

## Chapter 7 - Discussion

This chapter will be structured in response to the study's final research question: 2a., *What does voice-centred choral leadership look like in practice?* The response to this question will encapsulate responses to all of the previous research questions as an integrated whole, addressing singers' expectations of choral leaders in terms of their overall responsibilities and the attributes they use to fulfil these responsibilities, making particular reference to both the voice-centred and the leadership aspects of the choral leader's role. Findings will be discussed in reference to leadership literature and conducting literature, as reviewed in Chapters 2 - 4 of this thesis. This will be followed by the presentation of a proposed model of choral leadership which integrates all themes and meta-themes presented in the previous chapter. This model will then be discussed in relation to the body of conducting literature reviewed previously.

### 7.1 Towards a model of 'voice-centred choral conductorship'

In the previous chapter, a total of four meta-themes were presented as outcomes of the analysis undertaken. These were: *Variance*; *Areas of Responsibility*; *Attributes*; and *Voice-Centred Concerns*. I propose that integrating these meta-themes will demonstrate an overall picture of singers' expectations of choral leaders, as described in the data set. I further propose that this integration could be used to model not only what is expected of choral leaders, but also how each of these meta-themes may be related to the others. This

integration leads to the development of the concept of 'voice-centred conductorship' for which a proposed definition will later be presented. In order to relate meta-themes to each other, it is necessary to first understand what each meta-theme represents.

### **7.1.1 Variance**

The first of the four meta-themes to be discussed will be *Variance*. Although the theme has been generated from multiple singer reports of experiencing varying approaches to choral leadership and is therefore a valid meta-theme in itself, discussion of the concept of variance is unlikely to lead to meaningful insight unless paired with a discussion of *what* is varying, that is to say what the conductor does and how they do it. This meta-theme therefore has an overarching effect on all other aspects of the findings and the notion of variance will influence the subsequent discussion of the remaining three meta-themes.

The inclusion of Variance as a meta-theme in the discussion of choral leadership represents an acknowledgement that singers in the sample group do not expect choral leadership to be a 'one size fits all' approach. Instead, singers report expecting varying forms of choral leadership with some even concluding that "[e]very conductor leads in their own unique way" [141]. Whilst this is arguably unsurprising as a finding given the sample size and scope of the study, it is noted that many participants reported having sung with more than one conductor and encountering varying conducting approaches. Singers report variance of approach in relation to, for example, whether or not a choral leader will teach vocal skills during rehearsals depending on the levels of singer expertise present in the group. They also report an expectation that a choral leader's approach will vary depending on whether or not

a performance is upcoming, and that the result of this variance will influence the demands they make of singers prior to and during this performance in terms of vocal effort levels. Multiple other examples of context-dependent variances of approach can be found within the data set, as shown previously in Chapter 6. It is therefore proposed that any model of choral leadership generated from this analysis must acknowledge the contextual and temporal variance which will influence the choral leader's approach. This aligns with previous writing on musical leadership which argues that "a leader's intuition and tacit knowledge of teaching-learning situations, and the people involved, must always be allowed to inform the situation" (Mather & Camlin, 2016, p.7) and which calls for further research on choral conducting across varying cultural/social contexts (Durrant, 2000).

### **A Sociocultural Perspective on Choral Singing**

The notion of *Variance* in choral leadership across varying social/cultural contexts may be examined further through a consideration of sociocultural theory. Sociocultural perspectives focus on the interacting roles that individual, social, and contextual factors have in influencing and shaping human action (McInerney et al., 2014). Sociocultural approaches to research therefore examine situated action, acknowledging that knowledge is context-specific and cannot be abstracted from the domain in which it is constructed (*Developmental Psychology, Sociocultural Approach*, 2021).

Modern sociocultural theories stem largely from the work of Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1986 – 1934), whose work rejected contemporary perspectives on human development

which tended to focus on psychoneurological processes, and instead proposed that environmental influences were a necessary consideration in understanding human behaviour (McInerney et al., 2014). Vygotsky contended that “[e]very function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level” (Vygotsky, 1978, cited by Polly et al., 2018). Sociocultural theory therefore considers knowledge to be co-constructed in social settings as opposed to being an abstract, external truth to be discovered by individuals.

Vygotsky’s work has been drawn on by many socioculturalists to develop social theories of learning and development. The work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger adopts a sociocultural approach to learning as a situated process which is influenced by social and cultural factors (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This leads to a conception of groups of people who come together in social practice as Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998). A Community of Practice (CoP) is characterised by three elements:

### **1. Domain**

A domain of interest that is shared by the CoP, indicating that members share a common form of expertise, though this expertise may not be recognised as such from those outside the CoP (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015)

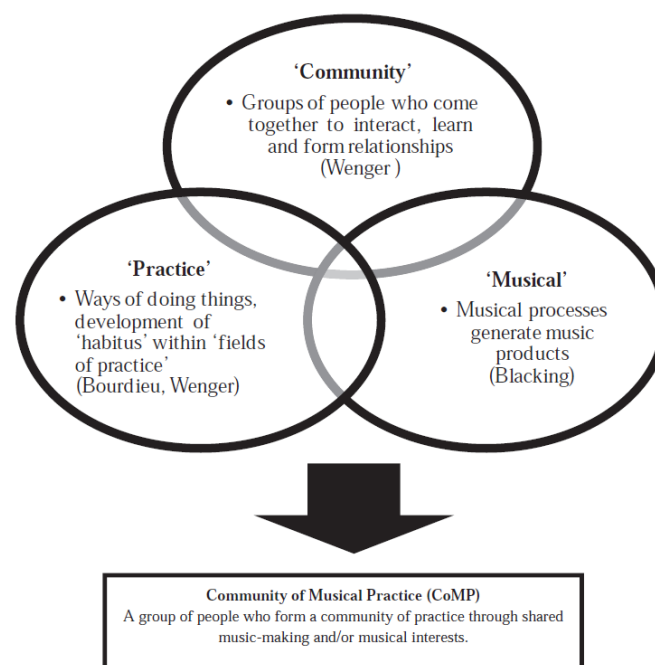
### **2. Community**

Engagement in joint activity, the sharing of information, interacting and learning together within the CoP (*Ibid.*).

### 3. Practice

A set of socially constructed and defined approaches to action within the CoP  
(Wenger et al., 2002).

More recently, the CoP model has been adapted to specifically focus on Communities of Musical Practice (CoMP) (Kenny, 2016), in which the three areas characterising CoPs are defined in figure 57 below:



**Figure 1. Communities of Musical Practice (Kenny, 2016, p.16)**

The CoMP lens lends itself well to the examination of choral activity. Choirs share a common **musical domain** of interest, namely choral singing. They also share a **community** in that they are groups of people who regularly engage in joint activity, singing together, interacting and in so doing sharing and developing **practice**. The **practice** in choral situations involves

engaging in group singing in specific ways which are socially defined and contextually appropriate within the choir's "field of practice" (*Ibid*).

### **Variance between CoMPs**

Within the CoMP framework, *Variance* in what singers in this study indicated they expected of their choral leaders may be seen most clearly between the different fields of **practice** which they were engaged in. The other two characteristics of CoMPs are likely to remain constant across the data set. The **domain** of engaging in musical processes is a fundamental component of choral singing shared by all participants who responded to a survey on the subject of group *singing*. The **community** aspect of group singing is similarly likely to be shared by all participants in that choral singing is characterised as groups of singers interacting and engaging in some form of choral practice regularly. The **practice** however of the various types of groups attended by the singers in this study, and therefore their expectations of the leader of these groups, can be shown to differ from field to field.

