



The Participative Management of Actors: an Analysis of Decision-Making Through Social Management

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the participation's management of organization's actors in the decision-making processes, using the social management lens. To reach the objective, a case study was carried out in Cooperativa de Pais, Amigos e Portadores de Deficiência of Florianópolis, and the theoretical foundation on social management was brought by to identify its assumptions, and to compare it with the traditional type of management. Regarding data collection and analysis, these were predominantly qualitative, collected through interviews with several participants of the cooperative, analyzed with a content analysis method. As they are main results, there was a coexistence of strategic management and social management in the organizational decision-making process, in other words, it is often participative, opening opportunities for the dialogue among its members and sometimes it is sole to some members, in which the decision is configured hierarchically.

Keywords: Social Management; Cooperative; Deliberative Citizenship.

Introduction

The management model of the traditional organizations is oriented to the strategic and instrumental perspective of the actions, in which the utilitarian calculation is the guide, that is, the focus is on the profit maximization and it leaves others social and organizational aspects in the background (RAMOS, 1981).

However, this action logic has been questioned, especially when reproduced on social nature organizations (RAMOS, 1981; SERVA, 1997). That is because the utmost orientation is not to economic matters, but to cope with some social problematic, not attend neither by the market, neither by the State (TENÓRIO, 2008a).

Hence, the mimicry of the traditional management practices in civil society organizations results in an abysmal reduction, given the inadequacy to the purposes of this last one, which is, in its core, the common good. That is, one is individual-oriented, and the other to the collectivity (FRANÇA FILHO, 2008).

Given that, these perspectives go to opposite ways, and so cannot converge in common point, it was developed the following research question: what type of management presents greater adherence to social organizations? To Tenório (2008a, p. 25-26), it is necessary a type of management that opposes the strategic management, he calls it social management: “the social management opposes the strategic management once it tries to replace the technocratic, monologist management, by a more participative, dialogical management, in which the decision-making process is exercised through different social subjects”.

According to the author, the social management configures itself as a set of social processes that differs of traditional management when develops a managerial action materialized through negotiation between the involved actors, and when it loses the bureaucratic characters, given the straight relation between the management process and the multiple politic and social participation (TENÓRIO, 2008b, p.40).

In this orientation, of differentiated management of people, one of the main elements is the decision-making process configuration, which must be participative and transparent. This way, in an ideal type, the decision-making process, based in the assumption of social management should present, at first sight, the following characteristics: collective decision-making, coercion-free and based in the understanding, transparency and intelligible language (OLIVEIRA; CANÇADO; PEREIRA, 2010).

Conforming to Monje-Reyes (2011, P. 721), the cooperatives show, potentially, a close interface with social management, given the “both are forms of social production and sustain themselves in the social actors’ participation in the decisions about what and how to do. Therefore, deepening the democracy and modernizing the principles of the social politics subjects’ active participation”.

In this context, the following question emerges as a structuring problem of this essay: How the participative management of the actors in the decision-making process in cooperatives is characterized, based in the social management assumptions? Thus, this essay aimed to analyze the organizational actors’ participation management in the decision-making processes, through the social management, in the Cooperativa de Pais, Amigos e Portadores de Deficiência. To that, this article is divided in five sections, counting this introduction: theoretical foundation, methodological procedures, data description and analysis and final considerations.

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

The social management denomination has been very used in the past years (FRITZEN et al., 2017) and, hence, has been receiving relevance, both in the theoretical and practical scope (SILVA, 2013). Even with the rise of the theme, for some authors

there is a lack of paradigmatic delimitations (DOWBOR, 1999; FISCHER, 2002; MAIA, 2005; CANÇADO, 2011).

The term was, most likely, born in Brazil in the 90 decade, in the middle of an economic and social change that was happening in the country, the globalization of the economy, which marketed and expanded the social acting segments and new challenges of the civil society participation, influenced the social management concept construction (MAIA, 2005).

