



Widening the gap? The challenges for equitable music education in Scotland

ALASTAIR WILSON, KATIE HUNTER and LIO MOSCARDINI

Exposure to and potential to engage in music is now very different for children and young people from more middle-class and affluent backgrounds compared to those from working-class or poor households. Middle-class children and young people have access to opportunities to learn an instrument and engage in performance, predominantly for intrinsic reward and on occasion as the basis of a future career. Children and young people from more working class or poor backgrounds are more likely to be excluded from these opportunities and are less likely to take advantage of opportunities within the wider world of music industries. This research draws on in depth case studies of three local authorities in Scotland to reveal the ways in which local provision for music education is largely being reshaped by economic factors and restraints. Drawing on aspects of critical theory it discusses the ways in which economic-based decisions are interacting with the dominant social and cultural values to influence provision. It makes the argument that in an era of austerity the social and cultural values of the middle class are dominant and effectively increasing inequality in access to music. Children and young people from poor or working class households are increasingly excluded from opportunities to engage with formal music provision.

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Introduction

The idea that access to music education is a worthwhile and valued activity is widely recognised (Črnčec *et al.*, 2006; Hallam, 2010) and is consistent with article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Scotland, there have been persistent recommendations that access to music education should be structured coherently in a way that extends equality of opportunity to all of Scotland's young people (Broad *et al.*, 2003; EIS, 2010; IMS, 2014; Moscardini, 2015; Scottish Government, 2015, 2013; Brennan *et al.*, 2017; Broad *et al.*, 2019). The Scottish Government Instrumental Music Group (IMG) has recognised that music 'contributes greatly to children and young people's mental, social, emotional and physical wellbeing'. A report published in February 2015 (Scottish Government, 2015) announced that among policy makers and teachers 'there is a growing understanding and awareness' around the importance of instrumental music services. This was supported by a Scottish Government commitment of £1m of funding to invest in new instruments for musical tuition in schools. Similarly, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) disseminated a Charter for Instrumental Instruction in 2010 to every Scottish school outlining the value of the instrumental instruction stating that: 'Every school pupil in Scotland should have the opportunity to receive specialist tuition on a musical instrument or in voice as part of their school education' (EIS, 2002). Fulfilling these ambitions, however, is problematic. The 2013 Instrumental Music Group Report (Scottish Government, 2013) identified the limited access to instrumental tuition for children with additional support needs with recommendations to address this. While it is recognised that Instrumental Music Services play a vital role in the musical education of Scotland's children and young people, it is also recognised that this is a service working within strict financial constraints. Most recently, the first recommendation in the What's Going on Now? report (Broad *et al.*, 2019) stated:

Local Authorities should develop common guidance for Instrumental Music Services that reflects an inclusive approach consistent with article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and coherently extends equality of opportunity to all of Scotland's young people within the lifetime of the next Scottish Government.

These ambitions come at a time when Scottish Education is particularly concerned with closing the attainment gap between poor and working-class pupils and those from more middle-class backgrounds. The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) is committed to ‘... achieving equity in educational outcomes, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap’ (Education Scotland, 2020). Music provision does not feature explicitly within this agenda but could arguably be implicit within the focus on ‘... a Scotland where every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed regardless of their background or circumstance’. The SAC has been complemented by the introduction of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Similar to the ‘Pupil Premium’ in England, PEF seeks to give schools additional funding (circa £1k) for each child identified via free school meal and postcode data as being poor. An initial analysis of school spending of PEF funding reveals that schools are using PEF to purchase musical instruments, fund music activities and buy in music specialists to deliver programmes (Scottish Government, 2020). However, in parallel with these developments, re-organisation of music provision in local authorities and schools in Scotland has seen the introduction of fees in some local authorities and the reduction of provision in others. A complex landscape has emerged and the purpose of this paper is to explore some of the ways in which this is impacting on equal access to music provision for all children and young people.

