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## Managing in Brazil a guide for American managers

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MANAGING IN BRAZIL:  
A GUIDE FOR AMERICAN MANAGERS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Business  
in the College of Business  
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## ABSTRACT

As the Brazilian economy is growing, more and more companies are looking to open businesses in Brazil. This may require some managers to hire Brazilian employees. By using the Hofstede and GLOBE studies, as well as other cultural traits, I have gathered a significant amount of knowledge on the Brazilian culture. I compared these traits to the American culture to find what American managers should focus on changing to best manage Brazilian employees. This guide determined techniques that American managers should follow when traveling to Brazil. In addition I have added other traits that American managers should look into before choosing to work with Brazilian companies. After reading this Thesis, managers should be able to manage Brazilian employees more effectively.

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## **Introduction**

As a leading emerging economy, Brazil has become a very prosperous place for multinational corporations to conduct business. Brazil's economy has increased dramatically over the last decade. According to the U.S. Department of State, Brazil experienced growth of 7.5% in 2010, which shows an astounding recovery from the global financial crisis. Thus, Brazil has been categorized with the four emerging economies collectively known as BRIC: Brazil, India, Russia, and China. Brazil's rapid development and future capabilities makes it a very promising country to extend business.

Brazil has used many different measures to become a more open economy since 1990. Trade liberalization, the easing of foreign direct investment controls, the creation of The Southern Common Market, also known as MERCOSUR, and the Real Plan are all ways in which Brazil has embraced democracy to become a country where international business is present in many different areas (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 2004). American managers should keep in mind that the United States is Brazil's most important trading partner (Turner & Kleiner, 2001).

Managing people from a different culture may pose certain difficulties that do not exist in the home country. Differences in culture and growth are reflected in everything that is done in a business. As, Boddewyn states, management occurs in every aspect of every society beginning with a family household to a business environment (2004). The most prominent reason multinational businesses fail abroad is because they are

unaware of the culture (Miroshnik, 2002). Therefore, it is makes it very important to be aware of the distinct way of working in a new country. Learning the new language is a start to the process, but it is not the only thing that a manager must learn about the foreign country. Once it has been determined that an American manager will begin anew in Brazil, learning the cultural processes will become necessary to continuously produce positive results. The purpose of this paper is to outline the steps needed to prepare an American manager for work in Brazil.



## **Literature Review**

A nation's culture, or its people's way of life, guides the actions, values and practices of the people living in it (Foster, 1962). As Schein stated, "culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the appropriate ways to perceive, think, and feel with relation to those problems" (1997). Recognizing the similarities and differences within cultures is extremely important when conducting business in a foreign country.

It is important to define the term management in this paper means. As was previously stated, management is a socially constructed activity that entails every aspect of work and social life (Boddewyn, 2004). Management processes include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling a firm to produce a product for a group of customers. International management must broaden this definition to include acquiring different cultures and groups of people (Boddewyn, 2004). A good international manager provides a model for global corporations and contributes to a worldwide development in every manner (Boddewyn, 2004).

### Cultural Dimensions

#### Hofstede

I will be using Hofstede's approach to cultural dimensions as one of the sets of traits for understanding culture. Hofstede surveyed members of an international company who live in over fifty countries and determined that countries have a tendency to have the same values (Shi & Wang, 2011). Values depend on a person's mental

programming and national character, not on what they believe occurred (Hofstede, 1983). Hofstede separated his findings into four dimensions: Individualism v. Collectivism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity v. Femininity (1983). Later, an additional dimension, long-term vs. short-term orientation was added. (Beekun & Stedham & Yamamura, 2003) Each country is placed on a scale between 1 and 100, with 1 being the lowest score and 100 being the highest, for each cultural dimension (Shi et al, 2011).

The individualistic society differs from the collectivistic society. The members of an individualistic society are loosely integrated, whereas the members of a collectivistic society are tightly integrated (Hofstede, 1983). Because of the freedom in an individualistic society, its members generally look after themselves and their immediate family (Hofstede, 1983). This means that individualistic cultures tend to look after their own benefits (Tu, Lin, & Chang, 2011). In a collectivistic society members look after each other and highly value family and relationships (Hofstede, 1983).

The most basic definition of power distance is the response to how society deals with inequality amongst the people. Power distance measures how much people willingly conform to autocracy in a society. In a society with high power distance it is normal for the boss to assert authority amongst his employees, because both parties agree upon this value. (Hofstede, 1983)

Uncertainty avoidance tells whether the people in a society deal well with the uncertainty in the future. In a society with weak uncertainty avoidance, people live day-

by-day and do not worry about the future and what is out of their hands. A society with strong uncertainty avoidance tries to avoid risk and is usually highly anxious.

Uncertainty avoidance also correlates with risk level, tolerance, work ethic, security and anxiety (Hofstede, 1983).

