Social Capital as a Framework in Music Education Research

Anita Prest

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Social Capital as a Framework in Music Education Research

Anita Prest
University of Victoria, Canada

In recent years, an increasing number of researchers have chosen to examine various sociological dimensions of music education (e.g., inclusion, civic engagement) through the lens of social capital. Yet, there has been no systematic discussion of the capacity and limitations of this conceptual framework to shed light on these sociological dimensions. Therefore, one of the main purposes of this paper is to review the growing body of music education literature that refers to social capital in order to understand the ways in which music education researchers have drawn on this conceptual framework in their studies and articles, identify whose conception of social capital they employ, and determine which issues each conception has illuminated. I note critiques of social capital by scholars in other fields and the ways in which some music education researchers have resolved them. Then, I succinctly demonstrate how the findings of my recent doctoral study contribute to the aforementioned body of knowledge, especially in relation to rural music education practice. I conclude by noting how music and music education are uniquely positioned to facilitate social capital and why a social capital conceptual framework that highlights relationships is pertinent to music education practice and research in pluralistic societies.

Keywords: social capital, music education, rural music education

Social capital is a framework that provides the vocabulary and creates a space for music education researchers and others to discuss the personal and collective benefits derived from specific kinds of relationships. Woolcock (2010) suggests that social capital has widespread resonance in research across the disciplines, “because it provides a name for an intuitive, transcultural recognition that we are inherently social beings, and that this has significant consequences for a host of other substantive issues we care about” (471). However, he also stresses that it is important that researchers who use a social capital lens be “as precise as possible in articulating ... [their] particular

definitions, theoretical moorings, and empirical referents” (Woolcock 2010, 471) when communicating their ideas in order that their specific epistemological perspectives, conceptions of social capital, and purposes for viewing the object of their study through this particular lens are transparent to readers.

In keeping with Woolcock’s (2010) recommendation, in this paper, first, I review the small but growing body of studies in which researchers have investigated the sociological dimensions of formal and informal music education using a social capital framework so that I might understand how they have made use of this framework in their studies, identify whose conception of social capital they employ (Bourdieu 1980, 1986, 1996; Coleman 1990; Hanifan 1916, 1920; Putnam 2000), and determine which issues each conception has illuminated. Although some music education researchers also mention other theorists in addition to those cited above, in this paper I focus only on these four theorists because they are either historically important (Hanifan, 1916, 1920) or the most cited—and thus influential—scholars to date in developing this conceptual lens (Bourdieu 1980, 1986, 1996; Coleman 1990; Putnam 2000). Given the recent upswing of music education research that focuses on sociological issues via a social capital lens, this analysis is important because it will reveal both the capacity and limitations of this conceptual framework to draw attention to and shed light on sociological factors affecting music education.

Using three databases (EBSCO, ProQuest Theses and Dissertations, and the International Index to Music Periodicals), I completed a search of all texts from 1990–2015 with the keywords “music education” and “social capital” in their abstracts in order to locate all articles, theses, and dissertations. Those papers that mention social capital only in passing or without definition are beyond the scope of this review.

Second, I note and address various critiques of social capital (Fine 2010; Portes 1998; Schafft and Brown 2003), describe the ways in which some music education researchers have attended to them (Coulson 2010; Eastis 1998; Pietersen 2008), and suggest alternatives that move beyond the dichotomies that such critiques highlight. In the final section of this paper, I discuss the ways in which some of the findings of my doctoral study, entitled The Growth and Contributions of Bridging Social Capital to Rural Vitality via School-Community Music Education Partnerships, contribute to our understanding of how a social capital framework might be useful in music education research. I conclude by

noting how music and music education are uniquely positioned to facilitate social capital and why a social capital conceptual framework that highlights relationships is of value to music education practice and research.

**Review of the literature**

Most contemporary social capital theorists agree that, “Social capital is *neither an individual nor a collective property*, but rather a property arising from the interdependence between individuals and between groups in a community” (Franke 2005, 2; italics added). That is, “unlike other forms of capital (e.g., economic, cultural, human, symbolic), social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons. It is lodged *neither in individuals* nor in physical implements of production” (Coleman 1990, 302; italics added). Putnam (1993) also affirms that, “unlike conventional capital, social capital ... is not the private property of those who benefit from it” (4).

Bourdieu (1980, 1986), however, conceives social capital differently from his American contemporaries in that he ascribes a degree of ownership to individuals. Bourdieu (1986) states, “the volume of social capital *possessed by a given agent* ... depends on the size of the network of connections he [sic] can effectively mobilize” (51; italics added). Whereas individuals embody or possess the economic, symbolic, and cultural capital that they derive from the fields of which they are a part, in Bourdieu’s (1986) view, social capital “ownership” is infused with a more conditional and temporary quality. Members of a group are provided with “the backing of the collectivity-owned [social] capital” of that group, a “credential’ which entitles them to credit” (51), but only so long as they actively maintain membership of that group by participating in a “continuous series of exchanges” (52) and avoid embarrassing the group through lapses of behaviour.

In a later publication on France’s elite schools, Bourdieu (1996) elaborated on his conception:

> Individuals have their own shares [of social capital] and all members together have the entire sum ... the capital held individually by an individual agent is increased by capital possessed *by proxy* that depends on the amount of capital held by each of the members of the groups of which that person is a member as well as the integration of these groups (family, corps, etc.). (293)

Thus, social capital—similar to other forms of capital—exists and functions in relation to a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 77). Within a field, one form of

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capital may, with considerable time and effort, be converted to another form. Moreover, the hierarchy among different forms of capital varies from field to field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 74). For example, in one situation, an individual’s social capital may be the most efficacious form of capital, whereas, in another setting, economic capital might be more “valuable.”

