Rethinking Motivation in Choir Participation: Proposing a Contextual Model of Motivation

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Abstract: Choir singing is a worldwide, multifaceted phenomenon, thus, to some extent choral research can be described as a multidisciplinary field. However, research on motivation in choir participation does not show the same multifaceted diversity, which would create opportunities for expanding present discourse. The aim of this chapter is to rethink the notion of motivation in choir participation by emphasising the importance of cultural and social contexts, and by doing this, offer a deeper and more nuanced understanding, which also includes sociological, cultural, and emic bottom-up perspectives. The data for this study were generated in Sunnmøre, Norway, and includes twelve interviews, notes from participant observation periods with four choirs, and a larger online survey. Through a "near-to-the-data" analysis the findings are expressed through a contextual model of motivation, where a range of motivational factors were sorted according to whether they are perceived to be central or peripheral to the informant. The model proposes connections and dynamics providing insight into how motivation may evolve both individually and collectively, and offers alternative ways of speaking and thinking, creating opportunities for changing how we experience and do choral work and research.

Keywords: choir singing, choral research, motivation, motivational culture, motivational profile, field of tension

This chapter will reconsider the notion of motivation in choir participation by pursuing the following research question: *How may emphasising the importance of context expand our understanding of motivation in choir*

participation? A premise for this line of questioning is the straightforward claim that a person's motivation for a certain behaviour depends on the context encompassing the person and the behaviour. The context of choir participation is here built on the understanding of the choir as a complex and dynamic field of tension (Eiksund, 2019), expressing the many parallel and different meanings a choir may have to its members, where varying emphases on motivational factors, ownership, identity forms and group functions play a part. In the doctoral thesis[1] this chapter is based on, motivation stood out as a central category, and the present chapter is an elaboration and refinement of the findings from that study. The study's data were generated through a broad ethnographic approach in the study of amateur choirs in Sunnmøre, Norway, and included a survey, participant observation, and interviews. Departing from a traditional individualistic-psychological pathway of basic needs (Maslow, 1943, 1962, 1970a), and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), this chapter proposes a contextual model of motivation, which includes a wide range of motivational factors in an effort to incorporate sociological, cultural, and emic bottom-up perspectives (King et al., 2018).

In what follows, I will contextualise the study by presenting aspects of choir singing, choral research and theoretical perspectives on human motivation. The study's scene and methodological considerations will then be followed by a presentation of the results in the form of a selection of central and peripheral motivational factors. In the discussion I will propose the concepts "personal motivational profile" and "motivational culture", both integral parts of the contextual model of motivation.

Background

Choir singing is a popular activity in Norway, engaging somewhere between 2% and 4% of the population on a weekly basis (Eiksund, 2019, pp. 17–18). Chorus America (2009) estimated that 42.6 million adults and children regularly sing in one of 270,000 choruses in the US, while in Europe it is suggested that more than 37 million adults take part in

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1   *The Choir as a Field of Tension – Between the Minor and the Major* (Eiksund, 2019).

group singing (Welch et al., 2019, p. v). Naturally, such a phenomenon has attracted an increasing amount of research. Choral research is difficult to define, but can be described as a multidisciplinary field, requiring a range of research strategies, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches (Geisler & Johansson, 2014, 2019). In a Norwegian context, existing choral research may be structured according to whether it emphasises factors like society, musical practices, or human processes (Eiksund, 2019, pp. 20–23). This aligns with the findings in Geisler's (2010) global choral research bibliography, where most titles fall under the categories of choir history and sociology, choir pedagogy, and choir music and health. In the newly published *Oxford Handbook of Singing* (Welch et al., 2019), seven chapters are dedicated to the "collective 'choral' voice", with contributions focusing on e.g., youth choirs, social identity, intonation, and musical leadership, revealing the great variety of topics in which choral research is developing today.

One topic in choral research that does not show a similar multifaceted diversity of strategies and perspectives, is the notion of motivation in choir participation. To ask why human beings sing in choirs seems like an obvious question, and this may be the reason why research on this topic accordingly offers obvious findings. On the one hand, studies emphasise musical factors as important for choir participation (Balsnes, 2009; Einarsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2016; Schjelderup, 2005); while on the other hand the emphasis is on social factors as crucial for choir participants' motivation (Einarsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2016; Follestad, 2013; Hollen, 2010; Lindland, 2011; Myrmel, 2007; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Theorell et al., 2020; Weinstein et al., 2016). Balsnes (2009) also suggests combining these two factors, the musical and the social, as a central theme in choral practice: "Choral practice must continually balance between these two dimensions to let people enjoy themselves" (pp. 236–237, my translation). This established dichotomy between musical and social factors in choral practice contributes to a clear and simple understanding of how motivation in choir participation manifests itself, giving choir member and choral researcher alike a conceptual approach to the inner motivational workings of a global phenomenon. Still, considering the richness of contexts encompasing the many forms of choir

participation, it is well worth exploring further the notion of motivation in choir participation, something this chapter aims to do.