Different types of choir habitually engage in different forms of practice. As an example, the information regarding choral practice available to a prospective member of the Royal Choral Society and a prospective Rock Choir member differs greatly. Although both groups are national choirs made up of adult, amateur singers and both choirs perform publicly, the format and focus of the described practices of these choirs are different (*Joining Rock Choir: What to Expect?*, 2021; *Royal Choral Society: Join Us*, 2021).

The Royal Choral Society focuses on practices which relate primarily to the group performing at a high level as a group, such as: auditioning singers; participating in performances in prestigious venues; engaging in only a “brush up” (*Royal Choral Society: Join Us*, 2021) of regular repertoire (such as Handel’s *Messiah*); and requiring a minimum level of rehearsal attendance for members [*Ibid*]. In contrast to this, Rock Choir practices focus on supporting the individual singer’s experience of singing with the group, including: not requiring members to audition to join the group; teaching new material by rote to include members who do not read music; teaching some material over 3 – 4 weeks yet interspersing this with easier pieces that can be learned in just one rehearsal “which especially helps new Members to leave their first rehearsal with a huge sense of achievement” (*Joining Rock Choir: What to Expect?*, 2021); the creation of musical and visual resources such as dance routine videos and lyric sheets which are made available to members in advance of rehearsals; and the appointment of ‘Prefects’ within the choir whose role it is to support the choir leader and to meet new members at the door of their first rehearsal to help them to settle into the group [*Ibid*].

The field of practice engaged in by participants in this study was therefore determined by the type of choir participated in by the singer. *Variance* can be shown to exist in which themes were deemed more/less important by singers across different types of choir. The following discussion will focus on the themes and codes generated within the *Area of Responsibility* meta-theme as this meta-theme most clearly relates to **practice** within the CoMPs represented. The *Attributes* meta-theme is not examined here as this more clearly relates to *how* a conductor enacts their practice than *what* this practice entails. The *Voice-*

*centred Concerns* meta-theme was generated from a smaller portion of the data set using reflexive thematic analysis (as opposed to the codebook thematic analysis used to generate the other two meta-themes) and is therefore not suitable for analysis and discussion in this way. It therefore also does not feature in the discussion below.

As shown in figure 22 (see p.187), in comparing the ratios of themes within the *Area of Responsibility* meta-theme reported by singers, a small level of *Variance* can be seen between types of choir in which theme is emphasised most strongly in the coding. In particular, the level to which *Teaching* and *Vision* were emphasised by singers varied with an 11% difference between Rock and Pop choirs and Religious choirs in the *Teaching* theme, and a difference of 15% between Chamber choirs and Rock or Pop choirs in the *Vision* theme.

A small amount of *Variance* can therefore be seen at the meta-theme level however *Variance* is more clearly found in lower levels of the coding hierarchy, among themes and codes. Differences in, for example, percentages of coding generated within the *Vision* theme for different types of choir vary by up to 72%, as seen in figure 26 (p.194) within the *Atmosphere* code. Coding generated from responses given by singers in Pop or Rock Choirs placed 90% of the emphasis in this code on *Atmosphere* whereas this code made up only 18% of the coding generated by singers from Religious Choirs. Moderate levels of *Variance* were also found at the theme level for the remaining themes (*Coordination*, *Safeguarding*, and *Teaching*) in the *Area of Responsibility* meta-theme.



Within the *Coordination* theme, coding percentages vary by up to 30% within the *Rehearsal* code, as seen in figure 30 (p.203). Coding generated from responses given by singers in Religious choirs placed 56% of the emphasis in this code on *Rehearsal* coordination whereas this code made up only 26% of the coding generated by Rock or Pop choir singers. Within the *Safeguarding* theme, (shown in fig. 28. p.199) whilst variation between coding percentages was smaller than in the other themes discussed in this section, *Variance* was still found to an extent with differences of up to 14% found between Chamber Choir singers and Rock or Pop Choir singers within the *Understanding Capability of Singers* code. Finally, as shown in figure 32 (p.206) within the *Teaching* theme, differences of up to 31% were found between Choral Society singers and Rock or Pop Choir singers for expected levels of *Vocal Teaching*.

Plotting the ratios of codes generated within themes shows that different types of choir place emphasis on different areas of leader responsibility. As an example, this can be seen in Fig 33. (see p.207) which shows codes within the *Vision* theme plotted for each type of choir. As shown in Fig.33., the shape of the plots for Chamber Choirs, Choral Societies, and Religious Choirs broadly match. The plots for Community Choirs and Female Voice Choirs form a second group with broadly matching shapes of plots. Rock or Pop choirs show a third, idiosyncratic plot shape. This suggests that three separate patterns of emphasis have been identified, in terms of codes within the *Vision* theme, across the types of choirs represented in this study. *Variance* was also found across all themes within the *Area of Responsibility* meta-theme, however the grouping of choirs sharing patterns of emphasis were different for each theme (see figures 33 - 35, pp.207 - 209).

It is therefore at the theme/code levels, as opposed to the meta-theme level that *Variance* is most clearly seen within the findings of this study. It is thus found that although there are shared broad *Areas of Responsibility* expected of leaders by singers in this sample, conductors of these groups will be expected to vary aspects of their practice according to the type of choir they are leading, that is according to specific field of practice in which they are working.

In exploring *Variance* between CoMPs in this manner, it is worth considering that the findings may be affected by the fact that certain types of choir may only recruit singers with a high level of vocal education and singing experience, whilst others will accept singers of all levels of training. It is possible that this difference in levels of training may affect singers' expectations of conductors. It is therefore important to examine, in addition to social and cultural factors, whether or not individual factors appear to affect singers' expectations of choral leadership. As shown in fig. 36 (p.210), the results of comparing the percentage of codes in each theme generated within the *Area of Responsibility* theme, split by participants who had/had not engaged in solo singing training, did not show any significant level of variance. Instead, the level of similarity in levels of emphasis placed on each theme by participants in both groups was striking. The average margin of difference between the two groups was just 1%, and the largest difference was only 4% within the *Interpretation* code.

It is fair to state that the individual factor of prior solo singing experience did not appear have any significant effect on singers' reported expectations of their conductor. It is therefore proposed that the *Variance* in singers' expectations of choral leadership discussed above relates to engagement in different CoMPs, as opposed to individual singing expertise.

I argue that, although at a meta-theme level conducting practices within the groups represented share many similarities, *Variance* is a meta-theme which permeates the themes and codes generated at a lower level of coding within this study. Conductors of the groups represented are expected by their singers to adapt their practice to the specific field of practice engaged in by the CoMP they are leading. Based on the findings of this study it is however not possible to suggest concrete areas of practice which conductors should emphasise in any particular field of practice. This is due to the fact that a convenience sample was selected for data gathering, and also to the qualitative nature of the analysis which was used to generate these findings. It would not be appropriate to ascribe particular levels of emphasis to areas of practice in any CoMP for a conductor to adhere to based on these findings. In practice however, knowing that *Variance* in practice is expected by singers across differing choral settings and that practice should be adapted to suit the focus of the CoMP in question is a useful finding in itself.

*Variance* is therefore proposed as a stand-alone meta-theme which affects conducting practice, however as this *Variance* affects elements of the other meta-themes generated this meta-theme will therefore not only be discussed alone, instead the notion of variance will permeate the discussion of the remaining three meta-themes below.

