and had a better integration than traditional employees. Nevertheless, this did not affect negatively the perception of other employees regarding them. There were no “jealousy” or “envy” whatsoever coming from other employees, therefore justifying the results of Nacoste (1990) which asserts that against the common belief, non-beneficiaries of affirmative action initiative are comprehensive about the need for such practice to make up for past social injustice.

As a result of all the elements, no participant mentioned the perception of being seen differently or negatively by co-workers when they entered the company. No one suffered from direct discrimination or felt categorized for having participated to an exclusive recruitment program. Marina (company C) was particularly afraid of such categorization – the minority stress (Cochran, 2001). She feared of not having enough qualifications to meet objectives and therefore that her managers leveled down the tasks for her. She was quickly reassured that this will not be the case, that she will benefit from English classes paid by the company to be able to do the same tasks as other employees as quickly as possible. Moreover, all participants believe they manage to integrate within the teams without any problems.

Finally, another critical factor to consider in the integration phase is the perception of the current state of diversity within the company at the day of arrival, namely whether the interviewees could see other employees belonging to the same under-represented group. For both Pedro and João who work in consulting, they saw very few black people in the top-management and in general. They also mentioned that there were very few women and LGBTQIA+ in top-management positions, but they were more in entry or medium level positions than black people, as previously observed by Conceição and Spink (2013). Juliana was able to identify a reasonable number of women in leadership positions when she entered the company. This echoes the fact that the banking sector in Brazil has already started to implement diversity program targeted for women a few years ago as explained in the literature review. It is a very encouraging result that proved diversity programs and policies work – when done well. Marina had mixed feeling about the diversity in company C: although she could see some black people (all men) in leadership positions of other departments, in her area (product management) she was the only black person. This was quite shocking for her. Leticia was also the first black person to enter her department in company D. She entered along with another black female co-worker. She mentions that this stems from the fact that luxury in Brazil nowadays is not targeted

at all to black women, so internal teams unconsciously reflect this reality. Finally, Isabella was able to identify only one black person in her department when she entered in August 2020. She also mentions that this number has been growing a lot since. Those numbers help to understand that Brazil is really at the beginning of a profound transformation that needs to accelerate. I must confess the lack of diversity employees in some of the companies studied in this research really surprised me. Hopefully, all participants also mentioned that their companies were now fully aware of this fact and recognized it as a matter. Therefore, they seemed to be increasing the number of diversity recruitments – even if no participant was able to give me a concrete number or objective given by their company in terms of future percentage or proportion of diversity employees.

iv. Perception of reputation within the company

When it comes to the perception of the reputation of the participants in their company, I received the same answer from everyone. All participants perceived their reputation within the company as good and not deteriorated whatsoever by the fact that they had participated to an exclusive recruitment program. Juliana even mentioned that she and her counterparts had a pretty good reputation since many other employees were happy to see them in the company and celebrated that. Among other factors, this can result from the fact that all companies studied already had behavior regulations implemented inside the companies which prevent employees from discriminating or judging others. A negative point of view would suggest that the perception of the reputation can be good but not necessarily correspond to what other colleagues think of you in “secret” or what is told without you knowing about it. There is no data or testimony on this matter so no conclusion can be done.

v. Perception of the fairness of treatment, access to responsibilities and opportunities

Inside their respective companies, all participants have the perception of having access to the same responsibilities and opportunities than traditional employees. Two participants said that they experienced some difficulties, but which were not related to the diversity factor. Juliana felt her department (IT department) was not as prepared as others to receive interns and therefore she felt a bit loss sometimes. Marina also faces some difficulties in her day-to-day job, but they are more related to the fact that she is still in the training phase which is supposed to last one year. As a result, she is sometimes assisted during her work – and therefore can perceive to have reduced responsibilities – but reckons this has nothing to do with the diversity