Research on the complex field of human motivation, especially in relation to the arts, is considered important in order to understand the human need and drive for musical and other artistic activities (Kemp, 1997), but the way forward is not as straightforward as it may seem in established choral research discourse: "The set of human motivations is a pie that can be sliced any number of ways" (Elster, 2007, p. 65). One way of slicing this pie, in terms of educational psychology, is by distinguishing between those who use more prevalent psychological theories, and situative theorists (Nolen et al., 2015). The psychological study of motivation in formal and informal learning contexts aims primarily to create somewhat generalisable models that can explain what, how, and why learners are motivated. One of the most well-known of these theories is self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000). On the other hand, a situative approach aims to: "(a) account for both the dynamic complexity of motives of different individuals to learn (or not learn) within and across particular social contexts over time; and (b) to identify useful patterns and dimensions in activity within contexts that can inform the more effective design or redesign of learning environments" (Nolen et al., 2015, p. 236). A similar point is made by researchers promoting the importance of culture and context when studying motivation in an increasingly multicultural world. The recognition that motivation is strongly influenced by contextual factors (through social-cognitive, socio-cultural, and situative theories of motivation), as well as the growing acceptance of the universalist perspective acknowledging the existence of both etic (culturally universal) and emic (culturally specific) psychological processes, allows a more nuanced understanding of the interface between culture and key psychological processes (King & McInerney, 2016, pp. 1–2). The etic approach usually places the researcher outside the cultural system he/she is studying, while the emic approach involves exploring indigenous theories, models, and constructs. Building on a native's perspective, it emphasises understanding psychological phenomena and the inter-relationship with other phenomena. Criticism has been raised against research that proceeds as if most psycho-educational processes are culturally invariant,

and that Western theories are universally applicable and culturally independent (King et al., 2018). Even though the current study does not focus exclusively on learning per se, and is placed geographically on the west coast of a Western country, I still believe the points made are very helpful in interpreting the data. In the spirit of a universalist perspective, I will in what follows advance theories, which in different ways highlight motivation as a phenomenon, from a psychological, sociological, as well as a culturally imaginative (King et al., 2018) point of view. Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation, and Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (2000) are chosen as starting points as they represent etic individual-psychological approaches, which have also been used in relevant choral and music research.

Theoretical Perspectives on Human Motivation

In the essay "A Theory of Human Motivation", Maslow (1943) presents the well-known hierarchy of needs consisting of basic physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualisation. If the needs on one level are met, the organism "moves on" to needs on a higher level – for instance from safety needs to love needs. In the same way, the want of needs on a lower level, for instance lack of food and sleep, demands priority over needs on the levels above. Without going deeply into the intricacies of this theory, two issues are relevant for this study. One concerns the difference between deficiency needs and growth needs (Jerlang et al., 2008, p. 279; Maslow, 1962, pp. 24–25). Deficiency needs motivate when the organism lacks something, and disappear when the needs are met. Growth needs relate to self-actualisation, growth, and personal development, and give "positive health" when attended to. Needs for safety, social relations, love, respect, and esteem depend on other people, i.e., the social surroundings to be attained, and people motivated by these needs are hence more dependent on these surroundings (Maslow, 1962, pp. 24–33). The second issue concerns the conditions that must be in place to meet the needs. A threat to these conditions will be perceived as a threat to the needs themselves, and will demand priority (Maslow, 1970a, p. 47).

The classification of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is a central element in self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT is an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods while employing an organismic metatheory highlighting the importance of humans' evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioural self-regulation. Intrinsic (or natural) motivation occurs when the motive for an action is to gain inner satisfaction, or when you engage in an activity for its own sake. Extrinsic motivation contrasts with this as it refers to the performance of an activity to attain some separable outcome. In this theory, three basic psychological needs are essential to foster self-motivation and personal integration: the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A large-scale study using SDT on motivation for musical activities has shown that intrinsic motivation increases with the level of musical activity (Appelgren et al., 2019). Stewart and Lonsdale (2016) compare choral singing to two other relevant leisure activities, solo singing and playing a team sport, to examine if and how singing in a choir might be beneficial for an individual's psychological well-being. The study suggests that group membership is more important than singing for perceived well-being, and the choir members reported stronger feelings of *entitativity* (Lakens, 2010; Lakens et al., 2011), meaning an experience of group membership as meaningful or "real". Another interesting finding was that the choir members reported the lowest experience of autonomy. Still, choir members reported significantly higher levels of well-being than solo singers. Stewart and Lonsdale (2016, p. 1250) point out the role the basic need of autonomy plays in SDT in a choir setting as an area for future research.

SDT is a very interesting framework for exploring human motivation. What is especially helpful is the connection it makes between inner motivation and a range of positive consequences, including improved performance, increased persistence and enhanced subjective well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016, p. 1243). However, it diminishes some aspects of a very complex phenomenon. Many activities are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated (Renolen, 2008, pp. 42–44), and as the study by Stewart and Lonsdale (2016) shows, it may not fully account for the specific context of the choir members, especially

the role of autonomy and entitativity. Also, SDT has received criticism for not adequately exploring culturally and contextually sensitive bottom-up phenomena (King & McInerney, 2016; King et al., 2018; Nolen, 2020; Nolen et al., 2015).

