NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Singing in School Culture: An Ethnographic Case Study of a Secondary Choral Program

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Music Education

By

Julie Katherine Bannerman

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

August 2016

ProQuest Number: 10160473

ProQuest 10160473

ABSTRACT

Singing in School Culture: An Ethnographic Case Study of a Secondary Choral Program

Julie Bannerman

Participation in music programs is influenced by the educational context in which they exist. Examining contexts of music programs promotes understanding of participation patterns and gaps in music education related to issues such as socioeconomic class, gender, and academic achievement. This study examined a rural, secondary choral program and how it was situated within a school cultural context in order to examine how choir participation was enabled or impeded. An ethnographic case study design was used to explore the culture of the choral program and its interaction with the social and academic culture of the school. Data generation included interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Participants included choir students, the choir teacher, parents, and school personnel.

Singing in school was enabled by the choir program's convergence with school culture. The rural school district served a mixed socioeconomic student population and promoted middle class values with which the choral program aligned. Choir was valued as contributing to a well-rounded education. The choir teacher enabled participation via contextually responsive teaching, developing and maintaining the choral program through positive interaction with the school and community context. The teacher's philosophy and approach to the social and academic culture of the program additionally enabled participation. Choral participation generated positive musical, social, and personal meanings for students.

Singers faced impediments to choral participation related to curricular tracks with associations related to socioeconomic status, academic achievement, and gender. Male singers cited gender norms as impediments to their participation that they negotiated in part by drawing upon school values. School personnel did not problematize all impediments. Some, however, were actively addressed such as those for students with special needs, academic challenges, and financial hardships. This research reveals how impediments to choral participation can be embedded in curricular structures and in cultural beliefs. Attention to how music programs are situated in school cultures aids in understanding contextually responsive teaching and how music teachers and programs function within wider cultures of learning.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the students, staff, and parents of "Bridgetown" Schools for making this study possible by generously sharing their time, insights and experiences. I am especially grateful to the choir teacher for welcoming me with open arms into her classroom and sharing her work and students with me.

I am indebted to my dissertation chair, Dr. Janet Barrett. Thank you Dr. Barrett for your steady and supportive presence. Thank you for encouraging me and challenging me to be a better writer, thinker, and researcher. Thank you to the additional members of my committee, Dr. Maud Hickey and Dr. Steve Demorest.

To the faculty I had the privilege of working with at Northwestern University, I am most grateful. Dr. Carlos Abril, Dr. Peter Webster, Dr. Maud Hickey, and Dr. Janet Barrett have profoundly influenced the scholar and teacher I aspire to be.

Thank you to all the members of the Center for the Study of Education and the Musical Experience who continue to inspire me with their work. I would like to thank the wonderful graduate students at Northwestern who were an integral part of my experience and from whom I learned so much. My thanks to those who came before me and welcomed me to NU: Jon, Rick, (and especially) Ken, Nasim, and Linda. My thanks to those who came after: Julia, Jason, Donna, Dan, and Sara. Thank you to Kim, my brilliant cohort partner, who began the PhD adventure with me.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

"The meaning of any kind of music is inseparable from the conditions under which it is

generated and experienced" (Bresler, 1998, p. 2)

Bresler's assertion that meaning making in music is inseparable from the context in

which it is made points to the central questions guiding this dissertation. This dissertation

explores meanings of choral participation and how these meanings are situated within school

culture in a small, rural secondary school. A variety of contextual conditions have been shown to

impact adolescent participation in music including features of the school music program or

community music organization such as its location, resources, and philosophy (Bartolome, 2010;

Bennetts, 2013; Harrison, 2007); social constructs surrounding gender and class (Adler, 2002;

Hall, 2011); and approaches to curriculum and instruction (Hoffman, 2012). School music

programs, although arguably sub-cultures in and of themselves (Adderley, Kennedy & Berz,

2003; Morrison, 2001) are not islands apart from the school, community, and societal contexts in

which they function.

Benedict and Schmidt (2011) argue that music educators do not adequately respond to the

contexts in which they teach. They critique pedagogical and curricular approaches in music

education that purport to transcend the "geographic, communal, economic, or political needs or

interests of students" (p. 139). Music educators, like all teachers, work in a climate of schooling

that is increasingly "regulated, standardized, and placeless" (Tieken, 2014, p. 20). These forces may create tension for teachers seeking to adapt to local context in order to meet the needs of their students and communities. When it comes to meeting the needs of rural students and schools, traditional models of successful music programs may not be appropriate (Prest, 2013).

To counter these trends and to address the problem of standardized teaching and curricular practices, music educators may consider socio-musical places, how music pedagogy engages in the local and is also connected to the wider world (Stauffer, 2012). Music educators have been called upon to teach in contextually specific ways (Bates, 2011b; Hunt, 2009), to get to know the community in which they teach and their students, and to allow those connections to influence curriculum and instruction (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). This project considers context a school culture.

An understanding of how music programs function in school culture may aid in understanding and addressing problems facing the field of music education in schools. There is concern in the field over participation patterns and gaps among certain student populations. When it comes to student diversity in terms of academic achievement, ethnicity/race, socioeconomic class, and gender, choral programs, like all school ensembles, do not serve all students equally (Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). High school music education programs serve disproportionately female, economically privileged, academically achieving, and white students (Elpus & Abril, 2011).

The present study is necessary in order to further our understanding of issues related to access to music education programs. Access must be understood more broadly than within traditional concepts of recruitment and retention on the part of the teacher or motivation on the part of the students, which may obscure the impact of school culture and the context of the community. Examining music programs through a lens of school culture reveals how music programs work in convergence with school culture or diverge from it (Hodkinson, Anderson, Colley, et al., 2007).

A framework of school culture may concretize our understanding of context in schools, and account for the interaction between classrooms, schools, communities, and wider social and cultural forces. In proposing a cultural approach to education, Bruner (1996) notes: "Learning and thinking are always *situated* in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilization of cultural resources" (p. 4, italics in original). Individuals make sense of their choral experiences by utilizing cultural resources—the values, beliefs, assumptions, symbols, and traditions in their environment. Erickson (2004) asserts, "everything in education relates to culture—to its acquisition, its transmission, and its invention" (p. 31). Culture is something that we learn from others, pass along to others, and is also something that is changeable by individuals and groups. From an anthropological perspective, Erickson refers to culture as a "human toolkit," helping us make sense of and take action in daily life. The culture of a school may also be viewed as a toolkit, providing students with particular ways of interacting within their academic and social environment.

A school culture may support certain norms, beliefs, and actions, and impede others. Actors within the school environment including teachers, students, and programs such as the music department or athletic department, may support certain values within a school culture and reject others (Peterson & Deal, 2009). Schools may serve as regulatory and normalizing spaces, or as spaces with transgressive possibilities for participants (Connell, 1996). School cultures are not without tension and conflict. There may be tension between cultural norms in a given environment and individual or group interactions with that environment (Brewer, 2010).

In examining the concept of culture and its interaction with meaning making, Bruner points to the interplay between canonical interpretations of culture and individual, idiosyncratic ways of making meaning. He states, "life in culture is, then, an interplay between the versions of the world that people form under its institutional sway and the versions of it that are products of their individual histories" (p. 14). In the interplay between individuals and institutions, culture is fluid rather than static. This understanding of culture, or cultures, accounts for varied and multiple student experiences within the same choral program (Adler, 2002). Individual interactions with cultural forces at societal and school levels may impede or open avenues to music participation in schools (Harrison, 2007). Examining school music practices, in this case a choral program, from a perspective of school culture sheds light on how school choir participation, its meanings and functions, interacts with a local context and is simultaneously connected to broader social and cultural forces filtered through individual experiences.

Scholars have defined parameters of school culture in order to aid in their examination. Hodkinson, Biesta, and James (2007) defined school culture to account for both internal and external forces impacting schooling. Their model of school culture includes the following: 1) the positions, dispositions, and actions of the students; 2) the positions, dispositions, and actions of the teachers; 3) the location and resources of the learning site; 4) the time teachers and students spend together, their inter-relationships, and the range of other learning sites students are engaged with; 5) school management and procedures, together with funding and inspection body procedures and regulations, and government policy; 6) wider vocational and academic cultures, of which any learning site is a part; and 7) wider social and cultural values and practices, such as issues of social class, gender and ethnicity, the nature of employment opportunities, and social and family life (p. 416). This model accounts for external influences upon school culture, specifying government policy and wider social values and practices relating to gender, class, etc. With insight into these aspects, they examined how the educational programs under study converged or diverged from the culture of the learning site, which impacted the success of the program for teachers and students (Hodkinson, Anderson, & Collet et al., 2007). This model was useful in examining aspects of the school culture that interested with choral participation at Bridgetown.

Extant research in music education related to this project includes examinations of varied meanings of singing, the social meanings of singing and school music participation, cultures of music programs, and music programs in school culture. Research related to understanding music

programs in school culture include an examination of how school culture influences or supports

male singing (Bennetts, 2013, Harrison, 2007), and how a band program functions in regards to a

school's racial, linguistic, and academic environment (Brewer, 2010). School culture, focusing

particularly on school leadership, was examined in order to understand how a school supported

students persisting in music between elementary and middle school (Bruenger, 2009). Bresler

(1998) examined elementary music teaching by considering how teachers' beliefs and

backgrounds (micro level) interacted with their school (meso level) and larger educational and

cultural context (macro level). The present study contributes to this line of research by

considering the interaction between a choral program and school culture in a rural secondary

school.

The setting: Rural music education

This ethnographic case study was conducted in a rural secondary school in the

Northeastern United States. Therefore a consideration of rural music programs is warranted. A

detailed description of the setting is provided in chapter three illuminating the unique

circumstances of this particular rural school district, which features unusual community assets in

the form of two small universities.

Rural education and music education in rural schools face unique challenges. In *Why

rural schools matter*, Tieken (2014) discusses educational trends and the challenges facing rural

schools, in addition to painting a picture of the ongoing meaning, relevance, and vital potential of

rural schools for their communities. Tieken cites increasingly narrow and standardized curricula

designed to further the goals of national economic gain and social mobility. These curricula may have little to do with the lives of children in rural contexts, and may convey definitions of success that preclude students' continuing to live and work where they grew up. Rural schools face challenges related to limited tax bases, distance, isolation, and federal aid systems that calculate funding based upon numbers of poor students rather than rates of poverty (Tieken, 2014).

Music educators working in rural schools face a variety of challenges. Isbell (2005) notes challenges teachers in rural areas may face including resource scarcity, isolation from other music teachers, and low enrollments in music classes. Many rural music teachers work in K-12 schools and, as the sole music teacher, may teach general, choral, and instrumental music. Rural students are more likely to be involved with extracurricular activities, and therefore teachers may confront overscheduled students (Isbell, 2005). Spring (2013) found that a music teacher in a rural school had multiple roles in addition to teaching music, needed to adapt to limited teaching resources and space, and faced limited professional development opportunities and isolation.

Rural schools have unique needs and circumstances that are often overlooked in models of music education. Prest (2013) argues assumptions about music education do not apply to small schools in rural contexts (with student populations of 500 or fewer). These "structural and dynamic" (p. 2) assumptions in music education include, for example: 1) exclusivity fosters music program success; 2) music festival standards are objective determinants of success; 3) rural positions are less desirable than urban teaching positions; and 4) professional development

is readily accessible. Countering these assumptions, Prest argues that inclusivity is more important for success in rural schools due to a limited number of students and scheduling conflicts. She notes, however, that rural music programs may attract a more heterogeneous population of students with varying levels of interest in music, making meeting performance standards more difficult. Prest argues that music festival standards do not account for differences in programs, and therefore may marginalize or discourage students who are rated against peers with greater resources. Despite these challenges, including the challenge of accessing professional development for isolated teachers, Prest argues rural teaching positions offer many rewards to music teachers.

Music teachers may be ill equipped to teach in rural contexts. Bates (2011b) raises concerns that music educators have misconceptions and biases about rural students, including assumptions that rural students are less capable, intelligent, and hardworking than their suburban or urban counterparts. He encourages music teacher preparation to address rural issues, to expand curricular and pedagogical visions for rural music education, and to value teachers working in rural settings. Bates (2011a) argues norms of music education in schools are based in middle and upper class norms, which create cultural barriers for poor, white, rural students who face stereotypes as being backwards, undisciplined, and lacking culture. He critiques messages within the music curriculum and from teachers that may promote "elite, cosmopolitan sensibilities," ignoring the music making and musical preferences of students which may include less valued genres such as country and heavy metal, and informal music learning practices (p.

117). Bates argues for a culturally and contextually responsive music education for students in rural settings.

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this ethnographic case study is to understand how school culture interacts with meanings of singing in a rural, secondary school choral program in order to understand how participation in choir is enabled or inhibited by school culture. The following questions guide the study:

1. What characterizes the culture of the choral program?

2. How does the choral program interact with the wider school culture?

3. How is choral participation enabled or impeded in school culture?

Methodological Overview

I sought what Greene (1995) characterizes as a "big" view of choral music education. Greene's conception of 'big' is a close-up look at the details of schools as opposed to a 'small' view, looking at schools from a distance. To view schools 'big' is to see the "intentionality and concreteness of everyday life" (p. 10). To achieve this view, I conducted an ethnographic case study of a secondary (7th-12th grade) choral program in a rural school community. The primary sources of data generation include interviews, observations, and the examination of relevant documents. In order to gain different perspectives on meanings of singing in school and the school culture in which it resides, I sought various viewpoints including the choral teacher, school personnel, student singers, and parents of singers. I visited the school frequently over a

period of six months, conducting observations of 7th-12th grade choir classes and music and arts related events at the school. This case study is rooted in the research methodology of ethnography, in which what people do, what people think about what they do, and the context in which people act are considered in order to explore the phenomenon of singing within a school culture.

Participants. Participants included seven middle school students (3 boys and 4 girls) and twelve high school students (8 girls and 4 boys) who sing in choir. Adult participants included the choir teacher, a principal, a guidance counselor, and four parents, two of whom were also schoolteachers in the district. Choir students participated in individual and group interviews ranging in size from groups of two to four students. The music teacher, school administrator, guidance counselor, and parents participated in individual interviews in person or over the phone.

Interviews. This study utilized group and individual interviews. Adult participants such as the music teacher, school personnel, and parents of the students participated in individual interviews for this study. Choir students participated in individual or group interviews, depending upon their schedules. I designed the interviews as semi-structured, with a prepared interview protocol that was used flexibly to allow for emerging topics in conversation.

Observations. Over a period of six months I conducted 34 hours of observations of choral classes and choir related school events. This extensive time in the field offered insight into the choral program and the educational context in which the choral music program exists. I

attended rehearsals for the Middle School Chorus and the High School Choir, choral concerts, musical performances, and high school plays.

Data Analysis. Interviews were transcribed for analysis. Observations were field noted by hand and transformed into narratives for analysis (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Data analysis followed what Creswell (2007) described as the data analysis spiral. Coding entailed pre-coding, first cycle analysis, second cycle analysis, and the development of categories and themes (Saldaña, 2013).

Validation criteria. Creswell (2007) noted four validation criteria: 1) *credibility*, referring to the study's accuracy in interpreting the participants' meaning; 2) *authenticity* in terms of multi-vocality, hearing multiple voices in the research including those of the participants; 3) *criticality* in terms of a "critical appraisal" of all elements of the research; and 4) *integrity* in terms of the researcher taking a reflective and self-critical stance (p. 206). This study employs strategies to increase credibility including multiple methods of data generation including focus groups, individual interviews, and observations. These multiple sources of data served to corroborate findings. Authenticity in the findings was sought via multi-vocality, including the voices of the participants in the research report, and by interviewing multiple participants to provide differing perspectives on the phenomenon under study. I worked to take a critical and reflective stance to my work as interpreter of meanings and creator of the research text.

Reflexivity and integrity. In qualitative research, the researcher herself is the instrument of analysis. Therefore, I made efforts to be aware of potential biases and my own subjectivities that may have influenced my analysis and interpretation. I approached this research project from several perspectives: as a musician with experiences in vocal and choral music, as a music educator with experience teaching general and choral music, and as a scholar interested in the impact of school context upon the meanings and functions of music education programs. My own experiences, and the questions raised by these experiences, influenced the formation of this research project. My vision of music education is rooted in what music education philosopher Estelle Jorgensen (2003) articulated as "ideals of civility, justice, freedom, and inclusion of diverse people and perspectives" (p. 20). It is from this vision that I pose the central questions of this dissertation, which relate to the intersections of choral music education and school culture.

Chapter Organization

Chapter two reviews relevant literature including research into 1) meanings of singing, 2) social meanings of school music participation, 3) choir and school music cultures, and 4) music in school cultures. Chapter three describes the method of this ethnographic case study, including data generation strategies of observation, individual and group interviews, and examination of documents. In chapter three I describe the setting for the research, including site and participant selection. I describe the school district and its music program, with special emphasis on the organization of the vocal music program. Findings are presented in chapters four and five. In chapter four I present findings related to the culture of the choral program. In chapter five I

examine the choral program in the context of the school culture. Chapter six provides the summary and conclusion of the study, with implications for music education and recommendations for further research.

Conclusion

This ethnographic case study examines singing in school culture in a rural middle school and high school. This study involves observations and interviews with singers, parents, and school personnel. Varied perspectives offer insight into the multiple meanings of singing in school and how a school culture may enable or impede singing in school. This study contributes to a developing body of literature examining music programs in school culture. It is my hope this study will further the field of music education in understanding how meanings of choral singing interact with school culture.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review will consider work from the following areas, progressing towards the focus of this study: 1) meanings of singing; 2) social meanings of school music participation; 3) cultures of choir and school music; and 4) music in school culture. These areas of literature are related and overlap, as is indicated in Figure 3.1. I have categorized the literature in this way in order to develop the basis for the current study, which focuses on how school culture interacts with the meanings of singing and participation in choir.

Meanings of singing

Social meanings
of school music
participation

Cultures of
choir and school
music

Music in school
culture
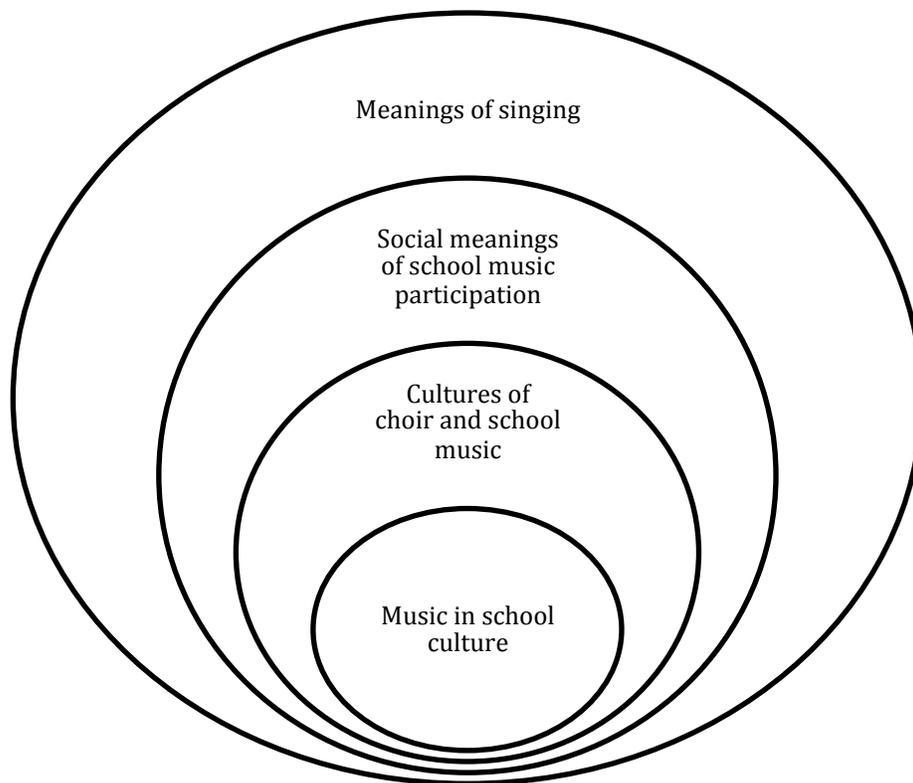
Figure 3.1. Organization of the literature review

Meanings of singing

      Multidimensionality in values and functions of singing. Researchers have approached the multidimensionality of choral experiences by surveying singers about their experiences and considering what might influence their perceptions, such as gender, age, years of musical experience, and choral context. The following studies examined singer perspectives in middle, high school, and community choruses. These studies provide insight into the value of singing for singers, and the varied functions that singing in choir serves. Researchers have framed their work in terms of meanings of singing and benefits of singing. Much overlap is evident in the singers' responses, and researchers point to interrelatedness among the different aspects of singing that emerge.

      Hylton (1981) influenced a line of survey research into the multiple dimensions of meaning singers make of their choral experiences. He defined meaning as "a psychological construct with cognitive and affective aspects, manifested overtly through behavior, reflecting an individual's evaluation and valuing of an experience" (p. 288). In order to aid music teachers in better meeting individual needs of choral students by understanding the value and function of the choral experience, Hylton developed the *Choral Meaning Survey*. He developed the survey by asking high school choral students to respond to open-ended questions about their perceptions of their choral experience. These answers were then categorized and transformed into 72 survey statements. With this instrument, Hylton surveyed high school choral students ($N = 673$). Using factor analysis, he identified six aspects of the choral experience: achievement, psychological,

integrative, musical-artistic, communicative, and spiritualistic, although all dimensions were interrelated. Achievement included statements related to self-esteem, pride and success such as "to present good concerts" and "to feel rewarded" (p. 297). Psychological statements related to self-development, including self-concept such as "to relax and forget my problems for awhile" and "to find out who I am" (p. 299). Integrative statements related to the group experience, including working with others and developing friendships. Musical-artistic statements related to musical growth and musicianship including, learning "how to control my voice" and how to "train my ear" (p. 298). Communicative statements related to sharing, expressing, and performing for an audience. Finally, spiritualistic statements related to religious or spiritual meanings, such as "to experience spiritual uplift" and "to show off the potential God gave me" (p. 297). Hylton concluded that although meaning of the choral experience is multidimensional, there is a more global, overarching concept of meaningfulness of which these dimensions are sub-concepts. He suggests teachers should therefore consider and value multiple outcomes for students, rather than exclusively focusing on one, for example, the musical-artistic, to the exclusion of the other dimensions.

Kwan (2002) published a pilot nearly replicating Hylton's study and additionally examining effects for gender, grade level, and musical experience (defined as years of instrumental or vocal lessons). Kwan surveyed high school choral students from rural Indiana (N = 84). She used a modified version of Hylton's *Choral Meaning Survey*, removing the spiritualistic items in order to avoid asking public school students questions that could be

perceived as having a religious connotation. Kwan found no effects for gender, grade level or musical experience. Like Hylton, she found that all the factors correlated, suggesting a single, overarching concept of choral meaning with many dimensions. Organizing the factors by those students rated most positively resulted in the following order: achievement, musical, psychological, integrative, and communicative.

Sudgen (2005) also based her research on Hylton's study. She gathered student responses to both Hylton's *Choral Meaning Survey* and a self-concept measure and analyzed these in regards to participant gender, years of choral experience, grade level, and years of private instruction. Sudgen measured self-concept in music by using the *Arts Self-Perception Inventory* developed by Vispoel (1993), which asks students to rate their perceptions of their own musical abilities, such as "I am talented in music," and their perceptions of their abilities in comparison to others. Sudgen surveyed singers in grades 7-12 from nine schools in Indiana ($N = 835$). Differences between boys and girls were not found in years of choral experience, likelihood to take private music lessons, type of lesson (vocal/instrumental), or total years of private lessons. High school students were more likely to have taken private lessons than junior high students. Boys and girls who sang in choir did not differ in their perceptions of their musical self-concept; no relationship was found between gender and musical self-concept. Years of private music lessons and years of choir experience did correlate with a higher composite score of musical self-concept.

Like Kwan (2002), Sudgen adapted the *Choral Meaning Survey* to exclude the spiritualistic items and instead provided open response questions for students to name other salient aspects of their experience. In this space, some mentioned spiritual aspects. Sudgen's results replicated four factors from Hylton's study (musical-artistic, psychological, communicative, integrative) and replicated aspects of the achievement dimension. Based on her results, Sudgen divided the achievement construct into three aspects: vocational achievement, personal achievement, and musical achievement, although these three explained little variance in the model. Therefore, Sudgen defined the most salient aspects of the choral experience for 7th-12th graders as including the following five dimensions: musical, psychological, communicative, social, and achievement. All of these factors were highly correlated. Participants who took private lessons differed slightly from those with no lessons on the communicative factor, which included items related to performance, suggesting students in private lessons might feel slightly more positively about performing aspects of singing. Differences according to grade level and gender were not found in the meanings singers made of their experiences.

Kwan (2007) continued this line of inquiry into singers' perceptions of their choral experience in Hong Kong. She examined secondary school choir students' perceptions of the meaning of their choral experience, their attribution of success and failure in music, and motivation in music in relation to learner and school characteristics. Participants included students in grades equivalent to 7-12 from thirteen schools ($N = 476$). Kwan administered Hylton's *Choral Meaning Survey*, the *Asmus Motivation Factors* (AMF) measure, and the *Asmus*

Magnitude of Motivation (AMM) measure. The AMF measures five factors consisting of seven statements each related to a student's perception of the importance of the statement for success in music. The five factors are effort, background, classroom environment, musical ability, and affect for music. Students in Kwan's study attributed their success or failure more to effort and musical ability than the other aspects such as classroom environment, background, or affect. The AMM measures student motivation in the following areas: personal commitment, school music, and music compared to other activities. Kwan found high motivation among the participants, who had all elected to take choir as an extra-curricular activity.

In regards to the *Choral Meaning Survey*, Kwan (2007) replicated some of Hylton's results and revealed several new results. Integrative, spiritualistic, and musical artistic groupings were similar, while new factors included achievement in performing and achievement in singing. Sudgen (2005) also found greater differentiation in the concept of achievement in the choral setting. Kwan's (2007) factors were integrative, spiritualistic, achievement in performing, broad musical artistic values, social/psychological, and achievement in singing. She hypothesized that cultural context may have influenced her results. She also noted collectivist aspects of Chinese culture might have made the integrative aspects (relating to participating and interacting with a group) more dominant in the experiences of the singers in Hong Kong. The most meaningful aspects of choral singing for her participants in Hong Kong were achievement in singing, musical artistic aspects, and integrative aspects. Middle school students viewed classroom environment as more important than high school students, while high school students viewed

personal background as more important for success in music. Middle school students valued

integrative aspects (interacting with a group) more than high school students, while the

social/psychological aspects (development of self and others) were more highly valued by high

school students. For all of the measures in this study, no differences were found between boys

and girls.

Baird (2007) examined benefits of choral singing with a researcher-developed

instrument. She surveyed singers in fourteen Canadian choral ensembles ($N = 414$). Findings

relate closely to those of the meanings surveys, suggesting researchers are accessing similar

constructs when asking singers about meanings and/or benefits. However, Baird's work points to

differences in singers' valuing of their experiences according to choral context and geographical

location. The singers ranked benefits of choral singing in the following order: musical,

intellectual, emotional, physical, social, spiritual. Baird examined differences in the perceptions

between singers in different choral settings, specifically whether a chorister was paid or a

volunteer, the choir's location, whether the singer held a music degree or not, singer's age, choir

size, and type of choir (e.g., community versus church). Findings point to differences according

to the ways that singers interacted with their choir and the choir context. Volunteer singers were

more satisfied with their choral experience, felt more accomplished, and perceived more physical

benefits than paid singers. Rural residents, who traveled distances to sing in the suburban or

urban ensembles, rated most statements higher than their urban or suburban counterparts. Urban

residents valued making new friends and social aspects of the choir experience more than their

suburban counterparts. Older choristers, middle-aged and senior, experienced greater overall benefits than younger singers. Singers in small ensembles reported greater social benefits, including a sense of unity, than those in larger choirs. Baird's work points to differences in choral contexts that influence the value and function of choral singing in singers' experiences.

In a methodological shift, Bartolome (2012) engaged in ethnographic research to identify benefits singers, parents, and conductors gained from participating in an elite girls' choir organization including musical, personal, social, external, and community benefits. Musical benefits included the intensive, formal music education choristers received in the program. Personal benefits included choir as a worthwhile endeavor, a source of self-confidence, as empowerment, as discipline, as collective experience, as commitment, as school, and as emotional outlet. Social benefits included choir as a constant, as interpersonal development, as a place to belong, and as a diverse environment. Finally, external and community benefits included choir as community enrichment, choir as ambassadorship, and choir as advocacy for music education.

Summary: Multidimensionality in values and functions of singing. These studies, the first by Hylton and those that followed using his instrument, sought to consider the value and functions of singing from the perspective of singers in school contexts. Hylton's (1981) research into the multidimensionality of meanings of choral singing provided strong evidence that choral singers value more than music making when it comes to singing in a choir. Choir participation serves varied functions in the lives of singers, providing musical-artistic value to singers but also

a sense of achievement, self-development, social aspects such as developing friendships and working with a group, and reaching out to audiences and communities.

Researchers sought factors that might influence singers' perceptions of different dimensions of the choral experience, such as gender, grade level, years of experience, musical self-concept, etc. No significant differences were found in relation to most of these items, and, notably, gender did not impact students' perceptions of the choral experience. Kwan (2007) uniquely considered aspects related to the school and cultural context that may have influenced students' perceptions of their experience. Sudgen (2005) and Kwan (2007) were able to differentiate the achievement construct, indicting different ways students may understand achievement in chorus in different choral contexts.

Other research has examined meanings of singing specifically in terms of benefits singers gain from their choral experiences. Musical, personal, social, and community benefits were identified as features of the culture of an elite girls' choir (Bartolome, 2012). Choir is an institution that has value for participants for its internal features and for its connection to community and those beyond the ensemble. Singers from a variety of choral settings in Canada ranked the benefits they received as musical, intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual (Baird, 2007). Differences between degrees and kind of benefits was evident according to individual and singing context characteristics, such as age of the singer and size of the ensemble.

The research reviewed here affirms the multidimensionality of choral singing, and points to how certain differences in singing context, personal circumstance, and geography may impact how singers value their experiences. The meaning of singing in choir extends beyond the ensemble experience, as singers value giving back to the community and engaging in community. Choral experiences, despite sharing many dimensions of meaning, vary according to context. The following section will consider studies with similar aims of understanding value and function of choral singing, but which focused on one particular population of choral singers, adolescent boys.

Meanings of singing: Boys. Boys and men have received much attention in choral research due to choral music educators' concerns with recruiting and retaining males, especially during the adolescent period of vocal change. The following studies focus on boys as a special population, seeking to examine the value and function of singing in their lives. These studies utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate boys' perceptions of choral singing.

Kennedy (2002) located her qualitative investigation into junior high boys' motivation to participate in choir on Hylton's work, among others. Kennedy interviewed 11 boys who sang in a mixed chorus of eighth and ninth grade students. She triangulated her findings with an interview with three girls in the same choir. Interview transcripts, descriptive field notes from seven visits, a teacher questionnaire, repertoire selections, and tapes of choir festival performances were data for the study. Kennedy found that boys were motivated to join choir because of their love of singing, the teacher, and the company of friends. Musical skills the boys

identified included sight-reading, vocal production, choral technique, concert etiquette, and performance presentation. Kennedy noted the teacher's musical learning goals reiterated by the students, suggesting clear communication in the teacher's instruction. The participants cited the teacher, musical aspects, non-musical aspects, and social aspects such as working with a group and developing friendships as benefits and sources of value.

Sweet (2010) examined a group of eighth grade boys' motivations to sing in choir. Sweet conducted one group interview with five eighth grade singers who were enrolled in both the curricular choral ensemble and an after-school, auditioned, men's choir. Sweet's findings echoed those of Kennedy; the boys who elected to sing in choir enjoyed singing as an emotional outlet and a source of self-expression and enjoyment, and were influenced by significant relationships with teachers, family and peers. During the group interview Sweet conducted, the eighth grade boys remarked upon experiences of being teased for singing, both during choir rehearsals and outside of choir rehearsals. The singers dismissed this teasing as being motivated by jealousy and insecurity. Singing was a skill that they were proud to have and they were proud to be a part of an all-male group.

Lucas (2011) administered a questionnaire to seventh and eighth grade boys singing in choir in six Oklahoma and Kansas junior high schools. The participating boys ($N = 101$) were asked to identify the factors influencing their decisions to participate in choir and what their peers, school adults (such as other teachers and coaches), and family members' perceptions were of their choir participation. Influential factors in the boys' decision to join choir included

enjoyment of choir and singing ability; boys who sang in choir perceived they were good singers. The boys surveyed indicated support for their vocal participation from influential people in their lives including peers, school adults, and family members. In the schools surveyed, strong peer support for boys singing in choir was evident; the participants responded positively to the question of whether socially popular students participated in choir. Important factors in boys' successful participation were an enjoyable choral experience and an intrinsic interest in singing combined with support from peers and adults.

Freer (2009) examined accounts of choral singing from six high school boys, two who had sung in school choirs continuously, two who had sung but later withdrew, and two who did not sing at all in school ensembles. The boys' narratives were examined for aspects of flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi and others) including Sense of Personal Control (clarity of goals; autonomy, control and deep concentration) and Awareness and Competence (receiving immediate feedback; disappearance of self-consciousness and merger of action and awareness; reward through challenge and skill; matched challenge and skill; autotelic characteristics). Freer concluded that the boys valued successful completion of challenges, opportunities to refine their musical skills, and receiving immediate feedback from teachers. Freer sought to improve choral teachers' abilities to meet the needs of adolescent boys in the choral context, encouraging "sustained attention to boys and their musical experiences" in order to increase lifelong choral participation among boys (p. 155).

