

ARTICLES

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THE MULTIPLE LENSES OF STUDYING AND APPROACHING LEADERSHIP

Múltiplas lentes de estudo e abordagem da liderança

Los múltiples enfoques y abordajes del liderazgo

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the multiple forms of studying and approaching leadership with a particular interest in recent theoretical and empirical studies from Brazilian scholarship on the topic. The article reviews what we denote as the three main lenses of leadership: individual leader(ship), followership, and collective leadership. The article's typology epitomises the essential view of each lens and its historical treatment. We use this discussion about the three lenses to analyse the scientific literature on leadership in Brazilian scientific journals from 2016 to 2021. The systematic literature review of 32 articles reveals emphasis on the first lens, the focus on individual leaders, normally those in positions of authority, and the idea that leadership is a vertical and hierarchical activity rather than a collectivistic phenomenon. The article concludes by highlighting opportunities for empirical inquiry into more contemporary collective leadership research in Brazilian organisations.

Keywords: leadership, followership, collective leadership, Brazilian research on leadership, leadership research.

RESUMO

Este artigo discute as múltiplas formas de estudo da liderança, com um interesse particular nos recentes estudos empíricos e teóricos da produção científica brasileira. O artigo revisa o que denominamos as três principais lentes de estudo da liderança (i.e., liderança individual, followership, liderança coletiva), e a tipologia utilizada no artigo resume a visão essencial de cada lente, bem como a sua evolução histórica. Essa discussão sobre as três lentes é utilizada para analisar a literatura científica sobre liderança em periódicos científicos brasileiros no período entre 2016 e 2021. A revisão sistemática de literatura de 32 artigos aponta para uma ênfase na primeira lente, isto é, o foco em líderes individuais, em posições formais de autoridade e para a ideia de que liderança é mais uma atividade hierárquica e vertical do que um fenômeno coletivo. O artigo conclui sinalizando as oportunidades para estudos empíricos em abordagens mais contemporâneas sobre liderança coletiva em organizações brasileiras.

Palavras-chave: liderança, followership, liderança coletiva, pesquisa brasileira em liderança, pesquisa em liderança.

RESUMEN

Este artículo discute las múltiples formas de estudio del liderazgo, con un interés particular en los estudios empíricos y teóricos recientes de la producción científica brasileña. El artículo revisa lo que llamamos los tres lentes principales para el estudio del liderazgo (es decir, liderazgo individual, followership, liderazgo colectivo), y la tipología utilizada en el artículo resume la visión esencial de cada lente, así como su evolución histórica. Utilizamos esta discusión sobre las tres lentes para analizar la literatura científica sobre liderazgo en revistas científicas brasileñas en el período comprendido entre 2016 y 2021. La revisión sistemática de la literatura de 32 artículos apunta a un énfasis en la primera lente, es decir, el enfoque en los líderes individuales, en las posiciones formales de autoridad y en la idea de que el liderazgo es más una actividad jerárquica y vertical que un fenómeno colectivo. El artículo concluye señalando las oportunidades de estudios empíricos en enfoques más contemporáneos sobre el liderazgo colectivo en organizaciones Brasileñas.

Palabras clave: liderazgo, followership, liderazgo colectivo, investigación de liderazgo brasileño, investigación de liderazgo

INTRODUCTION

As a topic of study and research in management, leadership continues to attract considerable attention among scholars and non-scholars. Some call this setting a ‘leadership industry’, with countless courses, workshops, and consultants claiming to teach people how to lead, while ‘becoming a leader has become a mantra’ (Kellerman, 2012, p. 5). This scenario can be partly explained by leadership being seen as both a problem and a solution to address complex contemporary economic and social issues that affect organisations and governments (Rickards, 2015). Organisations, in particular, consistently revisit and re-assess their leadership models, and consequently, heavy investments have been made in the development of leaders, making leadership development a USD 366 billion industry in recent years (Westfall, 2019). However, ‘there are as many definitions of leadership as people who tried to surround the concept’ (Bass, 1997, p. 7), and leadership remains a contested concept that is constantly being discussed and debated (Grint, 2005).