Changing Perspectives on Human Motivation

As mentioned above, the importance of culture and context when studying motivation has been emphasised by a growing number of researchers (King & McInerney, 2016; King et al., 2018; Nolen et al., 2015). Sociologically, motivation is considered a piece of a larger puzzle, something well illustrated by the concept of pathways (Finnegan, 1989). The pathways that exist in a certain society guide our choices by being essential for the way we structure our lives. Both Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu et al. (1995) point out that our actions must be understood in connection with larger social structures or fields, anchoring motivation in a social and cultural context.[2] One can argue that the role the basic need for relatedness plays in internalising extrinsically motivated behaviour in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 73), somewhat accounts for this larger picture, since it makes a connection between motivation and the support of the community or social group. Still, in my view, these sociological perspectives indicate a contextual understanding of motivation, making human motivation less of an individual phenomenon, and more fundamentally dependent on the surroundings. For the participants in the current study, choir participation constitutes this context, surrounding them in value patterns and complex social codes, which in turn guide the development and goals of their motivations. To examine human motivation in a certain context while including the specifics of that context in the examination, may hopefully contribute to a deeper and culturally imaginative understanding of this topic.

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2   In Bourdieu's philosophy of science, «motivation» in a traditional sense does not have a place. His philosophy of human action breaks with concepts like «motivation», «subject», «agent» and «role», but focuses more on the relationship and mutual influence of the objective structures (fields) and the embodied structures (habitus) (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 12).

The Study's Scene and Methodological Considerations

The data of the study were generated in the region of southern Sunnmøre on the west coast of Norway. Southern Sunnmøre has a population of 49,712 (2021)[3], consisting of villages, rural districts, and cities. It is divided and brought together by fjords, mountains, tunnels, bridges, and ferries. There exist rich and long-lasting traditions of choir singing in this area, reflected in a higher choir participation of 5%, compared to the national average of between 2% and 4%. At the time of data generation (2010–2011) there existed about 90 active choirs in this area, together responsible for over 1,000 performances of different kinds throughout the year. In addition to the performances, close to 89% of the choirs had regular rehearsals, with over 60% rehearsing one or more times a week. Half of the choir members (about 52%) were from 40–79 years old. Over 42% of the choirs were connected to some sort of association (business, church, club, team, organisation, school), while 60% were organised in choir associations (Eiksund, 2019, pp. 123–134). This sets the scene for the study, making choir singing an important and integrated part of the region's inner workings and public life. By this I mean that while being a member of a choir is very much a public endeavour, it also flows through people's everyday lives, structuring and affecting weekdays, social relations, and life choices.

The study was designed in a way that allowed a broad and open approach. This is in line with what King et al. (2018) describes as an emic approach, especially important when the aim is to capture "bottom-up phenomena" (p. 1048). The aim was to be close to the material, and let the data, as much as possible, be a strong guide in deciding which factors to focus on. As a starting point I tried to build a complete map of the "choir world" in this area, and spent about two months on the phone talking with choir singers, conductors, church employees, schoolteachers, musicians etc.[4] At the end of this period, I had a list of about 90 choirs, and a

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3   Statistics Norway (SSB). https://www.ssb.no (accessed 2 February 2022).
4   In my doctoral thesis I used the following broad definition of a choir: «A choir is a group of people that sing [preferably] polyphonic with some degree of organising» (Eiksund, 2019, p. 9, my translation).

contact in every choir. I then developed a questionnaire that the contact in every choir answered on behalf of his/her choir. Based on this, four choirs were selected. The selection criteria emphasised variation (female/male/mixed choirs, geographical location, organisation, age, and other situational factors) and limitations (adult choirs, not connected to associations like churches, schools, workplace etc.). I spent participant observation periods, each of a duration of 2–3 months, with all four choirs. At the end of the observation periods, I conducted 16 qualitative semi-structured interviews of about 1–2 hours each. The interviews were of choir members and the conductor of each choir, and contribute the main material for the analysis. Measures to ensure informed consent and confidentially were taken at all levels of the study, and the project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). All names of participants used in this chapter are fictional.

Data generation method	Description	Data
Online survey	A representative for each of the 90 choirs answered 69 questions concerning the choir's history, activity, and current condition.	Quantitative and qualitative data
Participant observation	Participant observation periods of 2–3 months duration in four choirs	57 A4 pages of observation notes
Qualitive interviews	Sixteen qualitative interviews, four from each choir (including the conductor in each choir)	22 hours audio / 379 A4 pages of transcriptions

Figure 1. Data Material

The initial analysis process relied on categorisation through a step-based deductive-inductive method, in short SDI (Tjora, 2010). In SDI one aims to work from raw data to concepts and theories. The "upward" motion is to be perceived as inductive – the movement from data towards theory. The "downward" motion is to be perceived as deductive – to test the theory on the empirical material. This model was developed to fulfil the potential of the data and relies on a "close-to-the-material" first phase of the analysis. The first phase of the analysis resulted in 259 codes. In the next phase similar codes were gathered into more general categories, and as the process went on, the categories were refined into dialogue with emerging research questions, omitting codes that did not contribute.

