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Cultural omnivorousness and musical gentrification: An outline of a sociological framework and its applications for music education research

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Abstract

In this article, we aim to develop a theoretical model to understand what we refer to as 'musical gentrification' and to explore how this model might be applied to and inform music education research. We start from a Bourdieusian point of view, elaborating on the connections between social class and cultural capital, and then move on to discuss more recent contributions concerning cultural omnivorousness and musical gentrification. Furthermore, we show, through describing an ongoing research project, how the notion of musical gentrification can be utilised in music education empirical research, and we also discuss its possible applications in future efforts of mapping and understanding the present-day complexity of the cultural-musical landscape. Keywords: cultural capital; cultural omnivorousness; musical gentrification; music and social class; sociology of music education

Introduction

In recent times, rather than consuming only high culture, members of the higher classes tend to consume much of what would have previously been dismissed as low culture. For instance, when Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in 1952, Britain's then premier composer, Benjamin Britten, wrote the opera *Gloriana* in her honour. When Princess Diana died 45 years later, Elton John performed his song "Candle in the

Wind”, originally dedicated to Marilyn Monroe, at the funeral. Within just a few decades, a significant change can be detected regarding what kind of music is considered appropriate for this type of official event, and the music that has traditionally enjoyed limited status among the elite (i.e. popular music) has in many ways and areas replaced art music. Regardless of whether this is because people of higher social status—‘the gentry’—have developed new, omnivorous taste patterns, or whether it is due to other causes, there has been a parallel tendency over the past couple of decades, at least in the Nordic countries, to expand the repertoires and resources of music. This has happened in many fields simultaneously and can be witnessed, for example, in how music as a school subject is expected to absorb and mediate a multitude of styles and genres (see e.g., Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2006), in how the academic music field has expanded, and through the wide range of music-related events that are given support and funding from public cultural authorities, organizations, and institutions. Through these developments, many popular music genres have been included and have thereby gained considerable educational, curricular, and institutional recognition and status. In this article, this particular phenomenon is part of what we metaphorically refer to as ‘musical gentrification’. In the following, our purpose is to develop a theoretical model to understand musical gentrification and to explore how this model might be applied to and inform music education research.

The Context

The present article is written from within a Nordic context, a societal frame in which the patterns of cultural and musical expansion have, as already mentioned, become quite evident in recent years. More specifically, the authors of this text are all employed and located in Norway, a country which, due to its hydrocarbon industry and consequent economic wealth, has been endowed with some extraordinarily beneficial conditions for building a society that allows for positive social change, optimal growth and development, minimisation of social inequalities, and the enhancement of class mobility. Given an additional large degree of political stability,

the Norwegian welfare state has—from World War II and until today—enabled a substantial educational revolution, not only in science and technology but also in the humanities and the arts, and has ensured common public education for all, including overall free higher education. This has facilitated class elevation (which is a quite recurrent theme in film and literature; see e.g., Seljestad 2010), and also seems to have evened out steeper and more traditional social hierarchies. As with free education in general, the Norwegian educational system provides easier access to arts and music education. While the country's legislation maintains that each municipality is required to provide its inhabitants with low-fee music and art schools for children and youngsters (Kulturskolerådet 2011), the arts-education expansion can also be seen through a wide-ranging availability of upper secondary-school programmes in music, dance, and drama and through new course offerings at several universities and university colleges, for example, music teacher and musician education programs on the tertiary level that incorporate a constantly increasing scope of musical styles and genres. Furthermore, in alignment with the surrounding world, Norwegian culture and society in general has been fully exposed to the Western—gradually global—emergence of popular music, media and youth culture, and institutions and corporations have been established to meet the various cultural needs of an increasingly diverse population. Once fairly monocultural, Norwegian society has become more multicultural, with 14.1% of citizens with immigrant backgrounds (Statistics Norway 2013).

The richness and diversity of the Norwegian society—both culturally and musically—is captured in the white paper *Kulturutredningen 2014* (Norwegian Ministry of Culture 2013) which highlights cultural complexity as one of the main characteristics of the contemporary state. Furthermore, the paper shows how both diachronic and synchronic processes have contributed to this phenomenon. First, on the diachronic level, there exists a long-standing tradition in Norway for recognising everyday and lowbrow cultural forms on the official level. The so-called 'extended notion of culture' encompasses a wide range of cultural activities which span both the traditional fine arts as well as "sports and youth projects" (Norwegian Ministry of

Culture 2013, 38) and amateur activities within many areas and directed towards all age groups. As such, attempts have been made to dissolve the opposition between highbrow and lowbrow culture or at least to strongly reduce it. Even though this process was started already in the beginning of the 1970s, at least on the part of Social Democratic governments, in practice it has not necessarily always affected the enacted social and cultural hierarchies of the country. Second, with regard to synchronicity, the white paper recognises the porous borders and overlapping tendencies of contemporary cultures, and pinpoints how “national, regional and local cultures are products of historical exchange and hybridisation processes which reach across national borders” (58). These features are enhanced when individuals with “complex cultural identities” (58) meet in transnational contact zones. The phenomenon also suggests that it is highly problematic, nowadays, to talk about a unified and unchangeable ‘Norwegian culture’. Rather, the national culture must be understood as complex, ever-changing, and highly diversified along “social and geographical strata” (58).

