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## BRAZILIAN HUMAN RESOURCES IN A POLARIZED LATIN AMERICA

*Elza Fátima Rosa Veloso<sup>1</sup>*

*Leonardo Nelmi Trevisan<sup>2</sup>*

*Wilson Aparecido Costa de Amorim<sup>3</sup>*

*Rodrigo Cunha da Silva<sup>4</sup>*

*André Luiz Fischer<sup>5</sup>*

*Joel Souza Dutra<sup>6</sup>*

**Abstract:** This article provides an overview of human resource strategies employed by Brazilian companies in a polarized region of Latin America. Firstly, we highlighted the concerns of Brazilian managers in respect to the coming years, and to identify the current strategic approach of prominent companies in the Brazilian market. Secondly, we identified possible strategies for internationalization, particularly in the context of Latin America. The results of two surveys were used: one prospecting management trends by 2015 and another consisting of a sample of 541 companies that participate in a national survey in which HR managers answered a questionnaire. Among the results, it is noteworthy that the main issues of concern for Brazilian managers in the coming years. We found most the companies concerned with these challenges in the industries of

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<sup>1</sup> PhD in Business from Universidade de São Paulo (FEA-USP). Professor of the Post Graduate Studies Program in Administration at Centro Universitário das Faculdades Metropolitanas Unidas (PPGA/FMU), São Paulo, SP, Brazil, e-mail: [elzafr@uol.com.br](mailto:elzafr@uol.com.br)

<sup>2</sup> Doctor in Political Science from Universidade de São Paulo. Full Professor in Post Graduate Studies Program in Administration at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP), São Paulo, SP, Brazil, e-mail: [intrevisan@pucsp.br](mailto:intrevisan@pucsp.br)

<sup>3</sup> PhD in Business from Universidade de São Paulo (FEA-USP) and Professor in School of Economics and Administration at the same University, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, e-mail: [wamorim@usp.br](mailto:wamorim@usp.br)

<sup>4</sup> PhD in Business from Universidade de São Paulo (FEA-USP). Invited Professor in Post Graduate at Faculdade FIA de Administração e Negócios, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, e-mail: [rdgcdasilva@gmail.com](mailto:rdgcdasilva@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup> PhD in Business from Universidade de São Paulo (FEA-USP). Full Professor in Post Graduate Studies Program in Administration at the same University, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, e-mail: [afischer@usp.br](mailto:afischer@usp.br)

<sup>6</sup> PhD in Business from Universidade de São Paulo (FEA-USP) and Professor in School of Economics and Administration at the same University, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, e-mail: [dutra@usp.br](mailto:dutra@usp.br)

information technology, iron and steel, and health services. Forty-nine of a total of 541 companies intend to internationalize, 17 of them towards Latin American. Their profile characterization allowed us to divide them into two groups: those focusing on the local needs of Latin American, and those looking to meet the expanding needs of Brazil or the country of their parent company.

**Keywords:** Latin America; Human Resources Management; Human Resources Strategies; Internationalization

## Introduction

The polarization of the economic structures in Latin America affects the business scenario of the countries in the region. In countries like Brazil, this polarization affects Human Resource (HR) Management. Since the economic reforms in the 1990s, Brazil evolved from an “economy closed to international trade and foreign capital, with a strong government presence” to an “open economy with reduced commercial barriers and free capital flows” (Camargo, Néri, Cortez & Reis, 2000, p. 255), implying significant changes in the labor market. This macroeconomic trajectory deviation accelerated a concentration of qualified labor in some centers, a typical phenomenon in Latin America (Werthein & Cunha, 2004). The new industrial plants of major powerful exporting countries in the region disrupted this status quo and redesigned the employment map in different Latin American countries, especially Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru, which have showed positive economic growth rates in the last few years (Paulino, 2010). The Brazilian stance has its own characteristics, partly because of significant aid from international financial agencies (Moreno, 2007).

