The Real Brazilian Leadership Style: Are Morality and Authoritarianism still part of it?

Abstract
The relevance of this article is indeed related to the fact that paternalism may change over time. Based on Cheng et al.’s (2000) paternalist leadership model, the main purpose here is to analyze paternalistic leadership as a multidimensional construct (i.e., benevolence, authoritarianism, and morality). Culture context, will also be analyzed as an important boundary condition and then it turns to understand how this context interferes attenuating or strengthening its effects on paternalist dimensions. From the understanding of paternalistic Brazilian leadership antecedents and consequences the author proposes that the dimension “benevolence” has considerably more representativeness in Brazilian leadership style, when compared to other two paternalistic dimensions: authoritarianism and morality. Finally it will be possible to demystify the “Real Brazilian Leadership Style”.

Managerial Implications
The study has some implications regarding drawing the attention that paternalism changes over time. It will help managers in organizations understand how national culture interferes in their own actions and how it can have an impact on others. Differences in national culture call for differences in management practices as well as in expectations from leaders (Pasa et al., 2001). Research in a paternalist culture also provides a new perspective for global managers who plan to work in paternalistic cultures like Brazil.

Theoretical implications
Paternalistic leadership is being studied for the past 15 years, but few researches are found in Brazilian territory. Theoretical implications are related to how context may play a role in subordinate’s reaction to paternalism. Culture acts differently in each of the three paternalistic dimensions and its effects may change over time. Empirical studies considering GLOBE data can testify or demystify Real Brazilian and other paternalistic leadership styles.

Introduction
There is still considerable disparity among authors with respect to the definition and effectiveness of paternalistic practices. Pellegrini & Scandura (2008) in their review identified areas of agreement among researchers as well as gaps that have to be addressed in the literature.

In Chinese business context, for example, Westwood (1997) suggested that paternalistic leadership is effective because it meets the “twin requirements” (compliance and harmony). For Mexico, paternalistic values are related to respect for hierarchical relations and strong family and personal relationships (Martinez, 2003, 2005) and in Western context, paternalistic leadership has been equated with authoritarianism (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2005), despite the negative correlation reported between paternalism and authoritarianism.

Part of the agreement is that paternalistic leadership has to be considered in a global context, as international leadership research is at a major crossroads (Graen, 2006). In the recent two decades, economists increasingly have paid attention to culture as an intermediating, if not causally dominant variable in explaining the differential performance of countries. So the cultural context has an important boundary condition to evaluate paternalistic leadership performance and has the role of being one solution to the puzzle of how linking institutions with economic performance. Well, if this is a style and not a theory it is expected to prevail in some cultures instead of others.

Paternalistic leadership has mainly been studied by Farh, Cheng, and colleagues (Farh & Cheng, 2000; Farh et al., 2006) and Aycan (2006). This article adopts the paternalistic leadership model proposed by Farh and Cheng (2000) consisting of three dimensions: authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality. Authoritarianism refers to leader behaviors that assert authority and control and demand unquestioning obedience from subordinates. Benevolence refers to leader behaviors that demonstrate individualized, holistic concern for subordinates’ personal and family well-being. In return, subordinates feel grateful and obliged to repay when the situation allows. The third dimension, morality, depicts leader behaviors that demonstrate superior personal virtues, which lead subordinates to respect and identify with the leader. Given the negative interdimensional correlations among the three dimensions domains, recent research by Farh, Cheng and colleagues suggests that an overall paternalist leadership construct is not very useful and that the dimensions should be used separately (Chou et al., 2005; Farh et al., 2006). Aycan (2006) also concurred that paternalistic leadership is not a unified construct.
With this delineation of distinct paternalistic leadership styles, it became more apparent that the disagreements among authors on the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership originated primarily from a lack of construct clarity. Based on this gap in paternalistic leadership literature emerged the main reason of this article: analyze paternalistic leadership as a multi-dimensional construct, its each dimension representativeness, having culture as an important boundary context. In order to clarify the “Real Brazilian leadership style”, Brazil will be used as an example country from Latin America, for its known traits as paternalism, loyalty people, formalism and flexibility (Barros e Prates, 1996).

