

# An analysis of the antecedents of trust in the leader of a special operations police unit

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This article aims to widen the understanding of informal coordination elements in the management of teams working in complex and unpredictable scenarios. It presents the results of a study carried out in a special operations police unit, the *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais do Rio de Janeiro (Bope/RJ)*, using quantitative methods. The study analyzed the relationship between the antecedents of trust and power distance and personal and professional trust in the leader. The results confirm a direct and negative relationship between power distance and professional trust in the leader, and a direct and positive relationship with some antecedents of trust. The greater the perceptions of internal communication quality, and sharing and delegation of authority in the decision process, the greater the trust in the leader.

**Keywords:** antecedents of trust; trust; leadership; special police units; team management.

## Uma análise dos antecedentes da confiança no líder numa unidade policial de operações especiais

Este artigo se propõe a aprofundar a compreensão dos elementos de coordenação informal na gestão de equipes que atuam em cenários complexos e imprevisíveis. Apresentamos os resultados de um estudo realizado numa unidade de operações especiais de polícia, o *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais do Rio de Janeiro (Bope/RJ)*, utilizando métodos quantitativos. Analisamos a relação entre os antecedentes da confiança e a dimensão distância de poder e a confiança pessoal e profissional no líder. Os resultados confirmam uma relação direta e negativa entre distância de poder e confiança profissional no líder, e uma relação direta e positiva com alguns antecedentes da confiança. Quanto maior a percepção da qualidade da comunicação interna e o compartilhamento e delegação de autoridade nos processos decisórios, maior é a confiança pessoal no líder.

**Palavras-chave:** antecedentes da confiança; confiança; liderança; unidades policiais especiais; gestão de equipes.

## Un análisis de los antecedentes de confianza en el líder en una unidad policial de operaciones especiales

Este artículo se propone profundizar en la comprensión de los elementos de coordinación informal en la gestión de equipos que actúan en escenarios complejos e imprevisibles. Presentamos los resultados de un estudio realizado en una unidad de operaciones especiales de policía, el *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais do Rio de Janeiro (Bope/RJ)*, utilizando métodos quantitativos. Analizamos la relación entre los antecedentes de la confianza y la dimensión distancia de poder y la confianza personal y profesional en el líder. Los resultados confirman una relación directa y negativa entre distancia de poder y confianza profesional en el líder, y una relación directa y positiva con algunos antecedentes de la confianza. Cuanto mayor es la percepción de la calidad de la comunicación interna y el compartir y delegación de autoridad en los procesos decisorios, mayor es la confianza personal en el líder.

**Palabras clave:** antecedentes de confianza; confianza; liderazgo; unidades policiales especiales; gestión de equipos.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to deepen the understanding of the elements of informal coordination in organizations that operate in highly complex and uncertain situations. Leadership and trust are two relevant elements to explain the difference in performance between organizations that are often similar (Braun et al., 2013; Pinheiro Neto, 2013; Zanini et al., 2003; Haas, 2005; Legood, Thomas and Sacramento, 2016; Hasel and Grover, 2017). Especially in contexts of high complexity and unpredictability, engagement and trust are essential to ensure cooperation in the search for internal adjustments necessary to construct rapid responses to the challenges of the environment (Hannah et al., 2009).

This article presents an analysis of the antecedents of trust in the leader in the operational teams in Bope/RJ (Special operations police unit of the Rio de Janeiro Military Police, PMERJ). In the literature, these organizations are recognized as Critical Action Organizations (CAOs) (Hannah et al., 2009). According to Hannah and collaborators (2009), CAOs are characterized by engagement in extreme events such as combats, with high potential for major critical consequences involving the risk of life of both members and nonmembers.

To better understand these elements of informal coordination, leadership and trust, we study the case of Bope/RJ, where high uncertainty, unpredictability, complexity and volatility of the environment can be studied in extreme situations. Unlike productive organizations, where there is control and relative predictability about the variables that interfere in the operational routines, combating crime presupposes the capacity to face random or planned actions with the intention to reduce the effectiveness of the police activities. That is, the work routine occurs in an environment where the intentional reaction to the efforts of the police teams is the fundamental characteristic of the activity and where the error or a failure can result in loss of lives of police or civilians.

