

The social construction of quality in a Brazilian Classical Music market

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1 Introduction

In order for the final product of an orchestra, the concert, to come into existence and reach its destination, the public, a number of actors engage in multiple cooperation processes and mobilize multiple resources building a production network system, or what Howard Becker would call an “Art World”. To Becker (2008, p. 1), “the existence of art worlds, as well as the way their existence affects both the production and consumption of art works, suggests a sociological approach to the arts”.

On the other hand, if we pay attention to the common market dynamics, what we can easily perceive is a highly competitive environment. The mentioned phenomenon is approached by Lazega (2009) from a different perspective: in the competitive world, actors constantly see themselves in situations where they seek market’s stability. This does not happen simply because of the law of supply and demand but from producers positioning in a quality scale that differentiates their products. For this to be possible, full competition is not viable since there is some interdependence between producers. This vision is anchored on the relational perspective which conceives markets as social structures and enterprises, states, etc. as network structures (WHITE, 2008; WHITE, 2002; LAZEGA; HIGGINS, 2014).

The main goal of this investigation is to uncover classical music market. This market still remains out of the common sense interest of economists, sociologists and other market scholars, maybe by chance, maybe by its high complexity and specificity. To guide this investigation, a theoretical framework is proposed aggregating four elements: two economic sociology theories, one regarding quality as the main discipline of production markets (WHITE, 2002), other stating the centrality of the State (FLIGSTEIN, 2002), normative isomorphisms concept (DIMAGGIO; POWELL, 1983) and the brand new theory of multilevel networks (LAZEGA; SNIJDERS, 2016).

Before presenting our research questions and our goals, it is necessary to do an immersion in the specific literature in order to make a theoretical review as deep as possible. Afterwards, we will try to extract from the observation of the literature (considering what is already postulate and, above all, the identified gaps) the direction of our investigation.

Therefore, we will begin our work presenting the results of our bibliographic research. It was made in two of the main abstract bases in sociology and economics¹.

2 Results of the Bibliographic Investigation

In order to investigate the “state of the art” in the research field that involves music market and music economics, we searched for abstracts of published works between 1983 and 2014 ($n = 44$). To do that, we used seven keywords² in Sociological Abstracts and Econlit. 86.36% of the work found are research articles, four are doctoral dissertations and two are published books. Table 1 lists the types of study found. Table 2 lists the research methods used.

Table 1 – Type of Study

Case Study	6
Experimental Study	2
Exploratory Study	1
Historical Study	6
Qualitative	1
Quantitative	5
Economic Sociology	1
Institutionalist Economic Sociology	1

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 2 – Research Method used

Multivariate Regression Analysis	1
Big Data	1
Big Data + Word Count	1
Comparative Analysis	1
Comparative Historical Analysis	1
Discourse Analysis	1
Economic Method	1
Field Theory / Organizational Theory	1
Documental Research	1
Rationalization	1
Social Network Analysis	3
Survey	1
Web-based Experiment	2
Interviews + Documentation Analysis + Statistics	1
Interviews + Music Journals + Promotional Literature	1

Source: Elaborated by the author.

¹ Sociological Abstracts and Econlit.

² Music Market, Classical Music Market, Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra Market, Classical Music Economics, Classical Music Production and Music.

The investigation themes appear on the revised works on a very diffuse way. We found some publications approaching cultural aspects that influence music market, musicians labor market, gender relations and labor division, financing and patronage, music consumption and the variable that explain it, musical taste, aesthetic standards, cultural identity and national/folk music, social history of musicians, the musical repertoire canon, conductor's leadership and participation/satisfaction of musicians, ancient music, digital revolution and music industry.

3 Cultural goods and music market

Our first challenge lies in the fact that we are dealing with an object that defies the majority of economic theory assumptions. Let us begin establishing some fundamental differences between common goods and cultural goods. According to Tolila (2007), goods are understood by four objective criteria, namely, its physical properties (which, in this case are directly related to the quality of the product), date and local where it is available and what conditions its delivery in a certain universe, i.e., without uncertainties. The quality of a good, in this perspective, can be decomposed in a bundle of objective elements, i.e., clearly measurable and hierarchical. Moreover, in neoclassical economic theory every good is considered a "private good" and, therefore, "exclusive and rival" in consumption. For instance, "a coffee, a sandwich, a shirt, a pair of shoes, a chair, etc., are exclusive because it is possible to stop me from getting them (...); on the other hand, each of these goods is exclusive because in the moment I enjoy it, no other person can enjoy it as well" (TOLILA, 2007, p. 29). Cultural products in general are not exclusive; one can, for instance, admire a beautiful historic building without having to pay for it. Neither they are rivals in consumption; the pleasure of attending a concert is not diminished by the presence of other people.

This sector of the economy is defined by its logic towards production, unlike market of consumer goods. States and public collectives has shown growing interest on cultural industry. This can be verified by policy making, by specialized administrations, allocation of resources directed specifically to this sector and the emergence of a whole network of institutions and professionals acting in this sector, most of them financed by public resources (TOLILA, 2007).

Musical performances have also another peculiarity regarding the nature of its existence in which resides a large part of the methodological difficulties that surround them. Tolila (2007) explains it: "What is music? The score? No. The orchestra musicians? No. The conductor? Neither. In fact, it is almost impossible to define music as a "thing" because it only exists in fact in the very moment it is heard, in a relation with the listener" (TOLILA, 2007, p. 109).

Thus, music (as well as dance and theater) assumes a special mode of existence that involves the participation of all the elements of actors mentioned, i.e., the score, the musicians, the conductor, etc., in the construction of its materiality which only exists (and can only be consumed) in the listening moment. Also, orchestra musicians tend to be evaluated much more from their recognized skills and the prestige of the institutions they attended and the mentor they studied with than from formal certification. Segnini (2013) showed that the relevance of

the mentor artist - not always a teacher - and the permanent formation are two constants in musicians discourse. A flute player of the Opéra de Paris stated that even if there are auditions to get jobs in orchestras and opera theatres in France, if you did not study at the *Conservatoire Supérieur de Paris*, auditions can become more difficult. To her this has nothing to do with the quality of classes given there but it is related to the networks built there with people that can interpret very well (SEGNINI, 2013, p. 1).

3.1 The economy of singularities

Karpik (2009), Karpik (2007) addresses the problem of stating a market for the “good” musical interpretation as well as the good lawyer, wine, theatre spectacle, concert, etc. How something that is, in essence, not comparable and incommensurable can delineate a market?

Karpik (2009) states that this problem is resolved with the *judgement devices*. To understand the judgement devices, it is necessary to point the basic difference between the *decision* and the *judgement*. The former is essentially made upon calculations aiming for the optimal outcome. The latter is related to the qualities of a given product and its main action is the *choice*. To this author, no calculation would help on choosing between, say, the best interpretation of Beethoven’s 5th. The choice is made essentially as a judgement, an arbitrary and subjective action that tries to take into account all the information one can dispose to build knowledge that differentiates the options into a practical way. For the judgement to happen, consumers mobilize five kinds of judgement devices: (1) networks, the only personal device and the other impersonal devices (2) appellations, (3) cicerones, (4) rankings and (5) confluences.

EXPLAIN.....

CONNECT.....

According to Benhamou (2007, p. 54), “competition takes a paradoxical form of a competition between institutions that offer unique and ephemeral goods” where economic actors behavior tend to discriminatory monopolies. According to the author, the sector is characterized by a strong inclination to the singularities and a constant fragility because of periodic cost increases and the nearly absence of productivity reserves. In fact, as we will see, the current paradigm, regarding the economic theory of live performances, points to an inevitable deficit. We will now examine these two points in further detail.

4 Baumol and Bowen’s model – The Cost Disease

Baumol and Bowen did, under a Ford Foundation’s demand in 1965, a research aiming to diagnose the economic situation of Broadway theaters (BENHAMOU, 2007). Their findings are considered valid to this day. To Baumol & Bowen (1966 apud BENHAMOU, 2007) economy is divided in two sector, (1) archaic and (2) progressive. Archaic sector does not have the possibility of generating productivity gains while progressive sector generates productivity gains from innovations, from scale economy and accumulation of capital. Live performances are part of the archaic sector because of the position that labour has on it.

Baumol and Bowen's model is based on three hypotheses:

1. Economy is divided in two sectors, archaic and progressive. In archaic sector, where live performance lies, work productivity is constant or has little increases and the amount of work cannot be diminished without denaturing the product. Be $L_{1,t}$ the volume of work employed in archaic sector in moment t and a a constant value, the quantity of product in the archaic sector in moment t ($Y_{1,t}$) is obtained by

$$Y_{1,t} = aL_{1,t}$$

Be $Y_{2,t}$ and $L_{2,t}$ respectively the quantity of product in the progressive sector in moment t and the amount of work employed on progressive sector in moment t , be r the rate of increase in labor productivity and b a constant, the quantity of product in the progressive sector is obtained by

$$Y_{2,t} = bL_{2,t}[1 + r]^t$$

2. Production costs, compared only to wage costs (W), evolve in the same pace and direction that productivity in the progressive sector, that is, $W_{1,t} = W_{2,t} = W_t = W[1 + r]^t$. The relative costs of each sector are, therefore, given by

$$C_1 = \frac{W_t L_{1,t}}{Y_{1,t}} = \frac{W(1 + r)^t L_{1,t}}{aL_{1,t}} = \frac{W(1 + r)^t}{a}$$

$$C_2 = \frac{W_t L_{2,t}}{Y_{2,t}} = \frac{W(1 + r)^t L_{2,t}}{bL_{2,t}(1 + r)^t} = \frac{W}{b}$$

Thus, the cost by product unit obtained increases indefinitely in the archaic sector and remains constant in the progressive sector.