A nation's level of masculinity is determined by what the society recognizes as male or female social roles (Hofstede, 1983). This can be done by categorizing countries that try to maximize or minimize the "social sex roles divisions" (Hofstede, 1983). According to Hofstede, in a more feminine society, "the public sympathy goes to the underdog" and the individual brilliance is suspect (1983). Masculine societies make clear distinctions as to what men and women are each suppose to do (Hofstede, 1983).

Long-term orientation refers to the perception of time that a culture takes when choosing between decisions. This means that a culture with long-term orientation values traditions and values from their past much more than a culture with short-term orientation. (Beekun et al, 2003)

### Globe

Another useful research program is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE). This research project helps people to better understand the differences in leadership throughout the world. GLOBE uses ideas from various cultural theories to develop nine cultural dimensions in which the countries are measured upon. These nine dimensions are Performance Orientation, Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Humane Orientation, Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism, Gender Egalitarianism, Power Distance, and Uncertainty Avoidance.

GLOBE arranged sixty-two countries into ten clusters that have similar measures of the cultural dimensions. These clusters are Eastern Europe, Latin American, Latin Europe, Confucian Asia, Nordic Europe, Anglo, Sub-Sahara Africa, Southern Asia, Germanic Europe, and Middle East. (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully, & House, 2006)

Performance Orientation measures how much a country emphasizes the importance for its members to improve and exceed in whatever they do. Corporations in countries that score high on this dimension tend to promote training and development amongst their employees. Countries that score lower believe that family and background are more important than improvement. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Assertiveness relies on how much individuals in a country are forward, aggressive and confrontational in their relationships. Individuals in countries that measure high in this category enjoy competition and have optimistic attitudes. Members of countries that have low assertiveness take pleasure in relationships that emphasize harmony, loyalty and solidarity. (Javidan et al, 2006)

The cultural dimension of Future Orientation determines how much members of a country participate in behaviors such as planning and investing. Future oriented countries have thorough planning processes and generally try to look ahead. They are risk averse because they like to know what will happen. Countries on the opposite end of this scale are more opportunistic in their endeavors. (Javidan et al, 2006)

The cultural dimension of Humane Orientation looks at the amount that a country rewards its members for being humane or compassionate. It measures how much the

citizens react in manners that embody kindness, fairness, generosity, and unselfishness. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Institutional Collectivism is the degree in which a society encourages a collective distribution of resources amongst its members. Like Hofstede's measure of collectivism, societies who rank high in this assessment tend to emphasize a country's social performance, whereas societies who measure low in this, attribute importance to individual successes. (Javidan et al, 2006)

In-Group Collectivism differs from Institutional Collectivism because it focuses on how much the individuals in a society take pride in their families and organizations. Loyalty and cohesiveness in a familial or organizational structure is emphasized greatly in countries that measure high in In-Group Collectivism. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Gender egalitarianism is similar to Hofstede's cultural dimension of masculinity versus femininity. GLOBE measures the dimensions of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance in a manner that is comparable to Hofstede's measures of these as well. It looks at how much a society tries to minimize the inequality of the genders. Gender egalitarian societies encourage tolerance for diversity distributed throughout its members and their ideas. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Power Distance, according to the GLOBE studies, is how much people expect the power of individuals to be equally distributed. Countries who rank high in power distance are better economically distributed. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Uncertainty Avoidance is the “extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.” Societies who rank high in uncertainty avoidance tend to look for order and structure and formal procedure in their society. Also, they tend to prefer consistency. (Javidan et al, 2006)

#### Other Traits

Other cultural factors worth looking into include attitudes towards: material wealth, achievement, time, change, subjective vs. objective decision making, family, authority, trust, fatalism, monochronic vs. polychronic information processing, and high vs. low context cultures. The way a group of people reacts to these cultural traits can demonstrate many factors of their life including the way they do business. This will affect the techniques managers need to use with their employees to get the results that they want and may be accustomed to.

Material wealth shows how much a culture values having physical possessions. If a culture is high, they value being rich. If they do not value material wealth, there is something more important than money for that culture. This affects the rewards that employers should give their employees to foster good behavior, because the culture may value bonuses through more money or more vacation time. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Achievement measures the importance for people to move up in a social setting for a culture. This reflects what a culture thinks of climbing the career ladder. A culture with high achievement strives to move up in the business they work. A low achievement culture, such as the Hindu culture may be stuck in a caste system. The people in this

society do not believe they can move above the level they were born into, so they do not try to move up in a business setting. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Time in this cultural trait reflects the importance of being on time to any event, be it business meeting or family gathering. Time can be a very strict setting in some countries, requiring people to be on time by the minute. Other countries are not so stringent with their schedules. Business meetings for different cultures may be scheduled for “the afternoon” as opposed to 3:25 P.M. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Change to different cultures may be regarded as positive or negative. Cultures who have a positive attitude toward change believe that change is required and generally detest when there is a slow progression. They usually want to do better today than yesterday and work toward their goal. A measure of how well they may be is the amount of change between each generation. Countries with low change orientations do not think change is important. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Subjective decision-making does not require an in-depth analysis. Instead the person generally focuses on how the decision makes them feel and uses gut instincts to make a choice. This is the opposite of making an objective decision. When making objective decisions, generally factual information is greatly relied upon. The decision-maker will work out financial and other analysis to determine if the decision will prove to be a good one. Obviously, subjective decisions can be made on the spot and require much less time than objective decisions. (Sweo et al, 2009)