Summary: Boys' meanings of singing. Researchers have focused attention on boys' meanings of singing and motivation to participate in choir due to concerns about boys not electing choral classes. Despite research indicating that there are unlikely to be differences in aspects of meaning, value, and function of singing between boys and girls and men and women, researchers have focused on boys' motivation to sing and the meanings of their choral experiences. Middle school boys were motivated to join a school choral ensemble because of their love of singing, their teacher, and their peers, and noted musical and non-musical benefits to their experience (Kennedy, 2002). Eighth grade boys valued singing, working with other people, developing camaraderie among their fellow male singers, and interacting with peers (especially using humor) (Sweet, 2010). Seventh and eighth grade boys wanted to sing in choir because they enjoyed singing and the choir experience; they were influenced to participate in choir from peers and significant adults, and perceived choral singing as an activity for socially popular students (Lucas, 2011). Boys who persisted in choral music valued completion of challenges, refining their musical skills, and feedback from teachers (Freer, 2009).

The studies considered here focusing on boys' experiences in choir point to social issues, such as boys being teased for singing (Sweet, 2010). However, the meanings of singing literature focusing on boys and the value, function, and motivation to sing often do not sufficiently consider the social dimensions of singing in context or specifically how constructs of gender interact with boys' experiences singing. There have been gestures towards these kinds of questions such as Lucas (2011), who considered perceptions of singing in school in his survey, in

which boys indicated positive perceptions of their singing. Questions remain regarding gendered barriers to choral participation, while motivations to join and meanings of singing as defined by Hylton and others do not seem to differ according to gender of the participants. In the next section I examine research into cultures of choirs and sociocultural meanings of singing, including explicit considerations of gender as a social construct acting in the lives of male singers.

Social meanings of school music participation

Boys, gender, and singing. Throughout choral research, gender differences in the meanings of singing and the experiences of boys and men have been of particular interest. This interest is largely due to concerns over disproportionate participation in choral ensembles by boys and girls, and men and women (Bell, 2004; Elpus, 2014). Survey research has found no significant differences between male and female choristers in regards to the meanings of the choral experience, the benefits of singing, and motivations to sing (Kwan, 2007; Sudgen, 2005). Explorations of boys' motivations to participate in choir echo previous research including findings that the teacher, musical aspects, non-musical aspects, and social aspects are of value to boys and young men (Freer, 2009; Kennedy, 2002; Lucas, 2011; Sweet, 2010). Qualitative research has brought to light gendered aspects of singing in choir that survey studies have not such as harassment at school for singing (Sweet, 2010). In the following section, I will examine research that has explicitly sought to examine singing and gender in boys' choral experience.

These studies rely primarily upon qualitative methodologies of interview and observation, and even fictional narrative, to explore gendered meanings of singing in the lives of young singers.

Legg (2013) conducted a mixed methods examination into singing by young adolescents in the United Kingdom. He first surveyed adolescents in order to establish rates of participation in singing activities and then conducted focus group interviews, from which data for a fictionalized narrative were gathered. Legg wrote this fictionalized narrative based on the accounts of three adolescents (gender not specified) who participated in the qualitative portion of his study. The narrative shows singing as a problematic activity for adolescent boys. It tells the story of a boy who auditions for a school musical at the encouragement of his peers, wins a lead role, and then drops out due to unwanted, negative attention by both adults and peers. Legg's story highlighted the sense of vulnerability and risk involved in singing by male adolescents, and showed that gender policing may come from not only peers, but also significant adults in children's lives.

Adler's (2002) case study of a music program in one school setting shows that even within one school environment, there were boys for whom singing was a liability and also boys for whom singing was a resource and a source of social capital. His project included 16 boys in grades seven and eight, and two seventh grade girls. Adler differentiated social groupings within the boys' choir and among boys in his general music classes, noting that the boys in his study negotiated the psychosocial aspects of singing in different ways. Adler described typologies of identity groups within the extracurricular boys' choir and his general music classes, marked by a

hierarchy of masculinities and differing approaches to interaction with peers, schooling, and singing. Boys who utilized singing as a resource for social capital were a group of boys who self-labeled themselves the Jocks of Singing. Adler created two additional labels to describe the general characteristics of the other prominent groups in the Boys' Choir: Sensitive Boys (who valued academic and artistic success, and were more likely to have small peer groups and prioritize self-esteeming identities) and Neutral Boys (seventh graders in early phases of social development who could potentially become Sensitive Boys or Jocks of Singing). Other typologies explored in the study were Non-Singers (boys who chose not to sing in extra-curricular choirs and who were reluctant to sing in required general music classes) and Bad-Asses (boys who rejected learning activities and school norms, and engaged in name calling of other boys). This disaggregation of the boys in his music classes reveals multiple approaches to masculinity and singing within a single music program. Rather than treating all boys as a homogenous group, Adler revealed that different boys interact with local gender norms about singing in different ways according to their social status in the school. Some boys had greater resources than others to combat perceptions of singing as non-gender conforming, such as the Jocks of Singing who included singing as part of a pro-school, popular persona.

An additional example of an adolescent using singing to create a counternarrative to normative masculinity, Hall (2009) utilized interviews and observations to examine one chorister's views on singing and gender identity. Her study tells how an individual used singing to assert an alternative masculinity from the dominant form that views singing as gender non-

conforming. The chorister, Thomas, loved singing in his elite boys' choir, sang through the transition from primary to secondary school, and did not think singing was "girly" although he was "aware that others do… [yet] has never considered giving up" (p. 18). Thomas connected with singing as a way to achieve emotional wellbeing and respite from everyday life. Thomas mocked anti-singing discourses rooted in masculine stereotypes and rejected normative understandings of what it means to be a boy through his singing and participation in choir. Hall analyzed Thomas' strategy of infusing symbolic capital into the act of singing, which he achieved by "inverting the discourse that singing is feminine (weak) by constructing the rejection of singing as an act of weakness, thus singing as an act of superiority (masculinity)" (p. 26). Thomas viewed those who did not sing as being afraid, lacking in confidence and the courage to express themselves. This was an opinion echoed by Adler's (2002) and Sweet's (2010) participants. Thomas' love of singing and membership in a choir was a way to position himself as unique, "he [made] being 'different' an investment by re-articulating choral singing as a powerful act of distinction and, in doing this, he challenges the discourse that this kind of singing is feminine" (p. 28). Thomas "uses singing as a valuable resource to be the boy that he wants to be" (p. 19).

Hall (2011) continued her work into singing and gender, while also examining class as another factor in boys' choral experiences. She examined the experiences of accomplished choirboys ages 10-13 from the perspectives of the singers themselves and their mothers, in order to understand the relationships between music, gender, and class. Hall relied upon feminist and

sociological perspectives, particularly Bourdieusian sociology, in order to understand the central question of "what allows boys to become choirboys"? Hall's findings suggest boys were able to leverage the power afforded them from their middle class position, economically and socially, in order to "trouble gender expectations for boys" (p. 159). The economic and social position of their families were most significant in enabling the boys to become choirboys, in what Hall characterized as middle class musical mothering, involving extensive involvement pedagogically and emotionally by the mothers. The boys exhibited a particular version of middle class masculinity in their views on musical style, quality teaching, and establishing themselves as different from other boys. Hall found boys were enabled additionally through interaction with eminent choir directors who demonstrated what Hall characterized as "pedagogy for virtuosity" (p. 215). Finally, Hall argued the boys displayed particular musical habitus, and used the concept of habitus to examine the intersections of the choir boys with dominant cultural narratives of music, gender, and class.

Summary: Boys, gender, and singing. Research examining social meanings of school music participation includes a body of research directly addressing gender and singing, and examining in greater detail the social environment of ensembles in schools and out. Researchers in this area rely more heavily upon qualitative methods, and even fictionalized accounts of participants' experiences. Adolescent boys may feel vulnerable singing at school, and despite peer encouragement to sing, they may also face negative feedback from peers and even adults in schools (Legg, 2013). In an in depth examination of singing in one school, boys interacted with

singing in choir in different ways according to their relative social status in the hierarchy of the school (Adler, 2002). A boy who sang in an elite boys choir invested his singing practice with symbolic capital, asserting singing as a sign of a strength and superiority, and as a way to reject narratives of singing as non-masculine (Hall, 2009). Class and gender were implicated in an examination of an elite boy choir, where middle class values and definitions of masculinity converged to support participation in a choir within a culture of performance excellence (Hall, 2011). These studies show that gender, class, and singing contexts are implicated in constructing meanings of singing. Different boys in the same school may experience singing differently according to social factors such as status, and other factors such as support from significant adults and peers.

The studies presented here deepen our understanding of the meanings of singing in choir by revealing ways that social constructs of gender interact with boys' lived experiences in vocal music. These studies share methodological approaches, in depth interviewing and, often, observation techniques. Importantly, the researchers frame their inquiry in order to reveal social constructs (gender, class) at the individual, school, and society level that may interact with musical meanings and participation for adolescent boys. These studies reveal that in making meaning of their choral experiences, boys may face barriers to singing in school, but not all boys experience those barriers in the same way. In the following section, I consider the work of researchers who have examined the social environment of music classrooms and music ensembles.

The music classroom and social identity. In this section I examine research considering relationships between practices in music classrooms and students' meaning making in relation to the social structures and personal identities. Frameworks guiding these investigations include personal investment theory, social identity theory, social capital, social identity formation, and social structures.

Bruenger (1999) investigated meanings of singing in a non-select choir through the framework of Personal Investment Theory (Maehr, 1984). In personal investment theory, meaning is defined to include three aspects: personal incentives (social goals, task goals, ego goals, etc.), perceived options (possibilities available and appropriate for oneself), and sense of self (identity, self-reliance, sense of competence). Personal investment theory suggests students carry meaning into the learning situation, including sociocultural context of the person, personal experiences, age, and performance situation. The features of the specific learning situation impact these meanings brought with the student, determining the student's personal investment in the learning experience, which the theory argues is observable in specific behaviors. Bruenger sought to examine the relationship between personal investment behaviors and the meaning non-select choir members made of their choir experiences. Data sources included audio and video recording of choir rehearsals in order to observe the direction, intensity, continuing motivation, and persistence behaviors of choir students. She also conducted small group interviews with all choir students, and profiled six students representing different behaviors in class. Students with strong musical identities had family support, a strong sense of competence, goal directedness

towards choir, and self-reliance. Cultural differences emerged as a factor in students' experiences of choir. The choir teacher and the school were predominantly white, with a population of African American students bused to the school from an urban center. African American students indicated conflicts in their perceived options in choir that white students did not, for example, in the manner of performance required, the choice of literature, and the teacher's authoritarian approach to classroom management. Bruenger's framework of personal investment theory provided a lens with which to explore a variety of contextual features that interacted with individual students' experiences of choir, in particular different experiences according to the cultural background of the students.

Using the method of grounded theory, Parker (2014) created a model of choir as a context for social identity development. She examined three high school choirs, interviewed 36 students and conducted observations and interviews with choir teachers. Parker's model reveals social identity development in choir as an 8-stage process from the decision to audition or remain in chorus leading to the central phenomenon of "team." Consequences of experiencing the central phenomenon of team led to benefits for the singers including pride (in successful performances, in their individual contribution, and in praise from others), "who I am" (in becoming more outgoing, in personal acceptance, and in singing ability), and culminating in a desire to give back to the community (p. 27). Factors that impeded social identity development included social cliques and egos, which participants in some choral contexts overcame by directly addressing these issues. Participants were both social producers and social products of their choral

environments. Thus, Parker concludes, the choral classroom is a site for adolescent social development and choir teachers may capitalize on this construction and reinforce this aspect of the choral experience to the benefit of their students.

Langston and Barrett (2008) and Langston (2009) conducted studies examining choral participation through the framework of social capital, revealing ways choirs build social capital for individuals and also serve as resources for the development of social capital in communities. Langston and Barrett (2008) conducted an interpretive case study of a community choir in order to examine the manifestation of social capital in the ensemble. Data generation included survey, field notes, and artifact elicited semi-structured interviews. The authors sought to examine participants' experience and perceptions of their choral experience as individuals, as well as interactions within the choir and the choir's interaction with the community. Twenty-seven of the choir's thirty members were included in the study. Features of social capital that were found in the community choir setting included shared norms and values, trust, civic and community involvement, networks, knowledge resources, contact with family and friends, and fellowship. Langston and Barrett note that individual social capital gained in choir increases the development of social capital in the broader community, via the choir's civic engagement activities and developing of connections and networks among local community performing groups. Langston (2009) further explored manifestations of social capital for one individual from the choir, Henry. Using narrative research techniques, Langston tells Henry's story, a man widely connected and active in his community including church, multiple choirs, and civic

organizations. Henry, influenced by his upbringing and social history, embodies bonding and bridging social capital. Langston notes, Henry's "activities work to develop social capital in the community in general and in the community choir in particular" (p. 78).

Hoffman (2012) conducted a multiple case study of six middle school band students in order to examine how they construct identities in the social context of a band classroom. Data collection included observations of band classes and of students, staff, and faculty in the school building, such as faculty meetings and lunch periods. Hoffman interviewed each participant three times and collected weekly reflections about their band experiences. The middle school band classroom served as a context for identity formation as students interacted with influential individuals, felt belonging to a social group in varying degrees, and interacted with others via specific roles. Hoffman noted how students' perceptions of their band classmates shifted over time from seeing others primarily as members of varying groups according to extra-curricular activities and social status to a greater knowledge of individuals.

Stereotypical instrument associations according to gender were present in the band and a social class structure was also evident. Students recognized that financial wealth benefited student achievement in the band program. Therefore, socio-economic status impacted musical identity for some students who were frustrated at not being able to advance to higher chair placements due to lack of affordability of private lessons. Students who participated in advanced ensembles were perceived to be more intelligent and academically successful than other students, although social class was also a factor in determining which students advanced to higher

placements. Hoffman revealed the impact the band program's evaluative structures had on student identity, where a placement in a lower level band would alienate students and result in their leaving the program of which they no longer felt a part.

Abril (2012) examined the meaning and value adolescent band participants assigned to their experiences. Five "hardcore" band students and the music teacher participated; findings from three representative students were presented. The social life of the band was described in terms of roles and hierarchies. The hardcore band students described themselves as leaders, either formal or informal, in the ensemble. Leadership roles were somewhat fluid, and mentoring other students was a noted aspect of responsible band membership. A hierarchy was evident in the band, with the hardcore students at the top; the "middles," which represented the largest proportion of students; and the slackers, whose apathy negatively impacted the band. The hardcore band members employed exclusionary/inclusionary tactics and therefore could be characterized as a clique. Meaning and value was found in active music making and responding, developing emotional awareness and self-regulation, and working with others towards common goals. Abril's research affirms band as a social learning space, with its own sociocultural system.

Summary: The music classroom and social identity. Examinations of the social meanings of school music ensembles reveal how social structures of programs interact with student experience, and how students are agents in creating social environments of ensembles. Strong musical identities were found in students with family support, sense of personal competence, goal directedness towards choir, and self-reliance (Bruenger, 1999). Barriers to

students' investment in school choir fell along lines of race, with African American students

experiencing conflicts with the structure of choir and the choir teacher related to performance

style, repertoire, and the teacher's enforcement of behavior (Bruenger, 1999). Parker (2014)

created a model of choir as a context for social identity development. She identified an eight-step

process with the central phenomenon being a sense of choir as a team. For singers who achieved

this state of feeling part of a team, benefits incurred were pride, personal development, and a

desire to give back to the community. Parker considered how choir singers were both products of

the choral environment, and producers of the choral environment with the ability to influence

and impact the classroom context.

Echoing choir as an avenue for giving back to the community, choral ensembles were

examined as sites for building social capital including features such as shared norms and values,

trust, civic and community involvement, networks, knowledge resources, contact with family

and friends, and fellowship (Langston, 2009; Langston & Barrett, 2008). Parker (2014) and

Langston and Barrett (2008) point to how choral ensembles interact with external sites,

specifically the communities in which they reside, primarily through public performance.

Two studies considering the social context of band classrooms point to an individual's

interaction with the social structure of a band, and how belonging can fluctuate according to

one's orientation to the group. An individual's identity in the band classroom can shift over time,

and be influenced by wider social and cultural influences such as gender and socioeconomic

status (Hoffman, 2008). A band classroom may be its own sociocultural system, with students

fulfilling specific, hierarchical roles, assuming responsibility for mentoring and encouraging dedication to band, while also engaging in exclusionary/inclusionary practices (Abril, 2012).

The studies considered in this section point to the complexity of the social environment of music ensembles. Individuals interact in unique ways with the environment of the music classroom. Cultural and social class differences interact with classroom norms (musical styles, behavior expectations, and evaluative procedures) to impact students' sense of musical identity and belonging (Bruenger, 1999; Hoffman, 2008). Students also play a role in shaping the music class environment, which may help to mediate barriers to a sense of belonging and to the benefits that a student may derive from feeling a part of a team (Parker, 2014). The music classroom may contain its own sociocultural system (Abril, 2012). Students may fulfill specific hierarchical roles, which may benefit the goals of the musical ensemble even as they include some band members and exclude others in different subgroups in the ensemble (Abril, 2012). In the following section I will consider the work of researchers who have looked at ensembles as cultures in order to examine in greater detail how the norms and values of an ensemble are created and recreated.

Choir and school music cultures

Morrison (2001) argued school music programs based in large ensemble traditions of choir, band, and orchestra were musical cultures in and of themselves, with their own "customs, conventions, and conversational manner" (p. 25). He suggested the cultural features of large ensemble music programs included: participation forming an aspect of student identity, common

forms of transmission, social dimensions, organizational hierarchy, traditional song, and traditional performance.

Researchers drew upon this idea to examine the subcultures of a high school music program of band, choir, and orchestra in order to consider: students' motivation to join and remain in music, the perceptions of the musical groups by members and school community, the meaning and value for the participants, and the social climate of the music classroom (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003). The findings included music students being viewed positively by the school, and as musically talented and intelligent. Benefits were: musical (knowledge and skills); academic (honors credit, resume enhancement); psychological (music class as development of positive personal qualities, as personal growth, as an emotional outlet, and as a positive atmosphere); and social (friendships and group membership).

Snead (2010) conducted an ethnography of the relationship between adolescents' musical lives and school music learning culture in a suburban high school. Two music teachers and seven adolescents participated in interviews. Like Bresler (1998), Snead determined that the school music learning culture was influenced by the teachers' musical values, backgrounds, and professional traditions in music education, and required them to negotiate between those aspects and the musical values of their students. Adolescents' musical lives were characterized by informal music activity valuing expression and feeling, relevance, quality in artistry and craftsmanship, and diversity. Snead characterized the dichotomy between in and out of school musical practices as emphasizing how music was learned, reacted to, and interacted with.

Teachers attempted to address adolescent musical interests by arranging popular music for performance or allowing students to choose repertoire to play, a focus on content that may not necessarily lead to opportunities for the kinds of musical engagements valued by adolescents.

Ramsey (2013) focused on one ensemble in her investigation of the culture of a highly successful high school men's chorus. Interviews with ten singers, two alumni, and the choir teacher, fieldnotes and artifacts were the data for the study. Features of this ensemble culture included an environment of support with formal and informal mentoring, pride in musical performance, and camaraderie built through traditions, friendship, and humor. The classroom environment balanced teacher authority with student responsibility and student voice in interpreting, analyzing, and expressing the music. An atmosphere of play, with jokes and side commentary, was balanced with focused work and intense effort. Trust in the ensemble arose partly because of the vulnerability participants felt was inherent in singing. Taking risks to sing in front of peers generated greater trust among the members of the choir and the choir teacher. Ramsey modeled the choral experience in the men's chorus by using the metaphor of a tightrope. This reflected the balancing act participants (including the teacher) engaged in between valuing strength and sensitivity, teacher authority and student ownership, work and play, and trust and vulnerability. Strength and sensitivity were gendered concepts for the participants. Singers described their experiences in the men's chorus as giving them feelings of power and manliness from an exceptional performance while also providing an opportunity for the participants to eschew hyper masculine expectations and engage with sensitivity and emotion. Ramsey

suggested the avenue for finding a balance between the varied dualistic aspects of the men's

chorus experience was the repertoire, the music itself. The music featured a variety of expressive

and educational challenges for the singers beyond stereotypical repertoires for men's choruses.

Bridges (1996) conducted an ethnographic case study of the Alabama Boy Choir,

including chorister and parent perspectives on the choral experience. The boys noted the

following aspects of their choral experience: musical competence and performance, working

hard, following rules and receiving recognition within the choir's structure, maintaining the

choir's reputation, social benefits, and broadening experiences (such as travel). Aspects of the

choral experience parents valued included discipline and responsibility, social and life

experience, competence and self worth, and music performance and instruction. Parents also

noted obligations for parental involvement, scheduling demands, and financial commitments as

facets of the choral experience. Bridges described the choral environment as one of discipline,

emphasizing manners and respect. The choir had a formalized promotion and reward system,

which included demerits for failing to meet standards for dress and behavior. Boys were

informed of their competence, motivated to work hard by the director, and challenged to improve

musically. Bridges found the director balanced success with challenge, strived to create

professionalism in the singers, and worked to maintain a musical partnership with the boys. Boys

experienced this environment as contributing to their sense of musical competence and self-

worth. Bridges summarized this choral climate as one of excellence.

Bartolome (2010) conducted a musical ethnography of the Seattle Girls' Choir, a successful choral organization built upon notions of musical excellence and comprehensive choral education that begins as early as age five. Bartolome interviewed choristers, faculty, and parents, and conducted fieldwork as a participant observer and faculty member in order to analyze the social organization and cultural structure of the choral institution in the lives of its members. She relied upon various frameworks to examine the choir as a cultural institution. Applying Bohannan's (1963) model, she considered four systems of the choir: the event system (daily practice for choristers, weekly rehearsals, annual events), the material system (the centrality of the musical score, body of repertoire, dress with the choir logo, and uniforms), the idea system (formal mission statement, philosophy of faculty, music education, benefits), and the social system (the girls as a tribe, the organizational and hierarchical structure of parent volunteers, and the triad of choristers, faculty, and parents). Bartolome, in working towards a global model of the culture and social system of the choir, considered how the three-part structure of teacher, students, and administrators was counterbalanced by the fluidity of roles within each group, and the organization's emphasis on collectivity and shared governance. Bartolome characterized the culture as a "community of partnerships" (p. 226) with the choristers, the girls, at the center.

Titcomb (2000) examined the choral culture of an adult church choir and processes by which adults learned and made music. Singers were motivated to participate in choir for fun, stress relief, fellowship, working with others towards a common goal, challenge, worship, and to

fulfill a calling to use their talent. Titcomb noted aspects of the culture including rules, norms and traditions that structured the choral institution and that also occasionally caused conflict, such as seating arrangements. Features of learning in the ensemble included formal instruction from the director and from more experienced members who commented frequently in rehearsals and aided less experienced members. This mentoring was referred to as the buddy system, which was an important feature of the choral culture of acceptance and support. Titcomb's in depth exploration of the adult church choir is notable for its insight into the practices and norms of a choir culture, including aspects of the culture that are undergoing change and that cause criticism and confrontation among participants.

Summary: Choir and school music cultures. The studies examined here reveal processes by which meanings of singing are constructed choir cultures, in the social, musical, and institutional environments of choirs. These studies point to how these choir cultures are shaped by the unique contexts in which the choirs exist and by the network of individuals who make up these groups, which includes not only singers and directors but also parents and other stakeholders. Choral cultures are influenced by the context in which they exist, their function in the school or community, and the unique set of circumstances through which singers access the choral experience.

Choir cultures involving intense family commitment such as the community children and youth choirs incorporate parents into the cultural system of the ensemble (Bartolome, 2010; Bridges, 1996). Parents value the experiences their children gain from their choral experience,

and may also experience difficulties to meet expectations for time and resources. Choirs may experience community conflict or tension over practices and norms, ultimately motivating change in choir cultures (Titcomb, 2000). Adults may have more influence over choir cultures, as they may enjoy greater power in the ensemble in their roles as singers and as volunteers in the choral administration.

The investigations into choral cultures considered here feature prolonged fieldwork and interviews with singers and conductors but also parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in choral organizations. For the youth and children's choirs examined here, musical excellence and intensity of social relationships were common features. Other choirs examined here were situated in school contexts or religious contexts, which impacted how participants constructed meaning of their experience.

Music programs in school culture

In this section I will consider studies most closely related to the present work, which examines a choral program in the context of a school culture. I examine research that examines school context and culture in relationship to music programs.

Using narrative inquiry, Brewer (2010) examined issues of race, language, class, and culture in relation to band participation at a school near the U.S./Mexico border from the perspective of three former band students. For a white, non-Hispanic student, a racial and ethnic minority in the school, band was a place to fit in and blend in. He saw band populated by academically achieving students, who valued his contribution. Sophia, a white, Hispanic student,

played tuba in the band for eight years. Sophia noted tensions between American and Hispanic culture in regards to band, in that concert band is not a part of Hispanic culture and is associated with white culture and prestige/elitism. Band in high school was viewed as an activity for white students for whom English was the dominant language. Band participation signaled school engagement and buy-in. The final participant, Lucia, immigrated from Mexico with her family and found the band to be a place with like-minded students, who valued school and wanted to engage in school activities. Band was a place where those who might feel like outsiders in the rest of the school, felt like insiders in the band culture. Differences in socioeconomic status made success in band more accessible to those who could take private lessons. Brewer suggests that the narratives reveal liminal spaces in which identity in schools is complicated by race, language, class, and culture, among others. The school band represented the values and agenda of the school, including formal education in English and a larger cultural and political agenda that was perceived in conflict with Hispanic cultural authority and values.

Hunt (2009) conducted a case study to examine stakeholders' views of the role of music programs in rural and urban districts. She interviewed music teachers, school and district administrators, schoolteachers, and parents from four school districts, two rural and two urban. Four themes emerged from the interviews: community interaction and awareness, understanding advantages and challenges, music teacher preparation, and recruiting and retaining music teachers. Advantages in rural contexts included sustained contact with students across grade levels, community support, and involved parents. Challenges in rural contexts included high

community expectations for the music program, maintaining privacy, lack of local music resources (private teachers, music stores), community scrutiny, and leadership expectations of the music teacher. Across rural and urban contexts teacher qualities such as musical skill, teaching skill, organizational skill, and advocacy skill were prioritized. Understanding cultural diversity was cited as important in both rural and urban contexts, as was managing demanding schedules and recruiting new teachers. Hunt proposed the Developing Contextual Awareness (DCA) model for music educators. The DCA models comprises four aspects: 1) understanding the music teachers' and music program's roles (local expectations from varying stakeholders), 2) focusing on advantages and accepting challenges as opportunities (community resources, community involvement), 3) creating and implementing specific professional development goals, and 4) committing to persistence with patience (cultivating dispositions for longevity in rural and urban contexts).

Bruenger (2009) conducted a case study to examine the "school-wide motivation culture" of an elementary general music program with a strong record of motivating students to persist in music at the middle school level (p. 3). Over 88% of students had persisted in music each year throughout the past decade at the time of the study. Observations and interviews with the music teacher and administrators were transcribed and analyzed using Maehr's (1992) framework "Transforming School Culture to Enhance Motivation." Bruenger's analysis revealed how the school environment supported student "task-goal adoption" in regards to learning tasks, evaluation, student recognition and awards, resources, and scheduling. In regards to learning

tasks, evaluation, and recognition, the school discouraged displays of relative ability or competition. There are no select membership groups, such as auditioned ensembles. Students were evaluated on effort and individual progress rather than relative performance standards in music. The principal at the school emerged as a key figure in determining the educational environment by promoting the school's philosophy related to curriculum, instruction, and evaluation. He was central in school's approach to resources and scheduling. He allocated resources to benefit the students and to support positive student outcomes (such as full sets of classroom instruments, grants for music materials, etc.). Finally, the principal viewed music, art, and physical education as integral parts of the school's educational mission, which led to scheduling structures that maintained instruction on early release days and that supported reasonable performance expectations for the music program. Based on this case study of school environment, Bruenger recommended music teachers focus on successful musical experiences for every child, articulate their goals in terms of benefits for all students, rationalize budgetary and scheduling needs in terms of student outcomes, and collaborate within their school.

Bresler (1998) examined elementary music instruction in order to examine the interaction between the institutional context (the meso level), the larger cultural context (macro level), and the teachers' beliefs and background (micro level). Data included nonparticipant observations of music instruction, after-school music clubs, music performances, and meetings of arts specialists, semi-structured interviews with teachers and principals, and analysis of materials including music textbooks, student tests, and program notes. In the participating school sites, music was

taught by classroom teachers in some schools and by music specialists in others. Music taught by classroom teachers was sporadic, focused on academic topics or seasons and holidays with an emphasis on lyrics and literacy over expression, musical concepts, or skills. These practices reflected school level values of prioritizing academic topics and verbal literacy, and society's similar emphasis on literacy and view of music as entertainment and as mood regulation. Performances led by classroom teachers were valued for entertainment and social relations. For music taught by specialists, a variety of approaches and values were evident, reflecting the teachers' images of their role in the classroom and their beliefs about music in their students' lives. Music instruction by specialists was teacher centered, large group, and prescriptive, rarely calling upon children to make individual expressive, interpretive, or creative decisions. School music taught by specialists was a distinctive subculture in the school, apart from regular academic instruction, and often viewed as dispensable by the school context. Allocations of space and time reflected school priorities, with limited time and lack of dedicated space for music instruction. School contexts prioritized certain teacher/student interactions and discipline/management routines; these could limit the kinds of musical experiences possible in school music and prevent improvisatory, collaborative, or creative endeavors. Macro level, cultural discourses and values, impacted music instruction. Macro level factors included values related to the status of school subjects, music consumption, narrow interpretations of multicultural education, and relative teacher autonomy in de-centralized educational institutions.

Bresler's examination reveals tensions between schools and music, and the framework of micro, meso, and macro provided varying perspectives on practices and their variations.

Harrison (2007) conducted a mixed methods study into male participation in music, including instrumental and vocal pursuits. The qualitative phase of Harrison's study is relevant here, involving interviews with adult men (ages 18-40) reflecting upon their school music experiences in instrumental and vocal music. Themes included early music experiences, situational factors, role models, music and sport, stereotyping and gender issues, and harassment. Findings showed that in early experiences, family, studio and class music teachers were important figures influencing the level and type of involvement the men encountered in music. Situational factors that impacted the participants' experiences included micro cultures of schools, classrooms, and families and macro cultural environments, such as society's views towards music participation for men in Australia. These situational factors could be positive resources, such as encouraging teachers, or barriers, such as homophobic attitudes, and perceptions of certain music activities as gender non-conforming. The relationship between music and sport pointed to the importance of school culture, in which music came second in some schools while in other schools music had a complementary relationship with extra-curricular athletics. Harassment was directed towards men engaging in what were considered gender non-conforming musical activities such as playing "feminine" instruments or singing; the harassment was often homophobic in nature. Harrison's findings point to the importance of context, and macro and micro cultures that individuals must negotiate in order to access music at school.

In a cross examination of schools in Australia and their musical cultures, factors that contributed to a positive musical culture supportive of boys' participation in music were identified in a single-sex, high achieving, private school (Bennetts, 2013). A case study of this school revealed the following features that contributed to boys' active participation in music: 1) the educational philosophy of the school (music as a part of a rounded, liberal arts education); 2) role of teachers (teachers actively promoting the school's philosophy of education and music); 3) a teacher-centered approach (traditional, classical music based approach to instruction); 4) music teacher characteristics (passion and conviction); 5) influence of class (middle class values), 6) influence of ethnicity (majority Asian descent student population with cultural valuing of classical music training and academic achievement); and 7) the single-sex environment (providing permission to boys to engage in a wider range of activities). This study identified aspects of school culture and school practices that positively impacted participation by its students, in this case male students. This study is important for its focus on contextualizing the meanings of music participation within a school culture.

Summary: Music programs in school culture. The research examined here focused on school music ensembles in the context of school culture. The meanings of participation in school music were influenced by a variety of internal and external aspects including school and community structures, school leadership, and assumptions about music participation. In a school near the U.S. / Mexico border, the band program was associated with white students, English language, and school achievement (Brewer, 2010). These aspects isolated the band program from

the mainstream culture of the school populated by Hispanic students. Hunt (2009) examined the role of music programs in rural and urban schools, and proposed a model of contextual awareness for music educators to apply in their schools in order to successfully interact with varied school environments. The principal emerged as a key figure in providing leadership for a school culture that supported music education, student participation, and access to quality instruction (Bruenger, 2009). Bennetts (2013) examined a school culture that supported male participation in music, identifying aspects such as the educational philosophy of the school and teachers, music teacher characteristics, influence of socioeconomic status and ethnicity, and a single-sex environment. These views of school culture primarily focused on school and community level factors that interacted with music programs. Other research conceptualized school and educational culture as encompassing wider external forces. Bresler (1998) considered the culture of elementary general music and how school music interacted with teacher beliefs, school practices, and broader cultures of education. Harrison (2007) examined both individual and contextual factors such as the micro culture of schools, classrooms, and families and macro cultural environments that impacted participants' access to music.

Conclusion

This literature review primarily examined research in choral settings beginning with studies broadly construing meaning, motivation, participation, benefits and value of the choral experience in order to examine how singers experience choir. Amidst this research, boys and young men were particular focus populations. Studies that sought greater depth of understanding

of particular choral contexts illuminated processes by which choral cultures were built and maintained in community and school settings. Finally, a line of research has examined school music in school culture, relying on varying definitions of school culture including definitions that view school cultures as self-contained and those that account for external influences.

The present study contributes to this body of research by considering how school culture interacts with meanings of singing. This study examines the meanings of singing in a choral program in a rural school context from the perspective of boys and girls, parents, and school personnel. It builds upon previous qualitative research into the sociocultural meanings of music and choral participation, and seeks to specifically understand how school culture enables or impedes choral participation within a school context, which may include constructs such as gender and class, but may also relate to institutional structures in the school. This research considers school culture as encompassing the school and community, but also consider interactions with wider cultural issues.

