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The choir as an organization: its structure and motivational
implications

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The choir as an organization: its structure and motivational implications

Abstract

Choral singing – professional or amateur – can be itself considered a work practice, which provides cultural products and services, such as concerts and records. Under this point of view, choirs are based on material resources (such as musical instruments and scores) and, prominently, by human resources (such as conductor and choristers). These characteristics indicate that choirs are social groups or organizations and require management of their operations and processes. This paper aims at presenting an empirical research developed in 7 (seven) choir of São Paulo city, Brazil, being 6 (six) of them amateur groups, and 1 (one) that can be considered semi-professional one. Through semi-structured questionnaires, conductors and choristers were asked about how motivation is an ability that their maestros domain. Interviews with the conductors and observation of rehearsals complete the data for analysis.

Key words: organizational structure; motivation; choir; maestros’ job; maestro as manager.
1. Introduction

Choral singing is a very common example of teamwork and consists in a musical practice developed and diffused in the most different cultures and ethnical groups. Being a group of musical learning, vocal development, interpersonal integration and social inclusion, the choir is a space constituted by different social and teaching-learning relationships, what demands from the conductor a series of competences and abilities not only concerning the technical-musical preparation, but also in reference to the management and direction of a team that looks for motivation, education, culture and new experiences. As Mathias (1986) detached, a choir has different levels of action, and promotes individual integration in various dimensions: personal (motivation), group (interpersonal relationships), communitarian (improvement on life quality), social (inclusion) and political (democratic participation in public actions, free expression of aesthetic, ethic, artistic manifestation of ideas and ideals).

The aim of this paper\(^1\) is to explore a deeper dimension of the choral work, beyond the metaphors and analogies, searching for the organizational structures and motivational factors that domain the day to day of amateur vocal groups. For studying it, we apply a model of maestros’ job developed by Fucci Amato (2010), based in the concepts of abilities and competences. This model was applied in the empirical research, where there were studied the cases of 7 (seven) choirs from São Paulo city (Brazil), being 6 (six) amateur groups and (1) that can be considered

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\(^1\) This paper is part of a postdoctoral research about “The work of maestro as manager and the organizational perspective of choral singing: interdisciplinary contributions for conductors and managers”. This research is funded by São Paulo State Research Foundation (Fapesp) and is developed at University of São Paulo (USP), Engineering School of São Carlos (EESC), at the Production Engineering Department.

semi-professional. Data collection was conducted through: (a) semi-structured questionnaires, applied to conductors and choristers; (b) observation and recording of rehearsals and (c) interviews with choral conductors. The table below presents the material of research collected in each choir.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choir</th>
<th>Choir 1</th>
<th>Choir 2</th>
<th>Choir 3</th>
<th>Choir 4</th>
<th>Choir 5</th>
<th>Choir 6</th>
<th>Choir 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(35)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>(26)</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(35)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.1. – Data collected for the research**

Concerning its design, this empirical research combines characters of three methodological approaches:

- **multiple cases study**, defined by Yin (2009) as the research of different cases analyzed in separate, with multiple units of analysis (what do not prevents general conclusions, starting from the results observed in each group);

- **field research**, once it intended to go to the loci of its object of study (the choral activity) and collect data among its agents;

- **exploratory opinion research**, social research technique that enables to detach the vision
of certain agents on the organizational context that they are insert – in this case, agents are the conductors and choristers.

After the presentation of its comprehensive model and of its theoretical bases, the paper detaches and analyses data collected through this methodological design.

2. The competence of management, the ability of motivation

Starting from the ideas of French theories on managerial and pedagogical competences (Perrenoud, 1999; Le Boterf 2010), we can propose an comprehensive theoretical design concerning abilities and competences. In this model, abilities are understood as practical knowledge (know how to do), as skills actualized in practical situations-problem. Competences, therefore, would by a complex set of inter-related abilities (practical knowledge) plus theoretical background in the reference area.

