Musical Behaviours, Dispositions, and Tendencies: Exploring Church Music-Making Through a Theory of Practice

Laura E. Benjamins, Western University

Supervisor: Wright, Ruth, The University of Western Ontario
Co-Supervisor: McClatchie, Stephen, The University of Western Ontario

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music
© Laura E. Benjamins 2023

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd

Part of the Music Education Commons

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine two churches’ music-making practices and their reflection of, and response to, the musical and theological fields in which they are located. Using central concepts from Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977) including habitus, capital, and field in connection with religion, the study considered how worship leaders and musicians strategized their musical behaviours and “disrupted” or affirmed traditional norms of music-making in each contemporary worship music-making setting. The study further explored whether such musical behaviours reflected and shaped habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurred.

This research utilized a qualitative, multiple case study design (Yin, 2014) to examine the music-making practices of two churches in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. Data were collected from May to July 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, influencing each church’s musical positioning. Results from cross-case analysis indicated that worship leaders’ and churches’ values were enacted musically through sub-themes of repertoire selection, modes of performance, and participative choices, positioning each church differently within the religious field. Musicians spoke to tensions they encountered between the pursuit of musical excellence and a focus on participation and inclusivity, reflecting contrasts in theological approaches and worship leaders’ strategization of musical behaviours. Worship leaders, as facilitators, can be understood to direct musical behaviours, “thoughtfully disrupting” (Higgins, 2015) or critically accepting perceptions of excellence and “legitimate musical knowledge” (Green, 2006).

Based on data findings, the study expands upon the concept of “dialogical habitus” (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Catron, 2022) in relation to reflection and conscious conversation among agents within church music settings. Findings suggest that when there was a
disjunct between habitus and an interrogation of the *doxa*, or rules of the game, dialogical processes of reflection contributed to a transformation of (religious musical) habitus – institutionally and individually. The study posits that while shifting field conditions influence changes in habitus, it is also the dialogical processes that can contribute to inter-subjective spaces of encounter, knowing, and being, thus re-shaping dispositions, tendencies, and pedagogical practices within church music, music education, and community music settings.

Keywords: Religion; Theology; Liturgy; Music Education Sociology; Dialogue; Participation; Excellence; Worship Leader; Community Music
SUMMARY FOR LAY AUDIENCE

The purpose of this study was to examine two churches’ music-making practices and how they reflected and responded to the musical and theological norms and traditions of the church. This study used three central concepts from Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) including habitus, capital, and field in relation to religion to consider how worship leaders and musicians in each church affirmed, or “disrupted” the traditional norms of music-making through their contemporary worship music-making practices. The study further explored whether musical behaviours reflected the dispositions, preferences, and tendencies both of the church and of individual musicians.

This research examined the music-making practices of two churches in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. Data were collected from May to July 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, influencing each church’s musical practices. Results from data findings indicated that repertoire selection, performance practices, and choices surrounding musical participation varied between the two churches. Worship leaders were understood to direct some of these musical behaviours, “disrupting” or critically accepting the musical and theological norms in place. These musical and theological norms were understood to contribute to musicians’ difficulty in maintaining a balance between the pursuit of musical excellence and focusing on inclusivity and participation for all.

Based on data findings, the study encourages the implementation of dialogical practices, meaning processes of reflection and conscious conversation among musicians within music-making settings. Dialogical practices were understood to contribute to change, thoughtfully reshaping “norms” and “tendencies” in place within church music, music education, and community music settings, leading to future transformation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am incredibly grateful for the many people who have contributed to my thesis writing process and journey as a PhD student. To my supervisors, Ruth Wright and Stephen McClatchie, thank you for your encouragement throughout the past several years in my research journey. It has been such a gift to be able to work with and learn from you both. I am grateful to have your perspectives informing this thesis. Ruth, thank you for encouraging me to do a PhD. Your belief in my writing and research has brought me to where I am today, and I am so grateful. Thank you for your critical perspective and careful edits. I have learned so much from you as a supervisor and researcher and appreciate your level of dedication to your students. Stephen, thank you for being willing to supervise this thesis and for welcoming me into your liturgical music class at Huron. Your willingness to spend time discussing and reading church music theology will not be forgotten and has significantly shaped my research trajectory. Your church music knowledge has been such a welcomed perspective to my research.

To Betty Anne Younker, thank you for your role in the music education department. You have been a wonderful mentor and I am forever grateful for our conversations and coffees together. You provide a helpful perspective and ask thoughtful questions that help me think about my research differently. Cathy Benedict, you have played an immensely influential role in my writing development and who I am as a pedagogue. You’ve taught me what it means to be a reflective practitioner and question the ‘why’ behind what I am doing in my teaching and interactions with students. Thank you for your mentorship and interests in my research.

To friends who I’ve met at Western – Kelly, Alison, Liz, Ariana, Laura, Kristine – thank you for your constant encouragement and for being willing to provide advice when needed.
To my family – thank you for all you’ve done. Thank you for encouraging me to keep going in my research journey and for asking the critical questions about what I am reading and writing. Thank you to my parents, Marion and Bob, my parents-in-law, MaryAnn and Ken, and siblings for your interest in what I am doing and for helping out with the girls when needed. I am thankful to be able to have conversations about worship music with all of you and love how music is such an integral part of our families. Thanks especially to my sister-in-law, Jantina, for our many conversations about academia and motherhood. I would not have started a PhD without having you as an example. You showed me that it was possible to have young children and value the role of motherhood while meaningfully engaging in academia.

Most of all, thank you to Derek and my daughters, Annalise and Julia. Derek, you have prompted me to think deeper and more critically, and you’re the one person whose questions about my research are the most thoughtful and difficult to answer. Thank you for encouraging our daughters and me and for all you do for our family. We love you and love making music with you.

_Soli Deo Gloria_
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary for Lay Audience</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Appendices</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter I: Introduction ................................................................. 1

- Arriving at this Area of Research ............................................... 1
- A Brief Introduction to Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) .................. 6
- Overview of Theoretical Framework ................................................ 7
- An Interdisciplinary Study ............................................................ 11
- Background to Problem from a Music Education Perspective .................. 13
- Statement of Problem ......................................................................... 17
- Statement of Purpose .......................................................................... 18
- Research Questions ............................................................................ 19
- Design of Research Questions ......................................................... 19
- Significance of Research Study ....................................................... 20
- Methodological Overview ..................................................................... 21
  - Researcher Positionality .................................................................. 22
- Setting the Scene: The Cases ............................................................. 23
- Ethical Considerations ........................................................................ 25
- Study Summary and Limitations .......................................................... 26

## Chapter II: Review of Literature ......................................................... 28

- Introduction ......................................................................................... 28
- Church Music and Theological Perspectives ......................................... 29
  - Evangelicalism .................................................................................. 29
    - Evangelicalism in Response to Today’s Culture ................................ 32
    - Church Cases in Relation to Evangelicalism .................................... 33
      - Reformed Churches ....................................................................... 35
      - Presbyterian Churches .................................................................. 36
    - Impact of the Protestant Reformation on Church Music .................. 38
    - Music of Evangelicalism .............................................................. 40
      - Early Christian Worship ............................................................ 42
      - Protestant Church Music and English Hymnody ............................. 43
      - Beginnings of Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) ....................... 45
      - Worship Wars .............................................................................. 48
    - Defining Today’s Contemporary Worship Music ................................ 50
      - Fundamental Presumptions .......................................................... 50
      - Music ......................................................................................... 50
Chapter III: Theory ..........................................................95
Introduction .........................................................................95
Bourdieu’s ‘Generative Structuralism’ ........................................95
Theory of Practice ..................................................................98
Habitus ..............................................................................99
Field ...............................................................................100
Capital ..............................................................................102
Transformation of Habitus ......................................................104
Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and Music-Making .....................104
Classical Music and Taste .....................................................104
Musical Habitus and Capital ..................................................107
Critique of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice .................................109
Discussing Illusio in the Religious Field .................................110
Collusio in the Religious Field ..............................................112
Religious Habitus ................................................................112
Habitus and Ritual ................................................................114
Religious Capital ................................................................115
Prophet and Priest ................................................................117
Bourdieu’s Theory of Religious Practice and Production of Culture 120
Conclusion .........................................................................130

Behaviour .............................................................................51
Dependency on Electronic Technology .....................................51
Theology and Philosophy of Church Worship ..........................52
Critique of CWM ..................................................................59
Pedagogical Approaches to CWM ...........................................63
Formation through Rituals of Music-Making .............................66
Impact of COVID-19 on Church Worship ...................................71
Virtual Ensembles ................................................................72
Music Education, Social Justice, and Pedagogies of Inclusion .........74
Popular Music Pedagogy and Informal Music Learning ..............77
Response from Literature .......................................................77
The Link to Social Justice ........................................................81
The Role of the Teacher and Dialogical Practices ......................84
Community Music Perspectives ..............................................87
Boundaries, Inclusion, and Community Music ............................88
The Facilitator in Community Music Settings ...........................90
Summary ...........................................................................93
Chapter IV: Methodology........................................................................................................132
  Introduction.........................................................................................................................132
  Ontological and Epistemological Decisions.................................................................133
  Qualitative Research........................................................................................................134
  Bourdieu and Research Methodology..............................................................................137
  Methodologies within Congregational Music Studies..................................................139
  Case Study Research .......................................................................................................140
    Choosing Cases.............................................................................................................141
      Church Cases ...............................................................................................................142
      Church Case #1 .........................................................................................................143
      Church Case #2 .........................................................................................................144
  Study Procedures.............................................................................................................146
    Data Collection ............................................................................................................147
      Questionnaires ..........................................................................................................147
      Semi-structured Interviews .......................................................................................149
      Non-participant Observation ......................................................................................152
      Field Notes ..................................................................................................................153
      Documents ..................................................................................................................154
  Incorporation of Virtual Research Methodologies.....................................................154
  Ethical Considerations throughout the Study ..............................................................155
  Data Analysis ..................................................................................................................157
    Coding ............................................................................................................................158
    Cross-Case Analysis .....................................................................................................159
  Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity........................................................................160
    Methodological Considerations ....................................................................................161
    Models of Reflexive Religious Subjectivity ................................................................162
  Study Methodological Limitations ..................................................................................165
  Summary ...........................................................................................................................167

Chapter V: Case Study One ...............................................................................................169
  Introduction.......................................................................................................................169
  Making the “Implicit Explicit” .......................................................................................171
  Theme 1: Understanding the “Rules of the Field” .......................................................171
    Selecting Repertoire .......................................................................................................172
    Approach to Worship .....................................................................................................179
    Musical Participation in the Worship Team ...............................................................186
    Conclusion of Theme 1: Elements of the Theological Field .......................................191
  Theme 2: Strategization of Musical Behaviours ............................................................193
    The Role of the Worship Leader ....................................................................................194
    Perceptions of Musicianship .........................................................................................199
    Summary of Theme 2 ....................................................................................................204
  Theme 3: Musical Behaviours Shaping Habitus ..............................................................205
  Summary and Concluding Ideas .....................................................................................209

Chapter VI: Case Study Two ...............................................................................................213
  Introduction.......................................................................................................................213
Theme 1: Understanding the “Rules of the Field” .......................................................... 215
  Selecting Repertoire ........................................................................................................ 217
  Approach to Worship ...................................................................................................... 225
  Musical Participation in the Choir .................................................................................. 231
  Conclusion of Theme 1: Elements of the Theological Field ........................................... 235
Theme 2: Strategization of Musical Behaviours .............................................................. 236
  The Role of the Choir Director ....................................................................................... 237
  Perceptions of Musicianship ............................................................................................ 244
  Summary of Theme 2 ...................................................................................................... 248
Theme 3: Musical Behaviours Shaping Habitus ............................................................... 249
Summary and Concluding Ideas ....................................................................................... 256

Chapter VII: Discussion .................................................................................................. 259
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 259
  Research Question 1: Musical & Theological Fields ...................................................... 261
    Selecting Repertoire ..................................................................................................... 262
    Approach to Worship .................................................................................................. 265
    Musical Participation .................................................................................................... 268
    Connection to Social Justice ....................................................................................... 271
    Locating Both Churches .............................................................................................. 272
  Research Question 2: The Strategization of Musical Behaviours .................................. 274
  Research Question 3: Musical Behaviours Reflecting and Shaping Habitus .................. 281
    The Transformative Nature of Habitus ....................................................................... 283
    Religious Musical Habitus ........................................................................................... 287
  Significance of Research Study and Dialogue ............................................................... 288
  A Note about Dialogue .................................................................................................. 289
  Choosing Not to Engage in Transformative Practices ..................................................... 291
  Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 291

Chapter VIII: Conclusion ............................................................................................... 293
  Introduction and Overview of Study .............................................................................. 293
  Limitations of the Study ............................................................................................... 295
  Implications for Music Education .................................................................................. 297
    Informal, nonformal, and formal learning .................................................................... 297
    Considering Musical Excellence ................................................................................ 300
    Interruption of Cycles of Reproduction .................................................................... 304
    Facilitating Spaces of Dialogue .................................................................................. 304
  Additional Implications for Worship Leadership and Church Music .......................... 306
  Future Directions for Research ..................................................................................... 310
  A Final Thought ............................................................................................................. 312

References ....................................................................................................................... 313
Appendices ....................................................................................................................... 347
Curriculum Vitae ............................................................................................................. 369
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Description of Study Participation ................................................................. 144
Table 2: Relationship between Interview Questions, Research Questions, and Key Literature. 149
Table 3: Relationship Between Research Questions and Data Themes at Church #1.............. 168
Table 4: Relationship Between Research Questions and Data Themes at Church #2 ............ 213
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Visual Representation of the Four Disciplines Integrated in the Thesis .................. 12
Figure 2: Elements Composing Two Cultural Dimensions of Worship .......................... 190
Figure 3: An Analysis of Musical Excellence and Participation with Church Case #1 .......... 191
Figure 4: An Analysis of Musical Excellence and Participation with Church Case #2 .......... 234
Figure 5: Visual Representation of the Religious Musical Fields in Place at Both Churches ... 272
Figure 6: The Reproduction of Habitus Within the Religious Field ................................. 281
Figure 7: The Transformation of Habitus within the Religious Field ............................. 284
LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Information and Consent – Senior Pastor ........................................... 347
Appendix B: Letter of Information and Consent – Worship Leader ........................................... 351
Appendix C: Letter of Information and Consent – Musician .................................................. 357
Appendix D: Interview Guide – Worship Leader ................................................................. 363
Appendix E: Interview Guide – Musician .............................................................................. 365
Appendix F: Email Script for Recruitment – Senior Pastor .................................................. 367
Appendix G: Email Script for Recruitment – Worship Leader ............................................. 368
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the best things we can do to ensure the transformative, rehabilitating power of Christian worship is to foster reflexive intentionality about what we’re doing and why. In short, liturgical catechesis will encourage reflection on worship precisely so we constitute worship as that “suite” of disciplines that are habituations of the Spirit, into which we’re invited in order to learn how to imagine the kingdom. (Smith, 2013, p. 189)

Introduction

Making music together in worship shapes and forms musicians, as well as the greater congregation. Music contributes to worshippers’ formation of the unconscious and to the shaping of their emotions, which influences one’s perceptions of the world (Smith, 2013; Wolterstorff, 2015). For North American Protestants, music is an essential aspect of public worship in Christian communities (Myrick, 2021). Liturgical scholars have noted that music connects worshippers together, enlivening their emotional and relational convictions (Begbie, 2011; Best, 2003; Smith, 2013) while also facilitating the negotiation of personal and communal values (Porter, 2016). Such connective and formational properties of music are heightened with the weight of religious convictions in church settings, broadening the impact of music and its formational quality (Myrick, 2021).

In my church music involvement, I have come to realize the capability music has for teaching theology, “training” and forming believers as they use music in their worship, while also building a sense of community. Drawing on my theological reflection on music as worship, I understand all music used in church settings to be formative, regardless of the music’s inclusion of a textual element. This thesis assumes that music is organized, ordered sound that functions as part of the ordered creation while serving as a means of communication within worship with theological content (Joncas, 2013). In relation to my philosophy of worship, I believe in church
musicians’ pursuit of musical craftsmanship in composition and technique (DeMol, 1992), developing raw materials of sound while seeking to facilitate congregational musical participation in worship. I have encouraged worship leaders, meaning the lead vocalist or instrumentalist and facilitator in worship musical ensembles, to consider the impact that musical decisions have on congregants and their engagement in worship (Benjamins, 2021b). I, too, strive to consider how my musical decisions and practices impact congregants’ musical participation. While some schools of Christian thought have emphasized music’s moral, formative weight in worship, others have done the opposite (Ingalls, 2018; Nekola, 2009), understanding music as a “neutral medium” or as a “purely aesthetic form”, independent from doctrinal truth, the believer’s heart, or the embodiment of believers’ actions in the world (Porter & Myrick, 2021, p. 3). In fact, part of the founding ideology of the Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) movement, which is of interest in this thesis, was that music is a neutral medium, dependent on the messages carried with it to obtain meaning (Ingalls, 2008; Nekola, 2009). This research, however, frames church music-making, and music in community music and music education contexts, as inherently formational, impacting musicians and their practices, values, and beliefs.

Arriving at this Area of Research

Before I provide an overview of this study’s theoretical framework, statement of purpose, and research questions, I wish to provide the reader with an understanding of how I arrived at this area of research. In this section, I outline my research trajectory, background, and experiences that have contributed to the development of this study. I examine my religious and musical background in more detail when discussing research positionality in my methodology.
chapter, but here I briefly consider how my research interests, shaped by my past musical and theological experiences, have taken shape as I have been in graduate school.

I grew up with a classical piano background, enrolled in traditional private piano lessons from kindergarten to grade twelve, and I followed the Royal Conservatory curriculum. I decided to pursue classical piano performance in my undergraduate degree and studied it for four years before completing my Bachelor of Education teaching degree. During that time, I completed my A.R.C.T. (Royal Conservatory, Toronto) in piano performance and decided to continue into a graduate degree in music education as I did not feel as though I was properly equipped to teach instrumental music in the classroom since I did not have any music education courses in my undergraduate degree.

During this time, I was always involved in church music which, in some ways, was juxtaposed with my education in piano performance. I distinctly remember starting to accompany church services in grade five and was accustomed to playing “performance-oriented” worship repertoire in preludes and offertories; however, I quickly learned skills for accompanying congregational hymns and was taught that I was there to “lead” rather than “perform”. My mother, grandmother, and aunts were all the main accompanists in their local congregations. I grew up with a strong philosophy of worship music, attending church music symposiums throughout high school, and understood that music in church was to serve the congregation’s worship of God.

Throughout my time at Western University, I was introduced to Green’s (2002, 2008) principles of informal music learning\(^1\) and drew connections to what I experienced with the

---

\(^1\) Green’s (2002) five principles of informal music learning include: (1) Learning music that pupils choose, like, and identify with; (2) Learning by listening and copying recordings; (3) Learning with friends; (4) Personal, often haphazard learning without structured guidance; (5) Integration of listening, performing, improvising, and composing. These principles, alongside popular music pedagogies, are further discussed in the review of literature.
entrance of popular musical practices, through the Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) genre, in local congregations. I considered my experiences and difficulties learning how to play with a worship team at church, and the insecurity I felt when trying to play by ear or learn how to play chords alone rather than lead the congregation as a solo instrumentalist. Drawing from these experiences and in preparation for my thesis research, I conducted a pilot study (Benjamins, 2019) that examined how worship musicians acquire and develop their musical skills in relation to Green’s (2002, 2008) framework, drawing on data from two churches in London, Ontario. I considered musicians’ processes of informal music learning, perceived musical ability, and themes of individual agency versus corporate unity within the church. Already at this point I was interested in the “relational” aspect of music-making, drawing on Small’s (1996, 1998) concept of musicking. Data findings indicated to me that in my thesis I wanted to compare music-making within different denominations and represent more accurately how music-making practices relate to a church’s theological and denominational positioning.

I did not notice until I was developing the argument for this current study regarding habitus formation and transformation that dialogical, relational practices have been a significant area of interest since I started exploring worship leadership in relation to CWM. In my exploration of musicking as liturgical speech acts (Benjamins, 2021b), I analyze the CWM context as a particular case where liturgical language shapes musicians’ spiritual formation. I was drawn to Smith (2013, 2016) and Wolterstorff’s (2005, 2015) writings that highlight the formative aspect of worship, and I continue to reference them repeatedly in my conversations today. When considering the pedagogical practices of worship leaders, I have considered dialogue as a tool to promote spaces of relational musicking and meeting through I-Thou (Buber, 1958) encounters (Benjamins, 2021a). I similarly drew upon these themes within formal music
classrooms, examining how educators might enact an ethic of “care” through the facilitation of relational spaces of musicking in the classroom. My model suggests that through dialogical practices, alongside elements of modeling, practice, and confirmation, students may be better positioned to enter into such relational spaces and encounter the world differently.

Elsewhere, I draw on Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of dialogism to explore how pedagogues and facilitators might “care with” fellow musicians toward participative dialogue and the encounter of Others within community music settings (Benjamins, forthcoming). Reflecting some of the themes of this current study, I use Bakhtin’s theory which emphasizes the act or utterance, recognizing the social significance of any act in relation to a living “text” or social field. In this, I encourage community musicians or worship leaders to consider their processes of engagement and consciousness (Bakhtin, 1993), rather than a “resolution” of differences.

Each of these experiences, encounters with research, and various academic explorations with my research interests contributed to the framing of this current study. As evident in the sections that follow, themes of CWM, philosophy of church music, connections to community music, and dialogical practices have been consistent areas of interest in my research trajectory. I later chose to use Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) in conjunction with his writings on religion as a framework as I felt that his concept of habitus and its permeability according to the social field in place aligned with many of my beliefs surrounding church worship. In the sections that follow, I provide the reader with more background on CWM, an overview of the study’s theoretical framework, research purpose and questions. I situate the research problem within the field of music education, providing a background to the problem from a music education perspective. I then conclude with an overview of my methodology and the two church cases.
A Brief Introduction to Contemporary Worship Music (CWM)

This thesis assumes that music holds an ability to shape and form musicians. In response to this belief, some Christians have been wary of music’s role in worship, expressing concern that music might exert a negative moral influence through its aesthetic beauty, its ability to stir emotions, or its connection with bodily movement (Porter & Myrick, 2021). Often, such musical positioning depends on the culture of the local congregation and tend to be against a “religious or cultural other” from which certain Christian communities strive to distance themselves (Porter & Myrick, 2021, p. 3).

To further complicate matters, particular musical genres in twenty-first century worship, such as Contemporary Worship Music (CWM), have been approached with great hesitation due to their association with popular music influences, contemporary sounds, and informal nature (Lim & Ruth, 2017). CWM, “a global, Christian congregational song repertory modeled on mainstream Western popular music styles” (Ingalls, 2018, p. 5), is the primary musical genre used for worship in many twenty-first century evangelical Christian church congregations (Ingalls, 2018). Worship bands typically lead and perform CWM, often consisting of vocal and instrumental popular music ensembles including drums, keyboard, and guitars. As acknowledged in various discussions surrounding CWM, the lyrics tend to be quite approachable and “conversational with an informal nature” (Lim & Ruth, 2017), focused on the believer’s “personal worship experience” (Graham, 2019), accompanied by simplistic four-chord melodies, and representative of a distinct theology (Dawn, 1995).

---

2 Evangelical refers to a trans-denominational movement in Protestant Christianity that might broadly be categorized as Calvinist. According to Ingalls (2018), evangelicals currently number somewhere between 300 and 550 million Christians worldwide.
I found the entrance of CWM into many Christian Protestant worship settings to be fascinating. I grew up watching local congregations grapple with these new “praise and worship” melodies, popular tunes, and increased focus on personal worship experiences. I heard conversations of hesitation in letting “worldly popular culture” enter the church. Yet I also saw some increased congregational engagement with the entrance of this repertoire. I tend to have a balanced approach and opinion surrounding the presence of CWM in worship. While I enjoy engaging with CWM in a church setting, I am, at times, wary of the theology presented as well as the lack of singability of particular arrangements, discouraging congregational participation in some circumstances. I also see the benefits of CWM specifically in terms of resonating with some youth and unbelievers, as well as the level of familiarity and musical association that CWM melodies tend to have. These experiences and approaches to CWM informed this current research, as CWM provides a unique aspect to study when considering how church music-making practices reflect and respond to the specific setting in which they are located, typically indicative of their approach to embracing more “contemporary” music in worship services.

**Overview of Theoretical Framework**

This research uses sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) in connection with religion as a theoretical framework. Bourdieu’s research broadly questions various authorities, traditions, and assumptions that determine many aspects of the lives of individuals in society (Rey, 2007), including the impact of religion on society. His work approaches religion from a critical sociological lens, striving to unveil the “self-deception” that is “collectively maintained, fostered, and…at the foundation of the most sacred values within a society” (Rey, 2007, p. 7). Bourdieu’s writings on religion operate under a “hermeneutic of suspicion” (Rey, 2007, p. 79) as he viewed religion as “‘imposing’ worldviews upon people” (p. 79) through the
inculcation of modes of thought into their habitus, or system of dispositions (Rey, 2007). Yet I find the central concepts in his theory to be particularly useful in describing and analyzing practices that are “performed” in worship settings.

Bourdieu’s three main concepts in his *Theory of Practice* – capital, habitus, and field – strive to account for the social rules that humans act accordingly, while also acknowledging flexibility and freedom present among individuals. Habitus is described as a system of dispositions, one’s past that is understood in the present while also changing according to social structures and conditions in place. It is a system of “structured, structuring” dispositions that “make itself present in practices structured according to its principles” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82). Individuals, or social agents, are situated in evolving social fields and are impacted by their evolving habitus. Within the social field, agents occupy particular positions in a larger network of power. Social agents use capital – economic, cultural, social, and symbolic – to occupy and maintain their positions in the social field.

Bourdieu (1987, 1991a) extended his theory to religious contexts as well, referring to a religious habitus, religious capital, and the religious field in several of his works. Bourdieu explained how religious practices shape habitus within the religious field. Religious habitus, then, is the dimension of individuals within the religious field that include the “matrix of perception” of religious symbols, teachings, practices, and dispositions towards them (Rey, 2007). Religious capital is a socially or culturally produced capital pertaining specifically to the religious social space or field, as produced by religious specialists (Rey, 2007). In the reproduction of field conditions, *doxa* – meaning the unwritten rules of the field that maintain its stability – and *illusio* – the belief in the game being played in the field to legitimize it – are
elements that will be recognized in the data analysis in understanding the broader picture of church music-making practices.

Participating in church worship includes the enactment of actions according to a “scripted” text, or a liturgy (Smith, 2013; Wolterstorff, 2015). To participate in a liturgy is to perform “scripted, rule-governed, actions” (Wolterstorff, 2015, p. 8) that are representative of a social practice and “know-how”. Understanding humans as “liturgical creatures” acknowledges the fact that as individuals engage in worship, they are fundamentally formed by worship practices while entering worship settings with individual backgrounds, tendencies, and dispositions (Smith, 2013, 2016). One’s worship practices, “communal, embodied rhythms, rituals, and routines” (Smith, 2013, p. 4), unconsciously and quietly shape desires, theology, and “rules of the field” over time.

It is important to note that church worship is a form of community music-making that is situated within a broader religious social field, characterized by issues of relationality, struggle and power. In religious fields, as in any social field, agents confront each other and contribute to the conserving or transforming of its structure (Rey, 2007). Particular elements of worship, such as music, prayer, and gestures, position religious communities in the overall social field (Monnot, 2018), while also contributing to agents’ religious habitus formation. Through strategic practices such as music-making, the social field is shaped while iteratively structuring the habitus of “social agents”, who thereby occupy certain positions determined by religious capital (Rey, 2007).