Inequality and access to music education

Historically music provision has emphasised musical competencies based on performance and ability. Green (2014) suggests that social class ideologies of musical value are perpetuated through the education system as social practices are built up around the notion of the ‘greatness’ of classical music. Despite the incorporation of a variety of musical styles in the curriculum, Green further argues that ‘assessment mechanisms have developed to highly reward those who display the most advanced musical abilities’ (p. 7). A recent study in England has shown that young people from middle-class backgrounds are more likely to reach higher levels of musical engagement and academic attainment. Whittaker *et al.* (2019) found that ‘across 2013/14 to 2017/18, at least 60% of A-level music entries each came from schools in postcodes with POLAR ratings of 4 or 5, meaning that those from geographical areas with historic access to Higher Education are much more likely to engage in this qualification. The stability in this trend across this period is also a significant finding (p. v)’. This situation appears to be replicated in Scotland where recent research has revealed very different post school

opportunities between young people from poor or working-class communities and those from more middle-class ones (Broad *et al.*, 2019, p. 114). At an initial level, access to the financial resources to engage in music is crucial. Bates (2012) illustrated how some parents/carers ‘... may not be able to afford musical instruments and accessories, instrument repair and maintenance, performance attire, private lessons, or transportation to and from special events’ (p. 34). However, Bates also asserted the role of cultural practices and social networks as crucial in determining musical opportunities and experiences. This assertion draws on some of the wider theory informing educational inequality and, crucially, the ways in which it is able to operate and perpetuate.

Prominent within these is the concept of ‘capital’ which has evolved over time to encompass different emphasis. The ideas of Putnam, Cole and Bourdieu have been influential and particularly their development to different degrees of the concept of social capital. The work of Bourdieu has established recognition and understanding of cultural capital, social capital and economic capital as key concepts in the maintenance of social class based inequality in education. Central to Bourdieu’s analysis are the ways in which each family is able to transmit to their children ‘... a certain *cultural capital* and a certain *ethos*’ (Bourdieu, 1976, p. 110). For Bourdieu, this process is critical in allowing middle-class families to align with dominant cultural values and, equally for working-class families to become distanced or alienated. Much research within educational sociology has drawn on Bourdieu’s ideas to show how the interaction of social, cultural and economic capitals enables the reproduction of social class inequality.

In an analysis of the contribution of Bourdieu’s ideas to the sociology of music Prior (2013) interrogates the debate that has evolved since Bourdieu stated that ‘... nothing more clearly affirms one’s ‘class’, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 18). This debate is centred around the extent to which Bourdieu’s presentation of a clear relationship between social stratification and music consumption can persist in the age of the music ‘omnivore’. The former is identified as the homology position which ‘... claims that class positions throughout the class hierarchy are accompanied by specified cultural tastes and specialized modes of appreciating them’ (Veenstra, 2015 p. 134). In the latter, the ‘cultural omnivorism thesis contends that elites are (increasingly) characterized by a breadth of cultural tastes of any and all kinds’ (p. 134). Prior argues for the significance of the contribution of Bourdieu’s ideas but also for the need for them to be further developed and modelled. There is not room here to extend this analysis but evidence exists on both sides to problematise (see also

Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007). Different studies have explored these issues empirically in a school context. In an analysis of music education in the United States, Bates (2017) urged for the recognition of such critical theory in the shaping music provision. This was not an academic exercise but a serious claim that ‘... school music tends to marginalize, exploit, repress, and alienate – reifying social beliefs and structures that uphold economic disparities’ (p. 3).

In summary, the benefits for all children and young people of being able to participate in music education in Scotland are undisputed. Recent policy initiatives though have seen considerable reductions in funding to local authorities in parallel with an increased emphasis on reducing inequality in educational attainment. This paper examines the emerging shape of music provision in Scotland in the context of these different policy initiatives. It draws on qualitative evidence drawn from three case studies of local authority areas to explore the ways in which access to music has been impacted on by these changes.¹ In particular, it examines the extent to which the current policy landscape is addressing inequality in opportunity or narrowing it in favour of those from more middle-class backgrounds. How music education is being restructured and the impact on practice clearly has implications for inclusive practice. There is potential for this restructuring to disrupt current processes that produce inequality but equally there is potential for new processes and mechanisms to emerge that maintain if not exaggerate it. The research presented seeks to illuminate some of these emergent processes. With this intent it was underpinned by the following research questions:

- How is music provision organised in each of the case studies?
- What implicit perceptions of the value and role of music education shape this provision?
- How does this impact on equality of opportunity?

Research methodology

The case study element of the project followed the methodological framework for carrying out a scoping study set out by Arksey and O’Malley (2005). It adopted a case study approach (Flyvbjerg, 2011) exploring music provision in three different local authority areas in Scotland. These were selected on the basis of their different local contexts and are summarised in Table 1.