Corroborating Maia's thought (2005), about the theme origin in the country, Cançado (2011) claim not to find, in his study about the social management theoretical foundation, the terminology origin. However, to the author, the first steps were given in the Professor Fernando Guilherme Tenório's texts, who, since 1990, leads the Social Management Study Program (Programa de Estudos em Gestão Social - PEGS), together at EBAPE/Fundação Getúlio Vargas/RJ.

According with Tenório's words (2008, p. 157), the first insights about social management were constructed "when the economic neoliberal wave arrived hitting, literally the back of Brazil and the Brazilian people", making the author consider about the public management and oppose the changes happening in Brazil.

Tenório's considerations are based in the State-Society and capital-work relations. The author reverses the concepts, suggesting that the main role in these relations must belong to society and the work, in the relations established with the State and the capital, respectively (TENÓRIO, 2008a, 2016). The author, himself says:

Having the individual as the privileged subject of vocalization of what concerns the Society in the demands of the State and of what interests the worker in the interaction with capital means to change the nature of these relations, that is to say, to move from monological, technobureaucratic and authoritarian conditions to dialogic situations, democratic and intersubjective, the exercise of citizenship (TENÓRIO, 2008a, p. 34).

Therefore, based in abovementioned authors ideas, social management studies must use the optics of the society and the work. This focus change promotes the citizenship, as a category of the social processes intermediation, and brings closer the political and social relations, presenting itself as an articulator and democratic alternative of the relation between diverse social actors (TENÓRIO, 2002).

Regarding the citizenship promotion aspect, Tenório (2008b) justified his thought using Habermas' ideas, that "intends to bring reconciliation between democracy and individual rights in a way that none of both subordinates the other", proposing a theory about democracy "based in the correlation between human rights and popular sovereignty and consequently reinterpretation about the autonomy in the forms of the dialogue theory", the procedural deliberative citizenship. In general lines, the habermasian deliberative citizenship "constitute itself in a new articulation way that questions the unilateral prerogative of the administrative power political action - of the State and/or the money's capital" (TENÓRIO, 2008a, p. 48).

The deliberative citizenship has as base the inherent aspects of communicative rationality. In this specific type of rationality, the dialogue and consensus must be the groundwork to the agreement between the individuals, contradicting the positivist logic, predominant "in the world of systems" that carries functionalist and alienating mechanisms (TENÓRIO, 2002).

In the social management process, according with the communicative acting – dialogical, the truth only exists, if the entire social act participants admit its validity, that is, the truth is the promise of a rational consensus, or the truth is not a relations between the individual and his perceptions of the world, but an agreement reached by critical discussion, intersubjective appreciation (TENÓRIO, 2016, 29).

Thereby, the communicative rationality opposes the aspects referring to what Tenório (2008a) calls strategic management. In relation to the assumption, the strategic management characterizes itself as an social action based in the consequences utilitarian calculus (SERVA, 1997), in which the social relation is established through formal existent hierarchy. As main strategic management characteristics, it is possible to list two, the utilitarian rationality and the hierarchy:

The first strategic management characteristic is founded in the utilitarian rationality. The second characteristic is the hierarchy existence. To the possibility of a perfect coordination existence, looking for the drawn goals, it is needed the construction of a hierarchical structure that centralizes, sustains and justifies the decision-making [...] while the ones on the hierarchy top execute planning actions, based in the goals to be reached, in the utilitarian rationality logic, the other ones implement these decisions through the using of coercion (salary, mainly). The summit coordinates the process, analyzes the results and make the next decisions. (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 72).

These two characteristics, the utilitarian rationality and the hierarchy, are commonly presents in the private sphere, “where the power relations are institutionalized, and it is very clear to the participants their role in the organizational context.” (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 72). To the same authors, the strategic management may exist in the public sphere, when this happens, the appropriation of the public by private also occurs and, consequently, the space loses its potential egalitarian participation between the diverse society actors, especially those who are usually excluded from the social participation process.