3. "The demand of live shows is elastic; any price increase leads to a public reduction" (BENHAMOU, 2007, p. 56). If the prices are proportional to the relative costs in both sectors, $P_1 = \alpha C_1$ and $P_2 = \beta C_2$, then

$$\frac{P_1 Y_1}{P_2 Y_2} = \frac{\alpha C_1 Y_1}{\beta C_2 Y_2} = Cte$$

or

$$\frac{C_1 Y_1}{C_2 Y_2} = \frac{W(1 + r)^t \cdot L_{1,t}}{W(1 + r)^t \cdot L_{2,t}} = \frac{L_{1,t}}{L_{2,t}} = K_0$$

and

$$\frac{Y_1}{Y_2} = \frac{aL_{1,t}}{bL_{2,t}(1 + r)^t} = \frac{aK_0}{b(1 + r)^t}$$

"When t increases, $\frac{Y_1}{Y_2}$ decreases and when $t \rightarrow \infty$, $\frac{Y_1}{Y_2} \rightarrow 0$ " (BENHAMOU, 2007, p. 57). Thus, production in the archaic sector fatally decreases.

Complementarily to Baumol's law, Throsby (1994) develops a function of live performance production which can be synthesized in this way:

The number of presentations in a given season must be fixed taking into account the capacity of the auditorium v . Be L^s and K^s the necessary work and capital to a production, be L^r and K^r the work and capital required by each performance of the production, the number of spectators of the performance i of the production j , y_{ij} , such that $y_{ij} \leq v$, is given by

$$y_j = \sum_i y_{ij} = y_i(L_j^s, K_j^s, m_j, q_j)$$

where

the number of performances of the production j

$$m_j = m_j(L_j^r, K_j^r)$$

and q_j summarizes the qualities of the production j which, in this context, can be measured by the lavishness of the production. In this case, q_j is not independent of L^s and K^s . It is expected that

$$\frac{\partial y_j}{\partial m_j} > 0 \quad , \quad \frac{\partial^2 y_j}{\partial m_j^2} < 0,$$

that is, extend the season can decrease the spectators number in the margin.

According to Benhamou (2007, p. 59) "the conclusion of Baumol's model is the ineluctability of the increase on deficit of live performance". This model has been corroborated by many researches (THROSBY; WITHERS, 1979; LEROY, 1980; PEACOCK; SHOESMITH; MILLNER, 1983; BAUMOL; BAUMOL, 1984; DIAS, 2011, e.g.) and, to Benhamou (2007, p. 54), this sector characteristic is sufficient to justify the increase of public subsidies and the practice of patronage even in view of the fact that "this massive intervention, distributed in a very unequal way, is not enough to ensure to the sector a lasting financial equilibrium". To Baumol & Bowen (1966 apud LUKSETICH, 2011, p. 320), "if one agrees that the performing arts confer general benefits on the community as a whole... the arts are public goods whose benefits demonstrably exceed the receipts one can hope to collect at the box office".

Baumol's analysis pointing the specificities of the cultural sector contributed to both the development of the research program that we know today as economy of culture and the recognition of the necessity of binding live performances to the subsidized non-commercial sphere. However, this approach is a standard economic one which, for the purposes of this investigation, lacks some of the social elements that are important to understand the shaping of a market, namely, institutions, social control, cooperation and social coordination, etc. Therefore, we will now try to build a theoretical framework inside social theory and accounting for the findings we have seen so far. Let us start presenting each of the elements we are going to aggregate in our analysis framework, namely, (1), White's $W(y)$ model, (2), Fligstein's theory, (3), normative isomorphisms and (4) multilevel networks.

5 The Social Construction of Markets

To Harrison White (2002), markets are not given but they are social structures that emerge from complex interactions between its components. This interactions can occur competitively and, we argue, cooperatively aiming the stabilization of the market and the reduction of what White calls “knightian uncertainty”³

White’s theory aims to explain “how firms minimize uncertainty by forming a market as a collection of niches based on signals observed in their commitments” (WHITE, 2002, p. xiii). What is a production market? The answer to this question goes through two dimensions. The first relates to the independent nature of its structure, that is, an emergence from dependencies on its own flows. The second concerns its operation mechanism which consists of commits by several firms in product flows in which the demand of the aggregate buyer was incorporated. To White (2002, p. 1) “Resulting streams of differentiated goods or services from the market get split among diverse buyers as equally good options: The market discipline centers on product quality”. This is a central point in our study object’s description. But first, what would be market disciplines?

White (2008, p. 63) indicates that “Disciplines offer rules of the games that yield coordination in tasks in an otherwise messy world”. Disciplines allow joint action giving order to ties between identities in a network. Each discipline has a type of process that aggregates joint action. They have also an order of a specifical value by which the struture is hierarchically organized (therefore, we can also understand disciplines as a local status system). Among ideal types of disciplines, the one which applies the best to markets is called *interface*. Its typical process is the *commit* that generates productive flows. The typical distinctive value of this discipline is *quality*.

How, then, can we undestand the statiblization of a markets interface? Which of its properties can collapse to the “knightian uncertainty”?

5.1 Stabilizing the knightian uncertainty

Market transactions have more to do with repetitive interactions than with unique moments. Thus, the volume of product flows in a market can function as a signal to producers about commits. White states that

Each can orient to a niche by the size that is appropriate to the market’s assessment of its quality compared to that of its fellows, who also are orienting to niches: the market as a joint social construction. (WHITE, 2002, p. 10)

Attached to market’s interface is the notion of *quality*. Although it is commonly taken by an inherent characteristic of the products, it emerges from interactions between producers and buyers judgements. Thus,

(...) it is dual notions of differential quality, referent both to product and to producer, that become established as the core around which a set of market

³ In reference to the american economist Frank H. Knight.

footings for producers can reproduce itself as footings in a joint market profile. The two sides, buyers and producers, exert contending pressures on the shape of this profile, pressures that correlate with their respective discriminations of quality. (WHITE, 2002, p. 10)

Each producer seeks to differentiate his product and, at the same time, he recognizes the differentiation system – the quality index – to his version of a market product. In this context, choices interact with influence and calibrate the repeated commits of production flows and payments. This interactions between choices pressuposes a minimum of comparability which is obtained in a much simpler way in a linear order of precedence.

5.2 The mechanism behind production

According to White (2002, p. 12), flow commits are related to various phenomena, some of them specially interesting to our modelling rationale:

1. a *small number* of recognized firms that constitute a business line;
2. an unequal ranking between firms including their profit distribution and product commits in the market;
3. firms aim *profit* and do not commit, as orthodox economic theory states, to a *zero sum system*;
4. if conditions allow the production raise, one would expect that unitary cost diminishes generating (bigger return);
5. in some business lines, the recognition of a superior quality product demands smaller structural costs than other products with acknowledged inferior quality;
6. *monopolies* are extremely *rare*;

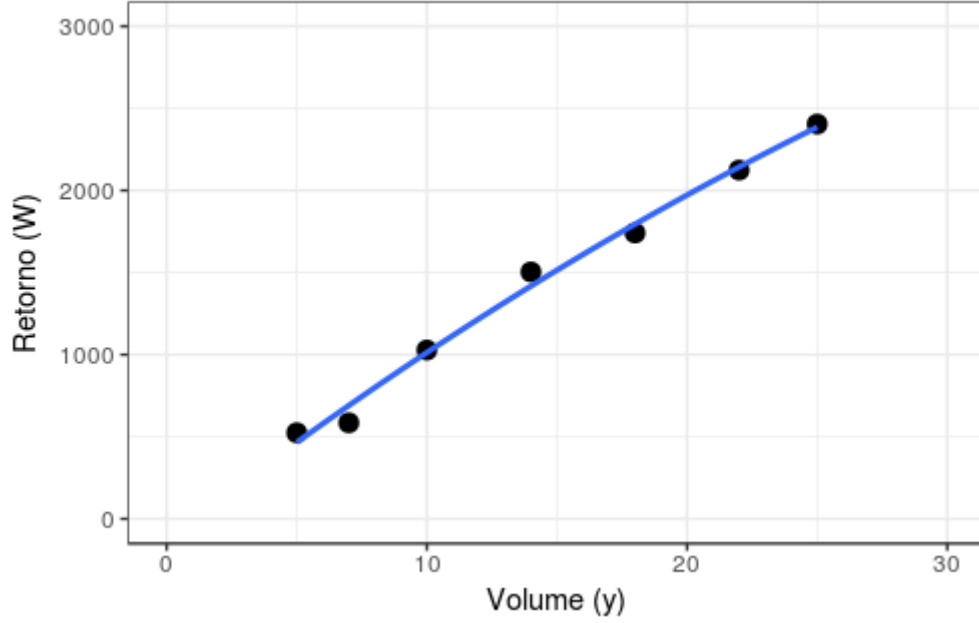
These phenomena are crossed by an operationalized model which we will present now. The model makes a fundamental assumption that quality and identity are not build one from the other but produce each other inside firm interaction in a market. Quality is understood here as a social construction, not like an evident attribute.