The research was designed over the following phases:

Phase 1: An initial mapping of current provision and practice of music education opportunities for young people under the age of 25 was undertaken across each of the three identified local authorities.

Phase 2: Following the identification of key organisations and individuals through the mapping process, fieldwork was undertaken. This involved: qualitative interviews with key informants, knowledgeable in the extent and nature of current provision. This included pupils, children and young people within each of the specified areas.

Table 1. Summary of case studies

Case study A	<p>This is perceived as a prosperous island community with a strong traditional music scene and a strong music network involving schools, the local arts scene and a newly flourishing private sector. A population of approximately 23,000 is served by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 secondary school• 1 secondary school with a primary and nursery department• 1 school with a secondary, primary and nursery department• 4 junior high schools with secondary, primary and nursery departments• 22 primary schools <p>Currently, this LA charges for instrumental music lessons</p>
Case study B	<p>An urban area of a major city with a largely working-class population and significant areas of poverty. No conspicuous music tradition outside of that established around marching bands. A population of approximately 70,000 people. Single parent households make up 45% of all households with dependent children. Eight out of ten people live within 500 m of vacant or derelict land. Twenty-five per cent of adults are claiming out of work benefits. Thirty-seven per cent of children live in poverty and levels of deprivation are considerably higher than the Scottish average.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 secondary schools• 15 primary schools• 2 ASN primary schools <p>Currently, this LA does not charge for instrumental music lessons</p>
Case study C	<p>A semi-rural community with a large rural area and a central city that is the administrative centre. The overall population is approximately 151,000 with 47,000 of this number living in the city. The central geographical location makes it accessible to visiting arts organisation and the city is served by modern concert hall that houses a diverse range of concerts programmes and community events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 secondary schools• 69 primary schools• 1 ASN straight through school• There are also a number of independent mainstream and special schools in the district <p>Currently, this LA charges for instrumental music lessons</p>

Phase 3: Data largely in the form of interview transcripts were collated and analysed using a thematic approach (Charmaz, 2006). These data were initially coded. In an iterative process of analysis and team discussion, salient themes were identified and discussed through regular meetings of the research team. While the research design on the whole assumed the linear format outlined above, phases 1, 2 and 3 were iterative in their nature, and were revisited when necessary as more information was revealed throughout the process. The study fulfilled the requirements of the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee. All participants gave informed consent, they have been anonymised to ensure that they, their school or local authority cannot be identified.

Key findings from the research

The impact of reduced resources

Changes in the overall amount and allocation of resources have been a key factor in shaping provision in each of the case study areas. Each local authority has developed different approaches in terms of the nature and organisation of provision. In case study A, the reduction in allocation to schools resulted in reduced one-to-one lessons, more group lessons and a reduction in the range of genre experiences on offer. Parents had reacted to this by seeking more one-to-one lessons in the private sector and there was evidence that this sector was growing to meet this new demand. While parents had to meet this expense themselves fees were considered to be of a reasonable rate and not overly expensive. Further research would be necessary to understand the impact of this shift in provision on those not able to afford private lessons. Provision was also shaped in case study A by the prevalence of traditional music. While historical, this had also been subject to a more recent revival of interest and emphasis in schools of traditional music and its role in local communities and culture. Traditional music was familiar to many children and young people in their families and at social events. In this way, it was evident what engaging in musical activity could lead to (Cope and Smith, 1997; Cope, 1999). This could be interpreted not only as accomplishment in performing but also as being part of a wider community of musicians with both local and international status. This was a trajectory that was understood and valued:

Music is really important in [case study A] so why would we cut it back? ... What you have to remember is that [case study A] has a culture of music. It is proud of its music tradition ... I suppose it's about what you value. It's about

what the culture of your local authority is. For us music and arts has been really strong ... and has always been really highly respected by our councillors and by our Local Authority (interview with senior manager, Local Authority).