The importance of family to a culture can be seen in the way decisions are made within a family. In high family scores, a family usually consists of extended members including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins living in the same household. Everyone living in the house generally makes the decisions for these types of people. In a low family score there is usually two spouses and their children. Spouses may make decisions without even confronting the other. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Authority is a measure of how people react toward other people in positions of official authority. This can be determined by watching how people respond to commands given by the head of a military in a country. If the country generally follows the command, there is a high sense of authority. Oppositely, if a police officer attempts to give a command in a country with a low authority score, the people will generally ignore them. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Trust determines what people in a country will think when someone attempts to make a claim about something. In a country that scores high in trust, people are usually believed to be telling the truth when they say something. This type of culture is easily willing to work with people they do not know a lot about. In contrast low trusting cultures do not believe people unless they have known them for a long time. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Fatalism shows the amount in which people from a culture believe they control their own destinies. This means that people in a highly fatalistic culture think that what will happen to them is destiny. What they will become has already been determined for them so what they do will not change their life. Low fatalistic cultures believe that there



are consequences to every action they make. This usually means that people of low fatalistic cultures generally experience much higher stress than those in highly fatalistic cultures. (Sweo et al, 2009)

Monochronic information processing means that people will process information piece by piece. This type of culture will work on one task at a time. For this reason they are good at jobs that require strict attention to detail. Polychronic information processing can be also known as multitasking. This type of person can easily process more than one piece of information at a time. Their work environment may seem more hectic than monochronic cultures are used to. (Sweo et al, 2009)

There is also something to be said about cultures that are high and low context. Cultures that are low-context generally have definite meanings for words and rely on those definitions when they speak. In a high context cultures, metaphors and anecdotes are used often. Non-verbal cues and physical context are generally more important than what was actually said. In a high-context culture, "a message encoder who relies too much on words, without regard to external cues, may not quantitatively and qualitatively communicate." (Ihator, 2000)

## **Methodology**

I have gathered information from different sources to provide a guide for American managers to use while managing Brazilian people. I will be using Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a basis to describe specific differences in the cultures. Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) will be another research program that will help me to gather data about the cultural differences between Brazil and the United States. In addition, I will be using other cultural traits that are not identified in either of these studies to supplement. After thoroughly identifying what traits are portrayed in Brazil and the United States, I will continue to compare the way these cultural differences affect the way people react to certain styles of managing in Brazil. Using the information from other sources, I will be able to recommend the practices that will most likely work best when managing Brazilians.

Many differences exist within the Brazilian culture. This is because there are several different nationalities and ways of life throughout the country. This guide will provide a basic knowledge on ways in which managers can receive the most positive results when working with the general public in Brazil. I will then suggest ways in which American managers might use all this information to best manage their Brazilian employees.

## **Data**

The Data in this section will explain what cultural dimensions are most prominent in both the Brazilian and American culture. Identifying the differences between the two cultures will help to further explain what techniques will help American managers in Brazil.

As Table 1 shows, the cultural dimensions, as measured per Hofstede, of Brazil and the United States are nearly opposites. Brazil scores high on power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, while the U.S. scores low on power distance and has weak uncertainty avoidance. Brazil is also a more collectivistic culture whereas the United States is individualistic. Lastly, Brazil leans toward a more feminine society, and the United States tends to be more masculine. These differences in culture reflect highly in the way the people of the two nations prefer to be managed and do business.

According to O'Keefe et al, the high power distance culture in Brazil reflects the way people speak to their elders and bosses. (2004) It is important to understand that although Brazilians may seem very sociable and friendly, they may feel disrespected if you use their first name too early in the business relationship. Being too upfront with people who have a high power distance culture is seen as disrespectful and may also cause a loss in business ventures. (O'Keefe et al, 2004)

Garibaldi de Hilal did a study to determine the organizational culture in Brazil that reflected many questions Hofstede used in his study (2009). In her results she determined that as Hofstede said, Brazilians have a high power distance (Garibaldi de Halil, Wetzel, & Ferreira 2009). Many of the people surveyed agreed that the boss

should have precise knowledge of and answers for subordinates questions (Garibaldi de Halil et al, 2009). Other factors that Garibaldi de Halil found in Brazilian culture were low satisfaction at work and low competition amongst people of the organization (2009).

Collectivistic cultures generally tend to be more people oriented and work more toward group goals (Turner et al., 2001). “Brazilians do not interact with others in a formal systematic manner. Their relationships with other business people are interpersonal in nature, and they place a high value on human relations. Any first-time meeting begins with getting fully acquainted with each other in a relaxed and casual way. In fact, they are very casual about time and work.” This has to do with the fact that they have a highly collectivistic culture (Turner et al., 2001).