Abilities would be, then, independent components of a particular competence. The verbal ability, for example, constitutes at the same time the competences of advocating, making a religious or political speech and many other actions. Yet, when inserted in given competence, abilities are inter-linked. For example, the ability of leadership complements the ability of communication in case of an enterprise manager. It forms an integrated and systemic whole called management competence, consisting of inter-related skills. The Congrès Force (a French worker’s institution), according to Vieira and Garcia (2004: 8), “defines competence as a set of
knowledge mobilized in the work situation. Its components are the knowledge or expertise, the knowledge put into practice, know-how, skills, intelligence and professional staff”, among others. Thus, a competence is comprised of related abilities, which involves an advanced theoretical knowledge already acquired by the individual. The theoretical knowledge and the abilities constitute, then, a specific competence. This is defined as a set of requirements – knowledge and abilities – urged by the performance of a particular function, which requires the action of the individual seeking the solution of certain problems and situations (Sant'anna; Moraes; Kilimnik, 2005). The establishment of a dynamic and flexible power is also noted in the idea of competence, which is reorganized in different contexts, depending, for example, on different requirement levels to perform the same function: “The competence of the individual is not a state, can not be reduced to a specific knowledge or expertise” (Fleury; Fleury, 2004: 48).

In a construction of a model to understand and to analyze choral conductors’ job we propose to understand the competence of choral conducting as a wide and complex level, made by four types of competences: educational competence, vocal competence, musical competence and managerial competence.

The choral conductor, as a musician, has theoretical knowledge in areas such as harmony and counterpoint and (practical) abilities, as to play an instrument (e.g., piano), to conduct (in a strict sense, i.e., the gestural technique) and to mark the rhythm. In the vocal competence, knowledge on physiology of voice and other areas, besides the ability of know how to sing, are very important. In pedagogical competence, knowledge on teaching methodology, philosophical foundations of education, among other, combine with abilities such as knowing how to learn with
the choristers. Finally, concerning managerial competence (Mintzberg, 2009; Fleury; Fleury, 2000), besides some knowledge on administrative theories, maestros develop a high number of managerial abilities, concerning communication, motivation, leadership, strategy, networking, negotiation, etc. In this sense, we propose here to analyze one of these abilities: the ability of leadership.

Synthetically: the competence of management is decomposed in a series of abilities: to know how to assume responsibilities; to know how to improve yourself; to know how to motivate; to know how to lead, among many others.

3. Organizational models

Mintzberg (1979, p. 2) defines organizational structure as “the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them”. With reference to the simple structure, the author presents the direct supervision as the main mechanism of coordination, and the centralization and organizational structure as key parameters. In the simple structure of an organization, the power to take relevant decisions tends to be centralized in the hands of the chief manager, what may allow quick responses. The executive is responsible for strategy formulation and this design is intrinsically dependant on his/her personal beliefs and experience, being focused on leadership (Mintzberg, 1992). The conditions for the establishment of a simple structure are (Mintzberg, 1992):

- the environment of the simple structure tends to be one and the same time, simple (decision making is controlled by an individual) and dynamic (organizational structure: there is no coordination through standardization);
- the technical system is unsophisticated (lack of facilities of support staff) or not bureaucratic;
- informal communication is convincing and effective.

Mintzberg (1992) says that there are some problems associated with simple structure, because of its dependence on individual contingences and wishes. For some people, this simple and organic structure presents itself as highly restrictive: an individual decides and the others follow the instructions. Moreover, it is worth detaching that this same structure can provide a sense of mission, because of de direct supervision of the leader (usually a charismatic person) and the mechanical solidarity that flow from the intimate dimension of the organization. Finally, the author asserts that the simple structure still remains important in our society, despite criticism that ranks it as paternalistic, autocratic and inappropriate concerning empowerment balance.

As will be detached, the researched semi-professional and amateur choirs tends to present a very simple structure, but variations in the organizational structure in which they are eventually inserted and the infrastructure and internal organization of some choir presents some refinements concerning of power delegation (empowerment), decentralization and teamwork.
4. Results and discussion

4.1. Comments on the structure and management of the choirs

4.1.1. Choir 1

This vocal group is part of a private university and the choir started its academic activities linked to the students center, at the time when the Country was under military dictatorship, when the activities of this choir reflected the desire for expression of the singers and conductor(s). Currently, the choir is linked to the Dean of Culture and Community Relations and has some choristers engaged for more than fifteen years. Many who went through this chorus turned professional as solo singers, instrumentalists and conductors.