5.3 Whites production model

Let us call *worth* the total revenue $W(y(k))$ of the *volume* $y(k)$ sold by each firm k . This can be approximated in a continuous function $W(y)$. Basically, the market profile – or Market Schedule to Favereau, Biencourt & Eymard-Duvernay (2002) – can be inferred from the observation of pairs volume-worth behaviour (cf. Figure 1).

Each firm k tries to select the optimum $y(k)$ and also adjust its *price* strategy $W(y(k))/y(k) = p(y(k))$ to maximize *profit* $W(y) - C(y(k), k)$. Therefore, White (2002, p. 36) states the cost schedule for the variation of a producer's cost with volume as

Figure 1 – A profile market



Source: Adapted from White (2002, p. 15)

$$C(y, n) = q \cdot y^c \cdot n^d \quad (1)$$

where the two main parameters are the exponents c and d , expressions of elasticities. In this formula, q is a numerical scaling factor across all the firms, a constant, y represents the volume of product commitment and n is a quality component, the very identity of the product of that firm. The d parameter is specially interesting in this case. It will be analysed in more depth later.

On the consumer's side, the aggregate buyer's *satisfaction* $S(y, n)$ is defined by

$$S(y, n) = r \cdot y^a \cdot n^b \quad (2)$$

and it relies both on the number of units bought y and on a *qualitative component*, n . According to Favereau, Biencourt & Eymard-Duvernay (2002), since “buyers in aggregate make a ‘yes or no’ decision when offered a volume/price pair by a producer”, the only producers who stand out are those whose offer satisfies the following constraint:

$$S(y[n], n) = \theta \cdot W(y[n]) \quad (3)$$

“The parameter θ is a sort of mark-up of satisfaction (...) over the overall buying cost of a given production” (FAVEREAU; BIENCOURT; EYMARD-DUVERNAY, 2002, p. 217). It is a ratio that functions as a “deal criterion” (WHITE, 2002, p. 39). The cost C and the market schedule $W(y)$ are known by the producer but not the satisfaction function S which are constructs of the observer.

The efforts of a firm embedded in its cost structure tend to be reflected in the aggregate buyer evaluations. This correlation provides a base for the perceived quality ranking, namely,

a linear ordering sufficient to base market's profile. But what is the relations between commit volumes and the perceived quality? To White, that depends on the business line. White (2002) explains that

Sometimes, a large y connotes higher quality, as in the soda pop industry, but at other times, lower quality, as in the wine industry. So the frequency with which buyers encounter a producer's output (...) can signal different things across different shapes of profile. As some goods monopolize shelf space, wealthier suburban mothers, like wealthy East Siders in Manhattan, shy away from them, since they are what the average person is buying. For other goods that receive high exposure in advertising, that's precisely what these shoppers buy. After all, the fact that everyone else is buying it confirms that it's the best. (WHITE, 2002, p. 15)

In this sense, the quality ranking involves, therefore, a social context where firms have a previous prestige distribution that mixes their reputation with the reputation of their products. "When it is possible for actors to make use of information read from the doings of others, let's call this information a *signal*. Fulfilled prior commitments are themselves the signals read off as profile by the producers" (WHITE, 2002, p. 16). Thus, the author defines market production mechanism in this way:

A production market forms around and thus consists in a joint interface between producers confronting uncertainty from the other side of the interface. This interface is energized by rivalry among its peer producers, all seeking buyers for their continuing streams of production in amounts optimal for their individual cost structures. The producers have come to signal each other through a profile across their production commitments. (WHITE, 2002, p. 27)

Let us now take a closer look to the elasticities parameters, the exponents a , b , c and d , to understand how the market can be understood in terms of these variables.

5.4 The topology of markets – elasticities parameters

To White (2002), the four elasticities parameters, saturation terms that shape the market curves, when analyzed jointly allow for the investigation of the viability of the market. Parameters b and d are measures of dispersion across quality, "the exponents of discount of valuation with declining quality by, respectively, taste of consumers and cost of producers" (WHITE, 2002, p. 50). The same way, a and c are saturation parameters for volume produced. These parameters relate themselves as we describe in table 3.

Table 3 – Tabulation of parameters

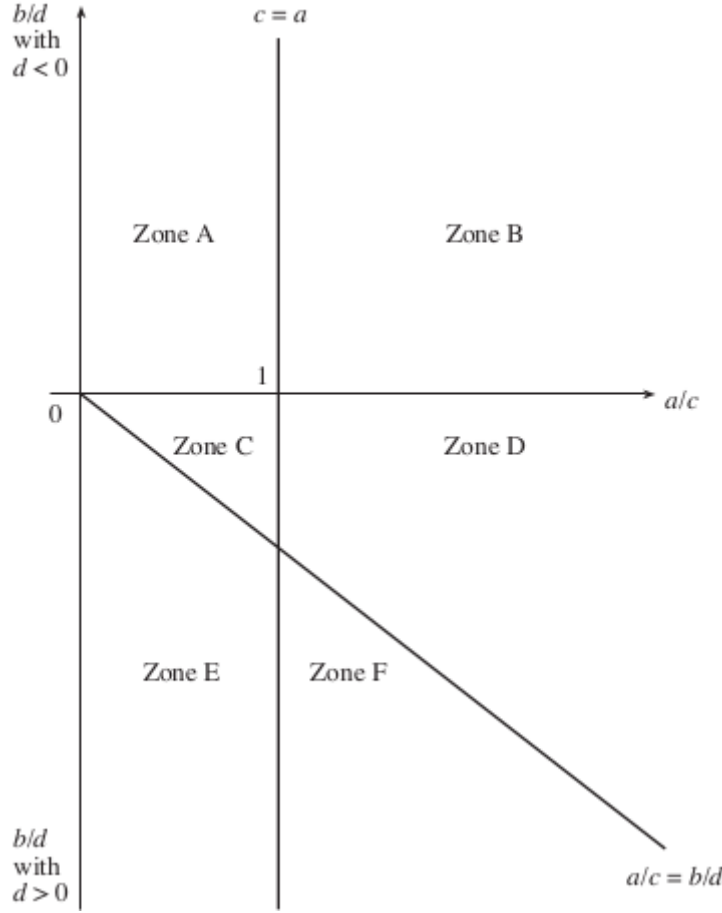
	<i>Buyer Need</i>	<i>Producer Cost</i>
Volume sensitivity	a	c
Quality sensitivity	b	d

Source: (WHITE, 2002, p. 51)

According to White (2002), we should combine the parameters in ratios in a way that each ratio with buyer side in the numerator and producer side on the denominator makes an axis

of the market plane. This allows for a simplified representation of the possible market profiles despite of the complexity of the $W(y)$ model (cf. FIG. 2).

Figure 2 – Market plane, designating four regions, three locations



Source: (FAVEREAU; BIENCOURT; EYMARD-DUVERNAY, 2002, p. 229)

To Éloire (2009), the main goal of White's model is to show the structure of the market. The market plane shows six zones; four of them are zones that demarcate viable market, the other two, non-viable or unraveling. They can be described in a simplified way⁴ like this:

Zone C is labelled **ordinary**. In this zone, revenues decrease to scale ($a/c < 1$) since cost increases with quality ($d > 0$). This is the 'ordinary' that we think about quality. Also, returns are decreasing to quality to a more severe degree than to scale ($a/c > b/d$). Zones D and F are labelled **advanced**. In this zone higher quality is more expensive to produce ($d > 0$) and revenues increase to scale ($a/c > 1$). Zone A is labelled **paradox**. In this zone, in contrast with the ordinary thinking, higher quality is less costly to produce than lower quality ($d < 0$) although there are decreasing returns to scale ($a/c < 1$). B and E are non-viable market zones.

5.5 Measurements

In the $W(y)$ model, measurements are an issue to be solved in a creative way because White does not close the scope of the variables to be chosen. The review of two important studies

⁴ A mathematical development of this plane is described in Appendix 1.

gives us a basis to decide on this measurement issue.

Biencourt & Urrutiaguer (2002) studied the theatrical institutions markets. They argue that the main advantage of White's model is related to the interdependence of the market structure and individual decisions through niches. This is particularly interesting to this specific case because

Theatrical organizations base their construction of niches on the competencies of their administrative, technical and artistic teams, the public's former experiences and the programming policy that orients choices of repertoires and directors. The concept of a niche is suited to the uniqueness of performances. Their quality is the result of a combination of the quality of actors' and technicians' individual work on a project, under the control of the director. (BIENCOURT; URRUTIAGUER, 2002, p. 255)

If we retake the functions of satisfaction (2) and cost (1), the variables were chosen in this manner:

- **Volume of production** Y – estimated by number of performances listed in the theaters' annual report.

The authors show that for Throsby & Withers (1993 apud BIENCOURT; URRUTIAGUER, 2002) the number of tickets sold is a better suited indicator for Y . However, “the determination of S would then require one to know the degree of audience satisfaction after each performance, something that is impossible” (BIENCOURT; URRUTIAGUER, 2002, p. 264). The number of seats available for each performance would also have been a good indicator if the authors had access to this data.

- **The satisfaction of consumers** S – measured by the number of paid visitors to the institution market.