As an individualistic society, the United States differs greatly in the way they speak and act with their colleagues. Gulbro & Herbig (1999) found that individualistic cultures spend more time conducting direct communication and collectivistic cultures do indirect activities that are not related to direct communication (Tu et al, 2011). Individualistic societies allow themselves to make decisions to meet their own goals without any guidance from their family (O’Keefe et al, 2004). Self-centered behavior, such as this is not tolerated in Brazil and is deemed arrogant (O’Keefe et al, 2004).

In Hofstede’s studies it appears that Brazil is more feminine and the United States leans more toward the masculine culture. As a feminine culture, societal sex roles are not prominently distinguishable. In addition to obtaining long-term profitability, creating and maintaining jobs is another very important aspect of business in Brazil.

This means that it is normal for Brazilians to hire workers from the same family in an organization to ensure that the family is prosperous. (O'Keefe et al, 2004)

Uncertainty Avoidance in Brazil is relatively strong while it is relatively weak in the United States. The Brazilian people's high level of uncertainty avoidance means that they are risk averse and will take time to ponder and research difficult decisions before they actually make a choice. Trust is also very important for Brazilians because of their high uncertainty avoidance. They take the time out to meet potential business partners and talk through every aspect of the business plan before they make a decision.

This shows that the perception of the importance of time is very different for American managers and Brazilian managers. Brazilians may seem to not take time as seriously as Americans because they do not act rushed when making decisions. Building a relationship with trust is much more important to Brazilians than just rushing through a deal to get it signed quickly. Americans low uncertainty avoidance means they have no problem with taking risks because the benefit may be greater than any fault that may occur. (O'Keefe et al, 2004)

The United States scored very low in the Long-term/Short-term orientation while Brazil scored somewhat in the middle. The difference between both countries score in this trait reflects a small difference in the perception of tradition and culture in the two countries. Brazil's higher long-term orientation means that they may value traditions and their past more than Americans. Brazilians did not score as high as Asian cultures in

this orientation though, because they are not as focused on traditions as them. (Beekun et al, 2003)

In analyzing the Globe cultural dimensions I found Brazil is a part of the Latin American cluster. Brazil scored low in performance orientation, future orientation, institutional collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. They scored high in in-group collectivism. For the other cultural dimensions, Brazil scored in the middle region. These dimensions are assertiveness, humane orientation, gender egalitarianism, and power distance. (Javidan et al, 2006)

The United States is grouped with the United Kingdom and other English speaking countries in the Anglo cluster. This cluster received high scores in Performance Orientation and low scores in In-group Collectivism. For the rest of the cultural dimensions, the United States scored in the middle range. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Both of these clusters strongly differ with how they scaled in each of the nine cultural dimensions. Qualities of leadership in those countries differ as well. It is important for managers who would like to lead people in Brazil to understand what style of leadership makes Brazilians work to the best of their ability. GLOBE identified six dimensions of *culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory* (CLT). These show what leadership qualities are most desired in the culture clusters. The six dimensions are Charismatic/Value-Based, Team-Oriented, Participative, Humane-Oriented, Autonomous, and Self-Protective. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Charismatic/Value-Based leadership reflects the way in which leaders encourage, inspire, and believe that their employees can improve in what they do. Generally, this type of leadership is associated with outstanding leadership. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Team-Oriented leadership shows how important group building is amongst the employees. A common goal in an organization reflects team-oriented leadership. Team-oriented leadership helps to contribute to outstanding leadership too. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Participative leadership is how much a manager creates an environment in which employees have a say in decisions that are to be implemented. Participative leadership may help to establish outstanding leadership. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Humane-Oriented leadership is the degree to which a leader shows support and consideration to his staff. This leadership style consists of the leaders generosity and compassion as well. Humane-oriented leadership may be neutral or moderately contribute to outstanding leadership. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Autonomous leadership is the degree to which employees individually lead themselves. Independent leadership practices are demonstrated greatly in this leadership dimension. Autonomous leadership may slightly facilitate or completely hinder outstanding leadership. (Javidan et al, 2006)

In the Self-Protective leadership style, it is important to guarantee the safety of the individual. This style is based on a self-centered approach. Self-protective leadership usually hinders outstanding leadership. (Javidan et al, 2006)

