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## **Maestro as manager: the work of conductors beyond the stage**

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## **Maestro as manager: the work of conductors beyond the stage**

### **Abstract**

The aim is to present a specific perspective of the interface between music and operations management. Firstly, it points out the usages in business literature and imaginary of the conductor's picture as a metaphor of the leader and the manager. Soon afterwards, it seeks to show that the managerial role of the conductor is not so relevant in his/her performance on stage as it is in pre-concert activities, when the maestro performs tasks such as material and human resources management, coordination, planning, motivation and leadership. The research is based on a bibliographical revision and on a case study with participant observation as a choir conductor in a chamber vocal group: Madrigal InCanto, from São Carlos city, State of São Paulo, Brazil.

**Key words:** human resources management in artistic groups; managerial role of conductors; OM in musical groups; motivation; leadership.



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## 1. Introduction

Since the publication of Fayol's classic book on *General and Industrial Management* (firstly in France, in 1916, and later in the USA, in 1949), organizations have undergone a series of profound transformations. From the traditional optics of administration, as suggested by Douglas McGregor, that *managing means to make things through people* to the modern views, which aim at rescuing the importance of motivation and creativity of human beings in various administrative areas, including the strategic decisions of the organization, there has been a major breakthrough in thinking about the manager's job. The new managerial trends, which can be synthesized in various forms of participatory management (co-management, self-government, semi-autonomous groups of work, self-managed teams, etc.) argue that management is fundamentally a process of releasing potential, creating opportunities and providing guidance to professionals so that they can put all their creativity and ability to serve companies and groups. In the same sense, the original ideas of Frederick Taylor, in the early twentieth century, about the alleged existence of *The Principles of Scientific Management*, are today widely questioned in the context of academic debate, though they are still present in the managerial practices of many organizations. Even some "innovations" introduced by the Japanese model of management or Toyotism seem to be more improvements and refinements of the traditional model of producing and organizing work (for some authors it is in fact a neo-Taylorism).



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The aim here is firstly to point the description of managing as conducting a musical group and then to discuss what the organizational and managerial tasks carried out by a maestro are. For discussing this question, many approaches of the manager's job are discussed. These approaches were presented by the most detached management authors, from Fayol to Koontz and O'Donnell, Peter Drucker, Chester Barnard, Simon, Mintzberg, Peter Senge and Prahalah, among others. In this context, the classical administrative or managerial functions are redesigned under new and different dimensions. Finally, to provide a first analysis about the relevance of these theories to describe maestro's managerial tasks, a study case is presented.

The methodological approach of this case study about the Madrigal InCanto (InCanto Chamber Choir) is based on a participant observation. According to Thiollent (2005), this research strategy was created in USA, in the 1940s, by Kurt Lewin. "While a methodological proposal, participative research and research-action detach the qualitative aspects of conception and organization of the research process, and its relation with the capacity of action of the involved actors" (Thiollent, 2005, p. 172). The study used participant research strategy, as choristers have an active role in producing the data collection (the experiences described and analyzed) and the conductor of this vocal group is one of the researchers.

This paper is part of a postdoctoral research funded by the State of São Paulo Research Foundation (Fapesp, 'Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo') and developed in the Group of Organizational Studies on Small Business (Geope, 'Grupo de Estudos Organizacionais da Pequena Empresa'), from the Production Engineering Department, at the



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Engineering School of São Carlos, University of São Paulo (EESC – USP). The postdoctoral research is about: “The work of the conductor as a manager and the organizational perspective of choral singing: interdisciplinary contributions for managers and conductors”<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. The maestro on the stage: a caricature of management