### **7.1.2 *Areas of Responsibility* and *Voice-centred Concerns* as guidance on action to take**

The second and third meta-themes to be discussed, *Areas of Responsibility* and *Voice-centred concerns*, both denote considerations choral leaders take in enacting their role, that is to say decisions they will take about how to act within the choral situation. I propose that the sets of themes contained within these two meta-themes might be used to prompt choral leaders to first fully consider what singers expect of them, and then to make decisions in each area to respond to these expectations. Choral leaders may therefore consider how best to fulfil their responsibility within each meta-theme by taking each of its constituent themes, and deciding how best to act in each of these areas in response to the needs of the choral group they are currently working with. Within this grouping, the theme of *Vision* is placed first, above the other constituent themes. This placement is related to the *Variance* meta-theme, and is justified based on the fact that the *Vision* theme was the largest body of code (36%) within the *Areas of Responsibility* meta-theme. It is also justified based on the observation that decisions over what actions to take are more likely to be successful if aligned with *Vision*, that is to say the purpose of the choral group. A mismatch between the fundamental reason for the group existing and the actions taken in the choral setting is unlikely to lead to success.

As an example of decisions that might be taken in each of these areas, I will consider two different hypothetical choirs. The first will be a small group of musically educated singers, and the second will be a large community choir, consisting of untrained singers of mixed

ability levels. These hypothetical groups have been chosen as examples of choral practice which differ in terms of size, musical ability level, and purpose. A choral leader approaching each of these choirs might decide to approach their responsibilities to the groups in very different ways. A deliberate choice has been made *not* to base the suggested decisions in each of the areas on the output of the quantitative analysis of the coding generated within the *Area of Responsibility* theme (discussed above, see pp. 287-290). As stated before (see p. 290), the output of this analysis served only to highlight the existence of *Variance* across the choir types represented in the sample. The fact however that convenience sampling was chosen for this study means that it would not appropriate to generalise from these findings and propose specific guidance for any specific type of choir outside of this sample. Instead, *Variance* is proposed as a factor which influences the choices made by conductors in these areas according to the choir's *Vision*. Figure 58 (below) shows the themes within the *Areas of Responsibility and Voice-centred Considerations* meta-themes, and potential responses to each of these that a choral leader might take.

		<b>Small group of musically educated singers</b>	<b>Large community choir, consisting of untrained singers of mixed ability levels</b>
<b>Areas of Responsibility</b>	<b>Vision</b>	The performance of complex repertoire to a high standard	Community bonding, a safe place for singers to meet friends
	<b>Coordination</b>	Musical coordination achieved through gesture and explicit discussion of the timbre expected from each singer. Group coordination achieved via email bulletins	Musical coordination achieved through both gesture and the use of a backing track including a strong drumbeat. Group coordination achieved through the use of social media groups and frequent social events
	<b>Safeguarding</b>	The number of singers in the group will be strictly limited to allow the musical director the opportunity to spend time with each singer individually if necessary to offer support	The musical director will be supported by a committee and voice section leaders to check in with singers regularly and respond to any indication received that singers require additional support in the choral situation
	<b>Teaching</b>	The conductor will impart contextual information about each piece of repertoire before it is rehearsed to ensure that all singers are aware of conventional requirements	Each vocal line will be taught via notebashing to ensure that all singers are able to learn their parts. Vocal skills will be taught as part of warm-up exercises related to the repertoire being rehearsed
<b>Voice-centred Concerns</b>	<b>Vocal Advising</b>	The choral leader will provide feedback on the vocal sound being produced by the group on an ongoing basis	The choral leader will give technical advice on how to produce any sound that they ask the singers for and will offer alternative arrangements to singers finding their vocal line lies outside of their comfortable singing range
	<b>A vocal Duty of Care</b>	The choral leader will utilise gestures which support healthy vocal production and offer flexibility to singers unable to participate due to illness	The choral leader will provide supporting materials such as sheet music for singers and will lead warm-up and cool-down exercises as part of regular choral rehearsals
	<b>[Singer prioritising] Demands</b>	The choral leader will structure rehearsals carefully in order to ensure that complexity and effort levels are not overly taxing on singers' voices	The choral leader will ensure there are regular breaks and will teach repertoire fully to ensure that singers are able to contribute comfortably

**Figure 2 - Examples of potential decisions taken by a choral leader for two different choral groups in response to considerations within the Areas of Responsibility and Voice-Centred Concerns**  
**Meta-themes**

Decisions taken in each area might vary between choral leaders and the purpose of the examples given above are not to propose ‘correct’ answers to any of these considerations. This example instead is intended to illustrate that in leading different types of singing groups, choral leaders will enact their practice in different ways, however they may make decisions in similar core areas in order to determine how best to meet their singers’ needs and expectations. The *Areas of Responsibilities* and *Voice-centred Concerns* meta-themes are therefore proposed as guiding principles for decision making for conductors about how best to act to meet their singers’ expectations. The content of these themes is well aligned with much of the content of the maestro writing and how-to guides reviewed in Chapter 2. The conceptualisation of these however as meta-themes within which decisions should be made on how to behave from a range of options, as opposed to prescriptive lists of suggested practices is novel. The notion of non-prescriptive and contextually varying responsibilities is closely related to the *Variance* meta-theme.

### **7.1.3 *Attributes* as guidance on skills/qualities to be developed for use in practice**

The third meta-theme presented in the previous chapter, *Attributes*, and its constituent themes, namely: *Personal Qualities*; *Conducting Tools*; and *Leadership Styles*, are proposed as groupings of skills and qualities which conductors will use in taking the actions decided upon in response to the *Areas of Responsibility* and *Voice-centred Concerns* identified above.

### 7.1.3.1 Conducting Tools

The first of these, Conducting Tools, relates to the musical skills, communication skills, and teaching skills required to fulfil the choral leader's responsibilities to the group. Of the three themes within the *Attributes* meta-theme, this grouping is perhaps the most closely related to previous literature. As outlined in Chapter 2, how-to guides and individual studies often focus on musical skills and rehearsal strategies covering both communication and teaching skills. It is also noted that the *Conducting Tools* section of the findings relates to Durrant's holistic model of the skills and qualities necessary in an effective choral conductor (Durrant, 2018). Many overlaps can be found between Durrant's model and this project's findings in the *Conducting Tools* theme, such as the need for a conductor to possess good aural skills and the ability to communicate clearly. This is likely due to the fact that Durrant's model is designed specifically to focus on the attributes of a successful choral conductor.

There were however novel findings generated, particularly in relation to the emphasis placed on humour as a communication skill. Whilst previous choral research does not examine the functional use of humour, research within the leadership field points to several potential benefits of humour as a communication tool, such as: unifying a team (Holmes & Marra, 2006); the avoidance of follower fatigue (*Ibid.*); exerting influence without reinforcing hierarchical positioning (Watson & Drew, 2017); diffusing tension (Pundt & Herrmann, 2015); softening criticism of team members (Holmes & Marra, 2006); inspiring trust in a leader (Neves & Karagonlar, 2020); fostering organisational creativity (Lang & Lee, 2010); and reducing stress levels and physical tension (Morreall, 2019). Humour was the



third most frequently coded unit of data within the singer survey. 433 of the 1075 participants mentioned humour in their responses, with only *Inspirational Motivation* and *Music literacy, theory, history and musicianship* being coded more frequently with 494 and 482 participants respectively mentioning these. It is possible that the strong emphasis on choral leaders' use of humour within the data set indicates that singers are perceiving some or all of the benefits of leaders utilising humour outlined above in their choral activity. Singers certainly describe the use of functional humour as a positive action for conductors to take, suggesting that "[t]he conductor should also have a sense of humour, in order to make rehearsals more relaxed" [86], or that they should be a "teller of funny stories when we need a break from training" [538]. It is therefore proposed that the functional use of humour is an important conductor attribute which should be utilised by choral leaders as part of their practice. This tool has previously been overlooked in the choral literature and would merit further research.