Chapter 3

Method

I used a case study design in order to examine a secondary choral program in a rural school district in the Northeastern United States. I bound the case at the program level in order to understand the meanings of singing and choral participation within a specific school context from the perspective of multiple actors involved with the program including 7th-12th grade choir students, parents, school personnel, and the choir teacher. This case study entailed extensive data generation including 18 semi-structured interviews with 26 participants, 34 hours of non-participant observation, and examination of public documents. Through the data generation and analysis process, I explored the central questions guiding my research: 1) What characterizes the culture of the choral program? 2) How does the choral program interact with the wider school culture? 3) How is choral participation enabled or impeded in school culture?

Research setting

The community. When asked to describe the area that the school district serves, the first word most students used was "small." The number of stoplights in the village can be counted on one hand. Students commented that there were not a lot of stores in town, and that there wasn't much to do. "Almost nothing happens," commented an eighth grade boy. A seventh grade girl said, "a lot of last names are common around here and everyone kind of knows each other, like family sort of." One parent described the community as "close knit" and "safe." Another parent commented, "It's not a city and it's not so rural like some of the outlying areas here so I think

it's good…. Bridgetown's an okay place to learn to drive and to grow up and not be in a panic all

the time about what might happen and that sort of thing."

The greater Town of Bridgetown[1] is home to 10,000 residents spread out across 100

square miles of rural landscape including two small villages, Bridgetown Village and Rock

Village. Bridgetown Village hosts the schools. Bridgetown Village is located within Ridge

County, the most rural county in the state. There is no interstate highway that serves Ridge

County, and there is no passenger rail service. Cargo rail still crosses the county, with trains

blaring their horns as they transverse residential areas twice a day on a predictable schedule.

There is one private bus company that runs coach buses several times daily across the county and

will carry travelers from Ridge County to the closest medium-sized airport, approximately two

hours away. College students and Amish residents are common passengers.

There are two small universities serving approximately four thousand students each that

sit on opposite corners of the village, one public and one private. Educational institutions employ

36% of the village population. Parents noted the universities as important aspects of community

life. A mother of a seventh grade girl shared, "There's a lot going on because of the colleges here

and I really enjoy that." Likely due to the economic stability offered by the universities, the

village's socioeconomic statistics are better than county at large. In the village, the median

income is 51K compared with 30K in the county. The per capita income in the village is 21K

---

[1] All names of places and people have been changed.

compared with 15K in the county. In the Village, 10% of residents live below the poverty level compared to 20% in the county as a whole.

The county's economy has been struggling in recent years, with manufacturing and resource sectors (logging, paper manufacturing, and mining) closing plants and laying off workers. A parent described the economic changes he has observed over the past two decades, "When I first came up here [in 1993], there was a lot more industry. Kraft had a plant here in Bridgetown. GM had a plant [nearby]. There were several other businesses in the area that were doing well. Those have all closed now. It seems to be more of an economic struggle for businesses to survive up here now." Dairy is the dominant agricultural activity in the region; seasonal immigrants are the primary farm laborers. The annual Miss Dairy festival speaks to the importance of dairy in the region's self-image. The two-day celebration includes food and games in the park culminating in a parade through town.

Middle-class professionals primarily work in public sector and in education jobs at public schools, colleges, and in the state prison system. In many small towns and villages in the county, the public school system is the largest single employer. All of the adults interviewed for this study were middle class professionals working in education or in the public sector.

The Village of Bridgetown, which is home to approximately 7,000 residents, hosts the school district buildings. Bridgetown Village is 3.5 square miles in area. Single-family homes on tree-lined streets make up the center of the village, which is divided north and south by a two-lane road that serves as the central artery of the county. Reflecting the economic disparities in the

community, some houses are maintained and their historic charm restored with fresh paint and planters of flowers. Other houses show wear and are in need of maintenance. There are a few small apartment complexes and some mobile homes clustered together in the village. Driving along the two lane roads through agricultural fields and forested land, single mobile homes and old farmhouses can be seen. Amish communities have grown in the past 30 years, drawn to the area by inexpensive land. Buggies are frequent sights on roads, and Amish sell crafts and produce at local farmer's markets and roadside stands.

The main artery through Bridgetown, Central Street, is a small business district and home to county offices. Businesses include a five-screen movie theater that plays mainstream films, a café, a bagel shop, several pizza restaurants, and assorted small businesses such as a locksmith, a hair salon, and a dress shop. Several storefronts are empty. Like the rest of the county, the economic engines of the village are educational institutions.

The district. The Bridgetown School District consists of a medium-sized, single level, red brick building complex housing district administrative offices, the elementary school, the middle school, and the high school. The school buildings connect to each other, making it possible to walk from one school to the other via long hallways without having to go outside, a boon in the frigid winter months. The district falls into an average needs category; 33% of students in the district are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The district is overwhelmingly white, non-Hispanic (95%), with a small minority population (2% Black, 2% Asian, 1% Hispanic). Each grade level has approximately 80-100 students, with total district enrollment K-

12 at approximately 1,200 students. The district's educational philosophy speaks to the desire to create an academically challenging environment that is also socially fulfilling.

The school district is part of an educational consortium that serves Bridgetown Schools along with 15 other rural school districts in order to share resources for special programs. The consortium provides adult education, Career and Technical Education, special education, and other services that would stretch the capacity of the small school districts. Career and technical programs include, for example, Automotive Technology and Early Childhood Education. High school students may begin these programs part time in their junior year. Students enrolled in these programs go to a special campus for half days during their junior and senior years. The consortium also provides special education services for students aged 3-21, mostly within their local school and in the "least restrictive environment." Students with cognitive disabilities participate in the choral program and attend rehearsals accompanied by an aide.

Bridgetown School District has been financially strained since 2008 by decreased state and federal aid (in 2013-2014 there had been an overall decrease in state aid of 16% since the 2008-2009 school year). The district has relied upon voter-approved increases to property taxes to raise revenue, but state legislative caps on raising property taxes limit the scope of these efforts. Concern over losing programs and personnel due to the economic troubles of the district was an ongoing theme within the community during the 2014-2015 school year, with dire budget predictions communicated in school bulletins. Budget shortfalls in prior years led to overall staff reductions in the entire district. Fifty-five full time positions were cut in the years between 2008-

2013, 25% of the district's faculty and staff. These reductions included the loss of one full time

music position in the district, reducing the music staff from five to four positions. This lost

position was a choral/general music teacher, and those classes were cut or added to the other

music teachers' schedules.

      The music program. Bridgetown School District begins music education in kindergarten

with general music classes taught by a full time elementary general music teacher. The annual

third grade musical is an event highlighted in school bulletins, and the elementary general music

teacher also leads the Fourth Grade Choir. Instrumental music education begins in the spring of

fourth grade. Current music staffing includes an elementary general music teacher (K-5th grades),

a middle school general music/4th-6th grade band teacher, a chorus teacher (5th-12th grades), and a

secondary (7th-12th grades) band teacher. The secondary instrumental program consists of Middle

School Band (7th-8th grades), Concert Band (9th-12th grades), Jazz Band (9th-12th grades), Jazz

Combo (9th-12th grades), and a Rock Band class (9th-12th grades). The choral program consists of

Fifth Grade Choir, Sixth Grade Choir, Middle School Choir (7th-8th grades), Concert Choir (9th-

12th grades), Chamber Singers (9th-12th grades), and Jazz Singers (9th-12th grades). All ensembles

were classes that met during the regular school day. Music classes at the middle and high school

met every other day on a rotating schedule for 45 minutes. Band and choir are on alternating

days in the schedule, facilitating student participation in both instrumental and vocal music.

      The band and choir teachers teach small group lessons during the school day as part of

their teaching load; students come to their lesson during other classes. Fifth and sixth grade band

students receive one half an hour lesson per week on their instruments in addition to participating in a regularly scheduled large ensemble. Instrumental lessons continue throughout middle and high school. Sex segregated small group vocal lessons begin in high school, and these lessons are a required component of Concert Choir membership. Lessons for ensemble participants are standard throughout the state in which the study took place and are not unique to this school district.

Bridgetown maintained numbers high enough for viable ensembles from the perspective of the music teachers. Enrollment can be a concern for small schools where the proportion of students participating needs to be higher than for programs at large schools. For example, in order for a school of 1200 students to fill 40 slots in choir, only 3% of the student population needs to enroll. At a school of 400 students like Bridgetown High School, 10% of the overall population would need to enroll to get the same 40 students into choir. In the music program, out of approximately 100 students in 5th grade, 76 participated in 5th Grade Choir, 76% of 5th grade students. Out of 200 students in 7th and 8th grades, 63 were in Middle School Chorus, 31% of 7th and 8th grade students. Out of approximately 400 students at the high school level 48 were in Concert Choir, 12% of the 9th-12th grade students. The auditioned choirs enrollment was as follows, Chamber Singers enrolled 20 students (5% of 9th-12th grade students) and Jazz Singers enrolled 13 singers (3% of high school students). Numbers were comparable in Middle School Band (46 participants, 23% of 7th and 8th grade students) and Concert Band (39 participants, 9% of 9th-12th grade students). These numbers show that participation rates were highest in the

younger grades and the choral program faced attrition as students aged. With this attrition in mind, Mrs. Ames worked to maintain high enrollment in 5th grade choir.

Music students may participate in a variety of extra-curricular opportunities including honors ensembles (All-County ensembles, Area All-State), the state solo festival, and other collaborations with local community and university events (such as the annual assembly of a children's chorus to sing at the local university's holiday concert). Student participation in these activities is highlighted in school bulletins and concert programs indicate which students have participated in these special events.

Site selection and gaining entry

Music education faculty at a local university familiar with area music programs and music teachers recommended the choral program at Bridgetown Schools and the work of its choir teacher Mrs. Ames. Criteria for site selection was threefold: 1) a school with a successful choral program with participation by boys and girls, 2) a reputation of quality instruction based on the recommendation of local music teachers, and 3) access. These three criteria were met at Bridgetown.

I made contact with Mrs. Ames and arranged to attend a choir concert in the spring of 2014 in order to introduce myself and to see the choral program in action. Based on my observation of the choir concert and input from the music education faculty, I determined the choir program met my criteria. Mrs. Ames indicated immediate interest in the project and a willingness to participate. I scheduled a meeting with her and both the middle school and high

school principals to discuss the project. With the approval of each of the principals, I contacted

the superintendent and gained permission at the district level. The Institutional Review Boards at

the college where I was employed as an instructor of music education and at Northwestern

University approved the research project. As a district requirement, prior to gaining entry to the

school, I underwent finger printing for the school's background check system. With school and

district level permissions, IRB approval, and background check complete, I began the study in

the fall of 2014 and conducted the research during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

Participants

      The choir teacher. Mrs. Ames is the choral music educator at Bridgetown School

District serving students in grades 5th-12th grades. At the time of the study, she had been teaching

choir in Bridgetown schools for fifteen years, and teaching choir for a total of 19 years. Mrs.

Ames is an active and energetic figure in the school and community at large. In addition to

serving as the choir and tech theater teacher, Mrs. Ames directs the school musical theater

productions and is the tech director for school plays. She has volunteered in leadership positions

for the local teacher's union, serves in county music education organizations, and directs summer

musical theater productions in the local community. She holds an undergraduate and a master's

degree in music education. Mrs. Ames participated in two semi-structured interviews, and we

shared many informal conversations throughout the study.

      Choir students. Students in the Middle School Chorus and the Concert Choir were

invited to participate in the study. At the start of data collection, I spoke briefly to the two choirs

and handed out forms to interested students. Twenty choir students returned consent forms, and

nineteen choir students participated in the study. Participants were seven middle school students

(4 girls, 3 boys) and twelve high school students (8 girls, 4 boys). The student participants

represented every grade level (7th-12th) and a variety of academic profiles, with some in

Advanced Placement courses and others entering the CTE program. Students participated in one

semi-structured interview, either individually, in pairs, or in small groups, according to their

availability. These interviews ranged from 22 to 65 minutes in length.

Parents and school personnel. Parents were invited to participate in the study via the

student recruitment letter. Four parents of choir singers participated in this study, one father and

three mothers. Two of the parent participants were also teachers in the Bridgetown School

District, and this dual role added further insight to our conversation. Two individuals in

administrative roles at the schools agreed to participate in the study, the middle school principal

and a high school guidance counselor. Parents and school personnel participated in one semi-

structured interview.

Data Generation

Fieldwork. Prolonged engagement resulted in 34 hours observing two choir classes,

Middle School Chorus and Concert Choir, and music related school events during seven months

throughout the 2014-2015 school year (see Table 3.1 for observation schedule). I did not have

access to Jazz Singers, Chamber Singers, or small group lessons and therefore relied upon

participant reports regarding those ensembles. I relied upon the ethnographic fieldnoting

technique delineated by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011). During observations I brought a small notebook into which I made jottings by hand. My jottings included verbatim quotes and descriptions of rehearsals and events. Students in the choir classroom were accustomed to being observed by local college students who periodically came with observation sheets to fill out. On one or two occasions, college students were observing at the same time that I was. Thus, my non-participant observation of rehearsals and my writing into a notebook was an unremarkable activity. Confident that my jottings were unobtrusive, I openly took notes during rehearsals and performances.

Over the course of the study, as I began to interview students and become a familiar face in the classroom to some, students would greet me and I would hold brief conversations with them before class or with students hanging out in the choir room as I waited to meet others for interviews after school. Despite becoming recognizable to some, others had no idea who I was after months of visits and mistook me for a substitute teacher on a couple of occasions.

I worked to transform the jottings into descriptive fieldnotes as soon as possible. Descriptive fieldnotes are full narratives describing people and events observed in full sentences. I wrote fieldnotes in a variety of ways. At times I would write them in chronological order, from the beginning of rehearsals or performances until the end, elaborating on details that struck me as significant or capturing dialogue between teacher and students that seemed important. Other times I would write up a significant episode first, and then fill in the rest. At the end of the

fieldnotes, and sometimes in the middle, I included commentaries in italics. These commentaries

allowed me to pose questions and begin to interpret the day's observations.

Table 3.1

Observation Schedule

Date	Class/Event	Minutes
October 15, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
October 23, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
October 27, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
October 29, 2014	Concert Choir	45
November 4, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
November 14, 2014	High School Play	120
November 18, 2014	Concert Choir	45
November 20, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
November 24, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
December 3, 2014	Music Concert	90
December 9, 2014	Middle School Choir	90
	Concert Choir	
December 11, 2014	Music Concert	90
December 12, 2014	Middle School Choir	45
December 16, 2014	Concert Choir	45

March 17, 2015	Middle School Choir	45
April 28, 2015	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
April 30, 2015	Concert Choir	45
May 7, 2015	5th-7th Grade School Musical	90
May 12, 2015	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
May 14, 2015	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
May 20, 2015	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45
May 20, 2015	Music Concert	90
June 3, 2015	Music Concert	90
June 5, 2015	Middle School Choir	45
	Concert Choir	45

Interviews. One semi-structured interview was conducted with all participants except the music teacher, who participated in two interviews. Interviews lasted from twenty minutes to an hour and a half. Student interviews occurred in small groups of 2-4 or individually according to students' schedules. Student schedules needed to be coordinated with athletic schedules, tutoring, theater, musical theater, and after school busses. Student interviews mostly took place after school in a small conference room in the school library. This room had large windows with blinds closed to the library and large tables pushed together with chairs around it. One interview

took place during lunch, and one interview took place after school in the choir teacher's office. Adult interviews were conducted individually face to face at a location convenient to the participant, which included a local coffee shop, the participant's classroom, and the participants' office in the case of the principal, the guidance counselor, and the music teacher. One parent interview was conducted over the phone.

A total of eleven interviews were conducted with choir singers, totaling 7 hours and 13 minutes of interviews. A total of 7 interviews were conducted with adults including school personnel and choir parents, totaling 5 hours and 13 minutes of interviews. A list of participants and interviews can be seen in tables two and three.

Table 3.2

Choir Student Participants and Interview Schedule

Pseudonym	Gender	Grade	Group Interview	Individual Interview	Minutes
Cheryl	F	7th	December 16, 2014		35
Amy	F	7th	December 16, 2014		35
Chloe	F	7th	March 10, 2015		22
Elizabeth	F	7th	March 10, 2015		22
Nathan	M	8th		March 10, 2015	23
Jason	M	8th		March 12, 2015	29
Adam	M	8th		May 15, 2015	36
Amelia	F	9th	December 15, 2014		42
Brittany	F	9th	December 15, 2014		42
Ellie	F	9th		May 13, 2015	41
Cole	M	9th	March 26, 2015		65

Keira	F	10th	March 24, 2015		46
Hope	F	10th		May 14, 2015	42
Christopher	M	10th	March 26, 2015		65
Kimberly	F	11th	December 15, 2014		42
Eric	M	11th	April 30, 2015		52
Jen	F	12th	March 24, 2015		46
Sam	M	12th	April 30, 2015		52
Marley	F	12th	December 15, 2014		42

Table 3.3

Adult Participants and Interview Schedule

Pseudonym	Gender	Role	Interview	Minutes
Mrs. Ames	F	Choir Teacher	March 9, 2015	27
			June 15, 2015	77
Principal	F	Middle School Principal	March 5, 2015	19
Guidance Counselor	F	High School Guidance Counselor	June 17, 2015	55
Sara	F	Parent of Jerod (eighth grade)	March, 12, 2015	39
Jon	M	Parent of Brittany (ninth grade) and Kimberly (eleventh grade)	March 9, 2015	42
Sharon	F	Parent of Elizabeth (seventh grade)	March 24, 2015 (via phone)	22
Irene	F	Parent of Amelia (ninth grade)	April 7, 2015	32

Audio recording. All interviews were audio recorded for transcription. Interviews were transcribed in their entirety. Adult participants were given the option of audio recording, and all consented to be audio recorded. Audio recording was a required element of participation for the choir students because they were mostly interviewed in groups.

Interview protocols. The interview protocols (available in Appendix A) provided the basis for the semi-structured interviews with each group. Follow-up questions were posed in the course of interviews to clarify and deepen participants' perspectives, to elaborate on themes from previous interviews, and to verify emergent themes in the study.

Documents. Public school and district documents were analyzed for the study including community bulletins, newsletters, and concert programs. I collected these documents from attending concerts, from the district website, and from community mailings. I relied upon government census data and news reports for information about the county and the school district.

Data Analysis

Interviews and fieldnotes were transformed into research texts via transcription and writing of descriptive field texts. All identifying names and places were removed from transcripts and descriptive fieldnotes. All transcripts and fieldnotes were analyzed using *HyperResearch*, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program. Analysis of documents was completed by hand rather than using *HyperResearch* by writing into the margins of the documents.

My analysis process followed what Creswell (2007) described as the data analysis spiral. Processes in the spiral include data generation, data management, reading and memoing, reflecting and writing notes, describing, classifying, and interpreting, comparing and categorizing, and finally, representing and visualizing. I relied upon Saldaña's (2013) manual for coding processes.

As I read over transcriptions I engaged in what Saldaña calls pre-coding by highlighting sections that I deemed worthy of attention or topics to explore further in subsequent interviews. The formal analysis process progressed from codes, to categories, to themes. First cycle analysis involved coding using descriptive and "In Vivo" codes (p. 91). Descriptive codes allow researchers to analyze and categorize basic topics for further analysis. In Vivo codes use language pulled from the research text, and allow the actual words of the participants to be used in naming constructs and ideas. Second cycle coding involved creating categories by grouping codes together. Creating categories is an analytic strategy to reduce codes by identifying patterns. Finally, themes emerged. Creswell (2007) describes themes as key issues in the case, in which the researcher creates assertions and interprets the meaning of the case. Saldaña reminds researchers to not rush to themes, as "a theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection" (p. 14). Themes are the final interpretive phase of analysis.

Validation and reliability

I employed several validation strategies including prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking, and peer review (Creswell, 2007). Prolonged engagement in the field over

seven months allowed me to build trust with participants and learn the culture of the choral

classroom. By the end of my observation period, I had the sense that salient features were

repeating themselves and had become familiar to me. Triangulation was accomplished by relying

upon multiple and different sources of information. Member checking involved asking

participants to comment upon emerging findings and themes. I accomplished this by asking

follow-up questions in interviews related to particular concepts that were emerging in the study.

For example, the concept of well-roundedness surfaced first in student interviews and I was able

to ask parents and school personnel to further explain and comment upon this concept. I did not

share raw data with participants in the form of transcripts, but when common concepts and

themes emerged across interviews I worked to clarify and understand these concepts in

subsequent interviews.

Reflexivity

Creswell (2007) asks qualitative researchers to acknowledge, "how we write is a

reflection of our own interpretation based on the cultural, social, gender, class, and personal

politics we bring to research" (p. 179). I began my life in music singing at home. I first sang in

choirs in elementary school and have been singing in choirs ever since. Choral singing has been

the cornerstone of my life as a musician.

I first became interested in intersections of music and social issues through choral

experiences and choral conductors who brought issues of social justice to the fore. I studied

gender studies in college in addition to music education. I became interested in multicultural

education and culturally responsive teaching, and went on to work in diverse school settings. I have since focused my career on general music, which has included work with children and youth in choral settings. Working in multiple schools in multiple states highlighted the importance of school context on music education programs and particularly on the meanings of singing. Service in the United States Peace Corps, in which I was an education volunteer, brought questions of culture and schooling into stronger focus. Graduate work has since deepened my understanding of musical cultures and cultures of schooling. These personal, professional, and academic experiences, and my position as a middle class, white, female singer, have impacted the questions I asked and the way in which I interpreted them.

Limitations

This study faced limitations related to its scope, site access, and sampling. By defining the case as the secondary choral program, the aim was to consider the experiences of adolescents who have been the focus of meaning of singing literature. Thus, singing in the K-5th grade general music program and in the 4th-6th grade choirs are not included in this study. References to these aspects of the vocal music program were made throughout the study, however, and seemed to be key pieces in fostering singing in the school. Exploration of these contexts was limited by the design of the study, which was focused on 7th-12th grade experiences.

Another limitation in the study was site access. Due to permissions from the school, observations were limited to the non-auditioned choral ensembles at the secondary level and therefore information about the auditioned ensembles came via interview data only.

Additionally, I had permission to observe choirs in the 7th-12th grade choral program, but was not able to observe participants in settings such as academic classes or in extracurricular contexts. Thus, my firsthand observations are those of the choral program and music related school events, leaving me to rely upon participants' descriptions for other aspects of the school.

This study faced limitations due to sampling. Understandings of school culture are exclusively from the perspective of choir participants, their parents, and school personnel. Choir participants were the majority of participants in the study. This study would have benefited from greater participants at the administrative and school personnel level. This study was limited by a lack of socioeconomic diversity in the parents interviewed for the study; all the parents were middle class. These sampling limitations impacted the diversity of perspectives on school culture and the meanings of singing in the school.

This study's findings are limited to the perspectives of those who participated, the events I observed, and the documents I analyzed. This study's findings cannot be generalized to other rural, secondary choral programs. This rural school district is unique for the presence of two institutions of higher education in the small village it serves, which provides the community with resources other rural villages would not have. The music teacher does not face some of the challenges cited as common to rural schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter I described the design and the method of this case study. I began by describing the setting for the study, a school district of 1200 students within a rural,

economically struggling county in the Northeastern United States. Despite these factors, the school district has a large music department with four full time music teachers. Budget pressures led to the loss of a full time music position several years ago and there is ongoing concern over the future of special programs at the school.

This school site was selected based on criteria including quality of the choral program and accessibility. I gained access to the site with the permission of the music teacher, the school administration, and the district administration. Human subject review boards at two universities with which I was affiliated approved the project. Participants included the choir teacher, choir students in grades 7-12, parents of choir students, and school personnel.

Data generation involved semi-structured and informal interviews, non-participant observation, and review of public documents. Analysis followed the data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2007). Analysis of research texts involved coding, categorizing, and generating themes (Saldaña, 2013). I employed several validation strategies including prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking (Creswell, 2007).

The Culture of the Choral Program

This chapter answers research question one: What characterizes the culture of the choral program? Themes emerged related to the culture of the secondary choral program at Bridgetown including the choir teacher's vision for the choral program, the choral program's social and academic culture, and changes in the social and academic culture of the choral program during Mrs. Ames' tenure. The choir teacher's vision is anchored by beliefs in music education for all students, developing musicianship, and relationships. Themes related to the social culture of the choral program were relationships between the choir teacher and students, mentors, role models, friendships, and managing different levels of engagement in choir. Themes related to the academic curriculum of the choral program included musicianship, student song choice and the role of popular music in the choral curriculum, extra-curricular performance opportunities, and vocal pedagogy. Changes in the social and academic culture of the choral program reflect concerted efforts to improve both aspects of the program by Mrs. Ames and the music department. I present two profiles of students, a Concert Choir singer and a Middle School Chorus member, whose individual perspectives shed light on aspects of the social and academic culture of the program.

Entering the choir program

A picture of the choral program in action follows including a description of the choir room and a narrative of a rehearsal of each large, non-auditioned ensemble: the Middle School Chorus and the Concert Choir. The purpose of this section is to give insight into the lived experience of participating in the choirs at Bridgetown, the regular rehearsals that make up a

central point of interaction between the students and the choir teacher, and the classroom space which serves as the hub of the choral program.

The choir room. Entering the district complex from the high school entrance, the main office is on the left and the entrance doors to the auditorium are on the right. Past the auditorium, there is a hallway to the right that leads to the library, the technology lab, and the choir room. The choir room is opposite the backstage of the auditorium and the technical theater classroom, providing easy access to both. The choir room is set apart from the rest of the school. It is designated as the high school choir room, but the middle school choir classes are held there as well, giving the middle school students the chance to walk through the high school hallways.

The choir room is not large. It has a lived in, relaxed feel. There is a wall length bank of windows with a raucous assortment of potted plants on the window ledge. The windows provide a view of the parking lot and athletic fields beyond. Stacks of music and papers are in various piles on surfaces. Bookcases are filled with collections of art song and musical theater compilations for voice lessons. The choral library appears to be located on top of the bookcases, as boxes of octavos line the cases. Posters from previous plays and musicals hang on the walls and cabinets that line another wall, evidence of the close connection between the choral and theater department. Several music contest award plaques hang on the wall, heralding past achievements of singers at Bridgetown. The choir room adjoins the band room via double doors inside the room. The bands and choirs share concerts, and students walk from band through the

choir room during passing time and at the end of the day to reach the hallway and exit to the parking lot.

There are chairs stacked against one wall, pulled into use when the risers overflow. An occasional prop chair can be found in the mix, an upholstered chair with wooden armrests and worn padding amidst the plastic school chairs. Because of the size of the room, two sections of risers face each other with a piano in the middle. The choir room teems with students for the two large ensembles, Middle School Chorus and Concert Choir. For the auditioned groups with fewer members (20 in Chamber Singers and 13 in Jazz Singers), and for group voice lessons, students cluster around the piano in the center of the room. Students pile their backpacks and books on the edges of the room, grab their choir folder from shelves, and find their place on the risers at the start of class. After school, students can be found hanging out in the choir room.

Mrs. Ames' office is tucked into one corner of the room, enclosed but visible with half walls and then windows to the ceiling. Her office features a dusty rose colored chaise lounge on one wall, on which two to three students can often be found visiting with her or doing homework. Her small desk is lodged into the back corner, and a comfy, worn upholstered chair sits in the corner directly in front of her desk. Her office is host to stacks of scores, props, and decorated with posters, art, and family pictures. It is a comfortable and warm space. The choir room with its clutter and remnants of concerts, musicals, and plays past, feels lived in and personal despite the fluorescent lighting and linoleum tile.

A Middle School Chorus rehearsal in autumn. The seventh and eighth grade students enter the choir room talking and eating food from the cafeteria—bagels, chips and cold pop tarts. Some are alone and others enter in pairs or groups. The students vary in their dress, such as an eighth grade boy, Jason, in a button down shirt and tie, dressed up for a basketball game. He climbs onto the top step of the riser, and is joined by two friends, Nathan and Mark. Some girls have dyed their hair with different colors; none of the boys sport multi-colored hair. Most students wear simple t-shirts, jeans, and tennis shoes. As the students fill them, the risers are at overflow capacity. The Middle School Chorus has 61 members (15 boys, 46 girls). Several boys sit in chairs next to the risers to accommodate the overflow. As Jake walks into the room alone, Mrs. Ames quips, "How's Jake with the quick back hand?" Jake smiles big and laughs, finding a chair. In these brief minutes before class, Mrs. Ames engages frequently in brief individual interactions with students.

The Middle School Chorus is divided into three voice part sections: sopranos, altos, and basses. The risers are arranged like a parenthesis around the piano. Sopranos fill two riser sections and take up one side of the parenthesis. Among the sopranos are seventh grade students Chloe, Elizabeth, and Amy. Altos take up one riser section on the opposite side. Among the altos, standing near the top row, is Cheryl, a seventh grade girl. Students choose their voice part at the beginning of the year according to what range they are most comfortable singing.

The boys take up another riser section next to the altos. Mrs. Ames refers to this group alternatively as "gentlemen" and "basses," but the boys are in a variety of stages of change, a

fact acknowledged in class with some regularity. Some seventh grade boys on the alto/bass border sing exclusively alto. A seventh grade boy, Ryan, sits on the border and sings alto in a clear, strong treble next to another boy, Simon, who also sings alto. Ryan is an informal leader of the alto section and Mrs. Ames calls him a "triple musical threat," as he plays trumpet, horn, and sings. In the second semester, Ryan left the border between altos and basses and joined the soprano section. Simon stayed on the border. The students in Middle School Chorus have a variety of musical backgrounds, some take private music lessons on piano or other instruments, some perform in the Middle School Band, which meets on alternate days from choir, and for others choir is their only performing outlet.

Warm-ups ensue and Mrs. Ames continues her banter with individuals and groups of students by sections. Her dialogue interweaves musical commentary with reminders of classroom expectations. During stretching, she reminds the class: "Food is away. Gum is away. Check your feet." She leads the class in breathing exercises with sweeping arm and pulsing hand motions. "Use your hands for breathing, not your neighbor's hair," she says, looking pointedly in the direction of a few sopranos combing fingers through each other's hair. Mrs. Ames often uses anonymous correction when redirecting students in front of the class. She works to encourage engagement in choir by invitation, "Join us!" rather than admonishments such as: "You're supposed to be doing X, Y, Z."

The choir teacher frequently comments positively on sections and calls out individuals by name for accolades, "nice sound, gentlemen," "great posture, Jane." She moves between a

relaxed learning environment and musical rigor. She will joke with the students in one moment, and ask for a quick return to focus in the next when it's time to perform.

Often, students are given the impetus for monitoring themselves in terms of behavior and classroom expectations. For example, students are allowed to bring food into the classroom but cannot eat during class. If food debris is found in the classroom, no food is allowed in subsequent classes. The students view this policy as fair and reasonable. Mrs. Ames aligns classroom practices with middle school students' sense of justice and fairness.

After vocal warm-ups, attention turns to a rhythm reading exercise notated on the white board. Mrs. Ames has excerpted a syncopated rhythm from a piece of music to be worked on in rehearsal. The students read rhythms by counting. She asks individuals to take a turn at naming the counts for the measures on the board as she writes the counts underneath. Naming rhythms in this way will be part of their final written exam in choir, as will identifying notes on the staff. The written exam is part of Mrs. Ames's strategy for fulfilling teacher evaluation requirements for the state. A student names the counts, but answers incorrectly. The teacher asks, "Some other friends want to help?" Another student raises her hand, "Can I do it differently?" Mrs. Ames replies, "Talk me through your thinking." For the last measure, the teacher says to a student, "I never call on you, but I bet you know the answer. Even if you don't, I'll still like you." The student ventures an answer, but confuses the counting for sixteenth and eighth notes. Mrs. Ames points out the error and says encouragingly, "thank you for playing!" Middle School Chorus singers receive an ongoing narrative of their teacher's belief in their musical competence and

intellectual capabilities. She challenges students to learn by couching activities in language of play and by using humor regularly for both conceptual learning and for classroom management.

Students pull sight-singing pages out from their folders. After reading a line in bass clef, the teacher affirms, "Did you know could read so well in bass clef? Now you do." Warm-ups end with singing using solfege hand signs and syllables (do, re, mi, etc.). The choir echoes patterns signed by the teacher and finishes by singing and signing a round in solfege. They sing stronger and more in tune than they have during the rehearsal so far on this final round; all students are singing and signing along. The round is clearly a favorite.

Rehearsal moves to the repertoire of the day, which will be performed at the fall concert. Mrs. Ames connects the rhythm reading to a section of an SSB arrangement of "Winter's Waking" by Amy F. Bernon. She directs the students to find the section from the rhythm-reading exercise, and notices some boys aren't looking at the music. She challenges them to learn, "If you're not looking at the music, how are you going to play this game?" I notice a few boys and girls do not actively participate; they do not look at the music and do not seem to be singing. This is in contrast to boys and girls whose bodies are energetically engaged in the experience, who sing out and work to adjust their voices to the feedback given by the teacher. The majority of the students fall somewhere in the middle of these poles—they use their music and sing, but do not stand out for exceptionally inactive or active participation. According to Mrs. Ames, some students who never fully engage tend to "fade out," and drop the class, which she views as a natural self-selection process as students enter high school.

Into the work of the day, Mrs. Ames quips, "Diction. What is it? Not short for dictionary." One soprano laughs at the joke, "Thanks for laughing, Mary, that was pretty lame." At another point, the students accurately place the "s" consonant at the end of a word, "I so love you!" proclaims the teacher. "We know," quips a girl back. "Don't take my love for granted," Mrs. Ames replies. Moving onto the second piece of the day, she plays the opening bars of the holiday medley on the piano, and several sopranos start singing immediately. The rest of the sections catch on and pull out their music. "Oh, sopranos, you nailed it!" Mrs. Ames exclaims, eliciting grins from most of the section.