The figure of the maestro is repeatedly used in the management literature to refer to managerial roles and leadership<sup>2</sup>. Peter Drucker (2007a, p. 72), commenting on the impartiality in the selection of professionals, notes that a conductor who wishes to fill a vacancy in the suit of cellists in the orchestra cannot select an oboist, even if he is musically more competent than all other cellists candidates. In another work, Drucker wrote: “And just as an orchestra can sabotage even the ablest conductor – and certainly even the most autocratic one – a knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> The research aims at exploring the interdisciplinarity between the areas of operations management and music (choral conducting), analyzing the organizational and administrative aspects pertaining to the management function of choir conductor and to the choirs work, as well as uncovering the similarities, differences and mutual contributions of the conducting practice for the manager's performance and of management theory for the work of a conductor. The study is being conducted in two phases: first, there is an interdisciplinary literature review in the areas of business administration, production engineering and music (choral conducting), mainly. The foreground approaches of the administrative work and the organizational dimension of choral singing, the latter one with an emphasis on literature about the organization of small businesses, are discussed, since they share organizational features with the choires because of their dimension. Also discussed as related issues are the concepts of competencies and abilities, the vision of leadership (as an ability) and the motivational aspect. In a second step, the empirical research, numerous cases of choirs are studied, covering the different categories. Data collection will be conducted through semi-structured questionnaires, to be applied to conductors and choristers, observation and recording of rehearsals and interviews with choir directors. Thus, the purpose is to generate useful knowledge for choir conductors highlighting what they can improve on their management practice, from administrative theories to business managers, particularly managers of small organizations, focusing on what they can learn from the administrative practice developed by choir directors.

<sup>2</sup> Also in other areas of knowledge the maestro is a metaphor used in reference to coordinating activities. In a paper about neuroscience, published in a journal of scientific dissemination, it is said: “As an orchestral conductor, the cerebral cortex coordinates processing and storage of data captured by the sensitive organs (vision, hearing, taste, touch and smell), besides the movement” (Zorretto, 2009, p. 20).



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organization can easily sabotage even the ablest, let alone the most autocratic superior" (Drucker, 2007b, p. 60). According to Leavitt (2003, p. 96): "Back in 1989, Peter Drucker predicted that the businesses of the future would be modeled on a symphony like Mahler's Eighth, where a single conductor leads more than 1,000 musicians and singers without any intermediaries or assistants".

Henry Mintzberg dedicated an article in the *Harvard Business Review* to compare the maestro to the manager, concluding that qualified works – the case of musicians of high level orchestras – are not led by supervision, by inspiration. In these orchestras, the maestro is a high qualified worker, as the other musicians – the conductor is only one of them. Mintzberg (1998a, p. 141) also wrote: "When the maestro walks up to the podium and raises his baton, the musicians respond in unison. Another motion, and they all stop. It's the image of absolute control –management captured perfectly in caricature. And yet it is all a great myth".

In *HBR*, there are many papers relating maestro's job to tasks such as lead orchestra musicians focusing on a goal and on creating musical collaboration (Mangurian; Lockhart, 2006), to the usage of emotional intelligence, empathy, intuition and self-awareness in conducting and co-ordinating work (HBR, 2004), to the creativity at work (Almondo; Morse, 2006), to the command of groups (Gourville, 2005), to the ability of leading a high number of people (Leavitt, 2003), to the capacity of coordinating collective work. In a paper published in *HBR*, Christensen, Marx and Stevenson (2006, p. 72) wrote: "The primary task of management is to get people to work together in a systematic way. Like orchestra conductors, managers direct the talents and actions of various players to produce a desired result. It's a complicated job, and it becomes



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much more so when managers are trying to get people to change, rather than continue with the status quo”.

Amaral and Sbragio (2006, p. 17) compared the maestro to a project manager.

One afternoon I was talking about project management with a friend of mine who lives in New York and he told me a curious story about the presentation of a famous symphony orchestra. Early in the presentation, the conductor introduced himself and asked the following question to the public: “Can the orchestra play without the presence of a conductor?” Before the audience could respond, he asked the orchestra to execute a particular song and left the stage. To the surprise of all, the orchestra played straight, without even an error, being highly commended. The conductor then returned, thanked the musicians, and conducted the orchestra in the same song. To the delight of the audience, the result was far superior. The project manager is sometimes compared to a conductor of an orchestra, because he leads teams to achieve a common purpose. The project manager is assigned the task of conducting the project in order to develop the product or service on time, with quality and within budget.