factor. On the contrary, some participants maintain they have access to more responsibilities than other traditional employees. Indeed, belonging to under-represented groups of employees, they sometimes get the opportunity to actively participate internally to the development of programs to improve inclusion in the company. For instance, Leticia was given strong responsibilities in the diversity committee of her company. It is important to remind that the formation and functioning of a diversity committee is the most effective diversity and inclusion measure that a company can implement according to the ranking made by Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly in 2006. The results of such measure outperform any other diversity or inclusion measure a company could take. She took part in the creation of the committee and is now one of the most active and important members. She feels her voice is very powerful inside the company especially since top-management are decided to improve diversity management. This element echoes the results of Nacoste's study (1990) which suggests that diversity employee's coworkers usually tend to look up to the diversity employee and grant him/her credibility for the work he/she is doing. Ultimately, when it comes to compare the assessment of the work realized by their superiors or the amount of salary no participants perceived a difference with the way other employees are treated.

Such results are quite encouraging and tend to show that no discrimination is being made against employees who participated in exclusive recruitment programs. Nevertheless, they must be balanced by the short timeframe that this study focuses on. Indeed, all participants entered their respective companies one year ago or less. There is therefore a lack of perspective regarding the access to responsibilities or opportunities on the long run. Further study with a larger time frame would be necessary to assess the impact of exclusive recruitment processes regarding this matter.

Unfortunately, some participants have experienced unequal treatments when working with clients or at least externally – namely, not related to the life at the workplace. Isabella, for instance, relates that she has been several times taken for an assistant or an intern when meeting with a client for the first time. Indeed, many people are still biased and presume black women cannot hold project manager positions. Although this phenomenon is not directly related with the fact that Marina entered her company through an exclusive recruitment process, it outlines the reality of discrimination and prejudices that still prevails in the business world in Brazil.

vi. *Perception of well-being and happiness at the workplace*

I asked the participants their level of satisfaction in their companies. They were all positive about their experiences so far. They were grateful to have the opportunity to have participated to an exclusive recruitment process which granted them access to jobs that maybe they would never have considered or managed to have otherwise. It seems that all participants are really satisfied about the on-going support that they have benefited since they entered in the company. This is an important point since it reflects what scholars recommended to optimize inclusion inside companies: not only bold actions (such as exclusive recruitment processes) but an ongoing profound transformation of companies' cultures. Some of the words I heard were quite strong: "*passionate about the company*", "*a very strong culture of inclusion*", "*people are easy to reach*", "*high level of personal achievement and satisfaction*", "*I would rate my experience with a 10*"⁵. This lexical field tends to be positive and reflects a good perception of inclusion at the workplace from the participants. This set of perception shared by participants also embodies the employee engagement (Itam & Bagali, 2018) translated by a better identification to the values of the company and better commitment to the job (Findler, Wind & Mor Barak, 2007).

Additionally, the participants commented on the improvements they wished would be implemented in their respective companies regarding the exclusive recruitment processes and inclusion. This field is relevant for it offers companies some possible ideas to improve diversity and inclusion performances based on the perception of the employees who represent this diversity. The main possible improvement participants pointed out was the generalization of such exclusive recruitment processes to more types of diversity (Juliana, Marina, João, Isabella) or to increase the number of positions dedicated to the exclusive recruitment processes for black people (Pedro). Marina (company C) and Isabella (company F) also had two strong propositions regarding the improvement of their companies' performance on inclusion. Despite her positive level of satisfaction, Marina regrets three things in her company. First, she wishes she saw more intersectionality between the different communities who represent diversity in company C. Indeed, she has the feeling the barriers between groups of common identity or affinity are still too important. She wished her company organized more events in which many different types of people could exchange about their respective experiences to create better and stronger connections between employees. Moreover, she regrets the almost total absence of people over

⁵ In Portuguese: "*apaixonada pela empresa*", "*cultura de acolhimento muito forte*", "*peessoas são acessíveis*", "*alto nível de satisfação e realização pessoal*", "*daria nota 10*"