Although some sociologists have expressed differing viewpoints as to whether Bourdieu’s conception of social capital uses individuals (Halpern 2005; Portes 2000) or both individuals and groups (Lin 1999) as units of analysis, Bourdieu’s conception certainly sheds light on how individuals might accrue social capital subject to their location in a given field, and regular access to others who hold various forms and “stocks” of capital in their own right.

*The influence of Bourdieu: Social capital in music education—a focus on benefits to individuals*

Given Bourdieu’s (1980, 1986) acknowledgement of social capital accruing—in part—to individuals, his use of individuals as units of analysis to explain class reproduction at a societal level, and his emphasis on the interconnections among various forms of capital, it is no surprise, then, that those music education researchers who draw on his conception of social capital discuss it as a resource accruing to individuals, also noting its relation to economic, cultural, and symbolic capital.

Hampshire and Matthijsse (2010) examined a national community youth choir program in the UK entitled *SingUp!* using a mixed-methods approach. They found that those youth living in poorer neighbourhoods whose friends and families held different musical tastes to those promoted in the *SingUp!* choirs, took greater social risks (e.g., singing classical music) when choosing to participate in the program and, thus, had fewer positive experiences than their middle-class counterparts. Hampshire and Matthijsse’s (2010) findings suggest that such initiatives must take into account and incorporate the values and tastes of the youth who engage in them and those of their social circle in order for the initiatives to enhance their lives.

Kruse (2013) and Lu (2013) both investigated the ways in which immigrant and minority students’ access to and negotiation of post-secondary institutions are enhanced by relationships that they and/or their parents have fostered. Lu (2013) found that Taiwanese-owned community music schools in Flushing, New
York assisted students and their immigrant parents (from all social classes) to access cultural capital via the social contacts and information (e.g., social capital) that the music schools provided, challenging “Bourdieu’s theory that cultural capital is primarily an individual determinant inherited from the family” (305). Kruse (2013) conducted a single case study of a third-generation Chicana university music student and found that “immigrant students, regardless of generation, may require additional bridging [social capital] support” when applying to post-secondary music programs (36). The findings of both studies concur that non-familial relations via music assist youth in accessing and negotiating post-secondary education.

Both Cloonan (2004) and Coulson (2010) have identified the ways in which musicians access employment opportunities, in Scotland and northeastern England respectively, and how these opportunities might inform music education. Cloonan determined that employment training programs that focus on lifelong learning and human capital development are “successful only when [they manage] to move beyond that narrow base to embrace social and (sub)cultural capital” (40). Youth who completed the employment training considered the networks and relationships that they had developed with the help of the program’s coaches as important to their employability as the opportunity to hone their musical skills. Meanwhile, Coulson (2010) discovered that, “connections between class background, early music experience and formal education are more tenuous and complex than in Bourdieu’s analysis” (262). In her view, there is value in school music educators “exposing young children to as wide a range of instruments and choice of music-making opportunities as possible” (263) so that more youth stay involved in music learning (255).

Russell (2006), a university music teacher educator teaching temporarily in Nunavut, Canada, discusses how she facilitated culturally relevant music education by encouraging her Inuit pre-service elementary teachers to tap into their social and cultural capital—derived from their relationships with extended family members—when preparing lesson plans for their music classes. Last, Lee (2010) demonstrates how an African drum master in Hong Kong, through his superior performance skills (or cultural capital) accrues other forms of capital (e.g., symbolic, social, and economic) as he persuades other percussionists to extend their knowledge and participate in a new style of drumming.
The figure below summarizes the studies of those music education researchers who have employed Bourdieu’s conception of social capital to examine their topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Finding or Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloonan</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Study: Young musicians in employment programs find the social relationships they develop via the program as helpful in finding employment as the musical skills they acquire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coulson</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Study: The development of young musicians’ cultural and social capital is less contingent on family background (in northern U.K. in the 21st century) than Bourdieu’s analysis suggests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire and Matthijsse</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Study: Community arts programming that seeks to foster social capital among youth must take into account their musical preferences for it to be effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kruse</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Study: University students with immigrant and minority backgrounds may require additional bridging supports to gain entry to and graduate from universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Study: African drum master’s cultural capital is converted to social, symbolic, and economic capital, while shifting other percussionists’ habitus in a Hong Kong community music setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Study: Community music schools offer immigrant parents and students access to human capital via the social and cultural capital they foster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Study: Crucial to the creation of culturally relevant music classes is the opportunity for Inuit pre-service elementary teachers to draw on their social &amp; cultural capital.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. Studies by Music Education Researchers Who Have Employed Bourdieu’s Conception of Social Capital to Examine Their Topic*

The influence of Coleman: Social capital in music education – a focus on benefits to individuals and—possibly—collectivities

Coleman’s (1990) conception of social capital differs from Bourdieu’s in several ways. In his view, “social capital is not the private property of any of the persons who benefit from it” (315). Whereas for Bourdieu (1980, 1986), individuals derive
“credit” from their families and/or the exclusive groups to which they belong, for Coleman (1990), individuals also actively create their own relations with others and obtain “credit” by doing something for those people, who, in turn, reciprocate due to locally developed social norms and obligations (306). As well, Coleman (1990) held that people function as rational actors at all times. By contrast, Bourdieu (1984) was fundamentally opposed to rational choice theory because he believed people used “practical logic,” constantly negotiating between their socially learned dispositions or habitus and the particular context or field in which they find themselves, rather than exercising rational choice when making decisions.