The choir has a simple structure, because:

- the conductor decides and organizes the repertoire, approves or not the future singers (vocal classification testing), handles the scheduling of concerts and promotes other activities that denote his high level of power in internal decision making;

- regarding the technical infrastructure, this is not sophisticated, because the conductor has only the help of a teacher of vocal technique. Both are employed by that university.

4.1.2. Choir 2
The group is a project of the Dean of Continuing Education and Culture of this state public university since 1986. The structure of this choir is managed by a general and artistic director, who works in cooperation with the deliberative council, which gives the general lines of work. There is an administrative technician who takes care of all the bureaucratic and financial procedures for the choir. In its technical and musical structure, the conductor counts with assistant-monitors, that singers of the group itself or who have acquired musical knowledge during participation in the larger choral structure that is maintained at the University (with regard to the other ten academic choirs).

This choir also has a team that performs the following functions: scheduling concerts, accompanying concerts, secretary and archives. The activities schedule is designed for projects and this is defined with participation of singers to be executed in the following year. During proposals phase, the conductor reserves to himself the right of vetting any repertoire that the group is technically unable to perform (what, according to his testimony, has never happened). Once presented, proposals are voted in two phases. Maestros vote is equal to choristers vote.

The choir presents two general types of performance: (a) concerts associated with some kind of event: conferences, symposia, sponsor requests the entity; (b) concerts of a more artistic character (implementation of the project prepared): performances are made in a choose place or according invitations.

There is a formal charge (activity report) about the activities of the choir that are presented to the artistic director (musical and aesthetic issues) and to the general director (bureaucratic), respectively. The conductor is hired by the university.

For the maestro, his group has some strengths, such as: commitment, flexibility, musical-vocal quality (expressed in dynamics and articulation), creativity, vocal health, readiness for new experiences, tuning and critical sense. He expressed his conception of working well with a vocal group, taking into consideration four elements: the singers, the institution, the public and the maestro itself. In this perspective, the conductor selects some values that guide his work – the quality of the ‘choral sound’, choristers welfare, welfare of the public, aesthetical density, pleasure, making music together, coexistence, friendship, cooperation, understanding (not necessarily in that order).

4.1.3. Choir 3

This group is a project of the Department of Community Affairs, which is bound Pro-rector of Extension of a federal public university. The conductor has complete freedom in relation to its choir and also assumes the administrative responsibilities. In its technical and musical structure, the choir has an assistant hired by the university, who conducts other two choirs of this institution. The choir also has monitors-choristers and a body coach. In the same year that a project is conclude, the next project has to premiere in the last months. In the following year this project is improved and presented throughout the year. Choral activities are presented in a end-of-year report or in a report that is prepared when there is a change on academic administration.

4.1.4. Choir 4

This vocal group is an independent organization (nonprofit civil association) where the conductor assumes decision-making, informational and interpersonal roles (Mintzberg, 2009). The work performed by conductor is unpaid and he is the artistic director of the group since 27 years ago. The proposal of the choir is to promote good musical performance and to provide a reference for the university students on conducting. To keep these ‘clients’, the choir performs pre-classical repertoire and contemporary choral works, including symphonies and operas. The conductor states that the strengths of the group are good reading musical, versatility, maturity and diversity of vocal sound.

4.1.5. Choir 5

The conductor of this vocal group said that the group arose from the desire to rescue a repertoire of sacred music that is rarely presented in concert halls. The group action is directed to performances in churches and always for free. The group is independent and not permanent, i.e., for each project repertoire it takes an sponsorship and follows a schedule of rehearsals and concerts, after which everything dissolves. The group composition also varies according to the repertoire. The conductor of this semi-professional choir incorporates the next roles:

- musical dimension: he develops the idea, searches scores, rehearses and directs the concerts;
- administrative tasks: to make contact with the churches, media, sponsors and musicians, to create the necessary material for communication and marketing (programs, posters, flyers, website);
• financial tasks: for each program, the conductor presents an accountability report to sponsors, with musicians receipts, other data and results achieved with the project.

The remuneration of the conductor and the singers are made for each project. The singers are also professionals, working in professional choirs in the city of São Paulo. The conductor also has other work connected to a state university.