On the one hand, leaders are seen as those capable of influencing the results of organisations and shaping organisational identities (Raelin, 2016). Therefore, one of the key concerns in management studies is how leaders can improve organisational results through an influential process over their subordinates and other stakeholders, resulting in many models that attempt to improve leaders’ effectiveness (e.g., competency models, leadership frameworks). On the other hand, the paradigm of almighty leaders who determine the fate of organisations has been challenged, especially after corporate scandals and many companies performing well below market expectations (Kellerman, 2008). Moreover, the very notion of what constitutes leadership has become increasingly diffuse (Jackson, 2005). Constant internal changes in organisations have led to the appearance of organisational formats and managerial mechanisms that make the distinction between those who lead and those who follow less obvious (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). For example, leadership has been observed at different organisation levels, such as distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002), lateral leadership, and shared leadership (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2007). These concepts indicate that leadership can emerge in groups of individuals making a concerted effort at different levels of the organisation (Raelin, 2018).

Traditional and dominant views aim to understand how leaders perform their role in organisational environments (Western, 2013) and their impact on teams and organisational effectiveness (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In these cases, the preferred notion of leader identity is that of an ‘essence’ or ‘personal character’ that is normally acritical and detached from the social context (Wood, 2005) and whose emphasis is on the leader’s personality traits, behaviours, and styles. Nevertheless, models used to explain the leadership phenomenon, such as charismatic and transformational leadership (e.g., Balthazard, Waldman, & Warren, 2009), appear unable to handle the growing complexity both inside and outside organisations (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010), leading theoreticians and practitioners to look for alternative lenses. These lenses have started to consider the relational aspects of leadership, which depend less on the figure of the leader and more on the context and relations among individuals, as a co-created process within social relations (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011).

For example, the literature on *followership* emphasises the role and influence of those called followers in the co-production of leadership and its results (Collinson, 2006). This perspective considers the enactment of leadership in a range of organisational situations and that there are several co-authors responsible for its emergence, mainly in the role of followers (Blom & Alvesson, 2014). Additionally, other streams of research have pointed to ‘collective’ and ‘collaborative’ forms of leadership (Ospina, Foldy, Fairhurst, & Jackson, 2020). They try to locate leadership in the various configurations of individuals, groups, and connected parties and, therefore, beyond discrete and often heroically depicted individuals (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012). Here, leadership is centred on the collective accomplishment that is achieved by all participants in the leadership process (Drath et al., 2008).

These parallel views open numerous promising paths for theorising about and studying leadership and thus enable leadership scholars and non-scholars to gain a more nuanced and holistic view of this complex social phenomenon (Jackson & Parry, 2018). This article provides a review of what we denominate as the three main lenses of leadership: individual leader(ship), followership, and collective leadership. The individual leader(ship) lens, which we call the ‘I’ lens, normally focuses on the role of individual leaders in a formal position of authority and their personal characteristics (e.g., Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). The followership lens, which we call the ‘they’ lens, emphasises the role and impact of followers on the construction of leaders and leadership (e.g., Meindl, 1995). Finally, the collective leadership lens, which we call the ‘we’ lens, aims to examine leadership as a collective phenomenon distributed or shared among different people (e.g., Fairhurst, Jackson, Foldy, & Ospina, 2020). These lenses are summarised in Exhibit 1, which shows their origins. Each lens brings together several theories and approaches to leadership, and the article’s typology epitomises the essential view of each lens, and its historical treatment. This process enables an analysis ranging from micro-level approaches (e.g., individual traits) to macro-level approaches that focus on leadership processes and collective outcomes. In particular, this analysis of the lenses allows us to offer a review of the most recent Brazilian literature on leadership, noting its emphasis on the first lens – individual leaders – normally those in positions of authority. In our view, this literature that primarily focuses on leaders lags behind the international literature, failing to keep pace with a more contemporary approach and research on collective leadership practices.