50 in her company. She believes they represent one kind of diversity as well and should be considered, especially since it is commonly known that unemployed people over 50 tend to have more difficulties to find a new job. Ultimately, she regrets the fact that most black people in her company still occupy positions in the operational department. She wishes the company gave more opportunities to black people to have access to strategic top-management positions. Although some say this might come with time, she assesses concrete actions are necessary to fasten the path to a more representative board of direction. On the other hand, Isabella wished her company considered other types of diversity, especially economic and social diversity. Indeed, she believes her company – and other companies – should also focus on the employment of people who have few resources and therefore were not able to attend university or at least not go to a top-tier university. She believes there is an urging need to employ such people because it would directly impact the overall social situation in Brazil (reduce poverty, reduce inequalities etc.). For instance, she would be favorable to the organization of exclusive recruitment processes directly in the poor neighborhood (*comunidades* in Brazil) where people traditionally do not have access to the employment market. She mentions the fact that in many cases, the employment of one single member of the family can help all the family members to have access to primary needs and can also positively impact the future generations of such family by including them in the society. She would also be favorable to the generalization of the quota system in the private sector. The quota system already exists in Brazilian universities, but it has been criticized by a lot for not solving the employment issue as quota students in university tend to have less access to jobs than other students. This idea refers to a broader idea of inclusion and diversity which does not only refers to physical or personal attributes, but to all kinds of social elements which define one individual.

vii. Perception of the challenges induced by the pandemic on inclusion at the workplace

The last part of the interviews related to the perceived impacts of the pandemic on inclusion for employees who participated in an exclusive recruitment process. Surprisingly enough, participants assessed that the pandemic and home office did not directly affect their inclusion. Moreover, it seems that companies did not use the pandemic and the economic difficulties it caused as an excuse to push inclusion and diversity challenges at the background as non-priority matters. This is illustrated first by the fact that all participants of the study entered their respective companies while the pandemic had already begun. Therefore, it shows that companies have not abandoned their plans to organize exclusive recruitment processes because of the pandemic. All participants believe their companies had a diversity program that had been

implemented before the pandemic and that companies kept on realizing. To the contrary, João and Pedro think that the pandemic was even an accelerating factor for their companies when it comes to diversity since according to their discussion with more senior employees, the intensity and number of diversity related events or programs has increased.

Moreover, it seems that the pandemic and the generalization of home office made the question of well-being become a prime issue when it was not necessarily discussed before. This is not directly related to the diversity aspect but shows that there is an ongoing transformation in the way companies address the question of quality of life of their employees. Pedro mentioned that company A first generalized the diversity mentoring program to the entire country and not only the state of São Paulo. Moreover, all employees (interns and full-time employees) were given the possibility to receive a professional chair and a large computer screen at their place to improve the quality of their work life. João (company E) was also able to get the professional materials he had access to at the office in his home. On top of that, some companies implemented recurrent meetings or reunions with HR whose purpose is to make sure employees are feeling good and not depressed. Juliana's, Marina's, João's and Isabella's companies implemented such programs. The four respondents believe such reunions help them a lot to keep up with the pressure induced by the pandemic and help them to feel integrated, supported and included in the company. Naturally, it does not alleviate all the stress that home office can put on employees. Isabella, for instance, relates that she perceives she is under a lot of pressure since there is a lot to be done at work and the limits between work life and personal life have been blurred. Nevertheless, she is grateful towards the HR teams for organizing such programs especially because she knows that if she came to be over-stressed and unable to support the pressure, she could speak freely about it.

Such results might not be representative of all companies in Brazil who tackle diversity. Nevertheless, they are encouraging and show that companies transformations towards more inclusions and diversity have not been too heavily impacted by covid-19 crisis.