Some strong points are highlighted by the conductor: technical and artistic level of the members, the involvement of musicians, flexible training, and independent choice of repertoire. As weaknesses, he detaches the lack of permanent sponsorship, the lack of operational structure, the short rehearsal time and the fact that the group is independent. The opportunities envisioned for this type of vocal group are the specialization and niche occupation.

4.1.6. Choir 6

The conductor of this choir is with the group for 16 years. The choir belongs to an English language culture association and school. The musical-technical structure has the participation of an assistant-conductor, a pianist and a teacher of vocal technique – these people are selected among the members of the choir or are professional hired for the function. The conductor is hired as a free lancer with the association.

The organization of work is performed by these three components of the team, enclosing organization of program modules, covering repertoire of sacred music, spirituals and other composers thematically chosen (this year: Purcell, Elgar and Rutter).
The formal charge of the activities undertaken is presented to the coordinator of cultural activities of the Association in a monthly formal report. Another type of evaluation of the activities of this choir is made through the use of questionnaires on satisfaction of the public upon the presentation of the group.

The conductor states that his activity is guided by the parameters of sound quality of the group, singers’ level of pleasure, the response of the public and obedience to the decision of the sponsoring entity to maintain a repertoire consisting of predominantly English composers.

4.1.7. Choir 7

This choir is conceived as a community choir and a cultural network. It was born in 1970 and his founder remains its conductor until these days. Over the years, the group had several different structures and members and it was led by other conductors. The first goal is to sing (the musical quality is the first priority) the Brazilian culture and of the peoples who contributed to its national formation. This maestro considers that the choir practice contributes to the further social development the concepts of peace, freedom and equality. The choir’s artistic team has three assistants conductors, heads of voices and a vocal coach. During rehearsals, the concerts and out of these activities, the choir has a well-planned division of work in teams, as showed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plateau</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(team for preparing the environment of rehearsal, seminar, concert)</td>
<td>(team for organizing and achieving the musical material used in the concerts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal communication</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(team for coordinating and managing people for all the activities)</td>
<td>(team for coordinating and contacting the places for rehearsals and concerts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External communication</th>
<th>Archive and memory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(team for contacting other groups, entities, media)</td>
<td>(team for organizing the historical material of concerts, programs, photos, videos, media, etc.; copies and archive of all material used in concerts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Collective happiness’</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(team for producing happiness – lunch in the rehearsals, etc.)</td>
<td>(team responsible for sound, light and video)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(team responsible for the Website, blog, twitter, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.1.7.1. – Organization of choral teams**

Source: the cultural network

The group seeks to work in the form of a self-managed organization and it is divided into several thematic teams, as shown in the figure above. Today, the choir is a formally and legally constituted institution. In fact since 2002 it has returned to this law form as nonprofit corporation. Since 2007 the choir promotes concerts with the seasons’ subscriptions sales, what contributes with the maintenance of the choir, with the payment of expenses such infrastructure and hiring invited musicians hired for special presentations. The financial resources of the choir are preferentially applied in its own events production, and their employees only receive some financial compensation if necessary. The choir has the support of two entities, one trade-union
and one university, which provide the local for it activities. In 2008, the choir began to be conceived as a cultural network.

An initiative was implemented in 2009: a training school for singers for the ‘great chorus’, activity in which are taught classes of musical reading, history of music, vocal technique, repertoire development, transverse flute, group practice and performance. In this school, the Sound Factory, students who have not participated in the ‘big chorus’ form a kind of students’ choir.

Throughout this last decades, the choir has been performing important work in fostering research activities, dissemination and implementation of choral literature worldwide, with cultural and musical projects in many countries: Mozambique, Angola, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Congo, Kenya, Tunisia, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Germany, France, Portugal and Italy.

4.2. Evaluation of the maestros’ ability of know how to motivate and a general view on the choir’s structures

Based on the choristers evaluation of their conductors, we can affirm that the ability of know how to motivate presents variable indexes (concerning choristers evaluation that their ‘maestros domain this ability and this is essential’). Knowing how to motivate provides various levels of indexes: between 88% and 94% for three conductors, between 62% and 75% in two groups; 52% for choir 1, and 20% for choir 5. The conductor 5 might understand that motivation is already inherent in the choice of repertoire and of the project to be implemented, not requiring
other techniques. Probably because of this his index is so low. Also the intermittently activity and variable composition of the group, with turnover among participants to develop projects for a few months restrict the exercise of this ability. Regarding to the choir 1, the conductor evaluate that lacks for himself motivation to think and develop new types of activities, since there is some kind of accommodation with the daily activity of the group for his long association with its members.