Exhibit 1. Three lenses of leadership research

Lens	Emphasis	Historical treatment	Selected Authors
I	Leader: single formal leader	This stream has evolved from ‘Trait’ approaches (pre-World War II), through ‘Behaviour’ (post-World War II) and ‘Contingency’ approaches’ (60s and 70s); to ‘Charismatic, Authentic and Transformational Leadership’ (mid 80s and 90s).	Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing & Peterson (2008) Bass & Riggio (2006) Bono & Judge (2004)
They	Followers: role of followers in the leadership process	This stream has evolved from the work of Meindl et al. (1985) on ‘Romance of Leadership’, through the ‘Implicit Leadership/ Followership Theories’ (mid 80s and 90s) to the ‘Relational views’, which emphasise the mutual influence process among individuals (90s and 2000s).	Carsten et al. (2010) Meindl (1995) Rush et al. (1977)

(Continue)

Exhibit 1. Three lenses of leadership research

(Concludes)

Lens	Emphasis	Historical treatment	Selected Authors
We	Collective: complex, multi-level, dynamic processes emerging from the interactions among individuals	This stream has evolved from the notions of 'distributed', 'shared', and 'collaborative' leadership (2000s), to the idea of 'plural leadership' (2010s) and 'leadership-as-practice' (2010s).	Sklaveniti (2020) Holm & Fairhurst (2018) Denis et al. (2012)

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. First, we present a literature review of publications focused on the three lenses concerning leadership. Then, we present our research methods. The discussion continues by outlining the Brazilian literature on leadership from 2016 to 2021 and the possibilities for future leadership research in the Brazilian context. Finally, we present our concluding remarks.

The 'I' Lens of Leadership

The 'I' lens of leadership represents research on leadership focused on formal organisational leaders. These traditional theories privilege the perspective that leadership is held and manifested by a single person (Jackson, 2005). This perspective has led to leadership research focused on understanding the traits, styles, and behaviours of individuals (Crevani et al., 2007), while there is a vertical top-down influencing process between leaders and their followers (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Traditional leadership research tends to separate leaders and followers and privilege leaders as the primary agents in organisational dynamics (Collinson, 2005). A set of theories that focus on a single leader has been developed to create an effective leader (Kellerman, 2012). Therefore, leadership development means leader development based on a mechanistic competency framework (Ford, Harding, & Learmonth, 2008). According to these traditional approaches, followers are either not considered or are seen as passive recipients or moderators of leaders' influence (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985).

Exhibit 2. Traditional leadership theories

Theory/Group of Theories	Focus	Selected Authors
Traits	Specific personality traits explain leaders and leadership and facilitate its effectiveness	Judge et al. (2009) Bono & Judge (2004)
Styles and behaviours	Certain abilities, competencies, and leadership styles produce better leadership results	Gordon (2011) Glynn & DeJordy (2010)
Contingency or Situational leadership	Leaders adapt their style to the situation or adjust the situation to their style	Yukl (2011) Thompson & Vecchio (2009)
Charismatic, authentic, and transformational leadership	Charismatic, visionary, inspirational, and authentic leadership	Balthazard et al. (2009) Avolio & Gardner (2005)

The first traditional approaches were based on personality traits that can explain the emergence of leaders or their effectiveness in influencing organisational results (Bono & Judge, 2004). Leaders are seen as being endowed with extraordinary features and attributes recognised by followers, who respond to them positively. In this context, a leadership identity would be granted to any individual who is extraordinarily effective in influencing other individuals and producing collective responses (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009).

These initial leadership theories were followed by other approaches that prioritised leader styles that best produced the desired results. These theories focus on the leader's behaviour, such as theory X/Y of Douglas McGregor (Gordon, 2011). According to this view, leaders can exhibit steering behaviour (theory X), encouraging behaviour (theory Y), or both.

A third approach, known as contingency or situational theory, proposes that there is no single universally effective way to lead. Instead, the leader must rely on a range of characteristics that can be adapted according to the circumstances (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). Therefore, this theory focuses on how leaders adapt to the changes and needs of an organisation and drive followers in the same direction (Yukl, 2011). According to this perspective, followers are one of the situational elements or variables that leaders need to manipulate to achieve the desired results.

More recently, there has been an extension of these three perspectives, especially charismatic, authentic, and transformational leadership (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Charismatic leadership seeks to emphasise the emotional responses of followers to the leader's articulation of an inspirational vision and mission, and the skills and personal talent of charismatic leaders to influence followers in a profound and extraordinary way. Transformational leadership, in contrast to so-called transactional leadership, advocates that the leader should inspire, motivate, and challenge followers to achieve high levels of performance (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Finally, authentic leadership is demonstrated by leaders' self-awareness and authentic behaviour while striving to achieve relational authenticity (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Notwithstanding the limits of this lens, it continues to be the predominant view of leadership (Jackson, 2005). The problem with the individualistic view based on essential personal qualities and capabilities is that it considers these qualities abstractly (i.e., charisma, vision) and seeks to find these characteristics in a few key people occupying top positions in a hierarchy (Wood, 2005), without taking contextual aspects and power relations into consideration (Collinson, 2005).