Behaviours can be musically enacted through repertoire, modes of performance, and participative choices, becoming strategies toward the realization of values (Phelan, 2008). Scholars argue that music-making practices can perpetuate issues of hegemony, exclusion, and
elitism when the superiority of Western Art Music traditions is blindly accepted (Wright, 2019). The worship leader, similar to a community music facilitator, has a particular role in directing music-making processes and enacting a form of “thoughtful disruption” (Higgins, 2015, p. 446), or perhaps critical acceptance of the music-making processes, including perceptions of value, excellence, and “legitimate musical knowledge” (Green, 2006) in relation to musical capital. Each of these concepts may be understood in response to the specific religious field in which they are located. Therefore, an examination of the role of the worship leader and their practices is of particular interest in this study.

In this research, I explore two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices and how they may both reflect and respond to the theological and musical fields in which they are located through case study research (Yin, 2014). Using Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990) concepts of habitus, capital, and field, I consider how worship leaders and musicians might strategize their musical behaviours and “disrupt”, or affirm, traditional norms of music-making in each setting. I further explore how such musical behaviours may reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually. I expand upon the concept of “dialogical habitus” (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Catron, 2021, 2022), extending it to dialogical processes of reflection and conscious conversational practice between acting agents as musicians in formal, informal, and nonformal (Veblen, 2012) music-making settings. I examine how intentional, dialogical practices, along with changes in field conditions, have the potential to interrupt cycles of reproduction and hegemonic practices. I posit that dialogical practices contribute to the interrogation of the doxa.

Veblen (2012) differentiates between formal, nonformal, and informal contexts of adult music learning. Formal music learning tends to be sequential, institutionalized, and based on notated music led by a teacher. Informal learning, heightened with Green’s (2002) research on popular musicians, occurs outside of formal educational settings, and is unofficial, not sequenced beforehand, and is largely experiential. Nonformal learning is a blend between the two, including systematic and deliberated but less regulated approaches led by a director or teacher. The learner usually controls their own learning and the practices adjust according to the musicians present.
or rules of the game in the field, and impact the transformation of individual and institutional habitus. I also consider why musical practices may, instead, contribute to the stabilization and acceptance of dominant norms, responding to the particular religious field, capital, and habitus in force. This thesis sits at the intersection of four overlapping disciplines: music education, community music, church music, and theology, each of which contribute to the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis.

**An Interdisciplinary Study**

Within Wright’s (2014) exploration of three main sociologies that have dominated the field of music education, she proposes that a proper consideration of the complexities of a twenty-first century music education requires a fourth sociology – one of integration. A sociology of integration, then, “fuses perspectives from within sociology itself and combines them with complimentary fields, as relevant to the particular study under investigation” (p. 12). This allows one to add additional lenses and interpretations to the research, drawing from other disciplines. Following Wright’s work, this research study will integrate theoretical perspectives from sociology itself, while also fusing them with perspectives from other disciplines such as music education, church music, theology, and community music literature in conjunction with the research topic.
Music education, community music, church music, and theological research are in their very nature interdisciplinary, and church music in particular is one theoretical perspective that the music education discipline has not yet considered extensively. As Bourdieu (1991b) states, actors can be positioned in multiple social fields, yet the field of power exists between and among them, as interrelated forces between agents or institutions. Actors tend to share a discursive identity and habitus when they maintain similar positions in the field of power (Schirato & Roberts, 2020). In order to adequately examine church musicians’ practices within social fields in relation to the field of power, church musical practices must be addressed and considered from each of their perspectives. This topic is of interest to me as a music educator and worship musician, representing both a gap in knowledge and an area of music education research that has yet to be fully developed. The strength of this study lies in its interdisciplinary nature, understanding how different disciplines interact and relate to the findings of the study.
Background to Problem from a Music Education Perspective

As this thesis is situated in music education as my home discipline, this introduction chapter presents a background to the research problem from a music education perspective. Music education occurs in amateur and professional, formal and informal, institutional and non-institutional contexts. In these various settings, music-making may be planned or unplanned, existing for many reasons including primarily for teaching, for the musical experience, or for musical performance (Veblen, 2012). Some prevalent models of North American music education, however, continue to emphasize the end musical product and notions of student ability and excellence alone. This has occurred in part as a result of the dominance of Western Art Music standards, where, as Wright (2019) indicates, “the reification of musics and musicians in post compulsory music education in favour of Western Art Music languages and literatures, and those expert in studying and performing them, and against those expert in other musics, or in teaching music, serves in…reproducing the existing cultural hegemony” (p. 219, emphasis in original; Kingsbury, 1988; Nettl, 1995).

When discussing cultural hegemony in relation to music education, scholars argue that music education has the ability to cause harm through exclusion (Wright, 2019; see also Benedict et al., 2016; Small, 1996; Westerlund & Karlsen, 2016). Western Art Music traditions tend to focus on the development of technical virtuosity and excellence of performance within the art music canon, and over inclusive music-making experiences that value autonomy, cultural responsiveness, creativity, and process over product. Scholars argue that accepting the former traditions alone has the potential to exclude young people from a “culturally and personally relevant [music education] that speaks to their individual musicality”, and that may fail to
“provide them with the belief in their own ability and musical skills and understandings” (Wright, 2019, p. 221; see also Benedict et al., 2016).

In accordance with Small’s (1996) critique of the dominating effects of unquestioningly accepting the superiority of Western Art Music values, music educators are called to question how these assumptions have been socially constructed (Benedict et al., 2016; Wright, 2019). This involves exposing those “societal constellations of power and control” that have exerted and reinforced “their imperializing functions” (Wright, 2019, p. 220). Such processes, among others, have thus given rise to the pursuit of social justice in music educational environments, where educative action focused on participation, accessibility, and engagement and questioning of “legitimate musical knowledge” (Green, 2006; Vaugeois, 2007; Westerlund & Karlsen, 2016; Wright, 2015, 2019) might contribute to a more “just and humane society” (Benedict et al., 2016, p. xii). It is important to note here, as well, that these scholars are particularly addressing music education for school-aged children. While there were no children who served as participants in the churches I studied, I find this literature relevant to my study as an emphasis on participation, accessibility, and engagement has become an “end goal” of music currently in many churches. As addressed in my review of literature, the focus of church music within evangelical churches has shifted comparatively recently, in broad terms, away from times in church history where there was a significantly less emphasis on participation, accessibility, and engagement (Lemley, 2021).

Some scholars have also problematized the modern-day pursuit of social justice, inclusivity, and community in educative settings, suggesting that the pursuit of social justice is not a simple idea or a necessarily attainable goal (Mantie, 2009). Rather, it is most beneficial for educators to begin by first recognizing their privileged status, developing a true sense of the
other, and engaging in connection with their students at hand (Willingham, 2009). From a community music lens, Yerichuk and Krar (2021) suggest that while the pursuit of community points towards an inclusive ideal without boundaries, actual communities are formed “by creating [emphasis in original] boundaries…[through] processes of exclusion” (p. 8). Musically inclusive strategies, then, should be matched with socially inclusive strategies, while also analyzing the relationship between the facilitator or educator, and participants. These concepts are particularly relevant in situating my research in the broader music education and community music contexts, while church music provides a different focus within which to examine some of these “socially just ends” as addressed above.

Many Western Art Music traditions, tied to notions of musical excellence, intrinsic ability, and discourses surrounding what is worthy of study, however, have continued to filter into a variety of music teaching and learning contexts, including community music environments (Baker, 2014; Bull, 2016; Vaugeois, 2007). This has resulted in the stifling of many young people’s sense of individual musicality, negatively affecting their musical experience, as well as their beliefs surrounding who can be a musician. The Christian church is a social field and a community music-making field that some might argue is also impacted by Western Art Music’s values and assumptions, where the pursuit of excellence can contribute to formalism, arrogance, and art worship (Kauflin, 2008). Other scholars suggest, rather, that excellence in church worship equates to maintaining particular musical standards along with the facilitation of congregational musical participation (Best, 1982; DeMol, 1992; Long, 2001). When addressing these different claims, however, the theological and musical fields in which a congregation is located must also be acknowledged. Churches are unable to adopt a neutral position on musical style (Porter, 2016). Understanding a congregation’s theological conceptualization of what
worship is and what it should be and how that relates to their approach to music-making practices in their totality is necessary when addressing church worship from a music education perspective.

Further, the Christian church is a particular context of music teaching and learning that has not been significantly addressed thus far in recent music education literature. While church music and music education have been linked throughout history in many global contexts (de Couve et al., 1997, 2004; Music, 2008) and were inherently linked in the beginnings of Canadian history (Kallmann, 1960), their paths appeared to diverge from around the late nineteenth century (Benjamins, 2019). Today, church music-making practices are minimally addressed in music education literature, yet the broader field of spirituality and music education is continuing to increase in growth (e.g. Boyce-Tillman, 2007; van der Merwe & Habron, 2015; Yob, 2011).

As Canada continues to diversify, so do the cultural practices about which educators should become more informed. These cultural practices include music and the particular role it plays in spiritual and religious development across a variety of traditions. If music education is conceived as occurring throughout society, in a variety of settings and among diverse individuals, then the Christian church, too, is a site of music teaching and learning and should therefore be of interest to music education researchers. It is also important to note, however, that a multifaith context of a classroom is immensely different from the faith context of a church and denomination, where worshippers can generally be seen to express their faith consisting of similar values and beliefs. Classroom contexts, instead, contain a diverse range of faith traditions, backgrounds, and worldviews.
Statement of Problem

Contemporary music education and community music scholars generally recognize the need for inclusive, participatory music-making processes for the pursuit of increased engagement in music teaching and learning settings (Benedict et al., 2016; Higgins, 2012). While formalized approaches to music teaching and learning too often reflect values and practices of Western Art Music (Bradley, 2016; Small, 1996; Waldron, 2009, 2012) based on a 19th century German conservatory model (Green, 2002), some researchers have encouraged an increased emphasis on creative processes and participatory engagement through Western Art Music (Drummond, 2010; Toelle & Sloboda, 2021), approaching Western Art Music with the same tools as one would approach other musics. When Western Art Music principles dominate, however, they can, at times, emphasize the end musical product and notions of student ability and excellence alone, stifling musical participation, creativity, and opportunity while reproducing the existing cultural hegemony and fields of power (Wright, 2019; see also Kingsbury, 1988; Nettl, 1995; Small, 1996). On the other hand, creative processes and participatory engagement have also increased through the implementation of jazz music-making, digital/technological music-making, and popular music programs within schools. Church music provides a complex lens through which to consider musical participation and inclusivity, as it is often directed by theological understandings of worship as organized “vertically” (doxologically) or “horizontally” (communally). The church’s overall position in the social field directly impacts decisions in musical worship as well (Best, 1982; Flynn, 2006). CWM in particular has risen in popularity in evangelical churches to advance and expand communities through its contribution to social change (Van Dyken, 2017). Some may understand CWM to have more of a participatory, inclusive focus with its links with popular musical instruments, informal/nonformal learning, and
accessibility (Benjamins, 2019). The role of CWM in worship, however, varies according to approaches and theological understandings of worship and the “end goal” of music in the individual church as shaped by its doctrinal context.

If church music-making is understood as a relevant site of music teaching and learning today, it is important to understand how music-making practices both reflect and respond to social fields and fields of power in place, as within any educative space. Bourdieu’s (1977) theoretical concepts of capital, habitus, and field provide a useful framework with which to analyze a church’s approach to music-making within the social field. In order to consider church worship as a form of community music and music education, its complexities in terms of power, “rules of the field”, and strategization through performative music-making practices must be adequately considered. Further, music educators will continue to interact with students who regularly participate in church music-making, thus there is a need to increase the music educators’ understanding of music-making in religious musical settings in all its complexities.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate two churches’ music-making practices and their reflection of, and response to, the musical and theological fields in which they are located. Using Bourdieu’s (1977) concepts of habitus, capital and field, I consider how worship leaders and musicians strategize their musical behaviours and “disrupt” or possibly affirm traditional norms of music-making in each CWM setting. I further explore whether such musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs.
**Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study, each of which draw upon Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) (see below):

1. How do two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located?
   a. What are the *doxa* of these fields?
2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their (two different) CWM settings?
3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?

**Design of Research Questions**

The study’s three research questions were designed to reflect the interrelated nature of habitus, capital, and field within Bourdieu’s writings. They reflect how practices both reflect and respond to the social field in place and the powers within that field, as well as the role of agents engaged in practice. I view the research questions as a cyclical process describing the ways in which practices are related to fields, and how agents, then, may strategize or direct their behaviours in a certain way while still influenced by the field structures in place along with the capital that they hold. The third research question demonstrates the next step in the process, where the strategization of behaviours may then influence the institutional and individual habitus of agents who are engaging in the behaviours or practice.

Bourdieu describes a three-stage field analysis in his writings which is also reflected in the design of the research questions. Stages of his field analysis include first analyzing the position of the field within the field of power; second, examining agents’ positions and the
structure of relations in place; and third, analyzing the habitus of agents (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Such an approach allowed for interaction between the three key elements of his theory. As evident in the study’s research questions, the first question begins by examining the field positions in relation to the concept of power and how practices reflect and respond to the fields in place. The second question addresses the strategization of musical behaviours which is, in essence, a mapping out of the relationships and the enactment of practices between agents. Lastly, the third question analyzes the habitus formation of agents, which is identical to Bourdieu’s third stage of field analysis.

**Significance of Research Study**

This study is innovative specifically in terms of its interdisciplinary nature and the way in which it addresses the transformative nature of habitus in relation to church worship and worship teams. As explored in more detail in the theory chapter, critical scholars suggest that Bourdieu’s approach to habitus is too deterministic in nature, minimizing the potential for reflexivity or conscious behaviour (Crossley, 1999; Farnell, 2000; Noble & Watkins, 2003; Sayer, 2005). I argue throughout this thesis that habitus is permeable and transformative. Expanding upon the concept of “dialogical habitus” (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Catron, 2021, 2022), I describe, in detail, how habitus might be transformed both through a response to change in field conditions (*hysteresis*) and through dialogical practices and processes of reflection. There is minimal research that connects church music to community music and music education and a consideration of the worship leader in CWM settings as a facilitator who can contribute, in some ways, to the transformation of habitus is original in its essence.
Methodological Overview

This research employed a qualitative approach, considering the problem and phenomena from the perspective of the musicians involved. Qualitative research provides an in-depth and intricate understanding of actions, attitudes, meanings, and behaviours (Cohen et al., 2018). Purposes for qualitative research may include “description, explanation, reporting, creation of key concepts, theory generation and testing” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 287), where each of these purposes tend to involve the gathering of verbal, aural, observational, and tactory information from a large range of sources that draw strongly on direct experiences and meanings. A qualitative lens allowed me to understand the study’s purpose from the perspective of those involved, emphasizing the processes of participants’ behaviour and meaning-making in religious contexts. Due to the nature of my research questions, the subjective, individual experiences of participants lend themselves to qualitative methods of data collection for this study including interviews, participant observations, document analysis, and questionnaires.

Within a qualitative research paradigm, this study used multiple case study design as the methodological approach. Yin (2014) suggests that multiple cases help increase the internal validity of a study, and while an increased number of cases do not necessarily lead to generalization, they can contribute to a more detailed or robust understanding of what is being researched (Stake, 1995). In case study research, cases must be clearly defined, bound by time, place, and context, each of which determine the people, place, and time period which define the case (Stake, 1995). In my research, musical worship in two evangelical churches was the concept that bound the cases together.

Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, non-participant observation of praise band and choir rehearsals, as well as document analysis. All elements of
data collection occurred online due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Protocol for virtual data collection were followed, as addressed in the literature (Eynon et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Marotzki et al., 2017) to maintain a cautious and critical approach and to ensure that ethical standards were met throughout the methodological process.

**Researcher Positionality**

My subject position as a white, heterosexual, able-bodied woman with a Canadian, middle-class, evangelical Christian background influences my relationship to North American evangelicalism and its music. My musical and theological beliefs which shape this research have been informed by my ten years of church musical leadership in Protestant Christian churches, both in terms of accompanying worship services from the piano and in worship service planning.

In acknowledging my musical leadership experiences, this research has prompted me to consider how my own religious affiliation positions me relative to participants’ positions from the perspectives of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. Much of my fieldwork was conducted “at home”, causing me to consider my own philosophy of Christian worship while forming a space of critical distance with participants. As an “observant participant” (Butler, 2005, p. 48), I notice myself resonating with particular church cases over others in their approach to worship. While I have found aspects of musical worship in some settings to be ideologically, theologically, or ethically problematic, I have had to actively work against these opinions and understandings of data sites as “times of worship” for myself. My role as an “observant participant” (Butler, 2005, p. 48), engaging with models of reflexive religious subjectivity (Butler, 2005, 2008; Summit, 2000, 2016), are further addressed in my methodology chapter. I critically evaluate my own positionality, acknowledging how my biography, previous
experience, and my following of models of reflexive religious subjectivity (Butler, 2005, 2008; Summit, 2000, 2016) have influenced my research process.

**Setting the Scene: The Cases**

The data presented in this study were gathered in two Protestant churches in southwestern Ontario, Canada. Each church was understood to be a subset of either evangelical Protestant or mainline Protestant churches, which are further described in this study’s review of literature. Data collection occurred in May to July 2021 and each church served as its own case. In total, twenty-two church musicians and two worship leaders participated in the study. As defined previously, a worship leader is typically understood as a lead vocalist or instrumentalist and facilitator in a worship musical ensemble. Different than a pastor or a music coordinator, worship leaders in this study were understood to be musical leaders of specific worship teams or musical groups. Worship leaders could select musical repertoire which was later approved by pastors or worship committees. Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the Protestant churches only had the choir lead music rather than a worship team during my time of data collection. I therefore extended some literature and analysis of the “worship leader” to the role of the “choir director”, framing them both as a facilitator or a pedagogue at times. Both terms are used synonymously due to the external factors that influenced data collection.

While both churches may be understood to serve as formal spaces for the research, their music-making practices were generally understood to be nonformal in nature, described as “formal”, deliberate, and systematic practices where the process is led by a director or leader while the student/musician usually controls the learning. Typically, this type of learning occurs in an institution or other unregulated setting (Veblen, 2012) and I purposefully chose churches that I knew would be less hierarchical in nature in comparison to other denominations.
Both churches are situated in the same city, one is a Christian Reformed Church and the other is a Presbyterian Church. Redeemer Christian Reformed Church\textsuperscript{4} served as the first church case, described as a Christian Reformed Church consisting of a multi-generational congregation with diverse ages and backgrounds. As part of the greater Christian Reformed Church denomination in North America, Redeemer focuses on the Reformed confessions and a “blended” view of worship with both contemporary and traditional repertoire.

The second church, Calvin Presbyterian Church\textsuperscript{5} is a multi-generational church that is part of the greater Presbyterian Church of Canada denomination. Their worship services typically have a mix of contemporary and traditional musical repertoire, led by the praise band consisting of drums, guitar, keyboard, and vocalists, as well as the church choir. With the added changes of online rehearsals for both groups due to the COVID-19 pandemic, members rehearsed and recorded their musical parts individually on Zoom, and the choir director combined the songs to be used during online church services.

Data from non-participant observation of musical rehearsals, questionnaires, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews are presented in my data findings chapters. I compare the two cases using Bourdieu’s theory to analyze the religious habitus, religious capital, religious field, and musical field positioning of each church case through a cross-case analysis, allowing me to explore various patterns and divergences between the cases (Miles et al., 2014). These cases inform my findings and allow me to discuss possible implications of Bourdieu’s theory for music-making practices in informal and nonformal settings specific to places of worship.

\textsuperscript{4} Pseudonym used for anonymity.
\textsuperscript{5} Pseudonym used for anonymity.
**Ethical Considerations**

There were many ethical considerations that were part of this study, as further addressed in my methodology chapter. My ethical considerations generally surrounded the methodological process and were heightened due to the fact that I engaged in virtual research. To ensure for anonymity, participants and churches were given unique study IDs to limit any identification (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). Each church’s senior pastor, head worship leader or choir director, and musicians received letters of information and consent. If participants consented to engage in semi-structured interviews, they were provided with an opportunity to re-review their letters of information and consent and were also able to review their interview transcript. Online questionnaires were designed on Qualtrics which met Western University’s data security and confidentiality standards for online surveys. The survey was anonymous and did not collect any identifiable information. This research study was approved by Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board.

In terms of conducting virtual research, Eynon et al. (2017) argue that there is a necessary continuity between online and offline methods in relation to research ethics that must be maintained. Ethical judgements must occur in a context-dependent way. Online researchers face particular challenges due to the fluidity of boundaries between public and private, the possibility of third-party reuse of data, and the complexities that result with an increasing interdisciplinary focus in online research. It becomes more difficult when conducting research online to assess the risk of participants; it is also much harder to judge individuals’ reactions to the research (i.e. if a participant is distressed by a research question) (Eynon et al., 2017). To account for some of these challenges, I employed strategies such as building a positive rapport with church musicians and ensuring that participants had an easy way to leave the study if they so wished. Before
beginning semi-structured interviews, I reminded participants that they were able to leave at any point and could abstain from answering any questions.

When researching a social phenomenon through a virtual platform, it is important to analyze the community and its structural element, systematically observing the “naturalistic” behaviour of users (Marotzki et al., 2017). Using multiple sources of evidence is also considered to be a process of triangulation, which can occur through data sources (data triangulation), among different investigators (investigator triangulation), of perspectives to the same data set (theory triangulation), and of methods (methodological triangulation) (Yin, 2014, p. 120). All of these forms of triangulation require the following of proper ethical procedures when engaging in research, which must be maintained throughout the entirety of data collection, especially in terms of participants’ anonymity. I engaged in multiple forms of data collection and was careful to compare and cross-check data at multiple points in the study. I also shared data interpretation with multiple supervisors who provided suggestions for change or contrasting interpretations.

**Study Summary and Limitations**

This research consists of a small-scale case study of two evangelical churches, purposefully selected in response to the research questions rather than to provide a broad understanding of church worship and music education. Limitations of the study include a small sample size, lack of church participation due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as less opportunity to build rapport with participants due to the virtual nature of the study. Further, my position as a researcher and Christian worshipper could have complicated my data interpretation and analysis. Researcher subjectivity is further addressed in the methodology chapter, as I strived to acknowledge my biases, position, and understanding of worship when generating conclusions from the data.
While this research was subject to several limitations, the study provides an innovative, interdisciplinary perspective in understanding music-making practices in nonformal and informal settings, in combination with the added dimension of religion or religious *doxa* and *illusio* particular to two denominational fields. The study is organized as follows. Chapter one introduced the study’s purpose and research questions and provided a background context to the problem. Chapter two presents a literature review that includes music education, community music, church music, and theological perspectives that inform the study. Chapter three presents my theoretical framework, outlining Bourdieu’s key concepts in relation to religion and music-making. Chapter four includes the methodology for the study, addressing case study research as my methodological approach as well as processes of collecting and analyzing data. Chapters five and six address data findings in relation to Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice*. Chapter seven includes a discussion of the data findings and my results from the cross-case analysis. The thesis concludes with chapter eight which presents concluding thoughts to the research study and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of literature that informs the study. This study investigated two churches’ contemporary worship music-making practices and their reflection and response to the musical and theological fields in which they are located. Using Bourdieu’s (1977) concepts of habitus, capital and field, this study considered how worship leaders and musicians might strategize their musical behaviours and “disrupt” or possibly affirm traditional norms of music-making in each CWM setting. Further, it explored whether such musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs.

The subsequent theory chapter will examine Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) in greater detail and present literature that directly engages with Bourdieu’s theory. The majority of this chapter, then, addresses other literature from music education, church music, theology, and community music that inform the study. A significant portion of this review of literature centers around themes of evangelicalism within North America and CWM, drawing a historical sketch of the beginnings of church music as well as CWM within evangelicalism. I address critiques of CWM within contrasting philosophies of church worship while also acknowledging literature focused on formation through ritualistic practices, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on church worship. I then transition into a brief exploration of themes of social justice and pedagogies of inclusion within the field of music education. This chapter concludes with a section focused on community music practices, considering notions of boundaries and inclusion within community music settings, as well as the role of the community music facilitator. Each of
these topics are relevant to the current study, shaping and impacting data collection, analysis, and conclusions.

**Church Music and Theological Perspectives**

The literature used to frame this section of the literature review stems from church worship research in relation to CWM as well as the broader field of liturgical theology. As CWM is situated both within individual churches and within the broader evangelical church, this provides both a macro and micro view from the perspective of the literature.

**Evangelicalism**

Evangelicalism is a broad, transnational, interdenominational religious Christian grouping (Ingalls, 2018), typically referring to a trans-denominational movement within Protestant Christianity. According to Ingalls (2018), evangelicals currently number somewhere between 300 and 550 million Christians worldwide. The term “evangelical” carries with it “complex and intertwined theological and political connotations” (Ingalls, 2018, p. 12), with fuzzy and porous boundaries and promotes a certain “type of religiosity” (Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 62). While evangelicalism is difficult to define and is generally a self-designation (Ingalls, 2018), Bebbington (1989) and McGrath (1995) have proposed distinguishing marks or convictions of evangelicalism that are generally accepted in literature (Larsen, 2007). The four distinguishing marks of evangelicalism proposed by Bebbington (1989) include conversionism, activism, Biblicism, and crucicentrism. Simply put, evangelicals “emphasize conversion experiences; an active laity sharing the gospel and engaged in good works; the Bible; and salvation through the work of Christ on the cross” (Larsen, 2007, p. 1). McGrath (1995) lists six similar “controlling convictions” within which evangelicalism is grounded. These include: the supreme authority of the Bible, Jesus Christ as God incarnate and Saviour of sinful humanity, the
Lordship of the Holy Spirit, the need for personal conversion, the priority of evangelism, and the importance of the Christian community (p. 55, 59-85). Such convictions have been employed in major works of reference that address evangelicalism in North America and the United Kingdom (Larsen, 2007).

Evangelicalism derives from streams of the Protestant Reformation, the eighteenth and nineteenth century revival movements, as well as nineteenth and twentieth century defences of historic, orthodox Protestantism (Bebbington, 1989; McGrath, 1995). Today’s North American evangelical Protestantism is commonly placed under the larger umbrella of “Protestantism” which most scholars divide into two large families: Evangelical Protestantism and Mainline Protestantism (Bass, 2021). As Bass (2021) explains, evangelicalism includes a variety of theologically conservative Protestants who belong to various denominations such as the Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist Convention, or independent, non-denominational megachurches. Mainline Protestants, on the other hand, are what Bass describes as those churches who are more theologically moderate or liberal Protestant in nature, including the Episcopal church, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Drawing from an American context alone, an American Religious Landscape survey report was released in 2021, drawing from a 2020 census that affirmed trends that affect religion such as increased racial diversity within Christian communities, an increased presence of world religions, and an increase in those who are not religiously affiliated. This survey indicated that while there was a drop in White evangelical Protestantism, from 23% of Americans in 2006 to 14% in 2020, White mainline (non-evangelical) Protestants moved up from 13% in 2016 to 16% in 2020.6 Bass (2021) suggests that some ex-evangelicals are slowly

---

6 To access the 2020 census of American religion, visit https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion/#page-section-0. The data differentiates between white evangelical Protestants and white mainline (non-
shifting towards mainline or non-evangelical Protestant denominations to find their sense of identity.