In Brazil, the CLT leadership styles that are part of the outstanding leadership styles are Charismatic/Value-Based and Team-Oriented. Participative and Humane-Oriented leadership dimensions score in the mid region in the Latin American clusters. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Anglo leading styles are similar to those for Latin American cultures. Like Brazil, they rate high in charismatic/value-based leadership. The Anglo cluster also ranks high in the participative and humane-oriented dimensions. They have a medium rank in the team-oriented and autonomous dimensions and a low ranking in the self-protective leadership style. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Javidan discusses the difference between the way managers in Brazil and the United States make decisions (2006). In addition to a stronger level of uncertainty avoidance in Brazil, they are more assertive and performance oriented (Javidan et al, 2006). This causes American managers to make decisions much quicker than Brazilians are comfortable with (Javidan et al, 2006). Punctuality is a big difference between Americans and Brazilians (Turner et al, 2001). In Brazil, it is normal and even courteous to be a few minutes late for any arrangement so that the person you are meeting has time to set up and be prepared (Turner et al, 2001)



In-group collectivism is a very important attribute that Brazilians have because it means that they are comfortable with their collective group. They like to be part of groups in all aspects of their lives such as in business orientations and families. It is normal for people in small groups to expect special treatment such as discounts for those members. If these preferential actions are not given to the people in the groups, Brazilian may begin to feel uneasy. (Javidan et al, 2006)

The United States is ranked as a more humane culture than Brazil. This affects the amount that American managers and employees emphasize the importance of empathy and understanding in their leaders. Brazilians do not find it as important as Americans to have leaders who show compassion towards their employees. This may be because of the high power distance between employers and employees. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Francisco Gil researched work team effectiveness in groups in Spain and Brazil. They found that these two countries behave very similarly to each other in this process. Because of Portugal's influence in Brazil, they share similar cultural attributes. Process conflicts in Spain and Portugal have been found to impact team satisfaction. They found that feedback is also directly correlated with outcomes. (Gil, 2005)

Although they are not exactly the same, many of the other cultural traits considered in this study seem to be reflected in both the Hofstede and GLOBE dimensions. Using information about the Brazilian culture from both of those studies, could easily determine where Brazil stands in these other traits.

Although material wealth is valued in Brazil, they do not score nearly as high as Americans. The culture of the United States emphasizes the importance of material wealth throughout everyday life with the “American Dream.” (Sweo et al, 2009)

Achievement is also scored high for Americans. Throughout most American businesses, there are people who begin at the bottom and work their way to the top. (Sweo et al, 2009) The increase in the Brazilian economy has created a high want for achievement. Brazilians have seen the economic growth and are more prone to try to get it now than ever before. (Jones, 2000) Brazil has been found to have a strong sense of “drive.” (Lenartowicz, 2002)

The United States has a relatively strict sense of time. Although being a minute late may not destroy a relationship between businesses, it can affect the way a business sees how responsible the other is. It is even normal to be ten minutes early to meetings in the United States. (Sweo et al, 2009) In Brazil, time is more relative. Brazilians will take more time to make decisions. Being on time is not as definite as it is in the American culture. (Turner, 2001)

The United States ranks high in the people’s attitude toward change. Bettering your life can be measured through the change from parent to child. (Sweo et al, 2009) Following Brazil’s attitude toward achievement, it is common for change to be welcomed amongst Brazilians. Changing one’s life for the better, especially if it will help their family is something Brazilian’s generally look forward to. (Jones, 2000)

Objective decision-making is definitively used whenever possible in American culture. It is very uncomfortable and often deemed negative to just use a gut instinct to make an important decision in the United States. (Sweo et al, 2009) Although objective decision-making is included in the decision making process in Brazil, it is not the only thing used. Feelings are just as important. This means Brazilians like to calculate as much as possible, but do not always make decisions based on these calculations.

The United States has low family scores. This is seen when families move from one country to the next because a parent must transfer for work. (Sweo et al, 2009) Family is clearly very important to Brazilians. The high score in collectivistic culture exemplifies this. (Garibaldi de Hilal, 2006)

Authority is generally highly respected in the United States. (Sweo et al, 2009) In Brazil, this tends to be the case as well. The high power distance culture shows that there is a clear division between subordinates and their bosses. Generally, Brazilians respect this distinction and approach authority with respect.

The American culture is in the mid to high range scoring on trust. Although there is not complete trust between business people, it's easy to work with people that you have not known for a long time. Drafting contracts for nearly every business transactions shows that even if business partners do not completely trust one another, they can still work with each other. Brazilians require quite a bit more trust to work with other people. They need to feel comfortable with the other person, before beginning a deal. (Osland, 1999)

The United States scores very low as a fatalistic culture. People generally believe that their actions bear consequences, as a result they suffer from far more stress than highly fatalistic cultures. In Brazil, there is a tendency to have fatalistic views, although this may be changing. Generally people may try to create a certain outcome, but put their faith in God for it to actually occur. (Osland, 1999)

Compared to Latin American cultures, North Americans tend to be more monochronic. (Bluedorn et al, 1992) It is important to note that, monochronic and polychronic cultures tend to vary by the generation of people as well as their cultural values.