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### 3. Manager's job

Regarding the manager's job, basically two consolidated approaches can be identified: the process approach and the functions or roles approach (Escrivão Filho, 1995; Escrivão Filho; Mendes, 2008). For the authors of process approach, founded by Henri Fayol (1841-1925), the tasks of managers consist of a group of activities, the performance of which is a process sequential in the design and simultaneous in operation; a process that repeats itself continuously (Escrivão Filho, 1995). Fayol explains: "To prepare the operations is to *plan* and *organize*; to see that they are carried out is to *command* and to *co-ordinate*; to watch the results is to *control*" (Fayol, 2002, p. 225). On the other hand, concerning the functions or roles approach, although its authors do not share a single – or even similar – formulation on the manager functions, they can be grouped when the empirical support of their works and the criticism to the supporters of Fayol is emphasized. The main criticism directed to the processualists is that their theory prescribes "steps" for an effective management, which, in empirical reality, is far from the systematic and fragmented description proposed by the authors of the process approach (Escrivão Filho, 1995). In the approach of the managers' roles or functions, represented by authors such as Barnard (1966), Simon (1976) and Mintzberg (1998b), the visible face of managerial behavior has started to be considered as characterized by brevity, variety and fragmentation of work. The roles or functions approach authors are not unanimous in their description of the managers' job, but they have in common the criticism of the reductionism and the unreality of the process approach. Authors such as Stewart (1982, 1979, 1976, 1974) and Kotter (1999) can also be classified



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alongside Barnard, Simon and Mintzberg (Registrar Son, 1995), but a closer examination reveals that Stewart and Kotter also bring criticism both to the process approach and to the roles or functions approach, which basically reduces management to execution or to decision-making, respectively (Escrivão Filho; Mendes, 2008, p. 12). Therefore, the latter two authors are familiar with the roles or functions approach, but they propose new analysis, not yet fully disseminated and consolidated within management teaching and practice .

Another emerging perspective on the manager's job is addressed by Nadler and Tushman (1977), which fall within the so-called diagnosis approach. But they reject the diagnosis based on symptoms (in which the manager's job is just reactive) and the diagnosis based on the intuition of the manager. The authors propose, therefore, the systematic diagnosis based on particular organizational components, providing a "congruence model of organizational behavior", in which the manager's job is focused on solving problems.

Some contemporary views, individually advocated by their authors, do not constitute themselves great thinking lines on the manager's job, or are similar to those emergent approaches or to the already established ones. In this category, the visions of Senge (1994), based on organizational learning, and Prahalad, more focused on competitive strategy of large companies and corporations, stand out.

The following table briefly presents the concepts of the manager's job developed by the administration literature since Fayol.



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Approach	Author	Description of the manager's job
1 <sup>st</sup> . Consolidated approach of the manager's job explanation: <i>process approach</i>	Fayol (2002)	To plan, organize, command, co-ordinate and control
	Gulick (1969)	Planning, organizing, staffing, directing, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting
	Koontz and O'Donnell (1972)	Planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling
	Drucker (2007c)	To set objectives, organize, motivate and communicate, measure, develop people
2 <sup>nd</sup> . Consolidated approach of the manager's job explanation: <i>functions or roles approach</i>	Barnard (1966)	Maintenance of organization communication, securing of essential services from individuals, formulation of purposes and objectives
	Simon (1976)	Deciding and coordinating (development of a plan for all members of the organization involved, the communication of relevant portions of this plan to each member, and ensuring that each member is willing to be guided by the plan)
	Mintzberg (1998b)	Interpersonal roles (figurehead, leader, liaison); informational roles (monitor, disseminator, spokesperson); decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator)
Emergent approaches related <i>functions or roles approach</i>	Kotter (1999)	Agenda setting, network building and execution (getting networks to implement agendas)



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	Stewart (1982; 1979; 1976; 1974)	To meet demands under constraints and make choices
Emergent approach on <i>systemic organizational diagnosis</i>	Nadler and Tushman (1977)	To diagnose organizational behavior, search for alternative solutions (action), evaluate and feedback
Contemporary individual approaches	Senge (1994)	Five disciplines: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking
	Prahalad (1997; 2003)	Managing cultural and intellectual diversity, market volatility, Internet impacts, new and emergent clients; to design and implement complex strategic tasks, share and protect intellectual property, manage the public-private interface, provide intellectual and managerial leadership

**Table 1 – Approaches of the manager's job**

Source: the authors.

#### **4. Case study: Madrigal InCanto (InCanto Chamber Choir)**

##### **4.1. Introductory description of the group**

The InCanto Chamber Choir ('Madrigal InCanto': <http://www.incantochoir.blogspot.com/>) is a musical group dedicated to the vocal *a cappella* performance of polyphonic music of the Middle Age, Renaissance and of our times. The vocal



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group debut in 2009, with the concert “From Renaissance to Brazilian Popular Music”, when the InCanto sang pieces by medieval and renaissance composers (mainly the piece from Cancionero de Upsala), and arrangements of songs by Paul Simon, Carlos Lyra, Milton Nascimento and Almir Sater. InCanto’s performance of Villa-Lobos’ “*Feliz Natal*” was classified as “a lovely performance”, by Dean Frey, director of Red Deer Public Library (Heitor Villa-Lobos Website, 2009), from Canada, which maintains an international site about the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. InCanto videos at YouTube.com have been watched in many countries, such as the United States, Brazil, Canada, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, United Kingdom and Australia.