The fast-changing complexity phenomena found in contemporary Norwegian society and culture are, of course, largely similar to those found in other Western societies, rapidly spreading further through processes of globalisation. These phenomena have been objects of sociologists’ interest for several decades already and have underpinned the formation of sociologically informed understandings of contemporary society as being in a state of post (Lyotard 1979), late (Giddens 1990), reflexive (Beck 1994), or liquid (Bauman 2000) modernity respectively. Also, concepts such as transculturality (Welch 1994/1995) and super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) have been coined to connote the move from classical monocultures to the culturally diverse societies of today.

With rapidly evolving societal transformation, increasing complexity, relativisation of traditional arts-related hierarchies, and hybridisation of cultural forms, come changes in patterns of cultural consumption and taste as well as a potential for altering or even overthrowing the ways in which already established socio-cultural hierarchies function and are organised. In the following we will look

into these matters through sociological lenses focusing mainly on the contemporary negotiations within the field of music. Starting from a primarily Bourdieusian point of view and elaborating on the connections between social class and cultural capital, we will then move on to discuss more recent contributions concerning cultural omnivorousness and musical gentrification in order to create a theoretical framework for mapping the present-day complexity of the cultural-musical landscape.

The Concepts

Social classes and cultural capital: Bourdieu and beyond

Diverse understandings of *cultural capital* have proven highly relevant in the study of how musical taste and aesthetic preferences¹ in general are associated with social classes, societal change, social mobility, and social and cultural inclusion/exclusion processes (Bennett et al. 2009, Prieur and Savage 2011). Bourdieu's ([1986] 2011) notion of cultural capital differentiates between three forms, and can be found respectively

in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods ... and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification ... in the case of educational qualifications (82).

Through these different forms, individual agents, specific cultural artefacts, and institutions form a circuit of cultural capital (Savage et al. 2005). The term *capital* highlights that culture may be seen as a form of property that gains value when it is 'exchanged' or 'converted' into other forms of capital, for example social or economic ones (Faber et al. 2012). Bourdieu ([1986] 2011) initially presented the term cultural capital in order to explain "the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes" (82), and pointed out how certain cultural objects and practices are appreciated by the educational system as certified forms of cultural competencies. In rewarding and recognising particular forms of cultural goods and long-lasting cultural dispositions in relation to academic success,

schools also contribute to the reproduction of patterns of social differentiation by “sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital” (83).

The concept of cultural capital in its embodied forms points to *habitus* as a system of perception and appreciation of socially situated practices.² A person’s habitus is “acquired ... quite unconsciously” and “always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition,” such as social class (Bourdieu [1986] 2011, 84). Furthermore, habitus operates in the encounter between the system of dispositions and the system of positions (Faber et al. 2012), and it “thus implies a ‘sense of one’s place’ but also a ‘sense of the other’s place’” (Bourdieu 1990, 131). Bourdieu exemplifies that we may say of a piece of clothing, a piece of furniture, or a book: “that looks petty-bourgeois’, ‘that looks yuppie’, or ‘that looks intellectual’” (113). He further elaborates: “All of this is exactly encapsulated in the expression ‘that looks’ ... which serves to locate a position in social space through a stance taken in symbolic space” (113). This social space of lifestyles unfolds hierarchies of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, and provides an arena for the subtle work of positioning and of making distinctions between dominated and dominating tastes. Hence, it is also a space for maintaining patterns of social inequality. Since it is the privileged classes’ activities and modes of cultural participation that are appreciated as ‘good’ and legitimate, these are also the ones that are institutionalised and given attention within the educational system.

Bourdieu believes that classes are groups of people located at the same place in social space. However, they do not necessarily have a subjective experience of belonging to the same class. What distinguishes classes, then, is a variety of differences in the distribution of material goods and cultural resources and preferences. Scandinavian sociologists Faber, Prieur, Rosenlund, and Skjøtt-Larsen (2012, 60) claim that class is expressed through a variety of everyday experiences, such as emotions and feelings, as aesthetic and moral boundary issues with other socio-cultural groups, and as negative rather than positive identifications. They call this phenomenon dis-identification, which represents active dissociation and distaste, and as such, relates to Bourdieu’s (1984) original notion of taste as perhaps

“first and foremost distastes, disgust ... or visceral intolerance of the taste of others” (56). In Faber et al.’s (2012) study of ‘the hidden class society’ in the Danish city of Aalborg, the researchers found that the privileged middle- and upper-class inhabitants acted on a completely different level, culturally speaking, than the less privileged, and the former also actively denied the legitimacy of other social groups’ culture. As such, they strongly rejected lower-class cultural expressions, often for no other reason than for being precisely that. One example, taken from the field of music, was their intense distaste for so-called dance band music (146). This finding of the privileged group’s active positioning and making of distinctions in relation to certain cultural objects echoes Bourdieu’s (1984) assumption of taste as a typically bourgeois phenomenon since it in some ways implies a sense of freedom of choice in lifestyles.