5. CONCLUSION

As a reminder, the results of this research reflects the views of those who have gone through exclusive recruitment process and does not represent companies' perspective. The findings of this research tend to show that the perception of inclusion of employees who participated in exclusive recruitment programs is unanimously positive. In all the seven aspects analyzed (personal information, perception during the recruitment phase, perception during the integration, perception of reputation, perception of access to responsibilities and opportunities, perception of well-being and perception of impacts of the pandemic on inclusion at the workplace), no major discrimination or exclusion issues has been brought up. The personal information given by the participants prove the fact that diversity is a complex concept with different layers (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1994) as several participants were members of different diversity groups at the same time. It therefore reminds the crucial aspect for companies to deal with diversity as a whole without categorizing measures (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Perception of inclusion during the recruitment process show that the participants were feeling particularly welcomed and comfortable during these exclusive recruitment processes for knowing that they could be true to who they are. The perception of integration was separated into two distinct categories: the ones who has special integration and the ones who did not. The ones who did reckon they even benefited from special treatment compared to other employees who entered via traditional processes. Regarding the perception of access to responsibilities and opportunities, some examples really show that the companies managed to make the employees feel included (paid English courses, high power of decision). This directly echoes the concept of employee's engagement (Itam & Bagali, 2018) which supports that employees who feel included by their company will perform better. Eventually, all participants were satisfied by their position and their well-being inside the company. Complementary study would be necessary to compare the level of happiness compared to employees who entered through a traditional recruitment process. Nevertheless, this preliminary result shows that the type of recruitment process employees have gone through has not negatively affected their well-being at work.

As a result, the testimonies and experiences related in this research do not evidence deep failures or negligence from companies when it comes to guarantee inclusion to diversity employees. Indeed, all companies included in this research have been implementing complementing measures to ensure that their employees felt included, such as mentoring, inclusion in the diversity committees or privileged contact with HR or top management (amongst other). I have

not been able to identify a pattern of best practices according to sectors of industry nor types of diversity. It therefore seems that most companies are currently building a more inclusive management culture which supports recognition, more friendship, social bonds, and knowledge sharing (Barreto & Heloani, 2015).

Another encouraging result is that all companies included in this research seem to be accelerating their overall performances regarding diversity standards and inclusion. Indeed, most companies are thinking about generalizing or at least continue organizing exclusive recruitment programs. This leads to believe that in the coming years exclusive recruitment programs will be more mainstream than they are now and will hopefully improve the social situation in Brazil.

Moreover, apparently, the pandemic has not been used a pretext for companies to push inclusion measures in the background. To the contrary, companies seem to have been accelerating their diversity and inclusion programs during the pandemic. This might stem from the fact that well-being at work has now taken an important place in traditional management.

Nevertheless, this study has some limits and further analysis would be necessary to confirm the results presented. First of all, as explained, exclusive recruitment processes are quite recent in Brazil and therefore only a few companies and participants were included. A similar analysis in one or two years might give different results as it could identify bad practices. Additionally, a similar study in the coming years would allow to get the perception of participants over a larger period of time. Indeed, all participants cited in this study were employed for less than one year. Asking the same questions in a few years might bring different results, especially when it comes to the career path, promotions, long-term inclusion, and transformation of companies. Finally, the number of participants cited in the study (six) could also be considered as a limit. In the future, the democratization of exclusive recruitment processes may help to get insights from a more important number of participants and therefore bring more diverse experiences to the analysis. However, as previously mentioned, the small number of participants in this study does not discredit its value because the six participants involved were a diverse representation of the reality of exclusive recruitment processes to date.

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7. ANNEX

Annex 1: Questionnaire used for the research – English Version

Name:

Age:

Company related to the study:

Current position:

Position of entry:

Nature of the diversity recruitment process:

Self-identification to which group:

Nationality:

City of work:

City of living:

Location of birth:

1. The recruitment processes

- How did you hear about the recruitment process?
- Had you already participated to a traditional recruitment process? What similarities and differences you experienced comparing with this process?
- Do you know if the company is used to organize this kind of recruitment processes? Does it organize this kind of processes with other under-represented groups?
- Could you describe your experience of the recruitment process? Feelings, frustrations, satisfaction, thoughts...
- If known, what proportion of applicants passed the recruitment process? Does this rate differ from the one of traditional recruitment processes?