The authors justify this choice showing data from previous research on theatre audiences' habits and representations. Also, they divided the performances on four repertoire categories, namely, “classical”, “20th century”, “contemporary French” and “contemporary foreign” plays. They also make a correction for the repertoire effect by “multiplying the number of paying visitors observed in each of the four categories by the average ratio \bar{x}_i between the share of performances and that of the number of visitors in a given genre i for all the institution markets” (BIENCOURT; URRUTIAGUER, 2002, p. 265). Let \tilde{P}_i be the number of performances and \tilde{V}_i be the number of paying visitors to all theatres in category i . The average can be defined by

$$\bar{x}_i = \frac{\tilde{P}_i / \sum_{i=1}^4 \tilde{P}_i}{\tilde{V}_i / \sum_{i=1}^4 \tilde{V}_i} \quad (4)$$

If v_i represents the number of paying visitors in category i of repertoire, the public satisfaction can be estimated by

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^4 \bar{x}_i v_i \quad (5)$$

- **The aggregated cost** C – this variable was obtained by adding up theatrical artistic expenses (differentiated from fixed costs).
- **scale** r – equal the inverse of the average price of seats \bar{p} in all theatres.
- **scale** q – considered equal to 1.

To deal with quality index N , the authors elaborate a sophisticated construct to explain how various actors have a different influence on quality. To them,

$$N_l^{b_l} = N_{1l}^{b_{1l}} N_{2l}^{b_{2l}} N_{3l}^{b_{3l}} N_{4l}^{b_{4l}} \quad (6)$$

that is, the *overall quality* N in the year l is constructed aggregating the judgements of *drama critics* N_1 , the judgements of *programme planners* N_2 , the judgement of the *public authorities* N_3 and the influence of *previous consumption* N_4 . Now, each of these parts of the overall quality were measured in this manner:

- **Judgements of drama critics** N_1 – measured recording all reviews of shows scheduled in the theatres in *Le Monde* and *Libération* newspapers and *Télérama* magazine, opinion leaders among drama critics.
- **Judgements of programme planners** N_2 – the normed “indegree” centrality of the theatre; in that case, this means the number of performances of shows produced by other theatrical institutions, scheduled by the theatre divided by the maximum centrality of the network.
- **Judgement of public authorities** N_3 – measured by the amount of state subsidies. To Biencourt & Urrutiaguer (2002, p. 267), “this choice is justified by the weight of the state, which is greater than that of local authorities in the political recognition of an institution’s artistic reputation”.
- **Influence of previous consumption** N_4 – measured by the number of paying visitors in the preceding period.

The overall quality perceived by the public is constructed by aggregating these four variables in the form of a Cobb-Douglas function (cf. equation 6). To measure the weight of each one of these variables on the overall quality, they estimated a linear model that had the number of paying visitors per performance as the dependent variable. Knowing that $r = 1/\bar{p}$ and taking into account equations (2) and (6), we can derive

$$[S\bar{p}/Y]_l = Y_l^{\hat{a}_l} N_l^{\hat{b}_l} \varepsilon_l = Y_l^{\hat{a}_l} N_{1l}^{\hat{b}_{1l}} N_{2l}^{\hat{b}_{2l}} N_{3l}^{\hat{b}_{3l}} N_{4l}^{\hat{b}_{4l}} \varepsilon_l \quad (7)$$

where l is the year under investigation. This leads to the linear model

$$\log([S\bar{p}/Y]_l) = \hat{a}_l \log Y_l + \hat{b}_{1l} \log N_{1l} + \hat{b}_{2l} \log N_{2l} + \hat{b}_{3l} \log N_{3l} + \hat{b}_{4l} \log N_{4l} + \hat{\varepsilon}_l \quad (8)$$

From this, it is possible to deduce, without a constant,

$$\log N_l = \hat{b}_{1l} \log N_{1l} + \hat{b}_{2l} \log N_{2l} + \hat{b}_{3l} \log N_{3l} + \hat{b}_{4l} \log N_{4l} + e_l \hat{\varepsilon}_l \quad (9)$$

with $0 \leq e_l \leq 1$ assuming $\hat{b}_l = 1$.

Then, the four elasticities exponents were deduced as solutions of a system of two equations to two unknowns. As the authors were studying two years seasons, by posing $\Delta = \log Y_l \cdot \log N_{l+1} - \log Y_{l+1} \cdot \log N_l$, they obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} a &= \frac{\log([S\bar{p}]_l) \cdot \log N_{l+1} - \log([S\bar{p}]_{l+1}) \cdot \log N_l}{\Delta} \\ b &= \frac{\log([S\bar{p}]_{l+1}) \cdot \log Y_l - \log([S\bar{p}]_l) \cdot \log Y_{l+1}}{\Delta} \\ c &= \frac{\log C_l \cdot \log N_{l+1} - \log C_{l+1} \cdot \log N_l}{\Delta} \\ d &= \frac{\log C_l \cdot \log Y_{l+1} - \log C_{l+1} \cdot \log Y_l}{\Delta} \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

On the other hand, Éloire (2009) chose a different set of variables to measure the inputs of the $W(y)$ model. In his PhD thesis, he studied the market of restaurants in Lille. He also uses the number of clients as an indicator to y and observes the revenues (*Chiffre d'affaires*) as well as uses the average ticket price for W . In order to investigate the market plane, Éloire (2009) mobilized the variables described in Table 4:

Table 4 – Quality niches parameters

	Volume	Quality
Satisfaction	a = Average number of clients per service	b = Average ticket value + Quality note
Cost	c = Salaried / Couverts * Services	d = Ratio of salaried availability / clients

Source: Éloire (2009, p. 289)

Éloire argues that quality is a social construction build between the offer from structured producers and an aggregated demand. In the restaurants case, it also depends on the “cuisine” style which is very difficult to measure. However, this culinary scale is closely correlated with simple economic statistics: price, availability ratio in a way that the higher the prices and the ratio, the more “fancy” is the restaurant. Therefore, he considers the quality cost (**d** parameter) is related to the availability ratio, that is the amount of personnel that a restaurant hires over the number of clients it intends to serve. Clients satisfaction (**b** parameter) can be represented by the average ticket value.

The author recognizes that the a restaurant’s capacity is correlated to the volume of personnel. So, the volume costs (**c** parameter) are measured to the number of salaried employees divided by the (potential) number of cutlery multiplied by the number of services. Also, he

acknowledges that a main strategy of the restaurants is related to the amount of time/time of the day that it stays open. Some restaurants can function 24/7, some only at lunch, some only at night, and this implicates requires cost, personnel, logistics, etc. This is expressed on the **c** parameter calculus. The satisfaction at volume (**a** parameter) is measured by the average number of clients per service. This is derived of the restaurant's "filling rate". The higher this rate, the more we can infer that his decisions regarding volume costs are validated by the clients. On the other hand, the lower this rate, the more the volume costs can be seen as "disproportional" by the clients (ÉLOIRE, 2009).

The quality note pointed by the author in table 4 is built aggregating the notes of five international restaurant guides, all of them well known and recognized in the profession, namely, "Le Guide Michelin France", "Le Bottin Gourmand", the "GaultMillau", the "Champérard" and "Le Pudlo France". The aggregation of these guides scoring was obtained through a specialized website⁵.

5.6 The problem of defining quality

Although White's model represents a big step in the construction of knowledge about the markets, it has an issue related to its very core, the quality ranking. To him, quality is given in a predetermined social space. In fact, Favereau, Biencourt & Eymard-Duvernay (2002) states that to agree on price is not a big deal but to agree on quality is intrinsically a problem. We shall argue, however, that quality is not predefined but actors struggle and negotiate on a daily basis for its definition.

According to Éloire (2009), by embracing the annual publications previously mentioned, this industry has "specific judgement devices on quality" as Karpik (2009) argues. This devices do not only help the coordination between offer and demand, but they also "contribuent au classement des producteurs selon des critères de qualité collectivement définis et surtout acceptés, mais qui sont aussi des objets de lutte pour leur définition" (ÉLOIRE, 2009, p. 494). In fact, Éloire (2009) states that the very existence of various guides is, by itself, an evidence of this symbolic struggles for the definition of quality, although in the "high distinction" the guides seem to converge.

What if there are no guides or websites to testify on orchestra's quality and the critics in the main newspapers in town are nearly nonexistent? Well, this is the case in Belo Horizonte and it poses a quite of a challenge. All the cultural economics and singularities economics discussion on quality relies on the action of critics who are, per excellence, the ones who have the primacy of quality definition. In Belo Horizonte, orchestral performances almost never get a critic and there is not such a well structured platform for it as Rotten Tomatoes⁶ or *Adoro Cinema*⁷ for movies. If critics do not act much within the field of our study object, where does the quality definition come from?

⁵ <http://restaurant-hitlisten.de/france/bewertung.htm>

⁶ <https://www.rottentomatoes.com>.

⁷ A famous Brazilian movie critics website. Available in <http://www.adorocinema.com>.

Biencourt & Urrutiaguer (2002) present an interesting approach to the quality problem regarding theatres' market. We shall depart from their rationale to build the quality index n we will use in this investigation. The author's idea of the judgement of public authorities is similar to our conception on how the variable should be measured, that is, accounting for the huge role of the State on the market.

We will present next the second piece of our theoretical approach, Fligstein's theory, which accounts for this very important role of the State.