Layton (2006) argues that social class, expressed through emotions and feelings, attains its embodied manifestation in the discomfort one experiences when entering social practices that are outside of one’s own class or habitus range. She exemplifies this by describing her own anxious feelings of ‘stepping out of place’ when she, originating from the lower classes, enters upper-class stores. Recognising this discomfort as “internalized class relations [that] produce splits between what is proper to one’s class identity and what is not” (107) she also coins the term ‘the normative unconscious’ in aiming to theoretically capture the individual-social processes that are supposed to help us stay comfortable and avoid putting us at risk, habitus-wise.

As reminded above, class is primarily expressed indirectly by way of judgments and categorisations that are seemingly not about class at all. Consequently, class may also be expressed as intersections between multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations, including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, generation, age, ability, and other axes of personal and cultural identity, which are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. In Skeggs’ (2004) study of under-privileged women in the UK this is demonstrated by the author showing the effect of bodily demarcation—

in other words, how value can be read into these women's bodies and how class is known and experienced in particular ways from a female-gendered position and in the form of gendered cultural capital. The notion of *intersectionality*, first highlighted by Crenshaw (1991), thus represents an important contribution from feminist sociology. Furthermore, the understanding that class intersects with other modalities when it comes to aesthetic judgment and taste is strengthened by recent empirical research, which shows that, while class may still function as the main predictor of taste, it is closely followed by age, gender, and ethnicity (Bennett et al. 2009).

So, what forms does cultural capital take in contemporary society? As Bennett et al. (2009) point out, based on their wide-ranging cultural sociological study in the UK, the patterns of cultural taste undergo continual development. Also, as Prieur and Savage (2011) remind, even though the legitimate highbrow culture may have changed its content since Bourdieu's first studies in the 1960s, the concept of cultural capital is still significant in the sense that it designates a more relative set of cultural dispositions that need not necessarily "involve a proclivity for 'high' or 'legitimate' culture" (570). To complicate the picture further, highbrow and lowbrow cultural forms can now be detected on the micro(sub)plane, among other things in the complex contemporary or popular music field. Frith (1996) argues that we make sense of and respond to popular music much in the same way as we do with art music. When listening to popular music we make aesthetic evaluations of whether it is good or bad, but we also make use of the musical experience to construct ourselves socially:

What I want to suggest, in other words, is not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities ... but that they only get to know themselves as groups ... through cultural activity, through aesthetic judgement (111).

This social construction and positioning within the popular culture field is what Thornton (1995) aims to capture by introducing the notion of subcultural capital. She claims that little attention has been paid to these in-field distinctive processes, and states that:

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[h]igh culture is generally conceived in terms of aesthetic values, hierarchies and canons, while popular culture is portrayed as a curiously flat folk culture ... consumers of popular culture have been depicted as discerning, with definite likes and dislikes, but these tastes are rarely charted systematically as ranked standards (8).

Based on Thornton's study of social and cultural distinctions in British dance music club culture, she argues that it is possible to observe subspecies of capital operating in the terrain of youth culture and in other less privileged groups, and also that 'hipness' is a high-status form of subcultural capital that can be converted into a variety of popular culture occupations. However, subcultural capital is not seen to intersect in any one-to-one way with class, rather it "fuel[s] rebellion against ... the trappings of [the] parental class" (12).

While the notion and understandings of cultural capital and its relation to social class have been greatly expanded since Bourdieu ([1986] 2011) first coined the term, there is also some evidence, hinted at above, to suggest that the oppositions between high and low culture are diminishing or have ceased to exist (see e.g., Purhonen et al. 2010). In the following we will pursue this line of thought by elaborating on the concept of *cultural omnivorousness*.

Cultural omnivorousness (and its complications)

In Bourdieu's theoretical landscape the line of division demarcating the forms of cultural capital associated with the dominating and the dominated classes respectively, most often follows the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow forms of culture. Yet, some post-Bourdieuian studies investigate the cultural configuration of classes through exploring the access to and utilisation of a broad cultural variety as the new hegemonic form. Interestingly, the seeds of such an understanding can, in fact, be found in Bourdieu's (1984) own writings, in which he emphasises that the way the cosmopolitan bourgeois inhabit the world is characterised by ease and effortlessness, and that an element of play and a certain cultural flexibility are required in order to legitimately participate in the upper-class games of culture. Comparing such activities to children's games, he writes:

To be able to play the games of culture with the playful seriousness which Plato demanded, a seriousness without the ‘spirit of seriousness’, one has to belong to the ranks of those who have been able, not necessarily to make their whole existence a sort of children’s game, as artists do, but at least to maintain for a long time, sometimes a whole lifetime, a child’s relation to the world (54).