At the end of rehearsal, a community member stops by to announce that students have an opportunity to sing on a special upcoming holiday concert at the nearby private college. Rehearsals will take place after school. Approximately ten students pick up permission forms, boys and girls. One student comes up to Mrs. Ames and asks if there will be transportation provided because her mother doesn't have a car. She tells the student to first see if there are any peers who might be able to give her a ride and to then check back with her. As the bell rings, the choir teacher is still surrounded by a cluster of students informing her of personal news and asking questions until passing time is over.

A Concert Choir rehearsal in spring. The risers are in the auditorium today, on the floor in front of the stage, because they have recently been utilized for the 5th-8th grade musical. The high school students enter the space much like the middle school students, mingling, talking, and engaging physically with their friends. Many students were leads and chorus members in the

winter musical, now sporting T-shirts with their character name and a quote on the back. The students arrange themselves on the risers, stand with no discernable cue, and class begins on time. A minute after the bell rings a small group of students with cognitive disabilities, all girls, enter with an aide. The girls take their positions on the risers and the aide sits in the front row of the auditorium chairs.

Warm-ups proceed with breathing and vocal exercises. Because they are in the auditorium, there is no sight singing or rhythm reading today. During vocal exercises, Mrs. Ames compliments the girls, "You sang above a high C, nice!" Vocal warm-ups address articulation, which will be the focus of expressive work later. Solfege follows, with an interval singing/naming exercise (do-re major step, do-mi major third, do-fa perfect fourth, etc.) followed by singing solfege patterns from the hand signs of Mrs. Ames. Warm-ups conclude with the same round sung in Middle School Chorus with hand signs and syllables. Upon finishing their part in the round, the students sit on the risers. During solfege singing, one of the girls with special needs sings enthusiastically along, about a second behind the rest of the choir.

Seated, the choir takes out "Gloria" from *Messe-Credo* K.257 by W. A. Mozart, which will be performed on the spring concert. The piece is nearly memorized. Mrs. Ames has begun to work beyond the notes focusing on expression and interpretation. She reminds the choir: "I don't want you to talk, I want you to sit and think about 'Gloria'." The rehearsal focuses on articulation, getting a more staccato sound, and improving pronunciation and diction (e.g., flipping the 'r' on *gloria*). Students sing without looking at the music. Mrs. Ames shows a

crescendo with her conducting gesture: "What does this gesture mean?" The students answer, "crescendo."

While reviewing notes with the sopranos and altos, she gives the basses and tenors a task: "You're in high school now, think about your part. Are there skips? Are there leaps? Are there chromatics? Think." When singing together again, three basses in the back row make eye contact with each other and tilt their heads to hear each other, checking the pitch. They can't seem to figure out the part so one dives for the music. Their participation is in contrast to a bass in the front row with hands in his pockets who has not opened his mouth to sing yet. Mrs. Ames encourages: "Tenors, you have the right note, just be more bold." She asks the students to look at the top of page eight: "What makes it sound different from the rest of the piece? What happens rhythmically?" A girl answers, "It gets cool." The teacher provides the term: "This is an all-state word—hemiola." She scans the choir before the final performance of the piece for the day, "Stand like a singer, not a sloucher!" The choir is mostly solid on their parts and all four parts can be heard.

Bridge Over Troubled Water by Paul Simon, arranged by Kirby Shaw, is next. Mrs. Ames is working at a fast clip: "Smart musicians look for patterns, smart musicians look ahead. How will you get your note [sopranos]?" The sopranos figure out they will get their note from the basses, then she explains, "you're singing that [pitch] an octave higher because we're women and we can't sing that low." In another passage, she reminds the women of the register and tone

quality she wants: "Highest note still in chest voice ladies. Put your hand on your chest ladies, say 'ahhh' *(descending sigh),* open your mouth."

Posture has deteriorated on the risers. Mrs. Ames takes one of the front row basses' music and holds it up in front of his face rather than at navel level and says, "Look how this will change things." The bass deliberately doesn't move and grins, but Mrs. Ames plays along, "Didn't change much," and laughs. "Help me out here," she says and does a small side kick in the air, indicating that with a kick in the rear he'd stand up straight. Cajoled, the whole section stands up straighter. Before she leaves the front of the bass section to head back to the stand to conduct, she motions to the bass who has been barely participating: "Mike, the sound comes out here *(pointing to her mouth)*." Mike laughs and moves his mouth a bit when singing resumes. At the end of class the academic school day is over, the students stream out of the auditorium, headed to sports, clubs, meetings with teachers, busses, and walking home. Mrs. Ames heads back to the choir room to continue her day with afterschool lessons.

The choir teacher's philosophy

Mrs. Ames has a clear vision and purpose for her program educationally, musically, and socially. She works to provide the best experiences possible for her students. She believes in the importance of her work in the school and music in her student's lives. The choir teacher's vision for the choral program is rooted in beliefs of music for all, cultivating developing musicianship, and developing strong relationships.

Music for all. Mrs. Ames values participation over perfect performance: "I feel like anybody should be able to sing… it's really important that everybody has a chance to sing." She does not view her role as the music teacher at Bridgetown to "create the best singers and career musicians…those certainly aren't the ones that I'm teaching *to*." Although she supports those students who may want to pursue music teaching or further music study by connecting them to local opportunities, she works to maintain her focus on the "overall education" for all students. She embodies this philosophy in voice lessons in the way that she frames vocal development and in the way that she helps students understand talent, which is to emphasize a continuum of vocal development for all rather than fostering the belief that some have natural talent and others do not. One student noted the atmosphere of acceptance she creates, "Mrs. Ames makes you feel welcome. If you're not really confident in your singing, she makes you feel confident because there's nothing really you could do wrong by her."

Choir students echoed this vision of access for all and valued singing with "whoever enjoys singing" (Amelia) in Concert Choir. The non-auditioned Concert Choir could be viewed as less prestigious than the auditioned ensembles. However, Mrs. Ames viewed Concert Choir as an important site of musical learning, including for those students who sing in auditioned ensembles. She actively rejects what she characterizes as "elitism" in students' attitudes towards different ensembles. The philosophy of singing for all has its limits, such as when students elect choir but may not be intrinsically motivated to be there. Mrs. Ames works with administrators and at the department policy level to address these problems, which will be discussed later.

Developing musicianship. Mrs. Ames values developing musicianship in her students. She wants all students to be able to read, interpret, and express themselves musically. She contrasts this with passive "singing along." She explains:

> My goal is that everybody who comes through the program, if they stick with me through high school, they will be able to read music at a basic competency level, and that they will understand what goes into performing, preparing music, and that it is more than just singing along… that there is expression… and the mechanics of it, you know, good singing technique.

Throughout rehearsals, Mrs. Ames questions students about the music to generate an active, analytical approach to choral participation and choral musicianship. She questions students regularly about interpretation, expression, and literacy concepts. She jokes and cajoles and commands engagement. As indicated in the narratives of choir rehearsals, participation is valued over right answers, or perfect pitches.

Relationships. When Mrs. Ames first began teaching, she struggled to find her teaching persona and tried emulating what others were doing. During one of her first years of teaching a wayward bee disrupted an excruciatingly planned lesson, and she realized that teaching took too much energy to also try to "be somebody else." She decided to be her authentic self in the classroom in order to respond effectively to the "human element" at the center of the teaching endeavor. The human element remains at the center of her approach to 5th-12th-grade choir teaching at Bridgetown.

Mrs. Ames works to create positive relationships with students. She believes that good instruction is built upon relationships and genuine caring: "You could be the best teacher in the world, but if you don't care about them, and they don't care about you, not much is going to happen." She utilizes group voice lesson times to get to know her students more closely, even if it means covering fewer musical objectives for a given lesson. She works to build relationships with students based in mutual respect and care. She wants every student to find a niche in the arts program at Bridgetown.

Mrs. Ames' emphasis on relationships includes fellow music teachers and other staff. There is currently a collaborative spirit among the music faculty at Bridgetown. Mrs. Ames works with the elementary general music teacher to recruit students into choir. With 80-100 students in each grade level, she realizes that recruiting a critical mass into fifth grade chorus is key for the sustainability of her middle and high school choral programs. She interacts with the fourth grade students in order to boost fifth grade chorus enrollment, using her planning period and background in dance to choreograph the fourth grade end-of-year presentation in small groups. After sign up for chorus, the elementary general music teacher personally encourages students that she thinks will enjoy chorus to sign up. Mrs. Ames reflected, "This is what reformers get wrong, it's *people*. It's communication, it's knowing your students."

When Mrs. Ames took over the fifth and sixth grade choruses after losing a music teacher in the budget cuts, she looked to the elementary music teacher for advice and support. She observed the fourth grade chorus rehearsal directed by the general music teacher. The students

stood on the floor in rows instead of risers. Mrs. Ames was surprised at this arrangement, but saw that the general music teacher had more access to the students and the ability to walk between the rows at eye level with the singers. Mrs. Ames began to rehearse fifth and sixth grade choir on the ground. When the students move into seventh grade and elect Middle School Chorus, they will stand on risers, but Mrs. Ames affirms: "We formed that relationship on the ground level."

The social culture of the choral program

As in Mrs. Ames's teaching philosophy, people and relationships are central aspects of the social environment of the choral program at Bridgetown. Relationships between students and the choir teacher, mentors, role models, and friendships were important aspects of the social environment of the program. A source of tension in the social culture of the choral program is contending with varying levels of participation by students. Students spoke of frustrations with others who were less engaged, and varying levels of participation were reflected in the social categories within the chorus. In this section I profile Keira, whose perspective illustrates themes related to the social environment of choir and categories of participation.

Relationships. Choir students valued their relationship with Mrs. Ames. Students who elected to participate in this study were likely to feel positively about the choral program and the choir teacher. However, generally positive feelings towards the choir teacher were affirmed in observations and reports from school personnel and parents. Students valued her attention to them as individuals, her approachability, her fairness, and admired her musicality. Students

described her sense of humor, "She's always funny. She can make a joke almost out of anything." Other words students used to describe their teacher included patient, confident, nice, fun, easy-going, and awesome. Christopher described her as "the best teacher I've ever had." Hope exclaimed in appreciation of her musical skill: "She can sing all four of the chorus parts! It's like, 'Whoa!'"

Participants mentioned students who did not like the choir teacher, but countered these criticisms in the same breath. For example, Nathan noted, "Mrs. Ames does what she has to do so that we perform well at the end of the year." Ellie explained, "she's patient when we mess up but if we're goofing off she will not let us." These perspectives point to a shared vision between the students participating in the study and the choir teacher, such that the teacher's actions were understood, respected, and justified by these students.

Mentors. The Concert Choir encompasses a range of grade, ability, and commitment levels. Both students and parents mentioned the benefits of this arrangement for mentoring. A senior, Margo, sang in all the high school choral ensembles and was a lead in the musical. She recalled her beginnings in the choral program and the older student who encouraged her:

> [Starting out] in Concert Choir, I would stand next to an upperclassman because I'm a tall person. So, I always got paired next to a tall upperclassman (laughs). And they would say, "Oh, well, you have a nice voice." Or, "are you interested in doing this [activity]?" I met one [upperclassman] and she was active instrumentally and vocally. She preferred instrumental, but she did vocal, and she liked acting and all that stuff. And she

understood that I wasn't necessarily an instrumental person, and she gave me all these

options.

In this way students shared institutional knowledge across grade levels, revealing pathways to

participation in various activities for students with similar interests.

A parent cited mentoring across grade levels as a benefit for her daughter, Amelia, a

ninth grade student in Concert Choir. Amelia was encouraged to participate in the musical and

school play by upperclassmen she admired in choir. Despite being too nervous to audition to

perform, Amelia got involved by doing make-up and ushering. A contingent of students in choir

are also involved in plays and musical theater, and these students actively recruit other choir

students to join these activities. In an exchange related to the musical, a sophomore, Christopher,

encouraged a freshman to continue to audition and participate in musical theater productions:

Christopher: Cole would have gotten a lead if he were a junior this year.

But, since he is a freshman, Mrs. Ames didn't want to scare him off with anything… she is afraid that he wouldn't come back. And we want Cole back. Because, honestly I'm willing to bet within two years at most he's going to have to lead.

Cole: Oh! Thank you, Christopher.

Christopher: Yeah, dude, if you were a junior you would have had [a lead]. I'm not even kidding.

Cole: Oh! And that's something I haven't heard. So, now I will definitely go

back and try again.

Christopher: You better.

Role models. Recent graduates, older siblings, and successful upperclassmen served as important figures in student and parent thinking about the choral program. These individuals served as role models who were academically, musically, and socially successful. Two recent graduates, Karen and Dan, were mentioned in several interviews. Karen is pursuing acting in college in a large city and Dan is performing in competitive a cappella groups while studying to be an athletic trainer at a nearby college. "There's a lot of good kids that came out [of the choir program] like Karen and Dan… I think they're inspiring because they're both very good people and they're just happy and have a lot of friends. Chorus really helped them," reported Nathan. A parent, Sara, mentioned Karen and how important music was to her: "I watched the way she found so much joy. She built confidence and values and [was] centered, and all these things. If you ask [her father], he'll say, "It's because of the music." Sara wants her son to find that confidence and success in high school, and sees the music program as an avenue for this growth as it was for Karen.

Mrs. Ames periodically referenced former students during choir rehearsals. For example, she told the story of a boy from a dairy farming family who had graduated many years ago. He had an impressive contrabass range, and she used the story as an example of not making assumptions about people's singing ability based on outward appearance. Thus, the history and people of the choral department were remembered and shared, reinforcing the vision of the

department as a place to develop and share musical skills but also a place to find success that can influence students beyond the choir classroom. For some parents and students, choral participation was part of a broader package of academic and social success, and contributed to the cultivation of positive characteristics.

Friendships. Choir students were recruited by friends and actively recruited friends to join chorus. In this way peer pressure could be a positive force, particularly with the prominence of gendered peer groups. Eric noted, "if you're friends with a group of people, and one of them is taking chorus, then they convince another person to take chorus. It's kind of like a chain; it's a domino effect." Nathan spoke of convincing a friend to try Concert Choir in the coming year after much cajoling: "Me and a couple of my other friends just [told] him to do it, he's got a really nice voice." Cheryl noted the fact that most girls signed up for Middle School Chorus as a reason she joined: "I originally only wanted to join band but since most—a lot of the girls were joining, I decided that I could."

Engagement. There was a spectrum of participation in Middle School Chorus and Concert Choir. Students perceived some people in choir were not as committed as others, and this was a source of frustration. Cole commented, "I've seen people join and I don't know why they're still in it… they really don't do much at all, they just are there." The choir teacher estimated a small minority of students, 5-10% enrolled, whose "hearts aren't really in it."

Some students may have been in choir due to parental pressure to participate or out of the need to fulfill their arts credit requirement. Keira, sophomore in Concert Choir, noted this

problem occurred the year before in the alto section: "We had a lot of alto girls that just either wouldn't sing or would sing quiet or sing bad and that made the altos weaker. They were just there for the credit." Although the arts credit requirement may have funneled students into choir who were not intrinsically interested in being there, it provided the administration with a tool for preserving music programs at Bridgetown in the face of budget cuts because the course fulfilled state graduation requirements.

The middle school principal spoke of finding a balance between the school's emphasis on participation and the need to separate students from choir when their behavior was a detriment to themselves and those around them. As though speaking to such a student, the principal explained: "You're always welcome to come back if you're interested, but we're not going to force you to be here." The principal emphasized the school's efforts to help students take responsibility for their actions while affirming that opportunities are still open for those who are willing to participate responsibly.

Keira's perspective: Being confident without being 'overly confident.' Keira has sung in choir since fifth grade, and currently sings in Concert Choir and Chamber Singers. She participated in the solo festival for the past three years, and participated in County Honor Choruses. Music has been a way for her to gain new experiences and meet different people. She noted, "I don't normally have money to go out, so [friends] come to my house and I just stay home."

Keira stands out among the altos for the art she draws on her arms. Mrs. Ames has noticed Keira's drawing skill and encouraged her to take the theater tech course so that she can contribute to set design. Keira appreciated Mrs. Ames' individual attention: "She's really encouraging, and she likes to find particular students, and help them to increase their talents."

Her family, particularly her father, supports Keira in her musical endeavors: "I've always been able to sing good because I would always sing with my dad all the time in the car, or outside, or doing whatever." Keira's father has also influenced her listening life, introducing her to heavy metal and country music. A favorite memory singing was in eighth grade when Keira was selected to sing a solo and her father had a powerful reaction:

It felt kind of good because I was the only person singing. You could hear it throughout the auditorium. And my dad wasn't there for it, but when I went to his house that weekend he'd watched the video and his fiancé told me that he was crying.

Keira is confident in her voice, but does not want to come across as "arrogant" or "over-confident." Keira categorized people in choir into three groups: "over-confident," "confident," and "just there to get the credit." Keira locates herself in the middle group, a place she was not entirely satisfied with as sometimes she felt like she was being covered by other voices. She explained:

I know there's some people in chorus that are really confident and they're good, but they are way out too much and they don't allow other people to sing. They take over, which is

nice because you're making sure other people can hear you so they know their notes, but

it's also conflicting when you're trying to come out and trying to sing too.

Keira wants to be able to 'come out' and sing strongly, perhaps become a leader, but

without displaying undesirable traits of being arrogant or over-confident. She indicated similar

tension when discussing future plans:

I'm looking around because I want to stay local. I don't want to leave. There are a lot of

people who say, "I can't wait to get out of here. I hate Bridgetown." But I want to stay

here. As much as my dad and I make fun of the [private university] kids, I would love to

go to [the private college].

In Keira's classification of "overly confident" choir members and private college

students, there are connotations of class and privilege. Although she does not identify with the

wealthy college students or with privileged peers, Keira wants to become a leader in choir and

pursue her academic interests. She wants to do this without compromising the values rooted in

strong family commitment to Bridgetown as a place to live and work.

The academic culture of the choral program

In defining the academic culture of the choral program, themes included musicianship,

student song choice and the role of popular music in the curriculum, and extra-curricular

performance opportunities.

Musicianship. Mrs. Ames emphasizes developing developing musicianship and refers to

her students as musicians in rehearsals. She defines musicianship as notational literacy, music

theory, interpretation, expressive performance, and technical ability. This content is woven into rehearsals, voice lessons, and formal assessments, which include sight singing and written tests of music fundamentals. Understanding music theory concepts and developing notational literacy were viewed by students as points of pride in the rigor of their curriculum. These were important goals to master and part of the challenge of singing in choir.

Students enjoyed developing mastery over pieces culminating in successful performances appreciated by community, parents, and peers. Eric explained the satisfaction of mastering a difficult piece of music: "You look at this piece of music, which when you first look at it looked really, really difficult. By this time you've broken it all down, and it's just a fun piece to sing." In addition to mastering specific pieces, students spoke of their personal musicianship in development through choir and voice lessons including developing singing technique (such as improving vocal range) and theoretical knowledge (such as understanding time and key signatures).

Student song choice. An aspect of the choral curriculum valued especially by middle school singers was the student-selected song. Each choir chooses at least one song during the school year to perform at a concert. I observed this process in the fall semester in Middle School Chorus:

> *Mrs. Ames handed out the ballot of 15 songs nominated by the students and made sure*
> *everyone knew all the pieces by having students sing snippets. One girl sang a snippet of*
> *her nomination with vibrato and a husky tone, a departure from the vocal timbre of the*

chorus. The choir quickly circled their top two choices in the last two minutes of class.

(Fieldnotes, October 27, 2014)

The ballot had been narrowed down to two songs that received the most votes—Counting Stars by One Republic and Carol of the Bells. Mrs. Ames began a discussion about the lyrics of Counting Stars, especially the line "Everything that kills me makes me feel alive." A student had researched the lyrics in preparation for the discussion. She stood and explained that the lyric referred to the songwriter having turned to substance abuse after the end of a relationship. Mrs. Ames asked students what they thought about the lyrics. She noted that if they were to perform it they would need to explain its meaning to the audience and how they were interpreting it. Jason raised his hand, "I don't think [Counting Stars] will sound good as a choral arrangement." A girl asked, "If we do Carol of the Bells, can we do the Pentatonix version?" Mrs. Ames smiled and replied, "You mean you want to do the cool version?" Mrs. Ames concluded the discussion telling the students to vote for whatever piece they wanted and that she would work on researching their choice over the weekend. The students voted overwhelmingly for the Pentatonix's version of Carol of the Bells. (Fieldnotes, November 4, 2014)

The song choice process prompted students to reflect upon repertoires, style, and context. In considering the song choice process, Mark explained: "A lot of people want to pick out the pop [music]. Me, Nathan, and Jason realize that those kinds of songs are more for one person. It doesn't sound as well with the entire choir. We learned that. That's why we kind of chose Carol

of the Bells, because it sounds a lot better." Chloe, like Mark, was cautious about bringing beloved popular songs into chorus. She reflected on the song choice performed last year ("What Makes You Beautiful" by One Direction): "I didn't like that because it ruined [the song]. It is not the same, we didn't do that good." Elizabeth recalled the same performance, but emphasized the sense of ownership that singing a song she loved gave her, "I felt like it was one of my songs and not one that [Mrs. Ames] chose."

Like Elizabeth, many students spoke highly of the song choice experience. Students valued the process as a way to demonstrate their musical preferences, increase engagement, and feel empowered in choir class. In addition, the song choices by students led to special opportunities such as adding choreography, props and staging, and alternative singing styles. Amelia recalled singing "Wings" by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, "we had movement in the choir, and we had rappers. Then on the stage behind us there were dancers… it was this huge arrangement for that. It was really fun." The song choice process was cited as an example of how choir was different from other school classes; the opportunity for input into course content was perceived as rare and valuable.

The role of popular music in the choral curriculum. Mrs. Ames saw benefits in allowing students to choose repertoire. For middle school students in particular, the democratic process of nominating and voting for songs was important and appealing. The conversations that emerged as part of the song choice process, such as the discussion about the lyrics to "Counting Stars," were part of the learning process of choosing a piece to sing. Mrs. Ames viewed the

process as opening up "teachable moments." She noted: "How many of us sing mindlessly along with the song lyrics? [They need to realize] music is actually saying something."

The choir teacher was careful to assert her vision of the role of popular music in the curriculum. She was concerned that music teachers use popular music with the assumption that it will be an easy way to win favor with students without providing a quality musical experience:

It can be a cheap shot. You've got to be a good enough musician with a strong enough curriculum that you go about teaching the pop songs well, and you don't do *only* pop songs.... I think it's really cheap and disrespectful to think that you can just put in a pop song and be the favorite teacher

Mrs. Ames wants popular music to be treated as seriously as other kinds of music, in part stemming from her love of popular music:

I was raised on rock music. I love it. I did a Motown medley once. That was so much fun, but we also talked about the harmony and the presentational style of Motown, and, where does this fit in [music] history? You've got to be intellectually curious and make these connections, and help kids make connections, and then they get curious.

In the description of what she incorporated into the Motown medley performance experience, the choir teacher returned to her vision of developing musicianship, citing theoretical knowledge relevant to the genre students that should know (harmony), appropriate style and interpretation, and intellectual engagement with the music.

Extra-curricular performance opportunities. In describing significant performance experiences, musicals, plays, and extra-curricular opportunities were cited as part and parcel of the choral experience at Bridgetown. Mrs. Ames is a part of the theater department; she teaches the tech theater class, is the musical director for the musicals, and works on the plays. The choir room is physically close to the stage and the connection to the theater department is visible with posters, props, and musical scores mixed in with choral paraphernalia. Leads in the musicals come from the choral ensembles and audition excerpts are rehearsed with Concert Choir for several days before auditions. Choir students take a variety of roles in the musicals, including performing and behind the scenes work. The Middle School Chorus and the 5th and 6th grade choruses served as choruses for the middle school musical this year. Thus, the academic culture of the choral program includes theater and musical theater.

The County Honor Choruses and the Solo Festival were significant extra-curricular performing experiences for participants facilitated by the choral program. In the county choruses, students enjoyed the music, singing with a group of highly committed, select participants, and the recognition of their musical ability. The annual Solo Festival was another venue for extra-curricular vocal activity. Students could elect to prepare solos and perform them for judges who gave them a rating and feedback. These extra-curricular experiences were not available to all students, but added value for those who did participate, extending the benefits of singing in school choir beyond the school. Recognition for participation in these special events was part of concert programs. Students who participated in any one of these experiences received special

icons by their names in programs. Participation was also reported as part of music news in school bulletins sent to all households in Bridgetown.

The music teachers across the county are affiliated in the Ridge County Music Educators Association, which holds regular meetings, a professional development day, and runs the All County ensemble program. The group's bare bones website indicates the leadership council and provides a public calendar including meetings, auditions, festivals, and concerts. Mrs. Ames explained the current climate in the county association:

> There's such a good feeling right now in the county. It's great. It's like we've reached a critical mass where we've realized that, yes, we are being asked to do more with less, yes, we never know if our jobs are going to be there next year, but, you know what? We're here now. We love our jobs. We love our kids. And we're going to do the best we can with what we've got. Everybody just pitches in and we do it, and it's fun.

Mrs. Ames volunteers three weekends a year to aid in the running of the All County ensemble experiences. Students participating in All County ensembles may audition to participate in Area All State, and then in turn earn the possibility of auditioning into All State ensembles. The music teachers of Ridge County are geographically isolated, but connected and active locally and at the state level in music educators' associations.

Vocal pedagogy. Citing a lack of good vocal pedagogy in her own pre-college choral experiences, Mrs. Ames works to provide her students a strong foundation in vocal pedagogy and singing technique. Her efforts are evident in her teaching and in the way her students talk

about singing. A student who emphasized vocal development and pedagogy in our conversation is Nathan, who is profiled below.

Nathan's perspective: An eighth grade singer finding his voice. *In Middle School Chorus, Nathan can be found standing in the back row of the bass section often flanked by two friends, Jason and Mark. This trio leads the boys' section in Middle School Chorus, leaning into each other to check pitches and actively working with their scores and each other. Nathan sings out. He feels it is part of his responsibility as an older boy in the chorus. He notes that the younger boys don't sing out as much, either because they don't know the notes or they lack confidence. He has embraced one of Mrs. Ames' mottos: 'Make loud mistakes.' "I like that," he said.*

Nathan attended a small parochial school, Sacred Heart, until sixth grade. Singing was a regular part of school activities at Sacred Heart and he enjoyed it. This influenced him to join chorus at Bridgetown in seventh grade. He recalled the Christmas Concert at Sacred Heart in sixth grade when he was selected to sing in a small group. The song had a high descant, and Nathan explained he was "known for my falsetto." He was the only boy to sing with the small group, "I think I did pretty well so it made me pretty happy."

Nathan is preparing a solo for the Solo Festival by working with Mrs. Ames after school. They are working on negotiating register shifts. During an afterschool session, Mrs. Ames and Nathan went over a particularly tricky phrase in his solo that requires register shifts. They decide exactly where in the phrase he will shift into a lighter falsetto/head voice mix and

practiced this several times. In addition to register issues, Mrs. Ames and Nathan worked on breath support and expression.

Nathan has vocal technique on his mind, and speaks of popular artists in these terms. He named Bruno Mars as a favorite singer, remarking, "his range is really impressive because I understand how hard it is to hit those high notes in his chest voice and he pulls them off pretty well." When I asked when he started analyzing singers' use of registers, he replied:

> *That was probably last year when my voice started changing and I felt it was harder to*
>
> *hit higher notes. I just figured out that they're singing, the pop artists are singing, higher*
>
> *notes but in their chest voices, which is really hard for me to do right now.*

As for future goals for singing, Nathan wants to continue to improve his notational literacy. He is also interested in continuing his vocal development and staying on top of how his voice is evolving: "I also like to know where my voice is. Mrs. Ames really helps me with that. I also want to know how to keep my voice good for the rest of my singing career."

Mrs. Ames speaks about vocal registers and voice change regularly in Middle School Chorus rehearsals. I observed her conduct an impromptu voice check with a seventh grade boy, Simon, before class. She had heard Simon singing the soprano part an octave down or the bass part an octave up, prompting the check in with him about his range. Mrs. Ames sang a descending scale on "loo" with him and they identified the current state of his range. She invited him to stand on the border with the altos next to another seventh grade boy who was also more

comfortable in the treble range; they could switch parts as needed. I noted them singing alto exclusively. This shifting seemed unremarkable to the boys.

The following instances from Middle School Chorus rehearsals highlight her approach to navigating registers:

> *When putting the three parts together for "Winter's Waking," some boys sing an octave too low. Before trying again, Mrs. Ames asks the girls to listen for how many octaves they hear; they identify two being sung. She explains: "What happens to some of these gentlemen is their voices change drastically. Ladies, does your voice change? Yes. But it's not as drastic, it's more gradual." She sings the bass line, modeling the difference in range and register. She says to the boys, "try to get it [the voice] up here, if it still wants to migrate, that's ok, but try to get it up." The boys sing again, with most in the right octave.* (Fieldnotes, October 23, 2014)

Mrs. Ames refers to female vocal change as well as male voice change. She weaves education about the voice change process into the work of learning parts and negotiating vocal registers.

> *Middle School Chorus is working on the three-part SAB piece "How Can I Keep From Singing" by Greg Gilpin. The basses frequently sing the soprano part an octave down. The choir teacher addresses the problem by having the sections switch parts, such as having the altos sing with the basses on the bass part against the soprano part. Mrs. Ames describes the challenge for each part, "I always think if you're an alto, you have to be smart enough to not sing the melody and patient enough to sing the same note, but if*

you can do those things you create beautiful harmony." She says to the basses

"Gentlemen, you've got the sopranos pulling you on one end and the altos pulling you on

the other, you've got to be a pillar." When the altos sing with the basses in their range,

the teacher challenges them to sing out in their chest register. After they're done, a

soprano asks excitedly, "Can we try it?" Mrs. Ames has everyone sing the bass part. She

explains: "Because of the voice change, gentlemen, you are at the top of your range,

ladies, you are at the bottom." Eventually, everyone sings their own parts without the

piano in three-part harmony, and the choir receives an air high five from the teacher for

their efforts. (Fieldnotes, May 20, 2014)

By regularly incorporating discussion of vocal register and voice change for boys and girls, Mrs. Ames works to normalize the voice change experience for her singers. In addition to rehearsals, she addresses voice change in the small group lessons that are a part of the choral curriculum. She incorporates humor, naming and playing with the assumption that singing high is singing like a girl:

I just explain to them, the voice is changing. [I ask] "What are you, are you a girl today or a boy today?" And we laugh. "Wow, my voice is kind of low, I'm feeling kind of like a boy, can I sing with the basses today?" And it's a joke, and it's funny, and there's no stigma about singing high or low. There's just making music.

Although she uses humor to play with the notion that singing high is singing like a girl, she invites high school boys into Middle School Chorus to model for the younger students and to disrupt assumptions about ranges:

> I will have [the high school boys] sing, "Sing some low scales, boys!" And they do. And the boys are like, "whoa," and the girls are like, "whoa." And I'll say, "But also, boys are pretty amazing because they have these high notes, too. Boys, can you sing something in your falsetto?" And they'll sing it, and the kids are like, "Oh wow!" And just that one little thing, it opens up their eyes. It's not just about singing like a boy is singing low.

Change in the academic and social culture of the choral program

The academic and social cultures of the choral program are works in progress. After fifteen years at Bridgetown Mrs. Ames is still in a process of adjusting policies and reacting to changing circumstances in the school. She describes this process as an evolution of the program to get "things put where I want them." In the time that Mrs. Ames has been at Bridgetown, she and colleagues in the music department have worked to change and develop the culture of music education at the school. This process has involved changing practices in music classes, changing policies surrounding participation in music, getting involved in hiring, responding to cuts, and collaborating across the department.

An example of the impact of course scheduling upon both the academic and social culture of the choral program is exemplified by changes to Middle School Chorus. In the past, Middle School Chorus met first period opposite study hall and was an ungraded class. The course was

treated more like a club than a class. This situation provided the benefit of flexibility, but student attendance was irregular and musical progress difficult. Mrs. Ames was concerned about the perception of the program in the school: "Culturally, I felt, we need to make a statement that this is worth something. It is graded. It is a class. You have to be here, we are teaching curriculum. This is not just come hang out and sing a song if you want." After negotiating with the band director, who valued the flexibility of the arrangement but ultimately agreed that greater structure would be better, Middle School Chorus and Band were moved to third period. In that time slot, students go to music after an academic class, usually math. Students entered choir with a better mindset, their attendance normalized, and the graded structure provided legitimacy to the course as an academic endeavor. Course policies have continued to need adjustments. Students wanted to come in and out of their music classes as they fell behind in their academic classes. The music department initiated a cut-off date for dropping a music class and after dropping students were not allowed to re-enroll until the next semester.

Bridgetown has an automatic enrollment policy, which states if you sing in chorus one year you are enrolled for the following year. If a student changes his or her mind, they must get parental permission to drop the course. The automatic enrollment policy is good for enrollment in that the assumption of the school is that once students are enrolled in a music course they will continue. The downside of the automatic enrollment policy is that students who want to drop chorus must attend for the first few weeks of class waiting to get permissions and reassignment. Mrs. Ames has observed those students negatively impacting other students by their attitude and

demeanor in class, occasionally influencing other students to leave who may have otherwise stayed in chorus. She has changed the policy such that students can opt out with a note from a parent or guardian at the end of the school year. With this policy change, she hopes to improve the social culture of the program from day one.