Other economies, such as those in Central America and the Caribbean, are still dependent on “trade preferential agreements” with the United States and, currently, they can be qualified as being stagnated, vis-à-vis the polarization detected by Robles (2012) in Latin America. Within this reality, there are “labor markets” just as well polarized, and, consequently, differentiated production cost profiles. Upon this scenario, HR management at these companies assumes new aspects which are still to be understood. Other economies, such as those in Central America and the Caribbean, are still dependent on “trade preferential agreements” with the United States and, currently, they can be qualified as being stagnated, vis-à-vis the polarization detected by Robles (2012) in Latin America. Within this reality, there are “labor markets” just as well polarized, and, consequently, differentiated production cost profiles. Upon this scenario, HR management at these companies assumes new aspects which are still to be understood. *Thus, we can ask what people management strategies are adopted by companies headquartered in Brazil seeking to internationalize toward Latin America?*

In this study we address Brazilian companies, presenting an analysis of HR Management strategies of firms operating in Brazil. We also consider the possibility of internationalization of these companies, which is an emerging theme in Brazil, as well as in the rest of Latin America. Thus, this work had two main purposes: first, to point out the concerns of Brazilian HR managers for the forthcoming years and to subsequently identify the current strategic approach of outstanding companies in the Brazilian market, regarding such concerns. Second, to identify a possible strategic business plan of internationalization, particularly in the Latin American context and also exploring profile projections of these companies.

To study the concerns of these managers, we utilized results from a survey focused on the prospecting of HR Management trends for 2015, accomplished with 120 managers and specialists. To identify the performance and strategic plans, and to carry out projection profiles, we utilized a sample of 541 companies participating in a survey carried out with companies that seek to be distinguished in terms of organizational climate and HR Management practices, referred to as “Best Companies to Work For”.

After the introduction, we first addressed Latin America’s polarization, discussing its impacts on Brazilian HR Management. Then we analyzed various constraints against talent management, both contextual and organizational, going through the obstacles to Brazilian business growth. We considered the concerns of Brazilian HR managers about the forthcoming years and emphasized the strategic approach of outstanding companies in the Brazilian market regarding the aforementioned concerns.

Lastly, we analyzed the evolution of Brazilian companies’ internationalization towards Latin America. At this point, besides proposing the possibility of future studies, we discussed the strategic approach of these companies and the implications of the results, especially those driven by internationalization to America, projecting the strategic profiles of outstanding companies.

## **Literature Revision**

### **Economic Polarization of Latin America and its impact on Brazil’s Human Resources**

From the 1940s to the 1970s, Europe’s rebuilding was accomplished through the Marshall Plan and, because of this, large North-American business groups entered the old continent (Arrighi, 1996). Seeking new markets, European business groups invested in Latin America. In this period, with strong participation from the government and European production capitals, countries like Brazil, Argentina and Mexico embarked on development programs aimed at industrialization (Gremaud; Saes & Toneto Jr. 1997).

After the 1970s, the world entered a new phase. During the 1980s, developed economies attempted to distance themselves from state action, adopting liberal actions to conduct their finances and public investments. Economic instability and volatility have ruled ever since. Post-war global growth and relative stability were replaced by another world of important changes in various regions. (Stiglitz, 2003).

In the 1990s, the end of the communist bloc paved the way for an expansion of these economies which happened in a frantic and disorderly fashion. In Asia, the Japanese economy remained strong, but stagnated, while the economy of its neighbor, South Korea, took off. However, the most important transformation occurred in China. In this region, state controls, exports and domestic market growth brought all the overwhelming strength of a market equivalent to a quarter of the planet’s population into the game. (Arrighi, 2008).

In Latin America, a slow transformation also took place. Overall, the post-war development effort resulted in a public and external crisis of indebtedness, with high inflation rates and unemployment at the beginning of the 1990s. Nearly all of the countries in the region were submitted to tight financial controls. Under the orientation of

international financing agencies, the countries adjusted their national public accounts, and from that point on, they reduced the size of their states (CEPAL, 2010a). During the 1990s, with rare exceptions, the economic portrait in the continent was characterized by crises and hardship.

At the beginning of the new millennium, from the year 2000 on, the economic scenario opened up unexpected opportunities for the region. While developed economies moved at low growth rates, Latin American countries entered a phase of expansion. Factors such as the return of capital availability and recovery of commodity prices contributed to this evolution. In this context, the macroeconomic policy of some countries, like Brazil, adopted an anti-cyclic character as they took advantage of investment opportunities in production activities and in infrastructure in proportions never before seen in Europe (Ocampo, 2010).