Still, while Bourdieu’s dominant-class informants seemed to orchestrate their cultural games mainly through consumption of and participation in various types of highbrow artworks and events, the subsequent research of, for example, Peterson and Kern (1996) suggests that other and more elaborate forms of cultural omnivorousness have become not just legitimate but have, in fact, become a necessity if dominance is to be upheld.

In the 1990s, Peterson and his collaborators published a series of articles based on two comparable surveys conducted among US citizens in 1982 and 1992 and focusing on their consumption of and likings for various kinds of art (see e.g., Peterson 1992, Peterson and Kern 1996, Peterson and Simkus 1992). Paying special attention to the findings concerning music, Peterson and Kern (1996) detected a pattern showing that the participants categorised as ‘highbrows’—that is, “as liking both classical music and opera” (900) and attending performances of, for example, plays, ballet, and classical music—had increased their likings for lowbrow and middlebrow musical genres significantly from 1982 to 1992. Furthermore, in the 1992 survey the highbrow participants’ pattern of musical consumption and preferences was clearly broader and more multifaceted than it was for any of the other respondents. Consequently, the authors argued that openness to diversity was beginning to replace exclusive preferences for high culture as a means of class distinction. In other words, the ‘univore snobs’ that can be found, for example, among Bourdieu’s (1984) bourgeois informants did no longer exist, or at least, they were a dying breed. Instead, the cultural omnivores were the new representatives of the legitimate middle-to-upper-class taste, which also seemed to align well with the late or postmodern cultural formations that encouraged the aptitude to sample, mix, and match cultural forms. Distinction, however, remained, but the strategies for

achieving it seemed to be changing. In recognising the demarcation line of distinction as shifting from the highbrow/lowbrow taste towards the univore/omnivore differentiation, Peterson and Kern (1996) write, with clear references to Bourdieu:

Dominant status groups have regularly defined popular culture in ways that fit their own interests and have worked to render harmless subordinate status-group cultures ... [o]ne recurrent strategy is to define popular culture as brutish and something to be suppressed or avoided ... another is to gentrify elements of popular culture and incorporate them into the dominant status-group culture ... [o]ur data suggest a major shift from the former strategy to the latter strategy of status group politics (906).

Even though Peterson and Kern's theories have been criticised, among other things because the cultural univore appears to be a category which is close to impossible to locate empirically (see e.g., Purhonen et al. 2010), the dominant-class tendency towards cultural omnivorousness is still valid, and similar patterns can be detected among consumers of culture also in the Scandinavian countries (Danielsen 2006, Karlsen 2007). However, in a comprehensive, Bourdieu-inspired study of the organisation of cultural practices in the UK, Bennett et al. (2009) largely complicate the picture that knowing about and participating in a wide repertoire of cultural practices itself represents the new badge of distinction. While acknowledging that music is the most "divided, contentious" (75), and contested of all the cultural fields they explore, and that the area of contemporary popular music is especially vivid in terms of distinctive negotiations, they also point towards empirical evidence that refines the idea of cultural omnivorousness and its function and significance in terms of class and maintenance of dominance and power. First of all, their research shows that, although "many people range across genres" (92), there are still certain genre boundaries that cannot easily be transgressed. In their material, heavy metal and country music appear as relatively stigmatised forms that many people, although otherwise open in their musical tastes, intensely dislike. Second, while musical omnivores certainly can be found, unlike in Peterson and Kern's (1996) works, "the most omnivorous clusters do not appear to be especially composed of the well-

educated middle classes” (Bennett et al. 2009, 82). Rather, the demographic variable that divides the different levels of omnivorousness seems to be age, more so than class, younger respondents reporting to like more musical genres than older participants. Third, the omnivores might not be as voracious as thought at first sight, but concentrate their patterns of taste around “cognate musical forms” (77) such as opera, classical music, and jazz. Fourth, a preference for classical music still seems to be strongly linked to a membership in the elite groups of society. In other words, the distinctive power of this genre remains, but the way it is played out, socially, is now slightly altered. The elite members surveyed and interviewed are found to be “clearly steeped in classical music” (92), which places them in direct opposition to working-class participants. While classical music is liked across a wide range of social positions, for most people it mainly represents “a respectable background” (92) and not a genre one is strongly interested in. However, for members of the dominant classes who attend classical music events, especially the opera, this provides cultural respectability and an arena for making important “connections to other worlds” (92), which is one of the reasons this genre is still perceived as imbued with a form of objective cultural capital “which can be converted into social capital” (93). Furthermore, the elite group members also exhibit clear omnivorous tendencies in their musical tastes. Still, what above all differentiates them from the other participants is that their musical interests, regardless of genre, are expressed through a certain knowledgeable and educated “limited enthusiasm” (93) rather than through passionate connoisseurship.

In contemporary society, the phenomenon of cultural omnivorousness now seems to belong, in slightly different ways, to a wide range of cultural consumers across social hierarchies. As such, it is also a characteristic of the elite-group cultural taste. Yet, it may no longer matter so much *what* you consume, in the sense that the consumption does not need to be based on cultural exclusivity in order to be positively distinctive. Nonetheless, it is still of great importance *how* you go about exercising your consumption. In this sense, little has changed from Bourdieu’s (1984) French bourgeois in the late 1960s to Bennett et al.’s (2009) elite group members 40

years later; it is still the slightly playful but disinterested intellectual and intertextual approach to music that constitutes the appropriate dominant-class mode of musical consumption, although now across a wider range of styles and genres than ever before.