Conclusion

This chapter presented findings related to the culture of the choral program at Bridgetown Middle and High School. Understanding the culture of the choral program aids in considering how the choral program is situated within the wider school culture. Central in guiding the vision and purpose of the choral program was the choir teacher's philosophy. Her philosophy shapes the program's interaction with the wider school culture and was grounded in prioritizing music for all students, developing musicianship, and relationships. The choir teacher's values were on display during observations. The rehearsal vignettes and depiction of the choir room offered a window into the classroom environment featuring positive student-teacher interactions, humor, questioning, and musical learning.

The academic and social cultures of the choral program were valued aspects of the choral program. In the academic culture of the choral program Mrs. Ames developed musicianship in her students, encouraged active participation, encouraged disengaged singers, and incorporated vocal pedagogy. The choir teacher's approach to the curriculum prioritizes notational literacy and expressive performance, includes opportunities for student choice, and incorporates a variety of music. The role of popular music is situated similarly to other genres in that the central focus

is musical learning. The choir teacher's approach to vocal pedagogy is echoed in the voices of students, and permeates rehearsals and voice lessons. Her approach aids adolescents, boys and girls, in negotiating the technical and social-emotional aspects of vocal development. The theater program, musicals, and other extra-curricular performance opportunities are significant parts of the academic choral culture at Bridgetown, even though they are not part of the curricular day.

The social environment of the choral program features relationships between the choir teacher and the students, and the role of mentors, role models, and friendships. Due to the structure of the choral program, the core ensembles fulfill an arts credit requirement and are non-auditioned, there were some students who were less engaged and perhaps not intrinsically motivated to participate. These differing levels of engagement provided sources of tension in the choir between highly dedicated students and those perceived to negatively impact the choral enterprise. Additional sources of tension could be found between students and differing visions of appropriate leadership in the choir. For one student, leadership styles had classed connotations as leaders who were "overly confident" were linked with privilege and a lack of awareness that they could be preventing other singers from hearing themselves.

Finally, this chapter considered change in the culture of the choral program. Music department policies have changed to increase the quality of the music education at Bridgetown, and to positively impact the academic and social cultures of the choral program. Changing policies required collaboration with school personnel and other music faculty. Mrs. Ames' ability

at negotiating and communicating with stakeholders across the school enable her to effectively make change and adapt the program to change.

This chapter's findings present a picture of a successful choral program in a secondary school. There are sources of tension in the program, foreshadowing larger issues that will be evident when the program is considered within the school context. Specifically, hints at issues of class and gender will become more evident when the program is examined within the school culture. Additionally, the academic and social culture of the program, and the choir teacher's philosophy, take on new meaning when considered in the context of the school. In the following chapter, the choral program is examined within the wider culture of Bridgetown schools.

Chapter 5

Participants' Perspectives on Singing in Bridgetown School culture

In this chapter I answer research question two: How does the choral program interact with the wider school culture? Topics include: 1) the school's vision and purpose of the choral program; 2) choral participation within the school's social culture; and 3) choral participation within the school's academic culture. These topics relate to how choir participation interacts with the school's wider academic, vocational, and extra-curricular culture and implicates wider social and cultural issues such as gender and class. Findings are presented with profiles of students and parents whose perspectives illustrate these themes.

Values and beliefs about singing, choir, and music education at Bridgetown

Bridgetown schools are highly valued institutions in the community, viewed as community centers as much as schools. The music program, and the choral program as a component of it, is therefore viewed as important not only to school life but to community life. A parent, Sharon, spoke to the rural nature of the community making the school's activities central to community life:

> I think because there's pretty limited opportunities here for employment. I just feel like the school is a good place for kids to get the experiences that they're not going to have sadly in the future…We don't have a community theater, for instance. We don't have professional sports teams around here, so every source of that kind of thing comes from the school. Bridgetown school is—this is the life of Bridgetown.

A recent initiative to consolidate Bridgetown School District with that of a nearby village to ameliorate fiscal problems was rejected overwhelmingly by the community in a straw poll. This was due in part to fear of losing the school's place as a community hub. The music program is viewed as an important part of the school's identity, along with its academic reputation and athletics.

One way that support from the community was evident was at the regular concert performances at the school. The concerts were important semester rituals and served as regular celebrations of the accomplishments of music students and teachers. Concerts highlighted the school's valuing of music education; principals were always in attendance. Concerts were full, often with standing room only. Parents spoke of strong attendance at concerts: "I think when you're standing up there and you look at an auditorium that's filled with people, that sends you a message about how important this is and how much people value what you're doing" (Sara).

Students, parents, and school personnel valued the choral program at Bridgetown for social, personal, musical, and educational reasons. Choir students valued social aspects such as working with a group and likened choir to a team. Students felt choir was a place they could fit in, share a common purpose with fellow students, and feel responsible to others for their contribution. Parents valued the social aspect of the choral experience, and believed the group effort was an avenue for building confidence. Personal aspects of choral participation that were valued included choir and singing as a source of relaxation and stress relief, good feelings, emotional release, personal validation and confidence, and instrumental in defining and

expressing a sense of self. Parents and school personnel echoed the students' beliefs in the

personal value of choral participation. Musical aspects valued by singers included vocal

development, music literacy, meeting musical challenges, engaging with choral sound,

connecting to meaning in music, and music appreciation/culture. Parents and school personnel

believed the choral program was an avenue for expanding students' musical horizons and

appreciation for music and culture. The educational value of singing and choir participation

related to music education as complementary to and different from regular academic schoolwork.

To underscore these themes, the following table (Table 3) provides examples of

representative data for the varied aspects of choral participation valued by the singers and adults.

Table 5.1

Perspectives on the value of singing, choir, and music education

	Students	**Parents/School personnel**
Social value	**Teamwork** "You need to work as a team so it sounds right." (Mark) **Responsibility** "You get a sense of responsibility for carrying your own weight but also compromise and balance, like with the other voices." (Ellie) **Fitting in** "When I'm in a club, I feel like I'm left out, but when I'm in chorus, it feels like there are people there and they like the same thing I do, and I feel as though I fit in a lot." (Hope)	**Teamwork** "You're sort of every man for yourself in the classroom, but in the chorus you're a member of the group, who wants to look and sound good." (Sharon, Parent/Schoolteacher) "You are in a common effort in a way that you aren't as much in math class or science class." (Sara, Parent)
Personal	**Relaxation/Stress relief**	**Relaxation/Stress relief**

value	"It's a good way to relax, part of the way through the day. You don't always have to sit down and read. You can talk to your friends. You have fun singing." (Mark)	"Music is such a release. It can be useful in so many ways. It can be a stress reliever. It can be your friend when you're down. It can be something that peps you up when you need a pick-me-up." (Jon)
	"For a moment, you forget your stress in real life…When you sing, you kind of feel happy and more like yourself and all you're concentrating on is singing." (Cheryl)	**Good feelings** "If they are in a place where they can walk out [of chorus singing], clearly their comfort level is high…It's such a visual display of joy that we see in our students" (Guidance counselor)
	Good feelings "You feel comfortable with yourself. You can make yourself feel good." (Elizabeth) **Defining/expressing sense of self** "People see my personality through how I sing things, and I like that, that I can be myself." (Kimberly)	
	Validation/Confidence "When I did my festival solo last year, and even this year—I got a 99 last year, and I got a 90 this year. This proud look of accomplishment that I had, and it was a nice moment" (Eric)	**Validation/Confidence** "That she will feel comfortable standing in front of people, whether it's on stage eventually or any other venue. We're all on stage, I guess, in our job and things." (Irene, Parent/Schoolteacher)
	Emotional release "Singing is a great way to output emotions" (Ellie) "I guess you just kind of lose yourself in singing, and you just forget. You don't care who sees or watches or hears it. You just do it." (Jason)	
Musical	**Music appreciation/Culture**	**Music appreciation/Culture**

value	I like all the songs that we do in chorus but I like the Mozart and stuff. It's nice to be able to sing something with such culture" (Keira) **Vocal development** "It's nice to be able to just find out where your voice is at and what your range is." (Nathan) **Developing music literacy** "When I came to high school, I didn't really understand a lot of the voice lessons and how to read music, and so just coming into the high school not knowing all that and then leaving my senior year knowing almost everything." (Jen) **Meeting musical challenges** "Sounding good in a particularly difficult part of the song…maybe it was hard at first, but then we finally got it down and it sounds good!" (Sam) **Engaging with choral sound** "I liked Winter's Waking a lot because it was cool. It was just kind of mysterious and the guys' part was cool to sing because the harmonies were really nice." (Nathan) **Connecting to meaning in music** "I really like [Bridge Over Troubled Water] because there's a deep meaning behind that." (Jen)	"It's made her go home and look up a composer or check somebody else out, or this musical, and listen to that and then want to go to it. It just seems like it's the stepping stone for furthering your thoughts and ideas outside of school for her too." (Irene, Parent/Schoolteacher) You really have that place in their day where they are getting a cultural piece that I know is not being provided at home" (Guidance counselor) "A love and appreciation for a broad variety of music, especially music that she wouldn't hear." (Sharon, Parent/Schoolteacher)
Educational	"I feel like [music] in my overall	"There's a discipline involved [in]

| **value** | education gives me a new level of creativity because in my [academic] classes [the teacher says] 'you need to do this…we can't just change what we're doing." (Christopher)

"[In music] you have to learn how to have greater focus for things and what you're doing, the task at hand…you can relate that to other subjects too." (Sam)

"Last year we studied how music can change the brain…And it helps a lot and makes your life a lot better in general." (Nathan) | it." (Jon)

"I really support kids having something in their school day that is a break from an intense, academic class. They're still going to learn a lot in band or chorus, but… you're not sitting in a classroom taking notes. You get to have some output as well." (Guidance counselor)

"He's having to work parts of his brain that he wouldn't have to be working otherwise and that's actually strengthening his overall capacities, intellect." (Sara) |

The guidance counselor viewed music (and art) classes as unique spaces where students were allowed to "output" as opposed to exclusively receive information, providing a needed balance to the rest of the school day. Jon, a parent, spoke of the importance of the arts, of creative experiences, in schooling:

You can't just focus on your books all the time, and your schoolwork, and learning X, Y and Z.…Everybody needs some sort of creative release to help them get through everything else they're doing. To have some, not necessarily downtime mentally, but something enjoyable mentally, as opposed to just reading and doing your papers and whatever else. I think it's critical to have it as part of the educational structure that we have.

Sara shared why she believed music was important for her son, rooted in her own experiences with group singing in particular:

> I think knowing that there's a value in doing something that seems like it doesn't have any value. That there's value in making beautiful sounds. That that's part of the human experience and that's part of what makes us human is coming together and making beauty. And I think that choruses do that and bands, too, but I think choral music can tap into our humanity in a way that very few things that we do together can….that experience takes me out of all the other stuff that I'm expected to do and it's a refuge from other things….I hope he has that in his life.

Singing in the social culture of the school

Themes related to singing in the social culture of the school included perceived assumptions about singing and choir participation, singing and gender norms, and singing and sports.

  Perceived assumptions about choir participation. Perceptions of singing within the social culture of Bridgetown included beliefs that choir was geeky, weird, or uncool. A student explained attitudes she had heard about choir participation: "I like singing, but I don't want to do chorus because that's such a geeky thing to do and I'm not part of that." Choir participation was also reportedly perceived as "stupid," "weird," and "boring." Adam summarized: "Sometimes it's not cool to be in chorus."

Sam referred to portrayals of music students in television and media as contributing to a climate where singing is viewed as uncool, something to be avoided: "You watch a movie about high school, and you see all the different cliques, and the chorus people are always the weird, nerdy ones." These ideas about singing were not necessarily explicitly stated at school, but were part of stereotypical images about choir singers. At the same time, being different could be something to be celebrated. Sam entered high school thinking: "Chorus people are weird nerds." When he saw his friends were in chorus he joined. He realized: "These people aren't that weird. They are, but I guess a *good* weird."

The perception of choral participation as being uncool or weird could prevent some students from trying chorus. For others, the perception could be transformed as a way to distinguish themselves from others and embrace a positive association with weirdness—a unique identity. Perceptions of choir students as nerdy, geeky, or weird could also be a way of describing high achieving, pro-school students.

Choir students and parents cited positive perceptions of choir students at school. Choir was perceived to attract socially successful students: "A lot of people do choir, a lot of popular people, people that are really nice and have lots of friends" (Nathan). Margo noted: "You see a lot of the top ten in their class type-thing, the people who are really active and really want to try to go out and do things, and the people that you can tell…have parents who really want them to be well-rounded people and try really, really hard in school." The picture of a singer painted by these students is a high achieving, hard working, popular student who enjoys parental support.

A parent valued the music program for the positive social atmosphere that her son will be a part of:

> We see the music program at Bridgetown as being one of the niches we'd like Jerod to be in because they have remarkably talented teachers…The kids who are drawn to it are the kids we want him hanging out with…The kids who are really involved in the music program generally tend to be more serious of purpose… more academically inclined students. (Sara)

Despite these assumptions, students and school personnel reported all kinds of people participated in choir, a cross section of the school population. Chloe reflected, "I don't really think there is one person that is the 'choir person.'" Sharon explained: "You've got kids from all socio-economic backgrounds and levels of achievement as students. You've got kids who really excel and then kids who struggle, also. I think it's a good mixture." Irene, parent and middle school teacher, affirmed this perspective, "I think there are kids at all ability levels represented. There are students with disabilities, like my daughter, that you wouldn't know [she had a disability]. You wouldn't see it. Then there are students that you can perceive that they have a disability and they're still there. They're very encouraged. I think it's pretty open."

Perceived assumptions about singing ability and confidence. When considering reasons students might not enroll in chorus, students spoke of peers who lacked confidence in general, in their singing voice, or in their ability to learn to sing. Peers were perceived to be afraid of potential embarrassment, to not know their own singing potential, and to see themselves

as non-singers. For example, Cole explained: "I know some people…they think that if I haven't sung or haven't been good at singing before I won't be able to do it at all. Not necessarily true. What happens in chorus in that you sort of train your voice and you shape your vocals." Margo noted:

> Some people just don't have the confidence or they don't understand the concept of chorus, where you're singing all together. Just the idea of people hearing your voice, even if it's with a group of people, is just kind of scary to some people. They don't have the confidence to put themselves out there and let themselves be heard that way.

Peers were thought to be unaware that singing is a developable skill, and that choir is a place to train your voice and build confidence.

Singing and gender norms. Gender norms, particularly for boys, interacted with meanings of choral participation in Bridgetown's school culture. Norms are often unstated and informal, they may be inferred in casual conversations, in expectations for school activities and leisure pursuits, and in assumed knowledge bases. In a conversation with two high school boys, I asked if they had ever heard of someone being teased for being in choir. They both answered no, but Christopher clarified:

> I feel like it's not so much like bullying, like say: "Hey, you're in choir, you're stupid!" I feel like it's—people just know, "Oh, this goes against what I'm supposed to be doing." Like most people will think I'm doing football, but you're actually doing a musical, so this is kind of weird.

Gender norms were acknowledged even when not explicitly stated. The sanctions for not fulfilling gender norms at school might not be verbal harassment or bullying, but rather fear of losing respect or friendships. Cole explained:

It's about what you think of other people's expectations of you. Again, with building up a certain status with a group... and then you're feeling like they don't respect you as a friend anymore or treat you as an equal individual. It's just that feeling that could happen if you tell them and that's why you tend to shelter it away.

Christopher and Cole used the word "standards" to describe what I call gender norms. Being knowledgeable about and/or interested in particular sports were "standards" that Cole and Christopher negotiated with their peers. Activities that did not conform to masculine gender norms such as musicals, choir, or theater could have social costs or sanctions. The boys used humor as a resource in processing situations when they felt out of step with normative masculine expectations:

Christopher:	You always kind of hold yourself to someone else's standards unfortunately… You're always trying to go with the crowd. So when the crowd is going football and baseball and lacrosse and all that and you're wandering away from the crowd and you're in the musical—
Cole:	You're a million miles away, somewhere else like in a certain place.
Christopher:	It's always a little awkward and you just don't feel—

Cole: Because you have no idea what they're talking about, you don't know anything about their topic, you're trying to participate and be included. Then you're like, "oh, what do you think about this baseball team and this basketball team?" [You answer] "Yes." Then you just smile and nod sort of.

Christopher: "How do you feel about the game?" "Yes." *(laughs)*

Cole: Totally. *(laughs)*

Julie: You guys are joking about it.

Cole: It's because we're talking about extremes here.

Julie: Okay.

Christopher: One of the reasons we're joking about it is because I think that's one of the only reasons you can kind of deal. You have to keep the best attitude you can about it. You try not to let it get to you, just try and laugh it off. Whatever, you guys do your thing, I'll do mine. And just don't let the standards try and get to you.

Cole: That's a skill you learn sort of over time throughout school that I have learned and almost, I hope to have mastered.

Cole and Christopher employed a variety of strategies to counteract the pressure of gender norms, or standards, in their school life including humor, asserting an individual and alternative value and belief system for themselves, and finding support in like-minded students.

As Christopher and Cole asserted their individuality, preferences and values, they noted the pressure to live up to and negotiate the gendered expectations of their peers in order to avoid sanctions. An in-depth look at Christopher follows.

Christopher's perspective: Being true to himself. Christopher is 15, a sophomore at Bridgetown High School. He shares his thoughts at a fast clip, is confident in his musical development, and passionate about the music and theater programs at Bridgetown High School. His speech is peppered with jokes and earnestness about his feelings towards music. He is a leader in the theater program, having served as the stage manager for both productions this year, and proudly claims to be a "full out thespian." He has recently started considering pursuing tech theater in college, but is also interested in astronomy. Christopher sings bass in Concert Choir and Chamber Singers and plays euphonium and trombone in band. He can be seen hanging out in the choir room after school and in Mrs. Ames' office with other students in the musical.

Christopher he joined his first chorus in 4th grade because he liked music. When the 4th grade chorus began, he "just moved into it" as the presumed next step in music. However, in fifth grade, he didn't start in chorus, because he decided he wasn't having fun anymore. Halfway through the year the choir teacher came to him personally and said, "Christopher, we're missing you in chorus, why aren't you there?" Christopher appreciated her efforts and rejoined choir. When asked when he realized that he could sing, he replied, "I never really thought to myself

like, oh you can sing, I just thought to myself, I like singing, I want to sing, I don't care what people think."

Not caring what people think, and bucking social expectation and norms, what Christopher referred to as "standards," for adolescent male behavior and interests, were parts of Christopher's identity that he wove throughout his description of his passion for music, theater, and even academic pursuits at school. However, there were certain contexts in which he felt more free and able to be himself:

> *[In Chamber Singers] all the people there they have the same kind of ideas, they have the same kind of mindset. No one judges here, no one is going to care. With Concert Choir I might pull back a little bit. But in Chamber Choir and the musical and the play I'll just belt it out, I don't care what anybody thinks, because no one there cares.*

Despite vehemently affirming his choice to follow his interests and not caring what people thought of him, managing fear of judgment was still a factor in his musical experiences:

> *I decided that I want to go against the standards and I just want to heavily lean on the whole music thing. I feel like stuff like that will definitely keep you back if you don't try to be your own person in life. You don't try to find what you like and you just say, okay, well, these people like doing this and I like that too. You know what, you're never going to be happy if you just don't find what you like and you just keep going on with what other people like.*

Christopher speaks to both the importance of finding your way as an individual and finding people who share your values and interests as complementary strategies for negotiating the gender norms at Bridgetown High School. Chamber Singers and the theater were places where Christopher felt most free of peer judgment. These environments were more selective than Concert Choir, attracting students committed to the enterprise of singing and theater, providing Christopher with access to a group of like-minded individuals.

Although Christopher and Cole had no firsthand experience with boys being harassed or bullied for singing, a parent, Sara, shared her son's experiences with being the target of homophobic name-calling and harassment in choir. Despite some negative experiences in choir in sixth and seventh grade, Sara values music and choral participation highly for her son and hopes that he continues to participate in band and chorus throughout his high school career. Sara's perspective follows, in which she tells the story of her son's experience in choir and his perseverance in the face of harassment.

Sara's perspective: Supporting choir and handling bullying. Sara spent most of her life singing in choir, and currently sings in a community choir at the local university. Her eighth grade son, Jarod, participates in choir and band, and is a three-season track and cross country athlete. Since fifth grade, Jerod played clarinet in band and sang in chorus. Sara reflected that participation in the early years was practically by default; it was almost expected in the school that students would continue to elective music. Now as an eighth grader he had to make

decisions about his high school electives. He chose to remain in choir and in band, foreclosing other elective possibilities.

Choir participation has not always been easy for Jerod. According to Sara, in seventh grade he would come home unhappy with stories of being picked on by other boys in his grade in chorus. Jerod reported being called names and boys kicking him in the back from the riser above him. Sara believes the problems began in sixth grade. In sixth grade chorus, there was a group of boys who wanted to drop out mid-semester. Mrs. Ames decided to let them leave rather than have unwilling singers, despite the policy against leaving mid-term. She created an alternative ensemble, hoping to keep those boys involved somehow and to recruit more boys from study hall, which met at the same time. The all boys' study hall group was led by a high school boy and culminated in a performance at the concert of an a cappella style piece. Jerod tried out the boys' group, but did not like how unstructured it was and so he returned to the main chorus of mainly girls. The following semester, many boys returned to chorus and there was no longer a separate group. Sara reflected:

> *I think his choice is actually part of the reason why he's been labeled as gay by the other kids. I think part of that comes from his decision to not do what all the other boys did, but to do the thing that they all saw as being a girl thing, which was to stay in chorus. I don't think it's the only reason by any means, but I think it's one of the factors that resulted in him getting a label as being a fag or gay, which is such a shame.*

Sara was concerned about the harassment her son had received and at the general homophobia that she perceived in the school. Chorus was not the only site in which Jerod was bullied, but in seventh grade it was one of the sites. In response, Mrs. Ames rearranged riser positions and one of the main instigators of the bullying was asked to leave the chorus. Choir was no longer a "focal point of the problem anymore" and is now a more positive experience for Jerod. When I asked Sara what allowed her son to persevere during the time he was being bullied in choir, she shared that she and her husband have worked to teach Jerod "not to let boys have power, and he doesn't want to give them the power by quitting something that he likes to do."

Jerod was on Mrs. Ames' radar this year; she wants him to find a niche that will allow him to be successful socially and artistically. Observing a lack of interest in the middle school musical experience, of which the Middle School Chorus was a part, Mrs. Ames offered Jerod the chance to work on lighting direction instead of performing. Jerod had the chance to experience a leadership role, and to learn aspects of technical theater under the mentorship of a supportive high school student. Whether Jerod will pursue technical theater in high school remains to be seen, he is currently enrolled in choir and band for freshman year.

Other participants did not explicitly raise the issue of homophobia, but it was implicit in a senior's comments about perceptions of theater and choir people. Margo was involved in the reestablishment of the Theater Club at Bridgetown: "Theater Club is pictured as these very dramatic, flamboyant people. And it's not necessarily a good characterization, and people don't

necessarily want to be associated with that. So, it kind of goes over to chorus with the same thing." Being "flamboyant" is a stereotypical description of gay men. Margo may have used this word to refer to the association of theater and choir with homosexuality without having to explicitly state it. In the group interview in which this comment was made, an interesting conversation followed. Another girl replied, "Well, there are some people in chorus who kind of are a little bit eccentric but, I mean, that's just kind of the way they are." "Yeah," affirmed another girl, "It's kind of their nature." This exchange points to the social cost of being viewed as different, in this case potentially gay, by affiliating with choir or drama. This conversation also indicates a modicum of acceptance on the part of these high school girls of the "eccentric" others among them based in recognition of differences being biological or natural.

I asked the guidance counselor about the occurrence of harassment for singing in chorus. She responded: "I've never seen a kid be made fun of or singled out because they are singers, specifically. I've certainly seen kids be singled out, but not in that context, I guess." The guidance counselor and Mrs. Ames observed the locus of teasing as the student him or herself, rather than any given activity in the school.

Gender, singing, and sports. Gender norms emerged in discussions of the role of sports in relation to music participation in Bridgetown school culture. Participation in sports was generally viewed as not a being a barrier to participation in music or theater. The guidance counselor spoke to attitudes about music participation and accommodating athletes, particularly male athletes:

It's a really mixed bag. You would have some people who were athletes who wanted to

do both. Even if they were hockey boys, there was no sense of, "We're too cool for

this."… It's not uncommon for us to have kids who are great athletes and participating in

sports, who also get a lead in the musical. Sometimes that gets really hard to manage. Our

king for *Cinderella* last year would kind of look at me some rehearsals and be like: "I'm

sorry I was late, I had lifting." I can't get hung up on that. I have to just say, you're doing

both. Good for you. We want you when we can have you.

Students felt they were not forced to choose between sports and music, and appreciated their

coaches' and teachers' efforts to accommodate competing schedules.

Support for sport and music participation was not universal. Mrs. Ames received reports

of a coach giving boys a hard time for participating in musicals. She explained how the boys

reacted:

To their credit, the boys just laugh it off, and they keep doing the musical. They just think

the coach is an idiot, which shows incredible maturity on the kids' level…The fact that

the kids will take that [criticism], that they won't talk back to the coach. But, you do what

you want to do. You take the criticism and you do it anyway. That's pretty amazing for

high school kids.

Although she was prepared to intervene, the students did not ask Mrs. Ames to talk to the coach.

As she describes it, there are coaches who "just don't get it." Participants in this study admired

boys who were active in both music and sport. Girls who were active in sports and choir were

not similarly singled out and recognized by participants for having both musical performance and athletic skills.

Seventh grade girls Elizabeth and Chloe spoke about the opposite poles of sports and music participation, and situated themselves within these poles. Elizabeth is a three-season athlete; she plays basketball, lacrosse, and volleyball. Chloe plays basketball. Both girls are committed to athletics; they elected to play in an important basketball game over participating in County Honor Chorus a couple years ago. They considered dichotomies between sports and music, and norms for boys and girls at Bridgetown. Like Christopher and Cole, the girls noted that gender norms were both unspoken and spoken:

Julie: Is there anybody that would not be likely to sign up for choir?

Chloe: Yeah. The boys. The jocky boys.

Elizabeth: The boys think it is stupid, but then when they see–

Chloe: I think it is nice that there are actually some people who are known for their athletics who are in chorus too because that shows that you can do more than one thing and that chorus isn't "girly."

Julie: Who says that chorus is "girly"?

Chloe: People don't really say it out loud but, well, they do. But, also, you can tell that they think it is girly because–

Elizabeth: Because there are mostly girls in it too so they think—Like the color pink is girly. Like chorus is girly and sports are tomboyish.

Chloe: Manly.

Elizabeth: Yeah, manly, basically. There are two different things. There are sports

and music *(gestures to two opposite sides with her hands)*. I am in the

middle…. Some people really like music and don't like sports and some

people really like sports and don't like music. I like both so I'm in the

middle of it.

This conversation is notable for the girls' use of feminine gender stereotypes, "girly" girls

and "tomboys." Choir is for girly girls, like the color pink, and sports are for tomboys. Elizabeth

disrupts this dichotomy by locating herself in the middle of these two extremes, as someone who

likes both choir and sport. Absent from the girls' discussion is the sense that there were social

costs or sanctions for where they located themselves in terms of sports and music participation,

unlike Christopher and Cole. They easily identified the gender norms for boys and girls

regarding choir and sports participation, but were comfortable moving in between the poles.

Both choir and sports were viable activities for themselves as girls at Bridgetown.

Music and sports

Students spoke to the importance of sports in the school culture: "We are very into

sports…. Almost half the guys play either football, soccer, or lacrosse. Some do swimming.

Then half the girls do lacrosse, softball, or, some girls do soccer, too" (Hope). Opinions on the

role of sports in school culture varied; some saw too much emphasis on sports while others

appreciated the balance the school struck between academics, sports, and other activities like music.

Sports participation factored into how students were grouped and categorized at Bridgetown. When discussing groups of students at the school, a student explained: "you have the music and thespians, you have the artistic people, you have the people who go out all on sports, you have the people who go to CTE, you have the science and physics nerds." Many students referenced two categories, sports and music, but students acknowledged that many students participated in both, including many participants in this study.

Negotiating with coaches for student time after school during theater and musical productions could be a challenge. Mrs. Ames enjoyed a good relationship with the gym teachers and the athletic department. The high school gym teacher had children in the music program, including a daughter in choir, and valued students participating in a variety of activities. The relationship between the music department and athletics was cultivated over the years and, at the high school level, was "the best it's ever been in terms of any job I've had." Mrs. Ames has an informal agreement with the coaches that students are allowed to miss musical rehearsals for games, and in turn are allowed to miss athletic practices for musical rehearsals. Students are not allowed to miss concerts for games because concerts are part of the academic requirements of choir. The relationships between coaches and music teachers are built on mutual respect and rejection of stereotypes. Mrs. Ames explained that the school did not support beliefs such as

"musicians are smart and jocks are dumb, or that athletics is cool and music is geeky and dumb. I don't prescribe to that, [the gym teacher] doesn't [either]."

The 2014-2015 school year brought a new challenge for relations between the music and the athletic department at the middle school. Mrs. Ames produced a middle school musical after a long hiatus due to the loss of the previous middle school music teacher. Seventh and eighth graders with small ensemble or solo roles were asked to stay after school for musical rehearsals. Mrs. Ames reflected:

> I didn't realize I was kicking a hive. I had different reactions from different coaches. The middle school gym teacher was perfectly fine with it, very willing to work with me, said, "Look. I've got thirty kids signed up to play softball. There's no way I can play them all. Who do you need? What days do you need them? I'll play them on other days. They'll all get to play. It's fine."

The reaction of some coaches was not as collegial. Mrs. Ames was reevaluating how to proceed next year, considering whether a full musical is feasible and the best educational experience for the middle school choral program. Even in a small school setting, the culture of accommodation between the high school athletics and the music program does not necessarily result in similar relationships at the middle school level.

Singing in the academic culture of the school

Music and Career and Technical Education. In consortium with surrounding rural districts, Bridgetown High School students could elect to participate in the CTE program. Students travel to the off site center in the afternoons of their junior year and in the mornings of

their senior year. Offerings included, but were not limited to, education and human services, building trades, culinary arts, and automotive technology. Students enrolled in CTE faced structural constraints to participating in choir and the music program.

Hope, a sophomore, will enter the CTE program with plans to specialize in early childhood education in her junior year. She is excited at the prospect of being able to finish both her high school degree and technical certificate in two years and then be able to get a job. She is confident in her job prospects: "you can immediately go out and get a job as soon as you graduate. All you have to do is fill out an application and stuff for a job that you want and you can just get a job."

Studying in the vocational program requires missing a year of afternoon electives, including all music ensembles. The guidance counselor noted that students were accepting of the compromise. She discussed different orientations to curricular conflict between CTE and Advanced Placement students:

We'll have a conversation with them [vocational students]. Ok, if you're in this program, afternoon music ensembles are out for junior year. Those kids are really accepting of it. It's the Advanced Placement, the really top performing kids, who don't want to accept that [they may be prevented from participating in music].

Students and parents viewed music participation as an asset for college entrance, which may explain why students in Advanced Placement classes fought for continued participation in the music program in the face of scheduling conflicts. Music becomes associated with high

achieving students in part because students in CTE face interruptions to music participation. Hope's perspective follows to illustrate one student's path to CTE and her views towards choral singing.

      __Hope's Perspective: Entering CTE, leaving choir.__ Hope sits in the front row on the far edge of the soprano section. During choir rehearsals she is quiet and unassuming, focusing on her score and paying attention to Mrs. Ames, who is one of her favorite teachers. Hope is currently singing second soprano, but she wants to develop her range further and sing first soprano.

      Hope has spent her education moving from school to school across the surrounding rural county. Previously living with her mother, she currently lives with her father and stepmother in Bridgetown. When recalling her experiences singing in school, she noted: "I've been to four different schools so it's hard to keep track." On multiple occasions, she moved before the choir concert at the end of the term. When she was finally able to sing in a concert at Bridgetown High School, "I got told by everyone [in my family] that I was amazing, I was one of the best singers. I was proud of myself."

      Her first memory of singing in school was a story her mom told her about her first grade Christmas concert. Hope was "out there singing above everybody else. Since my mom told me that, I could tell that ever since I was little I've always wanted to sing." Hope's family is a significant source of support for her singing. Through performing in chorus, she receives praise and encouragement. About Concert Choir at Bridgetown, she said:

I love the experience. It's so much fun to be able to sing and kind of just feel like I'm part of something. Because I've never really been part of anything, and so when I'm in chorus, I feel like I can be someone.

Hope has struggled academically in school, but speaks with pride about being "really smart in chorus; I knew what I was doing." That feeling of confidence in choir was shaken when entering Bridgetown's choral program, which emphasized music reading more than her previous choral classes had. Although admitting that she had a difficult time at first, Hope feels she is getting the hang of it. During sight-reading, her eyes are glued to the score. She doesn't appear confident. "Sight singing—it's like reading in Latin—you can't understand it," she said. Her strategy is to "just go along with it. I sing and I memorize the songs as much as I can." At home, Hope sings along to the radio. She started a notebook where she writes down the name of every song she can remember. She explains that she has over one thousand songs written in what she calls her songbook or song journal. These are mostly songs from the radio, because she can't remember all the chorus songs she's sung.

Hope entered the solo festival this year, but because she did not attend practice sessions with the choir teacher after school she was not able to perform. She has also missed many voice lessons. She forgets, and is concerned about missing other classes to attend voice lessons with high school examinations on the horizon. In her future career in early childhood, she hopes to use her love of singing: "When you put them down for a nap you usually have to sing a lullaby, so I was thinking maybe I could bring my singing abilities there."

Hope is a student who has struggled academically and has faced instability in her personal and school life. Despite feeling "smart" in choir, she has struggled to meet the academic expectations of the choral program at Bridgetown. She struggled on her final sight-singing test, as she had taught herself the wrong solfege syllables. Mrs. Ames reflected:

> I don't like that when that happens to kids, because they're my kids and I want them to learn. I don't like it when they don't learn. Sometimes I can't control everything, but it also makes me think—How do I get kids like her to learn this stuff when they're basically inaccessible to me because of scheduling?