Through this process I ended up with five main categories: (1) motivation, (2) ownership, (3) identity, (4) social group, and (5) society. The motivation category contained a diverse set of interview excerpts that in one way or another expressed something about the "why" of choir participation.

In what follows, I will present the results from the analysis through the concepts of central and peripheral motivations, developed from the current study. These concepts are created to accommodate the great variety of motivational factors found in the data material in a meaningful manner. Based on these concepts, I will propose and discuss a contextual model of motivation, showing how this may enable an understanding of the motivational aspects of choir participation that transcends the established discourse on this topic.

Results: Central and Peripheral Motivations

As a starting point many of the informants expressed what they perceived to be the most obvious reasons for their choir participation: to sing and make music on the one hand, and to nurture social relations on the other. But as the conversations proceeded, many specific motivational factors appeared. Combined, these reasons create a spectre of motivational factors, transcending the obvious categories of music and social relations. In the analysis process I experimented with different ways of sorting these factors, ending up with a classification based on the perceived centrality of the specific motivational factor.
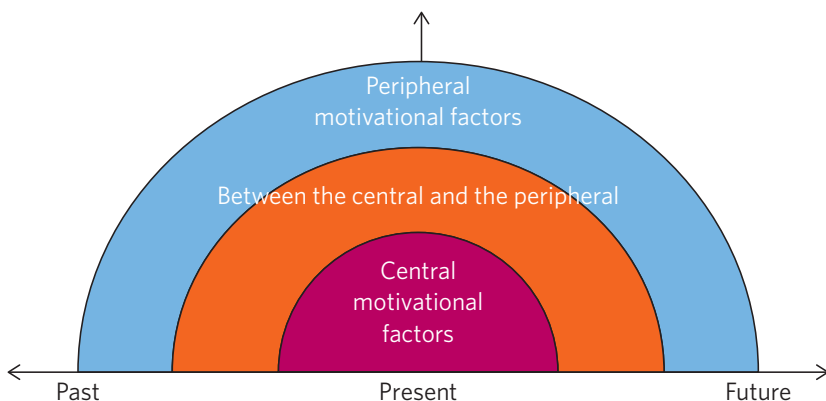

Figure 2. Central and Peripheral Motivational Factors

The vertical axis visualised in Figure 2 goes from central to peripheral. Central motivations include factors having a special, personal meaning to the informant, often involving expressions of identity, personal development, and peak experiences (Maslow, 1970b; Singer, 2000). Peripheral motivations include factors the informant perceives to involve something else/someone else/something larger than the individual (e.g., traditions, loyalty to other choir members). The horizontal axis is temporal, stretching back and forth in time. The further away from the present a motivational factor is situated, e.g. a peak experience happening a few years ago, the less central it will be perceived by the participant. Likewise, an exciting choir event planned to happen in a year's time may create anticipation and function as a motivational factor, but will not be perceived as central until the actual event gets closer in time. The point of including a temporal axis is twofold. Firstly, it illustrates the dynamic nature of motivational factors – the experienced centrality of a certain factor may change over time. Secondly, it is a meaningful way of analysing a certain motivational factor or set of factors, something I will return to in the discussion of the role of tradition.

Central Motivational Factors

At certain points in the interviews, it became clear that the topic of conversation meant something special to the interviewees, expressed through their emotional engagement and the way the topic was described. These topics, in this model described as central motivational factors, centred on moments of personal development and expressions of identity where the choir played a significant role in the informant's life. Central motivational factors are similar to what is expressed through the concept "intrinsic motivation" and its benefits (Ryan & Deci, 2000). But instead of focusing on how the "social environment can facilitate or forestall intrinsic motivation by supporting or thwarting people's innate psychological needs" (p. 71), central motivational factors highlight concrete experiences and events that take place in a certain context among a certain group of people. They are connected to what is experienced as the very core of choir participation. In what

follows, I will illustrate some of these factors through examples from the study's data material.[5]

To Have Something Exclusively for Oneself. Sonja talked about an everyday life full of tasks and responsibilities. When the question about giving up the choir to coordinate things at home arose, it became clear how much the choir meant to her:

> It is a struggle to get everything to go together when you have kids who come home from school, their homework needs attention and then they may also want to attend activities, before I leave for choir at six. And it was not very long after I started, when he [the husband] said, "We have to cut down on something. Maybe you have to cut out [the choir]?" And I just, "No!". [laughter] It's like the one thing I do only for myself, that is, I go out the door and know that everything will work out at home […]. But [the choir] is only me, and it's only for myself. And to be able to do that, it is unbelievably vital, so I think he actually understood how important it was and said, "OK, I understand how important it is to you, it's all right."[6]

For Sonja the choir was an arena where she could be herself in a different way than was possible in her everyday life at home. To leave her home and its responsibilities for a little while was an opportunity to validate important aspects of herself, also for her family.