Lastly, Coleman (1990) maintained that social capital sometimes benefits larger groups, especially when the social norm “that one should forgo self-interest to act in the interests of the collectivity ... leads persons to work for the public good” (311). As we shall see shortly, it is in this regard that Coleman’s (1990) conception anticipates Putnam’s (1993, 2000) interest in the ways that social capital might contribute to participatory democracy and civil engagement, potentially enriching societies while simultaneously benefiting individuals’ well-being (Helliwell and Putnam 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theorist</th>
<th>Location of social capital</th>
<th>Derived from</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourdieu</td>
<td>Individual by way of family/group</td>
<td>Familial and non-familial</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>Individual &amp; family/group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleman</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Familial and non-familial</td>
<td>Deliberate (Rational Actor)</td>
<td>Individual &amp; possibly collective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Two Theorists’ Conceptions of Social Capital: A Comparison of Key Elements

Brimhall’s (2014) literature review focuses on identifying those “teacher characteristics that promote social capital in students, thereby improving their ability to succeed [e.g., procurement of a career-aimed or a prestigious occupation] in society” (1). She found that those teachers who are musically knowledgeable, reflect regularly, and have a positive rapport (and thus successfully communicate) with their students, effectively promote social capital in their students. Her paper is unique among those I reviewed that cite Coleman (1990), in that it places emphasis on Coleman (1990) and Durkheim’s (1895/1982)
understanding of norms as primarily sanctions and constraints. Unlike Coleman (1990), however, she considers social capital an individual resource. For Brimhall (2014), social capital “suggests a construct for developing teacher-training curriculum that addresses current needs such as greater networking, understanding of cultures, and music participation that extends beyond school” (5) in order that secondary music students develop those networks that will help them to procure prestigious occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Main Finding or Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brimhall</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Literature review: Teachers who promote social capital in students (thereby improving students’ ability to succeed) are musically knowledgeable, have a positive rapport, communicative with students, and reflective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Eastis</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Study: Musical ensembles’ structures influence the quantity, quality, and forms of social capital that are fostered from group interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Langston</td>
<td>2009, 2011</td>
<td>Study: Fellowship plays a role in the generation of social capital in a community choir. Community choirs may foster social capital that benefits whole communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Langston and</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Study: Parent/staff music ensemble fostered social capital that enabled teachers to take horizontal leadership roles and resolve issues in their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Luebke</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Study: Parent/staff music ensemble fostered social capital that enabled teachers to take horizontal leadership roles and resolve issues in their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Jones and</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Position paper: Social capital should be a deliberate goal of formal and informal music education. Curriculum and pedagogy must be based on musical ecology of the locality so that students engage in lifelong music making, “engage positively in the world, and strengthen individuals and communities” (121).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

* Indicates those researchers who refer to at least two conceptions of social capital in their studies

Figure 3. Studies by Music Education Researchers Who Have Employed Coleman’s Conception of Social Capital to Examine Their Topic

The influence of Putnam and Hanifan: Social capital in music education – a focus on benefits to collectivities (including the individuals that comprise them)

Putnam (2000) defines social capital as “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (19). In this model, social capital enhances civic engagement, and the norms and trust developed by networks—rather than the networks themselves—produce it. He states, “social capital can ... be simultaneously a ‘private good’ and a ‘public good’” (5). Reciprocity may be specific (two individuals who do each other a favour) or generalized, in other words, “I’ll do this for you without expecting anything specific back from you, in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road” (5–6). Putnam (2000) has popularized Gittell and Vidal’s (1998) notions of bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive) forms of social capital and notes the importance of bridging social capital networks because they “encompass people across diverse social cleavages” (22). Like Coleman (1990), Putnam (2000) considers social capital a by-product of social activity, rather than its end goal. Much of Putnam’s own work (1993, 2000) has investigated the role of social capital in enhancing civic engagement at regional and national levels.

Putnam (2000) makes reference to Lyda Hanifan (1916, 1920), a state supervisor of rural schools in West Virginia who, influenced by Dewey’s educational philosophy, promoted schools as sites for social centers that facilitated community engagement through shared activities. Hanifan (1916) defined social capital as “that in life which tends to make these tangible substances [real estate, personal property, and cash] count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, goodwill,2 fellowship, mutual sympathy3 and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical center is the school” (130; italics added).

Thus, for Putnam (2000) and Hanifan (1916, 1920), groups, associations, and other social hubs are sites for social capital creation, whether through trust and reciprocity (Putnam), or sympathy, goodwill, and fellowship (Hanifan). It makes sense, then, that music education researchers who reference Putnam and/or Hanifan in their studies have examined how, and to what extent, musical groups have fostered trust and/or fellowship among members, thus enhancing social capital. They have identified social capital as an important outcome of music participation for the individual members of New Horizons bands for seniors

(Dabback 2008), drum-corps (Zdzinski 2004), community choirs (Langston 2009, 2011; Langston and Barrett 2008), and community bands (Jones 2010). For example, Zdzinski (2004) determined that “drum corps alumni found the social aspects of participation to be the most interesting, enjoyable, yet frustrating aspect of their corps experience” and noted that “the musical, social, and personal benefits of participation cited by the drum corps alumni are similar to results of studies of choral and band participants, both for public school and adult populations” (55).

In keeping with Putnam’s (2000) and Hanifan’s (1916) emphasis on the benefits of social interactions for communities, some of these same researchers have also studied the broader implications of fostering social capital in music education by examining “the capacity of groups and organizations to use the contribution of individual members to achieve collective benefits” (Franke 2005, 12, italics added). For example, Dabback (2008) determined that as trust grew among Rochester New Horizons Band members, it facilitated “further interactions that benefit both individuals and the program” (103). Langston (2011) sought to understand how social capital manifested itself in a community choir by examining participants’ “interactions within the community choir as individuals and the interactions of the community choir with community members and other community groups” (168). For Langston (2011), Hanifan’s (1916) notion of fellowship, or “that feeling of trust, camaraderie, togetherness, friendship, warmth, support, and deep appreciation of the feelings and needs of members” (178), is key to understanding how a community choir fosters social capital and group cohesion. He also noted that “choirs and similar organizations are strong community resources, crucial in the creation of social capital that benefits the whole community” (179).