(Musical) gentrification: When the already affluent take possession

Glass (1963) was the first to employ the term ‘gentrification’ for academic purposes when she described how middle-class residents began to settle in low-income and working-class areas in London, thus raising both the standard and the status of the properties and the neighbourhood, while, at the same time, many of the original residents were forced to move out: “Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed” (xviii). The term originates from the English word ‘gentry’, which in turn derives from the Old French *genterise* which denotes people of noble birth. However, when utilised in colloquial language and political discourse today, gentrification tends to mean urban renewal, which may involve mainly positive associations such as the stabilisation of declining areas, increased property values, reduced vacancy rates, increased social mix, encouragement and improved viability of further development, as well as rehabilitation of property both with and without state sponsorship (Atkinson and Bridge 2005, 5). In this sense gentrification seems to be synonymous with the revitalisation of a community. However, we must bear in mind that gentrification is also a process by which higher-income households tend to displace lower-income residents of a neighbourhood, thereby changing the specific nature of the local community. For this reason several scholars of urban geography and planning underscore that it is crucial not to omit or forget that displacement is at the core of gentrification (Marcuse 1985). In fact, several different types of displacement, abandonment, or marginalisation can be identified, such as: physical displacement—when one is directly forced by the new owners to leave; economic displacement—when renting or buying property becomes unaffordable; exclusionary displacement

or abandonment—when the total number of homes is reduced because smaller flats are merged into larger units; and cultural marginalisation or displacement—when one feels alienated and ‘out of one’s place’ in an altered community or neighbourhood that once was familiar. Hence, just as the above-discussed concept of omnivorousness can be understood as being both inclusive and exclusive, gentrification also comprises attractive as well as repellent features.

In the ongoing research project from which this article emanates (see below), the concept of *musical gentrification* is tentatively applied, which involves a symbolic transfer from the field of urban studies to that of the cultural and sociological study of music. The metaphor thus serves to illustrate and examine similar tendencies to the above in various socio-cultural fields of music, where musics that originally hold lower social, cultural, and aesthetic status become objects of interest and investment from cultural operators who possess higher status, among other things through the ubiquitous processes of cultural omnivorousness described above. The gentrification occurs in different areas. One example is when vernacular and popular musics are invaded by artists, educators, and researchers, with aestheticisation, institutionalisation, and academicisation as results. As part of this process, what characterises the original musical traditions and cultures may be disturbed, and some of the social and cultural ties to the musical cultures in question can be weakened or even broken for some of the initial participants. In this, there exists, it seems, intimate relations between musical gentrification and cultural omnivorousness, in that gentrification seems to provide necessary arenas or social fields for omnivorousness to be exercised according to the need to accumulate and exchange cultural capital in new, differentiated, yet distinguished ways. Moreover, in relation to one of sociology’s fundamental dichotomies—that of the tensions between the agentic and the structural levels—the two concepts of omnivorousness and gentrification would generally be placed on each side. However, in line with Bourdieusian theory, these two aspects are always interlinked and should be understood through their mutual relations. Even so, musical gentrification might to a greater extent allow a focus on the institutional and structural aspects of the complex

and contingent processes of social and cultural change in the fields of music and music education, while cultural omnivorousness focuses the attention on how individuals and groups operate within hierarchies of taste and cultural preferences. Thus, the former notion would typically add more to the macro analyses, while the latter indicates a more micro-oriented analytic level. Eventually, it should be noted that when Bourdieu applies the two dimensions of capital volume (high/low) and capital composition (economic/cultural) in order to make the connections between social positions and life-styles visible within the spatial framework of the diagrams of *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984, 122f), there is also a third axis implied, namely a “time-dimension referring to trajectories: the social agents’ history of stability or mobility related to the system of social positions” (Prieur and Savage 2011, 572). In such a view, the notion of musical gentrification—its mobile and processual dispositions taken into account—would seem suitable for scholars who wish to explore and highlight the historical dimensions of social differentiation.

On these grounds, and in the given theoretical context, we refer to musical gentrification as complex processes with both inclusionary and exclusionary outcomes, by which musics, musical practices, and musical cultures of relatively lower status are made to be objects of acquisition by subjects who inhabit higher or more powerful positions. As with the examples borrowed from urban geography and described above, these processes strongly contribute to changing the characteristics of particular musical communities as well as the musics, practices, and cultures that are subjected to gentrification.