Within a Canadian context, a 2021 study on religiosity in Canada and its evolution from 1985 to 2019 indicates that Canadians have declined in religious affiliation and decreased in participation in individual and group religious activities. While just over two-thirds (68%) of the Canadian population reported having a religious affiliation in 2019, 90% of Canadians in 1985 affiliated themselves with a particular religion. Those who attended a group religious activity at least one time per month moved from 43% to 23% from 1985 to 2019 as well. In terms of evangelicalism specifically, a 2019 Church and Faith Trends Survey was conducted with 5000 Canadians. Historically, about 10% of Canadians have considered themselves evangelical. This 2019 survey indicated that while 11% of the Canadian population are “evangelically aligned”, only 6% of the population are actually affiliated with a church within the evangelical tradition.

Mainline Protestant churches in southern Ontario appear to be both growing and declining, depending on particular demographic and religious characteristics of attendees and clergy in individual church settings (Haskell et al., 2016). Some researchers have found a positive association between theological conservatism and church growth in recent years, particularly in conservative evangelical Protestant denominations (Flatt, 2013; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015). Scholars have suggested a clear link between conservative theology of congregants and clergy and congregational numerical growth in Canada (Haskell et al., 2016; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015). Evangelical convictions help congregations maintain a distinct

---

To access the 2021 study results, “Religiosity in Canada and its Evolution from 1985 to 2019”, visit https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211028/dq211028b-eng.htm

To access the 2019 Church & Faith Trends survey in Canada, visit https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Communications/Research/2019-Church-Faith-Trends-Survey
identity in the larger culture, they provide unity through “an external locus of authority”, and “prioritize the faith development of youth and children” (Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 55-62).

As previously discussed, since evangelicalism is a complex term that is difficult to define, some tend to only associate evangelicalism with churches that maintain conservative beliefs versus mainline Protestant churches which are theologically moderate or liberal in nature (Jenkins, 2021). Others, however, would associate all Canadian Protestant churches as “evangelical” in essence.

**Evangelicalism in Response to Today’s Culture.** This following section considers evangelicalism in relation to today’s North American cultural context. Drawing on both academic and popular *New York Times* articles in the following, it is evident that evangelicalism has shifted in response to North America’s current cultural context and the responses from the public have varied. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and President Donald Trump’s tenure as the president of the United States, the cultural label for “evangelical” has picked up many associations. For some, this “cultural evangelicalism” is arguably hardly recognizable as Christian anymore and has aligned with wider social and cultural forces within North America. Distorted visions of Christianity have been linked to the invasion of the Capitol under Donald Trump’s presidency, combining faith, conspiracy thinking, and misguided nationalism.

According to Luo (2021), recent surveys have suggested that white evangelicals have been more likely to believe in conspiracy theories while also being more skeptical of the COVID-19 vaccine. Unfortunately, evangelicalism in North America has more commonly become associated with an anti-intellectualism, approaching scientific authority with suspicion at times.

Particularly in the wake of COVID-19, right-wing evangelical rallies were held that interestingly combined Christian worship music with political fervor. As Dias and Graham
(2022) observe, while elements of Christian culture have often been present at political rallies, and the Christian right has been linked with American conservatism for years, “many believers are [now] importing their worship of God, with all its intensity, emotion and ambitions, to their political life” (para. 5). The presence of evangelical religious fervor, rooted in the charismatic tradition, has entered many right-wing movements, where events and rallies have now included Christian symbols, rituals, and praise music. Dias and Graham note that worship elements within such events are distinctly evangelical; they include prayer and proclamation, rituals, and CWM, “becoming the soundtrack to a new fight” (para. 14).

Another common characteristic of modern-day evangelicalism is its link to Christian celebrity culture. Some argue that high-profile Christian pastors, influencers, and authors are more often using their roles as “celebrities” to expand their reach in the world. Scholars such as Beaty (2022) who explore contemporary evangelical movements argue that they use the notion of ‘celebrity’ as a tool for conversion. Beaty expresses concern that individual pastors are often held too highly above the institution, diminishing the power and role of the church as an institution. Beaty concludes her work by encouraging readers to take up lives of ordinary faithfulness, contrary to the values of Christian celebrity culture. It would be interesting to further extend Beaty’s research to the use of CWM in evangelical churches, considering how the role of music, specifically popular musical elements, evoke an exciting sense of a ‘celebrity’ entering the room in mega-church settings. This is another area of interest to consider when exploring the role of CWM in response to today’s North American cultural context.

**Church Cases in Relation to Evangelicalism.** Scholars such as Bebbington (1989) and McGrath (1995) suggest that streams of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, the eighteenth and nineteenth century revival movements, as well as nineteenth and twentieth
century defenses of historic, orthodox Protestantism all contribute to evangelicalism as a whole. Both Protestant church cases in this study are understood to be subsets of evangelical Protestant and mainline Protestant churches. The two churches of interest, comprising the case studies, include a Presbyterian church and a Reformed church. Both churches align themselves with Calvinism, or the Reformed faith, overall, yet have different slants or emphases (Balserak, 2016). “Calvinism” and “Reformed theology” are terms that are often used interchangeably, yet in some cases they have differences (Balserak, 2016). For purposes of this thesis both terms will be used in describing Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

Protestant churches that align with the Reformed tradition follow Reformed confessional statements such as the Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dort (1619-1619) and typically trace their origins to Reformers such as John Calvin (1509-1564) and Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). In addition to placing an emphasis on the confessions, Presbyterian and Reformed churches are generally connected by a common five-point Calvinist system of doctrine. This five-point Calvinist system of doctrine, known by the acronym “TULIP”, represents the key beliefs that define Reformed theology, meaning total depravity; unconditional election; limited atonement; irresistible grace; and preservation of the saints. First, humans are totally depraved, sinful at birth, and only God has the ability to redeem believers. Unconditional election refers to the belief that God has predestined certain people, the “elect”, to save and live with him eternally. Through his sovereignty, God chooses believers, rather than them choosing God. Third, in addressing limited atonement, Christ’s sacrifice atoned for the sins of humanity, paying the price of sin that was required for the elect of God. The fourth principle of Calvinism is irresistible grace, meaning God’s grace to save a person cannot be resisted, saving people who would otherwise be in hell from their sins. Lastly, Calvinists believe
that God preserves his people so that they can never be lost. Those who do not fall away are “saints” and are “holy”, sanctified through Christ. God’s love is omnipotent as evident in his work of salvation, and his love cannot fail (Balserak, 2016). Below I describe each church case in greater detail, and while they are both similar in nature, each emphasize different confessions

*Reformed Churches.* Reformed churches, led primarily by Calvin during the sixteenth century Reformation, tend to generally follow a “blended” worship style including a liturgical/patterned focus of worship with the use of hymns and psalms in conjunction with some CWM trends. There are a broad number of Reformed churches under such a title (e.g. Protestant Reformed Churches, United Reformed Churches, Christian Reformed Churches, Netherlands Reformed Congregations) and the worship style may vary according to the specific context and its worship traditions. Reformed churches are Calvinist, confessional (focusing on confessions such as the *Belgic Confession* (1561), the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), and the Canons of Dort (1618-1619) and evangelical in their theology. They tend to place a high value on theological study and theological application to current world issues. They particularly emphasize the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation, investing much of their energy into Christian education, Christ-centered political/social action, and church ministries (Christian Reformed Church of North America, 2023). Reformed theology encourages believers to actively engage in the world, self-consciously living as Christian citizens and neighbours (Bratt, 2022). Compared to other traditions, the Reformed tradition has a more dynamic sense of a Christian’s responsibilities within the world and culture (Balserak, 2016).

The specific Reformed church case in this study was part of the greater Christian Reformed Church (CRC) of North America. The CRC has roots in the Dutch Reformed Church

---

9 For more information, see [https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/reformed-acrent/reformed](https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/reformed-acrent/reformed)
of the Netherlands. As immigrants from Holland arrived in North America, Dutch America divided between two denominations: the Reformed Church in America (RCA), which stemmed from colonial New Netherland, and the CRC, which was rooted in a significant secession movement from the national Reformed church of the Netherlands in 1834. The CRC tends to draw from the political ideology of Dutch Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), who promoted the active engagement of Christians in all aspects of society (Bratt, 2022). The CRC includes just over one thousand congregations in North America today (Christian Reformed Church of North America, 2023). The CRC is difficult to position between evangelical and mainline Protestant churches; most CRC congregations would consider themselves to be “evangelical” in nature due to their theological positioning, as they are conservative and traditional in nature, yet at the same time would not be associated with modern-day evangelicalism in terms of its apparent alliance, at times, with extremely right-wing politics, approaches to culture, and focus on charismatic, personal experiences of faith. Due to their Reformed, Calvinistic stance, CRC congregations place a smaller emphasis on conversionism as a mark of evangelicalism, and like Presbyterian churches, focus on unconditional election and God’s sovereignty.

**Presbyterian Churches.** Presbyterian churches are also part of the broader Reformed tradition and have historical roots within the British Isles. Presbyterian churches reflect the Church of Scotland’s doctrines, church government, and forms of worship. In a general sense, there is not one fixed “Presbyterian” worship style, it is both “structured” and “open”, but some Presbyterian churches tend to follow the traditional liturgical year and follow a balance of hymns, preaching, and congregational participation (McCrostie, 2008). Presbyterian churches

---

10 For more information, see [https://www.crcna.org/welcome](https://www.crcna.org/welcome)
use the *Westminster Confession of Faith* [1646] as well as a “Book of Order” to determine common practice and order.

The work and thought of John Calvin (1509-1564) and John Knox (1515-1572) were influential in implementing a form of Calvinistic pattern on the Church of Scotland. Knox is known historically to be the Father of the Scottish Reformation and was a friend of Calvin’s. During several years of exile, Knox met Calvin in Geneva and gained from him knowledge of Presbyterian polity and Reformed theology. Knox then brought his theological ideas back with him after returning home and later led the Protestant Reformation in Scotland (Cowan, 1970). A Presbyterian style of church government within the Church of Scotland was encouraged by Andrew Melville (1545-1622), and as Scots Highlanders began to settle in Eastern Canada, as well as Upper and Lower Canada, Presbyterianism spread among Canada and the church heightened in popularity. The specific Presbyterian church case in this study was part of the greater “Presbyterian Church in Canada” denomination, which formed in 1875 from four separate Presbyterian groups. Current Presbyterian Churches in Canada are, in fact, the remnant of congregations who did not approve the 1925 amalgamation with the Methodists and Congregationalists that ultimately resulted in the United Church of Canada (Cowan, 1970).

Today there are over 1000 Presbyterian Church in Canada congregations. They continue to focus prominently on missions, international partnerships, and ecumenical relations. As evident on the denomination’s website (see [https://presbyterian.ca/about/](https://presbyterian.ca/about/)), the Presbyterian Church in Canada focuses significantly on the pursuit of justice through its concern with issues of inclusion, poverty, employment, education, and more. This external focus tends to differentiate Presbyterian denominations from Reformed denominations. The twentieth century Social Gospel movement tended to influence mainline denominations such as Presbyterian.
churches more than some Evangelical denominations. By the end of the twentieth century, more mainline denominations began to embrace leftist political causes, advocating for religious and cultural pluralism. This tended to put them in contrast with the religious right (Evans, 2017). The Presbytery’s document entitled “Statement of Living Faith” (1984) was prepared as a confessional statement to direct much of the Presbyterian church’s theological decisions regarding some of these emphases. The Presbyterian Church in Canada would generally be classified as mainline Protestant, rather than evangelical Protestant in nature due to their theological positioning.

**Impact of the Protestant Reformation on Church Music.** As evident in the history of Presbyterian and Reformed churches, the Reformers had a significant impact on the development of the denominations, their confessions, and approaches to worship. During the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, the Reformers, including Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, tended to agree on the central matter of justification, yet had significantly differing views on a variety of points, including music. The Reformation began with Luther and his protests against problems in the churches of Saxony. Luther had a deep concern for music, understanding music as deserving the “highest praise” next to God’s Word. Luther understood music as a gift from God and is known for emphasizing the importance of congregational participation through hymnody. Luther was, however, quite conservative in his musical decisions for worship and did not want to disturb the faithful with modern innovations. He kept the communion liturgy with its chant in Latin and metrical forms in German (Westermeyer, 1998; White, 1993).

Zwingli, on the other hand, moved much further forward in terms of liturgical forms and sacramental theology. He was known to be a strong musician yet removed music from worship in response to his theology of music. Zwingli argued that God did not command singing in
worship anywhere in the Scriptures. He made a sharp distinction between the flesh and the physical versus the spirit and the spiritual. While he encouraged communal worship in a simple form, worship could only consist of congregants’ education in the Word of God, with music being for the secular world alone. Zwingli understood music’s power yet connected it to “play” or entertainment rather than the Word of God (Westermeyer, 1998; White, 1993).

Calvin approached music in a manner that reflected his eucharistic theology. He associated church singing with prayer, stating that there are two kinds of prayer, one “with words alone” and the other “with singing”. For Calvin, singing was part of “one of the three fundamental expressions of Christian worship” (Garside, 1951, p. 568). Music’s role was to share and proclaim the praise of God as well as to mutually edify other believers. Yet Calvin was also aware of music’s powerful role to be linked to sin and corruption and believed the Psalms, in particular, were holy and useful for worship. Calvin imposed several structures such as the use of metrical psalms, single monophonic lines, without melismas, polyphony, instruments, or choirs, and congregations sang in unison (Westermeyer, 1998).

Each of the Reformers have influenced Protestant church music today. As Westermeyer (1998) explains, while Reformed people officially follow Calvin in their confessions, and Lutherans follow Luther in theirs, Zwingli has also been influential in some Lutheran communities and some churches tend to cautiously approach music. Calvin’s advocacy for unison singing continued to filter into a variety of church worship settings and some twentieth century versions of his unison singing still believe that harmonizations of hymns must only follow what is printed in the hymnal. On the other hand, Luther’s musical approach resulted in changing harmonies and part singing by the choir and congregation (Westermeyer, 1998). It is interesting to consider how these varying approaches to and beliefs surrounding music in the
church were prompted by Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, and continue to influence church worship today.

**Music of Evangelicalism.** As mentioned above, the two churches in this study are part of the greater evangelical Christian church and align themselves with the Reformed faith yet have different slants or orientations in their worship services. Evangelical Christian congregational music-making varies in terms of the theological focus of denominations and it is difficult to find a category in which to place these different styles and repertoire. To further complicate matters, modern evangelical worship has been influenced by countless historical elements such as Jewish traditions, New Testament worship, liturgical shifts, and transitions from the Protestant Reformation (Sheeks, 2016). I will therefore next address a brief historical outline of evangelicalism in relation to music and the emergence of CWM.

It is important to note that between the sixth and eighth centuries, recent scholarship has suggested that early Christian liturgy and rabbinic Jewish liturgy were mutually influential, both borrowing from and resisting practices of the other (Langer, 2009, 2012; Leonhard, 2012). Leonhard (2012), in particular, presents different modes of migration between Jewish and Christian liturgies, suggesting that Rome as the majority culture of the time influenced customary sets of ritualized acts that migrated into both groups, which were then adapted according to different social situations. Both Christians and Jews maintained a high degree of flexibility within mealtime prayers specifically, suggesting a clear blending of ritualized acts between the two, while also making it difficult to separate and understand the specific influence of one on the other.

Both Jewish and Christian traditions used a variety of prayer texts and maintained similar readings of the sacred texts that may have been a result of migrations between the two groups.
Each tradition developed systems of reading the Holy Scriptures along with ritual elements during appointed times throughout the year, and particularly before the celebration of the Eucharist. The Christian Easter likely began as a ritual migrating from one group of associations with the other, specifically as a custom developed in opposition to another group’s practices (Leonhard, 2012).

As the Jewish faith sought separation from the outside world, there was traditionally no need for Jewish liturgy to focus on inclusion of Gentiles. Jewish liturgy addressed disasters that they endured, and due to the anthological nature of Jewish liturgy, these prayers which, at times, included negative references to Christianity became permanent features of the liturgy. As Christians became aware of this reality, various Jewish books were burnt around the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, leading to the eventual disappearance of such passages in performed liturgies. Much of the liturgical relationship between medieval Christian-Jewish interactions has thus disappeared from historical documentations. There was an ongoing abandonment, restoration, and renovation to Jewish prayers in response to Christianity over time, particularly within medieval Europe where prayers were eventually renovated and transformed to be less offensive to Christians (Langer, 2009, 2012). It is important, therefore, to consider the Christian-Jewish dialogue when outlining a history of Christian liturgical worship as Christian-Jewish relations have been a significant element of liturgical development as both traditions contributed and responded to the other through liturgical elements and practices surrounding the liturgy.

The following continues to outline the development of Protestant church music and hymnody as the church cases in this research study were classified as Protestant Christian churches.
Early Christian Worship. The study of Christian church music begins in the Old Testament, where music was organic and a natural characteristic of human life. Music was tied to festivals, celebrations of worship, and everyday life as evident in the book of Exodus, carrying stories of God’s mighty acts. Miriam and Moses famously sang the doxological story of their deliverance after crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 15:20). Music in the temple, provided by the Levites, consisted of the highest level of quality, care, and importance, Music was “associated inseparably with the sacrifice”, therefore following a system of “strict discipline” and “constant rehearsals” (Sendrey & Norton, 1964, p. 49). During this time, some form of musical development and organization took place that centered around the well-used Hebrew form of prayer, “You are blessed, O God, because you have done…”. This form of prayer continues to be a significant focus of church music content today and contributes to the development and use of the Psalms in worship (Westermeyer, 1998).

As the New Testament church developed, Jewish Christians in Jerusalem likely attended synagogues at the time of the Babylonian exile (Foley, 1991). Synagogue worship did not involve sacrifice but had a set liturgy with singing used in all of worship. The Jewish chant was prominent when Christians only consisted of Jews, but as Gentiles entered the church, Hellenistic musical thought entered, eventually leading to the development of Gregorian chant. Early Christian groups were noted to have an open attitude towards participation; all participated in corporate worship including those of lower social and economic status, including slaves, and males and females. Worship was relatively informal and known to be open to many contributors who were seen as inspired or gifted by God (Hurtado, 1999).

Worship in the early third century already centered around the word, sacraments of baptism, and the Lord’s supper. In response to Christ’s coming, the church often sang “canticles”
or texts in the Bible other than Psalms that were sung (e.g. Benedictus; Magnificat; Gloria in Excelsis; Te Deum). By the fourth century, distinct Eastern and Western (Latin) rites emerged with their own liturgy and music. Gregorian chant, Jewish chant, Byzantine chants, and others emerged from these rites, used for the Mass. Much of this music resulted in the devaluing of the congregation’s singing, as it was complex and foreign to the congregation in terms of both music and language.

While choral music continued to develop in church worship, progressing from chant to organum to Renaissance polyphony, worshippers were excluded from all liturgical singing at the Mass at the beginning of the tenth century. People continued to sing around worship and in their daily lives, but it was not until the sixteenth-century Reformation that congregants’ singing was recovered specifically in Protestant denominations (Westermeyer, 1998). As discussed previously, the three Reformers had a significant influence on changes regarding music in the church.

**Protestant Church Music and English Hymnody.** Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was one of the first hymn writers for the English-speaking world. Arguing persuasively for hymn singing, Watts is known as the father of English hymnody as he was not happy with metrical psalmody alone. Watt’s hymnody prompted evangelical music of the eighteenth century in which the Wesleys – John (1703-1791) and Charles (1707-1788) strongly contributed musically. In America specifically, Westermeyer (1998) outlines the development of church music at the end of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where William Billings (1746-1800) and Lowell Mason (1792-1872) were some of the first musical leaders of the evangelical tradition. Billings and Mason, along with influences of Anglican dissenters, Catholic refugees, Moravians, liturgical, and non-liturgical groups, contributed to the development of American folk hymnody.
and note traditions. As the eighteenth-century singing school arose in North America, singing masters were the first people outside of Roman Catholic institutions to teach music classes in public schools for the purpose of improving “poor congregational singing” by “teaching their people to read music instead of singing by ear” (Eskew & McElrath, 1995, p. 178). Congregational singing continued to shift and develop in response to singing schools, and new American worship formats began to develop, encouraging the increased use of music for evangelism (Eskew & McElrath, 1995).

Starting in the 1840s within Canada, music became included in the education of the middle classes, and in Toronto’s Upper Canada College, singing and instrumental music became optional as subjects around 1847 (Kallmann, 1960). Music emerged in early stages as a prescribed course in 1870 in Protestant schools of Ontario, and later in 1873 within Roman Catholic schools (Beatty, 2007). Church music and music education were inherently linked, and the church played a central role in musical practice and experience. Various churches “provided the musical nucleus from which sprang choral societies” and organists strongly contributed “to the improvement of musical knowledge and taste in their capacity as performers and teachers” (Kallmann, 1960, p. 183). Many individuals’ early childhood memories stemmed from the church where they became acquainted with oratorios and organ compositions. Furthermore, church music continued to be the subject of lively discussions including “the design of organs, the place of music in worship, the training and duties of church musicians, [and] the quality of the music performed” (p. 183).

From this point forward, church music and music education in Canada continued to advance, but from around the late nineteenth century their paths appear to diverge. While music
education courses increased in Canadian public schools, the church’s involvement in schools decreased.

**Beginnings of Contemporary Worship Music (CWM).** Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) consists of Christian musical lyrics meant for congregational song, based predominantly on a soft rock, popular musical genre (although other popular music styles are also represented within the genre). Praise bands are led by a worship leader, who sings lead vocals and often plays guitar or keyboard, along with a backup singer, or singers, electric guitarist, bass guitarist, keyboard player, and drummer (Scheer, 2006). As one significant element of evangelical worship, CWM’s history spans the period from the late 1960s to the present day. Ingalls (2018) explains that CWM overlaps but remains distinct from Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), which is “a presentationally oriented religious popular music genre intended for performance by solo artists and bands to listening audiences rather than for participatory congregational singing” (p. 6). The commercial music industries that produced CWM and CCM remained largely distinct until the late 1990s, but now much CWM is produced or distributed by CCM record labels and publishing houses. Since the two have overlapped more recently, many worship leaders and congregants view CWM as a subgenre of CCM (Ingalls, 2018).

The phrase *contemporary worship* increased in prevalence around the 1920s to the 1930s and was generally used to describe worship of a particular people at a certain time and place (i.e. describing medieval Europeans of the eighth century and their incorporation of “contemporary worship”). From around the late 1960s to 1970s, interest in “contemporary worship” increased again due to an interest in experimentation and innovation within worship (Lim & Ruth, 2017). Churches began to label their services as “contemporary”, and services were in contemporary English addressing contemporary concerns (i.e. social upheavals of the 1960s) with the inclusion
of contemporary music. This was a period of concern with the authenticity of worship, where an overall sense prevailed that worship was out of sync with contemporary society (Lim & Ruth, 2017).

Various revivalist movements placed more of an emphasis on the role of music in worship, and teams of charismatic Protestant ministers and musicians such as Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey moved across the country converting unbelievers. As North America’s musical culture transitioned in the 1960s to an increased emphasis on rock music, rock music with Christian lyrics resulted in particular evangelical groups such as The Jesus People Movement. By the 1970s, Christian music began to emulate popular music styles of the time, where most praise and worship music was inspired by folksongs, producing “Praise choruses” as published by Maranatha! or Vineyard. This continued to result in a variety of worship styles and conventions throughout North America, but generally commercially produced praise and worship music “was modeled on a handful of widespread popular music styles, perhaps most notably soft rock, modern rock, and contemporary gospel” (Ingalls, 2015, p. 7).

During the late 1970s and 1980s, CWM continued to develop as a genre and extended times of congregational singing, or “worship sets” emerged as an integral feature of contemporary worship in many evangelical churches. Maranatha! Music’s Praise album included worship sets with “brief moments of encouraging exhortation, scripture acclamations, moments of prayer by the worship leader-musician, and occasional ecstatic responses of the congregation” (Lim & Ruth, 2017, p. 68). Hosanna! Music’s first recording (1983) similarly included an hour-long worship set performed at their live worship event. Such albums would showcase live worship, demonstrating dynamics and flow within congregational singing. This
time period also allowed worshipers to begin to personally access contemporary worship through Christian bookstores or music clubs (Lim & Ruth, 2017).

Until the 1990s, American music dominated the contemporary worship world. By the late 1990s, two foreign influences – England and Australia – began to invade the CWM scene. Ingalls (2016) explains that this time period included strife and confusion in local congregations due to conflicts over worship music. British worship music was therefore seen “as a product of an embattled community in a secular community whose trials have unified them across lines of theological persuasion and stylistic preferences” (p. 433). British songs such as “Shine, Jesus, Shine” (Graham Kendrick) and “Come, Now is the Time to Worship” (Brian Doerksen) quickly grew in popularity and were ranked in the top twenty-five by the Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) charts. Similarly, the Australian Hillsong Church under the music directors Geoff Bullock (1985-1995) and Darlene Zschech (1995-2007) produced countless albums and key songs in contemporary worship, such as “Shout to the Lord” (Darlene Zschech, 1993) (Lim & Ruth, 2017).

Contemporary worship continued to undergo a time of transition and incubation, and the term did not have a clear, technical association with a “new style” of worship until the mid 1990s (Lim & Ruth, 2017; White, 1971). Beginning in 1994, a series of “how-to” publications used “contemporary worship” to refer technically to this new form of worship. Contemporary worship of the 1990s tended to focus heavily on attracting the unchurched because of the declining numbers of worshippers. Churches aimed to make themselves more attractive both to new members and their own congregations (Lim & Ruth, 2017). As Justice (2012) explains, the cultural setting of the time reflected consumer choice, where “having worship with different styles enabled congregations to see themselves as tolerant and active” (p. 30-32). Lim and Ruth
(2017) note, however, that there was not a simple binary of two styles in worship during the 1990s; there were multiple strands within both contemporary and traditional worship. Yet congregants of the time tended to divide church worship into a simple binary of contrast between “traditional” and “contemporary” music, thus contributing to the era of “worship wars”.

**Worship Wars.** Musical styles of worship have historically helped differentiate congregations and denominations from one another (Justice, 2018). Protestant music and identity significantly shifted during the 1990s as congregations struggled to decipher the sacred and social implications of “traditional” versus “contemporary” worship music (Justice, 2018). It is important to note that both “traditional” and “contemporary” worship music can be considered participatory in nature, yet vary in their approaches according to the particular congregational context. Ingalls (2008) notes that the early 1990s marked a significant increase in literature from evangelical magazines, book publishers, and online sites both defending and opposing contemporary worship, while some also took a middle position (see examples of approaches in Frame, 1997; Liesch, 1996; Zahl & Basden, 2004). Several of the worship-related difficulties that churches faced, as explored in detail by Ingalls (2008), included practical implications for social organization of evangelical music-making; discursive and theological issues within the dichotomy of “traditional” versus “contemporary” worship, and implications of new practices for evangelical identity (p. 105).

Within evangelical churches in the 1990s, musical aspects of worship were reorganized. While additions to churches’ song repertories occurred, changes in the performance part of communal worship, as well as shifts in the roles, skills, and qualifications of musicians also occurred. The “worship team” entered the scene, and the worship leader took the place of the church music minister. Music ministers were previously classically trained organists of pianists
who directed the congregation musically. The worship leader, in contrast, become responsible for the congregation’s “moving experience of the presence of God” (Ingalls, 2008, p. 108). Such changes caused tensions within local congregations, along with other difficult conversations surrounding the role of music in worship and worship’s role in the individual and corporate lives of congregants (Ingalls, 2008).