6 Fligstein's model

Neil Fligstein (2002) builds a theory on the emergence and functioning of markets slightly different from White. Fligstein also takes into account a relational structure where firms interact with each other and with the generalized buyer seeking the stability of the market (and consequent subsistence of all). The main difference is about the role of the State. While White does not make major considerations on the role of the State on the emergence and regular functioning of production markets, Fligstein elaborates his theoretical scheme identifying the State structure as central to market development. Why States? - asks Fligstein. His answer is "as the possibility for complex patterns of interaction in the sphere of economic exchange has expanded, actors have proven incapable of providing rules for themselves" (FLIGSTEIN, 2002, p. 27-8) and therefore, they appeal to the State as a rule provider so the economic game can happen fairly.

We will also argue that, beyond the State's role as the main market regulator, it is an active actor with a great weight in the definition of quality. It does so essentially by choosing which organization is going to receive funding and which is not, which organization will celebrate a partnership contract and which is not, etc.

Fligstein (2002) conceives markets as "fields", social arenas where sellers and buyers meet. These arenas obey four pure types of rules for the production and reproduction of its structure:

1. property rights;
2. governance structures;
3. rules of exchange and
4. conceptions of control.

These forms of regulation are inclusive; the higher level necessarily contains the lower. Property rights are, according to Fligstein, rules that define who has rights over firms income. Common forms of property rights are patents and credentials. These rules are *sine qua non* conditions of existence for markets since they define the relations between who has possession of some good and all the others. This stabilize markets. "Property rights thus function to produce two forms of stability: defining the power relationships between constituencies in and around firms, and signaling to other firms who firms are" (FLIGSTEIN, 2002, p. 34).

Governance structures are general rules on society level that define competitive and cooperative relations between firms and also their internal organizations. These rules define legal and illegal forms of competition control in the market. They can be laws or social norms although they can assume great variability.

Exchange rules define who can engage in business transactions with whom as well as its conditions. Rules also apply to weights, common patterns, delivery, billing, insurance, financial trade and contract signing. “Rules of exchange help stabilize markets by ensuring that exchanges occur under conditions that apply to everyone” (FLIGSTEIN, 2002, p. 35).

“Conceptions of control reflect market-specific agreements between actors in firms on principles of internal organization (...), tactics for competition or cooperation (...), and the hierarchy or status ordering of firms in a given market” (FLIGSTEIN, 2002, p. 35). They are, in their essence, cultural-historical byproducts.

A stable market is a social field in which a conception of control defines the social relations between incumbent and challenger seller firms such that the incumbent firms reproduce those relations on a period-to-period basis. The purpose of action in a given market is to create and maintain stable worlds within and across firms that allow dominant seller firms to survive. (FLIGSTEIN, 2002, p. 35)

Conceptions of control evidence also a political element in markets regarding the maintenance of the current hierarchical order, its reproduction and its manifestation on the process of defining quality standards and certification. Conceptions of control lead to questions like “who controls entrance and exit of a competitive system?” or “how challengers and dominants relate”?

To Fligstein (2002), in a market, the price is a reliable quality index. Enterprises are impelled by price competition to differentiate their products forming niches as a form of protection against instability. Diversification of the product catalog is also a dominant strategy to decrease risk. “A firm can produce multiple products that reduce their dependence on any one product and, hence, increase the likelihood that the firm will survive” (KAY, 1997 apud FLIGSTEIN, 2002, p. 74).

We still need a deeper investigation on the acting processes of firms on a daily basis, engaging in movements of competition and cooperation at the same time. Organizational isomorphisms is a concept that seems to throw light on these processes.

7 The search for market’s stability

To Lazega (2009), firms’ search for stability in a market goes through a quality concept that was collectively constructed from relations between firms. When acting, firms engage in processes of competition and cooperation at the same time – what is known in economic sociology as *coopetition*. Organizations do not conduct their business in isolation but they are necessarily dependent of some resources that forces them to make cooperation ties to other organizations. This relations may manifest in a legal and social framework more or less defined.

According to Lazega (2009, p. 568), “Ces ressources interorganisationnelles, échangés à travers des liens multiplexes, et pouvant consister en de l’apprentissage, des biens, des services, ne sont pas forcément de nature monétaire ou purement fonctionnelle”.

When acting, the entrepreneur seeks structuration of his interaction and business context aiming his own safety and the safety of his relational investments in the market. This process, which has a strong capacity for politicization, leads the entrepreneur to a contextual auto-restriction regarding his commercial partners selection. To Lazega

L’échange social conduit ainsi l’entrepreneur à une forme d’autodiscipline sociale qui s’appuie en fait sur une endogénéisation (...) des structures relationnelles. Cette endogénéisation prend la forme de l’entretien ou de la construction de niches sociales ainsi que celle d’une entrée dans la concurrence de statut social. (LAZEGA, 2009, p. 572)

The search for social niches, therefore, is a first means of mobilization of an opportunity structure. The social niche can be thus defined as “(...) le sous-ensemble de collègues-concurrents avec lesquels il/elle a des relations spécialement denses, multifonctionnelles, durables et liées, directement ou indirectement, à ses activités de production” (LAZEGA, 2009, p. 575). It is interesting to point here how White’s concept of a quality niche differs from Lazega’s concept. In White (2002) a niche is a specific position regarding pairs of volume of product flows and returns; in Lazega (2009), a niche brings the idea of a cohesive set of structurally equivalent firms. This later is investigable essentially through blockmodels which we will discuss further.

In the structuration of the social ties that composes the market, social processes articulate with emerging social disciplines providing a cognitive structure through which one can guide economic action. In this articulation, four social processes engage with disciplines:

1. Collective learning;
2. Solidarity phenomena;
3. Social control and
4. Regulation and institutionalization.

Very briefly, collective learning occurs from information flows, from resources (human or material) and through tacit knowledge exchanges. Solidarity phenomena can occur in the presence of threats of instability in the market. Commercial agreements, collectives, associations between enterprises that, although competitors, cooperate, emerge as a space conquest strategy in social field. Social control is facilitated by social niches and by recognizing a status structure between organizations. Finally, regulation and institutionalization processes consist of the redefinition of the rules of the game. In this process, organizations compete and cooperate to establish a reference language, a common normative body.

Our research aims to investigate a social regulatory process par excellence: the construction of the quality standard. As we saw, the quality index is the main gear that makes the orchestral music market engine run. The emergence of quality is a regulatory process that comes out of

a struggle between the various actors involved in the market (musicians, public, critics, the State). The outcome would not necessarily be defined in terms of which actor is the most powerful, as conventional sociological theory would state, but it will emerge as a construct from complex interactions of *coopetition* movements of the actors.

DiMaggio & Powell (1983) mobilize the *isomorphism* concept to give account for the competition-cooperation processes in which organizations engage. This authors part from a broad diagnosis attributed to the weberian sociology regarding the increasing rationalization of industrial world. If the rational action in markets is competitive, we would expect greater diversification of organizational forms, each one seeking different means of subsistence. This is not what the authors perceive.

Once diverse organizations engage in the same market line forming a structure (a field), the processes that lead to similarities start emerging robustly. However, what are we talking about when we talk about isomorphisms? DiMaggio & Powell (1983, p. 149) define the term as “a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions”.

DiMaggio & Powell (1983) cite three isomorphism mechanisms: (1) coercive isomorphisms, (2) mimetic isomorphisms and (3) normative isomorphisms. Coercive isomorphisms result from formal and informal pressures on enterprises. Expectations related to social norms or cultural standards are also triggers to this mechanism. Sometimes, the State can also boost this kind of isomorphism establishing new control policies. Mimetic isomorphisms arise in response to market uncertainty. When facing a scenario of uncertainties, a firm can imitate the model adopted by a successful firm in the market.

Normative isomorphisms come from regulations and traditions as well as growing professionalization. A professional collective can, for instance, undertake efforts to define conditions and methods of its professional stratum, establish control criteria or establish a cognitive and legitimating basis for occupational autonomy. Normative isomorphisms, therefore, seem like a more horizontal than a vertical mechanism of regulation. In this sense, we can argue that it occurs within professional network. We already argued that all orchestras are committed with a common quality standard by which they are positioned on a hierarchy in the market structure perceived both by themselves and by the audience. In that way, orchestras do unconscious adjustments to fit into this quality standard daily. Although each orchestra tries to reach that characteristic that makes it unique – somewhat contrary to what DiMaggio & Powell (1983) state –, they indeed search for a niche in the market to engage and have a positioning that is both clear to themselves and to the others; normative isomorphisms seems to be triggers to this processes.

At this point, the various theoretical elements presented so far seem to converge in a complementary way. One of our efforts in this work is to build a theoretical synthesis that is comprehensive enough to account for such a specific object. Next, we present the analysis model by which we will conduct the research.

8 Analysis

8.1 Theoretical synthesis

We seek to understand how the market for orchestral music production operates, as well as its operational bases. Here, markets will be analyzed as network structures (WHITE, 2002). The discipline which makes orchestral music market work is an *interface* and its value order is given by **quality** (WHITE, 2002). Quality is the regulator of joint action because all market participants regardless of their nature (individual or organization) get their basic social life norms from it as it is embedded in the structure. Put another way, it is from perceived quality and from orchestras *ranking* on a quality scale as a regulatory framework (market's interface) that agents (identities) act on this structure. Quality, however, is not something inherent in organizations but it is an attribute that emerges from multiple interactions on organizational level and also on individual level. *To explain how quality emerges in orchestras market is the main goal of this investigation.*

Beyond the disciplines, orchestral music market finds in the State its second most important articulator. According to Fligstein (2002), State has a fundamental hole in regulation and, consequently, in stabilizing markets. In Brazilian context, State is the main funder of the orchestras even if it is indirect funding (through laws to encourage culture). Laws to encourage culture work as catalysts of cultural production in the country (whether at federal, state or municipal level) and there are only a few productions out of its scope. The only productions that are capable of subsisting without this financing mechanism are, usually, big concerts or big spectacles promoted by big companies. Besides regulation, the State has a very important role on the definition of quality even if its participation is indirect – through funding, establishment of partnership contracts, etc.