In line with the study of the CAOs, some preliminary works addressing the organization (Zanini, Colmerauer and Lima, 2015; Zanini, Migueles and Colmerauer, 2014; Zanini et al., 2013; Pinheiro Neto, 2013; Storani, 2006) show how having trust in the leader is a key factor for accepting risk, even in contexts of extreme personal and institutional danger, inherent in the organization's activity. In these previous studies, confidence records were investigated according to internationally tested scales. The deepening of this analysis made us realize, however, that characteristic aspects of the institutional environment where the organization operates may pose specific challenges for the definition of the key factors of antecedents of trust.

In addressing the specific institutional context and its impact on the relationship between antecedents of trust and trust in the leader, this study contributes to the formulation of theories and definitions of leadership. Some scholars have brought attention to this need such as Oc (2017), Nevicka and collaborators (2013), Hannah and collaborators (2009), Avolio (2007), Porter and McLaughlin (2006), Waldman and collaborators (2006).

Thus, when we examine the qualitative studies of Zanini, Migueles and Colmerauer (2014) and Pinheiro Neto (2013), which point to the reduction of *power distance* (defined by Hofstede (2001), as an indicator of the degree of acceptance of inequality and distance between top and bottom), and the exercise of shared leadership, as critical factors for the acceptance of leadership and risk, the hypothesis was that the cultural dimension of power distance (comparatively high in Brazil), negatively correlates with trust in the leader and therefore with the effectiveness and productivity

of the organization's efforts. In previous empirical studies adopting the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) (Rockstuhl et al., 2012; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Anand, Vidyarthi and Park, 2015; Yu, Matta and Cornfield, 2017), it was demonstrated that the dimension power-distance, as defined by Hofstede (2001), moderates the relations of trust between leader and follower. In addition, using the antecedent of trust scales developed by Whitener and collaborators (1998), this research sought to better understand the antecedents of trust by means of a quantitative analysis, separately relating each scale to professional and personal trust in the leader.

## 2. CASE STUDY BOPE/RJ

Created in 1978, this military police intervention unit of the State of Rio de Janeiro has approximately 400 police officers specializing in actions to combat crime in areas of high risk, and in rescuing hostages. The aim is to understand the specificity of the links between Bope/RJ police officers, who work hard to combat drug trafficking in the Rio de Janeiro favelas with strong urban guerrilla characteristics, for which they have developed specific skills. The organizational form and leadership style of Bope/RJ, as well as its essential competencies (Prahalad, 1993) have already been studied in other works. Pinheiro Neto (2013) observes that the ability to plan in a participatory way, with a low degree of power distance in the hierarchical relations, is the foundation for the set of organizational competencies that sustain its operational excellence, strengthening the relations of trust between leaders and followers and among peers. According to Pinheiro Neto (2013), the low power distance contributes positively to the increase of trust. Zanini and collaborators (2013) note the central role of trust and leadership relationships as critical factors in generating cooperation and acceptance of extreme risk in BOPE/RJ. The predisposition of the police officer to engage in critical situations is significantly related with their trust in the leader, confirming the relevance of leadership in military organizations (Weber, 1968; Clausewitz, 1996). The same study identified that professional trust in the leader is positively related to affective and normative commitment. Zanini, Colmerauer and Lima (2015), analyze the relationship between trust in the leader and the commitment of subordinates, and confirm that the leadership style based on consultation is positively related to personal and professional trust in the leader.

## 3. EFFECTS OF POWER DISTANCE

The quantitative studies on comparative culture performed by Hofstede (2001) selected six comparative dimensions in national cultures. Among them, power distance (power distance index — PDI) was identified as a critical dimension for effectiveness and operational efficiency, especially impacting the relationships between leaders and followers within organizations (Migueles, Lafraia and Costa, 2007; Rockstuhl et al., 1990; Dirk et al., 2012; Zanini et al., 2013; Pinheiro Neto, 2013; Anand, Vidyarthi and Park, 2015; Mulki, Caemmerer and Heggde, 2015; Tian and Peterson, 2016). For this research, the selection of this specific cultural dimension was performed after the analysis of other studies in which this dimension was considered critical for the organization's capacity to develop internal trust relationships (Zanini et al., 2013; Zanini, Migueles and Colmerauer, 2014).