Part of the tensions of these “worship wars” developed because of the blurring of boundaries. Boundaries between the North American evangelical community and secular culture were blurring as contemporary musical forms entered the picture (Ingalls, 2008). Non-charismatic evangelical churches also struggled with their practice of borrowing worship songs from other denominations such as Pentecostal Christians with different theological views. Churches were forced to decide how to approach worship-related issues, such as raising hands in worship, or finding a balance between intimate, personal songs about one’s relationship with Jesus versus “didactic songs” that taught theological doctrines. As Ingalls (2008) poignantly questions, “Was the primary purpose and function of congregational worship to reaffirm corporate belief, to prepare the congregation for the preaching of the Word, or to facilitate a personal experiential encounter with God?” (p. 109). As much as churches and contemporary worship have moved forward since the “worship wars” of the 1990s, I would argue that many of these concerns continue to steer musical decisions in varying Protestant churches today, according to their system of beliefs and how they are situated within the social field. CWM as a genre continues to face criticism and hesitation by many churches, and its presence in worship often requires continual negotiation within the local congregation.
Defining Today’s Contemporary Worship Music. When defining contemporary worship, Lim and Ruth (2017) present four main categories that have remained primary throughout the history of contemporary worship as a whole. These are explored below.

Fundamental Presumptions. First, there have been three fundamental presumptions that underline all forms of contemporary worship from its beginnings in the 1960s. These include the use of contemporary, non-archaic English, a dedication to relevance regarding contemporary concerns and issues in the lives of worshippers, and a commitment to adapt worship to match contemporary people, sometimes to the level of strategic targeting. Music has remained central among these fundamental presumptions, particularly regarding musical lyrics, with contemporary language that relates to current concerns/issues of worshippers. In order for worship to be seen as authentic, contemporary worship tends to view lyrics as needing to be in the “regular language of the people…adapting worship to fit the people, [rather than] presum[ing] that people should change significantly to fit the worship” (Lim & Ruth, 2017, p. 3,4).

Music. Secondly, music is a distinct category of contemporary worship. Contemporary worship includes the use of musical styles from current types of popular music, extended times of uninterrupted congregational singing, as well as a centrality of the musicians in the liturgical space and in the leadership of the service. Lim and Ruth (2017) categorize music as “the central observable marker of when a church has contemporary worship” (p. 4). While churches vary in terms of their forms of popular sounds – such as folk, pop, rock, and even some country, hip hop, and rap styles, what is common among contemporary worship is to create worship music that sounds like some form of popular music. In order to implement popular music sounds in worship, instrumentalists, vocalists, and sound technicians attempt to replicate these sounds
through instruments and technology, while the songs themselves are also shaped in terms of their lyrical expression (CWM tends to be “more colloquial than older hymns” (p. 5)), as well as the lyrical structure (the use of verses, choruses, and bridges). Through contemporary worship’s extension of congregational singing, several songs now often flow from one another in a worship service, contributing to the entrance of new words to describe Christian worship such as “flow” (how the songs and sense of worship transition) and “set” (the list and sequencing of songs”).

**Behaviour.** Third, *behaviour* or how people act within a contemporary service is necessary to consider in understanding contemporary worship. Typically, in contemporary worship, there is a higher level of physical expressiveness, where people tend to move in a manner that is not necessarily scripted or directed by the worship leaders. While physical expressiveness varies according to congregations and ethnicities, contemporary worshippers will often stand, dance, weep, and raise their hands in a worship service. There is also a tendency towards informality in regards to all areas of the contemporary worship service, which some link to informality in dress as well as an “overall casualness in worship too” (Lim & Ruth, 2017, p. 7). One example of this is congregants bringing food and drinks into a worship service in particular denominations, which indicates the casualness of the contemporary worship environment.

**Dependency on Electronic Technology.** Finally, *dependency on electronic technology* is a fourth category of contemporary worship that has increased over time and has become a necessary part of the contemporary worship service. Projection screens in particular have become increasingly common across a variety of worship environments. As Lim and Ruth (2017) suggest, “it would be rare to find a worship service not deeply reliant upon a machine or even on electricity itself…electricity is needed for planning, playing, hearing, and seeing
worship” (p. 7). Without electricity, contemporary worship would be completely different and almost unrecognizable compared to its typical characteristics today.

CWM continues to expand in popularity today, and can be found in large mega-church worship services, as well as within small home churches (Hartje-Doll, 2013). With the increasing presence of CWM in today’s culture, various theological and musical critiques of the worship music genre have increased in prevalence as well, relating to personal philosophies of worship, which will be addressed in the following section.

**Theology and Philosophy of Church Worship.** Within church worship, beliefs surrounding musical quality and musical leadership vary greatly according to specific contexts. In order to explore how CWM shapes congregational participation through formative practices, it is essential to consider different theologies and philosophies of church worship. Worship includes elements of believing, belonging, and behaving. As Lemley (2021) poignantly articulates, our worship together “should call on us not only to recite but also to embody: to intend, to perform, to portray” (Chapter 1, para. 29). Congregants are participants in worship, and it is therefore necessary to consider how symbols and rituals act as texts in which they participate and engage in as part of worship.

The term “liturgy” is often used incorrectly to refer to a text, yet properly speaking, it refers to the *enactment* of a text, following “scripted, rule-governed, actions” (Wolterstorff, 2015, p. 7). While liturgies in relation to church worship, music-making, and formation are further discussed below, it is important to note that church worship includes a “know-how”, or a particular set of “correctness-rules” in the “scripted text” of the liturgy (p. 7). Christian worship tends to follow an *ordo*, or a pattern reflected and expressed by ritual and prayerful actions. It is the shape or structure of worship, and various theologians have approached the liturgical *ordo*
differently. Alexander Schmemann and Aidan Kavanagh were two figures who significantly
impacted liturgical theology following Vatican II and further developed the concepts of *ordo* and
*orthodoxy*. Schmemann (2003) conceived the *ordo* as an invisible structural element within the
liturgy which becomes visible in liturgical celebrations such as the Eucharist. For Schmemann,
the *ordo* involved meaning making, as “the words of prayer, lections, chanting, ceremonies” (p.
19) fulfilled a particular function (Geldhof, 2020). Schmemann (2003) suggested that the task of
the liturgy is to uncover the “theological ‘logos’ of the liturgy” (p. 32), its theological
‘meaning’” (p. 18). Drawing on Schmemann’s understanding of the liturgy, Wolterstorff (2015)
states that the implicit logos of the liturgy not only contains an implicit understanding of God;
implicit understandings of participants, human beings, and the world are also expressed. There
are connections here to exploring worship from a lens of a theory of practice, making the
“implicit explicit” (Wolterstorff, 2015), and understanding how liturgy is constructed according
to the given field that is re-enacted when congregants are worshipping. This concept is further
explored in this study’s data findings.

Stemming from Schmemann’s work, Kavanagh (1992) developed the central concept of
*orthodoxy*, referring “first [to] right worship and only secondarily [to] doctrinal accuracy” (p. 3)
within the liturgy. Kavanagh uses the term *doxa*¹¹ to refer to praising God, which is the
fundamental characteristic of Christian liturgy, in front of knowing and expressing moral and
dogmatic Christian convictions. Liturgical meaning within worship is circular in nature,
containing juxtapositions and the development of meaning through the positioning of one thing
next to another (Lathrop, 1993).

¹¹ Kavanagh has been criticized for how he interprets *orthodoxia* in greater detail, yet the word consists of two
components: orthos, meaning “correct” and doxa, meaning “praise and worship” in its various forms (Geldhof,
2020). It is interesting to contrast the use of the term doxa within liturgical theology with Bourdieu’s use of the term,
meaning “rules of the field”.
Within liturgical theology, the axiom *lex orandi, lex credenda* ("the law of prayer is the law of our belief" or "as we pray, so we believe"), explains the relationship between how a church worships and what the church believes. Reflecting such a principle, liturgical theologians would interpret the liturgy as the primary source for theological reflection. In practice, a church’s words and actions proclaim its faith (liturgical praxis) thereby shaping the faith of participants (belief content). Worship is called to account by the congregants, and while traditions vary in whether the law of prayer shapes the law of belief, or vice versa, Lemley (2021) argues that the church is called to examine whether its gathered worship and confession of faith affirm each other. Drawing from a sacramental theological perspective, Lemley explores the concept of authentic participation in worship specifically through CWM and encourages churches to contemplate how their elements of worship connect the community in service to God and others.

In considering various theologies of worship relating to music specifically, some literature suggests that ‘excellence’ in church music - in terms of musical quality - is needed to properly display the glory of God (DeMol, 1992; Ratzinger, 1985, 2008). Musical excellence for God can be an immensely subjective goal, where excellence, as interpreted by DeMol (1992), may consist not only of “craftsmanship in composition and performance”, but also often includes the notion of performing music “in joyful and obedient response to God” (p. 9).

Others, such as Ratzinger (2008) from the Catholic tradition, conceive excellence in church music as needing to “elici[t] the glory of the cosmos itself” (p. 441) and “express belief in the universal glory of Jesus Christ” (p. 491). Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, developed a radical response to aspects of liturgical change in the Catholic Church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1963-65), particularly those arising from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium* (1963/1996). The Liturgical Movement, meaning the
nineteenth and twentieth century effort in Christian churches to restore active participation of congregants in the liturgy, reached its peak during the Second Vatican Council (Geldhof, 2020). This process involved developing new texts, simplifying rites, and re-examining liturgical participation from the laity and clergy. While the notion of active participation arose from the Liturgical Movement and was expressed in Sacrosanctum concilium (Vatican Council II, 1994), Ratzinger’s theology of church music reacted against the active role of congregants in worship and instead called for professional church music that demanded “real musical qualifications”, where one must recognize “what is musically worthy” of God’s glory (p. 514). Ratzinger acknowledged that the Constitution does not see music as “merely an addition and ornamentation of liturgy,” yet he suggested that the post-Conciliar church still tended to resort to “utility music,”12 (such as folk masses accompanied by guitars) which were, inherently, “comfortable and serviceable,” functionalistic music (p. 440). This music was often judged “not in terms of its artistic value but solely on the basis of its functionality, that is, its ‘community-building’ and participatory function” (p. 480), which Ratzinger claimed impoverished the liturgy as a whole.

Within church music literature, two long established philosophies of worship tend to prevail, summarized in simplistic terms as vertical or horizontal, and their application to musical worship have been the source of much contention and debate (Best, 1982; Flynn, 2006). They surround notions of participatory and presentational music-making (Turino, 2008), questioning which should be the focus of worship music, and whether congregational participation and the formation of community should be conceived as a main purpose of music’s role in church. These

12 This term echoes the twentieth century Gebrauchsmusik (“Utility Music”) movement led by German composer and teacher Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), who likely coined the term but later denied it. Utility music is music with simple technique and style intended for performance by the amateur rather than virtuoso, directed for some social or educational purpose. It was a reaction against technical and intellectual complexities of nineteenth and twentieth century music that excluded the amateur from regular participation through the belief of ‘art for art’s sake’. Hindemith had a significant impact on music education and set up a music education system in Turkey, later teaching at Yale University (1940-1953) and University of Zürich (1951–1958) (Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 2022).
two philosophies include functionalism, or “utility music” that is directed towards a communal, “horizontal,” sanctification focus, and the other, which Ratzinger (2008) labels as “actual church music,” is one that suggests an exclusively “vertical” (doxological) organization of worship. As briefly mentioned before, this second view is understood to emphasize an individual’s relationship with the cosmos, with music leading them directly to God. Ratzinger (2008) explains that “actual church music” does not lean towards aestheticism where art has its own purpose and own standard – nor towards pastoral pragmatism – looking only for pastoral “success” - as an end in itself. Yet artistic “requirements” or pretensions, according to Ratzinger, should still be present to express God’s glory and “lift” worshippers up to God. Ratzinger’s understanding of church music is quite an extreme voice, however. Others such as Joncas (2013) and Wolterstorff (2005) have slightly more balanced approaches to describing different philosophies of church worship.

Joncas (2013) explores a similar tension within worship, arguing that worship moves “between its contemplative dimension (the ‘disinterested’ praise and adoration of God) and its pragmatic dimensions (evangelization, catechesis, moral conversion, building community, etc.)” (p. 327). Joncas notes, however, that similar to creation’s purpose being to praise God, worship is ultimately adoration of the living God, ordering its functions in that manner. Music, he argues, should follow in such ordering. Providing a different perspective, Wolterstorff (2005) discusses church music in relation to its service to the liturgy. He argues that almost all music is composed or used in the service of some social function. Wolterstorff acknowledges that from the eighteenth century there has been a distinction between functional and absolute music, where absolute music tends to be “higher on the scale of worth than functional music” for many (p. 6).
Music, however, is multifunctional, Wolterstorff (2005) states. While some works are meant for a particular function, others are meant for different functions. Music comes into its own “when it is put to that use, when it serves that function” (p. 7) which it is meant to do. If one understands church liturgy as a sequence of actions, meaning actions where God addresses his people and people address God, it is necessary to consider how music can serve the diverse actions of the liturgy. Music is not essential for church liturgy but it enhances actions within the liturgy. Further, Wolterstorff suggests that all music within the liturgy “should be in service of one and another liturgical action” (p. 12) and that the character of the music should fit the liturgical action it services, including the theologically correct understanding of the particular action. Music should be used for the liturgy, rather than, for example, having a separate concert of sorts of religious music within a Sunday service. Some music within the liturgy will better fit certain liturgical actions over others. Music in a variety of styles can be useful, but it is important to consider the ears of participants in the liturgy. My research will further consider Joncas (2013) and Wolterstorff’s (2005) different views of the role of music in worship particularly within my data analysis and conclusions. I appreciate how each of their views of music in the church focus on music as a component of rightly ordered worship, offering the very best to God. Such a belief includes a theological commitment to the transcendent omnipotence of God and has been quite central to the worship wars debate. As articulated in the introduction, I understand that church musicians should be pursuing musical craftsmanship in their technique, directing their development of sound (music) towards God. It becomes complicated, however, when considering church music genres and the social fields at hand in which churches are situated.

When describing these two philosophies of church worship in regard to musical roles in worship, Flynn (2006) explains that each stream of thought encapsulates the “dual command of
right relationship with God and neighbour, which lies at the heart of the Gospel” (p. 772).
Neither of these two images have to exclude the other, but churches usually emphasize one of
them based on the “specific needs of the historical situation and culture that they serve” (p. 772).
Flynn describes these views in terms of the “vertical” image representing an eschatological
“foretaste of the heavenly banquet” (p. 772) focused on the presence of Christ, while the
“horizontal” image represents a congregation’s communal celebration of Christ and their call to
action that results from their beliefs. A church’s musical practices clearly negotiate the
relationship between the two, and either image/practice of worship may incorporate elements
from the other.

I appreciate how Joncas (2013) and Wolterstorff’s (2005) views do not necessarily view
worship as “horizontal” or “vertically-focused” alone. There is danger in over-emphasizing
either one, and overemphasizing the vertical dimension specifically can imply hierarchy of value
as well as a separation from the “high” and the “low”. Rathe (2014) provides a trifocal lens of
common evangelical views on participation in worship that fits well with Joncas and
Wolterstorff’s approach to worship. These three categories that are useful for evaluating
evangelical understandings of worship include participation in human action; participation in
divine-through-human action; and participation in the life of God. First, participation in worship
can be focused on human action and the rites and rituals that worshippers are engaged in; its
interior, bodily, and external engagements. Second, as worshippers engage in corporate worship,
some may understand their actions to intersect with and embody the work of Christ, bringing
together the past and present into unity. Lastly, worshippers may understand their role as
participatory in the life of God and the divine mission, including heavenly worship and earthly
fellowship (Rathe, 2014). Such categories are useful in considering notions of participation within the two church cases that served as data sets in my study.

In reference to those who are educating church musicians, music educator Harold Best (1982) similarly addresses two main philosophies of church music that the church has struggled with, namely “absolute music” versus so-called “functional music”. These contrasting arguments surround a notion of music, or art, for its own sake versus music for a broader purpose. Both often exist side by side in the same situation, and unfortunately, Best explains, “music in worship may be perceived at any one time as means or as end” (p. 137). As a means, church music can be used “to attract people, induce them to worship, or accompany something else in worship…[where] music is seen primarily as an aid” (p. 137). As an end, rather, music is seen as valid “on its own terms irrespective of how it is perceived; it is expected to act on its own, to stand by itself. Instead of an aid to worship, it is said to be an act of worship” (p. 137). According to Best, while this second view may be seen as being “more” theologically appropriate for some, it often leads to musicolatry. In response to these views, Best argues that church music cannot be divided between function and form, and must ultimately consist of excellent church music training – not in terms of musical skill alone but starting with theological training. The goal of church music training, Best posits, “is the raising up of…widely competent musician-servants; not performers as such; but complete musicians” (p. 138), ones that are teachers and learners with a theological awareness that coincides with an acknowledgement of their worldview.

**Critique of CWM.** Based on a conception of church music leaning too much towards functionality, however, CWM has been critiqued for its so-called lack of musical quality, i.e. complexity, and its ability to ‘dumb’ down worship and present “theological problems” for
churches (Dawn, 1995; Jones & Webster, 2006; Scheer, 2013; Woods & Walrath, 2007). Particular musical characteristics of CWM are often critiqued because of their reflection of popular music and the “worldly” pop culture outside of the church. The use of popular music in church is intended to narrow the gap between the “sacred” elements of worship and activities of daily life (Porter, 2016). CWM has been seen to shape the imagination of worshippers by reproducing popular sounds and signs of authentic pop performance (Lemley, 2021). Woods and Walrath (2007) explain that CWM has been critiqued as being “merely entertainment, treating worshipers like consumers – giving them what they want musically rather than what they need spiritually, [and] relying on manipulation of emotions rather than the movement of the Holy Spirit” (p. 16). Nekola (2009) describes worship music’s increasing role as a consumer product, where individuals tend to feel empowered to decide whether or not to accept understandings or theological readings of music preferred by producers or worship leaders.

Ruth’s (2015) work in both the history of CWM and current characteristics of CWM examines how CWM lyrics reflect popular music. Such characteristics include the repetitive lyrical form of CWM repertoire (i.e. verse, chorus form or verse, chorus, and bridge form), moderate colloquial qualities (i.e. conversational, informal nature of pop lyrics), and a loss of the archaic language of prayer. Ruth concludes by acknowledging, however, that the relationship between CWM and popular culture is fluid and flexible, and it is too simple to conclude that CWM only uses secular pop forms and influences. The “pop” nature of CWM may both reflect pop musical developments as well as changes in church piety. In a different study, Ruth (2007) analyzes the presence of Trinitarian language within 77 CWM songs. He argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is essential as it is a vision “not only of God but also of our greatest longings for salvation and our deepest hopes in worship” (p. 30). Yet when examining a large variety of
CWM repertoire, Ruth concludes that the majority of the songs direct worship toward Jesus Christ rather than all three Persons of the Trinity. The songs generally demonstrate a common priority of a “shared affective experience in the worship of God” (p. 37), hooking people’s hearts and emotions towards the Lord.

In terms of musical characteristics, CWM is seen by some to be simplistic – based on a four-chord structure with accessible melodies, four words, and repetitive in terms of its form, yet lasting for two hours (Long, 2001). As Crouch (2022) describes CWM, “the chords are simple, the melodies are exceedingly singable, the sentiments are sincere, and the lyrics are brief” (para. 1). With a goal to “adapt worship to match contemporary people”, CWM is meant to be approachable, “using musical styles from current types of popular music” with a “centrality of the musicians in the liturgical space and in the leadership of the service” (Lim & Ruth, 2017, p. 3). With regard to simplicity, Porter (2016) acknowledges that there is a common assumption of worship music being of “poor quality” (p. 116). Some may link this perceived poor quality to the rationale behind worship music practices; meaning, approaching music in church as “lowest common denominator” music. As Long (2001) mentions, critics argue that CWM cultivates “a monotonic, downsized faith, a faith too naïve and simple to handle complexity, too repetitive to deal with real change” (p. 59). Such a simplification can raise liturgical concerns as well, where worship leaders and bands are placed in positions of theological authority, making decisions and using music with overly simplistic theology. When worship music is approached in terms of finding a singable and playable style that is also inoffensive to a broad musical audience, it tends to find a common ground between people’s musical abilities and tastes. Yet in doing so, Porter (2016) argues, “it fails to be in any way musically substantial or unique…reduced to the abilities of the least able participants” (p. 116). Porter’s approach to worship music reflects one
philosophy of church music mentioned above; the pursuit of absolute, excellent music as an act of worship focused on the vertical relationship between musicians and God, rather than pursuing “functional” music as an aid to worship that is more focused on horizontal relationships between musicians and congregants. The second, while seen as less substantial or unique by some, may be more valued from a CWM lens.

In addressing other characteristics of CWM, Scheer (2013) writes that CWM is very much focused on a personal goal of intimacy with Jesus, where lyrics tend to over-emphasize the attributes of Jesus or the worshipper’s passion. Other scholars have similarly concluded that CWM lyrics tend to be focused too inwardly on the believer’s personal worship experience and the heart’s authentic expression to God (Dawn, 1995; Graham, 2019; Ruth, 2015; Woods & Walrath, 2007). Dawn (1995), in particular, extends the argument further, asserting that in modern society, believers tend to focus on what they ‘get out’ of worship services, where CWM lyrics tend to be focused inward, thinking of the self first rather than God.

In Crouch’s (2022) examination of CWM, he describes the genre as containing “bite-sized” pieces of music, which many sing enthusiastically for several years but then lose interest in. While he acknowledges the importance of the CWM genre and the need for “emotionally pure, musically simple, short pieces” (para. 1) of music in church, he suggests pairing CWM texts with longer, more complex texts. In understanding CWM repertoire as choruses, one may approach these songs differently as “invitations to reflect more deeply on the content of complete prayers” (para. 13). Rather than approaching CWM critically for the characteristics mentioned above, CWM can be understood to enhance and build upon other musical repertoire in worship which perhaps includes more challenging and complex Biblical texts.
While some scholars view CWM's approachability and so-called simplicity as negative, others suggest that this simplicity allows CWM to be relationally oriented through its encouragement of active participation of all, where the objective is for the congregation to engage in a personal worshiping dialogue with God (Koenig, 2008). When such a dialogue occurs, “communication is multidirectional: from the congregation to God, from God to the congregation, and from members of the congregation to other members [where] active congregational participation is welcomed” (Koenig, 2008, p. 147). Congregational singing is encouraged through CWM, and CWM serves as a means of grace for evangelicals, since singing “is the vehicle through which the Holy Spirit meets the congregation” (Koenig, 2008, p. 151). As congregants engage in worship through CWM, worshippers are able to enact their faith through a cultural liturgy that connects lived experiences to the faith content (Lemley, 2021). As Lemley (2021) explains, musical participation can connect agenda (ritual worship) and vivendi (lived worship).

Rather than leaving musical leadership to the “professionals” with “real musical qualifications” as Ratzinger emphasized, CWM may instead be seen by some as more inclusive of both musicians of varying experiences and abilities and of the congregation than other musical genres (Benjamins, 2019). It can be argued that through CWM, musicians and congregants from all skill levels and backgrounds are encouraged to participate musically in the church, which affirms a particular philosophy of church worship in terms of offering God everyone’s participation. While literature has not yet addressed the possibility of greater opportunities for music learning and leadership through praise band participation in CWM, scholars have suggested that CWM as a form of embodied performance encourages the formation of identities
– individual and collective - and modes of congregational bonding and community formation through its participatory focus (Ingalls, 2018).

As evident in the section above, there are contrasting understandings prevalent in literature regarding the role and purpose of church worship. It is often left to the worship leader or planner, then, to decipher how a church’s music-making practices directly relate to a church’s understanding of worship in relation to their social field. Elsewhere, I have written about the role of the worship leader as a pedagogue and facilitator (Benjamins, 2019, 2021b). The worship leader is typically the lead vocalist or instrumentalist in CWM settings, and they select and facilitate much of the repertoire (Ingalls, 2018). As I have argued, the worship leader often has a responsibility to decipher the formative impact that CWM lyrics have on musicians and the greater congregation (Benjamins, 2021b). Worship leaders do not only provide musical leadership to praise bands, but they are also expected to provide spiritual leadership (Kurian, 2016), and facilitate an experience of divine presence through music (Ingalls, 2018). As Boyce-Tillman (2013) mentions that singing within a worship context can be transformational, worship leaders must “take care to perform the theology that accurately reflects the beliefs of the church [and] in order to promote unity instead of division” (p. 53). This research will further consider how a worship leader’s practices may reflect and respond to the social and theological fields in which a church is located.

**Pedagogical Approaches to CWM.** There is not much literature or many “how-to” guides that specifically address musical leadership within CWM. While there are a variety of international training programs for future worship leaders that exist such as Hillsong College, World Revival, Worship U, and university/college programs including Calvin University, Baylor University, and Liberty University, among others, literature that surrounds pedagogical
approaches to CWM is lacking. There are, however, a great number of resources that take a theological approach to worship leadership for those currently involved in music ministry (i.e. Hicks, 2016; Kauflin, 2008; Merker, 2021). Scheer’s (2006) *The Art of Worship*, Cherry’s (2016) *The Music Architect*, and Chapell’s (2009) *Christ-Centred Worship* are some primary guides for worship musicians in terms of planning services, evaluating worship songs, rehearsing with musicians, and so on.

Addressing university church music programs specifically, scholars suggest that as CWM heightened in popularity, church music training has not been able to keep up with current church music trends. Page and Grey (2014) explain that while churches adopted modern worship trends, educational institutions moved forward with their traditional approaches, at times ignoring changes taking place. This resulted in a gap of qualified worship leaders entering the ministry, and by the end of the twentieth century, many church leaders “viewed formal music education as irrelevant to the modern worship movement…result[ing] in declining enrollment, increased tension between academics and practitioners, and a diminished influence on a new generation of worship leaders” (Page & Grey, 2014, p. 72). Traditionally, Christian university and college programs would provide students with musical training as well as theological and ministerial training. According to Brown (2022), there are fewer churches currently hiring worship leaders that are musically strong with equally strong theological training. Thus, there is a need for strong worship curriculum that prepares students both musically and theologically for the current landscape of church worship.

More specifically, Brown (2022) encourages university church music programs to take non-classical approaches to musical instruction and performance, approaching modern musical styles in the ways in which they are typically learned and rehearsed. Too often there are gaps
between what is being taught in programs and practical skills required within worship leadership. On the other hand, churches may hire singers and leaders with these “non-traditional” skills without necessarily having biblical or theological training. Brown suggests that even though many assume that CWM is simpler in musical terms, worship leaders need the same level of professionalism and intensity that music performance majors would have. They suggest therefore that university music education programs that are training future worship leaders should still be incorporating “traditional” pedagogical approaches, while also transforming and adapting to modern corporate worship curricula.

Formation through Rituals of Music-Making. One of the themes of this thesis is the concept of “formation” considered alongside Bourdieus’s concept of habitus in the context of CWM music-making practices. Formation is commonly understood as an element of Christian life, where individuals’ identities are re-oriented toward God (Smith, 2016). Smith, in particular, explores the formative aspect of liturgy in worship, which is defined by Wolterstorff (2015) as a “sequence of act types enacted according to a ‘scripted’ text” (p. 19). Elsewhere, I connect the concept of formative rituals in Christian worship to liturgical speech acts (Benjamins, 2021b), analyzing the CWM context as a particular case where liturgical language shapes musicians’ spiritual formation. This argument is further discussed below in relation to dialogue and music-making.