**Figure 1 – Madrigal InCanto (InCanto Chamber Choir)**



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The choir is formed by one conductor and (in the last concert) by 9 (nine) amateur singers: two mezzo sopranos, three sopranos, two tenors and two basses. The conductor is the only professional musician of the group (she has a degree in Music, a specialization in Voice, a master and a PhD in Education). One of the sopranos is the assistant and he has some studies on musical theory and the piano. She has conducted some rehearsals in 2009.

The idea that originated InCanto came from a casual meeting with one chorister (tenor) who sang in her choir (Municipal Choir of São Carlos; 'Coral Municipal de São Carlos'<sup>3</sup>, which existed from 1983 to 1989) and had recovered some recordings of the group. After this meeting, the conductor visited another chorister (soprano) who sung in her choir (Municipal Choir of São Carlos) and was her assistant in this group. From these meetings came the idea of a meeting with the members of this choir, to remember the past times and eventually sing some score. After a first meeting, it was decided to make a presentation and the rehearsals have been conducted since August 2008, culminating in the first concert of the group in December 2009. The low frequency of rehearsals (one a month) and health problems with the choristers delayed the presentation, firstly programmed for June 2009. In the last concert, the group was formed by:

- a conductor;
- three sopranos: one retired scholar from the University of São Paulo (USP) in São Carlos, a researcher from USP-São Carlos and her daughter (a high school student);
- two contraltos, a retired secretary from USP-São Carlos and a trader;

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<sup>3</sup> Videos available at: <http://www.youtube.com/coralmunicipal>



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- two tenors: a high-school professor (father of one of the sopranos) and a professor from USP-São Paulo (husband of the conductor);
- two basses, a high-school professor and a professor from the University of São Paulo State (UNESP-Araraquara).

Nowadays, InCanto is still making rehearsals for the group concerts in 2010.



apresenta

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**Concerto vocal *a capella***

Com obras de Carlos Lyra, Milton Nascimento, Almir Sater,  
Paul Simon, Villa-Lobos e do Cancionero de Upsala  
Arranjos de DAMIANO COZZELA e ALEXANDRE ZILAHÍ

**Regência: Rita Fucci Amato**  
Assistente: Mirian Mendes

**InCanto**

João Amato, tenor  
Milva Caliri, contralto  
Paulo Censoni, tenor  
Jacy Rayel, contralto  
Ricardo Santos, baixo  
Rita Fucci Amato, regente  
Mauro Thobias, baixo  
Mirian Mendes, soprano  
Wilma Barriónuevo, soprano



**Teatro Municipal de São Carlos**  
**Sábado, 28 de novembro, 20h30**  
**Entrada franca**

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**Figure 2 – Poster of an InCanto's concert**



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## **4.2. Descriptions of manager's job applied to InCanto conductor's job**

### **4.2.1. Fayol**

According to Fayol (2002), the manager's job is described by five kinds of activities: to plan, to organize, to command, to co-ordinate and to control, which compound the formula POC3.

To plan is to make the program of action (see the future, evaluate and prepare it), according to Cerri and Escrivão Filho (2008, p.27). In the case of InCanto, the program of action is focused on concerts. The scheduling of a date at the Municipal Theater of São Carlos, especially, inspires everyone to work for a differentiated performance, because this is a place with great acoustics, good lighting, better possibilities for audio and video recording, demands appropriate clothing, a more formal way of presentation of the group, etc.). The Theater also carries the tradition of being a place with great performances and great memories for the choristers and the conductor.