In the comparative research conducted by Hofstede (2001), Brazil was considered a country with a high power distance. This dimension reflects, comparatively, how the less powerful individuals in each society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1997, 2001). The greater the power distance index of a country, the more comfortable individuals of that country are with an unequal distribution of power. According to Hofstede (1997:42), power distance is “the measure of the degree of acceptance, by those who have less power in the institutions and organizations of a country, of an unequal distribution of power”. In the work environment of countries with low power distance, the hierarchy is seen only as a temporary arrangement established for convenience. Employees expect a style based on consultancy from their managers, the difference between base and top salaries is relatively small, and employees expect to be consulted on the decisions that affect their work. In countries with high power distance, the hierarchy difference is seen as an existential fact, and the employees expect an authoritarian and paternalistic manager (Hofstede, 2001).

Analyzing the specific context of Bope/RJ, Storani (2006) and Pinheiro Neto (2013), observe that the rigorous selection process functions as a rite of passage for the police officer. Acceptance is part of the integration process in the team and coexisting with rigid disciplinary rules regulates behavior. Constant exposure to high risk to life during operations, establishes a closer relationship between police officers of different military patents. This creates a unique structure that promotes the reduction of perception of power distance and a greater sense of equality to those who belong to the group. Pinheiro Neto (2013:47) observes that the exercise of shared leadership, participatory planning, and rigorous training add to the fundamental process for accepting and reducing risk in operations, ensuring predictability in relation to the behavior of members and reliability in relation to tactical and operational plans.

The speed of operation, on the one hand, and the impossibility of fully understanding the scenario where it occurs, on the other, demand an ad hoc decision-making process. The possibility of the team leader being injured in combat is an integral part of the operation's risk planning (Pinheiro Neto, 2013:48). Therefore, shared leadership becomes fundamental to the continuity of operations and to the need to rescue injured police officers. Thus, Pinheiro Neto (2013) notes that the preparation to take the lead is part of the training of the unit's members. In this context, the reduction of power distance appears as a key factor for effectiveness in fast, complex scenarios and with numerous unforeseen possibilities. In these previous studies, however, the reduction of power distance in the analysis of causal relationships between the antecedents of trust and its influence on subordinate trust in the leader was not considered. Thus, this work deepens the study of this relationship, through quantitative analysis, separately relating each of the antecedents of trust with trust in the leader. The database used by Zanini and collaborators (2013) was also used in this study. The questions that assess the power distance are within the database, originally used by Hofstede (2001).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The original database built to measure the level of internal trust within the organization brings with it questions that could be analyzed, from this perspective, to assess the strength of this hypothesis. Other studies would be necessary to definitively affirm that the reduction of the power distance index (PDI) is fundamental for gains of leadership effectiveness in the Brazilian context, but its confirmation, even if partial, in a military organization (traditionally more hierarchical), allows to suppose that more consistent efforts in the validation of this finding are relevant.

#### 4. TRUST RELATIONS LEADER-FOLLOWERS

Contract and agency theory (Wolff, 1996; Williamson, 1996) shows that formal contracts represent an imperfect reduction in the nature of relationships that occur in organizations. Alternative mechanisms are necessary to ensure that all unforeseeable and contingent events, when making the initial agreements, are adequately addressed by the cooperation between the parties. Trust is recognized in the literature on contract theory as a central element for a better evaluation of relational contracts (Wolff, 1996; Ripperger, 1998). For the purpose of this article, we take Ripperger's (1998:36) definition of trust as: "voluntary and early acceptance of a risk investment, by abdication of explicit contractual mechanisms of security and control, in the expectation that another party will not act opportunistically". In the definition of trust, other theoretical perspectives also assume the centrality of vulnerability and risk (Rousseau et al., 1998, Gillespie, 2003, Tzafrir and Dolan, 2004). For example, Rousseau and collaborators (1998:395), define trust as "a psychological state consisting of the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations about the intentions or behaviors of another person". Tzafrir and Dolan (2004) note the existence of components common to the different definitions of trust associated with vulnerability and risk, such as reciprocity.