To Learn Something New and Experience Personal Development. Many of the interviewees expressed the joy of learning something new as a very important part of choir participation. Through choir activities they learned new melodies, lyrics, and also new languages: "[W]e have learned Greek, German, French and English" [Inga]. For some choir participation was a way of learning about organisational work, and for some the experience of developing their voice and becoming aware of their breathing and their bodies in a safe environment was important. Sara told about a "physical" experience of change, enabled

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5   To maintain anonymity, all names of study participants are fictious.
6   All quotes have been translated into English from Norwegian.

through increasing confidence in herself and her voice: "I have become so much more self-confident, especially when it comes to singing in front of others". To experience your confidence growing, and to gain the courage to use your voice, can be a very important part of your personal development. When happening in a choir setting, constantly mirrored in choir members you have a close relation to, this can increase the significance of the experience.

To Be Challenged. A part of learning something new is to be exposed to new challenges, which creates the opportunity to stretch further than what feels possible. Many of the informants talked about experiences in which they succeeded in doing something they did not think they were capable of, and the joy that came from this: "[S]ometimes we sing material that we barely manage. But after a while we master it. This is incredibly fulfilling, and a huge motivator" [Sonja]. For some high standards are in themselves one of the most important motivational factors: "Everything had to, and I love this, you know [laughter], be learned *before* rehearsals" [Linda].

Peak Experiences. Many of the interviewees talked about experiences that stood out in a special way. These experiences often included an altered state of mind with a physical dimension. To explain these experiences the interviewees often used words like "to have shivers down my back", "to get shaky", "have an out-of-body-experience", or "a feeling of oneness with the entire choir". To share this experience with the other choir members stood out as something special: "And you feel that all are one, no one stands out, we are all under the same umbrella, you hear everyone when you sing. So, it is really difficult to explain this feeling, but is something very special" [Inga]. The participants in this study often explained their peak experiences as bodily experiences, often combined with the feeling of "becoming one" with the rest of the choir. This created a unique combination of something very personal and at the same time collective. The collective aspect of these peak experiences, the feeling of "becoming one", adds to the sense of entitativity (Lakens, 2010; Lakens et al., 2011) or the meaningfulness of group membership.

Between the Central and Peripheral

Some of the motivational factors did not generally carry the "glow" of emotional engagement that was expressed above in connection to the central motivations. Still, it became clear in the interviews that these factors meant a lot, often described with ambiguity, meaning that the perceived importance could vary over time and in different situations. A common thread in them was that they were often grounded in long term needs and wishes.

The Social Community. The choir is a social meeting place where relations form between choir members. For many the choir is a place where they meet the same people regularly over time, generating an environment conducive to important and long-lasting social relations. The social community is always an important part of a choir, but whether this community is experienced as something positive or negative, or something central or peripheral, depends largely on the individual choir member. Since choir participation (normally) is voluntary, it also is a community one can choose to leave.

Something the choir can offer is contact with others who share an interest in music and song, and many of the study's informants expressed how important this was. Sara talked about how choir participation made it possible for her to form new friendships and acquaintances based on an interest in music: "To get to know people that I would never say hello to, or that live in other places and I would never have met […]. So, new friends and new acquaintances, and people that share my interest. Yes, this is special, and really fun, because none of my [normal] friends sing in choirs or do anything like this".

The social community is clearly an important motivational factor for the participants in this study, in the sense that it to some degree is present in all choir members. You cannot escape being part of the social community. A well-working social community may be the motivational factor that carries the choir member through periods of generally low motivation, but difficult social relations may also be the factor that pushes a member out of the choir. In some cases, the choir may have profoundly different social functions for its members, operating more as a primary

group for some and as a secondary group for others, forcing the members to navigate through competing norm and value systems. If the choir members expect very different things from the social community, this may create tension and difficulties (Eiksund, 2019, pp. 209–249). Due to this complex picture expressed by the study's informants, I have placed the social community as motivational factor between the central and peripheral. As with the rest of the factors in this "between" category, the social community has the potential to be a central motivational factor for the individual choir member, but did not appear as such on a more general level in this study's data material.

Interest in Music. Most of the interviewees expressed a general interest in music as an important reason for joining the choir. To be a part of a music-making experience is of course a very important motivational factor, and choir participation may offer a low-threshold opportunity to create and perform music for people who do not feel comfortable expressing themselves musically on their own. Still, the interest in music did not emerge as an overall central motivational factor in this study's data material. This may appear strange, but has a natural explanation connected to the repertoires only partially overlapping the individual choir members' musical preferences. Sometimes the choir sings something that the singer really connects with, creating strong and personal expressions of the individual's musicality, but other times it may perform a piece that the singer dislikes, making it hard to enjoy the music. The interest in music will always be present, but as a motivational factor it will vary between the central and the peripheral.