According to Fayol, organizing is to provide the body and social material. InCanto's choristers and conductor have defined what were their material needs (place for rehearsalrehearsals, piano or keyboard, printed material as scores, shelves, etc.) are. The place for rehearsals was defined as the house of a chorister (who is also the assistant), in which InCanto rehearses, usually at weekends. Concerning the social organism, the choristers and the conductor discussed the need of suit and general rehearsals. At first, suite rehearsals were conducted by the



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assistant and later the conductor recorded each voice (suit) on DVD. After some general rehearsals (of all the voices) the complaints about the DVD came, because to study through it, each chorister had to be at home, turn on the DVD player, and make a 'public study', bothering the chorister's families (the use of the TV was creating difficulties to individual access to the voices recording and to its study). One of the choristers presented the idea of making the voice recordings on the computer (.mp3) and of sending it to the choristers by e-mail. Besides this practice, that has been successfully implemented, today choristers can have individual doubts sessions with the conductor via Skype; InCanto also is planning to have some virtual general rehearsals (of all the voices) via Skype, as the conductor usually cannot be personally present more than one weekend per month. It is a new proposal for InCanto's organization, thus supplying the absence of the conductor in the choir host city – São Carlos – every week.

The other managers' functions described by Fayol are the command (to make it work), coordination (harmonization of actions, tasks and activities) and control (check the plan and its practice). In InCanto, these three activities are basically in charge of the conductor. All reports about rehearsals and the calendar of concerts are made by the conductor. The assistant, who makes her home available for the rehearsals, is also asked to intervene in any noncompliance or absence of choristers. All rehearsals are determined and formatted to comply with the program established for each presentation.

The command, coordinate and control acts are exercised by the conductor in a global vision and most often automatically.



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#### 4.2.2. Gulick

Gulick (1969) practically maintains the description of Fayol, with a few semantic changes. The functions of planning, organization, direction and coordination in InCanto have also been described, and also the function of staffing, similar to the organization concept as described by Fayol. In addition, Gulick (1969) describes the functions of reporting and budgeting.

In InCanto, the information refers to both the technical (musical) aspect of the work and the organizational dimension. The musical dimension is centered on the conductor, with the participation of the singers only within the common limits of all process of teaching and learning. The organizational dimension involves the communication of diverse information (dates of rehearsals, opportunities for presentation, assignment of tasks, etc.). The communication of organizational issues is more informal and less systematic, with the participation of both the conductor and the choristers in the communication of these issues.

Regarding the budget, as InCanto is an amateur choir in which the conductor works as volunteer (i.e., singers and conductor receive no payment), the only expenses of the group are those referring to snacks for the rehearsals, gifts, and eventual transportation costs for presentation and rental of the places for the concerts. To cover these expenses, each member bears the costs individually, or sometimes the costs are prorated. The conductor, who travels about 230 km for the rehearsals, is the sole responsible for her travels expenses.



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#### 4.2.3. Koontz and O'Donnell

For Koontz and O'Donnell (1972) managerial functions are: planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Planning involves deciding in advance what, how, when and who should do); organizing refers to enumerate and determine the necessary activities and to allocate authority) and coincides with planning; staffing (recruit, evaluate and select staff) is similar to the function of the organization described by Fayol, while directing (to lead and motivate) and controlling are the functions that Fayol appointed, respectively, as command and control. For Koontz and O'Donnell (1972), coordination would be the genre that encompasses all five types of managerial tasks. According to Moraes and Escrivão Filho (2008, p. 48): "The functions of providing, organizing and controlling did not result in great innovations; however, command and coordination have been the subject of much controversy".

Staffing is included in the organizing process described by Fayol. In the case of InCanto, the organization of the choir is confused with the recruitment and personnel selection: the selection was made from some well-known singers, old singers of the Municipal Choir of São Carlos ('Coral Municipal de São Carlos'), and singers brought by other choristers. The concern in the selection of singers was not their vocal quality and interest in learning, but also their commitment and personal affinity with the members of the group.

The perception of the real job of the conductor shows that managerial tasks are embedded in the daily work of conducting an amateur choir. In professional choirs, there usually is a distinction among the activities of the conducting, artistic direction (which generally coincides



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with the figure of the conductor) and administrative direction, which accounts for press releases, schedule of rehearsals and concerts, and checking the attendance problems of the singers. In an amateur choir, everything or almost everything comes to the conductor and requires solutions. It is conceivable that there is a “general coordination” task of the conductor inherent in the process of forming a vocal group.

In the routine of InCanto's rehearsals problems (lack of tenors, for example) emerged that required immediate solutions. The search for new singers has always been mediated by the conductor, although choristers also participated in this search. Currently, the choir needs a contralto: the members are searching for information and the conductor contacts (usually by phone) possible future singers. Sometimes the contact is rewarding, sometimes not. The last experience was frustrating because the candidate was shown to be adamant about the timings of the rehearsals (on Saturdays, 4 hours of rehearsal), showing, however, a great admiration for the group after having accessed InCanto videos at YouTube.com.