At the organization level, it is possible to point out some attributes that exert influence on the construction of its identity and, therefore, its positioning in market structure. These are the *financial incentives*, the *non-financial incentives*, and the *management capacity* of the organization or its institutional maintainer. We suspect that there is a strong correlation between orchestras musicians salary and the perception of the orchestras positioning in quality ranking. In the same way, orchestras can create incentive systems to musicians where the musicians best interest can be the prestige of his position of his personal fulfillment. An internal audition to choose a soloist to one of the season's concert or a picture of a musician stamped in the orchestras brochure are examples of non-financial incentives. Finally, when we refer to and institution management capacity, we are looking at its formal structure. It is reasonable to think that an organization that has a more complex formal structure would be better evaluated in quality ranking than an organization that has a simpler formal structure. The common statement in the field is that “more organized orchestras are better”.

According to DiMaggio & Powell (1983), organizations engage themselves in processes that lead them to become more and more alike. These isomorphisms happen as a strategy for stabilization and safety against market uncertainties. In the case of the orchestras, that seems like

a strategy for differentiation in market niches clearly noticeable, specially regarding orchestras style or specialty. Today, there are orchestras specialized on ancient music, on contemporary music, on pop music, etc. Also, this processes are triggered by an urge to fit into the current quality standard – a normative isomorphism.

We saw that in everyday activities, although they are competing, organization enter into supra-intentional cooperation processes as a strategy to stabilizing markets. This is known as *coopetition* (LAZEGA, 2009). In orchestras’ market, this process can happen by resources exchange (scores, equipment, financial help) and by information and knowledge exchange. Musicians that play in more than one orchestra, invited conductors and soloists can be triggers for exchanging knowledge.

At the individual level, we can identify some attributes that may have influence on quality attributed to an orchestra. These attributes pass through skills acquired by musicians to which both the training environment and the teacher are important – the construction of artistic skills, we argue, has a technical dimension related to his hability to play the instrument and a symbolic dimension related to the prestige of his teacher and his training institution. Furthermore, at the interaction level we can verify a status system between musicians and a system of collaboration and learning.

Given these brief initial definitions, we can now make explicit some central propositions that will guide our reasoning: (1) orchestral music production markets operate and stabilize anchored in a shared quality standard to which everyone takes commitment. This quality standard also gives rise to an interorganizational order that reflects market’s interface and that is widely recognized. (2) Quality, the main articulator of this structure, emerges from market itself in the flow of complex interactions between organizations (including suppliers, the State, maintainers and all the other organizations that orchestras deal with) and agents.

We shall present now our main hypotheses.

8.2 Hypotheses

We depart from the central assumption that the quality standard, the gravity center of orchestras’ market, emerges from its own structure. At the individual level, we argue that the concepts of a “good orchestra”, a “good performance”, a “good instrumental technique”, emerge from the bottom up and not from top to bottom. Also, that seems to be a struggle for the “right” to the definition of quality. This leads us to hypotheses regarding individuals, organizations and their relation with the State.

Hypothesis 1 *The greater a musician’s importance in the interindividual network (in terms of popularity, activity and freedom of action), the bigger his influence shaping the quality standard.*

Hypothesis 2 *The more an orchestra provides structural incentives for the musicians, the better it will be positioned in quality ranking.*

Hypothesis 3 *The more complex the organizational structure of an orchestra or its maintainer and the more complex its business network, the better it will be positioned in quality ranking.*

Finally,

Hypothesis 4 *The closest the relationship of an orchestra with the State, the better it will be positioned in quality ranking.*

Our study object, therefore, presents itself as a multilevel structure: the meso/organizational level represented by social groupings, in this case, orchestras and organizations and their relations with the State, the micro, individual level and the affiliations between the two levels (BRAILLY et al., 2016; ÉLOIRE, 2009; LAZEGA et al., 2008; FAVRE et al., 2016; LAZEGA, 2016). In sociology, multilevel statistical models are already robust in research groups. Recently, scholars that work with network analysis have made efforts to merge multilevel analysis to relational data with great success. We will explain now the main analysis strategies coming from this new methodological framework.

8.3 The multilevel approach

Lazega (2016)⁸ states that a sociological tradition whose origins are attributed to Max Weber develops itself to point out a kind of society that Perrow (1991 apud LAZEGA, 2016) calls “organizational” and Breiger (1974 apud LAZEGA, 2016) calls “dual”. Both concepts point to “two levels of collective agency that co-constitute each other: an inter-individual level and an inter-organizational level” (LAZEGA, 2016, p. 48) between all kinds of collective entities. Individuals are distributed within a social structure where they have ties which each other, where they are affiliated to organizations and where those organizations also relate and build ties to each other. This makes the actors look at the world in a multilevel perspective and be aware of the importance of accounting for people’s belongings to collectivities and the relations between these collectivities in a higher order to rationalize their actions in terms of control and efficiency. To Lazega (2016, p. 48), “without this multilevel coordination (...), neither individuals nor organizations can access or mobilize on their own all the resources that are needed to produce, compete and survive”.

Interpersonal interdependencies are formed out of cowork, advice, friendship and other kind of relations built within or across organizations. The rules that organize social exchange are also part of these interdependencies. Inter-organizational interdependencies, on the other hand, are created mostly by contractual agreements between entities where contributions, rights and responsibilities are defined in the pursue of a common goal. It also depends on institutions that guarantee its credibility. It is important to notice that the relations are much less personalized in the organizational level. “Resources, commitments and rules are different in nature from those characterizing the inter-individual level of agency” (LAZEGA, 2016, p. 49). The links between those two levels are created by member affiliations on one level to the other (typically individuals in organizations). These approach is called ‘linked design’ (LAZEGA et al., 2008).

⁸ Lazega (2016) gives a theoretical introduction to multilevel networks. For a technical introduction as well as a reconstruction of the operationalization of the concept, see Snijders (2016).

When accounting for the interdependencies of both levels horizontally (within each level) and vertically (affiliations between levels), we can observe overlap and complementarity from which arise complex combinations of the various interests at stake. Also, actors are displayed in a stratified structure where status hierarchy is perceived not only regarding their individual assets, but also their organizations'. There can be "big fish in big pond", "small fish in big pond", and so on. (LAZEGA et al., 2008).

Brailly et al. (2016) studied an international organizations market. According to the authors, behind the interorganizational relations there are always individual ties. Some organizations need interpersonal meeting to initiate joint actions or partnerships. As the partnerships repeat, the relation becomes more and more interorganizational and less interpersonal until they do not need meetings of specific members. The authors argue that for a better understanding of a mercantile phenomenon, one should study the complex articulations between these two levels of action.

In network studies, both levels have been taken into account although one at a time. Either authors concentrate on organizational level (and pay attention to ties such as commercial alliances, exchanges, partnerships that affect performance and enterprises' chances of survival) or they concentrate on individual level (identifying informal networks as friendship networks, advising, collaboration, resources and information exchange, etc.). Brailly et al. (2016) argue that economic activities and markets are shaped by the two levels that operate interdependently. "A deal between two companies, which is an inter-organizational tie, depends on inter-individual relationships and *vice versa*. Economic relationships such as deals between two organizations and informal relationships between their members are interdependent" (BRAILLY et al., 2016, p. 246). Both levels are, therefore, overlapping and partially nested.

To consider mercantile trade as multilevel phenomena implies two hypotheses: (1) the *horizontal structural dependence hypothesis* inside both levels and (2) the *vertical structural dependence hypothesis* between levels. The former states that actors in both levels act in social context. The latter states that an individual's network depends on his company's network and vice versa.

Two analysis strategies are mobilized in this perspective. To analyze horizontal dependence in both levels, the authors propose using ERGM because this model contextualizes internodal ties in their immediate neighborhood (e.g., centrality, diads, triads, and other more complex structures). To analyze vertical dependence, the authors retake an intuition common to SNA that consists of transforming 2-mode networks to 1-mode networks. This transformation allocates a tie between organizations that have a member in common and allocates a tie between individuals who participate in a same organization. The authors propose, therefore, an articulation of these techniques as a new approach that can give account of both dependencies.

We are going to use these techniques on accounting for the multilevel networks of musicians and orchestra related organizations. Further detail is given in the "Data and Methods" section.

8.4 Measuring the $W(y)$ model

Let us recall the two main equations of the $W(y)$ model. First the Cost equation (1):

$$C(y, n) = q \cdot y^c \cdot n^d$$

then, the Satisfaction equation (2):

$$S(y, n) = r \cdot y^a \cdot n^b$$

The parameters will be measured in the following way:

- The constant $q = 1$;
- the constant r = the inverse of the average price of seats in all performances of the season;
- The aggregated cost C will be obtained by adding the orchestra's artistic expenses;
- The satisfaction of consumers S will be estimated by a ratio of the number of paying individuals in the audience over the number of seats available;
- the volume of production y will be estimated by the number of seats available for each performance⁹;
- the quality index n will be estimated aggregating the ticket prices, total budget, "closeness to the state" note and the musicians perception;

We will also try to capture the audience quality perception through a web application that we will construct only for this purpose. We will compare the results generated by both n measurements. We will discuss this web application in more detail in the next section.