The 'They' Lens of Leadership

A second group of leadership theories can be classified as the 'they' lens because their focus is on followers, not leaders. Follower-centred approaches emerged in response to the traditional leadership perspective, and they emphasise the role and impact of followers on the construction of leaders and leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This lens has been developed by some critics of the notion of the unquestionable necessity of leaders for an organisation's functioning, which is seen as a socially constructed 'myth' created by members of a group to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity (Gemmill & Oakley, 1992). Furthermore, the 'romance of leadership' (Meindl et al.,

1985) proposes that there is an excessive tendency to attribute to leaders the success or failure of organisational results, overestimating the capacity of what they can effectively accomplish.

The follower-centred theories of leadership did not follow a clear path or sequence as leader-centred theories that evolved over time did. Previous studies that follow a cognitive and emotional approach can be traced back to the 1970s; these studies belong to the ‘implicit theories of leadership’ (e.g., Rush, Thomas, & Lord, 1977), which argue that followers have models and schemes of good and bad leaders built through socialisation and past experience. In organisational contexts, followers compare these models and pre-existing schemes with the actual leaders’ behaviour, granting or not a leadership identity.

These cognitive and affective approaches are paralleled by more relational approaches that emphasise the mutual influencing process between leaders and followers in the pursuit of common goals (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). Similarly, leader-member exchange theory (LMX) envisages leadership as a ‘transaction’ or ‘exchange’ between leaders and followers engaged in a relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The better this relationship is, the better the outcomes achieved by the leader-follower dyad. Other follower-centred approaches are based on organisational roles. Four groups of theories summarised in Exhibit 3 try to explain the role of followers in the emergence of leaders and leadership.

Exhibit 3. Followership theories

Theory/Group of Theories	Focus	Selected Authors
Types of followers	Types and styles of followers who contribute to produce leaders and leadership (e.g., conformists, passive, alienated, implementer, partner, individualistic, isolated, bystanders, participants, activists)	Chaleff (2009) Kellerman (2008)
Followers’ beliefs and schemes	Followers acting according to their beliefs and schemes regarding their and their leaders’ roles	Can & Aktas (2012) Carsten et al. (2010)
Followers as modellers of leadership	The degree of followers’ development influences leaders’ actions and the emergence of leader(ship)	Howell & Shamir (2005) Dvir & Shamir (2003)
Relational approaches	Construction of leadership as a relational process in which individuals engage in a relationship, which produces leadership and its results	Cunliffe & Eriksen (2011) Uhl-Bien (2006)

Types and characteristics of followers

Three streams of research focus on followers as the main organisational agents and seek to determine, similar to leader-centric traditional theories, the types of followers and their distinct features and styles. Two streams are based on a two-dimensional model, namely, independent/critical thinking compared with dependent/uncritical thinking and active compared with passive engagement (Kelley, 1992), or high versus low support for the leaders and high versus low challenge to the leaders (Chaleff, 2009). The third stream ranks followers into five types according to their degree of engagement (Kellerman, 2008).

Although concerned with understanding a follower-centred perspective of leadership, these three approaches do little to advance a relational view of leadership or investigate the influence

of the ‘types’ of followers in the emergence of leadership. Moreover, they reinforce a stereotype about followers as this typology has not been empirically tested in organisational environments.

Followers’ beliefs and schemes

Carsten et al. (2010) proposed the first empirical research concerning how followers describe themselves and act according to their beliefs and schemes regarding their leaders’ roles. Researchers have identified followers who report themselves as ‘passives’ (i.e., assume an obedient attitude and deference towards leaders). Some followers report a more ‘active’ scheme, as they identify the importance of expressing their views and providing their contributions when requested by a leader. Other followers report a more ‘proactive’ attitude, where they assume their role with an attitude of partnership and co-responsibility with a leader regarding the results of the group and the organisation. In a similar vein, Collinson (2006) argues about ‘conformist’, ‘resistant’, and ‘dramaturgical’ selves in the workplace.