In recent Norwegian and Nordic context we believe to have found several telling examples of musical gentrification. A number of Scandinavian researchers have described how, since the 1970s, higher music education has increasingly expanded, in the sense that musical genres that previously had no place and significance in music education have gradually been included in education programmes (Christophersen 2009, Karlsen 2010, Nielsen 2010, Olsson 1993, Tønsberg 2007, 2013). Largely, this concerns musical genres that traditionally have held lower status than classical music—the dominant genre since music education

became part of modern higher education—for example, different forms of folk and global music, jazz, and a variety of popular music genres. Internationally, we find it interesting to observe that, in addition to new musics, there has also been an extension of ways to learn, teach, and practise music, as attempts have been made, since the turn of the millennium, to include informal learning—inspired by popular music—in addition to formal learning (Folkestad 2006, Green 2001, 2006, 2008). The above tendencies appear, on the one hand, to imply positive expansions of the music programmes' contents, methods, and variety. Furthermore, academicisation and institutionalisation of certain forms of music undoubtedly increase their status in particular contexts. It may also seem that Nordic higher music education with this turn has reached new student groups, now attracting students with other social, cultural, and aesthetic backgrounds than have so far been typical. However, the inclusive effects of musical gentrification may, on the other hand, be mirrored by some opposite tendencies. An obvious question to ask when something is included is whether something else has been excluded: what kinds of folk music, jazz, and popular music are now part of higher music education, and what genres are omitted? Although popular music seems to have gained substantial space in recent music education, in the above material by Bennett et al. (2009) genres such as heavy metal and country music also appear as relatively reviled among otherwise omnivorous informants. This seems to be the case in higher music education as well where such genres are largely absent, along with Scandinavian dance band music, which represents a locally prevalent—though still despised—musical culture. In other words, and not surprisingly, there is congruence between what has low status in society at large and in higher education. However, in addition to the fact that some musics fall within and some outside, it is interesting to observe that the gentrified music to a certain extent is re-shaped in the image of higher music education. In a comprehensive study of the then-innovative Swedish music teacher education programme *SÄMUS*, which was implemented in the 1970s, Olsson (1993) examined how jazz, pop, rock, and folk music were included as radically new elements of content, while the traditional teaching methods, objectives, and assessment criteria

of the classical conservatory tradition still regulated the field of higher music education as such, and thus pushed the new musics into established values, forms, and practices. Despite this, Dyndahl and Nielsen (2014) discuss whether, in the current situation, this hierarchy is now about to be turned upside down, with popular music ideals becoming the new standard and informal learning practices constituting the new norm (see also Karlsen and Väkevä 2012). Indeed, this turn shows that what constitutes the dominant music in contemporary Western society is contestable and under negotiation. According to Bourdieu, at the end of the day economic capital is more important than cultural capital, and within the music industry popular music is by far the most successful and profitable product. Could it therefore be that popular music now possesses the highest status and thereby contributes to the gentrification of other musical genres, including classical music? Conversely, Bennett et al. (2009) find, as shown above, that a preference for classical music is still an important marker for the elite groups of society. In music education, however, some researchers seem to suggest that, for now, it is classical music that is marginalised (see e.g., Jorgensen 2003, Nielsen 2010). Theoretically, it may be difficult to determine whether such a phenomenon implies that there has been a shift in what is dominant and what is dominated culture, or whether there exists a reverse process of gentrification. In semi-academic and popular jargon, *ghettofication* denotes the opposite of gentrification, meaning the creation of deteriorated properties and areas caused by lower-income people slowly taking over and moving into middle-class and affluent neighbourhoods resulting in the flight of the former inhabitants. When students of lower classes attend higher music education, for reasons mentioned above, will they cause a devaluation of the educational status and eventually contribute to its 'ghettofication'? This is one of many questions music educators and music education researchers have been reluctant to ask, but which may still be implicated in discussions about prerequisites and eligibility requirements, about aesthetic and cultural breadth and depth, about *Bildung*, about evaluation standards, and the like. Here too, issues pertaining to class are likely to be expressed and discussed in indirect ways.

Another example of an ongoing musical gentrification process is that in Norway, the Ministry of Culture has, since the 1990s, decided to provide substantial financial support to selected music festivals that are considered to be the nation's leaders in their fields. Festivals with so-called 'national hub status' are then expected to be of assistance to other festivals in the same field, supplying festival management competence. In 2004 there were only four such festivals, two of classical music, one disseminating church music, and one international jazz festival. However, during the period of 2008-2012, there has been an expansion of eight new festivals, including one additional one in the field of classical music, plus festivals covering contemporary music, folk music, blues, rock, multicultural musics, as well as Sami and other indigenous people's musics and cultures respectively. Eventually, one country music festival received its hub status in 2011. This latest addition to the list was also the most controversial one. The discussion preceding the appointment triggered a debate about what criteria were needed to achieve the hub festival status in country music (see also Dyndahl 2013). A few cultural journalists from some of Norway's leading newspapers led the way in the debate, claiming that neither the organisers nor the audience of the proposed festival were qualified when it came to distinguishing between 'quality' country music and what was characterised as hybrids between commercial country and western and Scandinavian dance band music. Seeing themselves as trustees of the 'authentic' definition of country music, those gatekeepers could also be regarded as representing the well-educated and culturally affluent middle-class listeners' proper mode of appreciation, marching into the formerly low-status music culture, marginalising, displacing, or abandoning the original, less culturally affluent residents of the country music festival in order to gentrify the most desirable parts of this culture for their own cultural-capital accumulation purposes. These issues are subject to further development and exploration in the research project presented below, but so far we believe they indicate how a class-specific way of exercising cultural dis-identification often revolves around what might be estimated as legitimate, hegemonic definitions of the gentrified music, which seemingly invoke its essential or authentic meaning and

function directly, while the 'native' perceptions of what is at stake are often depreciated as less developed or dismissed as completely invalid.