The elasticities a and b , related to the Satisfaction equation, can be obtained as solutions of a system of two equations to two unknowns as it was proposed by Biencourt & Urrutiaguer (2002). Trying to measure any of these variables would violate the assumption that cultural goods are not rivals in consumption.

The elasticities c and d , on the other hand, can be measured in the following way:

- c = the number of salaried employees / number of performances;
- d = the total budget / number of performances

This makes sense because.....

⁹ In case we cannot have access to data on the seats available, y can be estimated by the total number of performances on a season.

9 Data and Methods

We identified five professional orchestras in Belo Horizonte: Minas Gerais Philharmonic¹⁰, Minas Gerais Symphony Orchestra¹¹, Sesiminas Chamber Orchestra¹², Ouro Preto Orchestra¹³, Military Police Symphony Orchestra¹⁴ and Opus Orchestra¹⁵. We chose Belo Horizonte because of its recognized expressiveness in the national cultural field.

In light of the relational perspective, we will seek to understand resources and information flows in this structure which allow orchestral music production. This part of our research will be made through preliminary investigations on orchestras' content available online, interviews with organizations' managers and *in loco* visits.

To investigate the social construction of the current quality standard within market structure, we will adopt two research strategies. The first is anchored on the assumption that part of cognitive mechanisms and quality control happen in the socialization carried out in musicians academic education period. Put another way, musicians learn with their undergraduate teachers what is a good performance and a bad one, what is a good orchestra and a bad one, what are the criteria in the evaluation of a musician's artistic quality, etc. Although this conception may (and probably will) change throughout a musician's career in his coupling/decoupling movements from various netdoms, the conceptual basis build with the teacher tends to create strong roots. Therefore, the first strategy consists on interviewing undergraduate music professors in Belo Horizonte's universities. We will not do any statistical sampling procedure due to the qualitative character of this research stage. We will adopt, therefore, a sampling by judgement taking into account the author's previous knowledge on the city's professors. The goal of the interviews is to verify convergences in professors' discourse regarding a good performance and a quality orchestra. The second strategy is anchored on the assumption that the quality standard emerges from a status system present in the hierarchical structure of musicians. In any network, the various individuals stratify themselves in a prestige and status hierarchy. The most prestigious individuals usually mobilize quality criteria. Therefore, we will investigate the relational structure between musicians on the various orchestras identifying the most central nodes. Considering the large number of professional musicians in Belo Horizonte, we find that the most appropriate approach and the one that has the biggest return chances consists of an online sociometric survey. During the visits to the orchestras, this author intend to have a brief moment with musicians to explain this investigation as well as the importance of their collaboration. Then, the online survey will be sent by e-mail. After identifying the most central individuals, we will interview them in the same way as the professors.

¹⁰ <http://www.filarmonica.art.br>

¹¹ http://www.fcs.mg.gov.br/index.php?option=com_gmg&view=page&id=2631&controller=page&Itemid=1281

¹² <http://www7.fiemg.com.br/sesi/centro-de-cultura/belo-horizonte/produtos/detalhe/orquestra-de-camara-sesiminas>

¹³ <http://www.orquestraouropreto.com.br>

¹⁴ <https://www.policiamilitar.mg.gov.br/portal-pm/orquestra/principal.action>

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/OrquestraOpus/>

9.1 The multilevel networks analysis

This investigation will be conducted as a multilevel networks study. The low level is composed by individuals, musicians. The structure between them will be tracked from advisement networks¹⁶ (aiming to capture artistic prestige), friendship networks and job indication networks¹⁷. The high level is composed by the orchestras and all the other organizations with whom they maintain any kind of relation, whether it is an economic relation, a partnership, a resources exchange agreement¹⁸. We will track the organizations' main activity, it's style (in White's terms¹⁹), it's formal structure and some economic variables of interest (for the companies in general budget, number of partnership contracts and relations with the State. Specifically for orchestras, the venues that it performs, average ticket price, number of tickets available and artistic expenses). These are the attributes we will use to model relation building between the organizations.

9.2 Blockmodeling

To investigate the quality market niches, we will identify structural equivalence among actors using Blockmodels as proposed by Lazega (2009). This will allow us to reduce complexity both on individual and organizational networks and identify niches that we can compare with the quality niches obtained through calculations and through surveys.

On accounting for the multilevel networks, we will adopt the analysis strategy described by Brailly et al. (2016). We will use ERGM's to test our hypotheses regarding relations within each level and 2-mode to 1-mode transformations to investigate the affiliations between levels. We will briefly explain the rationale of the models.

Blockmodels are an operationalization of one the most central concepts in networks analysis, which is, structural equivalence. This concept is based on the idea that individuals can play social roles in a network structure from specific positions (LAZEGA; HIGGINS, 2014). Blockmodels utilize, most of the time, iterated correlations on the rows and columns of a relational matrix or euclidean distance to separate structurally equivalent nodes (WASSERMAN; FAUST, 1994). This process returns a "shrunked" network with relations between groups of structural equivalent nodes. In this way, we can simplify our data to better understand it with an almost insignificant loss of information. To Lazega (2009), blockmodels are the best available tool nowadays to investigate market niches.

In this research we will use a stochastic frequentist version of the model elaborated by Daudin, Picard & Robin (2008) and a stochastic bayesian version elaborated by Latouche, Birmele & Ambroise (2012).

¹⁶ Cf. Appendix 2 - Sociometric online questionnaire - individuals.

¹⁷ We will exclude here performance co-participation networks because we believe that they will result in a too redundant data.

¹⁸ Cf. Appendix 3 - Sociometric questionnaire - organizations.

¹⁹ Explain what is STYLE in White's terms...

9.3 ERGM

ERGM's (ROBINS et al., 2007; LUSHER; KOSKINEN; ROBINS, 2013) are statistical models developed specifically to deal with relational data. A relations structure postulates interdependence between identities. This goes against one of the assumptions of conventional statistical modeling, the independence of information. "The fact that I choose Peter as my friend is not necessarily independent of the fact that I also choose Paul because they can be friends with each other" (LAZEGA; HIGGINS, 2014, p. 76).

The ERGM can be defined by

$$Pr(Y = y) = \left(\frac{1}{k}\right) \exp \left\{ \sum_A \eta_A g_A(\mathbf{y}) \right\}$$

where Y is the theoretical estimated graph, y is the observed graph, \sum_A is the sum of all configurations A , η_A is the estimated parameter corresponding to configuration A , $g_A(\mathbf{y})$ is the network statistic corresponding to configuration A of graph \mathbf{y} and k is a constant that ensures an adequate probabilities distribution (ROBINS et al., 2007). This model allows us to estimate the effect of each endogenous configuration of the network on the emergence of the network itself. Put another way, since every endogenous configuration can be associated with a social process, the model allows us to *explain the network as a dependent variable*, to explain which processes are important and which are not important to understand the social structure under investigation. In our case, this procedure will be conducted for both levels of the network, that is, we will model both social processes modeling the inter-individual structure and the inter-organizational structure.

In this research we will use a variation of the ERGM known as "Social Selection Models". These models were proposed by Robins, Elliott & Pattison (2001) aiming to take account of the existing heterogeneity inside social structures using nodal attributes as exogenous covariables. Therefore, besides the network's own configurations, we will analyze how exogenous variables shape the emergence of the structure as well (WANG et al., 2016).

9.4 2-mode transformations

2-mode to 1-mode transformations allow us to investigate an affiliation network anchored in the assumption that when people are engaged in the same organizations or in the same events (a common approach in the literature), people build ties between themselves. This procedure counts one tie between two organizations when they share a person or a tie between two persons when both are engaged in the same organization (BRAILLY et al., 2016; LAZEGA; HIGGINS, 2014). The result is a 1-mode weighted network of individuals who participate in the same organizations or a 1-mode weighted network of organizations that share members.

10 Proposed indicators

Our goal is to build a database with the variables we are going to rely for our investigation. In order to operationalize the research design described above, we will look for the following indicators: to verify the current **quality standard**, we will check musicians' representation of the ranking, the average ticket price and total investment. The average ticket price is adopted here as a quality proxy based on the finding of Throsby (1983) (the demand is inelastic in relation to the price but highly correlated in relation to perceived quality). We argue that this is a good proxy because, generally, people are willing to pay more for a concert they judge to be of high quality. Total budget seems, at first sight, a not so good proxy because there is a risk of falling into a tautology. Orchestras are good because they have more money or they have more money because they are good? However, we argue that, if we analyze this indicator conjugated with the organization's closeness to the State, it can give valuable insights on the field. We intend to test a quality index that will be created from the agglutination of these variables.

To capture **interactions at the individual level**, we will build musicians networks from sociometric surveys. We will adopt degree centrality, betweenness centrality and constraint as indicators for finding *hubs*. The **attributes** of the individuals will be measured by the country of origin, the city of origin, training institution and teacher. This indicators show us a little of the musicians' **context** and how he can be situated *a priori* in a prestige scale within the field. The name generators will be as follows:

1. If you needed advisement on the interpretation of a given piece, regardless of its period or style, to whom would you ask? Please, name up to five people.
2. Do you meet regularly com other musicians on social occasions outside work (bars, parties, pubs, etc.)? Please, name up to five people.
3. If you where invited to help on a musician hiring process to an excellent job vacancy, who would you indicate to get the job? Please, name up to five people.
4. If you were responsible for organizing a recital, regardless of the needed instruments of the works that you would choose, who would you like to invite to play on stage with you? Please, name up to five people.