The rise in international prices of raw materials was directly related to China's emergence as a central actor in the global economy. The Chinese expansion sustained commodity exports in the region and breathed new life into Latin American economies, even at moments of world crisis, from the second semester of 2000 onwards. The increasing importance of China as a commercial partner to Latin American countries is also a source of concern due to the bilateral trade standard established. Chinese counterpart activities have been the exporting of manufactured products, whose production costs are the lowest in the world given its scale and low labor costs (CEPAL, 2010b).

The economic debate on the region, at the beginning of the 1950s, developed around the center and periphery relation, and the necessary conditions for overcoming problems generated by this polarization (Furtado, 1968). More recently, in another historical context, once more, the reality of Latin American economies brings up the polarization issue. It should be noted that the countries in the region also maintain a great heterogeneity among themselves. This heterogeneity is composed both of a diversity of dimensions and characteristics of their territories and populations, and of their economies and economic policies, creating huge differences of productivity among these countries (CEPAL, 2010).

When dealing with polarization in Latin America, authors such as Izquierdo and Talvi (2011), and Robles (2012), indicate two groups of countries. The first one, denominated "Mexico group", has a more open economy and a greater economic dependence from the USA. Almost all Central American and also Caribbean economies fit into this configuration. The economic dynamics of this group is strongly "pegged" to the rhythm of the North American economy, and thus, it has recently showed more modest growth rates. The "Brazil group" is characterized by more diversified economic relations regarding commercial partners and finances. Besides, even with a greater commercial opening, it maintains a strong economic policy base focused on domestic markets. This group is typically formed by South American economies.

As for the business performance in Latin America, there is a great diversity of situations, such as the incidence of legislation controls in domestic markets; performance of multinationals; movement of companies between the countries of the region; and others. Despite the heterogeneities, there is at least one point in common among all Latin American countries: the poor quality of the education system, and, consequently, insufficient local labor qualification (Robles, 2012). Besides, Aguzzoli, Antunes and Lengler (2007) observed strong control being exerted by Brazilian parent companies over their

subsidiaries, attempting to impose their own organizational culture on the host country. Such a fact has its impacts on the management of company talent.

### **Talent Management Constraints**

The Manpower survey revealed that 57% of Brazilian employers have difficulties in filling job positions. This percentage is the highest among countries in the Americas and it ranks third in the world. In the Americas, the difficulties in filling job positions were due to the candidates' lack of qualifications. To overcome this challenge, in the Americas, as well as globally, the main solution pursued by companies was to provide training and complementary development opportunities to their existing staff (Manpower, 2011).

According to Queiroz and Leite (2010), companies are, more and more, facing the need to retain talented individuals by offering them career prospects aimed at being able to achieve strategic positions within the organizational hierarchy. Colling and Mellahi (2009) stated that the talent management strategy has to include activities and processes, seeking a systematic identification of strategic positions, which can contribute to the company's competitive advantage. They affirmed that academics who propose this approach suggest a first look at the company, its processes and strategic positions, and then the allocation in positions of the professionals who are valuable to the company. In this way, a differentiated architecture will be created for the area of HR Management (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Hill, 2009).

### **Obstacles in the growth of Brazilian Companies**

The development acceleration process, in the Brazilian case, faces a few specific obstacles. The first one is the integration among production factors, and there are the serious delays imposed on the delivery process of this production by infrastructure constraints, both in terms of transportation and goods storage. The World Economic Forum data reports competitiveness losses in recent years compared to other countries, justified by Brazil's deficient infrastructure (World Economic Forum, 2011). Another relevant data on Brazilian companies' performance refers to the outline of their insertion into international trade. Given the appreciation of the Brazilian currency, it has been increasingly hard to maintain a diversification of exported products. The lower number of exporters and the concentration on commodities and reduction in manufactured products in the Brazilian export basket is clear evidence of this observation (MDIC, 2011; Chiara, 2011).