Another two important characteristics of strategic management are the formal communication and the information protection to a privileged group of actors. In a private space, these actions are important to the results concretization, however, in a public space, this “management process makes harder the intersubjectivity between the actors, divided between the ones who have access to the complete and clear information and the ones who does not” (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 79).

Finally, the strategic management goal, which is the results maximization, that is, the range of goals by the using time and material resources more efficiently. Hence, the strategic management aims, above all, the profit maximization (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016). A summary of the inherent characteristics of strategic management can be observed in figure 1 of this research.

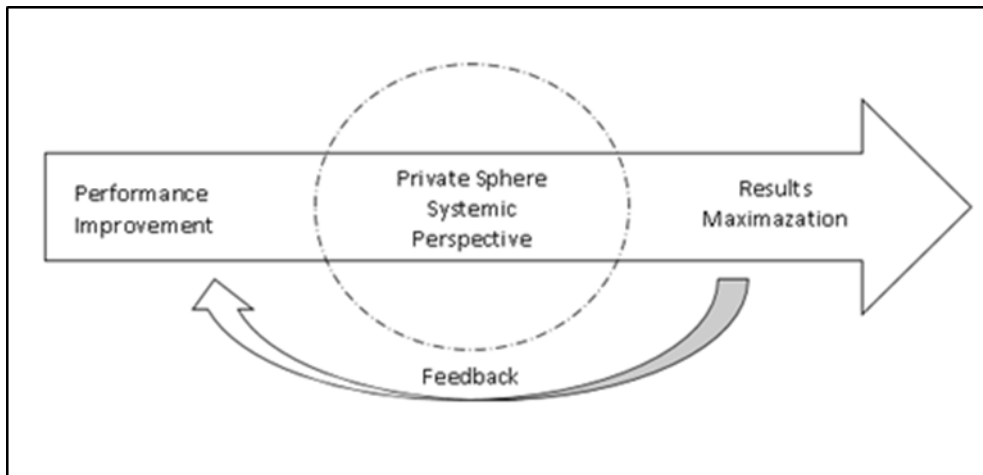


Figure 1: Theoretical approach for the strategic management.

Source: (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 72)

To Tenório (2008a, p. 25–26) the social management has as its goal to oppose the strategic management, “as it attempts to replace techno-bureaucratic, monological management by a more participative, dialogic management, in which the decision-making process is exercised through different social subjects”, that means the social management is “the processes set in which the management action develops itself through a negotiation action between its actors, losing the bureaucratic character because the straight relation between the administrative process and multiple social and political participation” (TENÓRIO, 2008b, p. 40).

This way, in an ideal type, the decision-making process, based in the social management assumptions, should present, at first sight, the following characteristics: collective decision-making, coercion-free and based in the understanding, transparency and intelligible language (OLIVEIRA; CANÇADO; PEREIRA, 2010, p. 622), on the contrary of the first strategic management assumption, in which the dominant is the instrumental rationality. In the case of social management, the rationality is substantive (RAMOS, 1981) and communicative (HABERMAS, 1993), once it allows the actors the possibility to dialogue to collectively make decisions, and the characteristic of the decision-making process is collectivity, instead of singular (TENÓRIO, 2008a, p. 48).

Therefore, the instrumental rationality, typical of the market, inhibits the individual's autonomy and emancipation, because it gives a unidimensional and utilitarian character to the relations between the social actors. Hence, the transfer of this type of rationality to a public space is a seminal error, an attempt to adhere to the logic and practices of the market, the possibility of participating and collective decision-making in a space that belongs to all (BOULLOSA; SCHOMMER, 2009).

The social management starts from the well understood public interest, in a context of solidarity and sustainability, occurring in the public sphere, with a dynamic of communities of practice, in which collective decision-making takes place through deliberative democracy coercion-free, guided by action rational, permeated by dialogue and intersubjectivity, considering the possibilities of interorganizational, founded on the dialogicity and intersubjectivity of the process aiming at emancipation as the ultimate goal (CANÇADO, 2011, p. 204).