Liturgical and practical theological studies have tended to evaluate formation – specifically in terms of character - in Christian worship through a lens of narrative. Generally, this understanding of worship as character formation views worship as a consistent ritual that includes defined and explicit moral values (Myrick, 2021). Liturgical scholars conceptualize worship as ethical in its formation of ethical character and its fulfillment of ethical
responsibilities (Saliers et al., 1998; Sayres, 1961). Character formation in Christian worship has also been seen to establish worshippers’ perspectives and relationships with others, the world, and God (Muller, 2006; Suggate, 2002). Some scholars view the Christian formation of character through the listening to and orientation towards stories in worship (Müller, 2006), while others have understood the formation of ethical character through participation in ritual and elements of worship such as the sacraments (Suggate, 2002; Wannenwetsch, 2004). Typically, in liturgical spirituality, three centres facilitate the movement of the “new self” and “unity with Christ” through font (Baptism), word (proclamation), and table (Eucharist), which are each expressed in the liturgy. The ordo (pattern) of worship, includes a fourfold pattern of liturgical activity: gathering the congregation, proclaiming the word, participating in the Lord’s table, and being sent to continue God’s work within the world (Lemley, 2021).

Ritual singing, in itself, has been seen to be a responsive performance that shapes individuals’ responses to God and others (Caccamo, 2004). Scholars such as Caccamo (2004) consider the role of ritual song in the formation of the identity and moral character of individuals. Hawn (2003) provides an interesting analysis of the use of cyclical musical structures in ritual performance and their impact on physical responses. He argues that cyclical structures with repetition – which I argue could be understood to be present in CWM – elicit a physical response and allow for easier participation in the liturgy. Lemley (2021) draws on the popular music influences within CWM specifically, arguing that participation in pop music is formative, as it is comprised of familiar sounds, acts, and objects that belong to a cultural liturgy that the church knows. Therefore full, conscious, active discernment of the impact of music and its relation to ritual and formation is essential when addressing CWM and church music as a whole.
From a community music lens, Phelan (2008, 2017) argues that ritual song has the ability to negotiate and perform values, reaching beyond linguistics and semantics alone. Drawing on Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977), Phelan discusses the strategization of behaviours through ritual singing, emphasizing the generation of values through musical participation, and embodiment through practice. Through performative choices within music-making settings, choices become strategies “towards the realization of values” (Phelan, 2008, p. 146), not through simply embracing values conceptually but through their musical embodiment. Through the tacit knowledge of performance, rather than a conceptual knowledge of ideology, a community’s values can strategically be generated (Phelan, 2008).

Phelan’s (2017) ethnographic study of various ritual contexts in Ireland examines the role of the singing voice and its ability to facilitate belonging. Through key characteristics of singing (resonance, somatics, performance, temporality, and tacitness), singing in ritual contexts has the ability to create experiences of belonging. I draw on Phelan’s focus on singing’s relationship with the social body through performance as a key characteristic of singing. Performance involves the concept of performativity, with roots in Austin’s (1962) exploration of language. Theorists such as Butler (1990) have extended performativity to the performance of gender and how identity is performatively constituted. While not the primary focus of this thesis, this understanding of performance relates to a conceptualization of music-making as “performance” of identity and meaning. Ultimately, “the persistence and transformation of social life…rests centrally on the successful inculcation of shared embodied know-how” (Schatzki et al., 2001, p. 3).

The body is not only a vehicle or medium of performance but generates intelligence and values (Phelan, 2017). Understanding the body as an active, performing agent in such a manner...
has direct implications for musicians and their relationship with repertoire. The body is not a passive recipient in nature but can use its various sonic and kinaesthetic tools “to generate cultural values, rather than simply being ‘inscribed’ with them” (Phelan, 2017, p. 79). Phelan (2017) emphasizes that within ritual contexts such as church worship, music – which is “structurally formalized, rhythmic, repeated, exaggerated, and elaborated” – has traditionally been linked to the concept of ritualization, enacting various doctrinal and ideological positions and beliefs. I would concur with Phelan, who reminds readers, “the potential of singing”, and I would add music-making more generally, “within a ritual context to promote a particular belief and to reinforce it, not only as an intellectual position, but as a somatic experience, is immense” (p. 81).

Ludolph’s (2021) recent dissertation examines the potential of singing specifically in terms of a communal, relational way of knowing that shapes worldview. Ludolph’s study focused on storied songs, and their ability to become boundary-crossers, where spirituality offers a sense of wholeness, hospitality welcomes a necessary difference, and worldview is performed through everyday life. When relational connectedness is encouraged through storied song, the imagination is impacted and enlivened. Identity, relationships, and a sense of vision are performed. Ludolph acknowledges singing’s impact on the imagination through its sonic, affective, and somatic characteristics, providing a space “for the body to potentially create values and an openness to the spiritual dimension that invite the singer to negotiate identity, to overcome fear of others, and to ‘un-know’” (p. 142). I would extend Ludolph’s argument to music-making in a broader sense, considering musicians’ instrumental playing in a worship band context as a performative, liturgical “speech” act (Benjamins, 2021b) that also shapes the social imaginary and one’s worldview.
Hall (2015) specifically examines the formation of a musical habitus and the enactment of gender and class through choirboys’ musical participation. Hall’s research illustrates how taken-for-granted assumptions regarding the value of Western Art Music and particular forms of knowledge are significant features of their musical habitus. As the choirboys engage with classificatory exclusions and inclusions related to musical preferences, they perform and reproduce and symbolic capital of Western Art Music. Hall suggests that there is an intellectual, aesthetic, and bodily education provided by the choir that is embodied in the boys’ musical habituses, expressed in their voices and musical bodies. The choirboys’ habituses are constantly being formed, expressing and responding to dominant cultural narratives of Western Art Music. Similarities can be drawn here to the formation of musical habitus through music-making in worship, where musicians’ musical habituses are permeable sites where the “logic of practice” is played out through music-making, legitimizing or shifting away from the narratives in place.

Scholars such as Smith (2013) similarly extend Bourdieu’s work to a liturgical context, examining how states of the body may “give rise” to states of the mind. As Smith explains, a social body is developed through mundane means such as bodily postures, repeated words, ritualized cadences. The body politic “implants in me a *habitus* by immersing in me an array of tangible movements and routines that effectively ‘deposit’ an orientation within” (p. 95). As Strawn and Brown (2013) articulate similarly, liturgies in worship create habits which then shape “the intentionality of one’s aim toward a particular telos” (p. 4). Embodied worship must focus on forming the body rather than focusing on experiential, conceptual knowledge. Smith suggests how one might change their worship *practices*; reactivating and renewing liturgies, rituals, and disciplines that embody the Gospel story (p. 40).
As explored by Phelan (2017), other studies on religion affirm the concept that religious dispositions are not formed only through conceptual knowledge but rather through “embodied disciplines and rituals that imprint dispositions onto the practitioner” (p. 124). In order to understand the performance of habitus, one must consider worshippers’ somatic, lived experiences, focusing on “practice” rather than “performance” (Phelan, 2017). These concepts all have direct implications for this current study. Being conscious of bodily practices, as expressed through music-making decisions, can impact behaviours, values, and habitus formation.

**Impact of COVID-19 on Church Worship.** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the landscape of church worship shifted significantly throughout the years 2020 and 2021. Like the rest of the world, the majority of people were forced to stay home. Lockdown measures forced the closure of churches, synagogues, chapels, and mosques around the world (Bryson et al., 2020). While Christianity is truly diverse in its nature, for almost all Christian traditions, church attendance is “one of the foundations of spiritual life associated with worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and mission” (Bryson et al., 2020, p. 360). Yet because of the pandemic, many congregations around the world were forced to partake in worship in their homes through virtual church services. Many places of worship had no experience in live streaming or recording services and congregations had to adapt in rapid continual manners. Bryson et al. (2020) completed the first study that explored churches’ development of mechanisms to provide virtual church services, examining the notion of sacred space within congregants’ homes. They found that the lines between sacred and secular spaces blurred as rapid transformations occurred through churches’ provisions of online services and virtual embeddedness. As ministers led worship services from their homes, homes between ministers and congregants were linked through shared worship and “intersacred” spaces. From a sociological framework, homes were
transformed into interlinked “fields” through the application of “habitus”, or the rules, conventions, and expectations associated with worship. Various behaviours traditionally found in sacred spaces (prayer, song, etc.) were enacted in the home, thus constituting the home as part of the religious field. This shift was complex in nature as the church was “layered” on the home and social media experiences were “layered” onto religious services, all part of the religious field, which contributed to temporary new geographies of home.

Countless other studies have developed since then that have explored the effect of COVID-19 on the church. These range from an interrogation of the mission of the church during the pandemic (Tettey & Nel, 2021); the practice of communion online (Johnson, 2020); Sabbath observance during COVID-19 (Langer, 2021), among others. Less research has examined the impact of COVID-19 on church music specifically, providing a gap in literature for this thesis research to enter. As further explored in my data findings, COVID-19 had a significant impact on the data collection for this study, as well as on the characteristics of the praise teams and choir, who rehearsed over Zoom and in ensembles of under five musicians. The COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, had a particular influence on the research findings.

**Virtual Ensembles.** Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and its various lockdowns, virtual choirs rose in popularity. Choral audio-visual content began to filter into social media, consisting of digital musical products that used multiple, individually recorded vocal lines layered on top of each other and edited to create a virtual ensemble. The first virtual choir performance occurred in 2010 by Eric Whitacre yet did not increase in use by other choir directors until the pandemic hit (Datta, 2020). Eric Whitacre’s Virtual Choir, a Youtube based ensemble, published virtual ensembles using crowdsourcing and has used video recordings of more than 20,000 voices (Cayari, 2021a).
During the pandemic, many music educators produced videos that featured choristers at various institutional settings, and attempted to facilitate collaborative experiences across their institutions to make music together online. Choristers would prepare their parts and some universities would use music technology courses to train choristers to prepare and edit their audio recordings through an online digital audio workstation (DAW) and record tracks through social media sites. As explored by Cayari (2021a), other K-12 music education classrooms had also included explorations of sound recordings, collaborative song writing and recording online (Clauhs et al., 2019), and the facilitation of collaborative opportunities with others across the globe (Clauhs, 2020). Cayari (2021a, 2021b) draws upon three creative dispositions that educators might foster in students while making music online, exploring practical steps for music educators to plan and create virtual ensembles.

The exploration of music education literature surrounding virtual ensembles is applicable to this study, as Calvin Church’s choir operated as a virtual ensemble. They engaged in weekly rehearsals over Zoom and choristers had to learn how to record their individual vocal lines. The choir director then would edit and compile audio recordings. These themes are further discussed in the study’s data findings.

This concludes the church music and theological section of the literature review. This section has emphasized the beginnings of evangelicalism, its effect on the development of CWM, and various philosophical approaches to church worship. For reasons of space, the last two sections of the literature review address music education and community music literature in a rather brief manner.
Music Education, Social Justice, and Pedagogies of Inclusion

As addressed in the introduction chapter, there has been a rise in the pursuit of “social justice” in music educational environments, focused on educative action, accessibility, participation, and engagement in order to contribute to a “just and humane society” (Benedict et al., 2016, p. xii). The concept of social justice helps situate the study’s focus within the broader field of, and current discussions within, music education. More recently, music education scholars have called for an interruption of “normative” music education through the introduction of popular music genres and informal music pedagogy (Green, 2008; Wright, 2019), “world musics” (Fung, 1995; Schippers, 2009), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; LuLadson-Billings, 1995, 2009), and an increase in composition and creative projects in the curriculum (Lupton & Bruce, 2010). By making music listening, creating, and learning more accessible, some may argue that hegemonic practices and socially reproductive functions of elite cultures have been challenged (Wright, 2017).

Modes of music transmission and learning tend to be categorized as formal, nonformal, or informal (Veblen, 2012), where nonformal and informal modes of learning have more often been linked to themes of social justice. Green (2002) describes formal and informal learning as two extremes on either ends of “a single pole” (p. 6). Informal learning, for Green, is associated with a variety of approaches, both conscious and unconscious, focused on gaining musical knowledge and skill outside of a formal classroom setting. Her proposed principles of informal music learning are further discussed below. In a different manner, Folkestad (2006) differentiates between formal and informal spheres and their relation to music through four descriptive factors: the physical situation (where the learning takes place), learning style (nature, character, quality), ownership (who makes the decisions and how), and intentionality (what learning is directed
towards). Green (2009) and Folkestad (2006) both suggest that learning operates on a continuum of two poles, where informal and formal learning co-exist and interact. Wright (2016) draws upon Folkestad’s (2006) descriptive factors in relation to real-life learning situations, suggesting we think of them “as sliders on a control panel…where several of the sliders may be anywhere on the continuum between formal and informal at any one moment in time” (p. 211). This description more accurately represents the messiness of real-life learning, where it is constantly moving between formal and informal modes. Wright (2016) emphasizes that it is important for the teacher to be fully aware of this ongoing shift and adapt to the mode that reflects the learning interests of their students.

Coffman’s (2002) research highlights a third category of learning between formal and informal. Drawing from Colletta (1996), Coffman (2002) discusses “formal” and “informal” learning within adult music education while introducing “nonformal” categories as well. For Coffman, nonformal learning is similar to formal learning in its deliberate, systematic practices, yet occurs outside of educational structures. As Veblen (2012) explains, nonformal learning tends to be related to, and situated within, real life professional contexts. Skills and knowledge are often acquired or directly applied within the working situation. Nonformal practices may be led by a director or leader, but the members own and partially control the group interactions, changing, adjusting and accommodating new players. Nonformal processes can move between orality and notation and can use a range of conserving and experiential approaches (Veblen, 2012). Veblen (2012) provides a helpful breakdown of each form of practice - formal, nonformal, and informal - in lifelong music learning, identifying the context/situation, learning style, sense of ownership, intentionality, and modes of transmission for each category. It is
important to note that each category of music learning includes a range of transmission depending on the particular setting or context at hand.

Many sites of community music as demonstrated in research can be described as nonformal learning contexts. Veblen (2012) provides several examples of nonformal learning such as an adult amateur chamber quartet, barbershop singers, and a week-long program for adult Celtic musicians. The way in which Veblen classifies nonformal music learning as deliberate and systematic yet situated within real life professional contexts can be connected to church music-making. When thinking of worship teams specifically, while there is a director or leader present, members generally own the group interactions, new players come and go, and a range of learning approaches (oral, notational, conserving, and experiential approaches) tend to be present.

For the purposes of this study, it is important to examine the role of the leader when implementing nonformal pedagogies, which I extend to contemporary worship music contexts. In Ng’s (2018) examination of formal, informal, and nonformal pedagogies in Singapore secondary schools, Ng describes observations of nonformal teaching styles through teachers’ demonstrations, and implementation of imitation and ensemble playing activities. Learner-based teaching sequences were implemented and learning began with what could be attained by the student. In one of the classrooms, the teacher found that informal music learning was too open-ended, and in response, the teacher spent much time scaffolding through formal and nonformal approaches. Both formal and nonformal teaching were used to impart basic musical competencies, and then students were able to utilize and develop their skills through informal learning. Other characteristics of nonformal music learning in the study included learning through teacher-led group-based activities with students who could determine direction and progress; low-entry barriers to music-making; leaders and musicians co-constructing curriculum;
and a particular sense of exploration or immediacy where learning is tacit. Some of these themes will be drawn upon in relation to the context of this study.

**Popular Music Pedagogy and Informal Music Learning**

Green’s (2002, 2008) work in popular music pedagogy has been particularly influential in terms of focusing on students’ authentic, real-life learning processes within the classroom. Green (2002) developed five principles of informal music learning based on her observations of popular musicians’ learning practices, arguing that school music programs should build on the informal ways many young people learn music outside of the classroom, rather than focusing on overly-prescriptive, didactic pedagogies. Green wondered whether education’s quest for more formal knowledge diminished the emphasis placed on popular musicians’ informal ways of learning (Mariguddi, 2022). In Green’s (2008) discussion of her study which transferred the five principles into English schools, Green introduced seven stages of implementation, starting with students being “thrown” “in at the deep end”, focusing on imitating popular musicians’ practices as closely as possible. From there it included learning popular music by ear, revisiting this stage, focusing on informal composing, engaging with popular musicians to model composing, and lastly revisiting some of the principles through an informal approach to classical music. Within these different stages, the teacher served as a facilitator, rather than fulfilling a traditional teacher role (Green, 2008).

**Response from Literature.** Green (2008) noted that students reported various strengths in the approach including increased participation and motivation. They enjoyed the reduced amount of music theory and felt like “proper” musicians with increased confidence. In a Canadian context, the implementation of informal learning practices through a Musical Futures
program\textsuperscript{13} similarly revealed students’ enthusiasm, eagerness to learn, desire to practice, and quick to problem-solve in their peer learning groups (Wright et al., 2012). Music programs have faced a significant increase in student enrollment through informal learning practices, and programs such as Musical Futures have been seen to increase students’ performance and engagement in other curricular subjects (Hallam et al., 2008).

There were, however, issues that resulted as well. The shifting role of the teacher resulted in some concerns surrounding the delivering of curriculum as well as concerns with students’ stages of progression. Some students’ skills, in fact, appeared to deteriorate before improving (Mariguddi, 2022). Wider music education literature responded to such concerns in a variety of manners. Some scholars appreciated informal learning as a relaxed approach, increasing teachers’ confidence and perceived effectiveness\textsuperscript{14} (Jeanneret, 2010; Jeanneret et al., 2011). Others, however, expressed hesitation concerning the teacher’s role, as teachers appeared to do minimal work in informal learning settings (Allsup, 2008; Gower, 2012) leading to a “disappearance of the teacher” (Allsup, 2008, p. 1). Since there is not much direction provided by Green regarding what constitutes teacher quality, scholars questioned how teachers should be trained and professionally developed to work in informal ways (Allsup & Olson, 2012; Rodriguez, 2009). Some of these scholars noted that informal learning practices do not use the teacher as an expert to the extent that they could be used, possibly limiting learning potential (Allsup & Olson, 2012) and that the teacher’s role lacks validity in such settings (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010).

\textsuperscript{13} Musical Futures is a contemporary initiative initially introduced to classroom music by Green (2002). It focuses on keeping music-making relevant, engaging, and authentic. It is pedagogically aligned with informal learning in that it focuses on the musical culture of participants, bringing real-world music learning processes into schools and other settings. Although Green’s model of informal learning can be separate, it often falls under the Musical Futures umbrella and the literature critiques both (Mariguddi, 2022)

\textsuperscript{14} Some of these responses relate to Musical Futures specifically.
Yet teachers do tend to shift their roles towards a facilitation model in informal learning settings, finding a different balance between teacher control and student autonomy (Mariguddi, 2022). As Rodriguez (2009) poignantly articulates, within informal learning settings, teachers must make a “substantial shift...such that they must become experts in helping students make things happen for themselves” (p. 39). Such a shift, then, affects how music teacher training is approached and directed. Other scholars such as Väkevä (2009) acknowledge that the teacher may have to take more responsibility in learning situations after musicians internalize basic skills, and the teacher will have to regularly diagnose learning situations and decide when formal pedagogical intervention is needed.

Different critiques of Green’s (2008) model of informal music learning surround pedagogical limitations. Jenkins (2011) argues that students’ choice of their own music could contribute to them remaining in their comfort zones and discouraging growth. If one’s musical exposure is too limited or narrow, and if students are then engaging in any form of composition, music may result that has a lack of depth, richness, and maturity.

Another significant critique of informal music learning surrounds the too common difficulty for traditional classical instrumentalists to engage with popular music learning practices. In Green’s research, classical instrumentalists’ skills did not appear to be as valued in comparison with popular music skills (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010). Literature suggests that classically trained musicians can encounter struggles when moving to informal music learning settings (Rodriguez, 2009), possibly associated with a problematic understanding of value (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010; Mariguddi, 2022). When students who are formally trained were confronted with problems to solve, they often resorted to formal music training methods of problem solving (Rodriguez, 2009). Interestingly, these concepts resonate with my
experience as a classical pianist who tried to transition into an informal music learning setting (worship teams) with the presence of CWM with popular music instruments. I had a significant degree in classical piano performance and could sight read almost anything put in front of me, and felt quite uncomfortable “stepping back”, playing chords, and blending in with other musicians to create a unified sound. Playing by ear was absolutely terrifying to me and I believed I was underequipped to engage with popular/CWM music. Other musicians in my study of informal music learning in church music settings had similar experiences (Benjamins, 2019).

Advocates for popular music pedagogy tend to associate popular music education with inclusivity for a greater number of students. In some cases, this is true, especially in regards to students’ previous musical training. But in terms of the inclusion of students’ interests and the decision-making process within the classroom, it is not possible for everyone to be included in every aspect of the classroom. Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) cite instances where students’ experiences from informal contexts with popular music instruments were higher valued when forming peer learning groups. Dominant students tended to control content and design and gender-related problems resulted as well, where boys who did not play instruments such as electric guitar, bass, and drums, which tend to be associated with “masculinity”, lost interest and left the class throughout the year. In responding to some of these issues, Georgii-Hemming and Westvall suggest that a “critical reflection of whom and what is included should contain topics that encompass students with, as well as without, a personal interest in music” (p. 29). They argue that informal and individualized approaches to music education do not always result in motivation, participation and inclusion. Thus, careful consideration of these critiques is needed.

In response to critiques of Green’s (2002, 2008) principles of informal music learning, several scholars suggest implementing a blended model of formal and informal learning in the
classroom. As mentioned earlier, Wright (2016) describes formal and informal learning as operating on a continuum within real-life learning situations. When implementing informal learning principles, especially within contexts where students are accustomed to traditional methods of learning, a bridging process that consists of the teacher modeling skills such as copying instrumental lines from recordings and basic instrumental playing techniques are important. Hess’s (2020) study recommends a balanced approach to informal and nonformal learning, embracing a “both/and” approach rather than “either/or” choices. Participants within the study spoke of tensions between “wanting to move away from theory and needing theory” and “preferred a structured approach to education before moving to a more ‘free pedagogy’” (p. 441). Mariguddi (2022) draws on these suggestions and encourages the development of spaces where “affordances of informal learning” (p. 451) can be experienced while various tensions and issues can be addressed within specific contexts, as mediated by teachers and students in the classroom.

**The Link to Social Justice**

While acknowledging the critiques of popular music education and informal learning mentioned previously, discourse in music education tends to connect popular music education with the concept of social justice. Along with popular music’s link to students’ lives outside of the classroom, popular music has been understood as an accessible vehicle “for exposing realities, voicing ideas, [and] prophesying futures” (Woodward, 2017, p. 396). Through its role in promoting change and equality for students, regardless of their musical backgrounds and “training”, popular music has been commonly linked to the concept of social justice in the field of music education. For some students, popular music programs, which can include principles of informal music learning, song writing, and collaboration, exemplify what hooks (2000) states are
“pre-requisites for social justice: care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, acceptance, and self-efficacy” (as cited in Silverman, 2009, p. 188).

Looking at social justice through a broader lens includes a particular moral imperative to care, modelling equality, ethics, and morals to students (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Frierson-Campbell, 2007; Jorgensen, 2007; Silverman, 2009). Many popular music pedagogies, as well as popular music in general, have developed to challenge power structures (Woodward, 2017). Yet regardless of whether a music-making setting includes popular music, informal/nonformal learning, and increased accessibility and participation, any place of music-making can face “ideological dominance of powerful groups in a social collectivity” (Apple, 2019, p. 27). Thus, the pursuit of equality, ethics, and morals within music education settings might be more properly understood through pedagogies of inclusion, reflective practice, and dialogue. As Willingham (2009) reminds music educators, “we teach students, not our subject” (p. 57), and the development of social justice perspectives “stems from recognizing our students as individuals” (p. 56). Through such a disposition, educators engage in the expectation of hope, “enacting and engaging in the greater good” (p. 59).

The pursuit of social justice is complex in nature (Mantie, 2009), and there are countless interpretations of the term. “Social justice” is a vague term and can be experienced and implemented in varying manners. Within modern educational settings, social justice tends to be related to the pursuit of the elimination of social problems in relation to class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and so on. Music education is concerned with social justice since music education is inherently an element of cultural and public policy (Jorgensen, 2015). Benedict et al. (2016) describe socially just practices within music education in terms of recognizing difference while encouraging greater diversity and inclusivity in teaching and learning settings. Beginning
with a recognition of the complexity of human experience, scholars argue that the pursuit of social justice should be aimed towards the creation of equal environments where communicative acts can occur. Music educators generally understand that their work should value individual students, demonstrating a commitment to all students regardless of their particular characteristics.

At times, differences and unjust approaches are perpetuated in the pursuit of an end masked as “social justice”. Too often, educators have strived to focus on open participation and music’s transformative potential, only to privilege certain musical practices, forms of knowledge, and traditions. Differences can quickly result in hostility and suspicion, even when spaces are created to negotiate different perspectives, worldviews, and mindsets (Benedict & Schmidt, 2007).

Ultimately, the development of a critical awareness of music as well as one’s pedagogical practices is essential throughout this process (Benedict et al., 2015). The pursuit of social justice – from a modern education conceptualization of it – lies in dialogue, acting critically and making choices, where we [allow] ourselves to be transformed” (Noddings, 2003, p. 34). Since this thesis engages with the intersection of religion, theology, and church worship, it is worth noting here that from a Christian standpoint, the enactment of social justice involves acting justly, pursuing mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8). This understanding of social justice provides a different end to the pursuit of social justice, which is further discussed in my data findings and discussion chapters as it influenced one church’s repertoire choices.

Returning to a modern-day discussion of music education and social justice, dialogical practices can counter-act systems of reproduction that are all too present within educational settings. Rather than only examining assumptions, one must consider the process of thought
behind assumptions as well (Benedict & Schmidt, 2007). Such processes influence pedagogy, where pedagogues can commit to challenge “taken-for-granted ways of knowing” and “conventional ways of being” (Benedict & Schmidt, 2007, p. 34). A re-con structs of who one is through dialogical practices has the potential to occur, involving a re-framing, interrogating, and new ways of knowing.

The Role of the Teacher and Dialogical Practices. Biesta’s philosophical writings on education and the role of the teacher helps frame the role of dialogue in this study. Biesta’s (2013a, 2014) approach to education presumes that educational practices are directed or framed by a specific purpose. They are constituted by their telos, or the aims and ends of education. The teacher, according to Biesta has a role to bring something new to students and their position in relation to the world (Biesta, 2013a, 2014). Rather than education serving with its purposes, education is “constituted by its purposes” (Biesta & Stengel, 2016, p. 32). Biesta (2013a) associates “being taught” with encountering something new, involving interruptions to one’s world and life. There is a common relational “quality” between the teacher and the student, where the teacher brings something new to the students’ field of experience, and students can choose to engage with this gift of teaching (Biesta, 2013b). If students engage with the gift of teaching or “newness”, an interruption of some kind will occur. This encounter can be understood as a dialogue between the “self” and “other”, or that which is outside of the self. Rather than a verbal exchange, dialogue occurs through a process where both parties interact. Both are formed and transformed in the process (Biesta, 2013b). Elsewhere, I connect Biesta’s (2013a) description of students encountering something new in education that “transcends the realm of the possible” (p. 456) to religious contexts, where students experience new and different ways of being in the world through “transcendence” or “revelation” (Benjamins, 2021b). I
suggest that teachers bring something new to the students’ encounter with the world, and the fulfillment of this task occurs through teachers’ engagement in a relationship with their students.