The **incentive structure** offered by the orchestra will be measured through average salary and salaries of musicians²⁰. The **non-financial incentives** will be measured by the number of times an orchestra member played as a soloist or in a chamber music concert in the orchestras' season²¹. The **management complexity** will be measured by the quantity of sections and

²⁰ We intend to compare both the average salary and specific salary by function, e.g., concertmaster and other leaders inside the orchestra that commonly earn more money than the other section musicians.

²¹ It is common to professional orchestras to organize concerts with smaller ensembles as string quartets or brass quintets with selected musicians.

boards that the orchestra/maintainer have and by the amount of hierarchical levels between the instrumentalist and the CEO.

The indicators chosen to measure the level of **interaction with State** are the amount of investment from the State itself and the existence/quantity of contracts, covenants and partnerships signed. The concepts mobilized and the proposed indicators are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 – Proposed Indicators

Concept	Indicator
Quality	Musicians perception Average ticket price Total financing
Individual interaction	Networks Centrality measures Constraint
Individual Context	Country of origin City of origin Formation institution Professor
Incentive Structure	Average income Income by specific function Presentation as a soloist or in selected chamber groups
Management Complexity	Number of boards/sections Level-distance from the musician to the CEO
Interaction with the State	Total financing from the State Number of partnership contracts

Source: Elaborated by the author.

11 Preliminary Data - Minas Gerais Philharmonic

Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra began its activities in 2008 led by maestro Fabio Mechetti. It was created from a partnership between Minas Gerais State and *Instituto Cultural Filarmônica*, the maintainer of the orchestra. “*Instituto Cultural Filarmônica* is a non-profit civil association that has the goals of structuring and maintaining Minas Gerais Philharmonic and promote the diffusion of classical music”²². The recognition of the *Instituto Cultural Filarmônica* as an *OSCIP*, an Organization of the Civil Society of Public Interest grants them the possibility of signing partnership contracts (MINAS GERAIS, 2017) with State Government and, therefore, receive investments directly from it. This partnership contract states the amount of resources invested by the government as well as both parts’ duties. The document also states the goals and the criteria by which the contract and the orchestra will be evaluated. Those criteria are particularly interesting to us specially because they indicate the weights

²²

with which the state conceives artistic quality. Those criteria are divided in 8 large groups and disaggregated according to the following (INSTITUTO CULTURAL FILARMÔNICA, 2017):

Table 6 – Orchestra Goals

Group	Goal	Weight
Execution of signature concerts	Cumulative number of symphonic concerts and signature concerts in the current year	15
	Average percentage of occupancy of Thursday signature concerts	4
	Average percentage of occupancy of Friday signature concerts	4
	Average percentage of occupancy of Saturday signature concerts	4
	Number of signatures to symphonic concerts series	3
	Renovation of signatures rate in relation to previous year	3
Education and public formation for music	Cumulative number of concerts of Youth Concert Series	5
	Average percentage of occupancy of Youth Concert Series	4
	Cumulative number of concerts of Didactic Concerts Series	0.5
	Average percentage of occupancy of Didactic Concerts Series	0.5
	Cumulative number of concerts of Chamber Music Series	0.5
	Average percentage of occupancy of Chamber Music Series	0.5
Democratization of access to classical music	Cumulative number of concerts in public squares or parks of the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte	0.5

Source: (INSTITUTO CULTURAL FILARMÔNICA, 2017, p. 3-4)

Execution of signature concerts Education and public formation for music; Democratization of access to classical music; To represent Minas Gerais State nationally and internationally; Stimuli to the revelation of new talents for classical music; Provide new experiences and knowledge to the artistic body of the orchestra; Fund-raising; Partnership management.

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Appendix 1 – The Market Plane

Here is a space for the beautiful intention of deriving the much very complicated White mathematical models. . .

Appendix 2 – Sociometric online questionnaire - individuals

[First page]

Hello. You are being invited to participate on the PhD research entitled “The social construction of quality in a Brazilian Classical Music market” by Neylson Crepalde. This research has Prof. Dr. Silvio Salej Higgins as advisor and Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Lazega as co-advisor. Your participation is voluntary and you will not have any onus because of it.

Because this is a network study, we will need to know the name of some of your colleagues/coworkers. However, NO NAMES WILL BE DISCLOSED in the research report or in scientific papers published with this data. We can assure total confidentiality of participants.

In case of any doubts, please, write to <neylsoncrepalde@gmail.com>.

At any time, it is possible to withdraw your participation from the study. In case you decide not to participate after you have answered to this online questionnaire, your data will be excluded from our database. We urge, however, that your participation is extremely important to the success of this research. Thank you for collaborating!

In case you agree on participating, click under CONTINUE to access the questions.

[Second page - General Information]

1. Full name:
2. E-mail address:
3. What is your Gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
4. What is your highest degree?
 - High school - incomplete
 - High school - complete
 - Undergraduate - incomplete
 - Undergraduate - complete
 - Masters - incomplete
 - Masters - complete
 - PhD - incomplete
 - PhD - complete
5. How do you consider yourself regarding skin colour?
 - White

- Black
- Brow
- Asian
- Indigenous
- Other

6. How old are you?

7. Would you consider yourself as (check as many as you consider correct):

- Musician
- Music Teacher/Professor
- Public
- Critic
- Orchestra Staff
- Administrative
- Other (describe)

[Third page - Vertical relations]

8. Do you play in any orchestra? Which one(s)?

9. Do you teach in any music school or college/university? Which?

10. Do you write critics regularly to any newspaper or online portal or other media?

11. Do you work in the administrative sector of an orchestra? Which?

12. Do you work in any company that is not an orchestra? What is your position in this company?

13. How frequently do you attend concerts?

- Once or twice a year
- Once or twice each three months
- Once or twice every month
- Once a week
- More than once a week

14. The questions that follow are only related to musicians. Are you a musician?

- No – Thank you very much for your participation!
- Yes – Continue to the next questions.

[Fourth page - Horizontal relations between individuals]

15. If you needed advisement on a piece's interpretation, regardless of its period or style, to whom would you ask for an advise? List as many people you want to. Please, cite in this way: Person1 - Main activity, Person2 - Main activity, Person3 - Main activity.
16. Do you often meet other people in social occasions outside work? Who do you meet? List as many people you want to. Please, cite in this way: Person1 - Main activity, Person2 - Main activity, Person3 - Main activity.
17. If you were invited to help an orchestra hiring a musician for an excellent job offer, who would you indicate?
18. If you were responsible for organizing a recital for you to play, regardless of the instrumentation of the works you could choose, who would you like to invite to play with you?
19. To you, what are the orchestras in Belo Horizonte that have the highest quality? Please cite from the greatest to the poorest.

[Fifth page - Context]

20. In what country where you born?
21. In what city where you born?
22. For how many years do you study music?
23. For how many years have you been working as a professional musician?
24. What is your instrument or main musical activity (if you are a conductor or a singer, for instance)?
25. In what institution did you receive most part of your musical training?
26. With which teacher/professor did you spend most part of your musical training?

Thank you very much for your participation!

Appendix 3 – Sociometric questionnaire - organizations

Good day. I want to thank you very much for your participation and assure that it is extremely important for the success of this PhD research.

1. Let's start with your professional partnerships. Could you name all the professionals that you relate with regularly? By professionals I mean every company with whom you have relations, economic or other, for example, advisement, collaboration, resources exchange, etc.
2. What is the main activity of each of these professionals?
3. I would like to retake each of this professionals that you mentioned. What is the relation that you would say you have with each one of them?
 - A relation between supplier and customer, only.
 - A partnership
 - A collaboration
 - An advisement relation
 - Other
4. What is the organization's structure? Is there an organizational chart that I could consult?
5. What is the organization's budget?
6. You did mention the State as one of your partners (What about the State?) How many contracts do you have with the State? What is it's share in your budget?
7. What would you say is your organization's style within the market?

[If it is an orchestra:]

8. In what spaces does the orchestra usually play? How many seats available?
9. What is the ticket price for each of the concert series? Is there variation on ticket price according to the place in the concert room? How many tickets are made available with each price?
10. How much does the organization spend with musicians paycheck?
11. Besides musicians and guests paycheck, what would you say are other artistic expenses of a performance?

Thank you very much for participating!

Appendix 4 – Teacher/professor/hub’s interview guide

Good day. I want to thank you very much for your participation and assure that it is extremely important for the success of this PhD research. Let’s begin talking about your **musical training**:

1. Where did you study?
2. What are your degrees in music?
3. Do you think the place where you had musical training was important for the training itself? How?

Now, let’s talk about your **students**.

4. How many students do you have today?
5. Are they working as professional musicians or they are only studying yet?
6. How do you manage, in your classes, teaching about technical elements and interpretative elements?
7. What do you do to make a student understand what does it take to have a “good ” performance? Is this a difficult process or does it come naturally?
8. To you, what are the higher quality orchestras in Belo Horizonte? Why?

Now, let’s talk about your **carrer**.

9. Beyond teaching, do you usually play on recitals or concertos?
10. When you are performing with another musicians, how interpretative decisions are made?

Thank you very much for participating!