Regarding transparency, it can be said that the collectivization of information is one of the conditions to the process of social management, since it always seeks the search for intersubjectivity and dialogicity. "Without these conditions, collective decision-making could not be considered as such and communicative action would not be present in this type of management" (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 79).

The last relevant social management aspect that opposes to the strategic management is its purpose. In this perspective, Ronconi (2011, P.2) highlights that "social management must be able to break with traditional management concepts; must lead people to the quest for emancipation and self-realization with a view to social satisfaction and the realization of potentialities."

Thus, on the contrary of the strategic management, in which the goal is the profit maximization through the processes efficiency, the social management searches the being emancipation, reinforcing the well understood interest. "The social management succeeds, the more emancipation and well understood interest between the same ones" (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 79).

Finally, Cançado, Villela e Sausen (2016), compare the two types of management that coexist in public and private spaces. The analysis can be observed in Figure 2.

Table 1 - Comparative analysis between strategic and social management

Dimension	Strategic Management	Social Management
Starting point	Performance improvement	Participation/Well-living
Rationality	Utilitarian/formal/instrumental/ monological	Communicative/dialogical
Decision-making	Based in a previous planning and in an organizational alignment system, which uses the organization's goals	Collective decision-making, molded by the well understood interest/common good
Transparency	Constant information in the technical reports and in the systemic evaluation with limited access	Available information, intersubjectivity based, making the dialogue possible
Space	Private sphere	Public sphere
Management purpose	Costs minimization and results maximization	Well understood interest/common good
Method	Logical positivism	Critic theory

ception of Organizational structure	Hierarchy/heterogeneity	Heterarchy
theoretical premises	Methodological individualism	Socialization
Modus Operandi	Competitiveness	Cooperation
Benefits	Profits and business results	Life quality improvement
Time dimension	Preferably short terms; medium and long terms planning based	Sustainability – long term
Action range	Worried only with its interests	General worrisome with the context
Vision	Linear/objective	Complexity/Intersubjectivity
Focus	Market oriented	Social oriented
Consequences	Reification	Emancipation
Relation	Work world	World of life

Source: (CANÇADO; VILLELA; SAUSEN, 2016, p. 80).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

To reach the present study's goals, it was used a qualitative research orientation, characterized as applied and descriptive. Thus, it was conducted a case study in a social cooperative in Florianopolis, Brazil, during the year of 2012. This choice of organization obeyed to three following criteria: a) the origin related to the initiative and mobilization of the civil society, considering the social management perspective as the theoretical study bias; b) innovation to face latent social problems; c) being formally created at for least five years.

The techniques used to data collection involved documentary research, through institutional documents analysis, such as the cooperative's social statute, the in loco non-participative observation, with the researcher following up the social group, acting inside the organizations in intercalated days and times, for two months, in the different groups and divisions of the organizations, and finally semi-structured interviews.

Regarding this last quoted technique, it was done 9 (nine) interviews, including board members, employees, deficient cooperated and their parents. The interviews followed a script based in the analysis categories. The only exceptions were the intel-

lectual deficient, once it was considered more adequate to conduct the dialogue in a more informal and adapted way to the interviewed.

The analysis categories were based in Tenório et al. (2008), who present an evaluation tool to the deliberative decision-making processes. This methodology is based in the fundamental principles of the deliberative citizenship, which embrace inclusion, pluralism, participative equality, autonomy and common good.

Basing on it, three analysis categories were reviewed and adapted that served as base to the studied organization decision-making processes understanding, namely: discussion processes, inclusion, participative equality and autonomy. These categories aided the researchers' analysis through the confrontation between the social management understanding and the observed practices in the organizations focused in the research. After that, it is presented a chart with the analytical categories and criteria, based in Tenório et. al. (2008).