In a different vein, Luebke (2010) observed that the parent/staff steel drum ensemble in an ethnically diverse elementary school in the Western United States fostered “social connections across the school/community divide and for the staff, better integrate[d] their lives at work with interests outside of work” (73). In her view, the social capital created in the parent/staff music ensemble facilitated dialogue and relational capacity that “withstood difficult conversations and differences of opinion on many issues” (73), also affording the elementary specialist teachers the opportunity to develop their informal leadership potential, and ultimately benefiting all facets of their school, including music education.
Eastis’ (1998) study of two choral ensembles adds complexity to the examination of social capital facilitated by music groups. She noted that a musical ensemble’s structure influences the quantity, quality, and forms of social capital that are fostered from group interactions. Her examination of two disparate ensembles’ recruitment strategies and modes of interaction reveals that an elite, auditioned university chamber choir fostered bonding social capital among its members, while a large, inclusive community chorus promoted bridging social capital among participants.

Last, with regards to university faculty, Wing (1996) has offered that music education researchers might foster social capital in the university music education community by deliberately reaching out to each other while engaging in research.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dabback</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Study: Individuals within the New Horizons Band and the community at large benefit from the social exchanges derived from the band’s activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Eastis</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Study: Musical ensembles’ structures influence the quantity, quality, and forms of social capital that are fostered from group interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Position paper: Call for music teachers to foster social capital via music engagement in order to nurture student disposition for civic engagement and intercultural understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Jones and Langston</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Position paper: Social capital should be a deliberate goal of formal and informal music education. Curriculum and pedagogy must be based on musical ecology of the locality so that students engage in lifelong music making, “engage positively in the world, and strengthen individuals and communities” (121).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pietersen</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Study: Community music programs contribute to sustainable rural communities in western Australia and may promote social justice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wing** 1996  Position Statement: Call for music education researchers to reach out to each other when conducting research.

**Wright** 2012  Position paper: Call for music teachers to foster social capital via music engagement in order to revive community and effect social transformation.

**Zdzinski** 2004  Study: Social aspects of drum corps participation are the most important for members.

* Indicates those researchers who use at least two conceptions of social capital.

**Figure 4.** Studies by Music Education Researchers Who Have Employed Putnam’s Conception of Social Capital to Examine Their Topic

**The influence of Hanifan (and Dewey): Social capital in music education – a focus on benefits to communities**

Hanifan (1916)—unlike Coleman (1990) and Putnam (2000)—posited that social capital might be nurtured *deliberately* “towards the general improvement of the community well-being” (131). He later explained how this might be achieved in his book entitled *The Community Center* (published by Silver, Burdett and Company in 1920), a practical manual for rural school superintendents and educators teaching poor and rural students. In the manual, he describes the many ways teachers might promote those community activities that contribute to rural life, including intergenerational dramatic, agricultural, musical, and debating clubs. With regards to music, Hanifan (1920) stated, “the power of community singing on community life and its wholesome effects on individuals are well known. If a community sing together, they will more likely work together on any plan of community improvement” (165). In a later chapter, Hanifan (1920) specifically refers to the social capital that facilitates this process:

> The programs suggested under ‘entertainments’ are intended primarily for entertainment or recreation. If skillfully directed, while serving this purpose they will also help to establish a spirit of community social life and neighborliness. In other words, the community will have had an opportunity to accumulate sufficient social capital to begin community building. (181)

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In his book, Hanifan (1920) refers to Dewey several times. Although Dewey did not define social capital in his writings, he used the term in four texts (1900, 1909, 1915, 1934) relating to education and schooling, sympathy, work, and growth (Farr 2004, 2007). For example, in his 1909 address to the National Negro Conference (immediately prior to the formation of the NAACP of which he was a founding member), Dewey spoke of social capital as a positive force linked to human potential, existing in the social realm and held in common, that could be unleashed through education and opportunity (Dewey 1909). Thus, it is evident that both Dewey’s (1900, 1909, 1915, 1934) and Hanifan’s (1916) conceptions of social capital were infused with notions of social justice.

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Figure 6. Studies by Music Education Researchers Who Have Employed Hanifan’s Conception of Social Capital to Examine Their Topic

Interestingly, three researchers (Jones 2010; Pietersen 2008; Wright 2012) who reference only Putnam’s (2000) conception of social capital also indirectly echo Hanifan’s (1920) submission that music education might foster social capital for broader social justice goals beyond the music ensemble. Jones (2010) argues that “music educators and community musicians can and should purposefully foster the development of ... social capital as goals to their musicking projects,” in order that their students may learn the “skills and dispositions for civic engagement and intercultural understanding” that are vital in our era of globalization (292).

In her examination of community music practices in rural Western Australia, Pietersen (2008) notes the significance of community music making with regards to fostering greater equity:

> Not only do such [community music] groups develop musical skills in individuals, they build active and sustainable communities based on mutual respect and trust. Such relationships can empower residents to change power structures where there are social justice issues and remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. (151)

Wright (2012) also promotes the “vital role music education might play in reviving community in contemporary society” leading to “social transformation” (12) through fostering social capital in music ensembles. Jones (2010), Pietersen (2008), and Wright (2012) all urge music educators to foster social capital via music making in order to enact social change in the broader community, presaging some of the findings of my own study.