The United States is a very low-context culture. When a question is given, there is usually a direct response. (Ihator, 2000) Brazil is a high-context culture. Meaning is found in the way people say things instead of what is actually being said. (Nguyen, 2007)

## Results

Table 1: A summary of the differences between US and Brazilian cultures

	<u>Cultural Dimensions</u>	<u>Brazil</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>Implications</u>
<u>Hofstede</u>	<i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i>	High	Low	Change
	<i>Power Distance</i>	High	Low	Change
	<i>Collectivism v. individualism</i>	Collectivism	Individualism	Change
	<i>Masculinity v. Femininity</i>	Middle	Masculinity	Watch
	<i>Long-Term v. Short-term</i>	Middle	Short-term	Watch
<u>GLOBE</u>	<i>Performance Orientation</i>	Low	High	Change
	<i>Assertiveness</i>	Middle	Middle	None
	<i>Future Orientation</i>	Low	Middle	Watch
	<i>Humane Orientation</i>	Middle	Middle	None
	<i>Institutional Collectivism</i>	Low	Middle	Watch
	<i>In-Group Collectivism</i>	High	Low	Change
	<i>Gender Egalitarianism</i>	Middle	Middle	None
	<i>Power Distance</i>	Middle	Middle	None
	<i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i>	Low	Middle	Watch
<u>Other Traits</u>	<i>Material Wealth</i>	Medium	High	Watch
	<i>Achievement</i>	High	High	None
	<i>Time</i>	Medium	High	Watch
	<i>Change</i>	High	High	None
	<i>Subjectivity v. Objectivity</i>	Subjective	Objectivity	Watch
	<i>Family</i>	High	Low	Change
	<i>Authority</i>	High	High	None
	<i>Trust</i>	Medium	High	Watch
	<i>Fatalism</i>	Medium	Low	Watch
	<i>Monochronic v. Polychronic</i>	Polychronic	Monochronic	Change
	<i>High v. Low Context</i>	High	Low	Change

Chart 1: Differences between Brazilian and American Culture

This chart will help to describe the vast differences between both cultures. Being aware of the way these different traits affect Brazilian employees is important to being an efficient manager. Managers should focus on the factors in the chart that require a “change” while recognizing those that they should watch for as well. It is important to analyze the differences between the way American and Brazilian people think and react

to situations before trying to combine these two ways of life. Changes may be required for both the managers and employees in different situations, but with this research managers should be more aware of the differences that are likely to occur in this new culture.

Managers in Brazil should be sure to keep the line between employee and boss clear and still maintain a friendly atmosphere. Brazilians will acknowledge the authority of their manager. Because of the highly collectivistic culture and high power distance, this is very important to keep in mind. American managers may seem self-centered if they continue to work with Brazilian employees as they did with American employees.

To maintain positive relationships with employees, managers should have a clear understanding of what they are doing and want to do within the organization. In addition, they should be able to discuss this with their employees in a well-organized form. American managers must also show respect to any Brazilian boss they may work for within the organization, and for other Brazilian companies they try to do business with, especially if the people are older than them.

The feminine culture means that Brazilians may not have the same distinct roles for males and females as the United States does. Managers must be sure not to create these roles within the organization as to not create uneasiness between employee and employer.

Because this is a guide for American Managers in Brazil, it is important to note what they should know when making business decisions with Brazilian managers.

Brazilian managers are much more risk averse than American managers. This means that they will take much more time to think about decisions more thoroughly. They will want to discuss the entire business plan as well as potential problems before making a choice. They value relationships with trust, so it is important to be friendly, respectful, and patient through the entire process. Be sure to give them plenty of time to become comfortable with the business idea.

Brazilians score low on performance orientation which means they will emphasize the importance of family throughout every aspect of their life. Family is usually their first priority. If managers want to promote training and development in their organization, they should make sure it does not interrupt family time. They may like to emphasize how this will be better for the employee's family by demonstrating specifically how the family will benefit from this.

Managers should also be sure to keep the employees background in mind. It may explain why some employees act the way they do. For instance, a mother may constantly arrive late to work because she has to take her children to school. In response, a manager should acknowledge the importance of her children, empathize with her and try to find other ways to work around this situation such as working from home for an hour a day.

Brazilian culture and American culture have similar attitudes toward assertiveness, which means that this trait is not affected when working with Brazilian people except in interaction with other traits.

Brazilians are a bit less future-oriented than Americans. Brazilians may seem more disorganized than American managers are used to because of this. There is less written planning for Brazilians than Americans may be comfortable with.

In both cultures, there is a tendency towards kindness and unselfishness, as is seen by the middle score on the Humane Orientation. Still, Brazilians may regard American culture as cold. If American managers show consideration and compassion, Brazilians will react positively and this should not be something to worry about.

Institutional Collectivism for Brazilian culture and American culture are ranked faintly different. This should slightly change the way American managers attribute successes for Brazilian employees. Brazilians value their individual success more than Americans. American managers may be accustomed to showing the successes for the company as a whole, but now they should try to show individual successes.

The difference between In-group Collectivism in the two cultures is completely opposite. As has been repeated throughout this paper, Brazilian culture emphasizes the importance of devotion to family members. This cohesion amongst a family may be difficult for an American manager to understand, because it is not what they are accustomed to.