Table 2 - Methodology for decision-making deliberative processes evaluation

CATEGORY	CRITERIA
Discussion process: presupposes negotiated authority and equal rights. Understood as an intersubjective and communicative space, capable of promoting understanding among involved actors.	Diffusion channels: existence and utilization of adequate channels for information access to the mobilization of the potential participants.
	Information quality: diversity, clarity and utility of the information provided to the involved actors.
	Plurality of the leader group: shared leadership, aiming to integrate different actors.
Inclusion: incorporation of individual and collective actors previously excluded.	Decision spaces openness: processes, mechanisms, institutions that favor the citizen or groups interests' articulation, affording an equal opportunity to all the decision-making participants.
	Social, political and technical acceptance: actors' acknowledgment of the need for a participatory methodology, in the social, political and technical ambit.
	Appreciation by citizenship: citizenship on the relevance of their participation.
Participative equality: effective isonomy of the decision-making processes action.	Choice of representatives: methods used to choose the representatives.
	Representatives' speeches: appreciation of participatory processes in the speeches made by representatives.
	Participative evaluation: intervention of the participants in the monitoring and evaluation of the decision-making processes.
Autonomy: the decision-making power owned by different actors.	Actors' reach: intensity of the organizational actors that can step in the discussed problems inside the organizations.
	Leadership profile: leadership characteristics in the decentralization guidance in the deliberation and execution process.
	Possibility to exercise their own will: analyze the configuration of the individual will's exercise and the existence of institutions, norms and procedures that allow the individual or collective will's exercise of the different social actors inside the organization.

Source: Adapted from (TENÓRIO et al., 2008)

COOPERATIVA DE PAIS, AMIGOS E PORTADORES DE DEFICIÊNCIA (COEPAD) CHARACTERIZATION

The COEPAD - Cooperativa de Pais, Amigos e Portadores de Deficiência – is a social organization located in Florianópolis, in Santa Catarina. The organization emerged in 1998, following the abolition of school classes that housed intellectually disabled people, at a school in the region.

Searching inclusion alternatives of the adult intellectual deficient, who did not find space in regular schools anymore, a group of parents mobilized to the creation of the first cooperative for people with intellectual deficient and disabilities in Brazil, aiming “to provide capacitation and job to people with intellectual disability, contributing to their self-esteem recovery and their citizenship exercise” (COEPAD, 2012).

The cooperated are divided in two categories: 1) intellectual deficient (who were about 20, at the beginning, and today are 40), workshop and other cooperative activities participants; 2) the intellectual deficient’s parents and friends. There is, still, a volunteer group, who contribute to the labor activities making, in alternated days, and also, the hired employees, who act, essentially, in administrative areas.

The cooperative’s production is divided in three workshops: a) paper production; b) cartonage, and; c) serigraphy – all of them formed by deficient and volunteers, coordinated by a cooperative employee. Almost every productive work is made by the cooperated, only some few cuts processes, which offer risks, are outsourced.

The entity maintains itself with the return obtained in its products and the equipment purchased by the Cooperative were made possible through partnership with private companies and other social and public organizations. The profit obtained is destined to the improvement of the Cooperative and part of it to dividends of the disabled cooperative.

RESULTS DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS BASED IN THE CATEGORIES

The analysis categories’ exploration aimed the approximation between the found data in the research field and the social management theories opposing the strategic management. In this orientation, the first analyzed category in the COEPAD’s decision-making processes was the “discussion process”, which involves, namely: 1) diffusion channels; 2) information quality, and; 3) promoter group’s plurality.

Regarding the diffusion channels, were found indicatives that the information is, mainly, transmitted through oral communication, even though there are other forms, such as writing, through murals, for example. A determinant figure in this process is the organization president. He is seen as a “communication vehicle” between the organizational actors.

The actors’ perception about the information quality that goes through the organization seems to demonstrate that they are available to all the members and relevant others so the integration about the cooperative activities is possible.

In this meaning, is highlighted that, to reach a democratic condition, the needed information must arrive to all the organizational actors, creating conditions to equal deliberation and democratic decision-making between them (CASTELLÀ; PARÉS, 2012).