### **7.1.3.2 Leadership**

Discussion of the leadership-related findings will be structured around the four paradigms of leadership as defined by Avery (2004) and outlined in Chapter 4. These are: Classical; Transactional; Visionary; and Organic. As shown in the previous chapter, analysis of the data relating to leadership revealed an expectation from many singers that conductors would utilise a leadership style that falls within the Visionary paradigm. This was due partly to the abundance of references to *Vision* within the data set, and partly to the large percentage (84%) of data units within the *Leadership Style* theme which relate to leadership falling

within the Visionary paradigm (*Ibid.*). A smaller number (13%) of the *Leadership Style* codes however also contained descriptions of a Transactional Leadership style.

#### **7.1.3.2.1 Transformational/Transactional leadership within the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM)**

Whilst strong support for the use of Transformational Leadership was found, participant responses also contained reports of an expectation of a Transactional Leadership style.

Whilst these leadership styles lie within separate paradigms, leaders may be capable of employing both of these styles in their practice, varying according to context. Indeed Bass proposed that Transformational Leadership augments Transactional Leadership, not that one style or the other should be exclusively used (Northouse, 2018). It is therefore possible that, as opposed to categorically preferring one form of leadership over another, singers may expect different forms of leadership to suit their needs across varying circumstances. It may, for instance, be the case that singers in different types of choirs expect different types of leadership. Alternatively it may be that over time, facing varying demands, singers expect different forms of leadership.

The proposed notion of the choral leader's style altering contextually aligns well with Bass and Riggio's (2006) evaluation of the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) which addresses both Transformational and Transactional leadership styles. Bass & Riggio find that follower evaluations of leaders vary according to circumstance with preferences for

Transformational/Transactional leadership varying contextually. Variables influencing follower preferences include: stress; leader/follower expertise levels; task specificity; leader

personality traits; and environmental contingencies (Bass & Riggio, 2006). It has also been found that in times of crisis, charismatic or Transformational Leadership is preferred by followers, whereas in times of stability transactional leaders are sought (*Ibid.*). Aligning choral leadership with the FRLM means that as opposed to acting on intuition, conductors may be guided by the extensive FRLM and Transformational Leadership literature on how best to lead according to circumstance. As events which may be perceived as threatening are encountered, such as public performances, interpersonal conflicts, financial strains, competition, and/or committee personnel changes, it may therefore be advisable for the choral leader to alter their leadership style to best meet the needs and expectations of their singers.

Stress, for example, may be experienced by novice choral singers faced with the prospect of an upcoming public performance. In this circumstance, conductors might be guided by the finding that Transformational Leadership can reduce feelings of stress and burnout within follower groups (Seltzer et al., 1989). Conductors might therefore use Transformational Leadership behaviours to unite their singers around the achievement of the group's goals and in doing so reduce feelings of stress and burnout within the group. They may, for example, choose to "lead by example eg [*Sic*] concert etiquette" [445] and utilise their Idealised Influence to inspire confidence in their singers. Alternatively, experienced singers may find the prospect of an upcoming performance less daunting and perceive the rehearsal period prior to the performance as a predictable environment to inhabit. Conductors in this situation may choose therefore to rely more heavily on a Transactional Leadership style, which has been found to lead to success within a stable, predictable environment (Bass &

Riggio, 2006). Conductors in this situation may therefore choose to “correct[] any mistakes made during the rehearsal” [117] and “negotiat[e] commitment to practice and rehearsals with singers” [16].

It is therefore proposed that, although the findings predominantly support the use of Transformational Leadership within a choral setting, *Variance* in approach in terms of leadership style is a fundamental aspect of successful choral leadership. It is argued that, when contextually appropriate, choral leaders may also be expected by singers to employ leadership behaviours that fall within the Transactional paradigm.

#### **7.1.3.2.2 Vision/Inspirational Motivation**

As outlined in Chapter 4, the concept of contextual variance as an aspect of choral leadership has been explored before in relation to leadership theory, and in particular Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) (Allen & Apfelstadt, 1990; Allen, 1988; Apfelstadt, 1997) and Transformational Leadership Theory (Davidson, 1995; Ludwa, 2012). SLT is a contingency theory of leadership lying within the Transactional paradigm (Avery, 2004) and Transformational Leadership theory lies within the Visionary paradigm (*Ibid.*). As stated above, findings in the present study indicate that although there is some expectation of transactional leadership, the predominant form of leadership expected is visionary (see Figure 16, p.172). It is therefore proposed that the use of both of these styles as contextually appropriate is expected by singers in the UK, with a strong emphasis on visionary styles. Further support for this argument can be found in reference to *Vision* and

*Inspirational Motivation* which were generated as a theme and sub-code respectively during analysis.

The concepts of *Vision* and *Inspirational Motivation* are closely related to each other, in that *Inspirational Motivation* is achieved through uniting followers behind an attractive *Vision* of the future. As *Vision* makes up 36% of the coding in the *Areas of Responsibility*, this suggests that there are many singers who expect this as a part of their choral participation. The data suggests that singers expect a choral leader to either align their practice with the choir's existing ethos/purpose, or alternatively that the choral leader will be the one to form a vision of the group's purpose for the singers to unite behind. Examples of choir visions described by singers included musical-focused aspects of choral activity such as the group's repertoire choice, concert programming, or interpretation of the music. Singers cited the conductor as being "[v]ital for providing direction in regards to suitable repertoire" [643] and bringing "a vision of how the piece should be performed" [186]. Other singers described extra-musical group purposes such as singing to improve lung health, singing as a form of worship, and choral singing as part of political activism. In these areas singers expected conductors to "set out the ethos for the choir as opposed to a list of songs" [702] and "[k]now what the choir is expecting and its ambitions as a whole [735].

*Inspirational Motivation* and *Vision* are key concepts differentiating this study's findings from the literature cited above which used *only* SLT as a framework (Allen, & Apfelstadt, 1990; Allen, 1988; Apfelstadt, 1997) and aligning it with studies which utilised measures of both Transactional and Transformational leadership (Davidson, 1995; Ludwa, 2012). This is

consistent with a general chronological shift in the popularity of leadership theories within academia, with theories falling within the Visionary paradigm being developed more recently than those within the Transactional paradigm (Avery, 2004; Northouse, 2016). This is also consistent with Durrant (2018) and Jansson's (2019) holistic approach to choral leadership, both of which incorporate elements of practice which relate to a vision singers can unite behind, such as accessing the "intersubjective space" of the sounding music (Jansson, 2019).

*Vision* is therefore proposed as a source of guidance on when conductors might find success in using either transactional or transformational approaches to choral leadership.

Transactional Leadership has been found to be successful in situations where tasks are well-defined whereas Transformational Leadership has been found to be more successful where tasks are less well-defined (Bass & Riggio, 2006). If the choir has a well-defined purpose, for example, the performance of a predetermined set of repertoire at weekly church services in order to support worship, it may be that Transactional Leadership is well-suited to the achievement of that goal. In contrast to this, if the choir is without a defined mission statement or the choir's purpose does not have measurable goals, such as might be the case with a community choir where participants attend for a variety of social and personal reasons, then it may be the case that, to be successful, the choral leader must act transformationally and supply *Vision* and *Inspirational Motivation* for the group.