Evidence from the case study suggested that the valued position of traditional music across different social groups was an important catalyst in terms of both preserving the status of music provision and in providing a fertile basis for its development. Other genres, though occasionally overshadowed by the traditional scene, were also able to benefit from this situation. In case study B, instrumental tuition was determined by the numbers of pupils who were SQA candidates (presenting for formal school examinations). Further provision was then allocated from any excess in tutor hours above SQA provision that could be allocated elsewhere, for example in a local feeder primary school. In this particular area, the number of SQA pupils was very low and this restricted access to music across the area. The third sector had attempted to bridge the gap in provision but the impact of this remains unclear. Of primary concern to these organisations were difficulties liaising with schools and the fragile, often insecure nature of their funding. It is important to note here though, that teachers (in the absence of a prominent role taken by parents) in this area are charged with brokering and/or nurturing almost all the musical experiences that children and young people may encounter, for example liaising with primaries, instrumental services, local voluntary organisations and potential post-school providers.

In case study C, there was evidence that provision had been centralised in response to resource constraints. It is currently in the process of coping with the implementation of 20% increases in costs per year over the next 3 years. These costs have been passed on to parents and there has been a reduction in the past session in terms of the numbers of pupils coming forward to seek lessons. Further exploration of this situation shows that while actual numbers overall have remained stable the constituency of these has moved towards those parents that can afford the new higher costs. The differences in terms of opportunity and progression in music are underlined by the following in Table 2 which shows figures for a secondary school in case study A and a similar sized school in case study B. This shows a stark contrast in numbers presenting for national qualifications across two areas with significantly differing demographics.

These differences were also highlighted in case study C in the post-school experiences of young people on university courses which focused on more contemporary forms of music, for example rock and pop. Similar to young people in

Table 2. Comparison of number of students presented for National Qualifications in similar sized secondary schools in case study A and B

	<i>Secondary school</i>	
	<i>Case study A</i>	<i>Case study B</i>
Pupil population	~920	~800
Pupils taking National 5	Two full classes ~ 40	10*
Pupils taking Higher music	42	5*
Pupils taking Advanced Higher music	18	3*

*Advanced Higher, S5 Higher and National 5, taught in same class. In Scotland Higher and Advanced Highers courses are the highest school level examinations and form general basis for entry to university.

case study B, these young people were largely unaware of trajectories in music and opportunities in music industries outside of the more formally shaped school provision.

Creating unequal opportunities?

The impact of the introduction of tuition fees and other mechanisms for reducing resources impacted differently in each of the case study areas. In case study A, the introduction of tuition fees has reduced the amount of one to one tuition available to pupils. This, however, was met by an increasing reliance by parents on the private sector for tuition. A buoyant mixed economy of school and private sector provision had emerged however drawing on the available data it was difficult for the research to discern the impact of this on more disadvantaged or poor pupils. It would be reasonable to suspect that the evolving mixed economy of provision in case study A will lead to an increase in inequality in terms of participation but further research is required to investigate this. Exploration of the impact of the passing on of tuition costs to parents in case study C revealed that while the actual numbers of pupils receiving tuition had remained stable the constituency of these had changed. It was almost exclusively middle-class parents that were prepared to meet the new tuition costs. This was recognised by the local authority:

What we are finding hard to capture are the ones who are not coming forward [for instrumental music lessons]. Unfortunately, because demand has always outweighed supply, our numbers overall so far are not dropping because new

people are taking their place. But the new people are those who can afford it (interview with local authority interviewee).

This division first manifested in primary school where middle-class pupils were those most able to take advantage of private lessons. Young people who had individual music tuition in primary school formed the majority of those selected to receive tuition in secondary school. This situation was reported by the school staff as conspicuously favouring more middle-class pupils whose families had the resources to pay for tuition in primary school. The total costs of engagement in music however were more than just tuition costs. These are illustrated in Table 3 which presents the costs of one young person's engagement in music in a school year (secondary school):

The secondary school music teacher interviewed recognised this issue and sought to offer music experiences to young people who were interested in music but unable to access formal provision. Lunchtime sessions based around rock music were developed by the school music department to try and to engage these young people. There was anxiety in the music department over the emergence of a 'two-tier' system for pupils. This pattern of access was of concern to instructors and the music teachers but was one they felt unable to resolve or disrupt:

For me, I was acutely aware of the fact that instrumental provision is elitist here. It is elitist based on finance, if you can afford it you can get and if you can't you don't. It sounds like a very curt thing to say but it is the truth and it means that providing for kids that can't access that is difficult. Kids can obviously say 'well, I want to play guitar' and we have issued guitar forms out to every kid in 1st year and I think I got 35–40 guitar forms back. We had space

Table 3. Illustrates the costs of music tuition for one instrument incurred by one family per year without any discounts applied

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Cost (£)</i>
Cost of lessons	295
Music camp	260
Concert tickets (to see various child performances)	60
Music ensembles	95
Associated travel costs	Variable, dependent on location
Total estimated casts	£710 + associated travel costs

for 12. So, the vast majority of kids that come back and say well I can't afford to be considered for anything else other than guitar, we are having to turn away because we don't have the capacity to teach them (interview with secondary school music teacher).