The lack of an adequate contralto to the group and to the hours of the rehearsals makes the conductor share the responsibility of singing as a contralto (mezzo soprano), collaborating with the other contralto of the group. In the case of InCanto, this is seen as natural and the interaction between the singer and the conductor is personally and vocally excellent (pitch and timbre are well established).



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#### 4.2.4. Drucker

For Drucker (2007c), a manager sets objectives, organizes, motivates and communicates, measures, develops people. The objective of InCanto was defined by the conductor and the choristers: the choir aims at presenting vocal music in high quality performances. The organization has also been described under a Fayolian vision. The commitment of the choristers is based on the motivation of accomplishing the goals collectively designed. Concerts “re-motivates” choristers and conductor to continue with the activities of the choir, and its evaluation is also designed in group, usually informally, through the audio and video recordings provided by the members.

#### 4.2.5. Barnard

According to Migliato and Perussi Filho (2008, p. 77), Barnard was the “first author to worry about consistently describing the functions of the executive, focusing on human, psychological and behavioral aspects. Moreover, the core of the Barnard’s arguments is the tension between the achievement of organizational goals (called efficacy) and the need of individuals to achieve their personal goals (efficiency). “The organizational objectives can not be achieved unless the leadership recognizes a set of individual aspirations and find a way to help employees achieve them. The cooperative system works best if there is balance between both” (Migliato; Perussi Filho, 2008, p. 73).



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Barnard was a pioneering thinker about the nature of leadership (the concept of a good manager as a trainer of values) in contrast to the figure of the authoritarian and manipulative manager (based on reward system). In InCanto Chamber Choir, the leadership exercised by the conductor is firstly based on her musical ability; secondly, on her facility to take decisions, taking into account a negotiation with the singers; thirdly, because the led internalize the conductor's leadership because of her strong intuitive power to build an imaginary appropriate to real situations; fourthly, because being together and producing high quality music is the greatest goal of all.

Another important point to be reviewed is the fraternity established by the conductor, which allows singers to express their anxieties and concerns about the work: moments of relaxation are essential in rehearsals (with juice and snacks). Relaxation allows suggestions and also definitions of new assignments to the singers. The leading process through co-operation and consent makes effective choices and goals achieved in a more rewarding way.

All leadership activities performed inside InCanto materialize the typical functions of managers described by Barnard (1966): maintenance of organization communication, securing of essential services from individuals, formulation of purposes and objectives.

#### **4.2.6. Simon**

For Simon, management (or administration) is the art of getting things done. With this author



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the rationality of the decision (balance between means and ends) becomes the main concern of administrative [or managerial] theory; it is a managerial task distributing and influencing the decision-making function in a particular organization. [...] For Simon, the actual behavior does not reach the objective rationality (best choice), because the individual is limited and influenced often by his/ her physical ability, values, and extent of knowledge. (Albuquerque; Escrivão Filho, 2008, p. 86-7)

Starting from this perspective, the limitations create the path of decisions. In the case of InCanto, on the one hand there are limitations brought about by some of the choristers.

- The qualities and limitations of the voices of the singers clearly delimit the choices of repertoire;
- The professional activities of participants make it difficult to schedule rehearsals. There is always a great collective negotiation for extra rehearsals;
- The amateur link of the singers with the activity contrasts with the professional status of the conductor. This restricts the activities, but at the same time, a stronger charisma group was created in this organizational structure.
- The pleasure of belonging to a group with vocal quality trims the edges of amateur / professional relations. InCanto is the result of a number of voices and that is the foundation of its existence: to sing in harmony.



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Concerning the conductor, she also adds up to several limitations, such as:

The conductor lives outside the host city of InCanto (about 230 km) and in this sense the rehearsals usually only occur on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon (from 15 to 19:30 p.m.). Because of this limitation, large concerts and presentations should be scheduled taking this fact into account;

- The conductor has other professional activities (currently she is a postdoctoral researcher) that do not allow her spending more time in InCanto's activities;
- Suit rehearsals are left to the individual singers. Each chorister should study his/her voice and request any support assistance from the conductor;
- The choice of repertoire is limited to the aesthetic taste of the conductor and some precedents are open for requests of participants. The vocal music of the sixteenth century are the works currently focused by the conductor and fortunately the scores are welcomed by the whole choir.