Professional Encounters. One part of a choir's activity is often collaboration with professional musicians, and some of the interviewees considered these professional encounters especially valuable. Through these meetings the choir members were exposed to higher standards than usual, something that could push them to the "next level": "The professionalism they [a professional jazz ensemble] had compared to us – it was worlds apart. The way they pulled us in to become a part of what they were doing, it was really special to me" [Susanna].

What is experienced as professional is of course relative to the level the choir currently operates on, and to meet professional demands may also be demotivating – especially if you feel incapable of fulfilling them. As a motivational factor professional encounters may be both central and peripheral, both eye-opening on a personal level and a utopian goal to strive towards. In this study's data material this factor finds its place in between the central and peripheral.

Peripheral Motivational Factors

The motivational factors described until now have a generally positive character for the interviewees. Personal peak experiences and strong musical and emotional encounters were important ingredients in the everyday life of the choir. But certain motivational factors were expressed in another way, often lacking the form of personal connection noticeable in the more central motivational factors. Even though these factors seemed more "distant" to the interviewees, they still appeared frequently. Another interesting point was that these peripheral motivational factors to a greater degree appeared in the interviews of choir members going through difficult transitions, recruitment issues, conflicts, or other types of challenges.

Loyalty to the Choir. Loyalty to the choir is something many members experience in one form or another. It can manifest itself in different ways, as the feeling of having to attend rehearsals and concerts or feeling the obligation to talk warmly about the choir to others. Loyalty can be a positive feeling of belonging to a community, but in some cases, it may become disconnected from these positive feelings, especially if there is a general sentiment of worry concerning the choir's future or sustained existence. Ola talked about how he felt more and more like a supportive person for the choir, and that his membership was based primarily on the fear of what would happen if he quit: "I have been a member so long that I feel like, if I was not there, then it [the choir] stops". Emil had a similar feeling in his choir, and was waiting for new people to join, making it possible for him to leave the choir without fearing its downfall.

As the conductor of a choir, Truls had experienced how difficult it was to expand the choir over a certain size: "It is difficult expanding the choir to over thirty members. It seems like someone always leaves. If there are too many [someone says] – 'well, now we are so many that [the choir doesn't need me anymore]'". The motivational factor most apparent in these examples was the wish to keep the choir alive. This did not relate to what the individual got out of it on a personal level, but was more about keeping the choir going. The moment you feel that the choir may survive without you, you may think "my work here is done" and quit.

The Local Community Wants Choir Music. Many of the interviewees talked about how people in their community wanted the music from their choir, expressed directly through demands for appearances and concerts, and indirectly through financial support (purchasing lottery tickets, voluntary work): "I have senior citizens in my taxi, and they ask all the time about the next choir café. There is a great demand for choir music" [Ola]. Anna felt the support of the local community when she sold lottery tickets on behalf of the choir: "If we are selling lottery tickets […] everybody says, 'Of course, we will buy some tickets!'". This feeling, of the demand and support for choir music from the local community, validates the point of singing in a choir, and gives choir participation another dimension.

The Importance of the Choir to the Local Community. An important motivational factor for many of the interviewees was the notion of the choir's importance to their local community. In a sense this overlaps with the previous motivational factor, but for some interviewees the importance of the choir to the local community exceeds the musical element. For these the choir enjoyed the position of a "master of ceremonies", being an integral part of important days and occasions: "It is a lot of fun, and the local choir is important. In two weeks we'll have a church festival […] and we are going to sing. I believe it is important that the local choir is there" [Anna]. Emil considered it to be a social task to sing for the local community's senior citizens, especially in institutions: "[I]t is really important to sing in institutions, it is not done enough! It should

be compulsory, some kind of rotation arrangement for all the choirs – to sing in these institutions". To be an important part of the local community could also be a part of a choir's identity, something Karl talked about: "We are a factor in the cultural life of the local community. We are there on our National Day [17th May], standing by the stone monuments, we have done that since I started in the choir almost sixty years ago […]. We arrange Christmas parties for the elders, we sing in the church".

To experience how important the choir was to the local community was an important motivational factor for many of the study's participants. Some identified strongly with having such a role, and felt they contributed to the community through their efforts. At the same time, it was clear that this motivational factor in general did not concern the individual singer to a high degree, but rather the choir as a whole. In cases where the individual singer identifies strongly with the choir, this motivational factor could be experienced as central, but in this study's data material this specific factor stands out generally as peripheral.

Keeping Traditions Alive. For many of the interviewees, the focus on keeping traditions alive was very evident. This could refer to the history or traditions in their specific choir, but also indicates being part of a greater tradition, like the national and international male choir movement. For Truls, the conductor of a male choir, this was a very powerful motivational factor: "They [the amateur singers] do not try to become anything special, but they want to keep an old tradition alive, and I personally believe that the male choir is worth keeping, the traditional male choir". To keep a tradition alive can be a dominant motivational factor, but can lack the form of personal connection noticeable in the central motivational factors. The "power" of tradition and historic events are peripheral in a temporal sense, and are in general experienced as "disconnected" from the present.