The table below presents the evaluation of the ability of motivation by the choirs and the conductors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Choir 1</th>
<th>Choir 2</th>
<th>Choir 3</th>
<th>Choir 4</th>
<th>Choir 5</th>
<th>Choir 6</th>
<th>Choir 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In choristers opinion, their conductors domain the ability of know how to motivate and this is essential (%)</td>
<td>52,94</td>
<td>88,0</td>
<td>88,89</td>
<td>62,07</td>
<td>20,0</td>
<td>75,0</td>
<td>94,29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In conductors opinion, this ability is</td>
<td>essential</td>
<td>essential</td>
<td>essential</td>
<td>very important</td>
<td>essential</td>
<td>essential</td>
<td>essential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.2.1. – Evaluation of the ability know how to motivate**

Source: the authors

The researched choirs are inserted in organizations with structures of different levels of complexity, what turns into differences in the maestro’s job in each case. The next chart points out some aspects of the organization of the researched choirs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choir 1</th>
<th>Choir 2</th>
<th>Choir 3</th>
<th>Choir 4</th>
<th>Choir 5</th>
<th>Choir 6</th>
<th>Choir 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal professor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other auxiliary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X pianist</td>
<td>X corporal teacher</td>
<td>X pianist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General director, artistic director, deliberative and technical-administrative councils (bureaucracy and finances)</td>
<td>The maestro is the main manager.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Há uma secretária-coralista</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.2.2. – General view of the organization and management of the researched choirs**

Source: the authors

From a overview of administrative structures of the surveyed choirs, one can see the predominance of an organization of low complexity and low bureaucracy, and the prevailing concentration of managerial tasks in the conductors, which do not have an abundance of
specialized structures of technical support and administration in most choirs. Therefore, decision-making is concentrated in the choir members and, depending on the type of leadership exercised by the conductor, it rests to a greater or lesser degree on the conductor and his choristers. When the choir is tied to an institution, the conductor has generally to refer the group’s demands to a person responsible for the activity of the choir, closer to the administrative bodies of the entity. Communication processes, however, are mostly informal and unstructured. There is, therefore, the predominance of the simple structure of organization, as described by Mintzberg (1992).

The two notable exceptions are the choruses 2 and 7. The first one, along with other vocal groups, is part of a big choral project, so it shares with the other groups a structure of advisory and administrative support. The choir 7 (an independent group) has a peculiar organization regarding the division of work between the members of the choir – whether in activities concerning the organization of concerts and rehearsals, and also in extra-rehearsals and extra-concerts tasks. There is also a peculiar division of technical work between musical and vocal assistants and the maestro (who spends most of his time outside the country).

Concerning the professionals typically involved in the preparation of a technical and musical chorus during their rehearsals, it is interesting to point out that the different choirs surveyed may or not count with monitors, vocal coach and assistants, variably. The vocal coach and the assistant – when they exist – share an functional intersection with the conductor. The monitors drives the partial rehearsals (there is usually a monitor for deep voices – basses, baritones and mezzo sopranos – and another for high voices: sopranos and tenors). In these rehearsals they usually hold a first approximation of the singers with musical pieces that are just...
being worked on. Therefore, different structural and functional configurations of bigger or smaller complexity and sophistication may be presented in the sense of the internal organization of the group.

In comparing the organizational and operational structure between choirs and small businesses, we can detach some considerations. From the typical characteristics of small firms in their organizational dimension highlighted by Escrivão Filho (2006), it is possible to point out some similarities between these organizations and the surveyed choirs:

- The inquired choirs do not have specialized administration, except the choir 2, which has an administrative technician to deal with bureaucratic and financial aspects;
- some choirs have a typical simple organization, with two exceptions: the choir 2, whose organizational design has a more complex structure, with technical assistance in administrative activities, and the choir 7, which presents an organization better configured for distributing responsibilities among the members (singers), backed by various collaborators (musicians), who also assist the maestro in the management of the choir;
- with the aforementioned exceptions, the systems of organization and management of most of the choirs is not complex – when there is a sharing of management tasks by the conductor, some of this activities are carried out only by the singers themselves;
- the Management of the choirs is mostly carried out by their conductors;
- the scarcity of own financial resources is also a constant in the coral world, the vast majority said that a own place for rehearsals, with minimum acoustic conditions, would be something extraordinary;