Our review of the concepts central to the theoretical framework presented above now leads to a section in which we will discuss their possible relevance for music education research, both with regard to areas of application that are about to be realised on specific terms and those still uninvestigated and open for exploration.

The Applications

Musical gentrification and socio-cultural diversities: The research project

Musical gentrification and socio-cultural diversities is a four-year research project, funded by The Research Council of Norway, which involves four senior researchers from Hedmark University College and the Norwegian Academy of Music, one PhD candidate and a post-doctoral researcher. The project aims to explore and describe how music has made an impact on social dynamics and cultural inclusion/exclusion processes in Norwegian society over the past couple of decades, and it is organised in three interconnected sub-studies, that is in the fields of higher music education and music education research, in relation to a country music festival, and among musicians of immigrant origin. The sub-studies are considered intensity cases in the sense that they cover areas of investigation that are particularly rich in information and clearly exhibit the key concerns of the overall project.

In the first sub-study, the academicisation and institutionalisation of popular music are investigated in order to map the dynamic topography of musical omnivorousness and the gentrification of popular music in the fields of higher music education and music research. As discussed above, the concept of musical gentrification seems to match the recent expansion that can be viewed in Nordic music academies, conservatories, and university schools of music and through which various musical cultures (e.g., jazz, rock, folk music, and so-called 'rhythmic music') have, at least apparently, reached a level of legitimacy and status equal to that of Western classical music. The phenomenon can also be detected through the recent academicisation of popular music within the fields of musicology and

ethnomusicology. However, the particular focus of the first sub-study is to investigate the notion of musical gentrification in the field of *research* on music and music education in Norway through a large-scale survey of all masters and doctoral theses written within these areas (including musicology, ethnomusicology, music education, music therapy, and music performance).

The second sub-study explores musical gentrification, cultural identity, and social mobility through the country music festival in Norway, mentioned above, that received its hub status in 2011. Named *Norsk Country Treff* (the Norwegian country meeting) this festival is located in the small village of Breim, Western Norway, and receives governmental support and funding on a yearly basis. This sub-study looks into how its newly gained status affects the festival, the composition of its audience, and its culture, and it is specifically focused on whether the country music culture is being gentrified and incorporated “into the dominant status-group culture” (Peterson and Kern 1996, 906) and, if so, which cultural elements this gentrification concerns. Key pivot points of cultural identity, such as social class, will thus be examined against an intersectional background, linking its interactions with other cultural categories, such as generation, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, to the situated interpretations. Sub-study two is a three-year PhD project designed as a case study and combining observations of festival events, surveys of members of the festival audience, and interviews with survey participants, representatives of the festival organisers, and local and national cultural politicians, all in order to investigate the different participating groups’ views on the festival’s development. In order to gain a broader understanding, political and media texts will also be included and analysed as part of the data.

In the third sub-study, the professional competence and entrepreneurship that is exercised among upcoming musicians of immigrant origin—within and across intersectional fields of (re)negotiation and (re)mediation of popular music-making and performance—will be examined. While many immigrants and *hyphenated* Norwegians have achieved highly visible positions in popular culture and there seems to be an established pattern that they represent the nation in, for example,

international fora and musical competitions such as the Eurovision Song Contest, students with minority backgrounds are, at the same time, significantly underrepresented in higher arts education (Hofvander Trulsson 2010). This apparent imbalance in huge artistic outlet and at the same time restricted access to arts education prompts a need for investigations into the intersectional conjunctions between nationality, ethnicity, and social class (Karlsen and Westerlund 2010). The third sub-study involves the research efforts of a post-doctoral researcher for two years, starting in 2014.

The sub-studies represent three different angles into the musical omnivorousness and gentrification real-world and enacted problematics. As such, the studies will hopefully enable a further development of the framework and provide valuable and empirically acquired nuances to our understanding of the theoretical concepts.

The framework's wider application for music education research

The theoretical framework outlined in this article allows, as shown above, for exploring how music becomes a central component in negotiations concerning the organisation of social and cultural hierarchies and the distribution of distinctive power. It also opens avenues for researchers to investigate how such socio-musical processes develop and evolve over time, and how they can manifest in diverse ways in relation to different cultural fields and activities as well as various time-space locations. As such, the framework should be considered as one possible application for scholars who wish to conduct inquiries within the borders of sociology of music education, and with an application range that potentially goes far beyond what has hitherto been suggested in this article. As Wright (2010) reminds, when explicating the benefits of employing sociologically oriented frameworks in music education research, “[s]ociological theory is good to think with, it gives us a framework around which to order our investigations and analytical tools with which to dissect what we find. Perhaps most importantly it makes the familiar strange” (1). So, in which areas, other than those already proposed, might ideas about musical omnivorousness and

gentrification contribute to making what is seemingly familiar strange? And for what purposes should these concepts be used to order and dissect what will then appear as the ‘unfamiliar-if-so-constructed’? In the following we will aim to provide the reader with some tentative answers to these questions.