Despite falling short of meeting the academic expectations in choir this year, Hope is committed to singing in choir and finds both challenge and satisfaction in her participation. Because of the structure of the CTE program, Hope will not be able to continue her music education in her junior year. This will impact her ability to continue to develop her musicianship and notational literacy skills, which are key aspects of the choral program at Bridgetown. She is excited to enter the CTE, but will lose what has been a source of learning, pride, and belonging in choir.

Students in the CTE program are considered less likely to be enrolled in chorus. A discussion between high school boys reflected stereotypes about CTE and at risk students but ultimately acknowledged the structural barriers to their participation. Eric suggested students with troubled home lives, who struggle academically, would be unlikely to sign up for choir:

"They probably have enough trouble getting their schoolwork done as it is, without piling the efforts of choir on top of that." Sam disagreed:

Sam: I don't think that's true.

Eric: I do.

Sam: I don't know. Just people may be going in a different direction, doesn't mean that they have to be from a poor background. People going into auto tech probably won't do chorus. That's still just a generalization though. I'm sure there are people that would. Like Bill, Bill would do chorus, and he was in auto tech. He's in auto tech now, and he can't anymore.

Eric: It conflicts, and he's not allowed to. Well, he just can't be.

Sam: So I guess in that way, people in auto-tech cannot be in chorus. It doesn't mean they wouldn't want to, though.

Curricular programs and their scheduling reinforced stereotypes related to gender, class and choral participation. The nature of the small school environment complicated this picture, with individuals disrupting these assumptions. The school has made an effort to de-stigmatize the vocational program by promoting it to all students. All eighth graders take a field trip to the CTE campus to gain hands on experience with the different offerings.

The guidance counselor rejected the term *tracks* when referring to the school's programs, because students are given the choice and make individual plans in consultation with the guidance department. The approach is: "Explore! Take a tech class, figure out what you enjoy

doing." The school is focused on career preparation, and "that's the way we're introducing careers to people—it's like, you do woodworking, maybe you should take building trades, maybe you should [enroll] in the [CTE] program." No student is involuntarily placed into a program. A parent commented upon Bridgetown's approach to different curricular offerings: "When I was in school, they tracked kids, where you were the kid that probably should go to CTE and learn a trade. You were the kid that should go to college. They would gently push people in those directions, and a couple instances where it wasn't so gentle. I don't see that here."

In spite of the school's emphasis on de-stigmatizing the vocational program, the realities of the split day schedule reinforce stereotypes about arts participation and socioeconomic class. CTE still carries connotations of serving lower income and less academic students. Students participating in these programs face interruptions in their music education which presumably would make it more difficult for them to gain entrance into auditioned groups. The regular academic track allows for uninterrupted participation in the music offerings and therefore greater access to elite, auditioned ensembles. When the Advanced Placement track prevents participation in music, students and parents seek accommodations.

Access to music. Access to music was a concern of school personnel, particularly in terms of serving students living in poverty, students in special education, and students facing academic issues.

Poverty. School personnel were concerned about ameliorating barriers that low-income students might face. The guidance counselor described the student body at Bridgetown as

encompassing students enjoying great privilege and students facing extreme poverty who need food assistance from the school. She noted: "We see the whole spectrum here and everything in between. We see them all in the music program." The principal noted that as demands and expectations of school and the music program increased in high school, students with more support at home might have an easier time participating. The principal explained, when it came to meeting obligations for practicing, getting to lessons and performances, etc., "kids who are not supported as well at home have a harder time."

The music teachers were aware of the different student populations in the school: "Our music teachers do make a concerted effort to reach out to students at risk. I think of the high school technical theater program…[it] reaches out to kids who might not otherwise be in music. And it really has made a huge difference in the lives of certain at risk students." Non-performing arts classes could be an avenue for involvement by students not interested in or not able to participate in chorus or band. Other steps taken to ensure access to the music program for students with limited financial means included providing concert clothes, arranging for free instrument rentals through the school's music booster organization, and placing afterschool activities on days with late busses. Mrs. Ames asserted the school works to arrange activities so that "poverty is not an excuse to not be part of something."

Special education. Bridgetown practices inclusion for special education students. Any high school student, regardless of disability, may elect, and is encouraged to participate in, Concert Choir or Concert Band. Mrs. Ames is proud that the non-auditioned choirs are a

welcoming place for students with special needs, "[students with severe disabilities] don't get mainstreamed into a lot of stuff. And I always take them, because they like it. They like music." For one student with cognitive and physical disabilities, choir is the highlight of her day. Her caregivers and teachers used choir attendance, and the chance to see Mrs. Ames, as motivation for the student to complete tasks in other aspects of life and school.

Mrs. Ames related a story of a year when a boy with Down's Syndrome, Liam, participated in Concert Choir. He usually vocalized quietly in class, but sang out loudly and proudly in a concert. Liam knew every word to the choral pieces, but his enthusiastic singing did not blend with the rest of the choir. Mrs. Ames recalled her own reaction, "This kid is singing. He loves it. And he's so proud and happy in this moment." She smiled with pride in her students recalling that not a single student said a negative word about that aspect of the concert or that Liam had sung out. Mrs. Ames described the post-concert reflection:

> There were about 60 kids in that choir. None of them said a [negative] thing about it. We were talking about the concert after the fact, what was the best part, the worst part, and what do we have to work on—post-evaluation stuff. And somebody said, "Wow, Liam was really into it, wasn't he?" And I said, "Yeah, could you hear him?" And they were like, "Oh yeah, we could." And I said, "Yeah, I could too." And they smiled. And that's the way it went.

Mrs. Ames' philosophy of participation for all students and access over perfection in performance contributed to this environment of acceptance. The principal spoke to the potential

tension that the school's policy of inclusion could cause: "If you're a purist listening for perfection in our Concert Choir at the winter concert, you're going to have a hard time with it. But, for me, it makes me cry when I see a couple of these kids. They're just so thrilled to be out there, and they're not technically extremely proficient but they love music and they love to sing."

The music program can play a key role for students with invisible disabilities. Irene, parent of ninth grade student Amelia and herself a middle school teacher at Bridgetown, spoke of her daughter's invisible learning disability and the role that music has played in her school life:

> I think she would be lost without it [music]. Like I said, she's dyslexic. Reading consequently is so difficult for her and even though she has an IEP and a program… it was really apparent that school was going to be a big struggle for her. When you're getting out of elementary school and understanding how much harder things are going to be—if she didn't have that outlet and that wasn't available to her here I think she would've drowned. It kept her going. She's at the point now as a freshman in high school where she's able to better self monitor and regulate and she knows how to use her special education and her consultant teacher. She knows how to balance herself better. I think at that point [middle school], at that age, if she didn't have the arts, something else to draw her here, she would have been sick every day.

Academic eligibility. Academic eligibility is not a factor in determining who is able to participate in school day music classes. Mrs. Ames explained, "I don't have students who are failing math so they're taken out of chorus anymore." Academic eligibility will, however,

prevent a student from participating in extracurricular music or sports. Mrs. Ames noted the

school's philosophy is to help those students who are academically struggling to continue their

participation in arts classes. School personnel value arts and music classes as venues where a

struggling student can feel success at school. Mrs. Ames related this story:

> I had a student this year who was not doing well, and it's generally at the request of the
>
> parents, not the counselor, not the principal, because they see the value of arts and they
>
> see that this child needs to feel successful someplace. And if it's in the chorus room, fine,
>
> let it be in the chorus room. And they know it's not healthy to just yank this kid out. But I
>
> had a kid this year who was failing, and the mother said, "I want my daughter put in
>
> assisted math until her grade gets up because she needs to be doing better." And assisted
>
> math—that's when chorus is.

Jen, a senior, reported that she couldn't participate in choir in middle school because of

"reading problems" and conflicts with the services she was receiving. Sharon, parent of seventh

grader Elizabeth and a teacher at the elementary school, noted that in the past students who were

receiving academic interventions or certain special education services had a hard time accessing

the music program. The school worked to resolve that situation "because it wasn't fair for the

kids who wanted to do it but couldn't, because of academic issues to be excluded."

Advanced Placement and music participation. Multiple students who participated in

this study were involved in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and spoke of rigorous expectations

for college. Mark, an eighth grade boy, described his AP strategy for high school. He was

already planning for balancing all the experiences he wants to have in high school: "I'm advanced. I was advanced science but I dropped out of that because balancing advanced science and math in the future would be tricky with sports and music." Mark reflects the need to make choices in regards to AP courses at Bridgetown. There are limited AP offerings and upper level language courses at Bridgetown due to staffing levels. Addressing these limitations can lead to conflict with parents and students who want as many activities as possible as part of their high school experience. The guidance counselor related: "In guidance we frequently want to narrow their focus a little bit. Because sometimes you're so well rounded that it—we have parents of our really high achieving, awesome kids—and I get they want every opportunity for their kid, but sometimes the master schedule is not going to give them every opportunity and we get a lot of backlash from that."

Limited AP classes and upper level language courses sometimes create conflicts with participation in music classes. Mrs. Ames explained, "If you want to be in AP government, it meets eighth period. That's when Concert Choir meets. Make a choice." Historically, all students had to enroll in Concert Choir in order to sing in the auditioned ensembles. There was a three-tiered system to the high school chorus program. Participation in Concert Choir offered the opportunity to audition for Chamber Singers, and if accepted into Chamber Singers a student could audition into Jazz Singers. The policy was simplified so that students who wanted to sing in either auditioned ensemble only had to sing in Concert Choir. However, with conflicts among Advanced Placement students' courses, Mrs. Ames occasionally has to exercise flexibility in her

policy about Concert Choir enrollment. In the year before this study took place, she allowed a set of upperclassmen to audition for the upper level choruses without participating in Concert Choir because of conflict with Advanced Placement offerings. Mrs. Ames is concerned about this trend devaluing participation in Concert Choir and providing an excuse for students to sing only in select ensembles. Mrs. Ames explained, "that's sort of creating this elitist attitude…I'm not going to condone that kind of behavior."

Below is the perspective of a choir parent, Jon, who speaks to his daughter's efforts to balance her academic life with her participation in music. Jon is an example of a parent who wants his daughters to 'do it all' and acknowledges that his children have needed to make choices in terms of their academic and extracurricular activities.

Jon's Perspective: Supporting choir participation and making choices. Jon is a father of five girls: two in high school, two in middle school, and one in elementary school. All are involved in the music program. Jon grew up in a small town about an hour away from Bridgetown, but attended one of the local universities in Bridgetown. His senior year of college, he was planning on an acting career, but when a coaching job opened up at the university he took it upon graduation. After starting their family, he and his wife decided to stay in the area. Jon now works in law enforcement, is a musician himself, and wants a well-rounded, rich educational experience for his daughters.

Both of Jon's two eldest daughters are in the top five of their high school class. His daughters have had to make decisions about how to use their time in school. Both dropped band

in late middle school to focus more on academics and vocal music. His eldest daughter received special permission from Mrs. Ames to opt out of voice lessons because she was concerned about missing her other courses and jeopardizing her class standing. Jon explained the increased demands upon students in the high school music program:

> *The band director and the chorus director want more time with the students. They have successfully lobbied to have vocal lessons and band lessons relatively at any point during the day. Because those [lessons] are graded now–when I was in school, it was just pass/fail. If you had a lesson and it fell during your English class or your calculus class, you just didn't go to your lesson. Now, even if you have a core course, they want you to [go] to the lesson. If you can't go to the lesson, they want you to make it up. If you don't make it up, you're losing points on your grades.*

Those few points are critical for his eldest daughter, whose class ranking means she could be valedictorian. Jon remembers doing it all in high school and wishes his daughters could have a similar experience.

> *I was a three-sport athlete, and I did marching band, jazz band, concert band, concert chorus, chamber chorus, school plays. I did everything. I would love for them to have that experience as well— if they want to. I had the feeling that they did, and then they just got to the point where they were like, "This is just too much. I've just got to cut something out." That was a little hard for me. Actually, my oldest daughter, who is second in class, she's no longer doing any sports. She's just doing the school plays and all of her vocal*

stuff. Which is fine if that was her decision. At the same time, I'm thinking if it wasn't

quite so demanding, she might have been able to fit more in and would have wanted to.

Jon values music education for his daughters, and appreciates the discipline he has

experienced in learning an instrument and performing. Four years ago, Jon began playing the

guitar and songwriting. This experience has changed his view of music making. He wants his

daughters to find their path in music as well for the benefits that he sees.

Music, in particular, is such a release. It can be useful in so many ways. It can be a stress

reliever. It can be your friend when you're down. It can be something that pumps you up

when you need a pick-me-up. I want them to realize that, because I didn't for a long time.

It actually wasn't until I started playing the guitar that it really became that for me. Here,

it was 2011, and I was 36, and I started playing the guitar. I'd been singing and doing

stuff all my life and never really used it as the stress reliever or the place to escape to or

to work out whatever I've got going on in my head. It's become that for me. I hope that

they eventually get to that point as well. I know they're both very– actually all five of

them are very musically inclined. It's going to be part of their lives. I just hope it gets to

that level for them, at some point.

For Jon, music has become an important part of his adult life. He values the school culture at

Bridgetown for its emphasis on academics, something that he perceived to be less valued in the

small town where he grew up. At the same time, he benefited from the opportunity to participate

in sports, choir, band, and theater in his own high school experience and regrets that his own

children have not been able to participate in all those activities. The intensity of the environment for his high achieving daughter, Kimberly, has required her to make choices, such as the choice to drop instrumental music, not play sports and gain special permission to not attend voice lessons during academic classes. These are the kind of choices that the guidance counselor spoke of as being necessary, but the need to specialize may be in conflict with parental expectations that their children be able to do it all in a small school.

College preparation and being well rounded. For some students at Bridgetown, pressure to be well rounded was a message sent by parents, the community, and the school. The message was so pervasive that, as Margo put it, it was "in your face." She explained: "our school encourages you to go out and do a lot of things and have a lot of opportunities, and be a well-rounded person. I mean, we are a college town, and so the idea of being a well-rounded person and participating in numerous activities is kind of always in your face." Amelia was sent the message from her parents, "you want to try new things and have all these other things, because it will help you in life and it will help you in college. Because you'll find something that you're good at, and that'll help just kind of figure out what you want to do in life."

The message came from the school in terms of criteria for honor society programs and scholarships. Honors societies look for academic performance, community service, and participation in extra-curricular activities. Bridgetown offers specific scholarships to graduating seniors, and the application includes a list of all of the school's extra-curricular options and asks students to explain their school activities. One of these scholarships is written for a student who

is described as being "well-rounded." The principal believed the "word has kind of trickled down" to add further support to participating in a variety of activities.

In valuing well-roundedness and high levels of participation in a variety of activities, the principal cited socioeconomic class and college preparation as a factor: "Particularly the students who have the resources and family support to realize these are the things to do to go to college. But, because we are a college town there's a critical mass of people that believe that, so students are pushed to try for accelerating academically but also to do extra-curricular and to do sports so that there's a good balance on what they take with them to college." Christopher noted, "There's a lot of pressure, starting once you get into high school…when you get to junior year, all of a sudden people are like, okay, you need to start looking into colleges, you need to choose your top ten by the end of the year." The guidance counselor also noted parents emphasizing well-roundedness as college preparation. Guidance has a slightly different focus than parents, she explained: "For me, that's a career exploration. But the other side of that is in guidance we frequently want them to narrow their focus a little bit." Pressure to perform academically was on the minds of students as was balancing their schedules with AP classes, music, sports, and other afterschool activities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined themes situating the choral program within the wider culture of the school. I examined the vision and purpose of the choral program in terms of participants' values and beliefs about singing and choral participation. The choral program, as part of the

music program, was an important part of the school's role as a center of community activity. The music program was a valued part of the school's identity in offering students a comprehensive, quality education. The choir program was valued for personal, social, musical, and educational reasons by students, parents, and school personnel. The music program was not only seen as an avenue for developing skills relevant to music, but as a distinct educational experience unlike other classes offered in the school day. In a climate of budget limitations and fear of losing staff and programs, participants situated the music program as serving Bridgetown students and community in a variety of irreplaceable ways.

Themes related to choir participation and the academic culture of the school included negotiating curricular tracks including the vocational and advanced. The choir program was situated in the wider academic culture of the school as a de facto part of the college preparatory classes, as choral participation was valued as an asset for college admittance and competitiveness. Other curricular programs, such as CTE, did not include music education as vital for the future career trajectory of the students, and therefore missing music classes was a trade-off participants and the school were willing to accept. The school actively worked to remove barriers to participation for certain student populations including special education and students living in poverty. Removing barriers for these populations was important for the school's values of providing opportunities for all students.

Themes situating singing and choir participation in the social culture of the school included assumptions about choral participation and singing, singing and gender norms, and

intersections between music and sports participation. Assumptions about singing situated choir

participation as part of a pro-school, academic identity. Singers could subvert negative

connotations of this association by embracing labels such as weird or geeky. Students negotiated

gender norms with the support of peers, significant adults, and the school culture, which

promoted well rounded participation across academics, athletics, and the arts. These attributes

were particularly valuable for college bound students who could compete for school awards and

college admittance. School personnel were more active in helping students balance commitments

between extracurricular music and theater and sports.

    In the following chapter I review the purpose, method, and main findings of the study. I

discuss how choir participation is enabled or impeded at the school. I consider how the choral

program is in convergence with or diverges from the school culture. Implications for practice and

recommendations for further research conclude the final chapter.

Chapter 6

Discussion

In this chapter I review the purpose, guiding questions, and findings of the study. As questions one and two were answered in chapters four and five, respectively, in this chapter I will focus on the final research question of how choral participation was enabled or impeded in school culture. This study treads familiar ground in presenting the characteristics of a successful secondary choral program and its teacher's work to develop musicianship and a supportive learning environment for all students. Less examined is how music programs are situated within school cultures. Findings suggest the choral program is largely in convergence with the school culture in ways that contribute to its success. Despite this convergence, impediments remain to choral participation, both social and structural. Importantly, not all impediments were viewed as problematic or sources of tension between the choral program and the school. The chapter concludes with implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Review of purpose and research questions

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to explore how school culture interacts with meanings of singing in a rural, secondary school choral program. The following questions guided the study:

1. What characterizes the culture of the choral program?

2. How does the choral program interact with the wider school culture?

3. How is choral participation enabled or impeded in school culture?

Review of limitations

This research faced limitations that the reader should be cognizant of while interpreting the findings. These limitations include issues of scope, access, sampling, and participant perspective. The findings presented here are limited by the perspectives on the choral program and the school that were gained from where and when I observed, the documents I examined, and the participants who were a part of the research. The scope of the project, in how I chose to bind the case study and where I was able to gain access, cannot provide a total view of the school and the choral program. The view of school culture presented here reflects a view from the choral department, and should not be understood as representative of the school as a whole. The view of the choral department was limited to the secondary level. Important meanings of singing were generated in general music K-5th grade and in Fifth Grade Choir and Sixth Grade Choir, but were beyond the scope of this project.

Claims about culture, shared values, beliefs, and traditions are inherently limited by an individual's experiences, which vary within settings. Bruner (1996) posits that culture is fluid rather than fixed. Findings from this research reflect the fluidity of perspectives of individuals who form idiosyncratic meanings of their environment even while they interact with larger, systemic versions of culture. Some experiences were limited to one participant (such as Hope's experience entering CTE), while other experiences were shared across many participants (such as the singers' involvement in athletics and music). Individuals' experience of choir varied, but by volunteering to participate in the study singers were inevitably committed to choir and believed in its value.

Parents and school personnel who participated in this study were middle class professionals. Voices of parents from varied socioeconomic circumstances are missing. These perspectives may have added additional complexity to the findings related to socioeconomic status in the school's culture and curriculum. Future research should seek diversity in socioeconomic status when gaining perspectives of parents. Greater participation from administrators and school personnel would also have been beneficial for this project.

In qualitative research, the course of the study can lead in unexpected directions. When designing this study, I expected issues of gender to be front and center in the participants' understanding and experiences of meanings of singing in school, which is reflected in the design of the literature review. Gender did arise, but was equally as relevant to issues related to socioeconomic status, curriculum tracking, and music's role in definitions of a well rounded student and education. Gender was related to other social identity categories, such as socioeconomic class, academic standing, and extracurricular pursuits.

Discussion of findings

In this discussion I consider research question three, ways that choral participation was enabled or impeded within school culture. In addition I will review central findings for research questions one and two and discuss findings with previous research and understandings in the field.

Bridgetown schools serve a mixed socioeconomic student body of poor, working class, and middle class students but reflect and promote middle class values that may be characterized

as "expressive independence" (Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014, p. 614). Schools promoting

expressive independence create opportunities for choice, self-expression, and the promotion of

individual accomplishments that prepare students for higher education and professional careers

(Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). These characteristics are reflected in student-teacher

interactions, parent-teacher interaction, expectations for student behavior and attitudes, and

classroom practices. The culture of the choral program, guided by the vision of the choir teacher,

converged in meaningful ways with middle class school culture to promote this expressive

independence. Singers relied upon discourses of expressive independence when negotiating with

social forces that may impede choral participation such as gender norms.

In comparing continuing education programs in learning cultures across multiple sites

Hodkinson, Anderson, and Colley et al. (2007) identified three types of learning cultures, those

featuring synergy and convergence, divergence and conflict, and both convergence and

divergence. They defined convergence as "forces between different factors pushing or pulling in

the same direction" (p. 405). Divergence was defined as when forces in the learning culture

"'pull' the learning culture in contrasting ways" resulting in tension or conflict (p. 405).

Hodkinson, Anderson, and Colley et al. (2007) acknowledged that all learning cultures feature

synergy, convergence, and divergence. However, understanding the overall characteristics of the

relationship that programs had with learning sites revealed sources of strength and weakness

within the program. This research suggests the choral program at Bridgetown was characterized

by convergence with the wider school culture. This convergence enabled participation in choir as

the choral program aligned with the school's mission and identity. Impediments to choir

participation were not necessarily viewed as points of divergence between the choir program and

the overall school culture.

Contextually responsive teaching in convergence with school culture

Mrs. Ames enabled choral participation through her philosophy and vision for the choral

program and her development of the social and academic cultures. Her ability to interact with the

wider school culture, including its academic, social, and extra-curricular aspects reveal ways

Mrs. Ames was contextually responsive in her work.

Mrs. Ames' success as the choir teacher at Bridgetown reflected her ability to align her

approach to teaching and curricular design to the wider professional and academic culture of the

school. School personnel were described as internally motivated, professional, independent, and

focused on students. Innovation and reform were welcomed. The choir teacher fit into this

professional culture and was adept at communicating and collaborating with different

stakeholders in order to make adjustments and improvements to the choral program. In this

climate, she felt respected both as a professional and as a person.

As the sole choral teacher for the three district schools in a rural setting, Mrs. Ames

developed the choral program to both meet the needs of the community and her professional

vision. Mrs. Ames strategically collaborated and communicated with fellow teachers and staff at

Bridgetown. She extended her community interactions beyond Bridgetown to cooperate with

other music teachers across the rural county. She further served the community by directing

summer musicals that provided further performance opportunities for her students and community members. Considering this case in regards to concerns over standardized curricula and practices (Benedict & Schmidt, 2011) that lead to decontextualized, placeless, curriculum and instruction (Stauffer, 2012), Mrs. Ames' approach and content area minimized some of those concerns. Choral music education at Bridgetown was not subject to standardized curricula, as Mrs. Ames was able to involve her students in choosing repertoire, and was able to otherwise make choices based on her professional judgment. The choirs did not participate in ensemble festivals or competitions that have preselected lists of repertoires. The local music teachers ran the county honor ensembles, and therefore were able to choose repertoires that would meet the needs of the students. The choir teacher was required to perform formal, standardized assessments of her students for purposes of the state mandated teacher evaluation, but at the time of the study she was able to create the assessments herself.

Unlike other rural music teachers, Mrs. Ames did not face isolation, low enrollments, or limited resources (Isbell, 2005). Rural schools may be defined in terms of what they lack (Spring, 2013), reflecting deficit thinking. Rural schools reflect a variety of kinds of schools, with varied resources in terms of funding, varied student populations, and varied music programs. This study is an example of a rural school district whose music teachers do not face challenges often associated with rural teaching. Bridgetown School District is unique in that it is located in a small village with two universities, whose influence is felt in the school. Nonetheless, the presence of these institutions does not guarantee a successful music program.

Rural schools may be defined in terms of social interactions, "where a rural place spawns familiarity, inclusiveness and togetherness, a safe place in which to live and teach" (Spring, 2013, p. 31). As in other small, rural, schools (Tieken, 2014), relationships were central for Bridgetown students and reflected in sentiments used to describe the school and community: "We all know each other;" "It's kind of like having a family of friends." The school prided itself on cultivating student-teacher relationships that were caring and nurturing. Teachers were expected to cultivate positive relationships with students in the context of high academic expectations and access to enriching experiences for all. Relationships, the "human element," were central to Mrs. Ames' approach to teaching and in convergence with the school's value systems. Mrs. Ames attributed the strength of the choral program to her caring about students and her efforts to develop positive, individualized relationships with them. Mrs. Ames' profile supports Prest's (2013) assertion that communication and relationship building are central tenets for successful rural music teaching.

Mrs. Ames worked to create an inviting classroom environment while also making it clear to students and administrators that chorus was a content rich subject. In comparing choir teachers across schools, Bennetts (2013) found that teachers focusing exclusively on enjoyment without sufficient challenge or skill development were less successful in maintaining student enrollment. Other research has shown that choir directors with high expectations, however that is defined within a particular context, contribute to successful choral cultures (Bartolome, 2010; Bridges, 1996; Hall, 2011). Definitions of excellent choral performance will vary from an elite

community choir to non-auditioned, small school choruses such as those in Bridgetown. However, across contexts, it is apparent that a belief in the quality and worth of the choral endeavor generates value and commitment to participation.

Mrs. Ames' goal was to develop active musicians rather than students who would just "sing along." Regular questioning and conversation in rehearsals occurred in regards to refining notational literacy, understanding theoretical concepts, interpreting the music, and making expressive choices. The tone of her questioning in rehearsals was supportive, playful, and peppered with humor. Mrs. Ames reflected qualities of other successful high school choral teachers who struck a similar balance of work and play in their rehearsals (Ramsey, 2013). Students perceived Mrs. Ames held qualities such as the ones Sichivitsa (2007) found increased singers' valuing of their choral experience—being knowledgeable, skilled, supportive, and fair.

Student enrollment and participation was enabled by Mrs. Ames' belief in the value of music for all students, a belief that was also in convergence with the wider school's vision for access to the music program as a creative outlet and an avenue for achievement for students who may struggle elsewhere. Mrs. Ames embraced these beliefs about music participation, which were reflected in her prioritizing access and participation over perfect performances or strict rehearsal behavior.

The structure of the choral program reflected the values of participation and access, and aligned with the needs of the small, rural school. The core ensembles were non-auditioned. Students who wanted to participate in auditioned ensembles needed to maintain enrollment in the

core ensemble. This structure enabled participation in the small school setting of Bridgetown.

Small school size can impede the success of school music programs (Abril & Gault, 2008). Non-

select performing groups have been suggested as avenues to promoting participation in small

rural schools (Prest, 2013). Mrs. Ames' design of the program responded to the realities of

working in a small school and converged with the school's vision for the choral program as an

avenue for all students to engage in the arts and achieve success. This design also allowed the

choral program to fulfill state mandated fine arts credit requirements, a requirement that aided in

maintaining the choral program in the face of budget cuts.

During her fifteen year tenure Mrs. Ames pursued various changes including adjustments

to scheduling, enrollment policies, and academic content. The choir teacher's efforts to improve

the quality of the academic and social experience for her students were an ongoing process of

negotiation, communication, and experimentation. School personnel, including fellow music

teachers, supported her in these efforts and these efforts were consistent with the school's vision

for its teachers taking initiative to improve the school for students. When new initiatives were

attempted, such as the reinstatement of the middle school musical after cuts in previous years,

new tensions might have arisen with school personnel, in this case the middle school athletic

department. Mrs. Ames worked to resolve these issues and sought organized input from students

and school personnel as to how to improve for the following year. Mrs. Ames took this input

seriously, evidence of her genuine engagement across the school, including allowing student

input into decision-making.

In Mrs. Ames' case, her interaction with the community and her students were central in being contextually responsive—the relationships she built, the coordination and communication she fostered across stakeholders, and her beliefs and vision for the music program which encompassed a variety of participants and emphasized the many rather than the talented few. Notably, the rural setting was an asset in many ways rather than a liability, and the choral program was relevant and meaningful to its participants.

Values and beliefs about choral participation

Previous research indicated choral experiences were multifaceted and included musical but also social, personal, and other benefits (Bartolome, 2012; Baird, 2007; Hylton, 1981; Kwan, 2002, 2007; Sudgen, 2005). This ethnographic case study affirms these previous findings with participants valuing multiple facets of the choral experience. Students' expressed values and beliefs about singing, choir, and music education included 1) social value (teamwork, responsibility, belonging); 2) personal value (relaxation/stress relief, good feelings, defining and expressing self, validation/confidence, and emotional release); 3) musical value (vocal development, music literacy, meeting musical challenges, engaging with choral sound, connecting to meaning in music, music appreciation/culture); and 4) educational value.

Facets less emphasized in previous studies include valuing choral music as high culture and valuing the choral program as a unique aspect within the academic life of students. These two findings relate to how the choral program is situated within the wider culture of the school and were emphasized by parents and school personnel. Parents and school personnel viewed the

choral program as part of the music program, and often spoke of the value and benefits of the music program in general and its role in the educational life of the school. They expressed values and beliefs about choral participation and music education including social value (teamwork); personal value (relaxation/stress relief, good feelings, validation/confidence); musical value (music appreciation/culture); and educational value. General educational value of choral participation included benefits such as developing creativity, focus, discipline, and as an experience in the school day that is distinctly different from regular classes. Additionally, choir could develop skills and dispositions in singers that are applicable in contexts beyond music. These values were expressed in a context of threat to the music program in the school from budget cuts. This may account for school personnel and parent's emphasis on the unique value of music for youth during the school day.

Singers' values were more expansive than adults, and included greater depth in each facet of the choral experience—social, personal, musical, and educational. Student responses reflected more comprehensively the musical content of the choral program including vocal development, music literacy, etc. The musical benefits valued by adults related to music appreciation and expanding general knowledge about music and musical genres.

High status knowledge. Students and adults valued the choral program as an opportunity to gain exposure to what might be called "high status" culture, such as music by Mozart. The music program was viewed as a unique avenue for interacting with music perceived to be high status that students might not get otherwise. Music education has been critiqued for reinforcing

notions of high versus low culture, and attempting to elevate students' musical tastes at the expense of their personal or family musical preferences and culture (Bates, 2012). Participants in this study located high culture in the music program as classical music. However, the approach to music in the program acknowledged student musical preferences and the choir teacher approached the teaching of popular music and other genres (jazz, world music, etc.) as part of the curriculum on par with classical pieces.

The perception of the choral program as imparting high status knowledge aided in situating the program as part of the academic, college preparatory program of the school. Students learned skills and vocabulary that prepared them for college or community ensemble performance. The teacher framed notational literacy and theoretical learning in terms of making students competitive for local and state honors ensemble opportunities, reinforcing the value of and possibility for achievement in mastering choral concepts and skills. That choir additionally was perceived to generate opportunities for personal growth, creative achievement, and social engagement added to its benefit within the values of the school.

Singing in the academic culture of the school

Advanced Placement. Participants spoke of choral participation at Bridgetown in ways similar to middle class participants in an elite boy choir examined by Hall (2011) who valued choral participation as part of the development of children with athletic, intellectual, and creative attributes. Bridgetown's choral program converged with similar values in the school by providing opportunities for self-expression, creative development, individual accomplishment,

and elective choices for students. One manifestation of this value system was in the message of well roundedness. Being well rounded was viewed as an avenue for personal betterment, career exploration, and college competitiveness. A well rounded student was engaged across school activities including academic pursuits, music, sports, and clubs. For those students on the college preparatory track, pressure to be well rounded and participate in a variety of academic and extra-curricular experiences was acutely felt. The principal described the college preparatory aspect of the school culture, influenced by nearby the presence of local colleges: "Students are pushed to accelerate academically or take AP [Advanced Placement], but also to do extra-curricular [activities] and to do sports, so that there's a good balance on what they take with them to college." School scholarships, memberships in honor societies, and awards were tied to participation in selected and/or varied activities at school.

Choir and music participation were part of the profile of a well-rounded, high achieving student who was likely to go to college and who would be prepared for competitive college entrance. Sources of tension between the academic culture of the school and the choral program related to the small school's limited course offerings and limited resources for staffing Advanced Placement courses. Because Advanced Placement offerings were limited, they sometimes conflicted with choir classes. Middle class parents and students were not willing to miss music opportunities and advocated for accommodations. The choir teacher made accommodations so that high achieving students could take AP courses and still participate in choir. This situation was counter to the choir teacher's vision for the choral program, in which all singers participated

in the non-auditioned, core ensemble at the high school level. However, she was willing to make exceptions in the face of resource and schedule constraints at the request of students and parents.

Career and Technical Education. The vocational program at Bridgetown was designed to prepare students to enter the workforce directly upon graduation. The CTE population was viewed as distinct from the music education population in the school by students. This social categorization was reinforced by structural impediments for vocational students. Entering the vocational program prohibited music participation during the junior year of high school. The connotations of (working) class and (low) academic performance associated with CTE and the course restrictions that result from enrolling in the program complicated the school's assertion of choice and agency when it comes to course selection including music education. The curricular offerings were described in terms of the values of the school as offering avenues for student choice, achievement, and personal development. However, a student who is less academically successful choosing freely to enroll in CTE is still restricted by the structure of the curriculum (Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2007). A student who participated in choir during their first two years of high school making a free choice to enroll in CTE rather than the traditional or advanced educational tracks reinforces the distinction between vocational and college preparatory courses. Music education courses become effectively part of the college preparatory track, and are therefore viewed as less appropriate for academically struggling students.