The article begins with construct explanation, from uni to multidimensional definition. Then cultural context is presented as an important boundary condition. Brazil is introduced as a contextualization for “collectivism” as an orientation for Brazilian people and finally is possible to analyze how culture context, as an important boundary condition interferes attenuating or strengthening its effects on paternalist dimensions to demystify the “Real Brazilian Leadership Style”.

Paternalistic Leadership: from uni to multidimensional construct

Gelfand et al., 2007 defined paternalistic leadership as a hierarchical relationship in which a leader guides professional and personal lives of subordinates in a manner resembling a parent, and in exchange expects loyalty and deference. Although much of the empirical research on paternalistic leadership studied paternalism as a uni-dimensional construct, Cheng et al.’s (2000) and Aycan (2006) concurred that paternalistic leadership is not a unified construct.

Farh and Cheng (2000) stated that paternalism stems from Confucian ideology, which is founded on social relations, such as “benevolent leader with loyal minister” and “kind father with filial son.” These principles form the cultural expectations that a leader should be benevolent to his or her followers. In paternalistic cultures, people in authority consider it an obligation to provide protection to those under their care and in exchange expect loyalty and deference (Aycan, Kanungo, & Sinha, 1999; James, Chen & Cropanzano, 1996). Thus, paternalistic leaders guide both the professional as well as the personal lives of their subordinates in a manner resembling a parent (Gelfand et al., 2007).

In a recent cross-cultural study, employees in China, Pakistan, India, Turkey, and the United States reported higher paternalistic practices than employees in Canada, Germany, and Israel (Aycan et al., 2000). In an earlier study, Mathur, Aycan, and Kanungo (1996) found Indian employees to be very high on paternalistic values, and they found no significant differences between the public and private sectors. Studies conducted by Martinez (2003, 2005) further suggest Mexican employees to have very high paternalistic values, because paternalism fits the Mexican cultural values of respect for hierarchical relations and strong family and personal relationships (Morris & Pavett, 1992).

Finally, although this type of leadership is still prevalent and effective in many business cultures, such as in the Middle East, Pacific Asia, and Latin America (Farh, Cheng, Chou, & Chu, 2006; Martinez, 2003; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006; Uhl-Bien, Tierney, Graen, & Wakabayashi, 1990), it’s visible through past studies that there are cases where some of the three dimensions (authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality) is dominant and others can even be neutralized depending on the context of analysis.

Culture context as an important boundary condition

Culture has been defined in many ways. One definition states culture as a system of shared meanings and understandings, together with a set of practices that enact and reinforce the shared worldviews (Triandis, 1972). In management science, it belongs to the five fundamental classificatory schemes proposed by Hofstede (1991). Hofstede (1991) defined culture as collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others. Based in a large research project into differences in national culture among matched samples of business employees – the IBM study – across more than 50 countries – Hofstede empirically identified five independent dimensions of national culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and long-term versus short-term orientation.

Besides Hofstede and led by Robert House, since the early 1990, the Global Leadership and organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) explore the fascinating and complex effects of culture on leadership and organizational effectiveness. Dorfman et al. (2012) demonstrated that national cultural values are antecedent factors that influence leadership expectations. Simply put, leaders behave in a manner consistent with the desired leadership found in that culture. Some scholars have already chosen some culture dimension to explain how some aspects from leadership are influenced by culture. Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) for example chose collectivism as an influencing dimension. Using data from 577 employees from three emerging economies (China, India, and Kenya), they found that collectivism strengthens the relationships between transformational leadership and work...
related outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceptions of organizational withdrawal behaviors.

Research has shown that culture moderates the relationship between leadership and employee’s outcomes. By the other hand, Dorfman et al. (2012) noted that it is cultural values and not practices that are predictive of leadership attributes. Culture also affects performance and learning motivational orientations (Lee et al., 2003). Although there are some divergences between researchers, it is already part of the agreement that cultural context has an important boundary condition to evaluate paternalistic leadership style.