In these perspectives, trust is a belief, expectation or perception of the leader, not a leader's characteristic or a characteristic of the relationship. Gillespie (2003) states that trust in work relationships is predominantly manifested through two distinct behaviors: counting on the others and to disclose personal or confidential information to others. The author distinguishes between two dimensions, personal and professional. Professional trust contrasts with the more personal, confidentiality-oriented nature, hence the distinction between personal and professional forms of trust. For Gillespie (2003), confiding or sharing something personal means that there is an emotional and relational basis of trust, revealing vulnerability, often accompanied by attachment, expressions of care and concern. In this sense, according to Mcallister (1995) the personal dimension is similar to the notion of affective trust, and is consistent with the view that there are trust components that are different as far as they have an emotional basis. Gillespie (2003) says that, contrary to *personal* trust, *professional* trust is based on the perception of professional skills and competencies that lead to reliability, that is, having the leader to help to solve important issues, to support in difficult situations, or trusting the leader's evaluation about the work.

The trust relations between leaders and followers has been approached in some lines of research, notably, in the Leader-member Exchange (LMX) theory (Pillai, Schriesheim and Williams 1999; Schriesheim, Castro and Cogliser, 1999; Braun et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2013). In this perspective, trust in leadership emerges and is operationally described as a process of social exchange (Whitener et al., 1998), assuming centrality, since the LMX theory has been properly defined as a process of trust building (Bauer and Green, 1996; Liden, Wayne and Stilwell, 1993; Scandura and Pellegrini, 2008). Empirical studies developed under this theoretical perspective point to trust in the leader as one of the main factors related to organizational performance (Martin et al., 2016; Banks et al., 2014) and reveal some critical factors as antecedents of trust in the leader. For example, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) conducted a meta-analysis to understand the critical factors in the relationship of trust in the leader, and among the antecedent variables of trust, those that presented the greatest relation, are the transformational leadership style (involving affective elements in the relation), the

perception of justice (interactional, procedural and distributive), and the perception of organizational support. Gillespie and Mann (2004) confirm that trust in the leader is directly and positively related to a leadership style of consultation, sharing of decisions, quality of internal communication, and sharing of common values. Holland, Cooper, and Sheehan (2017) confirm that trust in leadership is positively related to the leader's support and direct relationship with the subordinate. Boies, Fiset and Gill (2015) and Ruppel and Harrington (2002) confirm that the quality of communication is a critical factor for trust in the leader. Clark and Payne (2006) identify a strong relationship between perceptions of ability, integrity, fairness and openness to the other, on the part of the follower, as determining factors for the construction of relationships of trust in the leader. Caza (2015) confirms that trust in the leader increases as the subordinate realizes the leader's emotional honesty. Although these studies confirm some variables as antecedents of trust in the leader, we observe that these vary and need to be understood in their specific context.

For a better understanding of trust building in the leader in specific contexts (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002), we explored the causal relationship using the analysis of trust antecedents. In this sense, Whitener and collaborators (1998) present a theoretical model for the analysis of the antecedents of trust in organizations, based on five dimensions selected from academic works with a strong relationship to trust, namely: *perception of consistency, integrity, authority sharing and delegation when it comes to decision-making processes, demonstration of concern for subordinates, and internal communication.*

In this article, we use these same scales to analyze the hypotheses that are suggested in order to better understand the critical elements of the informal coordination model in the special operation police units. Thus, based on the analysis of the previous studies about trust in the leader and after identifying the antecedents, we formulated the following hypotheses, separately identifying the dimensions of professional and personal trust in the leader:

H1a: Power distance has a direct and inverse relationship with professional trust in the leader.

H1b: Power distance has a direct and inverse relationship with personal trust in the leader.

H2a: Perception of internal communication is associated with higher levels of professional trust in the leader.

H2b: Perception of internal communication is associated with higher levels of personal trust in the leader.

H3a: Perception of management consistency is associated with higher levels of professional trust in the leader.

H3b: Perception of management consistency is associated with higher levels of personal trust in the leader.

H4a: Perception of management integrity is associated with higher levels of professional trust in the leader.

H4b: Perception of management integrity is associated with higher levels of personal trust in the leader.

H5a: Perception of authority sharing and delegation is associated with higher levels of professional trust in the leader.

H5b: Perception of authority sharing and delegation is associated with higher levels of personal trust in the leader.

H6a: Perception of demonstration of concern for subordinates is associated with higher levels of professional trust in the leader.