By examining followers’ beliefs and schemes through an empirical study, this research sheds light on how followers understand their role in the emergence of leadership. Nevertheless, it also contributes by encapsulating followers into basic types, similar to the previous research stream, which reinforces stereotypes about followers.

Followers as modellers of leadership

Another line of research argues that followers are the modellers and influencers of the actions of leaders and their emergence (Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Howell & Shamir, 2005). According to this perspective, the degree or stage of development of followers, such as their motivations, values, knowledge, and engagement, influences the emergence of leaders and how leaders behave in an organisational environment. Followers who are autonomous, critical, and effective in what they do inhibit or limit the actions of leaders. Thus, they define not only the type of leadership they need but also when the intervention of a leader is required as a form of ‘leadership by demand’ (Blom & Alvesson, 2014).

Relational approaches

Relational approaches to leadership investigate the relational mechanisms, which are not necessarily restricted to the organisational hierarchy, of the leadership enactment by individuals who engage in a relationship in a given social context (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Therefore, leadership construction is a dialogic and reflexive process that occurs in day-to-day interactions (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012) due to reciprocal actions between individuals (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This approach recognises the discursive and socially constructed nature of individuals, which means acknowledging the relationship between leaders and followers and the multiple, fragmented, and often contradictory nature of leadership (Collison, 2005). Therefore, leadership identity is

co-created through the ‘claiming’ and ‘granting’ of the identities of leaders and followers (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

Notably, the ‘they’ lens to leadership has not attracted substantial attention from leadership scholars. Few empirical studies have been conducted to explore the followership dimensions of leadership (e.g., Carsten et al., 2010; Collinson, 2006). Main critics have highlighted the problem of this lens in that it approaches leadership with a dyad perspective (e.g., leader-follower dyad) without taking into account the complexities of the relations and situations in organisational environments and broader informal relational networks (Ospina et al., 2020).

The ‘We’ Lens of Leadership

The ‘we’ lens of leadership recognises that leadership is co-created in the relational interactions between people as a dynamic process that develops and changes over time (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). These views represent a ‘growing body of organisational research and theorising that examines leadership not as the property of individuals and their behaviours, but as a collective phenomenon that is distributed or shared among different people, potentially fluid, and constructed in interaction’ (Denis et al., 2012, p. 2). In this case, leadership is viewed as a ‘we’ or collectivistic phenomenon involving multiple individuals who assume leadership roles over time in both formal and informal relationships (Yammarino, Salas, Serban, Shirreffs, & Shuffler, 2012).

In recent years, there has been an emerging debate that emphasises leadership as a collective activity rather than as the actions of formal leaders. Leadership is seen as a collaborative and collective responsibility, where accountabilities, competencies, and decision-making processes need to be distributed to several individuals rather than to one (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010). The idea of collective leadership has emerged as a theoretical umbrella that captures diverse scholarship on plural (e.g., Denis et al., 2012), shared (e.g., Pearce & Conger, 2003), distributed (e.g., Gronn, 2002), networked (e.g., Carter, DeChurch, Braun, & Contractor, 2015), and complex (e.g., Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007) leadership. The Exhibit 4 below summarises some of the current approaches.

Exhibit 4. Collective leadership theories

Theory/Group of Theories	Focus	Selected Authors
Distributed and shared leadership	Leadership as an interpersonal influence relationship, distributed or shared among some, many, or all members	Pearce & Conger (2003) Gronn (2002)
Complex and social network leadership	Leadership constituting a network of relationships that emerges and shifts over time	Carter et al. (2015) Uhl-Bien et al. (2007)
Leadership as practice	Leadership that emerges and unfolds through day-to-day practices and experiences	Raelin (2016) Carroll et al. (2008)
Plural leadership	Plural forms of leadership as combined influence of multiple leaders in diffuse power settings	Denis et al. (2012) Sergi et al. (2012)

Several attempts have been made to redefine leadership in terms of the processes and practices organised by people in interactions (Crevani et al., 2010). For example, Carroll, Levy, and Richmond (2008) and Raelin (2016) identify the need to study leadership as practices rather than competencies held by individual managers. Gronn (2015) suggests the study of leadership activities rather than leaders as the unit of analysis, and Drath et al. (2008) propose a definition of leadership as activities with certain outcomes.