Although scholars said that the construct Paternalism itself is congruent with the values of collectivist and high-power distance cultures, to understand today’s leadership style in Brazil context, one should consider the process of transformation in business organizations and related labor culture changes. So in the next section you will get deeper on Brazilian leadership style antecedents related to its culture, in order to understand how it may affect paternalistic dimensions.

**Brazil: A contextualization for “collectivism” as an orientation for Brazilian people**

Brazilian context was chosen because of its military origins, which in part explain its hierarchical system and the paternalistic leadership model. Another reason to choose Brazil is because this country is being part of a huge process of transformation involving labor culture changes. Finally because most of the studies found in Latin America related to paternalism emerged from Mexico, where paternalism is a prevalent management style (Martinez, 2005; Morris & Pavett, 1992) and not from Brazil.

In Latin America, people produce work for others primarily because of personal relationships. Employers can rely on employees to perform tasks because they have a sense of personal loyalty to their employers (Osland, Franco, & Osland, 1999). Formal job descriptions are simply not enough to guarantee compliance or service. Albert (1996) suggested that the successful management approach in Latin America is “personalism” which refers to the personalized attention given to employees.

In recent research, psychologists have recognized that the term “collectivism” in fact covers two very different kinds of collectivism in the sense of group-oriented behavior (Brewer & Chen 2007). The first one, categorical collectivism, refers to shared ascriptions of a group of people, such as shared ethnicity or shared membership to an organization. What is important is whether group members believe that the group as such is a higher level entity which provides reasons for actions and which might even be an agent of its own, in the sense of a collective will. The other form of collectivism is “relational collectivism”, in which the individuals take heed of the interests of others, and in which the individual self is seen as dependent on the relations with others. Relational collectivism does not presuppose any kind of shared group identity. The crucial difference between the two kinds is salient if we consider the source of justifications of social actions taken. In the former case, these are deduced from a supposed common identity to the abstract group, such as the ethnic community, which are context-free. In the latter, these are basically mutual obligations between individuals, which are context-bound. Said that, is important to understand that Brazilian collectivism shows signs of being mostly relational then categorical.

So, as part of Latin America culture, Brazilian leadership has indeed signs of some of these paternalist behaviors. Said that, the article will now explore Brazilian leadership style antecedents and its consequences understanding how culture context interferes attenuating or strengthening its effects on paternalist dimensions (authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality). In the end the main expectation is to demystify the “Real Brazilian leadership style”.

**Proposition and discussion**

As already said, recent empirical studies identified negative interdimensional correlations among the three (authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality) paternalism domains (Cheng, Huang, & Chou, 2002; Cheng, Shieh, & Chou, 2002). These findings reinforce Aycan’s (2006) view that paternalistic leadership is not a unified construct. So let us deconstruct the general common sense of paternalistic Brazilian leadership exploring its antecedents and consequences. Based on that, the main proposition of this article is the following: In Brazil, considering culture as a context, the dimension “benevolence” has considerably more representativeness in its leadership style, when compared to other two paternalistic dimensions: authoritarianism and morality.

Different from the past, leadership styles in Latin American businesses today appear to balance both the individual and economic perspectives of organizations. In the humanistic perspective, individuals, organizations and the state all play roles in balancing interests and behaviors (Davila & Elvira, 2012). According to Davila & Elvira (2012) to manage effectively relationships in Latin America, leaders need to develop horizontal-relationships with stakeholders in contrast to a vertical-relationship of subordination. As research shows, the psychological and social contracts that frame an employment relationship in a context such as Latin America means that employees as
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stakeholders expect and demand specific behaviors and attitudes from the leader. Similarly, leaders relate to subordinates engaging in a personal relationship with expected reciprocity.