The school's emphasis on individual agency may obscure social structures in which students make decisions (Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2007). Participants' report of a male

singer who enrolled in automotive technology and had to drop choir illustrates how social structures were reinforced by his free choice to enroll in the CTE program. Participants considered boys enrolled in automotive technology least likely to enroll in choir. Automotive technology is the most stereotypically working class and masculine of the CTE pursuits, characteristics viewed as opposite to choral participation. Participants referenced ideas not only about class and choral participation, but also gender, in naming which kinds of boys are likely to sing. This finding reinforces calls to avoid treating boys as a homogenous group (Weaver-Hightower, 2003) when, in this instance, socioeconomic class and school track disproportionately impacts certain boys' (and girls') ability to elect choir.

Class and parent-student interaction with music education. Thus, students who were in the college preparation track and students who were entering the CTE track faced impediments to choral participation. Parent and student interaction with the choral program varied according to the relative status of the curricular program. According to school personnel and the middle class parents in this study, middle class students and families were unwilling to accept trade-offs in the college preparation curriculum and negotiated accommodations. School personnel reported parents of students in the CTE program did not engage in similar negotiations for exceptions to the curriculum structure. Middle class parents have been shown to engage in monitoring and questioning of teachers and schools while working class parents were more likely to trust the professional expertise of teachers (Lareau, 1987) and were less likely to dispute school authority (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). Middle class parents used resources to

customize their children's educational careers in ways that working class parents did not (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). This study suggests that family-school differences according to class were relevant regarding access to music education at Bridgetown in the college preparatory and CTE programs. Children of middle class parents taking Advanced Placement courses were able to customize their educational program such that they could continue to participate in the choral program by receiving waivers of program requirements.

Impediments due to tracking were not viewed as sources of tension between the choral program and the school culture. Rather, the tracks reflected the school's valuing career readiness and college preparation. Educational priorities nationwide are emphasizing career and technical education at the high school (CCSSO, 2014), and even middle school (Adams, 2015), levels. In this climate of increasing emphasis on schools providing direct connections to careers, questions may be raised about music education's role. Making connections to a variety of music careers has not historically been a priority for secondary music educators who teach primarily large performing ensembles in the classical tradition. The choir student, Hope, missing choir for a year was an acceptable trade-off for learning a trade and leaving high school career ready. For students in the college preparation track, like Jon's daughter, music participation was a valued aspect for college entrance and readiness. Therefore, accommodations were requested and made at the school.

Removing potential impediments to choral participation. Other potential barriers to music participation were viewed as problematic and the school made efforts to redress them.

These included providing access for students living in poverty, for students with special needs, and for students with academic issues requiring remedial or therapeutic assistance that might interfere with music class times. The school was concerned with fairness and not having educational and home circumstances beyond the students' control prevent them from participating in music classes.

For students living in poverty, school personnel recognized barriers students may face such as procuring concert dress, renting instruments, and accessing afterschool activities. Efforts were made to remove these impediments via the support from the music booster club, scheduling, and teacher initiatives. School and teacher efforts could not address all barriers, however, students without adult support at home often struggled to meet the obligations of the music program, particularly at the high school level. Nonetheless, teachers and administrators were cognizant of financial hardships within the student population and worked to remove barriers to music opportunities for those students.

The school prioritized access to music for students with special needs, particularly those students who were rarely mainstreamed due to moderate and severe cognitive disabilities. These priorities are obviously influenced by legal protections for students with special needs for an education in the least restrictive environment. Participants spoke of the school's inclusion policy as a point of pride and evidence of the school's effort to provide equitable educational opportunities. Their participation was accepted and welcomed by the choir teacher and students.

The choral program converged with the school culture in providing access to music participation for all students, and prioritizing participation and inclusion over perfect concert performance.

Maintaining academic eligibility was required for extra-curricular music participation (i.e., musicals). However, school personnel did not want students prevented from participating in school day music electives due to remedial coursework or therapeutic treatments. The choral program was viewed as an avenue for personal accomplishment and success for students who may struggle elsewhere for a variety of reasons. Therefore, school personnel worked to remove potential impediments for those student populations.

The academic culture of the choral program situated in school culture

Musicianship and notational literacy. Multiple aspects of the academic culture of the choral program enabled student participation and were in convergence with the wider school culture. The choir teacher's articulation of and commitment to the academic content of the music program was consistent with the school's focus on academic excellence across subjects. Like other successful choral programs, there was a sense of rigor surrounding the musical content (Bartolome, 2010; Bridges, 1996). Mrs. Ames asserted that all her students were musicians. She asked them to make musical decisions related to expression and interpretation and pushed them to greater levels of awareness of notational literacy and theoretical concepts. Students in turn valued their progress towards mastering new musical concepts and spoke with pride about improvement in notational and theoretical understanding of music. Additionally, students spoke

knowledgably about vocal development. Vocal pedagogy was incorporated throughout rehearsals and voice lessons.

Repertoire. Despite outsider assumptions of choir music being either too stuffy or too flashy, students within the program valued the variety of music the choir teacher programmed. Students appreciated the practice of including popular music in the choral curriculum through student song nomination and election; they felt empowered by their influence on the curriculum. Student song selections allowed for incorporation of different styles of singing, choreography, staging and props, and other performance elements not commonly used in the regular choral concerts. Similar to the school examined by Snead (2010) the incorporation of popular music did not change the choral learning process fundamentally. Rather, the choir teacher aligned her incorporation of popular music with the vision and purpose of the choral program and its curricular and academic goals. Nonetheless, students valued the experience as something distinct from regular choral practice and an outlet for creativity and choice.

Sources of tension. Tensions within the academic culture of the choral program were evident. The notational literacy and theoretical content of the program were viewed as valuable challenges by some students and a source of frustration for others; not all students were able to meet the academic standards. The choir teacher expressed concern over some students' poor performances on formal, written assessments while acknowledging that the students themselves owned responsibility for actions that impeded their progress such as not engaging during rehearsals or missing voice lessons. The choir teacher considered creating differentiated

assessments for struggling students such as those who had entered the choral program their freshman year and were behind others who had several years of instruction in middle school, but was uncertain if this was the best approach. She acknowledged students who often needed the most help and support were the least accessible as these students may be receiving academic and other interventions across the curriculum which potentially impeded attendance at voice lessons or at extra help sessions afterschool.

The social culture of the choral program situated in school culture

Like other music programs (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003), the social culture of Bridgetown's choral program emphasized relationships and people. The social culture of the choral program enabled participation in choir through relationship building, role models, mentors, and friendships. Detrimental forces included negative peer influences and varying levels of engagement.

Student-teacher relationships. Student-teacher relationships enabled participation by making students feel known and valued in the choral classroom. The choir teacher knew her students and made efforts to connect with individuals. Opportunities for extended time in the choral program with the same teacher facilitated long lasting relationships.

Mentors and role models. Mentoring was a valued feature of the social culture of the choral program, occurring between more and less experienced students and across grade levels. Experienced members serving as mentors within ensembles have been identified as a feature of social environments in other ensemble settings (Abril, 2012; Ramsey, 2013; Titcomb, 2000).

Mentors pointed students towards further engagement in school activities, especially theater and music related activities, and inspired peers to try new things. Choir participation at Bridgetown provided a source of social network development and knowledge resources for school activities and opportunities, aspects of social capital found in community choral settings (Langston & Barrett, 2008). Thus, participation in the choir program offered special benefits to participants and contributed to the wider school culture's valuing of engagement in a variety of school activities.

Role models included past participants still present in the minds of participants. These were alumni with significant musical skill, and academic and/or social success who thrived in the music department. These past participants were remembered and storied to reinforce particular values and beliefs such as choir as a place for academically and socially successful students, and choir as a place for all to tap their talents regardless of background. In this way the choral program celebrated exemplary students, students that were part of the imaginary of the school itself and the vision of success that was possible for students.

Friendships. Like other music programs, friendships were an aspect of the social culture of the program that enabled participation. Peers have been shown to be central in fostering male participation in choir (Kennedy, 2002; Lucas, 2011; Sweet, 2010). Boys in this study mentioned the presence of positive peer pressure which brought themselves or male friends into choir, and which encouraged retention of male peers. Gendered peer groups were also influential for girls in this study. The sheer number of girls participating in choir, and that girls were the majority,

normalized their participation. Not all students spoke to friendships within choir; friends were not required for participation.

Sources of tension. Tension in the social culture of the choral program related to different levels of participation and engagement. Students who were less engaged negatively influenced the classroom environment. Those who entered choir with intentions to leave once permissions were granted could influence susceptible peers to also leave choir. The lack of participation and interest from certain students was viewed as a detriment to the chorus and its performance ability. This was similar to band members who were deemed to belong to the category of "slackers" in one school's sociomusical hierarchy (Abril, 2012). A singer identified three categories of singers in Concert Choir: "overly confident," "confident," and "just there to get the credit." She located herself in the middle group and perceived tension between the different groups. Navigating cliques and egos in choral ensembles can be sources of struggle for choral participants (Parker, 2014). The choir teacher worked to address engagement issues that impeded participation within choir through her instructional approach, relationship building, and choral department policies.

Singing in the social culture of the school

Assumptions about choir participation. Choir students cited assumptions about participation in choir at Bridgetown as geeky, weird, or boring. Popular portrayals in media contributed to students' images of singing at school linked to socially unpopular people. Geekiness or weirdness could be worn as a badge of identity, especially with support of like-

minded peers. Like Hall's (2009) choirboy who subverted negative messages about singing and masculinity by making singing an indicator of strength, a student subverted the critique of singing being weird by embracing it and adding a positive adjective, "good weird." Being "good weird" was to associate with like-minded peers who valued choir participation as part of an expression of individual identity, confidence, talent, and school achievement.

Choir participation at Bridgetown was also associated with students who were high achieving, pro-school, and popular. These associations with music participation have been found in other contexts (Adderley, Kennedy & Berz, 2003; Lucas, 2011). This image of the choral program at Bridgetown was attractive to parents who wanted their children to associate with academically and socially successful students.

In some settings, the association of the music education program with the dominant values of the school could be a liability, particularly when the music program does not reflect the ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, etc., make-up of the school (Brewer, 2010). School personnel asserted that Bridgetown's music program attracted a wide spectrum of students in terms of academic performance, social status, and socioeconomic status. Certain students venerated as role models for others were likely to be high achieving and active across school activities, representing the well rounded ideal. These students were upperclassmen, boys and girls, who won solos, acted as leaders in their sections, participated in auditioned choirs and honors choirs, and were leads in musical theater productions. These students dominated student and parent

perceptions of choral participation, while school personnel held a broader view of the profile of choral singers in the school.

Students who did not participate in choir were perceived to lack confidence and to not understand the development of vocal skill. These perceptions echoed other studies in which (male) singers viewed outsiders to the choral experience as lacking confidence (Adler, 2002; Hall, 2009; Sweet, 2010). This view was applied to both boys and girls not singing in choir at Bridgetown. Both boys and girls spoke to gaining confidence in their singing through choir participation.

Gender norms and the school culture toolkit. As demonstrated in other research (Adler, 2002; Ashley, 2010), gender norms for boys were sources of tension for some in accessing choral participation at Bridgetown. Discussions of gender reflected a binary view, and there was no evidence of questioning or destabilizing this view of gender. Mrs. Ames did work to destabilize assumptions about voice and gender.

Erickson's (2004) metaphor of culture as a human toolkit is relevant here, as boys relied upon values and beliefs about the nature of a good student and a good education within the school and community and used them as tools with which to negotiate gender norms in the school. The system of beliefs around music participation aided boys in rejecting and negotiating gender norms within the school that constructed music participation as counter to dominant or hegemonic masculinity. The concept of hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominance of certain patterns of masculinity within a hierarchy of masculinities. Connell (1996) explained,

"hegemonic signifies a position of cultural authority and leadership, not total dominance; other forms of masculinity persist alongside" (p. 209). Thus, some types of masculinity are actively honored, such as the masculinity promoted through sports, and others are actively dishonored, such as homosexual masculinity. Boys in this study were aware of dominant masculinity in the school, marked by interest in and participation in high status sports.

Boys' reflections on the norms of dominant masculinity in the school revealed how they negotiated the messages about masculinity and music participation. Importantly, they were able to use tools from the culture of the school to assert their own versions of masculinity. They referred to gender norms as "standards" that they needed to negotiate in order to assert their own masculine identity. Their definition of dominant masculinity was mostly implicit and unspoken, but known, identifiable, and ultimately negotiable. Following interests other than high status team sports was potentially a source of social sanctions, such as losing friends or respect from peer groups. Fear of being ostracized from friends has been established as a powerful deterrent in enforcing behavior standards for high school men (Kehler, 2007). Boys in this study constructed and affirmed their own identities within the gender culture of the school, but they saw this as a work in progress. The boys in this study, like in other music education research, relied upon humor (Sweet, 2010), assertion of their own interests and individuality (Hall, 2011), and the company of like-minded peers to counteract pressure to conform and to mitigate the potential social costs of non-conforming such as losing respect of friends (Adler, 2002).

Music and choir participation was perceived as part of a comprehensive education at Bridgetown including academic performance and athletic participation. Participating in choir and musical theater was an avenue for boys to define and express themselves and was a source of achievement, particularly in the auditioned contexts of select ensembles and the musical. Hall (2011) connected class and gender in arguing elite choirboys and their middle class mothers worked to develop the boys as polymaths, or renaissance children, who cultivated varied interests including intellectual, athletic, and creative pursuits. Singing was an acceptable and desired part of a middle class masculinity. A similar view underpinned Bridgetown's middle class parents' emphasis on well roundedness in their children's education, which was reinforced in school awards and in strategies for college competitiveness. From this stance, boys (and girls) could counter views that singing was 'weird' or not normal for boys. This view of education was supported by peers, teachers, and families and highlighted in the lives of role models currently in the program and past participants. In these ways the school culture provided tools for boys in asserting positive singing identities and negotiating gender norms.

Gender and sports. Boys who were active in the music program and in high status team sports (football, baseball, lacrosse, etc.) were particularly visible and received special mention in interviews. Students reported a hierarchy of sports participation, with team sports valued higher than individual sports of track or cross-country. A boy participating in choir and a non-team sport such as track did not receive the same relative status or mention. Students situated athletes as figures in opposition to choir singers, but this dichotomy was disrupted as many choir students

participated in both music and sports. Previous research has found adults in schools can be sources of enforcement of gender norms in schools as well as peers (Legg, 2013). When a coach at Bridgetown sent negative messages to boys about participation in musical theater the boys dismissed this negative input by calling into question the coach's intelligence, relying upon the wider middle class value system of the school that supported participation across activities as part of cultivating an intelligent, athletic, and creative person.

Middle school girls noted the dichotomy between sports and music, using feminine stereotypes to describe the associations for girls. Athletic girls were "tomboys," i.e. masculine, while singing in choir was "girly," i.e., hyper feminine. These extremes did not present a dilemma for the girls, who located themselves in the middle of the continuum between tomboy and girly because they sang in choir and participated in athletics.

Girls who participated in sports and were highly active in the music program were not perceived as notable in the same way that boys were, reinforcing the lack of tension for girls in participating across these school activities. The silence around girls with notable athletic and artistic accomplishments may also suggest that girls' participation was taken for granted within the school culture (O'Toole, 1998). The influence of gendered peer groups (Thorne, 1993) and the sheer number of girls in choir made choir participation seem like an expected choice for them. This opened the possibility of choir to girls who may not have been otherwise considering enrolling.

Harassment and homophobia. At Bridgetown, singing and theater participation ran into tensions with undercurrents of prohibition of homosexuality at the school, with what one parent described as homophobic attitudes in students. Evidence of students experiencing harassment due to their engagement in music activities that are perceived to be gender non-conforming is emerging in music education research. Particularly, harassment has been found in the experiences of some boys participating in school music (Harrison, 2003), playing flute (Taylor, 2009), and singing in choir (Adler, 2002; Ashley, 2008; Sweet, 2010). Students had not personally heard students receiving harassment for participating in choir or singing at school specifically. However, a parent reported choir was a site of homophobic name calling for her son, Jerod. In this case, the instigator was another boy who was also participating in choir and who was ultimately separated from the class. Jerod remained and decided to continue in choir and band in high school. As in other contexts (Adler, 2002), not all boys were susceptible to social sanctions for singing, particularly boys who were socially popular and academically successful who gave themselves the moniker "jocks of singing." Adler (2002) found boys who were socially less connected and with less power in the school were more susceptible to harassment. School personnel at Bridgetown seemed to support this view, observing that rather than being instigated by any given school activity or pursuit, particular students were victims of harassment or bullying across school contexts.

Gender and voice change. Gender has been found to be situational in the school lives of children; they emphasized gender in some instances and deemphasized it in others (Thorne,

1993). In choral settings, gender is structurally emphasized in that it is often the determining factor in how students' bodies and voices are organized in space and sound. In Middle School Choir, all the boys are together even though many of them are altos and sopranos. Several boys occupied the borderlands between the altos and basses and one boy crossed the divide by joining the sopranos in the second half of the school year. This boy enjoyed social and musical resources that may have supported his ability to enter the soprano section. Not all boys were comfortable moving positions or locations for greater vocal comfort, but this was the strategy promoted by the choir teacher. This strategy relied upon singers' self-knowledge and proactively responding to changes as they occurred.

Ashley (2008) noted boys negotiated the voice change in varying ways, highlighting the event as not only a physiological one but as an "existential and psychosocial" one (p. 30). Ashley observed: "Boys, according to their attitude and disposition, may either attempt to prolong their high voices or attempt to sing low in a man's range before they are really capable" (p. 31). The choir teacher's approach to vocal pedagogy mitigated some of the psychosocial problems facing adolescents regarding changing voice and voice part assignment. The choir teacher emphasized and acknowledged gender differences in vocal register, range, and vocal development (e.g., differences in voice change) while also reinforcing the common technical skills (such as register shifts) that boys and girls needed to master in order to become better singers. In this way she downplayed dichotomies between male and female voices by uniting them via good technique.

The teacher's work related to vocal development and vocal change was situated in a positive classroom environment. She played with the association of singing high with femininity— the teacher would say, "are you a girl today?" when identifying the changing state of boys' vocal range—while simultaneously explaining the high and low registers and ranges of different voice types for boys and girls and emphasizing that boys can sing high, too. This work was undertaken within strict rules for respectful behavior towards classmates. The results of the teacher's vocal pedagogy was reflected in students' description of their individual vocal growth, their goals for range development, their analysis of popular musicians in terms of register and range, and their awareness of their own strengths (and areas to work on) in their own singing. There was evidence of fluidity among some boys in terms of vocal part, with 7th grade boys singing alto and one boy requesting to sing soprano.

Singing across school cultures

Bridgetown shared features found in school cultures supportive of music participation and choral participation. These features included the educational philosophy of the school, music education as part of the identity of the school, the role of teachers and administrators, music teacher characteristics and philosophy, and middle class values. Aspects of Bridgetown's school culture unreported in other music education research included the interactions between the choral program and the curricular tracks in the school.

The overarching educational philosophy of Bridgetown was based on a comprehensive education including music education. Administrators who viewed the music program as integral

to the school's educational mission and identity were central to creating a supportive school culture (Bruenger, 2009). Administrators, teachers, and community members perceived the music program at Bridgetown as part of the school's identity. Similar to Bennetts' (2013) setting, teachers at Bridgetown supported music participation and communicated the value of music to Bridgetown students. Music participation was so pervasive that some teachers assumed it was required. That music was an elective at the middle and high school level had implications for participation when student schedules diverged in high school due to curricular tracks.

Previous research has emphasized school leadership's role in supporting music education and generating a culture of participation (Bruenger, 2009). At Bridgetown, the music teacher's approach to her work emerged as a key aspect in the success of the music program. The music teacher at Bridgetown was passionate, knowledgeable, and committed to her work. She was adept at negotiating the particular cultural milieu of the community and school, which may have mitigated some tensions found between music programs and schools by Bresler (1998) such as expectations for student/teacher interactions and management norms. The choir teacher's beliefs were mostly in convergence with the school culture at large, and areas of tension such as between the music and athletic department, were proactively addressed. For example, the choir teacher emphasized values such as participation for all rather than promoting elite, competitive performance. Bruenger (2009) found a lack of competition and focus on individual effort and achievement conducive to promoting participation and retention in music programs. The music teacher featured characteristics cited by stakeholders in rural districts such as community

interaction and awareness, and understanding advantages and challenges of working in a rural

setting (Hunt, 2009). The choir teacher actively participated in school and community music life

while acknowledging the demands upon her time.

Bennetts (2013) found social class impacted choral participation relative to the school's

selective admission process, emphasis on academic achievement, and exclusive use of high

status repertoires, e.g., no popular music in the music curriculum. Bridgetown is a public school

serving a mixed socioeconomic student population that emphasizes academic achievement as

part of its identity and promotes middle class values. Regarding repertoire, the use of a variety of

music, including popular music selected by the students, was perceived as an asset to the choral

program in addition to high status selections valued as cultural exposure for students.

Brewer (2010) noted the racial, class, and linguistic associations of band in a school with

a majority Hispanic population. Like choir participation at Bridgetown, band was associated with

high achieving, pro-school students. In Brewer's setting, these students were more likely to be

English speaking and white in contrast to the population of the school at large. At Bridgetown,

choir participation was framed within the overarching middle class values promoted by the

school. Choir as a place for middle class students was reinforced by barrier to participation by

students enrolled in the CTE program.

Harrison (2007) cited school culture as an important factor in determining boys'

experiences in music. At Bridgetown, gender norms could present impediments to choir

participation for boys as choir was not a part of the definition of dominant masculinity at the

school. Like participants in Hall's (2011) study, boys relied upon middle class values promoted

by the school in order to assert their own, alternative masculinities, which included music

participation as a valued asset. Like Adler (2002), there were boys in Bridgetown's choirs who

enjoyed high status in the school academically, athletically, and artistically. School personnel,

students, and parents alike celebrated these boys. Girls featuring this combination of

accomplishments were not similarly noted or notable by participants.

Similar to the music teachers examined by Bresler (1998), Bridgetown's music program

was impacted by micro, meso, and macro factors. Previous discussion examined what Bresler

would characterize as micro level factors, the teacher's beliefs and background, and meso

factors, the school context. Differences from Bresler's findings at the meso level include

Bridgetown's stance towards music education. Bresler found schools viewed music education as

dispensable, whereas Bridgetown's school culture from the perspective of participants viewed

music participation as valuable for all students and indispendible for those who were on an

academic, college preparatory track. At the macro level, Bridgetown was similar to the general

music contexts studied by Bresler in that the music teacher enjoyed relative autonomy. The

choral program was impacted by values related to the status of music education, which was

valued for a well rounded education by parents and students, but was ultimately secondary to

larger educational priorities including career readiness and preparation. Not discussed in

Bresler's findings were issues related to gender, in which participants interacted with meso and

macro level understandings of masculinity in order to generate their own identities in school that included choral participation.

Implications for practice

Music programs in convergence with school culture

The success or failure of music programs are often considered in terms of conditions such as those outlined in the *Opportunity to Learn Standards* (OLS) (NAfME, 2015), which include curriculum and scheduling, staffing, materials and equipment, and facilities. The OLS do not account for many aspects of school culture that create conditions for successful music programs such as the values and beliefs held about music education and its role in the educational mission of the school. Music programs in convergence with school culture will be well situated for positive learning experiences and positive professional experiences for teachers. This study suggests that the success of a music program is intimately tied to school context and culture and the role of the music program in that system. Understanding and addressing the role of music programs in school culture will aid in strengthening, developing, and adapting music programs to local needs.

Structural and social impediments to music participation

Music education has a socioeconomic privilege gap (Elpus & Abril, 2011) and a funding gap related to the economic status of the school regardless of setting (Costa-Giomi, 2008). Music education programs serve disproportionately economically privileged students who are also more likely to be academically high achieving (Elpus & Abril, 2011). This study points to structural

barriers to participation including curricular tracks and parent-school relationships. In order for music educators to remove structural barriers that face certain student populations, a deeper understanding must be gained regarding the nature of these barriers. Some barriers may not be viewed as problematic in school cultures. At Bridgetown, the gap in music education that CTE students experienced was viewed by school personnel as a necessary trade-off within the larger goals and value system of the school. The school's values reflected national education initiatives that emphasize career and college preparation. Music educators have not historically connected secondary practices to careers in music and may not be accustomed to considering music curriculum in those terms. This educational trend warrants further attention in the field of music education.

This research also suggests music teachers consider how the values and beliefs of a particular school can enable or impede access to quality music education. Social impediments to singing apparent in the present research included beliefs about gender, class, and academic achievement. Students used various tools from the ethos of the school and community to assert their own versions of masculinity within the school context. Music educators may proactively provide students with effective tools to name and navigate norms related to gender and class when it comes to singing participation.

A thorough exploration of bullying or harassment at Bridgetown was beyond the scope of this study. Findings raise questions about assumptions that choir participation is a social liability for boys in general. As in Adler's (2002) study, choir was not a liability for some boys,

particularly boys who also participated in high status sports and who were socially successful at school. Choir teachers, rather than focusing attention on boys in general, may work to identify boys in their schools who may be vulnerable in choir and in other contexts in order to prevent and address harassment or bullying.

Music teacher characteristics

The development of Bridgetown's choral program over the choir teacher's tenure reflected an alignment of her vision for the program and the school culture in which the program exists. Teachers may be viewed as actors in isolation, with their successes or challenges framed primarily in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. This study suggests that the system in which teachers work interacts in meaningful ways with the processes and content of their classes.

The music teacher in this study represented attributes commonly associated with successful choral programs including musical and pedagogical skill and positive teacher dispositions such as humor, patience, and high expectations. The choir teacher's skill at navigating the school culture and developing a program in convergence with that school culture are skills less discussed in music teacher education. The choir teacher not only converged with school culture but also worked to develop the choral program to improve its standing within school culture. The present research reinforces calls for greater attention to teachers' abilities to adapt curriculum and instruction to their students and community contexts and provides a model of a teacher who through communication, collaboration, and experimentation engaged in this important aspect of music teaching.

Rural contexts

Rural schools are often viewed from deficit models, in terms of what they lack. However, rural settings may offer unique opportunities for teachers and students in music education. Rural schools may serve as community centers offering opportunities for music programs to be vital and valued aspects of not only school but also local cultural life. Music teachers may have the opportunity to teach in contextually responsive ways and develop close relationships with students and families over time within close-knit settings. Although the choir teacher in this study is not representative of all, or most, rural music teachers, she provides a picture of a teacher whose extra-musical skills and savvy are a model for working productively within a school community. Prest (2013) argued common assumptions about music programs do not fit rural contexts. This research affirms some of her assertions, such as the importance of non-auditioned ensembles at the center of programs.

Directions for future research

Further research into intersections between school culture and music education programs will aid in understanding mechanisms and structures behind participation gaps in music education. Research may continue to illuminate these intersections by examining schools that do not suffer from particular participation gaps and comparing them with schools that do. Music education programs may be examined more holistically within a school, examining an entire music program rather than one branch as in this study of the secondary choral program.

Additional methodological approaches for examining music programs in school culture, such as multiple and collective case studies of several schools will help to reveal different approaches to similar problems. Qualitative methods may be aided by surveys in order to gain greater understanding of music programs in school culture from a variety of participants, including those not participating in music education.

This study considered wider social issues intersecting with music programs in school culture such as gender and class. Further research into gender and singing may focus on how boys and girls negotiate gender norms in schools, and what tools they use to counter normative understandings of masculinities. Middle class values have been connected to boys' success in negotiating hegemonic masculinities that eschew singing. How boys who are not members of the middle class negotiate meanings of singing and gender warrants investigation as does research with populations other than white, non-Hispanic boys.

Issues of socioeconomic class remain under researched in music education. Greater attention has been paid to issues stemming from gender and race/ethnicity via culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education. Research targeting more issues of socioeconomic class, including structural and social barriers students may face in accessing music programs within schools, is needed.

Rural music education settings are also under researched in music education. This study contributes to portraits of rural music education programs, and points to the diversity of rural school settings. Finally, further research into contextually responsive teaching is warranted.

Research may examine how teachers engage with their communities both in and beyond their classrooms in ways that specifically connect with local places and benefit students' music education.

Conclusion

Bridgetown represents a rural school district serving a mixed socioeconomic student population that fostered a positive culture of singing and choir participation. The choral program was in convergence with the broader school culture and its educational values. This convergence did not prevent all impediments to singing, including structural impediments originating in curricular tracks and social impediments such as gender norms. Students needed to negotiate these impediments in order to access the choral program. Some barriers could not be removed while others, aided by the advocacy of middle class parents and college bound students, could.

Considering a music program within school culture revealed aspects of the academic and social culture of the school context that impeded or enabled choir participation. Situating this choral program within the wider culture of the school revealed ways in which the choral program converged with the school culture, enabling participation for some and impeding participation for others in ways that reinforced associations between music students, academic achievement, and economic privilege.

REFERENCES

Abril, C. (2012). Perspectives on the school band from hardcore American band kids. In P. S. Campbell & T. Wiggins (Eds.) *The Oxford handbook of children's musical cultures* (pp. 434-448). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Abril, C. & Gault, B. (2008). The state of music in secondary schools. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 56*(1), 68-81.

Adams, C. J. (2015). Career prep moves into middle schools. *Education Week, 34*(37), 7.

Adderley, C., Kennedy, M., & Berz, W. (2003). "A home away from home": The world of the high school music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 51*(3), 190-205.

Adler, A. H. (2002). *A case study of boys' experiences of singing in school* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (NQ69210)

Ashley, M. (2008). Boyhood melancholia and the vocal projection of masculinity. *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies, 2*(1), 26-45.

Ashley, M. (2010). "Real boys" don't sing, but real boys do: The challenge of constructing and communicating acceptable boyhood. *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies*, *4*(1), 54-70.

Baird, M. (2007). *Perceived benefits of choral singing: Social, intellectual, and emotional aspects of group singing* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (MR51363)

Bartolome, S. (2010). *Girl choir culture: An ethnography of the Seattle Girls' Choir* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3406114)

Bartolome, S. (2012). "It's like a whole bunch of me!": The perceived values and benefits of the

Seattle Girls' Choir experience. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 60*(4), 395-418. DOI: 10.1177/0022429412464054

Bates, V. C. (2011a). Sustainable school music for poor, white, rural students. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 10*(2), 100-127.

Bates, V. C. (2011b). Preparing rural music teachers: Reflecting "shared visions." *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 20*(2), 89-98.

Bates, V. C. (2012). Social class and school music. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(4), 33-37.

Bell, C. L. (2004). Update on community choirs and singing in the United States. *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, *2*(1), 39-52.

Benedict, C., & Schmidt, P. (2011). Politics of not knowing: The disappearing act of an education in music. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 27*(3), 134-148.

Bennetts, K. S. (2013). Boys' music? School context and middle-school boys' musical choices. *Music Education Research*, *15*(2), 214-230. DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2012.759550

Bresler, L. (1998). The genre of school music and its shaping by meso, micro, and macro contexts. *Research Studies in Music Education, 11*, 2-18.

Brewer, W. D. (2010). Inside/outside school music on "the line." In L. K. Thompson & M. R. Campbell (Eds.), *Issues of identity in music education: Narratives and practices* (pp. 37-63). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Bridges, M. (1996). *A case study of the Alabama Boychoir: Effort, success, self-worth, and*

competence within a climate of excellence (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 9633949)

Bruenger, S. D. (1999). *The relationship of selected personal investment behaviors to the*

meaning non-select choir members attach to their choral experience (Doctoral

dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 9945791)

Bruenger, S. D. (2009). School-wide goal environment and continuing motivation in music.

Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 27(2), 3-11.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

CCSSO (2014). *Opportunities and options: Making career preparation work for students*.

Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Connell, R. W. (1996). Teaching the boys: New research on masculinity, and gender strategies

for schools. *Teachers College Record*, *98*, 206-235.

Costa-Giomi, E. (2008). Characteristics of elementary music programs in urban schools: What

money can buy. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 117*, 19-28.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five*

approaches (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Elpus, K. (2014). National estimates of male and female enrolment in American high school

choirs, bands, and orchestras. *Music Education Research*, *17*(1), 88-102.

DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2014.972923

Elpus, K., & Abril, C. A. (2011). High school music ensemble students in the United States: A

demographic profile. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 59*(2), 128-145.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes (2nd ed.)*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

Erickson, F. (2004). Culture in society and in educational practices. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives (*5th ed., pp. 31-60). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Fitzpatrick-Harnish, K. (2015). *Urban music education: A practical guide for teachers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Freer, P. K. (2009). Boys' descriptions of their experiences in choral music. *Research Studies in Music Education, 31*(2), 142-160.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hall, C. (2009). 'Without music I'd just be another kid': Boys and the choral experience. In S. D. Harrison (Ed.), *Male voices: Stories of boys learning through making music* (pp. 16-31). Victoria, Australia: ACER Press.

Hall, C. (2011). *Voices of distinction: Choirboys' narratives of music, masculinity and the middle class* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://arrow.monash.edu.au/hdl/1959.1/572331

Harrison, S. D. (2007). A perennial problem in gendered participation in music: What's happening to the boys? *British Journal of Music Education*, *24*(3), 267-280.

Hodkinson, P., Anderson, G., Colley, H., Davies, J., Diment, K., Scaife, T., . . . Wheeler, E. (2007). Learning cultures in further education. *Educational Review, 59*(4), 399-413.

Hodkinson, P., Biesta, G., & James, D. (2007). Understanding learning cultures. *Educational Review, 59*(4), 415-427.