As a consequence of this situation, a more typical middle-class view dominated and shaped much of the provision. This valued music and engaging in the arts more generally and perceived music as having intrinsic value to the individual (Hallam, 2010). In contrast, there was local community interest in pipe band music but while popular this had a more difficult engagement with formal recognition formal local authority provision (Cope, 2002). This situation was also reflected in case studies A and B where middle-class parents were generally more able to navigate the different forms of provision to secure access to music that met their children's interests:

Whatever my daughter wanted to learn she got the opportunity to do at school ... she privately went for piano lessons. I think it's there if you want it ... It's that controversial thing, should we be expected to pay for it privately, can we not access that in schools? (interview with parent).

In addition, there was evidence that in some areas where primary music opportunities were limited or were withdrawn middle-class parents had found ways to organise their own forms of provision. For example, in case study C, the local authority was unable to provide string lessons in primary school, a parent led group was established and organised to provide private tuition within the school. However, in case study B, access to music tuition was almost entirely dependent on what was made available in or coordinated by schools. Access to tuition in primary was limited:

We have a woodwind instructor who comes down on a Monday. Last week she was doing hearing tests for any of our p6's who were interested in starting on the recorder. She did that last year and 3 pupils from that went on to play the flute from the recorder (interview with primary school teacher).

In one primary school year group, the deputy head teacher identified just six pupils as learning music outside of school. Of this group, two were learning piano privately in 1:1 lessons. Both were from immigrant backgrounds and were progressing to secondary schools located in more middle-class areas outwith their own communities. There was also evidence that limited exposure to music at an

early age impacted on the potential to take music as a subject and gain confidence in performance. In case study B, there was not a prevalent community valuing of music (outside of some attention to marching bands which some young people described this as their starting point for learning music which they now used more widely) nor was there evidence of more middle-class aspirations for musical accomplishment. This is not to say that interest in music was absent. For young people, there was an awareness of music in terms of popular rock bands, talent shows and choir participation. Only a very small proportion of children and young people in case study B were able to progress their music experiences and careers in a similar way to those in A or C. A contributing factor here was parental and young people's understanding and awareness of potential employment avenues within the arts:

Quite often what happens is parents will say 'well you don't need music to get a job' or 'you don't need art to get a job' (interview with music secondary teacher).

Case studies A and C contained isolated rural areas which posed additional challenges for provision of and accessibility to musical opportunities. Economies of scale tended to centralise provision and make access problematic for some children and young people. Some families could afford the extra expense and time demanded by journeys but for others this was a major barrier:

There are probably families that might not be able to afford lessons that might have done it in the past. They might have done it if they were free (interview with primary school teacher).

Developing a musical career

In terms of developing careers, a small number of young people were in a position to progress their musical interest into a performance career. The evidence from the case studies suggests that this route was difficult both in terms of its competitiveness and its emphasis on exceptional attainment and accomplishment. For others, music could form the basis of a university course then career in a range of different, related occupations such as teaching or music therapy. Interestingly, case studies A and C showed that where there was a high level of participation in music this was often related to high levels of formal academic attainment and

access to university. There was also evidence to suggest that such pupils were often not interested in progressing music as a career. Instead, they enjoyed it and valued the experiences it afforded. These young people tended also to have high levels of attainment that offered other opportunities such as a career in the more competitive professions. In case study B, young people had much more limited accomplishment (e.g. more limited experience from childhood and throughout school, no private tuition) and a career in music or a related profession was unlikely:

We're getting a new member of staff and we now do music and music technology. We do have an awful lot more kids go on from school to do music technology or sound production at college. We don't have many that go from school to university, that's not to say that they don't go eventually but a lot do college courses (interview with secondary music teacher).