Although high power concentration is still seen as a common sense in Brazil’s business arena, based on this group ties and Davila & Elvira approach, one line of investigation from this article is the possibility that authoritarianism dimension is losing strength when compared to other two paternalistic dimensions: benevolence and morality. Brazil had already accomplished its democratic transition and is unlikely to regress. The country lives one moment that the relationship of dependence is not being transformed in full independence, but interdependence between leaders and followers. The increase of educational levels in lower social classes and women’s growth in labor market opens space for debates not seen before. According to Barling & Sorensen (1997), changes in the nature of jobs and organizations, as well as social changes in family structure, have rendered much of the research-based knowledge of the interdependence of work and family outdated. In this scenario the old saying “Manda quem pode, obedece que tem juízo” begins to lose its effect.

The growing diversity of family structures represented in the workforce - including dual-earner couples, single parents, blended families, and employees with responsibility for elder care—has heightened the relevance of balancing work and family roles for a substantial segment of employed men and women (Googins, 1997; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986, 1994; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1997). These developments have greatly increased the complexities of the interface between work and family and in a certain way can explain the growth of benevolence dimension importance in Brazilian leadership style.

As already said a fundamentally Brazilian leadership style relies on social bonds based on reciprocity and stresses worker’s expectations. Members are distinguished by their personal relationships (Barros & Prates, 1996). Loyalty to the group, for example, which is an essential element of the collectivist family, also means that resources are shared. Obligations to the family in a collectivist society are not only financial but also ritual increasing leader’s benevolence. In this scenario confrontations are avoided in order to maintain harmony. At work, direct appraisal of performance instead of being a tool for personal improvement becomes a threat to harmony. When having a poor performance is the reason, an employee is immediately called for other tasks in opposite to individualist cultures, which would attribute the poor performance as a reason for dismissal. Personal relationships prevail over professional and relatives of employer and employees are preferred in hiring (Hofstede, 2001).

Brazil was the only country in South America to be colonized by Portugal, which as the colonizing power, was mainly interested in exploration of the natural resources of the country. Little attention was paid to norms, laws and regulations during this period (Holanda, 1973). This practice is still alive, leading to dissociation of formal law from social practices (Zimmermann, 2009). The highly male centered paternalistic authority and hierarchical differentiation was balanced by the preference for more informal and affectionate social relationships. As described by Da Matta (1986), the “Brazilian dilemma” of two opposing social practices of hierarchy combined with intimate relationship that is credited with the emergence of the phenomenon of Brazilian jeitinho.

These are all strong values in Brazilian society. Jeitinho, thus, becomes a social mechanism within a relationship of reciprocity. In organizations, it helps make things happen via emotional mechanisms and avoid highly disliked confrontations (Duarte, 2006). Jeitinho is an important cultural trait in Latin American societies that has particular social functions in organizations such as softening rigid and impersonal bureaucracies through maintaining personal and social relationships, as well as establishing the foundations for the social contract in which employment is embedded. In Brazil, benevolent leaders deal constantly with this trait, even if the adopted alternative strategy breaks some rules. On the other hand, Rega (2000) highlights its positive aspects, directly related to benevolence, such as creativity and solidarity used by citizens as they collectively adapt to difficult situations created by this system.

Although these examples illustrate a permissive scenario, benevolent paternalism may influence positive employee attitudes (Gelfand et al., 2007; Pellegrini et al., 2007). Care, support, and protection provided by paternalistic leaders may address employee’s need for frequent contact and close personal relationships, creating a positive impact on employee’s attitudes in collectivistic cultures (Gelfand et al., 2007). In addition, Rega (2000) highlights “jeitinho” positive aspects, directly related to benevolence, such as creativity and solidarity used by citizens as they collectively adapt to difficult situations created by this system.

Finally let’s explore the morality dimension, which means leader behaviors that demonstrate superior personal virtues (e.g., does not abuse authority for personal gain, acts as an exemplar in personal and work conduct), which lead subordinates to respect and identify with the leader.

As already said, Brazilian leadership style relies on reciprocity and stresses worker’s expectations. It implies that in Brazil, leader means only one thing: father! (Behrens, 2013) Members are distinguished by their personal relationships and usually come to light individuals who have certain degree of attractiveness, charisma (Barros &
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Prates, 1997). Rega (2000) acknowledges the negative aspects of jeitinho as part of the vicious circle in which Brazilians use it to deal with inefficient bureaucracies that demand and sustain corruption.