Expansion of commodity exports and difficulties faced by manufacturers in the external market, added to a greater penetration of industrialized imports, exert a strong impact on the Brazilian labor market, particularly regarding more qualified job profiles, which, in Brazil, are very concentrated on the industrial sector. The survey by the Brazilian Geographic and Statistics Institute ("IBGE"), Pesquisa Mensal de Empregos – PME (Monthly Employment Survey), which follows the labor market in six Brazilian main metropolitan regions, showed that the unemployment rate remained at very low levels during 2011. Nevertheless, we also observe that the generation of formal employment lost its dynamism. The labor market in Brazil makes a distinction between formal and informal employment, the latter being characterized by hiring workers without an employment contract governed by labor legislation (IBGE, 2011). A strong trend of worker migration between different sectors of the Brazilian economy is also noteworthy.

Upon the loss of exporting manufactured products in 2010 and 2011, and increasing imports of durable and semi-durable goods, the number of jobs offerings has

declined in the industrial sector. The trend has been one of better qualified jobs in the industrial sector being substituted by employment offers in commerce and in the private sector, a fact that has imposed a sharp reduction on the Brazilian average wage (Amorim, 2012).

In this scenario, the reduced number of jobs in the industrial sector does not lead to a trend of higher labor qualification in Brazil. Brazilian manpower shows an evolution cycle consistently linked with a higher number of years of schooling. According to the Pesquisa Mensal de Empregos - PME (Monthly Employment Survey) by the IBGE in 2003, 39.1% of workers holding formal jobs had 11 years or more of schooling. In Brazil, 11 years of schooling are equivalent to a complete secondary school education level preceding college. In 2011, the same PME showed the proportion of students with this profile of 11 years or more of schooling reaching 50.8% of the formal labor market (IBGE, 2012).

On the other hand, the increase in years of schooling of the work force may have improved the hiring conditions of informal employment. Between 2003 and 2011, average wages of informal workers increased by 39.2% in real terms, as also ascertained by the PME. The explanation for this great leap in wages in the informal sector is likely to be related to the rise in activities of the services sector, as well as the increase in years of schooling of informal workers (Machado, 2012). This contradiction offers the background for the analyses that follow on the concerns of HR managers.

### **Internationalization and Human Resource Management in Brazilian Companies**

Since internationalization is not a regular action among Latin American companies. In general, reflections on internationalization indicate the need for expansion of multinationals throughout the world to have teams with high performance standards. International HR Management has been adapting to face the challenges of managing globally integrated teams (Meyskens et al., 2009).

According to Colling, Scullion and Dowling (2009), there is an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of talent management for companies' success in the global business environment, but only few of them have the capability of identifying, developing and managing Human Resources anywhere in the world and in an efficient manner. Additionally, local workers are often the main source of knowledge available to leverage the business. Thus, the capability of developing and retaining local key-employees becomes a necessary condition for sustainable competitiveness in these markets in the long term (Reiche, 2007).

Along these lines, Brewster, Sparrow and Harris (2005) highlight the need to adopt a more strategic approach to manage the international transfer of head office resources to branches and subsidiaries, concerning the globalization of HR processes. The discussion on which organization needs to be global, regional or national definitely becomes a subject of interest. In this scenario, the HR professional is positioned as the guardian of the organizational culture and values, in accordance with local needs, as well as a partner in the elaboration of the HR strategy (Albuquerque, 2002)

Nonetheless, when Pudelko and Harzing (2007) study the influence on HR practices of multinationals domiciled in the United States, Japan and Germany over their cross-border units, it is revealed that there is a general dominance effect of parent company regarding their HR Management practices.

As for Latin America, Osland and Osland (2005) provided a feasible explanation for the parent company's dominance over its overseas units abroad. The authors show that the HR Management practices of some companies in Latin America, particularly in Central America, only rely on their own resources to carry out nothing more than the regular functions of HR Management. Many companies do not have the resources to innovate in this area, thus, they tend to adopt the practices that are developed in other countries.

A study promoted by Inter-American Development Bank - IDB (2010) corroborates this affirmation, as it reveals the low investments in research and development in countries of the region. Besides, they place Brazil as a leader in technology innovation in Latin America, being responsible for 60% of all investments in research and development made in the region.