**Summary**

From this literature review, it is evident that the majority of studies using social capital as a lens to examine sociological factors in music education have involved Community Music learning environments. Only three studies apply to a formal educational setting (Brimhall 2014; Kruse 2013; Luebke 2010). Also, no researcher in any of these papers or dissertations has referenced all four theorists—that is, Bourdieu (1980, 1986, 1996), Coleman (1990), Hanifan (1916, 1920), and Putnam (2000)—in their literature reviews of social capital. Researchers have cited either Bourdieu (1980, 1986, 1996), or one or more of the American theorists. The diagram below illustrates how music education researchers to date have

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linked a particular conception of social capital to a specific unit of analysis (individual, group, or community).

![Conceptions of Social Capital and Corresponding Units of Analysis in Music Education Research to Date](image)

Figure 7. Conceptions of Social Capital and Corresponding Units of Analysis in Music Education Research to Date

In reality, the boundaries between these conceptions are somewhat porous. Thus, the overlapping concentric circles illustrate those ideas held in common by some theorists. For example, although Putnam’s (2000) conception of social capital lends itself to macro-level analysis at a societal level, most of the researchers using his conception studied social capital in the group and/or community context. Additionally, the concentric circles visually demonstrate that social capital at the community level also affects the individuals within those communities. What is less obvious in this diagram—and so brilliantly outlined by Bourdieu—are the ways in which an individual’s social capital enhances and is enhanced by the sum(s) of capital accruing to that person’s group(s), thereby contributing to the reproduction of inequality at the societal level.

Discussion

The preceding social capital overview and literature review reveal substantial differences in how Bourdieu (1980, 1986, 1996), Coleman (1990), Putnam (2000), and Hanifan (1916, 1920) have articulated and inferred the intended purposes and desired ends of social capital. Teasing out the differences among these conceptions and noting the ways in which music education researchers have used these various conceptions of social capital to interpret their findings clarifies the strengths and limitations of each approach. Later in this paper, I will explore the confluence in these theorists’ ideas and how we might arrive at a more holistic conception of social capital, but first, in this section, I note the limitations of each theorist’s perspective.

For example, Bourdieu argues that individuals’ practical logic (derived from the embodied, habitual, and unconscious strategies and capital that they have accumulated in their respective fields) informs their relationships with others. In his view, practical logic ultimately determines (and limits) the choices and opportunities that individuals derive solely from their relationships. Coleman’s conception draws from a rational actor model, whereby individuals always act deliberately and consciously for their personal gain, only inadvertently creating social capital. This conception limits possibilities for altruism. Putnam’s emphasis on the ways in which volunteer efforts at the community level facilitate social capital while also enhancing civic engagement draws attention away from the very structures that might delimit success. Therefore, researchers who draw on a specific conception of social capital may be restricted by the limitations of their chosen theorist’s standpoint unless they recognize and query those positions. For this and other reasons, some economists and sociologists have articulated substantial critiques of social capital as a term and/or concept.

Addressing critiques of social capital

Researchers have expressed concern about 1) the use of an economic term (capital) to describe a social phenomenon (Fine 2007; Navarro 2002; Smith and Kulynych 2002), 2) the redundancy they claim is inherent in the term, as capital is always social because relationships are fundamental to any transaction (Dowling 2008; Fine 2007; Koniordos 2008), 3) its multiple definitions (Portes 1998), and 4) its focus on agency, which “risks obscuring and bypassing more critical analyses of how resources, power, and privilege are embedded within
dynamic, historically developed power structures” (Schafft and Brown 2003, 330).

Last, within the field of music education itself, Schmidt (2008) cautions that we must attend to the contextual factors of our educational practices when considering social and other forms of capital as they pertain to those practices. As Eastis (1998) notes, the structures of some music ensembles promote primarily bonding social capital, which, while helping to forge a tightly knit group, also clearly excludes others. Furthermore, such exclusion via music making may take on even more sinister overtones (Brown and Volgsten 2006; Fast and Pegley 2012; Johnson and Cloonan 2009; O’Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010; Street 2012; Urbain 2008). As Hebert and Kertz-Welzel (2012) point out, “we must also acknowledge that all forms of music can be used for an array of purposes, including even ironic or sarcastic ones” (2). It follows, then that bonding social capital fostered by music and music education might be used deliberately to ostracize individuals or groups, or for other unethical purposes.

These critiques bear consideration. In my view, critiques of social capital offer music education researchers the opportunity to consider how they might improve social capital’s efficacy as a framework when examining the sociological dimensions of music education. I will address each critique in turn, and wherever possible, use the music education literature cited in this paper to illustrate my points.

The term “social capital”

Some researchers have questioned the use of the word capital in social capital in order to express the metaphorical value of relationships (Fine 2007; Navarro 2002; Smith and Kulynych, 2002). Smith and Kulynych (2002) submit that social capital is a term that is consonant with economic imperialism, or “the use of methods and concepts rooted in neoclassical economics to understand a wide range of political and social relations” (152). Their assertion—that in a consumer society focused on the accumulation of all forms of capital, amassing “social capital becomes more important than the ends to which that capital is to be put” (164)—is compelling. However, Bourdieu (1998) argues that in order to challenge authoritatively the prevailing ideas of those in power, one must use their language and ways of knowing:

The only effective way of fighting against national and international technocracy is by confronting it on its own preferred terrain, in particular that of economics,
and putting forward, in place of the abstract and limited knowledge which it regards as enough, a knowledge more respectful of human beings and of the realities which confront them. (27-28)

Dewey used a similar strategy. Farr (2004) explains, “despite criticizing the negative consequences of capitalism, Dewey [also] appropriates its own vocabulary to bring “social” and “capital” together for rhetorical and critical effect” (16). Thus, those music education researchers who use a social capital framework in their studies and employ the term capital rhetorically are able to demonstrate the relational value that music education provides to individuals and communities, and, moreover, that this value informs an infinitely richer conception of the term than the narrower economic view.