Brazilians will do anything to support and protect their family and it may affect their ability to work. American managers should try to find out what familial aspects may affect an employees ability to succeed at work. They can do this by discussing the



employees relationships at home, such as if they live with and care for a spouse, children, or any other family member.

Brazilian leaders tend to take a group approach to leadership. This may be because of their high score in in-group collectivism. They detest any leadership styles that invoke individualistic approaches. American managers must make note of this and not use any form of autonomy when making decisions with Brazilian employees. The employees should feel like they have a say in what actions are taking plans in the company. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Although Hofstede found that Brazilian culture is more feminist than American, the GLOBE studies determined the cultures both rank in the middle for gender egalitarianism. This is good for American managers working with Brazilian employees. Both cultures practice the same tolerance among genders throughout society, even though Brazilian culture does not have as precise definitions for gender roles as American culture.

As in Hofstede's study on Cultural dimensions, Brazilians scored high in the power distance culture on the GLOBE project. This means that Brazilians favor a clear distinction between positions in authority in the organization. This will affect the way that American managers manage people in Brazil significantly. Although Brazilians do not want a manager who makes all the decisions by themselves, the manager needs to have a clear sense of authority with their employees. (Javidan et al, 2006)

Uncertainty avoidance in both, GLOBE's and Hofstede's, studies are very similar. Generally, Brazilians do not need strict procedures throughout their society to feel comfortable. American culture relies on a formal order and structure. This is slightly different for Brazilians. American managers should be weary that they not overload the employees with rules and regulations. It is important for them to realize that Brazilians may work better with less strict guidelines.

In the Brazilian culture, material wealth is not as valued as it is in the American culture. Managers should find rewards other than money to give to their employees. Some of these rewards may be a family vacation, vacation time, or even a certificate or plaque.

Arriving at a meeting fifteen minutes early in Brazil may be seen as a sign of disrespect. Managers should acknowledge the change in attitudes about timeliness in these different cultures. Generally, it is more likely that Brazilians will be late to work or any social event than they will be early. Emphasizing the importance in your work place can show your employees how much you value it, but be cautious when attempting to do this with potential business partners. Partners will tell you to come "airport time" or "American time" if you are required to be punctual for any event.

Americans and Brazilians tend to want to change their lives for the better. Their motivations may be different (individualistic and collectivistic), but they both work to succeed and make a positive change.

Because American managers are used to making strictly objective decisions, subjective decision-making may make them nervous. Brazilians influence from culture and fatalism allows them to use both methods to come to what they believe is the best decision. As it has been emphasized, it is important to give them their time to think about what their most appropriate course of action will be.

Trust in Brazil is not very strong amongst people who do not know each other very well. This is another reason to emphasize the importance of creating strong and positive relationships with your employees and anyone you would like to do business with in Brazil. American managers must learn about these people.

American culture tends to be more monochronic than Brazilian culture. In Brazilian culture, it is normal to find people doing several different tasks at the same time. Combined with their low future orientation, this can seem quite chaotic to those who are not accustomed to it.

A culture that is less fatalistic may affect the way American managers want to speak to their employees about what they are trying to do. In the Brazilian culture, employees will work as hard as they believe they can to get whatever God wants for them. To incorporate both cultures, managers should have employees strive for the best that God will give them.

The mixture of influences into Brazilian culture is said to have come from some “Hispanic arrogance and Portuguese laxness and plasticity,” resulting in slackness, anarchy, lack of cohesion, disorder and indiscipline. Although these may appear to be

“defects,” they helped to create a person with immense creativity that has the ability to be flexible. (Garibaldi de Hilal, 2006) Managers should be sure to recall this information if they believe an employee is not as organized as they should be. Too much organization may negatively impact the way Brazilians work.

The difference in the way Brazilians and Americans communicate, aside from the language, is essential to remember. It is possible for Brazilians to feel unwelcomed or disrespected because of body language and other social cues. Make sure to follow the customs used in Brazil to maintain positive relationships. Managers should maintain eye contact. Lack of personal space and friendly touching should not be misinterpreted; they tend to be normal and kind behavior, not what Americans are generally accustomed to.

#### Realistic Situations

Traveling to a different country means having several new experiences for managers. This also means their employees will have new experiences with a manager who is from a different country. Before arriving to Brazil, it is ideal to have at least a basic knowledge of the Portuguese language. In addition, managers should arrive prior to beginning work so they can become accustomed to their surroundings. Discovering the city they will be living in is a very important first step for the manager to succeed in the new country.

On the manager's first day at the job they should begin to learn about their employees, their jobs, and their families. Remembering the collectivistic culture in Brazil, managers should become knowledgeable about the people they will be working with closely. This will help their employees become more comfortable with the new

manager and gain trust. It will also be very beneficial for the future of the company, because Brazilians generally require more trust than Americans do.