It is however interesting to note that, within the sampled group of choral singers, the majority do not seem to expect choral leadership to align with the more recent paradigm of

Organic leadership. Within an Organic paradigm of leadership the notion of a single, fixed leader would not feature, rather leadership would be expected to arise organically within the group according to individuals' suitability to lead over time and across varying tasks (Avery, 2004). The data suggest that instead the sampled singers expect the role of the conductor to be held by just one nominated individual. As outlined above however, although singers expect leadership to be enacted by just one person, it is proposed that singers expect this person's leadership style to vary according to context.

### **7.1.3.3 Personal Qualities**

Within the analysis, four themes were generated within the *Personal Qualities* meta-theme: *Authoritative; Dynamic; Truthful/consistent; and Supportive*.

#### **7.1.3.3.1 Authoritative**

Data within this theme indicated that many singers expect a choral leader to act with authority, maintain discipline, and command the respect of the choral singers. This theme however also relates to the *Bad Experiences* code within the *Variance* meta-theme. This code contains descriptions of singer accounts of instances on which conductors have taken the notion of authority too far and mistreated or neglected singers within the group, resulting in a negative experience for the singers. Singers observed that "it is easy for a professional musician to have an agenda around what they want to produce and treat individual human beings as a bit of an obstacle to getting it" [559].

The *Bad experiences* theme may therefore be related to the concept of personalised leadership. Personalised leadership is recognised as leadership behaviours that are designed to further the personal interests of the leader. This is contrasted with socialised leadership which is characterised by a leader's focus on furthering group aims in a selfless and non-exploitative manner (Parry et al., 2019). Bass related the concepts of personalised and socialised leadership to Transformational Leadership, naming a personalised approach "psudotransformational leadership" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p.viii), as opposed to a socialised or "authentic" (*Ibid.*) approach. An authentic approach to Transformational Leadership therefore requires a leader to put aside their own goals in favour of the group's interest (Northouse, 2018). As one participant noted, "[t]he choir should be for the choir not just the choir leader. They should not see it as an opportunity to further their own career" [922]. Applying this form of leadership to a choral situation would therefore require the conductor to examine their approach ethically and ensure that their actions furthered the interests of their singers as opposed to their own. Singers are unlikely to want to voluntarily work with a conductor displaying personalised leadership and indeed, as reported in Chapter 6 within the *Bad Experiences* code, many of the singers in the sample who described experiencing this type of behaviour reported that they had not continued to sing with the choral leader displaying this type of leadership.

In addition to negative reports of conductors who used choral groups to further their own personal aims, singers also described choral leaders engaging in bullying and singling out singers for criticism. The majority of singers reporting this behaviour also stated that they had left the choir after these events. This effect was found previously by Bonshor (2017)



who suggests that negative feedback, and in particular criticism which singles out a participant, can have long-lasting effects on singers' confidence and self-belief. Participants in Bonshor's study of adult amateur choral singers used "words such as "victimised", "belittling", "hurt", "undermined", "afraid" and "destroyed"" (Bonshor, 2017, p.147) to describe this type of experience, and many of these singers also reported leaving choirs in which they'd received this treatment from the choral leader. It is clear that whilst the findings of the current study suggest that choral leaders are continuing to engage in these negative behaviours, singers do not perceive that this is acceptable, nor is it conducive to a productive choral rehearsal (Bonshor, 2017).

#### **7.1.3.3.2 Dynamic**

The data suggest that many singers expect a dynamic and charismatic individual to lead their choir. This finding aligns well with Transformational Leadership's concept of Idealised Influence. Idealised Influence involves setting an example for followers by acting as a role model. This behaviour encourages followers to identify with and emulate the leader. Followers also trust and respect leaders showing Idealised Influence, believing them to possess admirable characteristics such as perseverance, determination and/or extraordinary capabilities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Singers clearly look up to their conductors, calling them a "Goddess" [673], "Guru" [677], and "[t]he most amazing person I've ever met" [177].

Idealised Influence has been shown to be strongly positively correlated with employee performance (Ganga et al., 2017). This is achieved through heightening followers' collective identity by influencing the group as a whole and in so doing, creating shared values (Tse &

Chiu, 2014). This suggests that, aside from being useful in commanding attention from the group, Idealised Influence is a useful tool for conductors in increasing productivity and enhancing group identity in rehearsals. This is evidenced in the data set in singer statements falling within the *Idealised Influence* sub-code such as “[o]ur conductor is the lynchpin of our choir” [46] and “[s]he’s the glue that holds us together” [99].

In its original form, the concept of Idealised Influence was named charisma, before this was altered to avoid “idolization of the leader” (Antonakis, 2012, p265). Whilst charismatic leadership theories advocate for inspirational leadership which motivates followers to achieve their goals, there can be confusion over the concept of charisma and how it manifests itself as part of the leadership role. The literature on visionary leadership theories such as Transformational Leadership advocates for charisma as an important factor (Barbuto Jr, 1997). It is also true however that some researchers believe charisma to be a flawed concept in this context. It has been argued that as opposed to being a quality that is displayed, charisma is instead something which is attributed to leaders by followers. If true, then this is problematic in that charisma is therefore judged subjectively and “[t]he extent to which a leader is judged by individual followers to possess charismatic features will to some degree reflect socialized attributions, in the sense that such individual judgments and opinions are not made in a vacuum, but reflect the thinking and behaviour of other social actors to whom they are exposed” (Pastor et al., 2002, p.411). This is supported by Margarita Mayo’s research which shows that during times of stress, followers are more likely to attribute charisma to the leader they have chosen (Mayo, 2017), implying that even perceived levels of charisma may not be stable across time for leaders. In fact, the level of

charisma attributed to a person by a group has even been shown to increase when the group members believe that the person has died, implying that assessment of charisma may have little to do with the actions of a person (Steffans et al., 2017).

Bass & Riggio acknowledge and address the problem in their description of Idealised Influence, stating that “there are two separate aspects to idealized influence: the leader’s behaviors and the elements that are attributed to the leader by the followers” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p.6). Further to this, they suggest that when assessing Transformational Leadership, Idealised Influence should be measured from both the leader and the followers’ points of view. This allows for the assessment of both the leader’s behaviour and the qualities attributed to leaders by their followers.

The implication of this for conductors is that, even if charisma is cited as a desirable quality in a conductor by choral singers, simply modifying their behaviour in order to be perceived as charismatic and therefore a more attractive leadership candidate, may not meet with universal success. If charisma “exists in the eye of the beholder” (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019, p.71) then, whilst conductors can take steps to modify their behaviour, it will be impossible to guarantee that this will result in being perceived as more charismatic by their followers. Conductors can however instead increase their efforts to behave in ways that are likely to elicit positive outcomes for followers in order to affect the level of charisma attributed to them by their choir. Examples of this type of behaviour can be found in the data falling within the *Idealised Influence* sub-code. Conductors might for example “be prepared sufficiently to demonstrate what they require from the group” [122] or display an “ability to

stay calm and confident to give us the confidence to perform” [523]. These behaviours are active steps that can be taken which may be more likely to result in successful motivation than efforts solely aimed at being perceived as a charismatic individual.