H6b: Perception demonstration of concern for subordinates is associated with higher levels of personal trust in the leader.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The study tested the hypotheses by using a structured questionnaire divided into four parts. The questionnaire included questions about motivation, leadership and power distance (Hofstede, 2001); an inventory of interpersonal trust questions (Gillespie, 2003); antecedents of trust (Whitener et al., 1998); and demographic variables. The respondents were operational police officers of the special operations police unit of the Military Police of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Bope/RJ).

### 5.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The distribution of the questionnaires occurred in 2012, directly and manually, within the premises of Bope/RJ, which at that time had about 400 operational police officers, corresponding to our total population. Sample of the study counted on 115 Bope/RJ police officers, representing 28.75% of the population. The sample is characterized by police officers aged between 30 and 39 (about 64%), married (about 70%) and with high school education (66%). The average time in the unit is approximately eight years, and 74% of respondents have served there for more than five years. The majority of them are corporals (68.6%) and soldiers (17.6%).

### 5.2 RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire, divided into four parts. The first part had questions that explored the motivations of police officers to participate in risk operations, the motivational factors, and the leadership style they have and what they want. These questions were developed exclusively for this research and are linked to the specific context of Bope, for example: *What motivates you most to work in this unit? What is the main characteristic that a Bope member should have?* In addition, this first part of the questionnaire explored the construct power distance (PD) using the questions proposed by Hofstede (2001). The questions related to the degree of acceptance of subordinates disagreeing with their direct superior and the leadership style of the superior (consultative, autocratic/paternalistic or not consultative but based on the majority opinion).

The second part presented questions about trust in the superior, the colleagues and the team, a scale originally called Behavioral Trust Inventory (BTI) by Gillespie (2003). The scale has good reliability, both factors with Cronbach Alphas greater than 0.89 (Factor 1 — *Dependence*  $\alpha = 0.90$  to 0.92 | Factor 2 — *Disclosure*  $\alpha = 0.89$  to 0.95), being pointed out in several works as an alternative and reliable trust measure (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011; Schoorman, et al., 2007; Lewicki, et al., 2006; Gillespie and Mann, 2004). This questionnaire had already been validated for the Brazilian context by Zanini (2007), Cotta (2010) and Frederico (2012). The scale is composed of 10 items, evaluated on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 7 (1: not at all willing; 7: extremely willing). In this

questionnaire, each group of five questions aims to measure different aspects of trust. Items 1 to 5 measure professional trust, while items 6 to 10 measure personal trust.

The third part of the questionnaire contained the scales by Whitener and collaborators (1998) regarding the antecedents of trust, formed by five factors: *internal communication* ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ); *management integrity* ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ), *management consistency* ( $\alpha = 0.74$ ); *authority sharing and delegation* ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ); and *demonstration of concern for subordinates* ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). Each of these indicators is formed by 3 items, measured on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). In Whitener et al. (1998), *consistency* refers to the perception of the behavior of the person to whom the trust is deposited (for example, in the superiors) through an expectation of reciprocity and dignity of being trustworthy. *Integrity* refers to the perception of the level with which the management of the organization, through their representatives, tells the truth and fulfills their promises. *Authority sharing and delegation* measures the perception of the degree of involvement of members in the decision-making process of the organization and how it seeks to share such decisions with its members. This adds value to the members' involvement as being part of the decision-making process in the organization, indicating the level at which the organization values the contribution of its members. The *demonstration of concern* refers to the members' perception of the willingness of the organization's management to care about their well-being when making important or day-to-day decisions to the detriment of other interests. The *perception of internal communication* is related to the degree of accessibility, reliability and transparency of the information that is shared with the members of the organization.

The fourth part of the questionnaire collects personal demographic variables, such as education, age group, number of subordinates and time in current work place. A final section was made available for respondents to express their opinion and additional comments.

### 5.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The study used the Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) and Maximum Likelihood algorithm, with Promax oblique rotation. The analysis was carried out in two stages. The first analyzed the latent variables to be used in the proposed hypotheses test, with the objective of measuring and evaluating the quality of the measurement performed, analyzing the convergent and discriminant validity, and the reliability of the construct measurement instrument (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2014). The second stage evaluated the hypotheses of the study, when estimating the betas that correspond to the relationships between independent and dependent variables.

## 6. RESULTS

### 6.1 ANÁLISE DAS VARIÁVEIS LATENTES

The consistency check was performed by analyzing the latent variables using the SEM with standardized coefficients. The variables analyzed were: personal trust in the leader, professional trust in the leader, perception of internal communication, perception of management consistency,

perception of management integrity, perception of authority sharing and delegation, and perception of demonstration of concern for subordinates.