Nonetheless, the notion of collectives to understand the leadership phenomenon has been problematic (Crevani et al., 2007). Leaders are expected to be individuals, while many decisions and actions are collective by nature. Contrastingly, collective leadership practices might become problematic in some situations due to a relative lack of clarity of the roles and responsibilities in the organisational environment and whether agency lies with individuals, the collective, or both (Raelin, 2018). Therefore, there is clearly room for further empirical work, especially studies that address the dynamic and emergent nature of collectivistic leadership approaches.

METHOD

Our systematic review was performed in two steps. In the first step, we conducted a search of scientific articles published in scholarly (peer-reviewed) Brazilian journals between 2016 and 2021 (5 years) in three databases: EBSCO, Google Scholar, and Scielo. Our goal was to identify all articles that contributed to the debate concerning the research on leadership. We searched for all scholarly research using keywords associated with this topic of investigation, such as leadership, leadership styles, followership, and shared, distributed, and collective leadership. In this search, we did not use Boolean questions (e.g., x AND y OR z). To determine the inclusion or exclusion of each paper, we analysed the title, abstract, and keywords. This initial search yielded 80 papers. Then we proceeded with the analysis of the entire text of papers from this initial search. This analysis yielded 32 articles, which are summarised in Exhibit 5.

In the second step, to organise the articles according to the three leadership lenses, we investigated the main ‘unit of analysis’ used in each article to approach leadership (Gronn, 2009), whether the preferred unit of analysis was ‘individual leaders’ (e.g. styles, characteristics, impact on followers), ‘followers or followership’ (e.g., influence on leaders, relation towards leaders), or ‘groups or collectives’ (e.g., post-heroic, shared or distributed leadership). From this analysis, we concluded that 29 articles (90%) refer to traditional leadership theories, mainly transformational and authentic leadership, emphasising leaders’ styles and their impact on teams and organisational effectiveness. The remaining 3 articles are associated with the ‘they’ lens (1 article on LMX) and ‘we’ lens (2 articles on shared and post-heroic leadership).

Exhibit 5. Brazilian scientific articles on leadership, 2016–2021

Article's Emphasis	Authors	Overall Focus	Lens
Leaders' Style and Role	Thiago, Kubo, Pamplona, & Farina (2020); Matarazzo, Fernandes, & Alcadipani (2020); Sobral, Furtado, & Islam (2019); Gambirage, Jacomossi, Silva, & Hein (2019); Silva et al. (2019); Oliveira & Carvalho (2018); Bianchi et al. (2017); Moura, Bernardes, Balsanelli, Zanetti, & Gabriel (2017); Muzzio (2017)	Strategic People Management; Creativity Management; Team Management; Team Commitment; Leadership Effectiveness; Motivation; Sensemaking; Job Satisfaction	I
Transformational Leadership	Godoy & Mendonça (2020); Melo et al. (2019); Garcia & Russo (2019); Pessoa, Dimas, Lourenço, & Rebelo (2018); Abelha, Carneiro, & Cavazotte (2018); Barbosa, Gambi, & Gerolano (2017)	Quality Management; Team Effectiveness & Performance; Job Satisfaction; Strategic Management; Self Determination	
Authentic Leadership	Pioli et al. (2020); Campos & Rueda (2019); Novaes et al. (2019); Besen, Tecchio, & Fialho (2017)	Knowledge Management; Job Satisfaction; Work Engagement; Organisational Behaviour and Commitment	
Female Leadership Style	Milterseiner, Oliveira, Hryniewicz, Sant'Anna, & Moura (2020); Sousa & Cardoso (2020); Hryniewicz & Vianna (2018)	Female Leadership Style and Gender Equality	
Ethical Leadership	Lourenço, Perez-Nebra, Ferreira, & Kohlsdorf (2020); Filho Ferreira, & Valentini (2019)	Work Engagement; Job Satisfaction; Organisational Commitment	
Political Leadership	Sobral, Carvalho, & Furtado (2020); Ortunes, Martinho, & Chaia (2019)	Government Leaders' Communication and Public's Emotional Reaction	
Sustainable Leadership	Armani, Petrini, & Santos (2020)	Sustainable-Oriented Organisations	
Situational Leadership	Marins, Martins, & Pasqual (2016)	Organisational Results; Team Performance	
Leadership and Power	Vilela (2017)	Relationship between Leadership and Power	
LMX (Leader-Member Exchange)	Cortes, Souza, & Puente-Palacios (2019)	Job Satisfaction; Managerial Skills	
Post-Heroic Leadership	Sobral & Furtado (2019)	Current Trends and Challenges in Leadership Education	We
Shared Leadership	Carvalho, Sobral, & Mansur (2020)	Organisational Climate; Turnover	