Ferreira et al. (2012) demonstrated that jeitinho can be described by a three-dimensional structure: corruption, creativity, and social norm breaking. Their finding supports the social component of jeitinho (you need to have social skills and be extrovert to use it) but also confirms the potentially disruptive social nature of using jeitinho (e.g., the negative relation with agreeableness). The corruption factor was associated with less agreeableness and more moral disengagement. Jeitinho sometimes involves some kind of infraction, and it is characterized by more informal behavior. It could be seen as an individualizing moral strategy that creates a complex new form of binding morality based on informal and flexible moral relationships (Ferreira et al., 2012).

As part of a collectivist culture, in Brazil, economy political power is exercised by interests groups and not by voters. In this scenario the “dark side of charisma” can appear. This happens when leaders with personal motivations are concerned with their personal power motivations, goals and, thus tends to pursue goals based on their own private motives (House & Howell, 1922; Howell, 1988; McClelland, 1970). Social bonds are too tight, favored by the unbalanced political power. As a consequence, followers get blind and leaders have a free way to abuse authority for personal gain. In concrete social interactions Brazilians have difficulty in distinguishing jeitinho, favor, and corruption (Barbosa, 2006). In a country where the “malandro” behavior is admired it is difficult to keep morality!

Final Remarks

Recent empirical studies come to confirm the multidimensionality of paternalistic construct and also the importance of cultural context as a boundary condition to evaluate paternalistic leadership. Although scholars said that the construct paternalism itself is congruent with the values of collectivistic cultures, it was possible to check some effects from the transformation process in Brazilian business in each of the three dimensions proposed by Farh and Cheng (2000): authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality.

As seen, benevolence is the dominant dimension justified by the need of being part of the group regardless of what should be done to be an insider. Members are distinguished by their personal relationships (Barros & Prates, 1996) and loyalty. The negative association of jeitinho with moral attitudes (greater moral disengagement) suggests that these behaviors violate the norms of fairness and avoidance of harm inherent in individualizing approaches to morality (Haidt, 2008). An amoral act is no longer evaluated and judged by itself but is now compared to another (“greater”) amoral act to justify individuals’ behaviors (“It is OK for me to commit a minor moral transgression [e.g., park illegally, give some money to speed up processing of documents] because politicians commit much bigger offenses”), shifting notions of fairness and retribution within individualizing moral approaches (Ferreira et al., 2012).

In this scenario personal loyalty should be recognized and exploited not only by its positive and objective way of speed up information to reconcile alliances as its emotional side of humanizing relationships internal/external in companies (Barros & Prates, 1996).

In this country where the “malandro” behavior is admired and the “jeitinho” is allowed, morality can lose its representativeness when compared to benevolence for example. Finally the need of developing horizontal-relationships reinforced by the humanistic perspective (Davila & Elvira, 2012; Barros & Prates, 1996) contributes for the weakening effect from authoritarianism as a dimension. Care, support, and protection (Gelfand et al., 2007) addresses employee’s need in Brazilian culture. So why wouldn’t we say that the Real Brazilian leadership style is mostly benevolent instead of generic paternalistic?

Direction for Future Research

More research is needed on the performance impact and the possible differences among different paternalistic leadership styles in this regard. Interaction effects should be explored. It would be preferable to evaluate interaction impacts through empirical studies. Considering empirical studies, one should consider the possibility of using use GLOBE data information to verify the validity of known paternalistic countries. It would be interesting to test each paternalistic dimension and its representativeness in leadership style. Previous research has focused primarily on subordinate's responses, but the correlation between leaders’ and subordinates’ ratings of similar leadership scales is low enough to raise questions about scale validity for one or both sources. Measurement perspective is an important issue because it may act as a moderator of the relationship between paternalism and its correlates. Research that examines the longitudinal development of paternalistic relations over time is also needed to better understand the dynamics of these developmental relationships.

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