Some researchers have stated that the term social capital is redundant, as all forms of capital contain a social element (Dowling 2008; Fine 2007; Koniordos 2008). However, many fields single out the specific social value of relationships stemming from exchanges. For example, this value is clearly delineated in business and accounting practices. Goodwill (e.g., reputation, location, customer and supplier relations) is an intangible but quantifiable asset of a firm, separate from those assets that are tangible, such as property and products. Although, in light of Hanifan’s (1916, 1920) use of the term, one might justifiably consider the quantification of goodwill inappropriate in the context of music education, it is evident that a critique of the concept social capital based solely on redundancy in terminology is misleading.

Multiple definitions

Some theorists suggest that social capital’s multiple definitions may diminish its usefulness as a lens with which to examine a particular issue (Portes 1998). However, in this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate that these multiple definitions, in fact, offer an opportunity to examine the impact of social relationships at various levels of analysis—micro, meso, and macro (Franke 2005; Halpern 2005). I also submit that understanding the geographical and historical contexts in which these varied conceptions were conceived and interpreted may be a first step towards developing and using an informed hybrid configuration. Bourdieu (1999) explains the challenges inherent to importing conceptions from elsewhere:

Many misunderstandings in international communication are a result of the fact that texts do not bring their contexts with them ... The fact that texts circu-
It is in understanding the contextual foundations of differing conceptions of social capital that we then may begin to apply social capital as a conceptual lens deliberately and knowledgably when examining the objects of our studies, also noting which conception—or perhaps informed combination of conceptions—is most suitable to our specific context. As Coulson (2010) has demonstrated, we might also assess which specific aspects of that conception may not be representative of our context.

Acknowledging power and agency

Bourdieu’s (1980, 1986, 1996) conception of social capital facilitated his critical examination of the ways in which both structures and dynamic social relations served to replicate power and class in France, while in the United States, Hanifan (1916, 1920), Coleman (1990), and Putnam (2000) focused on the agentic quality of social relations that promote opportunities for individuals and groups. Critics of social capital have rightly pointed out the tensions that exist between these two approaches, which were conceived in very different contexts.

I propose two ways to move beyond this tension between power and agency when using social capital as a conceptual framework in music education research. These strategies draw on both the unique strengths of each perspective and the confluence among them. One way might be for researchers to acknowledge both power and agency, noting the constraints of educational and social structures—which are determined, in part, by those with a vested interest in their perpetuation—while also envisioning possible actions via music participation that might contribute to change for individuals or groups. As Farr (2004) argues, “criticism must be attended by construction” (15). Such a way forward is evident in some of the studies I reviewed.

For example, Cloonan (2004), Coulson (2010), Kruse (2006), and Lu (2013) all used Bourdieu’s conception of social capital in their studies, noting its connection to human and cultural forms of capital. However, they all found that musicians and students benefited from the social capital they “accrued” from non-familial and non-exclusive relationships, disrupting Bourdieu’s (1980, 1986,
1996) focus on perpetuation of power via family and other ties that foster exclusivity and homogeneity.

Likewise, Eastis (1998), Luebke (2010), and Pietersen (2008) attended to Bourdieu’s (1986) emphasis on context (without referring to him) while employing Putnam’s (2000) notion of bridging social capital existing in and emerging from new relationships forged between diverse people. In this way, they were able to demonstrate the ways in which music engagement in the particular settings they described fostered civic engagement that brought about consensual change in community music, schools, and rural communities.

Interestingly, Putnam (2015) has recently noted the constraints of social structures. His most recent research on how class in contemporary America restricts or enhances youth opportunities for the future reflects his increasing awareness of the limits of agency. In Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis, he argues that working class and poor youth (and their families) have fewer weak and strong ties to provide them with the social, material and informational support that leads to “social mobility, and educational and economic advancement” (208). Compared to sixty years ago, contemporary poor and lower class adolescents in the United States do not have the same degree of “equal opportunity” as wealthier youth. “Like financial and human capital, social capital is distributed unevenly,” he states, and “differences in social connections contribute to the youth opportunity gap” (207). Thus, Putnam’s current conception of social capital acknowledges that class structures limit agency and is more closely aligned with Bourdieu’s emphasis on the role of context and class in determining social capital creation.

A second way forward that also acknowledges the interrelation between power and agency may be the critically pragmatist stance inherent to Dewey’s (1900, 1909, 1915, 1934) and Hanifan’s (1916, 1920) conception of social capital. I submit that a critically pragmatic or Deweyan approach to social capital illuminates the conditions of inequality highlighted by Bourdieu, while also promoting the agentic capacity of humans to foster bridging social capital through inclusive group activities. It supports improved individual well-being through societal change, thus linking the micro-level of analysis to the macro-level. This stance is in accordance with Dewey’s and Bourdieu’s categorical rejection of dualisms (e.g., agency/power, individual/community), which, according to Bourdieu (in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), is one of several viewpoints that he and Dewey held in common (122).4
These suggestions are the result of my extensive reflections on the studies outlined in the literature review and the findings of my doctoral study. In the next section, I give a synopsis of the study and those findings specifically related to social capital, which made evident the relationship between various forms of social capital at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels.

My Study

My study, entitled *The Growth and Contributions of Bridging Social Capital to Rural Vitality via School-Community Music Education Partnerships*, focuses on music education in rural British Columbia, where school music programs are sometimes limited in scope or non-existent. Yet, in the rural community in which I lived and worked for sixteen years, the school-community music education partnership that community members and I organized (a music education festival) brought greater recognition and support to its school music program and positively influenced community vitality.