BRAZILIAN RESEARCH ON LEADERSHIP

In a previous literature review of the Brazilian research on leadership performed by Fonseca, Porto, and Borges-Andrade (2015), the authors concluded that between 1998 and 2013, 35 articles were published in Brazilian Journals. Out of these 35 articles, 16 (46%) focused on leaders' roles and behaviours, while 19 (54%) were centred on leadership styles, traits, and characteristics of leaders. For example, some research focused on the influence of personality traits (e.g., Garcia-Santos & Werlang, 2013), and leaders' values and attitudes that impact organisational performance (e.g., Fonseca et al., 2012). Other studies explored preferred leadership styles (e.g., Melo, 2004) in the organisational environment.

Our study confirms this previous literature by indicating that the leadership research in the Brazilian context has been closely aligned with the 'I' lens of leadership, based on single individual leaders in a formal position of authority. Overall, the studies in our review aim to understand and assess the impact of leaders and/or the relationship of a specific leadership theory and the organisational phenomenon, examining the activity of leaders by reference to their formal position within an organisation. For example, some studies assess the impact of leaders' style and role on strategic people management (Bianchi, Quishida, & Foroni, 2017), creativity management (Muzzio, 2017), and team commitment (Silva, Nunes, & Andrade, 2019), while Godoy and Mendonça (2020), Melo, Borba, Correia, and Cabral (2019), and Garcia and Russo (2019) assess the impact of transformational leadership on team effectiveness, performance, and job satisfaction. Other studies (e.g., Campos & Rueda, 2019; Novaes, Ferreira, & Gabardo-Martins, 2019; Pioli, Feuerschütte, Tezza, & Cancellier, 2020) assess the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, work engagement, organisational behaviour, and commitment.

The idea that permeates these studies is that leadership is a vertical and hierarchical activity exercised from the top down within an organisation (Grint, 2005) and is associated with a unitary command. Additionally, the underlying assumption is that leaders can enact leadership because of their particular characteristics and qualities, such as charisma, vision, authenticity, and communication skills (Western, 2013). In general, Brazilian research does not tend to consider the contribution of other organisational actors, especially those who do not occupy formal positions of authority, to the leadership process. It focuses on how leaders succeed in their task of influencing followers towards organisational goals, regardless of the contextual and organisational settings in which they are embedded (Ford et al., 2008). Earlier studies drawing on Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 1991) searched for 'typical Brazilian cultural traits' to reveal that followers are passive receivers of the influence of leaders in a relationship ruled by personalism, paternalism, and loyalty to leaders (Barros & Prates, 1996; Tanure, 2004). We believe that the advancement of leadership studies in the Brazilian context requires the re-organisation of the analysis to approach the multi-faceted and multi-contextual leadership phenomenon in a less traditional way.

The appropriateness of the 'we' or collective leadership lens for 21st-century Brazilian organisations resides in the increasingly complex forms of organising defined by technology,

networks, flattening of organisations structures, unpredictability, and uncertainty that characterises the contemporary socio-politic-economic environment (Crevani, 2018; Raelin, 2018). This scenario requires multiple and interdependent agents to contribute and collaborate to provide knowledge, expertise, and creativity (Denis et al., 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Moreover, ‘the skills required to negotiate an increasingly complex environment successfully are extensive and may be too broad to be possessed by one leader’ (Jackson & Parry, 2018, p. 65).

The question of ‘how’ to enact and sustain collective leadership in organisations remains a topic of debate, and the answer may require different levels of analysis. First, at the systems level (e.g., team and organisational), emphasis should be placed on how organisational members agree on rules and structures to organise the collective effort. Firstly, for a group to establish a common direction, this collective needs to understand its distinctive identity and the shared purpose that unites them (Jackson & Parry, 2018). Furthermore, actors should discuss areas of mutual responsibility and ways of organising a collective decision-making process, allowing individuals to act accordingly (Raelin, 2018).