Related to the information diversity, the 3 interviewed reports suggest that not all information is shared, even having freedom to questioning: “some things (are shared), not all. What belongs to the office, in the board, is kept with them. But we have freedom to come and talk”.

Regarding this, were found indicatives that the promotion of deliberative spaces and the activities and discussions leading are made, predominantly, by the coopera-

tive's presidency board and their managers. That is, because, is the administrative board that defines the meeting schedule, its periodicity and leads its unfolding.

Therefore, the data suggests that the discussion process is fortified about the diffusion channels available in the organization and its clarity and utility. However, the lack of diversity in the available information, allied to the centrality in the promotion discussions and managerial activities, undermine the democratic character and unidimensionalizes the discussion process. Thus, this category gets closer both to social and strategic management, in the same intensity, in the studied organization.

It is worth to mention that the transparency of the information in the discussion processes and decision-making is one of the central elements in social management, because, according to Oliveira, Cançado, e Pereira (2010), in a decision-making process that cares about the communicative understanding between its actors, the information must be accessible to all involved, given that the omission or asymmetry are unfamiliar aspects to the management social process.

The "inclusion" category expects to discuss the possibility of the actors' inclusion in the decision-making spaces and the following criteria are going to be used: 1) the openness decision-making spaces; 2) social acceptance, and: 3) citizenship valuing.

Concerning the openness of the decision-making spaces, the data suggests the existence of norms that favor the accessibility to these spaces. However, in the administrative practices, the spaces, in which the strategic decisions are made, are mainly configured by the managers.

When to analyze the social acceptance, which is based on the recognition of the organizational actors need for a participative methodology, it was possible to identify traces that demonstrate the existence of a worrisome about the subject in the cooperative. Such as, the existence of incipient initiatives in this matter. This is reflected, for example, in the management effort to create an environment that encourages participation of the least linked to the cooperative group, in the meetings: the parents of the intellectual deficient.

In this perspective, for the members who act effectively in the cooperative, the participation in the activities and opinion exposition is quite valued, what synthesizes the citizenship valuing in the participative decision-making process. The actors recognize as weakness, the non-participation of the cooperate deficient parents, who, apparently, do not see as extremely important their own participation.

Thus, the data indicate that the actors inclusion in the decision-making spaces presents a narrow link with the hierarchical acting of the organization; which the actors appreciate, in a segmented way, the participation, given the does not reach all the cooperative ambits and, that the interest in the development of participatory methodologies and strategies, especially to the further actors inclusion, shows as a potential advancement to the inclusive process. This way, is found indicatives that strategic and social management have similar intensity influence in the inclusion process in the cooperative, once they coexist latently

For the "participative equality" category analysis, were used the following criteria: 1) the leaders way to choose; 2) the leaders' speech and; 3) participative evaluation.

Regarding the first criteria, it was verified that the representatives choice process, in the statute, presents democratic character. Nevertheless, the existence of a

single plate and the meritocratic way that is formed – characteristic that permeates the choice of the coordinators - can compromise the democratic character of the choosing process of the representatives.

In this way, about the participative evaluation, it was verified the existence norms that facilitate the intervention process, the intervention possibility, the activities accompaniment and discussed problematics, however was not possible to verify, in depth, these interventions' frequency and complexity.

The leaders' speech suggests that they seem to value the different actors' participation and plurality of the leading group. However, it is was diagnosed organizational mimicry, of predominant characteristics in private companies, that adopt the strategic management model, especially in the speech related to the need of "into-business-transformation" of the social cooperative.

It is worth to mention that the leadership sharing is something presented by Castellà e Parés (2012, p. 230) as essential to the participation process, once the "existence of a shared leadership may concede a greater efficient and coherence degree to the participative process. Therefore, the data indicate that the existence of norms and structures that may potentially create an environment to the participative isonomy between the organizational actors, such as, the leaders' participation valuing was realized. However, some conditionings, as the "into-business-transformation" perspective and the single plates, weaken the participative equality process. This way, is found in category an intermediate approximation with the social management assumption.