Another key-word Simon's description (1976) is to coordinate. This role involves: the development of a plan for all members of the organization involved, the communication of relevant portions of this plan to each member, and ensuring that each member is willing to be guided by the plan. The organization of the activities plan of InCanto is delineated by the



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constraints highlighted. Planning and communicating are very participatory and democratic. These activities have a more horizontal and informal character and aim to take into account the views of all members (choristers and conductor). This way it is possible to obtain the commitment from all the targets.

#### 4.2.7. Mintzberg

Mintzberg (1998b) descriptions on the three great complexes of managerial roles (interpersonal, informational and decisional roles) is a great counterpoint to the Fayolian theory and is, in itself, a new paradigm of the descriptions about manager's job. In reference to the interpersonal roles, InCanto's conductor is the "official" figurehead and liaison of the choir. She is the person who makes contacts and negotiates the eventual prices and fees for presentations. She is also the one who figureheads the group in media interviews and during the concerts, in which she conducts the ceremonial and theatric aspects of the presentation. Leadership and motivation are also centered in the maestro's person.

Regarding the informational roles, the conductor develops the roles of monitor and disseminator, mainly because of her participation in the choral environment (concerts, informal conversations with musicians, etc.). However, because of the informality and horizontality of the group organization, the choristers also bring to the group information about other choirs and musical groups, concerts and other points. The role of spokesperson is also played by the choristers, but mainly by the conductor, seen as the "official" figurehead of the choir.



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Regarding the decisional roles, entrepreneurship is centered in the conductor, but with the active participation of the choristers. As disturbance handler, the maestro promotes a situational leadership, in which as a leader she makes use of her dialogue capabilities, and abilities for judgement and decision. InCanto's assistant, who is also a chorister, develops an important role in solving interpersonal disturbances, by means of motivational messages focusing on maintaining the existence and the harmony of the group. These activities also compose the internal dimension of the role of negotiator. In its external dimension, the decisional role is similar to that of the resource allocator role. Concerning this role, in InCanto an organization of work has been established in which all the members (choristers and conductor) are motivated to seek opportunities for presentations, focusing on the opportunities of remunerated concerts, such as those during scientific conferences, which are very common in São Carlos universities. Searching for resources is very important to the group to cover the costs of snacks usually consumed during rehearsals intervals. The group also needs to look for opportunities of paid presentations, because it needs money to make concerts in more formal and prestigious places: for example, in the first concert of InCanto, the Municipal Theater of São Carlos (funded by the municipal hall) required a fee of 415 reais to make the place available for the concert. As the group did not (and does not) have a sponsor, the solution was to share the expenses among conductor and choristers.



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#### 4.2.8. Kotter

Kotter's (1999) description of the manager's job involves agenda setting, network building and execution (getting networks to implement agendas). In the case of InCanto, agenda setting is basically defined in the rehearsals, during the year and according to opportunities of presentations and to the schedule restrictions of the members. For example, when a concert date approaches, the rehearsals become more frequent and their duration increases. The agenda is set according to its possibilities of implementation. Network building in the choir is determined informally by the personal networks of choristers and conductor. The personal relationships of InCanto members are usually the base for opportunities of presentation in some events and for obtaining spaces for the group concerts (such as churches attended by the choristers).

#### 4.2.8. Stewart

For Stewart (1982; 1979; 1976; 1974), the managerial job is determined by demands, constraints and choices. As described in the topic concerning the management of InCanto Chamber Choir under Simon's vision, the constraints of the groups create the possibilities of choices. For example, the choir cannot make a free presentation on Thursday afternoon, because the conductor lives in another city and usually can only go to São Carlos at weekends; the choristers are working at that time. As the presentation is free, the members of the choir would only try to overcome its obstacles if the presentation could provide some intangible profit (for



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example, there will be an executive from an enterprise that can provide future support to the choir).

#### 4.2.9. Nadler and Tushman

For Nadler and Tushman (1977), managing is to diagnose organizational behavior, search for alternative solutions (action), evaluate and provide feedback. This is the “congruence model of organizational behavior”.