One emergent and potential trajectory for some young people was to enter musical training in university and college based courses designed to open up opportunities in the music industries (e.g. sound production, music business or popular music). Young people interviewed on these courses tended to have followed less formal routes in their music education:

I didn't take any lessons, it was just Youtube really helped, and I guess it was just determination as well. I did have brief drum lessons but they didn't really teach me much. They got me started but then everything else I've learnt has just been myself (interview with university student).

Inclusive practice in music education?

Across the case studies, individual tutors, YMI tutors and teachers with experience of working with children and young people with additional support needs, recognised the wider benefits of music and were keen to progress inclusive approaches. The value of music for all children and young people was emphasised and it is without question that everybody interviewed, regardless of their position in the educational system, held this belief:

I used to work in [names special school] as well and they very much enjoy music as well. The children in [name of school] have very complex needs – physical and emotional. Seeing any kind of response in them is amazing. It

was daunting for me when I first started working there because I wasn't sure how much impact it was having on them, but it was amazing seeing the classroom staff reaching for iPads to film them because they were saying it was really something the reaction I was getting. [Now in mainstream school] I have much more of an understanding. You see both sides of it and you can see how to better meet the needs of everyone in the class ... It's a big challenge when there a few children in the class with more complex needs and I want to make as much difference to them as I can to everybody. That's really important for me (interview with YMI tutor – case study B).

Across the case studies though, there was little conspicuous formal mention of how disabled children and young people and those with additional support needs were able to engage with the forms of music provision available. This was consistent with an earlier Scottish study (Moscardini *et al.*, 2013). Music provision for this group was generally described in terms of additionality and difference rather than thinking about a sense of entitlement for all and taking the inclusion of everyone as a starting point (Allan, 2014). Inclusive practice was described in terms of responding to particular groups of children and their otherness. This reflects a needs-based, as opposed to a rights-based, response to inclusive practice (Riddell, 2009). There was evidence that while some progress had been made in this area, more work was required:

I think some are more comfortable with [working with pupils with additional support needs] than others and I think there is more work to be done because some are working more often with the ASN children (interview with local authority officer).

ASN pupils don't get any music at the moment but there are plans that there is going to be, it is being addressed (interview with local authority officer).

Discussion

The case studies illustrate a general consensus at different levels that there should be equality of opportunity for all children and young people. However, as indicated above, emerging systems of provision tended to favour those children and young people from more middle-class and advantaged backgrounds. This occurred in different ways. In the face of the re-organisation of school-based

provision, those from more affluent middle-class households were better positioned to meet the new costs of tuition or seek alternatives in the emergent market outside of school. In addition, the cumulative cost of engaging in music was substantial when considered in terms of the different, sustained expenses incurred throughout primary and secondary school or of supporting more than one child.

In parallel with the introduction of tuition costs was the reduction in school based provision. Case study B illustrates how the allocation of provision was based on the numbers presenting for formal music courses in secondary school. This though was shown to be largely determined (also in case study C) by the level of competency established in primary school. In case study B, music provision in primary school was limited. In case study C, it existed but was costly and as such only accessible to more affluent families. The combined impact of these conditions are apparent in Table 1 which shows that children and young people from a community with predominantly working-class and poor households are much less likely to engage in formal music education. This echoes work in England by Whittaker *et al.* (2019) which illustrated that in areas with lower levels of academic engagement in music tended to correlate with greater levels of deprivation (p. 1).

What the data also reveal though, are the other ways in which music provision was becoming increasingly inaccessible. The emphasis on charging for instrumental tuition combined with a drive on attainment promoted a focus on performance-based criteria. This tended to favour those higher attaining children and young people who were more able to demonstrate academic and performance-based competencies, overlooking the intrinsic value of participation in musical activity. It produced a tension in the system between ensuring access and participation for all and the achievement of performance standards and attainment. Children and young people from working-class or poor households are effectively excluded as this form of practice becomes established. These issues were not peculiar to children and young people from working-class or poor households. Disabled children and young people and those with additional support needs were similarly at risk. Provision for these groups was stunted and there was no evidence of strong models of inclusive practice. Although individuals within the system held the belief that music is for everyone, this was not supported at a structural level. There were no examples of practice that started with the idea of ‘everybody’ as an organising principle (Hart *et al.*, 2004) or a recognition of the transformability of learners in terms of their capability and what each individual brings to the learning experience.