In a previous article (Benjamins, 2021b), I apply the concept of “liturgical speech acts” (Calvert, 2018) to CWM settings, and suggest that similar to Biesta’s (2013) conception of the teacher, the worship leader uses the CWM song to help musicians “realize a truth…from the outside” (Benjamins, 2021b, p. 149). Drawing on Austin (1962) and Searle’s (1969) writings on speech act theory, liturgical speech acts are “multiple, simultaneous, irreducible illocutionary forces directed towards the perlocutionary effect of spiritual formation” (Calvert, 2018, p. 8). I argue that engaging in music-making through CWM involves one’s engagement with liturgical speech acts, directed towards a particular theological end. More importantly for this argument, however, is the worship leader’s facilitation of a relational space where musicians can enter and engage in meeting with one another through CWM music-making, along with the leader’s awareness of the theological impact of their decisions.

I have argued worship leaders can contribute to the facilitation of dialogical, I-Thou (Buber, 1958) encounters between musicians. In an I-Thou encounter, one takes an immediate stand in relation to another, involving one’s whole being as they engage in intimacy while maintaining one’s own concreteness (Buber, 1958). I suggest that the worship leader has a role in creating spaces that are conducive to relational meeting through the consideration of church music lyrics and their formative nature within worship. In a similar manner, I focus on the use of dialogue within a classroom setting in a different project (Benjamins, 2021a), using Noddings’s (2003) framework of care to argue that the educator has a role to promote opportunities for students to enter into relational spaces, opening up spaces for dialogue and reflection. In this chapter, dialogue is conceived as engaging in an open-ended encounter between educators and
students, involving care and experience sharing. In a different article, I expand on some of these concepts of facilitation and relationality using Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of dialogism, encouraging community musicians and worship leaders to consider their acts in relation to living “texts”, which impact their processes of engagement and consciousness (Benjamins, forthcoming). I draw inference to Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977) in the current study.

My current research, then, extends some of these previous research interests that are focused on dialogue, facilitation, and the role of the worship leader, and integrates them with key concepts from Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977). Rather than simply calling for increased practices of dialogue, care, and relational music-making within classroom and community music settings, this study was developed to provide a higher-level theoretical understanding of dialogue in relation to habitus formation, while acknowledging social forces in place that may contribute to the transformation of habitus and the ability of the worship leader to enact change. The presence of CWM adds a unique, innovative aspect to the study as a significant genre of modern-day church music.

As addressed in more detail in this study’s discussion chapter, dialogue can often be understood as an “ideal” as it promotes communication across varying perspectives and is misunderstood to consistently maintain an openness to difference and equality (Burbules, 2000). Dialogue can, in fact, create spaces for different perspectives to be brought together, without creating equal opportunities for all to engage. There are still power structures in place, and even with the presence of dialogue, there are still things left unspoken, hiding what and who “gets left out” (Burbules, 2006, p. 108).

Ongoing educator reflection may be one way in which educators can consider practices of dialogue and question the characteristics and values they are modelling to their students.
Within community music settings as well, facilitators can serve as reflective practitioners, learning through and from experience (Finlay, 2008; Schön, 1991). As participants’ musical experiences rather than the end musical product become the focus, practices of authentic connection, care, and trust have the ability to move to the forefront. Music-making can evoke connection and community (Hendricks & Boyce-Tillman, 2021), which I understand to be characteristics that can be prevalent in a variety of music-making settings, not only informal and nonformal settings.

The roles of social justice and music, and more specifically practices of inclusion, participation, and engagement, are of interest to this study. Church music provides a particularly complex lens through which to consider such themes. CWM specifically has increased in popularity within evangelical churches and can be seen by some to have more of a participatory, “socially just” approach with its links to popular musical instruments, participation, accessibility, and informal/nonformal learning. The role of CWM in worship, however, varies across churches and the particular social field at hand.

**Community Music Perspectives**

Similar to social justice-oriented themes in the field of music education (e.g. Benedict et al., 2016), community music tends to take a postmodern approach to music-making, advocating for an emphasis on people, community, participation, cultural democracy, coauthorship, and informal/nonformal education (Higgins, 2012). Taking such an approach to music-making places less of an emphasis on the artist, product, individual, and the aesthetic (see, for example, Higgins, 2012, p. 31). Instead, when focusing on participation, community, people, cultural democracy, and so on, diverse and inclusive educational practices move to the forefront. As some argue, inclusive educational practices contribute to a more equitable, creative, and
productive society, discouraging authoritarian, hierarchical educational practices within music-making traditions (Benedict et al., 2015). Community music, therefore, is one form of music-making that encourages the individual educative process through its diverse and inclusive modes of being. What defines community music as a distinct practice from other forms of music-making is its element of facilitation and process of its practice, which has similar connections to church worship settings in its various forms (Leis, 2021). These themes of facilitation and participatory, inclusive practices in conjunction with themes of “boundary” and “exclusion” within church worship and community music settings will be further explored in the following section.

**Boundaries, Inclusion, and Community Music**

Community music is known to be an ambiguous term that is difficult to define (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018; Kertz-Welzel, 2016). Scholars such as Phelan (2008) explain that it is possible to “view all music-making as community music” (p. 145), while Veblen (2012) argues that while community music has some distinct characteristics such as informal music-making, community music is ubiquitous and challenging to define (p. 1). Higgins (2012) attempts to define community music in terms of three different perspectives. These include the music of a community; communal music-making; and intervention between a leader-facilitator and participants. As an active intervention, Higgins (2016) writes, community music constitutes “a form of thoughtful disruption, denot[ing] an encounter with ‘newness’, a perspective that seeks to create situations in which new events innovate and interrupt the present toward moments of futural transformation” (p. 446). Yet within the various descriptions of what community music is, other scholars have argued that community music is often understood as an ideal, where “all distinctions regarding talented, untalented, or high and low culture are overcome” (Kertz-Welzel,
Boeskov (2017, 2020), when exploring musical practices in a national community music program, addresses the reality that musical participation might also reinforce social constraints, inequalities, and issues of hegemony. It is not only necessary to consider how music contributes to positive change, Boeskov (2020) suggests, but also to consider how particular musical practices, “due to their social and institutional embeddedness, construct the terms under which such changes can be pursued” (p. 6). Similar to other modes of music-making, therefore, community music sits within fields of power, and notions of boundaries and exclusion do exist.

The concept of community evokes a sense of closure, or a bounding of a group which defines who may be included or excluded. As Mantie (2021) reminds community musicians, an “ideal of inclusion can only exist in the presence of exclusion” (p. xv). Community cannot be created without boundaries of some form that both bring people in and leave others out (Yerichuk & Krar, 2021). Community music, then, does not attempt to eliminate boundaries, but embraces the challenge of “walking” them (Mantie, 2021; Willingham, 2021). In terms of “walking” boundaries, scholars have referred to inclusivity as a core principle of community music (Higgins & Willingham, 2017). Yet there has been minimal analysis of how notions of inclusivity might be enacted practically in community music settings (Yerichuk & Krar, 2021). Yerichuk and Krar (2021) call for a further consideration of matching musically inclusive strategies with socially inclusive strategies, while also analyzing the relationship between facilitator and participants. If inclusivity is a core principle in community music, an active process of “doing inclusivity” must result, which requires “active and continual work in creating the best possible participatory music experiences for the specific participants in the specific context” (p. 8-9). Here, we see an emphasis on musically inclusive practices.
Henley and Higgins (2020) provide a helpful framework in which to consider concepts of “excellence” and “inclusion” within community music settings. They point towards a reconceptualization of excellence as the process within community music and inclusion as the product of that process. Such an approach to these pervasive concepts within community music and music education literature connects well to Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977), which is implemented in this study. Rather than understanding excellence as a product alone, this study considers how excellence through pedagogical practices and processes might be pursued, reflecting and responding to the particular musical and social fields present within a church setting. Inclusion, then, might be more closely tied to the product of participatory engagement and musically-inclusive strategies. These themes will be further explored throughout the data findings and analysis.

The Facilitator in Community Music Settings. Higgins (2012) describes the aspect of community within community music as an element of hospitality, “broadly understood as people, participation, places, equality of opportunity, and diversity” (p. 133). Hospitality begins with a sense of welcome to the potential participant, including a permeable, open-ended affirmation of and for those who desire to experience music-making. This sense of welcome is an open, porous invitation; it is an ethical action toward a relationship to another (Higgins, 2009). This sense of hospitality suggests unconditionality which is, inherently, an “unlimited display of reception toward a potential music participant” (p. 139). An open invitation and sense of welcome has the potential to encourage participants toward creative music-making while also producing lasting impressions on the participants and community musicians.

While one may assume that unconditional hospitality implies community with unity or harmonization, Higgins explains that the community music facilitator, instead, privileges
“dislocation” over “gathering”. The unconditional welcome “prevents the closure characteristic of a determinate community” (Higgins, 2007, p. 84). The facilitator, then might be seen to encourage active musical dialogue (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018), enabling participants’ creative energy to develop, while offering routes toward suggested destinations. While musicians may, at times, look to the facilitator for reassurance, clarity, direction, and encouragement, facilitators typically find a balance between being prepared and being able to lead and being able to hold back (Higgins, 2012).

The relationship between facilitator and participant cannot be equal; the facilitator has a responsibility to ensure some boundaries. Relationships occur as asymmetrical bonds, yet within community music-making, the facilitator “enters the relationship without presenting a front or a façade and encourages the participant to do likewise” (Higgins, 2012, p. 161). This opens up a possibility to venture “safely” into the unknown, and the facilitative process puts faith in the relationship, flowing into trust, respect, and responsibility. Higgins describes such a relationship as one of inequality marked by the participant’s call and the facilitator’s welcome or vice versa; one does not relinquish or diminish the other’s individual responsibility. This relationship is a friendship of fluctuating inequality, where responsibility is the bond within the heteronomous encounter.

With the entrance of CWM and popular music instruments in church worship, some worship settings can be seen as sites of informal/nonformal music-making (Benjamins, 2019), similar to community music. The worship leader might be understood as a community music facilitator, leading participants’ music-making processes through the encouragement of active, inclusive participation (Higgins, 2012). Community music facilitators typically possess musical skills such as improvising, composing, arranging, leadership and social skills, enacting a sense of
hospitality to musicians, and welcoming them in (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018), similar to a worship leader. Further, community music’s emphasis on community and focus on hospitality and participation reflect many worship contexts. It is important to note, though, that church music provides a different lens in terms of the end purpose or goal of music-making. Rather than understanding themes of inclusion, participation, democratization of knowledge, and intervention through church music-making as ends in themselves, worship of God is, ultimately, the purpose of music-making in Christian church settings.

The emerging community music field has minimally addressed intersections with church music-making (Leis, 2021). Leis (2021) is one of the sole researchers who have identified some key points of intersection between community music and faith traditions. As Leis explores, a significant number of qualities that Higgins (2012) names as distinct music-making practices of community music are similar to central practices of the Anabaptist faith tradition, as well as broader areas of faith and church worship. While there are, indeed, many differences between faith traditions and the developing field of community music, several connections can be made, particularly in terms of educational models and the role of the facilitator. Leis specifically highlights the nonformal educational model present in community music as highly applicable to congregational church settings. Other similar principles of community music overlapping with church music include: importance of and focus on community (importance of faithfulness to God as lived out in community with others); focus on participation and engagement (faith through works [action] and focus on active social justice and peace making); context-driven music-making (individual churches encouraged to act and discern independently based on context); focus on hospitality and being open (focus on hospitality and welcome); and focus on inclusivity
(multi-voiced discernment and participation, and inclusion of those otherwise marginalized by society).

While research minimally addresses church music in conjunction with community music principles, spirituality may form a middle ground through which to enter the conversation. Spirituality can be understood as a distinct element of community music practice through its emphasis on authenticity, connectedness, and solidarity. Music, in particular, has been understood as an entrance point for engaging with spirituality. As Saliers (2007) articulates, “It is no accident that when poets or theologians wish to speak of the deepest realities, they move toward poetry and music in an attempt to sound spiritual matters…what moves us the most deeply…has both contemplative and prophetic powers…carrying with it a sense of life and world” (p. 72). Community music has more recently been interested in the field of spirituality, and church music-making practices can specifically be seen as a resource to inform community music, as community music practices also inform the broader field of church music.

Summary

The purpose of this review of literature was to situate the study’s topic within four overlapping fields: music education, community music, church music, and theology, in order to explore the role of church music-making practices within the greater social field. When understanding church music-making practices as a form of community music and music education, literature from these different academic fields must be adequately considered. The literature presented in the chapter aimed to illuminate the complexities of church worship in relation to rules of the field at hand, themes of power, and performative, ritualistic, music-making practices. Since the two church cases, as well as CWM, have roots in the evangelical church, the review of literature centered primarily around evangelicalism within North America
and CWM, examining the early developments of church music and CWM, moving to its active presence within many modern-day churches today. In addressing critiques of CWM, contrasting philosophies of church music, and themes of formation through music-making, the literature is a reminder of the necessary discernment that should take place on the part of the worship leader, pastors, and musicians when planning church services. As scholars acknowledge the role of formation through CWM, it is important to continue to consider why and how decisions regarding music within worship occur. The final section of literature that explores themes of social justice and music education as well as community music practices help situate the study’s topic in the broader field and current discussions within music education. This study intended to build upon the literature, presenting innovative research that would allow music education, community music, and church music scholars to understand church worship through CWM in a different light.
CHAPTER III
THEORY

Introduction

This study is grounded in an overarching theoretical framework that used Pierre Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) to explore church music-making practices. This chapter considers the theoretical underpinnings of the study, examining Bourdieu’s key concepts of habitus, capital, and field and the possible use of them in relation to religion as well as to music.

Bourdieu’s ‘Generative Structuralism’

Bourdieu’s (1930-2002) theory as a whole is a critical analysis and explanation of how social influences affect people, what they do, and how they do it (Rey, 2007). His main objective was a reappropriation of “the social unconscious” (Bourdieu, 2000), aiming to shift and reorganize unconscious forms of domination in society. Generally, Bourdieu wanted to understand the presence of power and domination within culture, interrogating “unconscious” behaviours and tendencies in place that legitimized forms of domination. To achieve this, he attempted to critically analyze the complexities of social life itself in relation to habituated human action and unconscious reproductive tendencies in the social world (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Schirato & Roberts, 2020). In other words, Bourdieu tried to critically analyze “rules of the field” and processes of thinking that were deeply engrained in individuals that caused them to affirm the social order in place. Bourdieu’s theory, in part, was developed in response to an epistemological division in the social sciences between subjectivism and objectivism. Objectivism was primarily concerned with an anthropological understanding in which humans acted according to social and cultural rules. Existentialism, which was based on subjectivist traditions, understood free, individual choice as at the core of human freedom.
Through a combination of ethnographic fieldwork and sociological interpretation of classical sociological theory and method (Rey, 2007), Bourdieu attempted to produce a theory that accounted for the complexities of both the social rules according to which humans acted, along with the varying degrees of flexibility and freedom present (Schirato & Roberts, 2020).

Bourdieu (1990) labelled his theory as a form of ‘generative’ or ‘genetic’ structuralism, “describ[ing] and analys[ing] the genesis of one’s person…understanding how what we call the ‘individual’ is moulded by social structures” (as cited in Mahar, 1990, p. 33). Bourdieu (1990) also referred to his work as ‘constructivist structuralism’, explaining

By structuralism…I mean that there exist, in the social world itself…objective structures that are independent of the consciousness and desires of agents…By constructivism, I mean that there is a social genesis on the one hand of the patterns of perception, thought and action which are constitutive of what I call the habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and in particular of what I call fields and groups, especially of what are usually called social fields. (p. 123)

Ultimately, Bourdieu’s social theory was meant to unveil dominations and inequalities that were too often hidden by common sense, increasing individuals’ awareness of such mechanisms. In order to escape the “realism of the structure” and focus on the “principle of the production” of observed social orders, Bourdieu (1977) argued, it was necessary to construct a theory of practice, understanding the “mode of generation of practices” (p. 72). Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice, then, was developed in order to uncover structures of domination in place and explain how human beings operate in a world of inequalities, social classes, and struggle.
Bourdieu’s social theory was influenced by modern sociological theory, particularly in terms of the structure/agency divide that had polarized the field of sociology from its beginnings. Differing paradigms within sociology have originated in nineteenth century thinkers such as August Comte (1798-1857), Karl Marx (1818-1883), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), and Max Weber (1864-1920). In a very simplified manner, Comte understood sociology as a positive science, understanding the essential, positive aspects of some social institutions in place. Marx was particularly interested in understanding the effects of day-to-day experiences of people who produced, for the rest of society, goods for consumption. Durkheim understood society to have its own independent reality, consisting of social structures and patterns of behaviour that influenced individuals’ actions. Weber did not believe that social structures existed independently from people and were, instead, constructed through complex interactions with values, culture, and consciousness (Wright, 2010). Each of these thinkers influenced major modern sociological schools of thought.

When considering modern sociological theory, major sociological schools of thought have emerged since the Second World War which include structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, structuralism, postmodernism, and structuration. Each of these schools of thought were positioned differently in the structure-agency divide, as discussed next in brief detail. First, structural functionalism, with its leading proponent Talcott Parsons, understood societies as social systems bound together by consensus, influenced by processes of socialization. Conflict theory focuses more significantly on the ways in which societies are divided through power and struggle. Symbolic interactionism, influenced by George Herbert Mead, emphasizes the importance of words, gestures, and signals as symbols that create and maintain society and institutions which are socially made. Phenomenology, which
derives from the work of Edmund Husserl, approaches knowledge as derived from people’s experiences and interactions within the social world. Structuralism, which heightened in the 1960s and 1970s through the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Louis Althusser, suggests that ideologies and language systems in society are a result of relationships between structural elements, influencing processes of production in every aspect of society. Postmodernism, as influenced in the 1960s by Thomas Kuhn and later by Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard, generally understood that paradigms guided observations within the sciences, and without paradigms, factual knowledge was not possible. These new beliefs resulted in a theoretical pluralism throughout a range of disciplines (Wright, 2010).

In the second half of the twentieth century, a number of sociologists began to consider structure and agency in new, less mutually exclusive terms. Anthony Giddens’s work in the 1970s and 1980s focused on synthesizing the two concepts, suggesting that structure provides form and shape to social life, enacted through human agents’ actions. As evident throughout this theory chapter, Bourdieu’s work also focused on bridging the gap between the structure and agency divide, acknowledging the effect of culture and identity within the divide (Wright, 2010). The key elements of his theory are discussed in the following.

**Theory of Practice**

Bourdieu understood the social world as a multidimensional space with main factors of differentiation that contributed to powers or forms of capital within a societal struggle (Rey, 2007). His theory of practice developed through a series of breaks from practical empirical knowledge and traditions of subjectivism and objectivism, allowing for a connection between an individual’s relation to both the material and social world (Grenfell, 2014b; Wright, 2015). Three
central concepts are present in Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977): habitus, capital, and field. Each are described in detail below.

**Habitus**

Habitus is one of the most widely cited of Bourdieu’s concepts, yet largely misunderstood and misused (Maton, 2014). Bourdieu (1977) understood habitus as a multi-layered concept, with general notions of habitus at a societal level, and more complex notions at the individual level. Habitus, most simply, is a “structured and structuring structure” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170) of social agents. Maton (2014) describes this concept in more detail:

It is ‘structured’ by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is ‘structuring’ in that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices. It is a ‘structure’ in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. (p. 51)

Within Bourdieuian literature, habitus is understood as both “generative (of perceptions and practice) and structuring (defining limits upon what is conceivable as perception and practice)” (Codd, 1990, p. 139). In other words, habitus is shaped by one’s past experiences, it contributes to one’s current perceptions and practices, and it is also changing according to current conditions and collective/social structures in place. Bourdieu (1977) emphasizes that habitus includes a system of *dispositions*, a past that can be understood in the present through one’s practices, and which also perpetuates itself into the future. While a person’s individual history establishes and shapes habitus, their whole collective history of family and class also contribute to the formation of habitus (Reay, 2010). The subject, therefore, “is the individual trace of an entire collective history” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 91). In understanding habitus as a collectivist phenomenon, an
individual’s past and present positions in the social structure contain dispositions that are indicative of their social position.

Habitus is responsive and permeable according to what is occurring around them. Current circumstances are internalized and can become another layer to add to one’s history of socializations:

Habitus as the product of social conditionings and thus of a history is endlessly transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it, when embodied structures of expectation encounter structures of objective chances in harmony with those expectations, or in a direction that transforms it and, for instance, raises or lowers the level of expectations and aspirations. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 116)

Dispositions (capacities, tendencies, props, and inclinations), then, are acquired through a gradual process of inculcation (Mills, 2008). The body, in particular, is a “mnemonic device upon and in which the very basics of culture, the practical taxonomies of the habitus, are imprinted and encoded in a socialising or learning process which commences during early childhood” (Jenkins, 2002, p. 75-76). There are direct links that have been acknowledged in literature between the body, or physical, practical taxonomies and habitus formation, specifically in relation to musicians and worshippers (Sagiv & Hall, 2015; Smith, 2013, 2016). A habitus, however, must also be understood with two other, interrelated elements of Bourdieu’s theory of practice: field and capital.

Field

Bourdieu (1991b) understood life as a series of social fields constantly evolving and in which social agents are situated. Actors are both situated in evolving social fields, and they themselves are impacted by evolving habituses that the agents bring to the social field (Maton,
Individuals occupy certain positions in society’s various fields, determined by their capital, loosely conceptualized as power that they possess. These networks of relations include individuals and institutions “competitively engaged in the dynamics of capital production, pursuit, consumption, and/or accumulation” (Rey, 2007, p. 44). Social actors develop strategies to maintain or improve their positions in this network of power. Each person’s strategy is not as much “the product of a conscious, rational calculation” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 62) but rather “the product of the practical sense as the feel for the game, for a particular historically determined game – a feel that is acquired in childhood, by taking part in social activities” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 62).

Although fields have variations in capitals, interests, and strategies, they are ‘homologous’, characterized by a uniform logic by which they operate. Individual fields (i.e. the cultural field, political field, religious field) are only “relatively autonomous” while being interrelated (Rey, 2007). Actors may transfer capital from one field to another, since all fields are situated in a larger meta-field of power. Multiple fields can be in play at specific times, influencing hierarchies and relationships. While each field covers a broad range of activities, texts, genres, forms of capital, and categories of identity, actors maintaining similar social positions in the overall field of power tend to share a discursive identity and habitus (Schirato & Roberts, 2020).

Thomson (2014) links Bourdieu’s concept of the social field to a football field, where each field has its own “rules, histories, star players, legends, and law” (p. 67). New players must learn the rules of the game, but over time these rules become implicit. Bourdieu’s concept of doxa, meaning the “rules of the game” indicate such taken for granted assumptions within the field. Each field’s condition can also affect what players can do in the field, where the field and
players’ actions are interdependent (Wright, 2015). Social fields, for Bourdieu (1988), are comprised of two opposing forces, operating like a magnetic field. At one end are “the economically or temporally dominant and culturally dominated positions, and at the other, the culturally dominant and economically dominated positions” (p. 270). Individuals, then, occupy particular positions within social fields according to forms of capital or “currency”, as discussed next.

**Capital**

Capital, for Bourdieu, is part of the overall competitive “game” that individuals play in the social field. A person’s engagement of capital can take a variety of forms, depending on their position in the field and the inclinations present in their habitus: consumption of capital, pursuit of capital, possession of capital, and so on. As Rey (2007) explains, how individuals engage with capital and the forms of capital which they hold as important “is one of the most important functions of their habitus, or of their internalization of the social world” (p. 51). The amount of capital they possess in specific fields will determine their position in the overall field of power.

Bourdieu (1984) identified four types of capital: economic (money and material possessions), cultural (certain types of knowledge, taste, cultural preferences, language), social (connections, family, religious heritage), and symbolic (cultural or social capital endowed with a symbolic “efficacy by the specific laws of [the] field” (p. 113), things that stand for other types of capital and can be exchanged, such as qualifications) (Wright, 2015). Within the social field, there is no level playing ground; certain players begin with particular forms of capital and are therefore advantaged at the outset (Thomson, 2014).

Each form of capital, its possession which defines class membership and its distribution are instruments of power, “unequally recognized as legitimate principles of authority or signs of
distinction” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 316). Symbolic capital, which is understood as something amounting to status or recognition “gains symbolic efficacy when it is misrecognized [italics in original] in its arbitrary truth as capital and recognized [italics in original] as such” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 112). In other words, cultural items, understood as something amounting to status or recognition, are used by some in the struggle for social domination over others. These cultural, symbolic elements can be evident in education systems, as middle-class children may have linguistic and cultural skills engrained in them, which are competencies that schools draw upon for educational success. Since schools do not explicitly teach these competencies, working class children are immediately disadvantaged. Using his concept of misrecognition, Bourdieu argued that schools legitimate economic inequalities through their “neutral” education systems (Wright, 2010). As forms of capital are transformed into forms of symbolic capital, Bourdieu understood this as a process of symbolic violence, where dominant forms and systems of meaning in the social order become ‘misrecognized’ by the dominated as un-arbitrary and natural (Rey, 2007). More simplistically symbolic violence occurs when systems reproduce the cultural division of society (Wright, 2010).

Bourdieu (1984) offered the following formula as a representation of his theory of practice, demonstrating how his three key concepts of habitus, capital, and field fit together:

“[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice”

Practice, therefore, is the product of one’s relationship between an individual’s habitus, or dispositions, and his/her position in a field, as defined by the amount of capital held in the field (Wright, 2015). As described by Bourdieu, practices are the result of “an obscure and double relation” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 126) between a habitus and field. One’s actions are determined by one’s habitus and current circumstances; the field structures the habitus while the
habitus determines an individual’s understanding of the field (Maton, 2014). These elements of Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* have direct implications for music-making and conceptions of taste, which are further described below.

**Transformation of Habitus**

While not a significant theme in Bourdieu’s writings, his concept of *hysteresis* is an important concept in this thesis as it can be understood to contribute to the transformation of habitus. Bourdieu (2000) acknowledges that habitus changes constantly according to field conditions which vary over time. Hardy (2014) explains that typically in times of relative stability, changes happen slowly through generational shifts, while in times of crisis, a disruption occurs and the habitus must evolve and respond to abrupt changes in the field. *Hysteresis*, for Bourdieu, is a mismatch between habitus and field structure. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that *hysteresis* is inherent in social conditions as structures of habitus are reproduced, and is one of the primary contributors to a “structural lag” that occurs between opportunities and the required dispositions needed to grasp them, thus resulting in missed opportunities. Bourdieu’s concept of *hysteresis* is further drawn upon in the study’s data findings and discussion as a significant element of the transformation of habitus, which I argue can be understood as a result of the enactment of dialogical practices.

**Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and Music-Making**

*Classical Music and Taste*

Taste is an integral element of Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice*. Bourdieu’s own study of *Distinction* (1984) in French society was the largest and most comprehensive research study that examined class habitus (Reay, 2010). Much of *Distinction* studies artistic and culinary
preferences as well as practices in different sectors of the social space to identify the habitus that underlies them.