Concerning the systemic diagnosis of InCanto, the group was formed from the encounter of conductor and singers who had worked together in the 80s in a choir in the city. Later, other singers were invited to participate. As one of the singers (the assistant) has mobility difficulties, it was defined that the rehearsals would take place in her house, which also provides the space needed for the activity.

The problems resolution is a main point for Nadler and Tushman (1977). In InCanto, the challenges refer to issues as: number of singers, their limitations and vocal qualities; what a chamber vocal group sings (search of scores); rehearsals agenda (one singer lives in a nearby city, the other singers live in São Carlos, where the rehearsals take place, and the conductor lives in São Paulo city, 230 kilometers away from São Carlos). The main question was: how to make a choir work if the participants only meet one weekend per month?



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As described, to solve these problems, one of the ways found was the voice recordings played by the conductor for the choristers' self-study. Recently, a night a week was implemented for solving chorister's doubts via Skype and an extra rehearsal using this electronic tool.

The concerts are the great goal of the group and each performance result is analyzed after each presentation, providing a feedback on the work developed and creating an environment in which all members can participate for re-planning the choir's activities. Besides the concerts, the group charisma is a basis to maintain InCanto activities, allowing its members to enhance the group "force" and requirements.

#### 4.2.10. Senge

For Senge (1994), a manager has to dominate five disciplines: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking. In InCanto, the conductor is focused on the group goal: to perform vocal music at high quality levels, based on singers' and conductor's aesthetic preferences. This model and the organization of work in the group were not so clear during the initial activities of the choir, but have been constructed through the sharing of visions and opinions by the conductor and the choristers. This way of defining of the choir goals makes it possible to develop a high integrated and enthusiastic team-work.

According to Senge (1994), learning organizations are those in which people continually expand their capacity of creating the results they desire, in which learning is continuous and group-based. These organizations create people's abilities and the capacity of learning. Learning



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and knowing are spread through all the members. The decisions have a significant degree of decentralization. The leaders of these organizations project, guide and teach (Lima; Perussi Filho, 2008, p. 168).

Are the choirs not good examples of learning organizations? By being a group of music learning, vocal development, interpersonal integration and social inclusion, the amateur choir is a space consisting of various interpersonal and teaching-learning relationships, requiring a range of abilities and competences from the conductor related not only to the technical (musical) preparation, but also to the management and conduction of people seeking motivation, learning and living together in a social group. In choirs, the conductor is a manager and a teacher of music and voice.

#### 4.2.11. Prahalad

For Prahalad (1997; 2003), managers need to know how to manage cultural and intellectual diversity, market volatility, Internet impacts, new and emergent clients; to design and implement complex strategic tasks, share and protect intellectual property, manage the public-private interface, provide intellectual and managerial leadership. The description of this author is not a really relevant contribution to understanding managing a choir. A choir is not a corporation viewing competition in the global market. Considering this, in the case of InCanto, only the abilities of *managing cultural and intellectual diversity* and *providing intellectual and managerial leadership* can be considered. To learn how to work in a group has to be highly



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developed, as choristers and conductor have experience in choral singing. But InCanto is a relatively homogeneous group concerning cultural and intellectual aspects. One of the leadership bases of the conductor is her technical knowledge, and in the administrative tasks, although she plays an important role in coordinating, the group, for being small, allows choristers to also take an effective part in these issues.

## 5. Concluding remarks

In addition to mentioning the apparent similarity between the conductor and the manager, and beyond the simple analogy or metaphor used in management literature (as a type of isomorphism in science, as conceived by Bertalanffy, 1977), it is important to highlight that the maestro's job, widely understood, is not limited in any way to wave the arms and make a vocal or instrumental group play music in a concert. In the day to day work of the conductor, during rehearsals, he performs the technical tasks of musical direction of a team, in which issues such as leadership, co-ordination, planning and motivation are essential factors for the construction of the artistic result expected from that human group. Also out of rehearsals, when the conductor has to raise funds for the choir, plan and organize the marketing of the concerts, examine and select scores, recruiting people and performing many other tasks, his activity resembles a manager's job. In fact, the conductor most often appears as a professional who performs many of the organizational functions – related to operations, marketing, finance, human resources and research and development, among others –, although their training, traditionally, only involves



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the technical-musical dimension, but almost never the organizational expertise. Moreover, to plan, organize, lead and control are words that mark the practice of conducting, but these terms come from management theory, and in administration, managers find it difficult to comply with these activities successfully, as noted by Mintzberg (1998b).

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