Overall, the peripheral motivational factors concern "larger" topics, such as tradition, history, and the choir's role in the local community, and appear distant in comparison to central motivational factors, like peak experiences, personal development and expressions of identity mentioned earlier.

Discussion: A Contextual Model of Motivation in Choirs

Leaving behind the established dichotomy of musical and social motivational factors in choral practice, as well as departing from the inherited balancing act between these two factors, this chapter has attempted a fresh look at motivation in choir participation. Through a sensitive and critical analysis of the data, a range of central and peripheral motivational factors has been presented. These motivational factors exist side by side, and choir members may experience most of them to different degrees at certain times. This arrangement of motivational factors reflects the etic individual-psychological approach illustrated by the hierarchy of basic needs (Maslow, 1943, 1962), and the self-determination theory of Ryan and Deci (2000). In some ways, central motivational factors take their emotional content from the concept of intrinsic motivation. The picture is widened to include the importance of group membership, especially in connection to the collective aspect of peak experiences in choir participation. This is supported by the findings of Stewart and Lonsdale (2016), and the connection they make between feelings of entitativity and perceived well-being. But instead of exclusively analysing motivation as an expression of human's evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioural self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68), the focus in this chapter moved towards the collectively created values and social structures or fields that anchor motivation in a specific social and cultural context. The motivational factors listed above are generated from a practice existing in an intricate, rich, and sometimes tension-filled relationship with the community (Eiksund, 2019, pp. 251–270). Thus emic bottom-up perspectives (King et al., 2018) come into play.

The distinction between different motivational factors is an integral part of the contextual model of motivation in choirs I propose in this chapter. In what follows I will present the concepts "personal motivational profile" and "motivational culture". Together with the central and peripheral motivational factors, this constitutes a conceptual framework allowing an alternative way of dealing with the notion of motivation in choir participation.

Personal Motivational Profile

None of the interviewees expressed identical combinations of motivational factors. Even though certain factors were more prominent in the data material than others, it does not mean that any one interviewee reported exclusively central or peripheral motivational factors. A personal motivational profile is a description of an individual's combination and the emphases of central and peripheral motivational factors. This profile may for instance emphasise the learning aspect (central), the social community (between the central and the peripheral), and traditions (peripheral), while peak experiences (central), professional encounters (between the central and the peripheral), and loyalty to the choir (peripheral) are less prevalent. The different factors emphasised by an individual may also vary over time.

Motivational Culture

Motivation has traditionally been examined as an individual phenomenon, a view reflected in the variety of motivational factors expressed by this study's participants. Based on the study's data material another issue seems to be connected to this specter of motivational factors, and relates to the collective aspects of a choir. A motivational culture is a description of the predominant central and/or peripheral motivational factors of a group, which also includes a description of whether and to what degree these factors are shared and communicated amongst the group's members. In some sense the motivational culture of a choir is the sum of each member's personal motivational profile, but a personal motivational profile and a choir's motivational culture are not necessarily identical. An individual whose personal motivational profile differs significantly from the motivational culture of the choir may experience social tension and a lack of understanding. This perspective may be helpful in understanding why individuals struggle to "find their place" in a choir. At the same time there exists a reciprocity in the relationship between the individual and the group, where the individual both affects and is affected by the motivational culture of the choir.

Utilising the Contextual Model of Motivation in Choirs

A central point of SDI (the step-based deductive-inductive method) is the "downward" motion – to deductively test the theory on the empirical material. By employing the contextual model of motivation in choirs on this study's data material, an interesting finding becomes visible. There seems to be a correlation between the motivational culture and the general state of the choir. The choirs that were experiencing difficulties or challenging transitions tended to report an emphasis on peripheral motivational factors. One of the choirs in the study had recently been through a drastic change, the result of a merger of two independent choirs each with long and robust traditions. The two choirs had struggled over time with recruitment, and the only realistic solution was to create a new choir consisting of singers from both choirs. "You cannot spend your time keeping two corpses alive", as one of the singers put it. Even though forming a new choir had created some new energy and optimism, many of the singers were still worried and uncertain about the its viability. Some of the singers also expressed sorrow over letting their "old" choir fade away, and when asked about why they sang in the choir, they tended to mention peripheral motivational factors as "keeping the choir alive", or the importance of offering choir music to the local community. Another choir in the study had recently experienced a real "flow", both in terms of good recruitment and musical quality. The choir had a growing, positive reputation in the local community, and the members expressed pride and joy in the status of the choir. When asked about their motivations for being in the choir, these singers emphasised, to a much larger degree, central motivational factors like peak experiences, being challenged, or learning something new and meaningful.