#### **7.1.3.3.3 Truthful & consistent/Supportive**

The notions of truthfulness and consistency being expected by singers are not novel and align well with previous studies of choral leadership. Jansson found this expectation in his 2013 study and “sincerity” (Jansson, 2019, p.877) is included in the coherence layer of his enactment model. Equally, being supportive is an aspect of Durrant’s modelling of the super-model conductor (Durrant, 2018), found in the requirement for a conductor to have “[a]n understanding of the nature of the conductor’s role to take responsibility for the singers collectively and individually” (Durrant, 2018, p.91). It is however interesting to note that these themes also align with Transformational Leadership’s concept of Individualised Consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006), in that offering support alongside truthful and consistent feedback to singers could be considered a critical part of the mentorship and developmental aspects of Individualised Consideration. It has previously been found that conductor feedback is cited as a source of confidence in adult amateur choral singers, and particularly that positive feedback from conductors, perceived as trustworthy and knowledgeable musicians, is professed to be as a source of confidence development by these singers (Bonshor, 2017). Bonshor also suggests that specific feedback alongside constructive criticism is valued by some singers as this enhances singers’ trust in the conductor as a sincere source of feedback (*Ibid.*). The delivery of honest, constructive feedback from choral leaders is therefore suggested to be a positive action that conductors

can take, and is supported by the findings of this study, particularly within the *Honesty* sub-code (see Figure 37, p.214). Data within this sub-code indicate that singers expect conductors to be “[m]usically honest” [93] in “not letting [the singers] get away with wrong notes, lyrics or dynamics” [457] but will also “give praise where it’s due” [217]. This lies in contrast to the negative effects of destructive criticism discussed above relating to the *Bad experiences* theme.

#### **7.1.3.4 Attributes - conclusion**

As was seen in the discussion of the *Areas of Responsibility* and *Voice-centred Concerns* themes, *Variance* is again emphasised within the *Attributes* meta-theme. This can be seen in the balance between the need for positive feedback and constructive criticism, or in the balance between the expectation that the conductor will be a charismatic, dynamic character and the need for them to show humility in putting the group’s needs above furthering their own aims. Jansson sums up this need for balance neatly, saying

“[t]he perfect musical leadership is an elusive phenomenon, not only because many of the preferences are individual but also because many of the things conductors are and do involve continuous choices and constant rebalancing, which affects the singers in turn” (Jansson, 2014, p.154).

That singers expect this balancing act from their conductors can be seen within the *Attributes* meta-theme. As shown in Chapter 6 sub-codes generated in the analysis indicate that singers expect conductors to be *Calm/relaxed* but also *Charismatic* and *Energetic*. They expect their conductors to show *Perfectionism* but also *Patience* for singers of varying ability

levels. They also expect a conductor to show *Control*, *Confidence* and be *Determined* whilst also showing a *Willingness to reflect* and humility.

The themes presented above are therefore are not intended as a summary of skills/qualities which are all expected to be used in every choral setting. Instead they outline broad groupings of core areas in which choral leaders are expected to have skills/qualities which they will use when contextually appropriate. There is therefore again a recognition that although the emphasis on precisely which of the skills and qualities that it will be appropriate for a choral leader to use will vary contextually and perhaps also across time, there are overlaps at a fundamental level in the groupings of skills/qualities that are appropriate for use by choral leaders on the whole.

## **7.2 Integrating themes to produce a model of choral leadership**

Following the discussion above, a model of which integrates the four meta-themes, *Variance*; *Areas of Responsibility*; *Attributes*; and *Voice-Centred Concerns*, along with the themes contained within each one is proposed. The model is shown below in Figure 59 following a discussion of its construction.

The first of the meta-themes, *Variance*, is proposed to have an overarching effect on all other meta-themes and is therefore placed along the sides of the visualised model, indicating its presence at every level.

The next meta-theme, *Areas of Responsibility* is then placed at the top of the model. The placement of this meta-theme is indicative of the study's findings that singers in the sample consider these four areas of responsibility to be at the core of the conductor's role, generated as they were from analysis of data relating to the overall role of the conductor. Vision is placed first in this layer of the model, above the other three responsibilities, indicating its importance and impact on decisions taken in the other three areas.

Below this layer, the *Voice-centred concerns* are placed indicating that these should be considered following the fundamental areas of responsibility as an enhancement, moving from general choral leadership to a voice-centred approach.

The final layer, *Attributes* is then placed at the bottom of the model. The placement of this meta-theme indicates that the availability of the skillset in this layer does not influence which responsibilities/voice-centred concerns are acted upon, rather that the decisions taken in the upper levels of the model will influence the requirement for specific skills and/or qualities from the *Attributes* layer.

Variance = context must determine choices made	Conductorship requires a consideration of 4 key <i>Areas of Responsibility</i> :			Variance = context must determine choices made
	Vision			
	Coordination	Safeguarding	Teaching	
	Voice-centred conductorship adds a requirement to consider:			
	Vocal Advising	A vocal Duty of Care	[Singer prioritising] Demands	
	Fulfilment of these responsibilities is achieved using conductor <i>Attributes</i>			
	Conducting Tools	Leadership style	Personal qualities	

Figure 3 - Voice-centred Choral Conductorship Model

7.2.1 ‘Voice-centred Choral Conductorship’

I have called this a model of **Voice-centred Choral Conductorship** to emphasise the relationship between the voice-centred, leadership, and conducting elements it contains.

This title contains two novel terms, ‘voice-centred’ and ‘conductorship’, and the more conventional term ‘choral’. Each of these terms will now be defined in relation to the model presented above.

The term ‘voice-centred’ refers to the focus on voice-related conductor functions, as defined in Chapter 3 of this thesis. ‘Voice-centred’ conductor concerns are therefore considerations which have a vocal aspect, as distinct from those that might relate to non-singing activities. ‘Choral’ refers to the fact that this model is suitable for use in choral settings and not necessarily in other situations where voices are involved alongside other



musical forces such as, for example, opera productions where the conductor's responsibilities may be divided between the choir and other musicians.

My newly coined term 'conductorship' refers to conducting practice. I developed this term in recognition of the equal focus on, and interdependence of both musical and leadership practices in this activity. Previous conducting literature has focused predominantly on the musical/gestural aspects of conducting practice and has not focused as frequently on leadership as a fundamental part of the conductor's role. In the new conductorship model, leadership is not only at the heart of the *Attributes* section, it also permeates the other sections of the model. Within the literature, on those occasions on which leadership *has* formed part of the discussion on the conductor's role, conducting has been described as a form of 'musical leadership' (Allen, 1988; Davidson, 1995; Jansson, 2013, 2018, 2019; Ludwa, 2012). This is a valid framing of the conductor's role, however I now argue that it does not go far enough. Musical leadership as two separate words implies a division between musical and leadership related factors, and also that it would be possible for one set of factors to take primacy over the other. I therefore propose an integrated or 'holistic' understanding of the conducting role, where the *Areas of responsibility/Voice-centred concerns* and the *Attributes* needed to fulfil these are both musical and leadership-related and are intertwined and inseparable. It is therefore appropriate to refer to the act of conducting not as musical leadership, but instead as conductorship wherein both leadership and musical concerns are acted upon as part of an integrated conductorship approach.