- the financial resources of the choirs are scarce, with one major exception to the choir 5, that works professionally for sponsored projects, and for the choir “7”, which has some partners and has performed concerts and seasons with paid tickets.
- besides the conductor, the human resources of the choruses are almost exclusively the choristers, who in most circumstances, being amateurs, have in their day various tasks. The choir is an organization of singers, especially; they perform professional activities in various areas, and only if it is requested they will collaborate with the group performing also other functions in addition to singing;
- the maestro is the manager, for excellence, par excellence of the chorus and occupies a significant position within the group. The choirs are organizations of low complexity in its the administrative apparatus and, often, this structure is practically nonexistent (chorus 5 and 6);
- in the choirs there is not a clear vertical division of work;
- the personal character of intra-organizational relationships is the constant key;
- the goal of the choirs surveyed is making good concert, ensuring the group’s and conductor’s survival.

Concerning the comparison between the work of maestro as managers and de work of a small business manager, as described by Oliveira (2010), it is interesting to detach some points:
in opposition to the typical small enterprise manager, who has a low concentration in his/her work and thinks predominantly in short time, maestros are very concentrated in their activities and think in short and medium time, trying to enlarge their group space of action inside choral universe; in these attitudes, therefore, maestro is different from a small business manager;

- differently of the work of a small business manager, the maestro usually has an agenda and plans his/her activities (rehearsals, contacts, concerts), although they also solve some ‘problems of way’.

Similarities among characters of managerial role of a small business director and of managerial role of conductors can be also pointed out:

- the choral conductor is also ‘inside the action’, the choral practice, taking decisions according his/her judgements of what are the necessities of the group and these decisions are taken with a relatively high degree of authonomy;

- the maestro is the main agent of choral strategy and the mains responsible for executing what was planned;

- the focus of conductor’s job is the rehearsal – an activity with a centralizer character;

- the information are received by the maestros in an informal and personal manner, except in extraordinary formal situations;
the maestro, as a small business director, supervises directly the activities inside his/her group.

5. Conclusions

The simple organizational structure of choral activity designs the ability of motivation as an essential attribute for maestros, mainly in the cases of amateur groups, as the researched, where the continuity of the project depends on a minimum number of choristers. In the researched cases – choirs of a high performance level –, motivation is not only a human resources management strategy for maintaining singers participation, but mainly to make possible a high level of demands on the choristers, who also have to sustain the technically high level of artistic results and the agenda of concerts designed for the group.

In all cases, motivation depends on some factors, mainly on: 1) a good relationship of maestro and choristers on the day to day; 2) a clearly and democratic design of goals; 3) exigencies compatible with choristers expectations; 4) good technical results (also compatible with choristers expectations. As maestro 6 detached in his interview, the demands he directs to the singers are of a high degree, but they accept it and “this difficulty is a great stimulus”. Performance in concerts also compensates other deficiencies in maestros in creating motivation for choristers – this makes possible the satisfaction of the higher necessity of human beings, as described by Maslow (1973; 1975; 1991): the self-actualization. The collaborative dimension of choral work, competently managed by the interviewed maestros (that, in general, reveal a high capacity of promoting cooperation and teamwork), enhances the group cohesion, supplying the
necessities of inclusion, participation and other social-psychological demands described by Schütz (1970) and Maslow (1973; 1975; 1991). The achievement orientation, other exit for the maestros, is related to group’s focus on optimal performatic results, with high technical and aesthetical quality, what gears more demands to choristes, fomenting a group charisma, as described by Elias and Scotson (1994) and visualized in the words of maestro 3:

They [the choristers] departed at 8 AM [from São Paulo] and arrived in Rio [de Janeiro] at 8 PM. They had 12 hours of travel, with bus breaking many times. […] [As they were late for the concert] they exit the bus […] and went directly to the stage. […] Without [vocal] preparation, we start to sing the songs and mark all things [in the stage]. After they had travelled 12 hours […], they [showed] a degree of commitment to the work…

6. Bibliographical references


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