As shown in table 1, the model test showed a good convergent validity. All questions presented good factor loading (loads over 0.5), except for one item (Consistency 1). For the convergent validity test, we also used average variance extracted (AVE). In the constructs used, the AVE is higher than the limit of 0.5 indicated by the literature (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Thus, it is possible to observe good convergent validity of the constructs. To measure reliability, we used the criterion defined by Hair and collaborators (2009), that the composite reliability (CR) should be higher than 0.7, which was also achieved, with 0.82 being the lowest CR among the analyzed variables. Thus, the results provide subsidies for the relationships tested in the structural model to be considered valid, since the measurement instrument has discriminant validity, convergent validity and reliability. Table 1 summarizes the results.

**TABLE 1** FACTOR LOADING, AVE AND CR

Constructs and items	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
C1: Professional trust in the leader							
Professional 1	0.75						
Professional 2	0.78						
Professional 3	0.82						
Professional 4	0.85						
Professional 5	0.78						
C2: Personal trust in the leader							
Personal 1		0.89					
Personal 2		0.62					
Personal 3		0.77					
Personal 4		0.67					
Personal 5		0.80					
<b>C3: Perception of management consistency</b>							
Consistency 1			0.28				
Consistency 2			0.52				
Consistency 3			0.88				

*Continue*

<b>C4: Perception of management integrity</b>							
Integrity 1				0.82			
Integrity 2				0.88			
Integrity 3				0.79			
<b>C4: Authority delegation</b>							
Delegation 1					0.81		
Delegation 2					0.84		
Delegation 3					0.63		
<b>C5: Demonstration of concern</b>							
Concern 1						0.77	
Concern 2						0.82	
Concern 3						0.84	
<b>C6: Internal communication</b>							
Communication 1							0.84
Communication 2							0.84
Communication 3							0.78
<b>AVE</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>CR</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.86</b>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

## 6.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

After analyzing the validity and trust of the constructs, we analyzed the hypotheses, based on the SEM. The maximum likelihood method was used, with standardized coefficients. Two models were estimated for each of the dependent variables analyzed (*professional trust in the leader* and *personal trust in the leader*), in order to test the hypotheses previously mentioned.

When analyzing the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent professional trust variable in the leader, it was observed that, as proposed in hypothesis H1a, there is a direct and inverse relationship with professional confidence in the leader ( $\beta = -0.30$ ,  $SE = 0.89$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The greater the distance of power, the less professional trust in the immediate leader. However, in relation to this construct, no other hypothesis is confirmed. Considering the results, the hypotheses H2a, H3a, H4a, H5a and H6a were rejected, since they did not present statistical significance. In practical terms, the perception of internal communication, perception of management consistency and integrity, authority sharing and delegation and demonstration of concern for subordinates are not related to *professional trust in the leader* in the context of Bope/RJ.

We then set out to test the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable *personal trust in the leader*. The results show a significant relationship between the *perception of authority sharing and delegation* and *personal trust in the leader* ( $\beta = 0.31, SE = 0.14, p < 0.05$ ). The greater the *perception of authority sharing and delegation* in the BOPE/RJ decision process, the greater the *personal trust in the leader*. In addition, the relationship between *perceived quality of internal communication* and *personal trust in the leader* ( $\beta = 0.28, SE = 0.15, p < 0.10$ ) is equally significant. That is, the greater the *perception of the quality of internal communication* (measured by the accessibility, reliability and transparency of the information, which is shared with the members), the greater the *personal trust in the leader*. Thus supporting hypotheses H2b and H5b. Hypotheses H1b, H3b, H4b and H6b were then rejected. The results of the hypotheses tests are summarized in table 2.