## 7.3 Discussion of the Voice-centred Choral Conductorship

### Model

The Voice-centred Choral Conductorship Model is a holistic model of the choral leader's role, depicting their responsibilities to the singers, and the skills and qualities used to fulfil these responsibilities. At every level of the model there is an acknowledgement that context will determine the emphasis placed on elements of the model in the conductor's practice. Viewing conducting practice through this conductorship lens shows that, although at first glance conducting practice might look very different across varying contexts, at a fundamental level there are core aspects of the role that are shared. It may, for example, seem that a conductor of a professional chamber choir and the leader of a singing for lung health group share very little in terms of their day to day practice. I argue however that with both of these types of groups, successful conductorship will involve responding to contextual *Variance* with a consideration of four key *Areas of Responsibility*, *Voice-centred Concerns*, and the use of conductor *Attributes* to enact the role.

The conducting literature overlaps in content with some areas of the conductorship model, in that how-to guides, maestro writing and individual studies, as discussed in Chapter 2, all touch on factors included in the model. Overlapping content includes voice-centred factors such as vocal teaching, warm-ups and vocal safeguarding, and more general conducting factors such as coordinating singers and the variety of conducting tools used to do this. The model however presents an integrated or 'holistic' depiction of conductorship, whereas much of the previous literature has separated these factors for individual discussion.

### 7.3.1 Holistic Models of Conducting

The model's holistic nature means that it aligns most closely with Durrant and Jansson's conception of conducting as the integration of multiple musical and non-musical factors within holistic approaches, as described in Chapter 2. It does however deviate from these models in terms of content, root metaphor, geographical relevance, and perspective. These deviations will be outlined below. It is first however acknowledged that Jansson's enactment/legitimacy models, Durrant's model of an effective conductor, and the conductorship model all have different foci and are therefore not directly comparable. However, due to the scarcity of holistic conducting research findings and as these three models were all generated following research on conducting and/or the conductor's role, it is worth comparing and contrasting these further.

Durrant's model of the skills needed in an effective conductor shares much of its content with lower-level codes and sub-codes presented in the previous chapter. Examples include "Appropriate aural and error-detection skills" (Durrant, 2018, p.92) and "The capacity to communicate clearly and unambiguously" (*Ibid.*). These items overlap with the findings presented in the previous chapter under *Aural skills*, *Error detection*, and *Diagnosis of issues*, wherein singers expressed an expectation that conductors would have "the ability to spot and correct mistakes within a complex texture of sound" [15], and within the *Communication Skills* code where participants expected conductors to be "able to communicate with all members of the choir" [437]. The notion of *Variance* permeating the conductorship model also aligns with Durrant's argument that successful conductors will

make contextual adjustments to their practice as they work according to the in the moment feedback they are receiving from singers (Durrant, 2018).

At a structural level however the models differ. This is partly due to the different foci of the two models. Durrant's research models the skills and qualities needed to be a conductor, whereas the conductorship model outlines responsibilities and considerations that form part of the conductor's role, before then presenting skills and qualities necessary to fulfil this role. Additionally, Durrant's model was generated based initially on the conducting literature and then later refined via research which centred the conductor's perspective. Conversely the conductorship model has been generated via a data-driven process, taking singers as the sample and therefore is inductively produced and centres the singers' perspectives.

Finally, Durrant's conception of the choral conductor is as an educator. The conductorship model does include 'teaching' as a potential area of responsibility and 'teaching skills' were presented as a code within the *Attributes* meta-theme. It was not however generated using the root metaphor of teacher/class for the choral situation. Instead the metaphor of a leader/team was used and leadership theory used as a framework for analysis and discussion. I argue that the conductorship model therefore uses an alternative lens to view the act of conducting and this is reflected particularly in the inclusion of *Vision* as a critical element of conductorship. Whilst Durrant's model includes vision-related aspects such as "[a]n image of the music prior to rehearsal" (Durrant, 2018, p.91) and "[a]n awareness of the aesthetic potential of the music" (*Ibid.*), these are music-focused visions and will only be

able to be used as a source of Inspirational Motivation if they align with a choir's ethos/purpose. The conductorship model's broader conception of *Vision* as the group of singers' reason for attending the choir, which may include non-musical considerations, is a key factor in differentiating conductorship from Durrant's conception of choral conducting.

Jansson's enactment model of conducting shares some content, metaphor and perspective with the conductorship model. This makes Jansson's model more closely related than Durrant's to the conductorship model. These similarities will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of the ways in which the models differ. Firstly, within its mastery level the enactment model contains "Musical Skills and Knowledge" (Jansson, 2019, p.875), "Rehearsal Management" (*Ibid.*), and "Mentorship" (*Ibid.*) and within the coherence level it contains "Authority" (*Ibid.*), "Sincerity" (*Ibid.*) and "Vision" (*Ibid.*). All of these elements can be found within the conductorship model. His legitimacy model also overlaps in places with the conductorship model in that "conceiving significance" (Jansson, 2019, p.870) relates closely to *Interpretation of the Music* and "Managing Setting" (*Ibid.*) and "Shaping the music event" (*Ibid.*) relate to *Coordination*. Secondly, Jansson's work shares a common conception of the conductor as a leader, as opposed to as an educator, with the conductorship model. Finally, Jansson's model is based upon qualitative research with singers as the data source, as opposed to conductors, as it the conductorship model. In these ways the two models share broad similarities.

One of the key differences between the findings of my research and Jansson's however is in Jansson's focus on how the conductor's attributes are perceived and made meaningful by

singers *during the music making act* (Jansson, 2019). In contrast to this, my conductorship model has been produced focusing on the conductor's overall role, that is their role within the choral organisation relating to both music-making and non-music-making acts.

"Organizational" (Jansson, 2019, p.881) leadership theory was therefore employed as a framework for my analysis and this is reflected in the conductorship model's inclusion of extra-musical factors. Jansson includes "Corporeal Congruence" (Jansson, 2019, p.875) as a key feature of musical leadership within the enactment model which "derives from conductor signals that are delivered in different modes (speech, posture, breath, hand movement, eye contact) but that contain the same message (or at least do not contradict one another)" (Jansson, 2014, p.151). This is closely related to Jansson's rejection of organisational leadership theory (Jansson, 2019) and emphasis instead on the theory of beautiful leadership (Ladkin, 2008), which emphasises the embodied nature of musical leadership. I have, in contrast, included *Physical Communication* only as a sub-code of *Communication Skills*, and noted in Chapter 6 that this was not the most frequently coded aspect of communication in the analysis. Both *Humour* and *Interpersonal* skills were coded more frequently in my study. This difference in emphasis might arguably have been caused by the two projects' use of different forms of leadership theory as guiding frameworks. Jansson's use of Ladkin's theory of beautiful leadership emphasises the importance of congruence, defined as "expressing the self through forms which are congruent with one's overall message and purpose. This requires attending not only to what one says but the way one says it" (Ladkin, 2008, p.33). This necessarily leads to an emphasis on physical communication, which is not automatically present in organisational leadership theory.

Jansson criticises the use of organisational leadership theory in examining choral conducting and contends that this perspective neglects viewing the conductor as an imperfect artist, who is primarily tasked with opening the gate to a shared musical experience. He argues that

“...art is ultimately an open-ended process that does not seek unambiguous expression or final closure in terms of understanding. In fact, this may be the point where conducting departs from the adjoining arenas of leadership in general...musicking is stuck (and blessed) with being its own reward” (Jansson, 2019, p.881).