While one of the sub-projects described above is explicitly concerned with gentrification processes in higher music education, another possible field of inquiry might be that of school music, in other words the music lessons that students receive as part of their compulsory education. A much-discussed topic in recent years among music education scholars has been the inclusion of popular music in school and the implementation of appropriate pedagogical frameworks for teaching such music (see e.g., Green 2008). While this has generally been perceived positively, among other things as a way to connect children and youngsters’ “in and out of school” (Lamont et al. 2003) musical realities, only a few researchers (see e.g., Dyndahl and Nielsen 2014, Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2012, Kallio 2014) have been concerned with what types of popular musics have been included, what types have been excluded, for what reasons, and with what kinds of consequences. Digging into this area of investigation and watching it through the proposed lens will allow for some interesting analyses of how, although changing, the music curriculum is still a battlefield for forces that wish to maintain control of the “prevailing cultural values” (Wright and Davies 2010, 35). A second possible strand to follow would be the narrative route of researching, for example, musicians’ or music educators’ musical life-worlds and life stories for the purpose of bringing out individual experiences of social mobility through, potentially, acquisition of omnivore and disinterested attitudes and omission from one’s ‘musical taste repertoire’ of stigmatised genres or styles. This would render knowledge of how musical gentrification operates and is experienced on the micro levels of society. Thirdly, comparative studies can be conducted within the framework, investigating for instance how processes of gentrification connected to one particular style are played out differently in different contexts. A possible extension of the sub-study of the country music festival described above could, for example, address the comparison between similar, style-

related festivals in other national and cultural contexts (say in Germany and in the US) on the shared nodal points of musical gentrification, cultural identity, and social mobility.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, our intention has been to describe and discuss a theoretical framework structured around some presumably important concepts. These concepts are seen in relation to a contemporary and historical Scandinavian context, to a sociological research tradition based on Bourdieu-inspired contributions to social theory and cultural understanding, and to a possible application of these matters to music education research. Despite the fact that many people question whether social class is an important issue or relevant category in today's Nordic countries, our starting point has been that class differences and dynamics still have a major impact. The relationships between classes are based on conflict, as all classes are seeking to either defend or improve their relative positions. The traditional view has been that the dominant class defends itself against the lower classes, for example through education or by developing their own strategies and patterns for aesthetic and cultural preferences. The dominated classes can hence choose to devalue the education, culture, tastes, and lifestyles associated with higher classes without necessarily causing harm to anyone other than themselves (see e.g., Willis 1977). The middle class fights on two fronts: on the one hand, some of its members try to fight their way upwards, which is characterised by an ambitious habitus. On the other hand, they defend themselves against the working class by focusing on education, or by dismissing the *simple* and *bad* tastes of the lower classes. To a certain extent, in today's society, these patterns can still be found, but how exactly class struggle becomes tangible and finds its specific expressions must be constantly examined in dialogue with empirical studies and theoretical analyses. To this end, we have discussed the notions of cultural capital and cultural omnivorousness as they appear and are utilised in several empirical research projects recently undertaken. In addition, we have endeavoured to coin the notion of musical gentrification in order

to underscore that such issues are also at stake in the value- and power-laden fields of music and music education.

Finally, we have attempted to display and argue that the prerequisites for playing the games of culture are not just unevenly and statically distributed class-wise or in fundamental hierarchical ways; the socio-cultural arenas of music and music education are also fields in which these ‘rules’ are constantly being negotiated and practised in earnest. As Bourdieu argues, positions in social space are interconnected with stances taken in symbolic space. However, this occurs most often in indirect ways and without the participants being conscious of it. The Bourdieuan tradition of sociological research aims to identify unrecognised or misrecognised forms of power and domination in society. To succeed with such a disclosure and enlightenment project, Bourdieu believed that it was necessary to develop theoretical concepts that exceed our immediate, everyday knowledge. In this article, we have endeavoured to live by this principle and apply it to phenomena, practices, and structures that operate with music and music education as their sites. In doing so, we hope to have identified at least some of the rules of the present-day cultural games running within and across these fields.

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Notes

¹ In line with the Bourdieu tradition, the term ‘aesthetic’ is used here in a very general sense as ‘artistic’ or ‘related to the arts’. Moreover, the notion of ‘aesthetic preferences’ connotes an individual’s taste as it relates to various forms of arts, but also to everyday objects with aesthetic qualities, such as clothing, furniture, and home decoration.

² For previous discussions of habitus within the context of sociology of music education, see for example Regelski (2004) and Wright and Davies (2010).

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