In the beginning phase of employment, Brazilians may seem very disorganized and work may appear to be chaotic. Recognizing that this may be what makes an employee creative is key. If the employee's work is intolerable then it is advised that the manager confidently discuss what the problem is with the employee and how some form of organization can help to improve it.

Other differences that managers may observe include the increasing amount of time that employees spend or would like to spend with their families, the unprecedented importance of soccer in the employee's lives, and the communication methods. If managers are well aware of these differences, they will better understand the employee's motivations. Differences between communication styles may be difficult for both managers and their employees to understand. Managers should become more aware of what employees are not physically saying by looking at their body language, as well as what their own body language may be telling their new employees.

Giving employees extra time off or tickets to a game of their favorite soccer club are excellent ideas to improve work ethic and generate energy. Also, this will show employees that the manager understands what they find most important, gaining the employee's trust and confidence. By understanding these factors and keeping an open-mind, managers should be able to efficiently manage Brazilian employees without any serious problems.

## **Discussion**

Managers should use these tools to emphasize what is important in Brazilian culture. This may be difficult at first, but will have a significant impact in managing Brazilian employees. Aside from cultural differences, companies should investigate other aspects that differentiate the two countries. Having a clear understanding of these differences will help companies and their managers when choosing to work in Brazil.

In addition to cultural considerations it is important for company's to be aware of Federal regulations in Brazil. Laws such as employment regulations are very different in the United States and Brazil reflecting their cultural differences. For instance, people in Brazil get paid "13 months" in a year because they get an additional paycheck in December. Also, it is required to have a month paid vacation in Brazil.

It is also very important to note that Brazil is a large mixture of cultures. There are great influences from different parts of the world all over the country. For example, the city of Sao Paulo is known to be largely Italian, whereas the southern part of Brazil houses a large Arabic population. These affect the way particular regions behave and their cultural traits. My research reflects a large majority of the Brazilian population, but does not go into detail about each subarea. With this in mind managers and companies moving to Brazil should do an in-depth analysis into the region they are moving into.

With this in mind, consideration of different generations within Brazilian employees is very important. Younger employees may be accustomed with a more "American culture" than older employees, because they have been raised in a global generation.

Because Brazil is an emerging economy it is important to mention the growth in technology that is presently occurring throughout the country. Technology is becoming a normal good that everyone can presently obtain.

Location in Brazil is important for other reasons as well. It is important to observe patterns of traffic around the physical location of the business. Traffic may be a deterrent when looking to open a company in the large cities such as Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro. Traveling during rush hour will cause serious delays because of the congestion in these cities. A simple twenty minute drive will easily take two hours. Managers should be aware of this fact when determining work schedules for their employees.

As a Brazilian, I realize that there are many more cultural facts that Americans should keep in mind when trying to work in Brazil. These details include the fact that most Brazilians do not speak English well enough to conduct entire business deals in English. It may be necessary to become fluent in Portuguese, or obtain a translator. Knowing absolutely no Portuguese, may appear arrogant when trying to discuss business plans with people in Brazil. It is generally a good idea to know basic Portuguese phrases.

In addition, there are customs that Brazilians use in everyday life. For example, when greeting anyone of the opposite sex (or two females) you kiss him or her on both cheeks. Males may shake hands in the first meeting, but after this initial meeting they generally hug. When meeting someone for the first time, it is also very important to

always say “Nice to meet you” or “Prazer” in Portuguese. I would like to stress the importance of being aware of these customs because of the collectivistic culture in Brazil. A Brazilian may be offended or at least uneasy if these things do not occur.

Soccer is very important to Brazilian people. It is unrealistic to believe that employees will work when Brazil is playing in an important tournament such as the World Cup. The government typically gives these as half or full day holidays. There are many more holidays in Brazil than the United States where businesses are closed, especially in observance of religious holidays.

Religion is also a large influence in everyday Brazilian culture, especially for older generations. There is generally not a negative stigma in praying or referring to God. Popular phrases that are frequently used in Brazilian Portuguese are “God Willing” or “se Deus quiser” and “thank God” or “Graças a Deus.” Superstitions are frequently referred to and may reflect any aspect of work.

It is interesting to realize the differences between the findings from the Hofstede and GLOBE studies within Brazilian and American culture. It may be because the GLOBE studies grouped countries into large clusters and there may actually be differences within the countries. Hofstede found a large discrepancy between the Power Distance scores in Brazilian culture, yet GLOBE said they both scored in the medium range. Different definitions for the cultural traits may be part of the reason for this inconsistency as well



Individuals in both cultures are different. This is important to note, because it means that this research paper may not be consistent with what every manager arriving in Brazil will experience. What people have experienced throughout their lives will change the way they may think and act. This will affect their perceptions and attitudes which may be different with the general cultural factors.

Furthermore, it is important to note that this guide is designed specifically for American managers as a tool to use when moving to Brazil. It can be also be helpful for managers from other countries, because of the strong use of comparisons between the cultural differences.

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