**TABLE 2 RESULTS OF THE HYPOTHESES TESTS**

	$\beta$	S.E.	p-Value	Hyphotesis
H1a	-0.30	-0.30	0.01	<u>Supported</u>
H1b	-0.13	0.09	0.15	Rejected
H2a	0.20	0.15	0.20	Rejected
H2b	0.28	0.15	0.06	<u>Supported</u>
H3a	0.00	0.13	1.00	Rejected
H3b	-0.01	0.14	0.93	Rejected
H4a	0.07	0.16	0.65	Rejected
H4b	-0.22	0.15	0.14	Rejected
H5a	0.00	0.16	0.98	Rejected
H5b	0.31	0.14	0.02	<u>Supported</u>
H6a	0.25	0.18	0.16	Rejected
H6b	0.05	0.19	0.80	Rejected

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

## 7. DISCUSSION

Based on previous studies by Zanini, Migueles and Colmerauer (2014) and Pinheiro Neto (2013) that identified the cultural distance dimension of power as a critical factor for the promotion of trust in the leader in Bope/RJ, this study applied methods that confirm the findings of these previous studies. The higher the power distance, the lower the professional trust in the immediate leader ( $b =$

-0.30,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, hypothesis H1a was supported. However, no relation was found between the variable power distance and personal trust in the leader. Therefore, hypothesis H1b was rejected. Hypothesis H1a, corroborates with the results of other empirical studies from the perspective of the LMX theory (Rockstuhl et al., 2012; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Anand, Vidyarthi and Park, 2015; Yu, Matta and Cornfield, 2017). These studies confirmed that the cultural dimension of power distance, as defined by Hofstede (2001), is a moderator of trust relations between leaders and led.

Regarding the hypotheses using the scales by Whitener and collaborators (1998), previous studies (Krosgaard, Brodt and Whitener, 2002; Zanini, Wolff and Lusk, 2009; Zanini et al., 2013) confirm a positive relation between antecedents of trust and trust in the leader. In these studies, however, the scales that compose the antecedents of trust were analyzed together and not separately as in this study.

In this analysis, the hypotheses H2a, H3a, H4a, H5a and H6a were rejected. There was no statistical significance in the analysis of the variables: *perception of internal communication, of management consistency and integrity, authority sharing and delegation and demonstration of concern for subordinates, with professional confidence in the leader*. Likewise, we did not find any relationship between the variables: *perception of management consistency and integrity and demonstration of concern for subordinates, with personal confidence in the leader*. That is, hypotheses H3b, H4b and H6b were also rejected.

Hypotheses H2b and H5b were confirmed. That is, the greater the perception of the quality of internal communication (measured by the accessibility, reliability and transparency of information shared with subordinates), the greater the personal trust in the leader. In addition, the greater the perception of authority sharing and delegation in the Bope/RJ decision-making process, the greater the personal trust in the leader. These results corroborate previous studies that indicate a positive relationship between the quality of internal communication and trust in the leader (Robert and You, 2017; Zanini, Colmerauer and Lima, 2015; Drescher, 2014; Men and Stacks, 2014; Thomas, Zolin and Hartman, 2009; Gillespie and Mann, 2004; Krosgaard, Brodt and Whitener, 2002). Especially with the studies of Gillespie and Mann (2004), which confirm that trust in the leader is directly and positively related to a consultative leadership style (with the sharing of decisions), the quality of internal communication and the sharing of common values. Thomas, Zolin and Hartman (2009) also confirm a strong relationship between sharing and transparency of communication with trust in the leader. Men and Stacks (2014) confirm that transparency in communication and the involvement of subordinates are directly related to trust in the leader, to the commitment and satisfaction of the subordinate. Corroborating with the confirmation of hypothesis H5b, Robert and You (2017) confirm a positive relationship between leadership sharing and trust in the leader, and Drescher and collaborators (2014) confirm a positive relationship between leadership sharing and trust in the leader and in the team.

In addition, our results are in line with other more recent studies, indicating a positive relationship with performance. For example, Boies, Fiset and Gil (2015) note a positive relationship between the quality of internal communication and trust in the leader, with moderating effect on team performance and creativity. Drescher and collaborators (2014) note a positive relationship between leadership sharing and delegation and trust in the leader, which in turn are positively related to team performance. Drescher and Garbers (2016) confirm that leadership sharing and the quality of communication

have a positive effect on performance and satisfaction. Hoch (2014) confirms a positive relationship between sharing of leadership and performance, mediated by information sharing.