This dominant approach can also be evidenced by observing HR Management practices at Brazilian companies in relation to their Latin American subsidiaries (Aguzzoli, Antunes and Lengler, 2007). This article's proposal therefore is that *in a polarized Latin America such cultural shift is adopted differently to enable better control by the parent company over the human resources strategies employed in their Latin American subsidiaries.*

## Method

Probing trends in HR Management is a relevant practice both for researchers and professionals in the HR realm. In the USA, traditional surveys such as those accomplished by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM 2005, 2007 and 2008) and Europa (EUROFOUND, 2009), offer some elements for managers and academicians reflection on challenges to be overcome by companies handling their manpower. In Brazil, the main reference on this subject is the DELPHI survey carried out by the Programa de Estudos em Gestão de Pessoas – PROGEP (People Management Study Program) of Fundação Instituto de Administração – FIA (Institute of Administration Foundation). Thus, the first of the two surveys used in this study seeks to identify trends within a Brazilian organizational scenario consisting of a series of rounds collecting opinions through questionnaires submitted to respondents.

This survey was accomplished in three editions (2000, 2003 and 2010). In its most recent edition (PROGEP, 2011) the Delphi survey achieved responses from nearly 120 people (about 70% of managers working for the main business groups operating in Brazil, besides consultants) considering the year 2015. The sample of this survey edition was composed of 569 professionals, 122 of which answered the questionnaire. Most of the respondents (67.21%) were HR executives. Academicians and consultants were also included in the sample. Overall, respondents were typically mature professionals, given their advanced educational level and the senior management positions they held at large Brazilian corporate organizations – 28.8% of the participating organizations were considered the largest in their sector of activity in 2010 (Portal Exame, 2010).

The second survey presents the results from a survey carried out in 2010 with a sample of 541 companies (Best Companies to work for), firms which seek to distinguish themselves by their organizational climate and HR Management practices. It is a non-probability convenience sample, so its results cannot be generalized. The initial participation requirement was for companies to have at least 100 employees. This database contains information on major companies operating in Brazil and it may be considered as a

reference in HR Management. These companies enrolled voluntarily to participate in a nationwide survey, in which their employees are submitted to a questionnaire on their work environment. Concurrently, through its HR managers, these companies filled out a multiple-choice questionnaire on their strategies and HR Management practices. In this questionnaire, they described their vision, mission, values and strategic human resource guidelines adopted. By means of descriptive statistics and content analysis, the survey revealed a specific profile of people management strategies adopted by organizations looking to internationalize in Latin America.

## Results and discussion

Barreto et al. (2010) assessed the results of the Delphi survey carried out in 2010. According to these authors, 87.5% of the respondents reported that talent management will be a “very relevant” challenge for the area of HR Management in Brazilian companies until 2015. The authors also observed that, in former editions of the survey, five challenges were considered a priority for HR during the first decade of 2000:

- Aligning Human Resource Management to business strategies;
- Aligning people/performance/human competence to business strategies;
- Management development and qualification;
- Retaining talent/high potential;
- Seeking commitment with Human Resource Management from Senior Management.

Compared to the findings from the survey carried out in 2010, it can be noticed that the first three challenges had already been reported as a concern in 2003, whilst the last two (talent retention and commitment from company senior management) were not so highly regarded as priority. It is also remarkable that among the **emerging themes** identified in the survey, one of the three most frequently indicated was **Talent Management** – ranking first in the respondents’ opinion, followed by **Evaluation of Results** and **HR Strategic Management**. These themes are considered the main concerns of HR managers for the purpose of the forthcoming analyses.

These results demonstrate that talent management is increasingly assuming its strategic role “due to greater labor mobility, international competition for talent and high demand for qualified workers.” (Barreto et al., 2010, p.13).

The data assessment started from the three main concerns of HR managers identified by means of a 2015 Delphi survey (talent management, HR Management strategy and evaluation of HR Management results). We have listed the HR Management key strategic guidelines of these companies including each of these concerns, as shown in Table 1.

	Human Resource Management strategy (50 companies)	Evaluation of Results (36 companies)	Talent Management (81 companies)	Others (374 companies)
<b>More frequent sector</b>	Technology and computing (5 companies)	Health Services (5 companies)	Metallurgy and siderurgy (9 companies)	Retail Trade (29 companies)
<b>Examples</b>	Aligning HR actions to Cooperative strategies through the performance of a transforming agent	HR Strategic Management linked to corporate Balanced Scorecard	Develop consistent strategy for attracting, appreciating and retaining talent	Knowledge production and management

**Table 1: Managers' concerns and outstanding companies' strategies**

Source: Elaborated by the authors

It has been noticed that in the technology and computing, iron and steel, and health service sectors, where there is probably more demand for workers' technical qualification, we found the highest number of companies that mentioned the three concerns in their HR strategic Management guidelines.