Over a ten-year period, the festival fostered much goodwill in the community, generating myriad social, cultural, and economic benefits (Prest 2011). My experiences as a festival organizer and participant over this extended period eventually propelled me to study the ways in which goodwill—one of Hanifan’s (1916) social capital indicators—is fostered by school-community music education partnerships and how it contributes to rural vitality and conceptions about the value of music and music education. Scholars have noted “that social capital is higher in smaller settings ... the more extensive interchange that is possible in smaller groups makes it possible to discover unexpected mutuality in the face of difference” (Putnam and Feldstein 2003, 275-276).

For my doctoral research, I sought to examine how those aspects of goodwill, trust, agency, and sympathy among diverse groups of people—in other words, the bridging social capital—that had been generated by my community’s school-community music education partnership, had unfolded in other rural communities that had also developed music education partnerships. In examining the experiences of others in multiple and distinct settings, I would broaden my understanding of the process while also shedding light on the concept of bridging social capital itself.

My main research question was: How and to what extent does the bridging social capital created by a rural school-community music education partnership

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influence community identity, agency, and vitality, and thereby shift community members’ conceptions of the value of music and music education?

Methods
I selected three rural BC communities: Nelson, Powell River, and Qualicum Beach for this multiple case study (Stake 1995, 2006) based on their size (each fewer than 15,000 people), their diverse geographies, histories, and constituent populations, plus their residents’ commonly held commitment to school-community music education partnerships. I sought to understand social capital process; therefore, I used qualitative methods (document analysis, personal interviews, and focus groups) in each community to acquire an understanding of the specific circumstances, dynamics, and structures that influenced social capital growth via school-community music education partnerships and its ensuing contributions.

Findings related to social capital
My research indicates that those who define social capital as an individual resource stemming mostly from familial and elite institutional relationships (Bourdieu 1980, 1986) and those who understand it as an asset existing in a variety of relationships (Coleman 1990; Hanifan 1916; Putnam 2000) are both correct. Bridging social capital was the most significant in effecting changes in community life, but, at the outset of the partnerships, bonding social capital (familial and group ties) was instrumental in opening some doors; also, acquaintances, or weak ties (Granovetter 1973), proved invaluable to partnership organizers in facilitating new ventures. Likewise, linking social capital (mostly vertical relationships to institutions and people higher up the chain of command) proved to be important to project longevity, especially as the partnerships matured.

Reciprocity, trust, goodwill, norms, and sympathy were present in all settings. I also found that reciprocity gives rise to social capital at the collective level only when, in addition to a simple exchange, it entails a sincere recognition of effort (e.g., moving beyond traditional rational actor or habitual behaviour to conscious and deliberate altruism). In keeping with Hanifan’s (1916, 1920) claim, the research findings also suggest that social capital may be effectively cultivated as a deliberate goal, and that fostering bridging social capital via music education...
partnerships may be an important means to actuate social change based on shared values arrived at through public discussion (Sen 2009).

This was most evident in one community, where the school-community music education partnership—a biennial international choral festival—engaged in cultural collaborations with the local First Nation community, over time contributing to closer social, cultural, and political relationships between the rural municipality and the First Nation community (Prest in press). Thus, these findings concur with Jones and Langston’s (2012) assertion that a social capital framework calls attention to “music’s inherently social nature, which can help people engage positively in the world and strengthen individuals and communities” (121). Finally, I found that there may be an inherent structural weakness that works against sustainable social capital when a school-community music education partnership is located in a school district or institution whose primary mandate is not music education and whose changing power brokers may demonstrate differing levels of support for various reasons.

The following dynamic representation of social capital as it functioned in the school-community partnerships I examined illustrates three aspects. First, the foundation of prior relations on which the partnership rests—often familial and other institutionalized group relations (Bourdieu 1980, 1986, 1996)—are crucial. Deliberate (Coleman 1990) and habitual (Bourdieu 1980, 1986, 1996) actions feature in these relationships. Second, bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam 2000), through their ongoing use, sustain the community-oriented (Hanifan 1916, 1920) project (and are, in turn, sustained), also supporting the creation of cultural (musical), and economic capital (see Prest in press for more detail). Third, institutional (or linking) social capital acts as a stabilizer that anchors the dynamic interchange between bonding and bridging social capital, and the partnership. The partnership, which is dependent on positive social interactions, becomes more secure over time as greater amounts of bridging and linking social capital are utilized and as a generalized form of social capital develops, which, in turn, affects social values and builds institutional support.

The model below illustrates how a partnership, like a spinning top, is poised on a foundational surface. Bridging and bonding social capital swirl around the partnership, maintaining its equilibrium. Linking capital further supports the partnership. Without ongoing bridging, bonding, and linking social capital, the partnership falls over on its side and collapses.
This model depicts the ways in which different conceptions of social capital intertwine in real life, which is a messier system than a theoretical construct. It illustrates the importance of attending to different conceptions of social capital so as to take into account the multiple intentions, dimensions, and outcomes of relationships. In visually representing how these various conceptions interact, the model points to how we might move towards a more holistic understanding of social capital.

This graphic also calls attention to the crucial and central role that relationships play in creating and maintaining rural school-community partnerships. This role may be more easily noted and studied in rural settings because, as rural places usually have fewer structural and institutional resources than metropolitan centres, residents must rely on each other. Bourdieu (1992) anticipates this situation by observing that the value of a given form of capital varies from field to field (74). In rural places, where economic, cultural, and human capital in the form of institutional structures, services, and expertise are not as prevalent as in metropolitan areas, social capital may be more abundant and its value heightened. Likewise, in the field of business management, Burt (1997) found that social capital is more valuable to “managers working across significant boundaries within or around the firm” including those who “work at remote plant loca-
tions” (353). Burt’s (1997) finding mirrors the experience of rural music educators who, wishing to provide myriad opportunities for their students, must often consciously reach out, develop, and maintain relationships with individuals and groups at a distance in order to facilitate those endeavours.