Drawing on critical theory provides a lens by which to understand this changing landscape. The children and young people across the case study areas engaging with music were doing so not just on the basis of their access to economic capital but on the basis of their access to and immersion in privilege and its associated cultural capital. The children and young people these data identified as being excluded from different forms of formal provision were not without musical interest or reluctant to seek it for fun or pleasure. Instead their social and cultural experiences in family and community life were unexplored and discarded.

An emphasis then on the mechanisms of accumulation of social and cultural capital is particularly helpful as it helps to illuminate the ways in which emergent practice is not neutral. Instead the case studies show the ways in which it is imbued with the dominating cultural and social values that promote different favoured genres of music and experience. This research indicates that left unopposed access to music tuition will increasingly becoming reserved for those from middle-class and more affluent households. Explaining the limited inclusion of children and young people from formal provision in case studies B and C shows perhaps that it was not a simple matter of cost that determined participation. Rather the forms of music available emphasised particular cultural tastes. The resultant forms of provision and opportunities for progression were shaped by an emphasis on more classical forms of music. Studies discussed by Bull and Scharff (2017) show that young people's engagement with classical music is not only shaped by provision but also there is a link between classical music education and middle-class culture. This middle-class culture of music education is also evident in higher education. A previous study by Scharff (2015) found that the majority of conservatoire students came from middle-class backgrounds with musicians from working-class or minority ethnic backgrounds encountering barriers to accessing the sector. Participation in classical music activity is often associated to families being 'musical' rather than being middle class. Given the connection between classical music education and middle-class culture, it is not surprising to find the reproduction of inequality and how this is associated with classical music being seen as more valuable while other genres come to be marginalised (Bull and Scharff, 2017). Was it an accident, for example that pipe band music struggled to become established in schools in case study C?

Drawing on critical theory could be useful in addressing this situation as its analysis potentially draws the attention of educators towards the acknowledgement of more local, community-based interests and engagement in music. The role of

marching bands in introducing children and young people to music may be an unpalatable beginning for some but is there potentially something to build on before importing the classical influence of *El Sistema* inspired initiatives which arguable harbour a deficit model of those from working class and poor backgrounds (Bates, 2017). The concepts of cultural capital and musical taste offer ways for exploring why music education is so heavily weighted towards those from more middle-class and affluent backgrounds.

A caveat to this though may be the forms of music available in case study A. Musical taste is an indication of wider sociological processes and how social and cultural identities come to be formed (Prior, 2013, p. 191) In case study A, there was strong community-based interest in traditional music. However, this too was subject to the need for meeting tuition costs for school tuition and/or community-based tuition in the private sector. Further research is needed to unpick the extent to which this impacts on participation for children and young people from working-class or poor backgrounds. It does though offer an interesting alternative in terms of a community where interest in a particular form of music outside of routine provision has been nurtured and grown strong.

What is apparent is that the data accorded neatly with a Bourdieu analysis. However, this may not be part of an argument to side with the homology thesis. Rather it may represent the ways in which music education is changing during a time of acute austerity. It may be being brought closer to the homology thesis from a more advanced position. In some ways, the weakest element of the Bourdieu thesis was that it possibly underplayed the role of economic capital. For children and young people from working-class or poor backgrounds, this was arguably the most powerful segregator in terms of governing their access to tuition and all other forms of formal engagement in music.

Conclusion

Drawing on critical theory is helpful in illuminating the ways in which issues around social class, power and aspects of privilege impact on education and contribute to inequality. This paper has attempted to show the ways in which this is enacted in the organisation and provision of music education in Scotland. If left unchecked, current forms of music provision in Scotland will work to increase inequality. Recognition of this is the first step towards effecting change. Finding solutions though is not simply a funding issue or redistribution of resources. Instead

it requires an understanding and acknowledgment of the ways in which inequality persists. The dominance of certain perspectives on musical performance, valued genres and the potential intrinsic value of music to all pupils need to be considered. Ishimaru and Just (2020) identified parental and community involvement as key aspects of effective strategy to raise attainment of marginalised students. Policy development in Scotland needs to recognise this and formulate ways in which it can be developed to make music education and opportunities more inclusive for all children and young people.

NOTE

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Correspondence

Alastair Wilson
School of Education
University of Strathclyde
Glasgow
Scotland
Email: jane.essex@strath.ac.uk