When analyzing the set of results of our hypotheses test, this study reveals a distinction between the antecedents of trust and the personal and professional forms of trust in the leader. The reduction of power distance is associated with professional trust. This result confirms the observations of Pinheiro Neto (2013), addressing the same organization, when he emphasizes the relevance of the professional aspects of the leader-led relationship to the reduction of power distance, such as the exercise of shared leadership, participatory planning and training credibility. According to the author, these aspects add to the fundamental process of risk acceptance in operations, ensuring greater predictability in relation to the behavior of members and the reliability of tactical and operational plans made jointly between leaders and subordinates. He also shows that this integrative dynamic of work establishes a closer relationship between police officers of different military patents, creating a unique structure that promotes the reduction of power distance and a greater sense of equality to those who belong to the group. Zanini, Migueles, and Colmerauer (2014:73) observe that, through the very dynamics of operations, shared leadership is a permanent exercise in operational routines. Team leaders assume a mediating role between the organizational goals, translated by the “common mission” and the autonomous action of the team members. That is, according to these field observations, now confirmed here, it is not the individual attitudes, abilities and qualities of the leaders that define the reduction of power distance, but they weigh the processes and routines of management that grant autonomy to the performer. This result corroborates the study of Haas (2015), investigating a context of the same nature (Metropolitan Police of Buenos Aires), confirming that trust in superiors is positively related to the professional aspects of the relationship with subordinates that establish equality between individuals, for example, in the application and acceptance of rules of conduct.

At the same time, the results confirm that the trust records of the Whitener and collaborators (1998) scales are related to personal trust in the leader. That is, when an affective and emotional basis prevails, situations of vulnerability of the individual are revealed (Gillespie, 2003). When these scales are analyzed separately, the scales of consistency, integrity and demonstration of concern are seen to reinforce a relationship of dependence of the subordinate by personal traits of his hierarchical superior (Whitener et al., 1998), that is, the impact of the superior and characteristics of the subordinate. Specifically, the scale of concern with the subordinate suggests a paternalistic/personalistic relationship, of indefinite or irrelevant impact on the autonomy of the performer. On the other hand, the scales quality of communication and sharing and delegation of authority, refer to organizational attributes and management practices (Whitener et al., 1998).

The results confirm that the antecedents of trust that induce personal trust in the leader are not based on these scales that refer to the individual attributes of the leader (consistency, integrity and demonstration of concern), but in those that refer to the organizational attributes (quality of communication and sharing and delegation of authority). Therefore, we observe that the impact of the personal attributes of the leader has a smaller weight for the autonomy of the subordinate, when the organizational attributes are present. These organizational attributes reduce the impact of the leader’s personal characteristics, both in defining the workflow and in creating the performer’s “autonomy space”. In this sense, they are preconditions for increasing the autonomy of the subordinate and for

his self-determination at work, especially in making ad hoc decisions in performing critical tasks. We consider the confirmation of these relations consistent with the reduction of power distance by the professional trust in the leader, because they are organizational attributes that guarantee the “autonomy space” to the subordinate for the increase of reliability and predictability.

## 8. LIMITS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study indicates opportunities for future research, such as, to better understand how the connection between the antecedents of trust and the professional and personal trust in the leader may be related to the performance of the operational teams. Another possibility of investigation is to observe the dynamics of the temporal relation of the elements that determine the relations of trust between leaders and followers (Jones and Shah, 2016). Other limitations of this study were that we did not analyze the effectiveness of the relationship between the elements of both formal and informal coordination and the elements of formal coordination, nor did we analyze, in depth, the organizational culture (its mysticism, rites, rituals and symbols) that could help to improve analysis of the results. Finally, we did not compare the studied police unit with other units of the same institutional nature.

## 9. CONCLUSION

This article seeks to deepen the understanding of the elements of informal coordination in organizations operating in scenarios of high complexity and uncertainty, recognized in the literature as Critical Action Organizations (CAO), based on the analysis of the antecedents of trust in the leader. In this sense, the study provides a relevant contribution to a better understanding of the antecedent elements that build trust in the leader, identifying and isolating the variables of greater relevance of the informal coordination model in these organizations. The results confirm that the cultural dimension of *power distance* is directly related to professional trust in the leader, and that the *perception of the quality of internal communication* and the perception of *authority sharing and delegation* are directly related to personal trust in the leader. Therefore, this study contributes to the analysis of the context and specific challenges of the organization, and in the definition of the key factors of the antecedents of trust. In this sense, the study also contributes to the leader-member exchange theory (LMX), as well as to the perspective of a theory of leadership in context, seeking to identify the specific critical factors according to the organizational typology.

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