2. Integration

- How would you describe your integration experience? Did the company take any specific action to integrate your group?
- Did you feel that you were treated differently because coming from a diversity recruitment process?
- How do you assess diversity within the firm when you entered?
- Did you feel as an exception?

- Were you able to see people from the same minority in upper positions?
- Were you easily mixed with other workers?

3. Reputation

- What perception did/do you have about your reputation and of those who entered through the same diversity recruitment process in the company?
- Did you feel that people tagged you with any kind of label?
- Did you suffer from any discrimination in daily life at work?

4. Responsibilities & Opportunities

- Do you feel you are given the responsibilities you are entitled to?
- Do your managers assess your work with the same criteria as other co-workers' work?
- Do you receive the same opportunities (in terms of salary, projects, promotions, or others) than other co-workers not coming from under-represented groups?

5. Well-being and Inclusion in the workplace

- Today, how would you describe your level of satisfaction in the workplace?
- Do you feel that there is a gap between the company's communication about diversity and inclusion and the actual reality at the workplace?
- Do you have any suggestions or improvements that could be implemented?

6. Covid-19

- If you are in home office, do you believe working remotely from your co-workers affected in any kind inclusion performances? (Less or more discrimination? Lack of priority for inclusive practices?)
- Has your perception of your personal inclusion in the company shifted? (Positively or negatively)
- What particular difficulties have you faced in your daily work because of home office?

Annex 2: Questionário usado para a pesquisa – Versão Português

Nome:

Idade:

Empresa:

Cargo:

Tipo de processo seletivo:

Identificação com qual grupo de diversidade:

Nacionalidade:

Cidade de trabalho:

City de residência:

Lugar de nascimento:

Formação:

1. O processo seletivo

- Como chegou a saber do processo de recrutamento?
- Você já tinha participado de algum processo seletivo tradicional? Percebeu algumas diferenças com o processo seletivo exclusivo?
- Você sabe se a empresa já tinha organizado processos seletivos exclusivos no passado? Com o mesmo grupo?
- Pode descrever sua experiência durante o processo seletivo? Sentimento, frustração, pontos positivos, comentários.
- Você sabe quantas pessoas passaram o processo e qual proporção isso representa? E diferente de outros processos seletivos tradicionais organizados pela empresa?

2. Integração

- Pode descrever sua experiência de integração na empresa? As equipes organizaram algum evento específico para integrar os recém-chegados do seu processo seletivo exclusivo?
- Você sentiu que foi tratado de uma forma diferente porque tinha entrado com um processo seletivo exclusivo?

- Como você avaliaria a diversidade na empresa quando você entrou? Você se sentiu isolado (em termos de diversidade) ou tinha outras pessoas do mesmo grupo em outras equipes? Nas posições de top-management?
- Você conseguiu se integrar com as outras equipes e outros colegas sem problema?

3. Reputação

- Qual é a sua percepção sobre a sua reputação na empresa?
- Você sente que outros te categorizam porque participou de tal programa?
- Você foi vítima de algum tipo de discriminação no seu dia a dia na empresa?

4. Responsabilidades & Oportunidade

- Você sente que lhe são dadas as responsabilidades a que tem direito?
- Seus gerentes avaliam seu trabalho com os mesmos critérios que o trabalho de outros colegas de trabalho?

5. Bem-estar e inclusão no local de trabalho

- Hoje, como você descreveria seu nível de satisfação no local de trabalho?
- Você sente que existe uma lacuna entre a comunicação da empresa sobre diversidade e inclusão e a realidade no local de trabalho?
- Você tem alguma sugestão ou melhoria que poderia ser implementada?

6. Covid-19

- Se você está no escritório em casa, você acredita que trabalhando remotamente com seus colegas de trabalho afetou a sua inclusão? (menos ou mais discriminação? falta de prioridade para as práticas de inclusão?)
- Sua percepção sobre sua inclusão pessoal na empresa mudou? (positiva ou negativamente)
- Que dificuldades particulares você enfrentou em seu trabalho diário por causa do escritório em casa?