Subsequently, the three main phases (definition, dissemination and evaluation) of HR strategic Management planning, as proposed by Albuquerque (2002), were related to the managers' concerns. Additionally, at each strategic planning phase, they were associated to the most frequent practices chosen by the companies in the proposed questionnaire. The distribution of these companies' responses can be observed in Table 2.

Strategic planning phases	Human Resource Management Strategy	Evaluation of results	Talent Management	Others
Company defines the business strategy in a formal manner <i>Best practice: space for suggestions and innovations</i>	62% 68%	69% 89%	67% 87%	4% 56%
Company disseminates the business strategy in a formal manner <i>Best practice: communication of the strategy by leaders</i>	62% 86%	69% 94%	74% 90%	5% 65%
Company evaluates the internalization of its business strategy in a formal manner <i>Best practice: evaluation of investment in education</i>	54% 66%	72% 67%	60% 75%	32% 49%

**Table 2: Strategic planning phases vs. companies with practices/policies related to managers' concerns**

Source: Elaborated by the authors

More than half of the companies which have HR guidelines regarding the three main concerns have a formal and structured process of strategic planning. Therefore, it can be assumed that these three concerns demand more strategic planning in HR Management where compared to the others.

### **Strategic performance of Brazilian companies**

Reflections undertaken herein considered 541 outstanding companies. In the strategy definition phase, 68% of the companies that focused on HR Strategy Management, 89% of the companies that focused on Evaluation of Results and 87% of the companies that focused on Talent Management stated that they offered space for suggestions and implementation of innovations and enhancement of company products, services and processes. Therefore, involving employees in the formulation and definition of innovations to the organizational strategy, are appreciated by the set of companies being analyzed.

As for the strategy dissemination phase, 86% of the companies focused on HR Strategy Management, 94% of companies focused on Evaluation of Results, and 90% of companies with a focus on Talent Management informed that they communicate their strategy through their leaders. We noticed that it is important for these companies to rely on leaders who understand the strategy formulation and implementation as two processes which cannot be split or conducted by different groups and people, or informal means of communication.

In turn, in the strategy evaluation phase, 66% of the companies aiming at HR Strategic Management, 67% aiming at Evaluation of Results and 75% at Talent Management considered the company objectives in assessment of the results for the investment in employee education.

This people management outlook becomes more complex when we consider the possible internationalization of Brazilian companies towards other countries and the transfer of their HR Management practices (Colling, Scullion & Dowling, 2009; Brewster, Sparrow & Harris, 2005).

### **The possibility of internationalization for Latin America and the strategic profiles of outstanding companies.**

In this section, we present evidence of company views on Latin America, and a projection of what the practices will be like (introduced in the previous section) if HR Management concerns are upheld in the Latin American subsidiaries of Brazilian companies.

From the 541 companies surveyed, when commenting on their view and mission, 49 mentioned the internationalization intent and, amongst them, 17 placed Latin America as a priority. The 17 companies which prioritized Latin America could be categorized into two profiles, as shown in the following table. These profiles were built by means of the analysis of the HR Management best practices described in this study.

Company Profile	Examples
Evidence of actions based on customized solutions attending to the needs of Latin Americans, as can be observed from their point of view.	Ensure more and more customized solutions with safe and qualified transportation logistics in Latin America, for the satisfaction of all parties involved in our business, through an ongoing improvement of our processes and our social and environmental responsibilities.
Evidence of actions oriented towards expansion needs in Brazil or in the country of non-Brazilian parent company.	<p>a) To have effective leadership in Brazil and Latin America, showing efficiency and excellence in everything that is done. To offer a broad range of services, attending to the maintenance technicians, the Government and the entire Brazilian electrical sector.</p> <p>b) The company will be one of the best and most respected companies in the world, in the eyes of its collaborators, clients, the community and shareholders. We shall be the first choice of our clients and an undisputed leader in Latin America.</p>

**Table 3: Profiles of companies in Brazil, which prioritize Latin America**

Source: Elaborated by the authors

It is believed that companies who fit in the first profile tend to be more receptive to suggestions and innovations proposed by native employees. Their leaders will probably seek to disseminate the parent company’s strategy, through negotiation and conciliation of interests between the parent company and the subsidiary. Investments in education will be evaluated considering shareholder return and the professional qualification of native collaborators. As for attraction, retention and development of talent, the focus will be on the local labor market and the subsidiary headcount.