The category "autonomy" aims to understand the possibilities of indistinct participation in the decision-making processes and will be analyzed through the following criteria: 1) actors' competence; 2) leadership profile and; 3) possibility of exercising one's own will.

Related to the actors' competence, the data indicate the presence of positive aspects about opinion expression freedom in different ambits and director board receptivity about changes in the operational environment. About the strategic part is leaded, predominantly, by the cooperative director's board, which is, tough, receptive to suggestions. However, the low deficient representatives' participation narrows their expansion and intervention possibilities. Regarding the leadership profile, it was verified that on one side an authority virtualized structure, related to the formal structure, but, it acts with the participation possibility and great dialogue openness, on the other side. The leadership exercised by the president has great legitimization among the cooperative members and presents great mobilization capability, being the social leader profile very valued. However, the intensity and the reach of the leadership make it unidimensional and inhibit its pluralization.

Therefore, about the exercising one's own will possibility, the data show indicatives that, in the operational ambit, the individual will presence is greater, but in the strategic ambit, the acting is narrowed, once the decision are taken in the director board, they may not converge with the other organizational actors will, even though this convergence is searched by the director board. Concerning the cooperative, as an institution, the greatest impediment presented to the exercise of self-will is the financial constraints, which restrain the decisions of the cooperative to its availability of capital and production capacity.

In this context, the organizational actors' autonomy finds its bases in the dialogue valorization in all the cooperative ambits and in the possibility of promoting changes, even if predominantly, restrict to the operational level and the cooperatives' leisure level, approximating with an intermediate intensity regarding the social management assumptions.

Relating to the approximation of the criteria with both the social and strategic management characteristics, the data indicate that the criteria which present greater convergence with this last quoted are related with the promoter group plurality, the decision-making spaces' openness and the way to choose the leaders.

Concerning the social management, the criteria with greater convergence are: diffusion channels, the social acceptance, the citizenship valorization, leaders' speech, the actors' competence and the participative evaluation. The criteria that involve the information quality, the leadership profile and possibility to exercise one's own will, present similar intensity with both social and strategic management. In the same way, the categories present, predominantly, the same balance.

Final considerations

The Cooperativa de Pais, Amigos e Portadores de Deficiência – COEPAD, goes through its growth, a bureaucratization process of its structures, once, due to the legal and formal aspects, it needs to adjust to guarantee its survival. This does not mean, however, that its social character is left out. On the contrary, the cooperative values the work done with the intellectual deficient and the opportunities for social inclusion it provides to them.

The management configuration follows the same orientation. At the same time that uses methods common to the companies' traditional management, the social cooperative also worries about allow and create conditions to the participation of its members. Therefore, it is verified that different management perspectives can coexist in the same organization. In COEPAD, was found traces of social and strategic management concerning the actors' participation in the decision-making process, once it presents more bureaucracy in its structures and processes, but still, with participation possibility and potential for its expansion.

During the development of the field activities, were identified evidences that the lack of knowledge about managerial alternatives lead the leaders to incorporate into the cooperative, experiences from the organizations where they operate or have worked, predominantly, private and public. One of the challenges to social management is, in order to develop convergent methodologies with social and collective organizations, and its theoretical and practical consolidation, as an alternative of participative, deliberative and democratic management.

In addition, it is important to highlight that social management, sometimes is seen as utopia, finds expression in production organizations, as in the case of the studied cooperative. It is possible, then, to foster organizational environments in which the maxim that prevails is "the legitimacy of decisions must originate in spaces of discussion guided by the principles of inclusion, pluralism, participation equality, autonomy and the common good" (TENÓRIO, 2008, p.148).

Finally, it should be noted that COEPAD materializes as an example of successful popular organization in facing a social problem that lasts for years: the coherent and beneficial inclusion of intellectual deficient through, for example, labor practices. Thus, it plays a distinct social role in fostering the conquest of the citizenship of its members and in building effective opportunities for social inclusion and collective development.

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