This criticism is perhaps valid if one views conducting as an activity enacted with and for experienced singers, in the pursuit of ‘art’, as may have been the case for those musically educated and experienced singers interviewed in Jansson’s research. This is however a limiting view to adopt on choral singing as an activity. Jansson’s model has been developed based on data gathered from a small, elite group of choral singers and the results of this study are therefore based on an exclusive conception of choral activity and therefore the conductor’s role. My approach to exploring the conductor’s role has, in contrast to this, been inclusive of a broad range of singers and therefore inclusive of a broad range of ability levels, experience levels, and educational levels of singer. It is possible and indeed likely that singers from varying ability and experience levels have varying motivations for participating in choral singing. Organisational leadership theory as a framework affords a wider perspective on choral activity, allowing as it does a conception of the choral conductor as

the leader of a musical organisation as opposed to just a leader of music. Whilst it is acknowledged that conductors may have other members of their leadership team sharing the organisational load, it is argued that the findings presented in Chapter 6, particularly within the *Vision and Safeguarding* themes indicate that singers expect conductors to consider their role as encompassing more than simply musical elements. There is therefore an argument to be made for the use of organisational leadership theory as a framework for the study of choral conducting. This lies in opposition to Jansson's argument that music making deviates from other forms of leadership however in situations where the notion of the intersubjective music making space is not the holy grail of choral participation for singers then this argument is less compelling. Participant quotes from the present study suggest that singers hold multiple non-musical motives for participating in choral singing. Examples include "[j]oining the choir has been a life-saver for me. I was in a very bad place mentally when I started choir, and being part of such a lovely group helped me immensely" [46], and "I think the sense of social inclusion, of purpose & of physical, mental & emotional well-being (specially [*Sic.*] among the older, possibly more lonely members of our choir) can be almost as important as the actual activity of singing itself" [108].

In both Jansson's and the current study, singers were asked to describe their conception of the conductor's role. Jansson began interviews with his sample group by asking "What is great musical leadership, and what's going on when you experience it?" (Jansson, 2019, p.886). The singer survey in this project began by asking singers "How would you describe the role the conductor has in your choir?". It is interesting that, despite the similarity of these starting points in the data gathering processes, the findings of these studies differ in



terms of singer focus. As discussed above, there is some degree of overlap between the findings in terms of musically focused conductor functions. The conductorship model however also incorporates extra-musical conductor functions. It is possible that this difference in findings may be explained by the scope of the two studies being markedly different, both geographically speaking and in terms of musical experience. Jansson's study gathered interview data from 22 musically educated and experienced choral singers based in Norway, all of whom had degrees in music/musicology. The conductorship model has been generated from research which gathered data from 88 choral job adverts and 1075 UK based singers. The sample included singers of a wide range of musical levels of education and experience, including singers with little or no formal musical education and varying lengths of choral experience. It is therefore possible that the difference in experience levels resulted in the two groups of singers focusing on different elements of musical leadership and that the conductorship model's content has been influenced by this incorporation of data from individuals with a wider range of musical skill and experience levels. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the conductorship model's focus is broader in scope than the enactment model and also that the notion of contextual variance is so critical within the model.

Both Durrant's and Jansson's conducting models may be considered holistic, however I argue that in focusing primarily on the music making moments, as opposed to the conductor's role over a broader time period and across a broader range of contexts, the models miss aspects of some singers experiences and expectations of choral leadership. Themes such as, for example, *Humour* or *Support* are novel to the conductorship model, and

I argue that their inclusion points to a broader range of responsibilities expected of conductors by singers sampled in this study.

### **7.3.2 Voice-centred Aspects of Conductorship**

The voice-centred considerations level within the conductorship model is novel in terms of holistic depictions of conducting. In relation however to the conducting literature as a whole, much of the content of this layer is well aligned with previous work. *Vocal advising* and a *Vocal Duty of Care* are well established as areas of interest within the literature as reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. This is found particularly in relation to texts supplying guidance on vocal exercises used to teach vocal skills (Haasemann & Jordan, 1991), warm-up voices (Jordan, 2009), or giving advice on vocal health and hygiene (Weiss, 2001). It is however noted that within these themes, lower-level codes generated during analysis illustrate additional areas of expectation that are not apparent in the conducting literature. Whilst error detection is prominent in the literature in terms of singer accuracy in producing the correct pitches and rhythms, singer responses in this study placed within the *Vocal Advising* theme indicate that there is a further expectation that conductors will be attentive to the choral sound in terms of the health and efficiency of singers' vocal production. Examples of this can be found within the *Range/registers* theme, in which singers expected conductors to offer "[a]dvice on how to reach high notes without straining" [115], or having "many voice parts so people choose which they feel comfortable with[and that it is o]kay to move between for different songs if not comfortable" [249]. This aspect of voice-centred conductorship is less frequently discussed in the conducting literature. Within the *Duty of Care* theme, in addition to the vocal health and hygiene conductor responsibilities, singers

also report an expectation that the conductor will offer flexibility in participation in terms of individual attention, solo opportunities, and medical considerations. Again, whilst these conductor functions have previously been addressed within the literature, this has not been done explicitly in relation to voice-centred aspects of choral participation.

The concept of *Singer Prioritising Demands* being expected by singers in relation to vocal health and development is a less well-established area of voice-centred conductorship that has been identified. Whilst many of the how-to guides and maestro writings reviewed in Chapter 2 do cite rehearsal management as an area of conductor responsibility, the conductorship model presents a further requirement of conductors in this area, namely that rehearsal planning and management should incorporate a consideration of singer stamina and capability levels in order to offer physical protection for their voices.

The *Voice-centred Concerns* layer of the conductorship model aligns well with the conception of the conductor as a Transformational leader. For example, if considered transformationally, then *Vocal Advising* might relate to Idealised Influence, in that the conductor may act as a vocal role model, singing lines of music to be learned or demonstrating good vocal technique. This was reported by singers in the sample to be a positive behaviour as demonstrated by the data falling within the *Idealised Influence* sub-code. Within this category singers stated that the conductor should “be a good vocal role model” [169] and that they would “expect the conductor to be able to correctly demonstrate musical passages” [463]. *Vocal Advising* might also be considered to be a form

of Individualised Consideration if conductors are actively diagnosing areas in which they can offer vocal advice which is relevant to singers' needs. Equally however, if working with a choir of experienced or competent singers then they may choose not to offer specific vocal advice but instead expect singers to use their experience to find a way of producing a vocally appropriate sound. This might then be considered an act of Intellectual Stimulation. Within the *Duty of Care* theme, a consideration of *Accessibility* would relate to Individualised Consideration, with conductors therein responding to specific singer needs. Finally, within the *Demands* theme, prioritising singers in the *Repertoire Choice* process or in facilitating *Improvement/Increased Confidence*, conductors might utilise Inspirational Motivation by offering an attractive future state or achievement of a goal which singers can invest in. As before, these examples are not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive, they are instead given to illustrate that the voice-centred aspects of conductorship could therefore be said to align with the use of Transformational Leadership.

## 7.4 Conclusion

The Voice-centred Choral Conductorship model represents an integrated, holistic model of choral conducting. Conducting literature has previously been criticised for being reductionist and segmenting the choral conducting act into separate functions, as opposed to taking a holistic view of the act (Jansson, 2013). The conductorship model responds to this criticism in taking an integrated view of the conductor's role. It is distinguishable from previous holistic models however in focusing not on what conducting *is* (Jansson, 2019), or what a conductor should be capable of (Durrant, 2018), but instead what a conductor does, and

how they do it. The model positions the conductor as a leader. This is in contrast to much of the previous research on choral conducting which positions the conductor as an educator (Durrant, 1996). The model also stands in contrast to much of the conducting literature in that it has been generated based on research which centres the singer's perspective, as opposed to the conductor's (Jansson, 2019).