Conversely, the companies to which the second profile is attributed are likely to be less receptive to suggestions made by local employees, paying more attention to employees and expatriates from the parent company or the foreign subsidiary. Their leaders will probably disseminate and impose only the parent company’s or subsidiary’s strategy. Investments in education will be analyzed, taking into account only shareholder return and parent company’s interests. And finally, regarding attraction, retention and development of talent, only the labor market and parent company headcount will be considered.

### Final considerations

We trust that Brazilian companies will adopt two approaches regarding the internationalization of HR Management practices. For some Latin American countries, which are a part of the stagnated economies bloc, a dominant approach would be dedicated, whereas in emerging Latin American countries, companies would be expected to adopt a strategy aiming at partnerships and adaptation to local realities considering the best practices addressed by this study.

In contrast with the discussions on internationalization among countries in Latin America and The Caribbean region, countries like China and others in expansion in Asia, present comparatively bigger challenges to the HR Management of Brazilian companies, both in cultural and economic terms, requiring greater flexibility to adapt to local characteristics. Brazilian companies have already invested in logistics and manufacturing of goods in China and other Asian countries; some of these enterprises have succeeded,

others have not. Much of this due to pressure from the review of strategy required for the adjustment to the external environment and the domestic market (Robles, 2012).

As main contribution, the success or failure of these enterprises is supposedly justified by the way the companies interiorize their HR Management practices in the internationalization process. As main contribution, the success or failure of these enterprises is supposedly justified by the way the companies interiorize their HR Management practices in the internationalization process. Part of that is in the manner by which spaces are offered for innovation and how strategy is communicated by the leaders. And above all, the concern with investing in the training of professionals in the Latin American subsidiaries.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

In this article, we sought to offer an outlook on HR strategies in a polarized Latin America. It will be important to promote future research for a closer look at the system of labor relations in the region to understand its dynamics. Particularities of legal aspects of each of the countries involved in this scenario are still to be known.

Another latent need is the research on changes in employment contracting standards, demanded by the Brazilian economy internationalization movement. At the same time, we ought to study new Brazilian labor profiles and changes in the employment map more deeply due to the continuous inflow of Latin American labor into Brazil. In parallel, the increase of business automation and the expansion in the services sector are fertile themes to inspire future research, especially comparative studies of Brazil and its Latin neighbors.

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## GESTÃO DE PESSOAS DO BRASIL EM UMA AMÉRICA LATINA POLARIZADA

**Resumo:** Este artigo fornece uma visão sobre estratégias de recursos humanos das empresas brasileiras em uma região da América Latina polarizada. Em primeiro lugar, salientamos as preocupações dos gestores brasileiros a respeito dos próximos anos e identificar a abordagem estratégica atual de empresas de destaque no mercado brasileiro. E segundo, identificamos possíveis estratégias de internacionalização, em particular no contexto da América Latina. Foram utilizados os resultados de duas pesquisas: uma delas de prospecção tendências de gestão de pessoas até 2015, e outra constituída por uma amostra de 541 empresas que participam de uma pesquisa de âmbito nacional, em que gestores de recursos humanos foram submetidos a um questionário. Entre os resultados, destaca-se que os principais temas de preocupação dos gestores brasileiros nos próximos anos. Encontramos o maior número de empresas atentas por estes desafios nos setores da indústria de tecnologia informática; siderurgia e metalurgia; e serviços de saúde. 49 do total de 541 empresas pretendem se internacionalizar, 17 delas, rumo a países latino-americanos. Nas caracterizações de perfil dessas empresas, foi possível dividi-las em dois grupos: aquelas com foco nas necessidades locais das populações latino-americanas e aquelas que procuram atender às necessidades de expansão do Brasil ou sede da empresa.

**Palavras-chave:** América Latina; Gestão de Recursos Humanos; Estratégias de Recursos Humanos; Internacionalização

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