This correlation makes sense through the perspective of Maslow's (1970a) theory of human motivation. As I mentioned earlier, people who experience a threat to the conditions for safety or social relations, will react as if they are actually experiencing a lack of safety and social relations (p. 47). Threats to the basis of the choir's existence, like decreasing recruitment and uncertainty over the viability of the choir, demand focus and attention, which in turn will affect the motivation of the choir

members. In this situation, two characteristics follow: (i) the choir members tend to emphasise peripheral motivational factors, and (ii) they lose touch with central motivational factors. In Maslow's terms, the "basic" needs connected to the viability of the choir demand attention, preventing the choir member from focusing on growth needs, like self-actualisation and personal development. A safe environment, where members do not need to worry about the choir's future, economy, or social relations, makes it easier for the members to focus on personal development, learning, and musical and social peak experiences, hence creating a motivational culture dominated by central motivational factors. The connection between central motivational factors, intrinsic motivation, and the experience of meaningfulness of group membership or entitativity, also contributes to the understanding of this picture, especially in relation to the experience of assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, exploration (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70), and a sense of well-being (Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016).

Motivational culture is also dependent on whether and to what degree these factors are shared and communicated amongst the group's members. It is not uncommon that there exists a culture for not "indulging in the gloom", and rather focusing on the positive, (or in some case, the complete opposite), which may lead to some motivational factors being shared more than others. The personal motivational profiles of choir members can also depend on the role they have in the choir. Members of the board or the conductor may feel an extra responsibility for the viability of the choir, making it harder to access certain central motivational factors. Still, for most members, motivation varies over time and in different situations, making this picture anything but monochromatic.

Another interesting phenomenon can be observed in choirs that have struggled over time, thus developing a motivational culture dominated by peripheral motivational factors. When the choir "turns the corner", for example by permanently filling that vacant conductor position, or succeeding in recruiting new members after being too few for a sustained period, something counterintuitive may occur. When things are finally in order, and one expects the choir to progress and grow, it stops. The mobilisation that has been happening to keep the choir going through the rough patches, seems to evaporate – some members may even leave the choir.

Several informants contemplated leaving the choir, as their motivation primarily had been to "stay as long as necessary", as mentioned when presenting the motivational factor on loyalty. My interpretation of this is that a motivational culture predominated by peripheral motivational factors drains the choir's members of energy and resources. On the other hand, a motivational culture predominated by central motivational factors may let the choir members, in Maslow's terms, attend to their growth needs, producing "positive health" (1962, p. 29).

Combining all of this exemplifies how the concepts and connections in this model can be utilised, but it is through the actual use of the concepts one can see whether they contribute to the reality of the choral practice. How does one talk about what happens in a choir when it is going through transitions or challenging periods? How does one understand the reasoning behind staying in a choir even though it may feel draining? What should be emphasised to drive the choir in the intended direction? To answer these questions, one needs a nuanced and rich language, adapted to the specific reality one exists in, especially when this reality is the product of a collective effort, like a choir.

Conclusion

It may seem like this chapter advocates heavily for central motivational factors, pointing out the clear advantages and positives of letting these dominate the motivational culture of the choir. This is not my intention. If you ask me what the most important motivational factors in a choir are, my answer will be all of them. All motivational factors carry with them different kinds of traits, important in different situations, and the motivational culture in any one specific choir is unique and an integral part of the choir's identity. If this study was conducted on another group of choirs in a different part of the world, the selection and emphasis of motivational factors would most likely be different. This has also been the point of this study, to complement an etic approach (exploring established psychological theories on motivation), with an emic approach. The emphasis on trying to understand a "psychological phenomenon and its inter-relationships with other phenomena from a native's perspective" (King et al., 2018, p. 1048),

the native in this case being the choir member from southern Sunnmøre, has broadened the discourse on motivation in choir participation. This has allowed a rethinking of the way motivation appears and functions amongst choir members and in a choir. In the presentation of the findings from this study I have tried to find the right balance between giving narrow and precise definitions, and providing a conceptual framework that is open enough to be useful in analysing other contexts. Still, I believe and hope that the contextual model of motivation I propose in this chapter may prove to be both recognisable and applicable. This is not the fate of all new choral research. Little or none of the increasing amount of choral research ever comes into use (Johansson, 2011). Choral practitioners do not generally use or benefit from these studies, and Geisler and Johansson (2019) suggest two reasons for this: (i) underdeveloped forms of communication between theory and practice, that is, between researchers and practitioners, and (ii) the fact that choral research is distributed across a range of disciplines that apply differing methodological and theoretical approaches (p. 779). Nevertheless, choral research has an opportunity to make an impact on active choral practice through offering new ways of speaking and thinking, creating opportunities for changing how we experience and "do" choral work and research (Eiksund, 2019, p. 293). To develop concepts and introduce words that are relatable and fruitful for the choir community has been an important motivation for this study, and I believe this chapter is a contribution to this.

Looking forward, I welcome studies that apply and adapt the contextual model of motivation I propose in this chapter. One of the most important contributions is the change from an individual to an emic and contextually aware understanding of motivation. As a further development, it would be very interesting to see this model used on other groups than choirs where motivation is also considered a central issue.

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