Bourdieu acknowledged taste in music as reflective of one’s class status and habitus. As Bourdieu (1984) stated, “Nothing more clearly affirms one’s class, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music” (p. 18). Bourdieu examined classical music in his writings as the purest and most legitimate artistic genre, and therefore where the most powerful effects of classification could be found. Music is a “pure” art, according to Bourdieu, that “says nothing and has nothing to say [italics in original]...represent[ing] the most radical and most absolute form of the negation of the world...which the bourgeois ethos tends to demand of all forms of art” (p. 19). For Bourdieu, a “pure” aesthetic is distanced from the natural and social world, linked to an autonomous field of artistic production. Such a field is capable of imposing its own norms on the production and consumption of its products (Bourdieu, 1984). In accordance with these beliefs surrounding classical music, Bourdieu critically approached classical music, suggesting that musical taste acquired in one’s youth tended to be linked to class hierarchy and material means (Ashwood & Bell, 2017).

In simplistic terms, Rimmer (2012) writes, musical taste from a Bourdieusian lens was understood to separate highbrow and lowbrow social actors. Higher-status social actors, conceived of as “snobs” for their “exclusive consumption of, for instance, classical music and opera, were shown to exhibit ‘omnivorous’ tastes” (p. 300), taking in highbrow, middle, and lowbrow genres. Low-status actors were understood to limit their tastes to “fewer and typically ‘popular’ genres”, exhibiting “univorous” taste profiles (p. 300). In understanding judgement and taste according to Bourdieu, taste “is always defined by those who have the symbolic power to make their judgement and definitions legitimate (the conversion of cultural into symbolic
capital)” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 107). Music, for Bourdieu (1984), offers a particular invisible and unusual demonstration of taste since ‘musical culture’ “is not a cultural display like others” (p. 10). As Bourdieu explains, musical culture is more than simply a quantity of knowledge and experiences; music is the most ‘spiritual’ of the arts bound with ‘inner music’ “of the ‘deepest’ sort” (p. 10). Similar to Bourdieu’s association of music as a ‘pure’ art as discussed above, demonstration of musical culture is complex as it involves an autonomous, multilayered field of artistic production.

Music can also be understood as a particular demonstration of taste indicative of one’s social status due to its bodily function. Within Bourdieu’s (1977) writings, the body plays an integral role as a meeting point between the social and the practical, operating within cultural and social contexts (Sagiv & Hall, 2015). Classical music as a genre requires a particular form of technical-practical knowledge that is reflective of one’s knowledge and place in the social field. When considering classical musicians’ habituses, Sagiv and Hall (2015) outline the complex process that occurs in order to acquire a classical musician’s habitus. They argue that significant amounts of knowledge and skills including bodily discipline in terms of technical-practical knowledge, translation of notes into music, and understanding musical structures and phrases must be acquired over time. Yet a classical music habitus is not only about bodily knowledge but also the social know-how, responding to socio-cultural nuances, such as understanding how to behave in particular social situations and understanding of social codes. Music is, therefore, a multi-layered ‘cultural-ensemble’ that is studied and conveyed to students and listeners over time (Sagiv & Hall, 2015). These particular concepts of “social know-how” through embodied musical practices will be further extended in this study to church music-making practices.
Musical Habitus and Capital

As described earlier, habitus is understood as ingrained patterns of behaviour, dispositions, and ways of seeing the world (Maton, 2014). Scholars have extended Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to music (Burnard, 2012; Hall, 2015; Rimmer, 2010, 2012; Wright, 2008) describing musical habitus as a “general disposition” relating to beliefs surrounding musical ability:

Thus, a musician’s habitus is acquired in the family as the product of early childhood experiences, along with schooling. It provides a general disposition, within which creative practices and narratives exteriorize themselves as subtle descriptions, which involves unwritten ‘rules of the game’ (the range of possibilities inscribed in the field), and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants. (Burnard, 2012, p. 267)

Wright (2008) similarly describes habitus in relation to music and perceptions of musicianship. In her ethnographic case study of a secondary school music teacher, she found that several class members described themselves as being “not musical” because they were not able to play a “real” instrument. Pupils and teachers evaluated notions of musicality and “real” instruments differently, likely deriving from their habitus. Some were trained in Western Art Music traditions and others were immersed in the popular music field, impacting their dispositions or ability to participate according to the unwritten “rules of the game”.

This concept of musical habitus is tied directly to Wright’s (2015) definition of musical capital, meaning “the skills, knowledge and understanding relating to music but also…to self-perceptions of musicality and musical potential” (p. 93). “Subtle descriptions” according to
narratives and practices tend to shape perceptions of musicality or being unmusical, influencing individuals’ musical or unmusical identities.

Educational institutions tend to reflect and perpetuate existing ideologies and perceptions of musical value which affirm some students’ habituses and undervalue other students’ backgrounds and experiences with music. Until more recently, musical ideologies have suggested that “classical music lays claim to the greatest value, by possessing transcendent qualities such as universality, complexity, originality, or autonomy” (Green, 2014, p. 38), distinguishing classical music from other musics. Such an ideology in relation to classical music, however, tends to highlight values of specific social groups at the expense of others (Green, 2014).

Music education has primarily been concerned with Western Art Music and arrangements of folk songs by prestigious composers (Green, 2014). Changes in terms of musical ideologies have slowly been taking place, contributing to a large body of literature on popular music education and pedagogy. Research by Green (2006, 2008) and others (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005; Karlsen, 2009; Wright, 2008, 2015, 2019) into informal music learning practices has claimed to encourage student participation, locating the production and development of musical knowledge within the students, while also allowing for a multiplicity of musical identities within the classroom. Such shifts require educators to also consider the *pedagogical capital* in place, meaning the “…skills, knowledge and understanding related to learning and teaching…concern[ing] ownership of decision-making concerning these things” (Wright, 2015, p. 93). Wright (2008) suggested that shifts towards more inclusive practices, culturally relevant pedagogies and altering the balance of power may be some changes that educators might
implement, moving away from their dominant habitus in order to “enter the musical worlds of their pupils” (p. 400).

While Bourdieu has been critiqued by some to be deterministic, as explored further below, Bourdieu acknowledges transformative structures in his writings, particularly in terms of school experiences (Reay, 2010). Scholars such as Mills (2008) suggest that his theory allows room for transformative traits of habitus, specifically in terms of teachers drawing upon a variety of cultural capitals to act as agents of transformation. This can be accomplished within the music classroom, as described in some of the strategies above.

**Critique of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice**

Bourdieu has been widely critiqued for the mechanistic tendencies of power and domination within his work, a deterministic understanding of human agency, and an “oversimplification of class cultures and their relation to one another” (Giroux, 1983, as cited in Mills, 2008, p. 79). In many of his critics’ views, his world is much more reproductive rather than transformative, and his social universe “ultimately remains one in which things happen to people, rather than a world in which they can intervene in their individual and collective destinies” (Jenkins, 2002, p. 91).

In terms of habitus specifically, Bourdieu has been critiqued as over emphasizing the pre-reflective dimensions of action (Reay, 2010). Scholars argue that Bourdieu overplays the presence of unconscious impulses, neglecting one’s engagement in reflexivity or conscious behaviour (Crossley, 1999; Farnell, 2000; Noble & Watkins, 2003; Sayer, 2005). While Bourdieu (1993) writes that habitus includes ethical dispositions and argues that convictions also constitute habitus, Reay (2010) argues that his emphasis on protension, meaning the “feel for the game”, still causes aspects of habitus to remain underdeveloped in his writings. While choice is
at the center of habitus, choices inscribed in the habitus, according to Bourdieu, are limited, lending itself to reproduction rather than transformation (Mills, 2008).

Other scholars such as Lahire (2003) have been quite prominent in emphasizing the plurality of dispositions of social groups. Lahire argues that sociologists tend to conceptualize social processes as general and homogenous in nature when, in fact, social agents develop a wide array of dispositions, “each of which owes its availability, composition, and force to the socialization process in which it was acquired” (p. 329). When studying the social in its individualized and embodied form, one must consider the institutions, groups, fields of power, and struggles which instill themselves within a body. According to Lahire, Bourdieu does not typically address the social construction, inculcation, embodiment, or transmission of dispositions. Yet if the aim of sociology is to study dispositions, rather than reducing the social world to systems and logic of actions and interactions, “it must move beyond making ritual appeals to the embodied past; it should examine how this past can become socially constituted and how it can be actualized” (p. 335).

Born (2010) similarly analyzes Bourdieu’s sociological theory of cultural production, proposing that an explanatory theory of cultural production requires consideration of themes such as aesthetics and the cultural object, the place of institutions, agency and subjectivity, temporality and change, and issues of value and judgment. These themes provide a non-reductive account of the aesthetic to the study of cultural production. As Born explains, Bourdieu argues that works of art are produced through the interplay of an artist’s habitus, reflecting their personal trajectory and social origins, and the structured space of the field, which consists of competing styles and genres. While Bourdieu’s nuanced structuralism has value, Born states, he diminishes the meaning and power of particular aesthetic formations and meaningful practices of
human motivations, reducing them to “a synchronic focus on the agonistics of position-taking…amounting to the competitive accumulation of cultural and symbolic capital, themselves predicated on a ‘utilitarian framework’ of ‘economic maximization’” (p. 179). Bourdieu also does not elaborate on his concept of improvisation, which could explain the creative, transformative aspect of agency in a deeper manner. His theory of agency “privileges the iterative over the transformative”, failing to address how the habitus “can be challenged, reconsidered and reformulated” (p. 181). Born’s research, then, uses theories of subject positioning and psychoanalytic object relations theory to conceptualize individual and collective agency, emphasizing how subjectivity is formed through the interplay between individual psychic history and collective defence mechanisms.

As relevant to the church cases in this thesis, religious scholars have also argued that Bourdieu tends to reduce the dynamic and open-ended nature of production and consumption processes (Dillon, 2001). Top-down approaches to ideological production within sociological research, Dillon writes, “understate the ways in which people actively construct meaning in their everyday practices and how these new or reinterpreted cultural schemas may foster social change” (p. 412). Bourdieu tends to suggest that the “game” of religion/Catholicism is quite mechanistic, which will be discussed later in this chapter. When analyzing institutional processes with more of a culturally driven approach, a greater awareness of the “subjective ways in which misrecognition [the process of legitimating the power and social status of dominant classes] is collectively subverted” may result (p. 413). Each of these critiques mentioned are helpful in this thesis specifically in terms of data analysis, refining my focus and understanding church case data from more of a micro, individual level.
As these critiques are considered in relation to the thesis, it is important to note that Bourdieu (2000) does reference some situations of tension between disposition and position, and acknowledges that habitus can change in response to new experiences. Reay (2010) extends these points in her study on higher education choice in relation to different social classes, examining the transformative aspects of habitus. Reay suggests that “habitus operates at an unconscious level unless individuals confront events or new familiar fields which cause self-questioning, whereupon habitus begins to operate at the level of consciousness and the person develops new facets of self” (p. 81). These disjunctures between habitus and field tend to occur when individuals with a well-developed habitus shift to a different field or a new part of the same social field. Reay reminds scholars that ruptures, disjunctures, and edges of coherence can lead to change, both within social fields and in one’s habitus if it is “characterized by dispositions that are open to change” (p. 86). Reflexivity and flexibility may be elements of some individuals’ habitus, and if one displays a flexible or reflexive habitus, processes of reshaping may not be as difficult to achieve, as some critics suggest (Sweetman, 2003).

**Dialogical Understanding of Habitus**

In responding to some of the critiques of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, a shift in pedagogic discourse or open dialogue may be one way in which to recontextualize processes of music education. As Wright and Froehlich (2012) remind music educators, specific knowledge or acquired skills within the classroom are never neutral, and each educator’s culture and habitus “predetermine the form and content of those choices” (p. 219). Perhaps the music education field might further question what habitus these music teachers reflect, and how that habitus relates to the dominant culture. Further, adjustments to their awareness of habitus and openness to override it through pedagogic decisions should be considered, questioning hidden values and cultural
preferences that are all too often present (Wright & Froehlich, 2012). If student autonomy and culturally responsive teaching are to be encouraged in the classroom, perhaps educators may want to shift their practices according to students’ habituses present.

Catron (2021, 2022) extends such an awareness of one’s habitus to a community music setting. She proposes a dialogical view of habitus, along with a conscious awareness of reinscriptive or deterministic tendencies, in allowing for one’s consciousness of habitus to emerge. Reinscriptive or deterministic tendencies could be linked to practices of colonization, excluding particular students and their processes of learning according to power structures in place. When habitus is practiced without understanding how it might impact learners’ perceptions, dispositions, and appreciations, Catron argues that equitable participation is impacted and the unconscious rules over conscious action (Mills, 2008). Yet if habitus is understood in such a dialogical, reflexive manner, colonizing tendencies could be interrupted, new learning ecologies might result, and inclusive musical participation would be encouraged.

In framing dialogue according to psychological and neuroscientific findings, Akrivou and Di San Giorgio (2014) argue that a dialogical conception of habitus is compatible with the “social basis of human freedom and learning” (p. 1). Progressing from Bourdieu’s understanding of habitus as more “deterministic” and “replicative”, Akrivou and Di San Giorgio (2014) suggest that when intentional, conversational engagement practice occurs between acting agents, “new experience of in-betweeness cognition” can result, “build[ing] mutuality through awareness of others” (p. 1). In supporting such a dialogical responsiveness to others, the authors encourage individuals’ engagement in shared reflection and conversation, moving towards a shared matter of inquiry. Dialogical processes, then, release new shared cognition pathways, focusing on inter-
subjective ways of knowing, and habitus is impacted in response to context and other actors in shared conversation.

These concepts of a dialogical view of habitus along with an embodied musical habitus are particularly useful for this thesis as I explore how musical behaviours within the church may reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually. Later in this thesis, I provide implications for a dialogical conception of habitus, encouraging intentional conversational practice between acting agents as musicians in formal, informal, and nonformal music-making environments. Within church music-making settings specifically, I examine how intentional, dialogical practices may have the potential to interrupt cycles of reproduction and hegemonic practices, leading toward future transformation. Therefore, I encourage musician and worship leaders’ awareness of their music-making practices, tendencies, and dispositions within the practice of contemporary worship music. Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital, and field have distinct references and implications to religious settings specifically, which are further described in the following.

**Bourdieu’s Approach to Religion**

Few scholars of religion have extended Bourdieu’s (1977) *Theory of Practice* to their research, even though religion was a profound influence on his thought. This is partly due to the fact that Bourdieu’s writings on religion are abstruse and translations of his religion articles into English did not occur until late 1980s and early 1990s (Rey, 2018). Further, some may hesitate to use his theory due to its pessimistic and atheistic approach to religion overall. Those who do employ Bourdieusian theory in a religious context generally include researchers who are concerned with religion and social class, and those concerned with religion and human perception (Rey, 2017). Bourdieu’s work is continuing to have an impact on the North American
academic study of religion overall, however, and is likely to continue to grow in the coming years (Engler, 2003).

Bourdieu wrote ten essays in total that centrally address religion and other aspects of his work also address it infrequently. His theoretical perspective including his religious stance is particularly helpful to consider when extending his central concepts of habitus, capital, and field to church music-making practices from a critical sociological standpoint. As Rey (2017) articulates, so much about the nature and function of religion can be explained “via consideration of the religious habitus and its inter-(re)generative [italics in original] relationship with the social” (p. 477). Bourdieu’s approach to religion provides an essential perspective to elements of his theory such as how religious practices shape habitus, how religious symbols and doctrines provide meaning, and how structures of power that exist in the religious field are influenced by religious capital, to name a few.

Some of Bourdieu’s most important concepts are derived from the social sciences of religion such as his concept of belief as a condition of existence of any field (Dianteill, 2003). Bourdieu (1990) explained that his concept of field emerged from “the encounter between research into the sociology of art…and the beginning of the chapter devoted to religious sociology in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft” by Weber (1968). Bourdieu’s notion of field was constructed “both against Weber and with Weber [italics in original], by thinking about the analysis he proposes of the relations between priest, prophet and sorcerer” (p. 22). Drawing from both Weber and Durkheim, Bourdieu (1991a) understood religion as an instrument of communication and knowledge, as a symbolic medium “at once structured…and structuring [italics in original], as a condition of possibility” (p. 2). Similar to Durkheim (1976), Bourdieu argued that religion provides “logical and social integration [italics in original] of collective
representations and…forms of classification” (p. 3). As explored in more detail below, Bourdieu’s analysis of habitus, capital, and field broadly focuses on social integration and forms of classification and, when applied to religious contexts, provides humans with an understanding of their social positioning and order.

Durkheim’s concept of the relationship between social structures and mental structures influenced Bourdieu as well. Durkheim (1976) hypothesized that there was a social origin of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation, and action. Bourdieu (1991a) drew upon this concept to argue that there is, in fact, a correspondence that exists between social structures (i.e. power structures) and mental structures. Such a relationship is enacted “through the structure of symbolic systems, language, religion, [and] art…[as] religion contributes to the (hidden) imposition of the principles of structuration of the perception and thinking of the world” (p. 5).

Bourdieu’s writings on religion generally cover two main themes: (1) religion in the contemporary world is declining; and (2) religion’s ultimate social function is to help people understand their positions in the social order (Rey, 2007). Similar to Durkheim (1982), Bourdieu admitted that religion is a “social fact” and provides human beings with meaning, yet similar to other “symbolic systems” in society (i.e. language, arts, politics, sports), religion is a product of human social creation. As Bourdieu (1990) stated,

Doomed to death…man is a being without a reason for being. It is society, and society alone, which dispenses, to different degrees, the justifications and reasons for existing; it is society which, by producing the affairs or positions that are said to be ‘important,’ produces acts and agents that are judged to be ‘important,’ for themselves and for others – characters objectively and subjectively assured of their value and thus liberated from indifference and insignificance. (p. 196)
For Bourdieu, therefore, religion is not based on a particular “transcendental supernatural reality or deity” (Rey, 2018, p. 301) but is produced through humanity’s search for meaning, providing people with a “mission” or “sense of purpose” in a world full of meaningless existence.

Weber contributed to Bourdieu’s sociological understanding of the religious field specifically in terms of approaching it as a dimension of the sociology of power (Dianteill, 2003). When describing Weber’s stance on religion, Bourdieu (1991a) explained,

He [Weber] gives himself a way of linking the contents of mythical discourse (and even its syntax) to the religious interests of those who produce it, diffuse it, and receive it, and more profoundly, of constructing a system of religious beliefs and practices as the more or less transfigured expression of the strategies of different categories of specialists competing for monopoly over the administration of the goods of salvation and of the different classes interested in their services. (p. 4)

As evident in the quotation above, Weber critically approached religion and Bourdieu followed in his footsteps of skepticism. Bourdieu critically questioned society’s authorities, traditions, and assumptions that filtered into religious beliefs. Described by Rey (2007) as a “master of suspicion”, Bourdieu’s spirit of radical doubt impacted his overall approach to religion, which was “to demonstrate the role of religion in the establishment, legitimization and reproduction of social inequality and all of its incumbent injustices” (p. 5). For Bourdieu, “religions ‘impose’ worldviews upon people by ‘inculcating’ into them modes of perception and thought…producers of people’s ‘misrecognition’ that the social world is only unequal because of karma [or] God’s will” (Rey, 2017, p. 471).

As a critical sociologist, Bourdieu aimed to unveil the “most sacred values” of society, and chose to critique religious power structures, using language such as ‘orthodoxy’, ‘heresy’,
‘transubstantiation’, and ‘sacred’, among others, to explain a whole range of ‘secular’ social institutions and practices. All powerful social institutions in society, according to Bourdieu, produce beliefs in individuals that “by some divine ordinance…most people are powerless while a relative few are powerful” (Rey, 2007, p. 9).

Not only did Bourdieu develop his theory in response to the sociologists’ work addressed above, but also according to the cultural influences of his time. Interestingly, Bourdieu developed his definition of habitus in response to the religious influence of the Catholic church. One of Bourdieu’s first explicit definitions of habitus is found in his translation and epilogue of Panofsky’s (1967) *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* as he referred to the “habit-forming force” of the Catholic cleric culture and the architect of Paris cathedrals (Dianteill, 2003).

Panofsky explained that the structure between medieval philosophy and gothic architecture resulted in a common habitus. In Bourdieu’s epilogue, he responds to Panofsky and defines habitus as:

> a system of schema [that] constantly orient choices, which, though not deliberate, are nonetheless systematic; which, without being arranged and organized expressly according to an ultimate end, are nonetheless imbued with a sort of finality that reveals itself only *post festum*. (Bourdieu, 1967, p. 161)

Indeed, Bourdieu’s thinking was impacted by a long tradition of French anti-clericalism and his intellectual project as a whole was influenced by his observations about religion, particularly European Catholicism (Dianteill, 2003; Rey, 2018). As further discussed by Rey (2007), much of Bourdieu’s model of religious habitus, capital, and field is useful for theorizing the role of religion in colonial conquest, representing Bourdieu’s experiences and interpretations of religion.

In the following, I discuss Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* in relation to concepts of religious
habitus, religious capital, and religious field. I explore each of these key components of Bourdieu’s theory, and explain how other Bourdieusian concepts such as misrecognition, symbolic violence, doxa, illusio, and collusio can be integrated into Bourdieu’s model of religious practice.

Outline of a Theory of Religious Practice

Religious Field

Bourdieu (1991a) understood religion as a symbolic medium that was both structured, meaning receptive to structural analysis, and structuring, as a “condition of possibility” (p. 2). As its own autonomous field, the religious field is fluid and dynamic in terms of structure and content. Bourdieu has been understood to stress the plurality of meanings within the religious field and “emphasized the importance of its contextual understanding” (Dillon, 2001, p. 414).

According to Bourdieu (1991a), the religious field, similar to other fields, consists of an area of competition and struggle, wherein religious agents and institutions struggle for control “of the production, accumulation and distribution of legitimate forms of capital particular to the religious field” (Rey, 2007, p. 86). The religious field is a sub-space of society that is a “network of relations between individual and institutional agents in various positions relative to the production, administration and control of forms of religious capital” (Rey, 2007, p. 155).

Relations of power, hierarchy, and cultural positioning are present, shaped by supply and demand, favouring some groups over others (Monnot, 2018). Bourdieu understood the religious field to consist of a struggle over the power to consecrate, meaning the legitimization and naturalization of social difference. He referred to individuals as agents of consecration who impose judgements of symbolic legitimacy and lead people to view the world in a certain way. As Bourdieu (1991a) stated:
The effect of consecration…also causes the system of dispositions toward the natural world…in particular transmuting the ethos as a system of implicit schemes of action and appreciation to undergo a change of nature [italics in original] into ethics as a systematized and rationalized ensemble of explicit norms. Thus, religion is predisposed to assume an ideological function, a practical and political function of absolutization of the relative and legitimation of the arbitrary [italics in original]. (p. 14)

Religion establishes an effect of consecration within the field in two ways: (1) through sanctifying sanctions, it contributes to the “symbolic manipulation of aspirations”, which adjusts “actual hopes to objective possibilities” (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 14); and (2) religion imposes a system of consecrated practices and representations “whose structure reproduces, in a transfigured and therefore misrecognizable form, the structure of economic and social relations in force in a determinate social formation” (p. 14).

The effect of consecration within the religious field verses the effect of recognition-misrecognition is important to acknowledge as well, since Bourdieu (1991a) differentiates between the two. Consecration is something that religious systems and practices tend to exercise in a direct or immediate way (i.e. in the religiosity of the dominant classes) or in an indirect way (i.e. in the religiosity of the dominated classes). Recognition-misrecognition, rather, is exercised by systems of religious practices through the imposition of hidden structures in place, producing misrecognized ways of thinking and perceptions, and contributing to “a system of questions that is not questioned” (p. 15). In other words, religious systems and practices tend to engage in behaviours that enact “rules of the field” through consecration. Such religious practices can exercise recognition-misrecognition, legitimizing hidden structures in place of power, and contribute to greater inequalities within the social field.
Similar to the way in which Bourdieu describes other elements of his theory, the religious field can be understood as a “game” between the Church and heresiarchy, meaning heresy (Rey, 2007). Yet as Rey (2007) points out, this game begins with certain advantages and disadvantages for some, since the Church slants the playing field by determining the doxa of every intercultural field in society. Those who are disadvantaged must make sense of their changing place within the social order. In established social orders, agents’ sense of reality is created through the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order. Systems of classification which reproduce…the objective classes, i.e., the divisions by sex, age, or positions in the relations of power production…by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, on which they are based…This experience we shall call the doxa [italics in original]. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164)

Rey (2007) states that Bourdieu’s model of the religious field is most helpful in societies where there are explicit distinctions between race, class, language, or denomination. For less stratified societies, however, his model is not as useful since undifferentiated societies do not tend to have an autonomous religious field. Bourdieu (1991a) explained that technological, economic, and social transformations occur with the development of towns, advancing the division of labour and the separation of intellectual and physical labour. This process constitut[es] the common condition of two processes that can only unfold in a relationship of interdependence and reciprocal reinforcement, namely the constitution of a relatively autonomous religious field and the development of a need for the ‘moralization’ and ‘systematization’ of religious beliefs and practices. (p. 5)
As evident in this quotation, the effect of the religious field is most prominent when it is autonomous, providing a rationalization for the separation between intellectual and physical labour as well as individuals’ place within society.

**Symbolic Violence in the Religious Field.** As previously discussed in this chapter, symbolic violence occurs when systems of meanings of the social order are *misrecognized* as non-arbitrary and natural by those who are dominated (Rey, 2007). In this case, the dominated use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator in order to understand the situation at hand, making the relation appear as natural (Bourdieu, 2000). Symbolic violence within the religious field can be seen to occur with the advance of colonialism, where colonial endeavors have been portrayed as God’s plan (Rey, 2007). As symbolic violence occurs, “the dominant culture contributes to the real integration of the dominant class…[while] also contribut[ing] to the fictitious integration of society as a whole…and contribut[ing] to the legitimation of the established order by establishing distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimating these distinctions” (Bourdieu, 1991b, p. 166). Rey (2007) emphasizes that this is particularly prevalent within the religious field, as religion represents a significant legitimizing force in many societies today.

**Misrecognizing the Illusio.** Keeping with the theme of misrecognition and symbolic violence within the religious field, misrecognition occurs by creating an illusion (*illusio*) that elites are religious and deserve privilege and power (Rey, 2007). For Bourdieu (1977), *illusio* allows any “established order…to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness…by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness” on which it is in reality based (p. 164). *Illusio* impacts the reproduction of the social order, produced through the relationship between habitus and field.
The *illusio* is determined from both the inside and the outside, sustaining the game being played and places value on certain forms of capital within the field.

Misrecognition produces and reproduces the *illusio* and legitimates dominant social status and power. In the context of the religious field, Bourdieu argued that the Church justifies the existence of dominant classes, influencing the habitus of the dominated class, and engages in a form of misrecognition. As Bourdieu (1991b) articulated, “the structure of the systems of religious representations and practices belonging to the various groups or classes contributes to the perpetuation and reproduction of the social order…by contributing to its consecration, that is, to sanctioning and sanctifying it” (p. 19). A process of structuring and reproducing of the *illusio* occurs, therefore strengthening the divide between the religiously dominated and the dominant.

**Collusio in the Religious Field.** Bourdieu’s (2000) concept of *collusio* does not actually occur within his writings on religion, yet it holds potential for understanding race, ethnicity, and class in the context of religion (Rey, 2007). *Collusio* is defined by Bourdieu (2000) as an immediate agreement in ways of judging and acting which does not presuppose either the communication of consciousness, still less a contractual decision, [which] is the basis of practical mutual understanding, the paradigm of which might be the one established between members of the same team, or, despite the antagonism, all the players engaged in a game. (p. 145)

Some might understand *collusio* as a type of collective habitus or a group’s collective grounding in a *doxa*. Collective participants may share a “feel for the game” and coherently belong and participate through *collusio*. Church goers, for example, may travel throughout the world and even without knowing a particular language, they might understand other believers based on the same religious *collusio* (Rey, 2007). This concept will be further addressed in the data findings.
as I examine how particular church cases produce culture and a shared sense of *collusio* among congregants.