Final thoughts

Elliott and Silverman (2015) have recently noted that “interpersonal, empathetic, and ethical relationships are at the core of social capital” (383) and that such values and music education are intricately connected. This is because music and music education, by their very nature and structure, hold the capacity to promote social capital. Music making, similar to relationships, occurs through time and is the result of concerted effort. As many of the studies cited in this paper have indicated, such effort often promotes cooperation and trust among music makers, be they students in formal educational settings, adults in community settings, or an intergenerational hybrid of both.

Moreover, cognitive scientists have discerned that *musicking*, whether singing, playing, dancing, or actively listening, has the capacity to biologically “couple” people’s brains, producing physiologically synchronous effects (Benzon 2001), thus preparing participants physiologically to cooperate (Cross 2009; Freeman 2001; Levitin, 2006; Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Gallese, and Fogassi, 1996). Music making is known to be an important means of fostering empathy (Rabinowitch, Cross, and Burnard 2012; Turino 2008). Such cooperation and empathy via music making may lead to an unleashing of the imagination, enabling us to see from the perspective of others (Bateson, 1972; Dewey and Tufts 1932/2008; Greene 1992). Importantly, Laurence (2008) reminds us that key to fostering empathy that is derived from the physiologically induced “feelings of unity arising during shared musical experience” (20) is an accompanying “framework of consciousness, stated and thoughtful *intent*, and arguably, a keen awareness of the kind of relationships which prevail, or are being established and ... explored” (22, italics added).

Fostering an empathic disposition via musicking for the intended purpose of mutual understanding is certainly beneficial to students in the classroom setting. It is also relevant to music making in community public spaces, which bring together diverse audience members who might otherwise not socialize with one another. Impromptu conversations with strangers, renewed acquaintances, and
friends in public spaces created by music making contribute to the density and quality of social interactions that are significant to collective social capital growth. It is in these public spaces that diverse peoples may begin to have conversations about which values are important to them as a community.

Thus, music educators who carefully plan their music activities are able to draw on their curricular subject’s inherent relational quality in order to support their students, reach out to the communities in which they live, and create a public space through the fostering of empathic musical encounters that may provide a forum for the discussion of common values in a pluralistic society. In this way, music education activities foster social capital that supports both individual students and the greater community. Jones and Langston (2012) affirm that a relational approach to music education should be at the forefront of teachers’ efforts and that music educators should facilitate bridging social capital in their ensembles in order to foster intercultural understanding and civic engagement, necessary skills in an era of internationalization.

School offerings should be created with developing social capital in mind in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. Curriculum should connect students to the musical ecology in which the school is situated … A curriculum can be designed that connects students to musical opportunities that already exist in the community, creates music opportunities within the community, and helps students develop the expertise to organize their own musical experiences. (129–30)

A place-conscious and relational approach to music education that engenders musical knowledge while also fostering bridging relationships within the classroom and the community becomes more relevant to and inclusive of more people. Inclusivity and relevance contribute to the healthy state of school music programs in all geographic settings, but they are fundamental to the continued existence of music education opportunities for rural youth, which are inherently more fragile. Moreover, in fostering inclusivity and relevance within their programs, music educators may engender greater cross-cultural understanding in their particular locations (Prest in press).

Given music and music education’s capacity to foster social capital, both the effects of social capital and the conditions that foreground its manifestation are important phenomena for music education researchers to study. Furthermore, a nuanced and informed social capital framework provides researchers with a relational approach that highlights music education’s relevance to people at individual, community, and societal levels. Last, it is a lens that may be familiar to policy makers, especially those with a broad social science background. Such
familiarity may facilitate their understanding of how music is meaningful in the lives of citizens, both in small communities where infrastructure and resources may be limited, and in cities where issues of inclusion and exclusion may be more complex. Consequently, they and other political actors may more readily give credence to and act on the findings of such research, turning music education’s “special interests” into public knowledge and concern in all geographic settings, including the rural.

About the Author

Dr. Anita Prest is Assistant Professor of Music Education in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Victoria (British Columbia, Canada). Prior to her appointment, Anita taught K-12 music for 20 years in rural and metropolitan settings. Her doctoral research at the University of British Columbia focused on the growth and contributions of bridging social capital to rural vitality via school-community education partnerships. Her current research interests include understanding the ways in which music educators in British Columbia, in conjunction with First Nations and Métis community members, facilitate the integration of local Indigenous knowledge, pedagogy, and cultural practices in music classes, schools, and the broader community. Anita has presented/lectured in Canada, Denmark, Greece, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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Notes

1 For Bourdieu (1985, 1986, 1996), economic capital refers to financial resources; cultural capital refers to education, cultural goods, and disposition; and symbolic capital refers to prestige, reputation, and renown. Becker (1964) defined human capital as educational attainment. For Bourdieu (1996), Becker’s conception does not consider that the ability to study is “also the product of an investment in time and cultural capital” (275). Similar to meritocracy, educational attainment is, in part, the result of a priori factors that have little to do with an individual’s autonomous ability. According to Bourdieu (1996), Becker’s “definition of ‘human capital’ … despite its ‘humanist’ connotations, remains entrenched in economism and disregards the fact that the economic and social returns on academic stock depend on the social capital (also inherited) that may be put to its service” (276). Therefore, Bourdieu (1986, 1996) subsumed educational attainment under the term cultural capital.

2 The notion of goodwill is central to my use of the term social capital in my dissertation (see p. 23).

3 The term empathy did not enter the English lexicon until 1909 and was not used widely for several years. In the 19th and early 20th century, the word sympathy had several meanings, including the more neutral term understanding that we currently ascribe to empathy.

4 Bourdieu (in Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) also pointed out the similarities between his term habitus and the pragmatist notion of habit-taking (122).