At the interpersonal level, further leadership studies could place less emphasis on ‘what makes a leader’ and more emphasis on the process of leading and following, what happens ‘in between’ people, and how leadership and followership occur (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). For example, Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) examined the antecedent conditions for shared leadership, focusing on the internal team environment, shared purpose, social support, voice, and external coaching. This requires an organisational environment that fosters participants’ diverse viewpoints through constructive and generative dialogue (Yammarino et al., 2012). Training should address individuals in forms of conversation and reflection and how to confront problems with those who are engaged (Raelin, 2018).

At the individual level, potential streams of research could analyse the role of formal leaders in enacting collective leadership practices and working with a group to move away from practices characterised by highly individualistic leadership. For example, studies could explore leaders who attempt to share leadership and responsibilities with group members by creating an environment of shared accountabilities (Raelin, 2016). In this regard, more collectivist theories, such as shared or distributed leadership, could help organisations move beyond traditional hierarchical-based leadership based on a single source of authority (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). The recent Special Issue of *Human Relations* devoted to Collective Leadership has demonstrated the range and depth of theoretical and empirical research that conceptualises and examines leadership as a fundamentally collective activity (Ospina et al., 2020). The articles in this Special Issue could provide a map and travel guide for Brazilian researchers to explore research on collective leadership (Fairhurst et al., 2020).

Finally, future research should focus on empirical studies that aim to investigate ‘how’ the practice of collective leadership is actually happening in Brazilian organisations and in what proportion, and the relationship between hierarchical and shared leadership. For example, it could explore further the influence of cultural elements in the Brazilian organisations that would help explain the emphasis of scientific literature on individual leaders and formal figures

of authority and the (non)treatment of leadership as a collective phenomenon. Comparative studies could also reveal similarities and differences in theory and practice of collective leadership across distinct organisations and cultures.

Final Remarks

Over the past 20 years, developments in leadership research have challenged the leader-centric view and moved towards a more 'decentred' understanding of leadership. Within research on collective leadership, attention has shifted from individual leaders to leadership as a collective endeavour (Sergi, Denis, & Langley, 2012), thus blurring leader centrality (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). Followership research, in turn, has shifted attention from the leader(s) to the followers, if not decentring, then at least re-centring leadership to another participant of the interaction (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Thus, in these recent developments, leadership has become viewed as co-constructed and negotiated in interaction and as a process relying on mutual recognition of relations between leaders and followers (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). However, the current scenario of Brazilian research on leadership shows that studies have not evolved to relational and collective perspectives of leadership.

From a theoretical and practical perspective, the 'I', 'they', and 'we' lenses should not be considered mutually exclusive but rather complementary. The increasing research on collective leadership has investigated the case of contrast or co-dependency between shared and hierarchical leadership (Denis et al., 2012; Yammarino et al., 2012). Actually, collective leadership may not exist independent of hierarchical leadership (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018), considering the introduction of collective practices may require management and support on the hierarchical side, raising the need for investigating the conditions that give rise to shared leadership (Crevani et al., 2007). This article's main contribution resides in its emphasis on the necessity of approaching and studying leadership through multiple lenses, moving away from traditional approaches that focus on individual leaders.

The locus of leadership is where, as researchers, we look for leadership. In order to overcome the challenge of defining, measuring, and documenting collective leadership, scholars have tried to map collective approaches to leadership by considering two main dimensions (Ospina et al., 2020): the 'locus of leadership', which captures how scholars conceptualise 'where' to look for manifestations of leadership (e.g., leadership residing in the group or in the system), and the 'view of collectivity', which shows 'how' scholars conceptualise the collective (e.g., collective leadership as empirical type leadership or as a theoretical lens through which to study leadership). This is an insightful connection between theory and method for Brazilian researchers and practitioners who want to advance the understanding of collective leadership.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Renato Souza and Thomaz Wood worked on the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach. The theoretical review was conducted by Renato Souza. Data collection was coordinated by Renato Souza. Data analysis included Renato Souza and Thomaz Wood. Renato Souza and Thomaz Wood worked together in the writing and final revision of the manuscript