Hoffman, A. (2012). Exclusion, engagement and identity construction in a socioeconomically diverse middle school wind band classroom. *Music Education Research, 14*(2), 209-226.

Horvat, E. M., Weininger, E. B., & Lareau, A. (2003). From social ties to social capital: Class differences in the relations between schools and parent networks. *American Educational Research Journal, 40*(2), 319-351.

Hunt, C. (2009). Perspectives on rural and urban music teaching. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 18*(2), 34-47. DOI: 10.1177/1057083708327613

Hylton, J. B. (1981). Dimensionality in high school student participants' perceptions of the meaning of choral singing experience. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *29*(4), 287-303. DOI: 10.2307/3345005

Isbell, D. (2005). Music education in rural areas: A few keys to success. *Music Educators Journal, 92*(2), 30-34.

Jorgensen, E. R. (2003). *Transforming music education*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Kehler, M. D. (2007). Hallway fears and high school friendships: The complications of young

men (re)negotiating heterosexualized identities. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 28*(2), 259-277.

Kennedy, M. A. (2002). "It's cool because we like to sing:" Junior high school boys' experience of choral music as an elective. *Research Studies in Music Education, 18*, 26-37.

Koza, J. E. (2010). Big boys don't cry (or sing): Gender, misogyny, and homophobia in college choral methods texts. *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning, IV/V*(4/1), 48-64.

Kwan, E. (2007). *Secondary choral music education in Hong Kong; Relations among motivation to music*, *meaning of the choral experience, and selected demographic variables* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3307724)

Kwan, E. (2002). Perception of the meaning of high school choral experience. *Visions of Research in Music Education*, *2*, 17-31.

Langston, T. W. (2009). The importance of being Henry. In M. S. Barrett & S. L. Stauffer (Eds.), *Narrative inquiry in music education: Troubling certainty* (pp. 63-80). Springer Science and Business Media. DOI 10.1007/978-1-4020-9862-8_2

Langston, T. W., & Barrett, M. S. (2008). Capitalizing on community music: A case study of the manifestation of social capital in a community choir. *Research Studies in Music Education, 30*(2), 118-138.

Lareau, A. (1987). Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of

cultural capital. *Sociology of Education, 60*(2), 73-85.

Legg, R. (2013) Reviewing the situation: A narrative exploration of singing and gender in

secondary schools. *Music Education Research, 15*(2), 168-179.

Lucas, M. (2011). Adolescent male attitudes about singing in choir. *Update: Applications of

Research in Music Education, 30*(1), 46-53.

Morrison, S. (2001). The school ensemble: A culture of our own. *Music Educators Journal,

88*(2), 24-28.

NAfME (2015). *Opportunity-to-learn standards for music instruction: Grades PreK-12*.

Reston, VA: National Association for Music Education.

O'Toole, P. (1998). A missing chapter from choral methods books: How choirs neglect girls. *The

Choral Journal, 39*(5), 9-32.

Parker, E. (2014). The process of social identity development in adolescent high school choral

singers: A grounded theory. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 62*(1), 18-32.

DOI: 10.1177/0022429413520009

Peterson, K. D., & Deal, T. E. (2009). *The shaping school culture fieldbook* (2nd ed.). San

Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Prest, A. (2013). The importance of context, reflection, interaction, and consequence in rural

music education practice. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 28*(14), 1-13.

Ramsey, A. L. (2013). *Swagger, gentlemanliness, and brotherhood: Explorations of lived*

experiences in a high school men's chorus (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3568204)

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sichivitsa, V. O. (2007). The influences of parents, teachers, peers and other factors on students' motivation in music. *Research Studies in Music Education, 29*(1), 55-68.

Snead, T. (2010). *Dichotomous musical worlds: Interactions between the musical lives of adolescents and school music-learning* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3411032)

Spring, J. (2013). Perspectives of a rural music educator: A narrative journey through "sense of place." *Rural Educator, 34*(3), 27-37.

Stauffer, S. (2012). Place, music education, and the practice and pedagogy of philosophy. In W. Bowman & A. L. Frega (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of philosophy in music education* (pp. 434-452). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stephans, N. M., Markus, H. R., & Phillips, L. T. (2014). Social class culture cycles: How three gateway contexts shape selves and fuel inequity. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65*(1), 611-634. doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115143

Sudgen, N. L. (2005) *Meaning of the choral experience and musical self-concept of secondary choral music participants* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3298528)

Sweet, B. (2010). A case study: Middle school boys' perceptions of singing and participation in choir. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 28*(2), 5-12.

Taylor, D. (2009). Support structures contributing to instrument choice and achievement among Texas all-state male flutists. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *179*, 45-60.

Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Tieken, M. C. (2014). *Why rural schools matter.* Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Titcomb, T. (2000). *The social context of informal adult learning: An ethnography of a church choir* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 9969961)

Weaver-Hightower, M. (2003a). The "boy turn" in research on gender and education. *Review of Educational Research, 73*(4), 471-498.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Student questions

Background questions, singing, and choir
1. What is your grade in school?
2. When did you start singing in choir in school?
3. What choirs do you sing in now?
4. Do you play any instruments? Do you play in band?
5. What are the most important benefits you get from participating in choir?
6. What is your favorite memory of singing in school? Outside of school?
7. What is your favorite song you have sung in choir? Why?
8. What singers/songs do you like to listen to? What do you like about their voice?

Choir in school context
1. How would you describe your school to someone who had never visited your school before?
2. Describe your school's choir program.
3. What do you think attracts students to participate in choir?
4. Why did you want to join choir?
5. Who is likely to sign up for choir at this school, what kinds of students does choir attract?
6. Who might be not likely to sign up for choir?
7. Is there a typical choir student? How are you like or not like a typical choir student?
8. If you had a friend who was considering joining choir but was on the fence, what would you say to help them decide if choir is right for them?
9. What helps or makes it easy for boys/girls to join or participate in choir at your school?
10. What prevents or makes it difficult for boys /girls to join or participate in choir at your school?
11. If a school was having a hard time getting boys/girls to sing in choir, what would you tell them is most important thing a school can do to help students choose to participate in choir?
12. Who or what do you think most supports choir at your school?
13. How does singing in choir fit into what you want out of your education

Parent questions

1. What is Bridgetown like?
2. How would you describe the school and its students?
3. What attracted your child to sing in choir?
4. What about this school makes it easy for students (your child) to participate in choir?
5. Is there anything that makes it difficult for students (your child) to participate in choir?
6. What kinds of students does the choir program attract?/What attracted your child to the choir program?
7. Who might not be likely to sign up for choir? Why?
8. What or who most supports choir participation at this school?
9. What are parents asked to do to support the choir program? What have you been asked to do to support the choir and music program?
10. In your view, what is the most important thing that a school and community can do to support or encourage student participation in choir?
11. What does your child gain from participating in choir?
12. How does singing fit into what you want for your child's overall education?
13. What do you hope your child will take away from their choir experience?
14. How do you see singing in your child's future?

School personnel questions

1. How long have you been the working in your current role at this school?
2. How would you describe the community that this school serves to someone who had never been here before?
3. How would you describe this school and its students?
4. There is strong music participation and a sizable choir program here. From your view, what does this school do that facilitates student participation in choir?
5. Is there anything that makes it difficult for students to participate in choir?
6. What kinds of students does the choir program attract? Is there a "typical" profile of a choir student?
7. Who might not be likely to sign up for choir? Why?
8. What attracts students to choir?
9. What is the school's philosophy?
10. How does choir or music participation fit into the school's philosophy?
11. What do you see as the strengths of the choir program?
12. What messages does the school send that supports choir participation (e.g. 'trying new things', 'well roundedness')? How does the school send these kinds of messages?
13. What is the most important thing that a school can do to support student participation in choir?

14. How does choir participation fit into students' overall education?
15. What are the most important benefits students gain from participating in choir?

Music teacher questions

1. What is Bridgetown like?
2. How would you describe this school and its students?
3. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching choir?
4. How would you describe the classroom environment you work to create?
5. What about this school makes it easy for students or helps students to participate in choir?
6. Is there anything that makes it difficult for students to participate in choir?
7. What differences do you notice in teaching choir and singing now from when you started?
8. How has your job and the choir program changed over time at this school?
9. How do you make choir singing relevant to your students?
10. Who, what kinds of students, does the choir program attract? What attracts students to sing in choir?
11. Is there a "typical" choir student?
12. Who might not be likely to sign up for choir? Why?
13. What or who most supports choir participation at this school?
14. In your view, what is the most important thing that a school and community can do to support or encourage student participation in choir?
15. How does singing fit into students' overall education?
16. What do you hope your students will take away from their choir experience?
17. How do you see singing in your students' future?

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Recruitment email to music teacher

Dear (choir teacher),

My name is Julie Bannerman. I am a doctoral student at Northwestern University in music education and I recently joined the faculty at Crane School of Music. I am exploring possible sites for a research project I will be doing this school year, called "An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers." (Northwestern IRB Study # STU00100602). This research is being supervised by Dr. Maud Hickey in the Music Education Department at Northwestern University.

I am contacting you because your choir program was recommended to me by members of the Crane music education faculty as a possible site for this project.
The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by young people within their school community. I would like to find out how choir students view singing and how a school community supports their singing. I would love the opportunity to talk with you and your students.

If your program were to be involved with this project, I would observe students in choir and at choir related events throughout the upcoming school year and conduct interviews with students, parents, and teachers who agree to be interviewed. I would also interview you several times throughout the course of the study, each interview would last approximately an hour. Participation in this study will involve no cost to you, and you will not be paid for participating in this study

I would love to meet with you or talk with you over the phone about this possibility. You may reach me at (phone number) or (email).

Sincerely,
Julie Bannerman

Choir student recruitment

I will invite students to participate at the end of a choir class period. I will read the spoken invitation to students, and give interested students a letter for their parents attached to the parental consent form in an unsealed envelope. If they give permission, the students will return their signed forms in a sealed envelope to a collection box located in the choir room. Student assent will be obtained prior to the start of choir student interviews.

Spoken Invitation for Choir Student Participation

My name is Julie Bannerman. I'm a doctoral student in music education at Northwestern University and I currently teach music education classes at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. I am also a singer and I taught vocal and general music in public and private schools before teaching college.

I am conducting my dissertation research study called "An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers" (Northwestern IRB Study # STU00100602). This research is being supervised by Dr. Maud Hickey in the Music Education Department at Northwestern University.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by young people within their school community. I would like to find out how choir students view singing and how a school community supports their singing. The principal at your school has approved this project and your choir teacher, Mrs. Busch, has agreed to cooperate with this study.

This study will take place at your school during this school year and you are invited to participate. I will be observing choir classes and attending choir related events at school and taking notes on these events. You may see me taking notes during choir classes. I will also be interviewing choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

If you volunteer to participate and your parents agree, you will fill out a brief questionnaire and talk to me about your experiences with singing and your views on singing and choir participation at school. Participation in this study will involve no cost to you, and you will not be paid for participating in this study.

The time commitment will include filling out a brief questionnaire and participating in two group interviews with your choir peers. Additionally, you may be asked to participate in one to two individual interviews. All interviews will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded.

If you are interested in sharing your experiences with singing and your views on choir participation at your school, please take a letter home to your parents, which will explain the study to them. If your parents agree for you to participate, they will need to sign the consent form included with the letter. You will need to bring the signed consent form back to school in this sealed envelope and you will put it in this box. I will collect the forms and we will schedule interview times. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at (address) or call me at (phone number).

Are there any questions I can answer right now?

Letter to parents/guardians

Dear choir parents/guardians,

My name is Julie Bannerman, I am a doctoral student in music education at Northwestern University and I teach in the music education department at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam.

I am conducting my dissertation research study called "An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers" (Northwestern IRB Study # STU00100602). This study is being supervised by Dr. Maud Hickey in the Music Education Department at Northwestern University.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by adolescents within their school community. I would like to find out how choir students view singing and how a school community supports adolescent singing. The principal at your child's school has approved this project and the choir teacher, Mrs. Busch, has agreed to cooperate with this study.

This study will take place at your child's school during this school year. During that time I will observe selected choir classes and attend choir related events at school. I will ask choir students to fill out a brief questionnaire. I will be conducting audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

Your child is invited to participate in this study and has indicated interest in participating. The time commitment for your child will include filling out a brief questionnaire and participating in two group interviews with their choir peers. Additionally, your child may be asked to participate in one to two individual interviews. All interviews will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded.

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you or your child. Your child will not be paid for participating in this study.

As part of my study, I will interview choir parents/guardians in order to gain their perspectives on their child's singing activities. If you are willing to participate in an interview, please let me know how I might contact you by returning the bottom portion of this letter.

If you are interested in having your child participate in this study, please have your child return the signed consent form sealed in the envelope provided. Your child will deliver the consent form to a box provided in the choir room to be collected by Julie Bannerman. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (address) or by phone (number). I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Julie Bannerman
For those interested in participating as a choir parent/guardian, please fill out, detach, and return in the envelope with the consent form:

Yes, I am interested participating in an interview as a choir parent/guardian to share my perspective on my child's singing activities and choir participation in my school community.

My name is:
The best way to contact me is (phone or email):

Choir parent/guardian recruitment email/phone script

Hello,

My name is Julie Bannerman, I am a doctoral student in music education at Northwestern University and I teach in the music education department at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam.

I am conducting my dissertation research study called "An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers" (Northwestern IRB Study # STU00100602) at your child's school. This study is being supervised by Dr. Maud Hickey in the Music Education Department at Northwestern University.

The purpose of my study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by adolescents within their school community. I would like to find out how choir students view singing and how a school community supports adolescent singing.

I am writing (calling) you because your child is participating in my study and you indicated willingness to be contacted as a possible participant in my study. Your participation in my study will entail one interview lasting approximately one hour, at a time and place of your choosing. I will be asking you about your views of your child's singing activities and choir participation in the school community. Participation in this study will involve no cost to you, and you will not be paid for participating in this study.

Let me know if you are still interested in participating, and what would be a convenient time/place for an interview. The interview may take place over the phone if that is most convenient. You may contact me at (phone number) or (email).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!
Julie Bannerman

School personnel recruitment email

Dear _____,

My name is Julie Bannerman, I am a doctoral student in music education at Northwestern University and I teach in the music education department at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam.

I am conducting my dissertation research study called "An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers" (Northwestern IRB Study # STU00100602). This study is being supervised by Dr. Maud Hickey in the Music Education Department at Northwestern University.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by adolescents within their school community. I would like to find out how choir students view singing and how a school community supports adolescent singing.

My study will take place at your school during this school year. During that time I will observe selected choir classes and attend choir related events at school. I will be conducting audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

I am contacting you because you are (teacher, administrator) who is familiar with your school community and its choral program. I am wondering if you would be willing to participate in my study? Your participation in my study will entail one interview lasting approximately one hour, at a time and place of your choosing. If you agree, I will audio-record the interview. The interview may be conducted in person or over the phone.

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you, and you will not be paid for participating in this study.

Please let me know if you would be interested in speaking to me. You may contact me at (phone number) or (email).

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,
Julie Bannerman

APPENDIX C

CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

ASSENT FORM

Project Title: An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers
Principal Investigator: Maud Hickey PhD, Bienen School of Music
Student Investigator: Julie Bannerman
Supported by: Northwestern University

My name is Julie Bannerman. I am a doctoral student at Northwestern University.

I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. A research study is usually done to understand how things work. In this study, I want to find out more about what singing and choir means to young people. I also want to find out how a school community supports singing.

You are being asked to be in this study because you sing and are enrolled in your school's choir program. In any study, only people who want to take part are allowed to do so. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to do so. Being in this study will not cost you anything, and you will not be paid to be in this study.

If it is okay with you and you agree to join this study, I will ask you to share your experiences with singing and your views on singing. You will fill out a questionnaire and participate in two group interviews. You may also be invited to participate in an additional two individual interviews.

I will audio record interviews for analysis. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, you will not be able to participate in this study. If you are uncomfortable with the audio recording at any time during the interviews, please let me know and I will stop. The interviews will take place after school at the school building, or at a time and location of your parent's choosing.

One possible risk of participating in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions. If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, please let me know and I will stop. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer. If you should feel distressed after the interview, please talk to a trusted adult such as a school counselor.

Taking part in this study may help music educators better understand student perspectives on singing, adapt curriculum to respond to student interests in singing, and better understand how to support youth participation in vocal music in schools.

You do not have to be in this study. It is up to you. You can say no now or you can even change your mind later. All you have to do is tell me. No one will be mad at you if you change your mind.

Your parents/guardians say it is okay for you to be in this study. If you have questions, please ask them now or at anytime.

If you are not happy with this study and want to talk to someone else other than Dr. Hickey or the people helping Dr. Hickey, you can talk to your parents and they can call the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 312-503-9338 or email them at irb@northwestern.edu. You may also contact Johanne Sullivan, Chair of the SUNY Potsdam Institutional Review Board by mail (204 Raymond Hall, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY, 13668), telephone (315-267-2688) or email (SUNYPotsdamIRB@potsdam.edu).

<u>ASSENT</u>
This study has been explained to me and I am willing to be in it.

_____
Child's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

Check which applies below *[to be completed by the person administering the assent]*.

☐   The child is capable of reading and understanding the assent form and has signed above as documentation of assent to take part in this study.

☐   The child is not capable of reading the assent form, but the information was verbally explained to him/her. The child signed above as documentation of assent to take part in this study.

_____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Northwestern University Bienen School of Music
Parental Consent Form for Research

PROTOCOL TITLE: An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Maud Hickey, PhD, Bienen School of Music
CO-INVESTIGATOR/STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Julie Bannerman
SUPPORTED BY: Northwestern University

What is the Purpose of this Study?
Your child is being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for the study, what your child will do, and the way we would like to use information about your child if you choose to allow them to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by adolescents within a school community. I would like to find out how choir students view singing and how a school community supports adolescent singing. Your child is being asked to participate in this study because he/she is currently singing in a choir at school.

This study will take place at your child's school during one school year. During that time I will observe selected choir classes and attend choir related events at school. I will ask choir students to fill out a brief questionnaire. I will be conducting audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

What will my child do in this Study?
As a participant in this study your child will fill out a brief questionnaire and participate in two group interviews with their choir peers. Additionally, your child may also be asked to participate in one to two individual interviews. All interviews will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded. The group interviews will be conducted at your child's school and will take place afterschool. The individual interviews will be conducted according to your child's schedule, and will take place at the school or at a location of your choosing.

In order to remember what was said in the interviews, I will audio record interviews and take detailed notes afterwards. If you and your child do not wish to be audio recorded, your child will not be able to participate in this study. During the interview, your child may ask that the recorder be turned off at any point if there is something that they do not want to have recorded or for any other reason. After the interview, the tape will be transcribed and any identifying information will be removed.

At any time in the study, you and your child may decide to withdraw from the study. If your child withdraws, no more information will be collected from your child. When you or your child indicate he/she wishes to withdraw, I will ask if the information/materials already collected from your child can be used.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts to my Child?
Although minimal, there is a risk that your child may feel uncomfortable answering questions about their experiences with singing and participating in choir. Although minimal, there is a risk your child may feel questions related to their experiences with singing and participating in choir are personal or sensitive. If your child is uncomfortable with any of the interview questions, he/she will be told they are free to not answer or to skip to the next question. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the Possible Benefits for My Child or Others?
I do not expect that your child will benefit directly from taking part in this study. I do hope that the results of this study will help music educators better understand student perspectives on singing, adapt curriculum to respond to student interests in singing, and better understand how to support youth participation in vocal music in schools.

What Alternatives are Available?
Your child may choose to not participate in this research study.

Financial Information
Participation in this study will involve no cost to you or your child. Your child will not be paid for participating in this study.

What are my Child's Rights as a Research Participant?
If you choose to allow your child to be in this study, your child has the right to be treated with respect, including respect for their decision whether or not they wish to continue or stop being in the study. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and they are free to withdraw at any time.

Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to your child or loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. Specifically, your child's choice not to be in this study will not affect your child's participation in chorus.

If you or your child want to speak with someone *who is not directly involved* in this research, or if you or your child have questions about your child's rights as a research subject, contact the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office. You can call them at (312) 503-9338 or send e-mail to irb@northwestern.edu.

You may also contact Johanne Sullivan, Chair of the SUNY Potsdam Institutional Review Board by mail (204 Raymond Hall, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY, 13668), telephone (315-267-2688) or email (SUNYPotsdamIRB@potsdam.edu).
Approval by the Provost of SUNY Potsdam and SUNY's Institutional Review Board attests only that appropriate safeguards have been included in the research design to protect human participants. This approval does not imply that SUNY Potsdam College endorses the content of the research or the conclusions drawn from the results of the research.

What about my Child's Confidentiality and Privacy Rights?
Participation in this research study may result in a loss of privacy, since persons other than the investigator(s) might view your study records. Unless required by law, only the study investigator, members of the investigator's staff, the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board, and representatives from the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) have the authority to review your child's study records. They are required to maintain confidentiality regarding your identity.

Results of this study may be used for teaching, research, publications, and presentations at professional meetings. If your child's individual results are discussed, their identity will be protected by an alias.

Parents, please be aware that under the Protection of Pupils Right Act 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked of or materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Maud Hickey to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

Audio/Video Recordings
If you agree to let your child participate in this study, audio recording is a mandatory part of participation. These recordings will be used in analyzing the research data only. Permission to use audio recordings of you in presentations in the classroom, at professional meetings, or in publications will only be requested as need be if it is relevant to understanding the results. All audio records will be kept for two years and destroyed at the end of that time period.

Whom should I Call if I have Questions or Concerns about this Research Study?
If you or your child have any questions during your time on this study, call us promptly. Maud Hickey is the person in charge of this research study. You can call her at 847-467-4726 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call Julie Bannerman, 315-267-2413, from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday, with questions about this research.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing and choir participation by adolescents within their school community. For this study, I will observe choir classes and choir related events at school. Choir students will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. I will be conducting audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

In this study your child will be asked to talk about their experiences with singing and their views on singing. The time commitment for your child will include two group interviews. Your child may be asked to additionally participate in 1-2 individual interviews. All interviews will last approximately one hour. Audio recording is required for participation. If you or your child do not want to be audio recorded, then it is not possible for your child to be in this study.

Consent

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact.

Please check one of the following to indicate your choice:

☐ Yes, I agree to let my child/legal minor _____
(print name) be in the research study described above. A copy of this consent form will be provided to me after I sign it.

☐ No, I do not agree to let my child/legal
minor_____(print name) be in the research study
described above.

_____   _____
Parent/Legal Guardian's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Northwestern University Bienen School of Music
Consent Form for Research (Adult Choir Student)

PROTOCOL TITLE: An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Maud Hickey, PhD, Bienen School of Music
CO-INVESTIGATOR/STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Julie Bannerman
SUPPORTED BY: Northwestern University

What is the Purpose of this Study?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for the study, what you will do, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing within a school. I would like to find out how choir students view singing. I also want to know how schools support singing.

This study will take place at your school during one school year. During that time I will observe choir classes and go to choir events at school. I will ask choir students to fill out a brief questionnaire. I will be doing audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

You are invited to be in this study because you sing at your school. I am interested in your views on choir participation in your school.

What will I Do if I Choose to be in this Study?
As a participant in this study, you will fill out a brief questionnaire and participate in two group interviews with your choir peers. Additionally, you may also be asked to participate in one to two individual interviews. All interviews will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded. The group interviews will be conducted at your school and will take place afterschool. The individual interviews will be conducted according to your schedule, when and where you choose.

In order to remember what was said in the interviews, I will audio record interviews and take detailed notes afterwards. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, you will not be able to be in this study. During the interview, you may ask that the recorder be turned off at any point if there is something that you do not want to have recorded. After the interview, the tape will be transcribed and any identifying information will be removed.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts?
Although minimal, there is a risk that you may feel uncomfortable answering questions about choral participation and singing experiences in your school. Although minimal, there is a risk you may feel questions related to choral participation and singing experiences are personal or sensitive. If you feel uncomfortable with any question for any reason, you are free to not answer or to skip to the next question. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the Possible Benefits for Me or Others?
I do not expect that you will benefit directly from taking part in this study. I do hope that the results of this study will help music educators better understand student perspectives on singing, adapt curriculum to respond to student interests in singing, and better understand how to support youth participation in vocal music in schools.

What Alternatives are Available?
You may choose to not participate in this research study.

Financial Information
Being in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for being in this study.

What are my Rights as a Research Participant?
If you choose to be in this study, you have the right to be treated with respect, including respect for your decision whether or not you wish to continue or stop being in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Specifically, if you choose to not be in this study, this choice will not negatively affect your participation in choir.

If you want to speak with someone *who is not directly involved* in this research, or if you have questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office. You can call them at (312) 503-9338 or send e-mail to irb@northwestern.edu.

You may also contact Johanne Sullivan, Chair of the SUNY Potsdam Institutional Review Board by mail (204 Raymond Hall, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY, 13668), telephone (315-267-2688) or email (SUNYPotsdamIRB@potsdam.edu).

Approval by the Provost of SUNY Potsdam and the Institutional Review Board attests only that appropriate safeguards have been included in the research design to protect human participants. This approval does not imply that the College endorses the content of the research or the conclusions drawn from the results of the research.

What about my Confidentiality and Privacy Rights?
Participation in this research study may result in a loss of privacy, since persons other than the investigator(s) might view your study records. Unless required by law, only the study investigator, members of the investigator's staff, the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board have the authority to review your study records. They are required to maintain confidentiality regarding your identity.

Results of this study may be used for teaching, research, publications, and/or presentations at professional meetings. If your individual results are discussed, your identity will be protected by using a pseudonym rather than your name or other identifying information.

Audio/Video Recordings
If you agree to be in this study, audio recording is a mandatory part of participation. These recordings will be used in analyzing the research data only. Permission to use audio recordings of you in presentations in the classroom, at professional meetings, or in publications will only be requested as need be if it is relevant to understanding the results. All audio records will be kept for two years and destroyed at the end of that time period.

Whom should I Call if I have Questions or Concerns about this Research Study?
If you have any questions during your time on this study, call us promptly. Maud Hickey is the person in charge of this research study. You can call her at 847-467-4726 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call Julie Bannerman, 315-267-2413, from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday with questions about this research.

Consent
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____ _____
Subject's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____ _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Northwestern University Bienen School of Music
Consent Form for Research (Choir Parent/Guardian)

PROTOCOL TITLE: An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Maud Hickey, PhD, Bienen School of Music
CO-INVESTIGATOR/STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Julie Bannerman
SUPPORTED BY: Northwestern University

What is the Purpose of this Study?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for the study, what you will do, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing within a school. I would like to find out how choir students view singing. I also want to know how schools support singing.

This study will take place at your child's school during one school year. During that time I will observe choir classes and go to choir related events at school. I will ask choir students to fill out a brief questionnaire. I will be doing audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are the parent/guardian of a child who sings in choir at school. I am interested in your views on your child's singing activities at school.

What will I Do if I Choose to be in this Study?
If you volunteer to be in this study, you will talk the researcher in an interview lasting about one hour. The interview will happen where and when you decide. With your permission, I would like to audio-record the interview to help me remember what you said. You may ask that the recorder be turned off at any point during the interview if there is something that you do not want to have recorded.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts?
Although minimal, there is a risk that you may feel uncomfortable answering questions about your child's singing and choral participation in your child's school. Although minimal, there is a risk you may feel questions related to this study are personal or sensitive. If you feel uncomfortable with any question for any reason, you are free to not answer or to skip to the next question. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the Possible Benefits for Me or Others?
I do not expect that you will benefit directly from taking part in this study. I do hope that the results of this study will help music educators better understand student perspectives on singing, adapt curriculum to respond to student interests in singing, and better understand how to support youth participation in vocal music in schools.

What Alternatives are Available?
You may choose to not be in this research study.

Financial Information
Being in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for being in this study.

What are my Rights as a Research Participant?
If you choose to be in this study, you have the right to be treated with respect, including respect for your decision whether or not you wish to continue or stop being in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time.

Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Specifically, if you choose to not be in this study, this choice will not negatively affect your child's participation in chorus.

If you want to speak with someone *who is not directly involved* in this research, or if you have questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office. You can call them at (312) 503-9338 or send e-mail to irb@northwestern.edu.

You may also contact Johanne Sullivan, Chair of the SUNY Potsdam Institutional Review Board by mail (204 Raymond Hall, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY, 13668), telephone (315-267-2688) or email (SUNYPotsdamIRB@potsdam.edu).

Approval by the Provost of SUNY Potsdam and SUNY's Institutional Review Board attests only that appropriate safeguards have been included in the research design to protect human participants. This approval does not imply that SUNY Potsdam College endorses the content of the research or the conclusions drawn from the results of the research.

What about my Confidentiality and Privacy Rights?
Participation in this research study may result in a loss of privacy, since persons other than the investigator(s) might view your study records. Unless required by law, only the study

investigator, members of the investigator's staff, the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board have the authority to review your study records. They are required to maintain confidentiality regarding your identity.

Results of this study may be used for teaching, research, publications, and/or presentations at professional meetings. If your individual results are discussed, your identity will be protected by using a pseudonym rather than your name or other identifying information.

Audio/Video Recordings
At the end of this consent form, you will be given the option of allowing us to make audio recordings of you. If you agree, these may be used in analyzing the research data only. Permission to use audio or video recordings of you in presentations in the classroom, at professional meetings or in publications will only be requested if it is relevant to understanding the results. All audio records will be kept for two years and destroyed at the end of that time period.

Whom should I Call if I have Questions or Concerns about this Research Study?
If you have any questions during your time on this study, call us promptly. Maud Hickey is the person in charge of this research study. You can call her at 847-467-4726 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call Julie Bannerman, 315-267-2413, from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday with questions about this research.

Consent
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Optional Study Elements
Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:
_____(Initial) I agree to allow audio-recordings of interviews.
_____(Initial) I do not agree to allow audio-recordings of interviews.

_____   _____
Subject's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Northwestern University Bienen School of Music
Consent Form for Research (School personnel)

PROTOCOL TITLE: An exploration of the meanings of singing in the lives of young singers
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Maud Hickey, PhD, Bienen School of Music
CO-INVESTIGATOR/STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Julie Bannerman
SUPPORTED BY: Northwestern University

What is the Purpose of this Study?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for the study, what you will do, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the meanings of singing within a school. I would like to find out how choir students view singing. I also want to know how schools support singing.

This study will take place at your school during one school year. During that time I will observe choir classes and go to choir events at school. I will ask choir students to fill out a brief questionnaire. I will be doing audio-recorded interviews with choir students, choir parents/guardians, and members of the school community who volunteer to participate in this study.

You are invited to be in this study because you are familiar with your school's choral program. I am interested in your views on choir participation in your school.

What will I Do if I Choose to be in this Study?
If you volunteer to be in this study, you will participate in 1-3 interviews. The interview(s) will last about an hour. The interview(s) will happen where and when you decide. With your permission, I would like to audio-record the interview to help me remember what you said. You may ask that the recorder be turned off at any point during the interview if there is something that you do not want to have recorded.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts?
Although minimal, there is a risk that you may feel uncomfortable answering questions about choral participation in your school. Although minimal, there is a risk you may feel questions related to choral participation in your school are sensitive or personal. If you feel uncomfortable with any question for any reason, you are free to not answer or to skip to the next question. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the Possible Benefits for Me or Others?
I do not expect that you will benefit directly from taking part in this study. I do hope that the results of this study will help music educators better understand student perspectives on singing, adapt curriculum to respond to student interests in singing, and better understand how to support youth participation in vocal music in schools.

What Alternatives are Available?
You may choose to not participate in this research study.

Financial Information
Being in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for being in this study.

What are my Rights as a Research Participant?
If you choose to be in this study, you have the right to be treated with respect, including respect for your decision whether or not you wish to continue or stop being in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Specifically, if you choose to not be in this study, this choice will not negatively affect your present or future employment.

If you want to speak with someone *who is not directly involved* in this research, or if you have questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office. You can call them at (312) 503-9338 or send e-mail to irb@northwestern.edu.

You may also contact Johanne Sullivan, Chair of the SUNY Potsdam Institutional Review Board by mail (204 Raymond Hall, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam, NY, 13668), telephone (315-267-2688) or email (SUNYPotsdamIRB@potsdam.edu).

Approval by the Provost of SUNY Potsdam and SUNY's Institutional Review Board attests only that appropriate safeguards have been included in the research design to protect human participants. This approval does not imply that SUNY Potsdam College endorses the content of the research or the conclusions drawn from the results of the research.

What about my Confidentiality and Privacy Rights?
Participation in this research study may result in a loss of privacy, since persons other than the investigator(s) might view your study records. Unless required by law, only the study

investigator, members of the investigator's staff, the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board have the authority to review your study records. They are required to maintain confidentiality regarding your identity.

Results of this study may be used for teaching, research, publications, and/or presentations at professional meetings. If your individual results are discussed, your identity will be protected by using a pseudonym rather than your name or other identifying information.

Audio/Video Recordings

At the end of this consent form, you will be given the option of allowing us to make audio recordings of you. If you agree, these may be used in analyzing the research data only. Permission to use audio or video recordings of you in presentations in the classroom, at professional meetings or in publications will only be requested if it is relevant to understanding the results. All audio records will be kept for two years and destroyed at the end of that time period.

Whom should I Call if I have Questions or Concerns about this Research Study?

If you have any questions during your time on this study, call us promptly. Maud Hickey is the person in charge of this research study. You can call her at 847-467-4726 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call Julie Bannerman, 315-267-2413, from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday with questions about this research.

Consent

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Optional Study Elements

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____(Initial) I agree to allow audio-recordings of interviews.

_____(Initial) I do not agree to allow audio-recordings of interviews.

_____ _____

Subject's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____ _____

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date