**Religious Habitus**

Similar to the definition of habitus as a “set of dispositions” that is a “structured and structuring structure” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170) that impacts agents’ actions and decisions, the religious habitus is the religious dimension of one’s habitus that exhibits itself in the religious field (Rey, 2007, 2018). Bourdieu defines religious habitus as: (1) “a lasting, generalized and transposable disposition to act in conformity with the principles of a (quasi) systematic view of the world and human existence” (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 126), and (2) “the generative basis of all thoughts, perceptions and actions conforming with the norms of a religious representation of the natural and supernatural world” (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 22). As Rey (2007) states, within these definitions is one of the most key points that Bourdieu addresses about religion:

That the perception and appreciation of the meaning and function of religious symbols and doctrines (not to mention belief itself) are attributable mainly to the agent’s religious habitus and the power relations, both institutional and personal, that unfold in and structure the religious field; i.e., the conflicts of interests and the struggle over religious capital. (p. 93)

A religious habitus, therefore, impacts one’s religious interests, tastes, dispositions and needs; how they respond to and use religious symbols or engage in rituals; their reactions to religious leaders; the forms of capital they deem as worthy to pursue; and how they interact within the religious field (Rey, 2007, 2018). Further, as individuals or the Church exercise a sense of religious authority, they “modify the representations and practices of laypersons by inculcating in them a *religious habitus* [italics in original]” (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 22).
Habitus and Ritual. Several scholars of religion have used Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to study religion and perception, understanding habitus as embodied in such a way that makes a body “a socially informed body” (Rey, 2017). Habitus, therefore, is useful for analyzing religious ritual and practice “because it focuses on the psychologically internalized content of the behavioural environment” and because of its “groundedness in the body” (Csordas, 1994, p. 97). Some may argue that everything that people do in religious practices are the manifestation of perceptions and dispositions embodied in the religious habitus of believers, which is, in turn, structured by the religious field (Rey, 2017). As mentioned in greater detail in my review of literature chapter, scholars such as Smith (2013) extend Bourdieu’s work to a liturgical context, analyzing how bodily states “give rise” to states of the mind, implanting in worshippers a habitus as they engage in liturgical practices. These concepts are extended to the current study in terms of the role of habitus formation through musical practices in two different church contexts.

Religious Capital

Bourdieu tended to embrace a “categorical view” of the production of religious capital (Dillon, 2001). He understood the process of gaining capital between “producers” (specialists) and “consumers” (laity) as one of competition over the production, control, and administration of religious capital (Rey, 2007). According to Bourdieu (1991a), religious specialists, or church officials, are the “exclusive holders of the specific competence necessary for the production and reproduction of a deliberately organized corpus of secret (and therefore rare) knowledge”, which he contrasted with the consumers/laity who are objectively “dispossessed of religious capital” [italics in original] (p. 9), “demanding” but not “supplying” religious meanings or goods (Dillon, 2001). Religious specialists have complete monopolization of religious production (Bourdieu, 1991a).
Bourdieu’s approach to religious production was evidently related to supply and demand at any given time:

Religious capital depends, at a given moment in time, on the state of the structure of objective relations between religious demand (i.e., the religious interests of various groups or classes of laity) and religious supply (i.e., religious services, whether orthodox or heretical) that the various claimants are brought to produce and to offer by virtue of their position in the structure of relations of religious power, that is, as a function of their religious capital. (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 22)

Within the religious field, the laity are considered “consumers endowed with the minimum religious competence (religious habitus) necessary to demonstrate the specific need for its products” (Bourdieu, 1991a, pp. 23-24). As Dillon (2001) further states, Bourdieu emphasizes the “superiority in the competence of specialists over laity”, where the laity tends to have a “practical mastery” of religious capital that derives from a “prereflexive mode” rather than institutionally mandated specialists who tend to achieve a systematic “knowledgeable mastery” (p. 415).

Types and sub-types of religious capital within the religious field may include sacraments, the sanction of wealth and power, the sense of meaning that religion produces, or the legitimation of social order, for example (Rey, 2007). Bourdieu often associates “the goods of salvation”, meaning sacraments and one’s official membership within an ecclesial community, as the most significant forms of religious capital, since they strongly contribute to misrecognition within religion. Ultimately, the presence of this misrecognition contributes to a “denial” of economic and political interests within a set of practices, causing underprivileged people to look
for meaning, consolation, and salvation in religion rather than seeking power to change the unequal and misrecognized social order.

**Prophet and Priest.** Drawing on Weber’s (1968) ideas of the economic logic of the religious field, Bourdieu (1990) used the terms *priest* and *prophet* to indicate central “players” in the religious game. Laypeople are positioned as consumers of religious goods and services, and priests, or at times, prophets, are the ones who produce cultural commodities (Dillon, 2001). Priests can be understood as “agents of conservatism” (Engler, 2003), the “functionaries of worship” who have a monopoly on either instructional or sacramental distribution and maintain an authority of office. This authority of office means that priests do not have to continually win and confirm their authority, avoiding the need to face consequences for their religious actions (Bourdieu, 1990). Priests generally play a conservative role, maintaining control over religious capital, and are seen as “agencies of reproduction” (Engler, 2003, p. 447).

A prophet, in contrast, is an independent producer or peddler of religious capital, or an “independent entrepreneur of salvation” (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 321) and an agent of change (Engler, 2003). A prophet’s primary objective is to take part “in the competition for the monopoly of the management of the goods of salvation” (pp. 318-319). Prophets initially produce “the principles of a (quasi-) systematic view of the world…stand[ing] opposed to the priestly body as the *discontinuous* to the *continuous*, the extraordinary to the ordinary, the non-routine to the routine and the banal” [italics in original] (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 447).

Prophets disrupt the Church’s monopolization of the administration of religious capital, which can contribute to greater religious pluralism and shifts within borders of the religious field. The prophet, however, is in a disadvantaged position initially in the struggle within the religious field unless a shift of power occurs over time. Prophets exercise their position outside
of institutions and are without institutional protection or authority (Bourdieu, 1991a). They continually gain and regain authority based on the relation “between the supply of religious service and the religious demand of a particular category of laypeople” (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 23).

There are an array of moments of transformations within specific systems, and in order to understand specific contexts, one must analyze the relationship between religious demand and supply at any given time (Rey, 2007).

A prophet may maintain a professional ideology labelled by Bourdieu (1991a) as charisma which “supports the faith of the prophet in his own mission [italics in original] at the same time as it provides him with the principles of his professional ethic” (p. 20). Prophetic discourse connects to an ideology of revelation, inspiration, and mission, believed in by the prophet. A prophet’s success, therefore, lies at a border between the “abnormal” and “extraordinary”, either admired by people as extraordinary “or scorned as not having common sense” (p. 21). The charisma of the prophet can be understood to contrast the “routinized and institutionalized interests” of the priest “in a paradigmatic tension between heterodoxy and orthodoxy” (Engler, 2003, p. 446). The priest and prophet ultimately engage in a struggle for control of religious capital within the religious field. Each of these concepts will be further explored in my data findings chapter, extended to the role of the worship leader, the production of culture within specific congregations, and the overall “religious game” in the production of culture.

Bourdieu’s Theory of Religious Practice and Production of Culture

Few scholars have extended Bourdieu’s key religious concepts to studies on specific, localized congregations. Monnot (2018), however, provides an interesting perspective on the production of culture within a space of Sunday worship that is applicable to this thesis. Religious
fields, like other fields, contain “relations of power, hierarchy or cultural positioning that favour some groups over others” (p. 120). It is important to locate specific congregations within the cultural field in order to understand their overall relationship to the field, as well as relations of power and cultural positioning. As Monnot (2018) points out, when a sociological researcher analyzes relations of power and domination within a religious field, they must also identify the specifics of that field and understand how agents are situated within it. If not, then the researcher is, in fact, participating in the constitutive discourses of the field and potentially reproducing the relations of power that structure that field.

The cultural production of worship is distinct according to specific congregations through its combination of speech, music, and prayer, along with readings, gestures, and recitations. A church’s musical style, speech used within a service, and member participation create a specific culture that is shared by a congregation. The performance is indicative of the cultural capital that is therefore accumulated by the congregation. Worship can be understood as an “institutional logic” (Monnot, 2018, p. 123) which determines a selection of particular elements from material practices, symbolic constructions, and liturgical elements, each of which make up its organizing principles. As Monnot explains, “the selection of cultural elements affects the cultural style of worship service produced by congregations and positions them socially” (p. 123). Various components of worship services, including songs, instruments, prayers, recitations, and types of liturgy “characterize the positioning of local communities in a field of specific cultural production” (p. 123).

Congregations distinguish themselves from other congregations through their selection of the closest cultural tools from the available repertoire (Monnot, 2018), engaging in a “practical reaction” to the social space at hand (Bourdieu, 1989). Some congregations, for example, may
want to use music as a tool to indicate their distance from congregations of other faith traditions. If they see another culture as “negative” or “wrong”, they may express their distance from that congregation or perhaps view them as “spiritually negative” (Monnot, 2018, p. 133). In understanding a specific congregation’s dispositions, one may better understand the potential distribution of cultural capital and related powers in play. The process is fluid, both structured and structuring. As Bourdieu (2000) articulated:

The social space cannot be reduced to a simple ‘awareness context’ in the interactionist sense, a universe of points of view reflecting each other *ad infinitum*. It is the relatively stable site of the coexistence of points of view, in the dual sense of positions in the distribution of capital…and of the corresponding powers, but also of *practical reactions* [itals in original] to or representations of that space, produced from these points through habitus that are structured, and doubly informed, by the structure of the space and by the structure of the schemes of perception that applied to it. (p. 132)

As congregations use cultural tools to position and distinguish themselves from other congregations, adjustments to the position may contribute to congregants’ overall sense of place, either by maintaining a certain style of worship, or producing another one to assert their distance (Monnot, 2018).

**Conclusion**

The theories presented in this chapter place emphasis on the complexities of social life itself, both in terms of human action and unconscious reproductive tendencies that exist in the social world. Bourdieu’s key concepts of habitus, capital, and field describe the wide array of social rules in accordance to which humans act, while also acknowledging the flexibility and freedom present in social life (Schirato & Roberts, 2020). Bourdieu’s (1977) *Theory of Practice*
was ultimately developed in order to uncover structures of domination and power in place and, although not commonly used as a framework for research in religious contexts, provides a helpful perspective in understanding the cultural positioning of local congregations and how congregants may be impacted through their “ritualistic” practices of music-making. Further, Bourdieu’s framework can be useful in analyzing the role of the worship leader as one who holds religious capital as well as how bodily practices in worship contribute to congregants’ habitus formation, for example. As Monnot (2018) articulates, it is necessary to locate congregations within specific cultural fields to understand issues of power and cultural positioning that are in play. Music-making practices, in particular, can be understood to be representative of a congregation’s social positioning and the type of cultural capital that is often maintained.

In this study, I conceptualize each church case as positioned within musical and theological fields, operating according to the rules that exist in each of their fields as well as the greater religious field. As the data in this study indicate, worship leaders as well as musicians act according to rules set in place in their local congregations. Yet as disjunctures appeared in the congregations between habitus and field, some musicians underwent processes of self-questioning and viewed their roles as musicians and worshippers differently. As later explored in this thesis, I argue for the importance of worship leaders’ greater awareness of their practices and actions within the religious field, contributing to habitus formation, perceptions of musicianship, and notions of what constitutes “worship” in each church setting.
CHAPTER IV
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach to this thesis, exploring processes of recruitment, data collection, and analysis, as well as researcher reflexivity which informed the thesis. The purpose of this study was to investigate two churches’ music-making practices and their reflection of and response to the musical and theological fields in which they are located. I considered how worship leaders and musicians could strategize their musical behaviours within CWM settings, and explored whether such musical behaviours may have reflected and shaped habitus both institutionally and individually, and if, the ways in which the process occurred.

I designed the study to explore the following research questions, each of which drew upon Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977) (see below):

1. How do two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located?
   a. What are the doxa of these fields?

2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in two different CWM settings?

3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?

This study operated within a qualitative research paradigm and used case study research to examine two churches’ CWM music-making practices. Data from questionnaires, non-participant observation of musical rehearsals, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews are presented in my data findings chapters. Through the implementation of cross-case analysis,
the study examined two cases to investigate commonalities and divergences between them (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008; Miles et al., 2014). Below, I outline my methodological approach as well as rationale for the study design and analysis.

**Ontological and Epistemological Decisions**

Educational research, as well as the broader social sciences, represent many ways to approach and interpret social reality. It is therefore useful to examine explicit and implicit assumptions that drive understandings of the social world. Burrell and Morgan (1979) list four sets of such assumptions: ontological, epistemological, human, and methodological assumptions. Ontological assumptions “concern the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 5). Epistemological assumptions (the nature of what is known) focus more on the very bases of knowledge: its nature, forms, how it is acquired and communicated to other humans. Ontological and epistemological assumptions influence methodological considerations, which, in turn, impact instrumentation and data collection (Cohen et al., 2018). Burrell and Morgan’s four assumptions reflect the subjectivist-objectivist divide within social sciences, each of which have profound implications for educational research. Both of these perspectives drive a researcher’s approach to the methodological design, and whether they choose to use a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods design.

Kuhn’s (1962) ground breaking work in methodology highlighted the discussion of “research paradigms”, which is “a way of looking at our research phenomena, a world view, a view of what counts as accepted or correct scientific knowledge” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p. 8). In other words, a paradigm is a shared belief system or way of pursuing knowledge within the world. Lukenchuk (2013) identifies six general research paradigms: empirical-analytic (scientific; quantitative; explanatory), pragmatic (problem-centred; practical; experimental),
interpretive (phenomenological; qualitative, constructivist; existential understanding), critical (concerned with analysis of power and ideology; transformatory), post-structuralist (anti-foundation knowledge; deconstructionist); and transcendental (asserts reason, intuition, mysticism, revelation as ways of knowing; qualitative). While paradigms do not necessarily drive the research, they are characterizations of research approaches and can overlap with one another (Cohen et al., 2018).

As a music education researcher studying church music-making practices, I focus on participants’ subjective, lived experiences. I believe that inquiry itself is inevitably a political act, focused on the pursuit of truth. As Kuntz (2015) states, “whether we reinscribe the normalizing processes of our present or challenge the legitimacy of commonsensical inquiry, methodological work is inevitably political” (p. 12). Methodological work involves truth telling, and Kuntz encourages the social-justice minded inquirer to orient themselves towards truth-telling, a “becoming-with the very truths one seeks to speak” (p. 16). Kuntz therefore strives for practices that consider inquiry as “relationally bound” to the particular phenomenon being studied (p. 17). As further explored later in this chapter, my study’s methodological design focused significantly on researcher reflexivity, as I upheld models of reflexive religious subjectivity and wrestled with maintaining distance in relation to my researcher position when working with particular churches.

**Qualitative Research**

Based on the aim and focus of my study, including the research questions, I chose to operate within a qualitative research paradigm, adopting an interpretive view of the research at hand. *Qualitative research* is a loosely defined term described by Cohen et al. (2018) to include “a vast range of kinds of research, [with] a wide range of meanings and cover[ing] a
heterogeneity of fields” (p. 287). Hammersley (2013) suggests that since the term consists of such a large range of meanings, it may no longer be a “genuine or useful category” (p. 99).

Following descriptions of qualitative research as focusing on “attitudes towards understanding, experiences and interpretations by humans of the social world, and how to enquire about all of these” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 287; see also Bryman, 2008), Hammersley (2013) defines qualitative research as

a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of approach. (p. 12).

Purposes for qualitative research may include “description, explanation, reporting, creation of key concepts, theory generation and testing” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 287), where each of these purposes tend to involve the gathering of verbal, aural, observational, and tactory information from a large range of sources that draw strongly on direct experiences and meanings. In other words, qualitative research understands knowledge as “perspectival and multiple” (Matsunobu & Bresler, 2014, p. 23) and tends to navigate distances and movements across a variety of perspectives. Subject and subjectivity are key elements of qualitative research, as researchers study phenomena within their natural settings, making sense of the research subjects according to the meanings that people bring to them (Allsup, 2014). Other common characteristics of qualitative research methods include researching within naturalistic settings as the researcher designs data collection questions; the implementation of multiple methods of data collection; the negotiation of inductive and deductive logic to analyze and form conclusions; an
emergent and flexible research design; an acknowledgement of multiple perspectives within data; and a focus on researcher reflexivity (Creswell, 2014).

In terms of epistemology, qualitative research methodology assumes that social reality is constructed according to an individual’s specific perspective, influenced by their personal and cultural contexts. Further, qualitative research epistemologies presuppose that knowledge exists in the relationship between people and the outside world, as humans actively construct meaning (Matsunbu & Bresler, 2014). Within the field of music education specifically, qualitative research has roots in the twentieth century “interpretive turn” within social science research where research paradigms moved away from a “scientific”, detached view of knowledge (Allsup, 2014). This shift has led to qualitative research becoming recognized as a more central, legitimate methodology. Case study and ethnography, each classified as “mainstream qualitative genres” (Matsunbu & Bresler, 2014, p. 23), have increased in prevalence, while new genres including narrative and arts-based research have surfaced (i.e. Barrett & Stauffer, 2012; Bresler, 2006; McCarthy, 2007). The application of a systematic inquiry that focuses on people’s lived experiences has developed particularly in the last twenty years (Matsunbu & Bresler, 2014).

Qualitative research aligned with my research interests, as I investigated two churches’ music-making practices and their reflection of and response to their location within musical and theological fields. I also examined musicians’ strategization of musical behaviours and habitus formation. When designing this study, I wanted to implement a research methodology that was flexible to adequately represent church musicians’ worship experiences in their totality. It would be difficult to quantify the spiritual element of engaging with and leading through worship music and I aimed to allow for personalized interpretations of musicians’ experiences within each church setting. Rather than focusing on “desired outcomes” at the onset of my research, I spent
more time emphasizing the processes of research and participants’ behaviour, striving to engage in “thick description” (Geertz, 2000) within each setting for an accurate representation of each in my stages of data collection and analysis. My research questions address subjective, individual experiences that are well aligned with qualitative methods of data collection such as interviews, participant observations, document analysis, and questionnaires. Further, epistemologies are not understood as static in nature and a qualitative research paradigm generally promotes flexibility and reflexivity if my methodology were to shift in nature.

**Bourdieu and Research Methodology**

The key elements of Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) tend to be interrelated rather than to be studied as discrete entities. Bourdieu’s approach involves both theory and research, as he develops hypotheses to describe the functioning of a phenomenon, while also collecting and analyzing empirical data to understand the “real world”. He demonstrates an ongoing, “reflexive interplay” between empirical investigation and theoretical explanation (Grenfell, 2014a, p. 214). Bourdieu’s empirical approach to investigating the social world is structural, relational, and dynamic as he focuses on flexible changing structures of the world (external objective readings) while examining individuals’ participation within them (internal subjective readings). He tends to begin with a phenomenon or research question at hand before developing overarching concepts and theories (Grenfell, 2014a).

Grenfell (2014a) suggests that Bourdieu operationalizes three methodological principles in practice: the construction of the research object; field analysis; and participant objectivation. Once an object of research is “constructed”, Bourdieu describes a three-stage field analysis: first,
analyze the position of the field with the field of power; second, map out the structure of
relations between agents’ positions; and third, analyze the habitus of agents (Bourdieu &
Wacquant, 1992). This methodological approach prompted the interaction between different key
elements of his theory (i.e. habitus, capital, and field). In a sense, data collection may
“presuppos[e] an initial gathering of personal – habitus accounts…analysed with respect to field
positions, structures, and their underlying logic of practice; and, most importantly the
relationship between field and habitus (Grenfell, 2014a, p. 223, emphasis in original). The
construction of the research object was poignant in Bourdieu’s work as a way to “‘break’ with
the ‘pre-given’ of the [academic] world” (p. 224). Such a way of approaching the object of study
necessitates an epistemological shift towards reflexivity.

This research study used Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977) as a theoretical
framework while also following Bourdieu’s approach to research methodology. Similar to
Bourdieu’s research process ebbing and flowing between empirical investigation and theoretical
explanation, I sought to investigate worship musicians’ experiences first-hand, then moving to
my theoretical framework to understand the data, and then back to my empirical investigation.
The study focused on internal subjective readings of musicians while also acknowledging
external objective readings of the church cases and their social positioning. I, too, began my
thesis research with a phenomenon at hand that I aimed to study: church music-making practices
in their totality. After considering my own experiences as a church musician and worshipper, I
then looked into possible theories and explanations for the experiential knowing and being that
exists within church music-making.
Methodologies within Congregational Music Studies

As the field of congregational music studies has increased in prevalence, research has more recently addressed the interdisciplinary methodologies required to analyze church music. Church music-making is multifaceted in practice and therefore requires a broad range of methodological approaches, particularly as scholars enter the field from other disciplines and tend to encounter different methodological norms, assumptions, and modes of discourse within church music research. Most recently, an edited collection by Mall et al. (2021) emerged that presents current methodological practices used by leading scholars in the congregational music studies field. Along with the varying approaches addressed in the collection, it is important to acknowledge that the term “congregation”, or perhaps in terms of my study “church musicians”, is shifting and may more accurately be understood as a “fluid, contingent social constellation that is actively performed into being through a set of communal practices” (Ingalls, 2018, p. 5). The notion of congregation, or more broadly church music could more often be conceptualized in terms of a performed process rather than a product. While Ingalls focuses on the musical modes of congregating found in worship conferences, music festivals, social media, and Bible studies, I find such a shift relevant to my study as a methodological focus is placed on the process rather than the defined product, which is what my research questions lend themselves towards.

Methodological approaches in congregational music studies vary in practice and provide different perspectives to traditional approaches in overlapping fields. Ruth’s (2021) work, for example, engages in liturgical analysis of congregational song lyrics, focusing on the congregation’s experiences, rather than a traditional harmonic analysis methodological lens to study church music. Busman (2021) emphasizes the importance of studying the sonic elements of congregational music in his examination of Hillsong United’s repertoire, accounting for the
theology that is expressed at a nonverbal level. Introducing relatively new approaches to church music, Nekola (2021) emphasizes an integrative critical-cultural media studies approach to the study of religious music while Zon (2021) encourages the implementation of scientific methodologies to understand the natural and metaphysical world in relation to music theology. Each of these approaches draw on methodological elements from other research fields which is indicative of the field of congregational music studies.

The interdisciplinary nature of congregational music methodologies aligns with this study. This thesis research integrates music education, church music, theology, and community music disciplines. I use a qualitative case study approach, which is common in music education research, yet also filters in to each of the other disciplines. As church music research is shifting towards less defined notions of church music-making and modes of congregating, my focus on musicians’ subjective, lived experiences coincides with such a shift. My chosen methodology also lends itself to a critical, sociological examination of church music-making, considering the ontological and social nature of musical practices.

**Case Study Research**

A wide array of research methodologies are classified as being qualitative in nature, including case study, ethnography, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and action research, among others. The case study is often used in qualitative studies, typically because of the “adaptability of its design and process, compatibility with educational research, transparency for readers, and pedagogical utility in research education” (Barrett, 2014, p. 113). Yin (2014) describes the case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and in its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). Case study research, therefore,
allows one to understand a real-world case, retaining a holistic perspective, while relying on multiple data sources for evidence. The case study is preferred for the examination of contemporary events that do not involve the manipulation of behaviours (Yin, 2014). Case studies “strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 2000) of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about, and feelings for, a situation” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 377).

Case studies can consist of single or multiple cases (Yin, 2014), allowing the researcher to focus “extensively and intensively” on the cases (Stake, 1995, p. 37). A researcher’s analysis of multiple cases can increase the internal validity of a study, providing a more detailed and reliable understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Such an approach allows for a greater exploration of research questions and theoretical evolution (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Stake (1995) explains that in a collection of cases, there will be individual questions related to each particular case, as well as overall questions pertaining to all of the cases. It is necessary, then, to carefully select cases and clearly define them, recognizing boundaries between phenomenon and context. Each case will be bound by time, place, and context (Stake, 1995) to help determine the people, place, and time period that define the case. Cases cannot simply be abstract, even if they begin with hypotheses (Barrett, 2014; Yin, 2014), and definitions of cases will need to be reviewed regularly as shifts may occur when themes or questions emerge from the data (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011).

**Choosing Cases**

In terms of selecting cases for the multiple case study (or as Stake (2006, p. vi) terms the ‘multicase’ study), the selection process typically begins with cases partially identified following three main criteria also identified by Stake (2006) - (1) Is the case relevant to the quintain (the
cases in the collection; the object, phenomenon, or condition to be studied)? (2) Do the cases provide diversity across contexts? (3) Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts? My identification of what concept or idea bound the cases together helped in my study’s case selection, which was the concept of musical worship in evangelical churches. Typically, it is helpful to research multiple contexts where the particular program or phenomenon exists, and where cases are often selected in both typical and atypical settings (Stake, 2006). Flyvbjerg (2011) suggests several strategies for the selection of samples and cases, where cases are either randomly selected to avoid systematic biases in the sample, or selected according to information-orientation. In the second overarching method of case selection, these cases are generally selected “to maximize the utility of information from small samples and single cases” where “cases are selected on the basis of expectations about their information content” (p. 307).

**Church Cases.** The churches selected for this study are both Protestant churches that are considered to be subsets of evangelical Protestant and mainline Protestant churches. More specifically, the church cases include a Presbyterian church and a Reformed church. In my review of literature chapter, I provide more information regarding how these cases align with evangelicalism as a whole as well as their theological and historical positioning within the context of Protestantism. My aim was to focus on the research questions specifically rather than provide an overarching picture of church worship and music education. After receiving approval by Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board, I purposefully selected and contacted approximately four churches in the Kitchener-Waterloo region, where I was located, who I expected to have differing approaches to church worship due to their theological positioning. My process of sampling assumed that I wanted “to discover, understand, and gain
insight” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96), and that I therefore needed to select a sample from which most information could be learned. Here, I handpicked the four cases as samples “on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of a particular characteristic being sought” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 218). Patton (2015) acknowledges that the power of qualitative purposeful sampling lies within information-rich cases, and the churches were chosen and contacted based on their ability to meet the criteria that guided the case. The two data sites were the two churches who responded to me, and there appeared to be a lack of interest in the study overall due to the effects of a recent COVID-19 lockdown. Data collection occurred in May to July 2021 with each church serving as its own case. Both churches were situated in the Kitchener-Waterloo region in Ontario, Canada. In total, twenty-two church musicians and two worship leaders participated in the study. Participants ranged from age 18 to approximately 80 years in age.

**Church Case #1. *Redeemer*¹⁵** Christian Reformed Church is a multi-generational Protestant Reformed Church located in Kitchener, Ontario and was formed in 1948. This church denomination falls under the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) of North America. They affirm three historic Reformed confessions of faith: the Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort, and the Heidelberg Catechism. With roots deriving from the sixteenth-century Reformation, Redeemer Church is Calvinist in nature and generally follows a “blended” worship style of both traditional and contemporary elements of the liturgy. Redeemer Church’s theological perspectives are more clearly defined in this study’s review of literature chapter.

Due to the effects of COVID-19, I was not able to visit the church in person. Yet in my conversations with different participants, as well as my initial contact with the worship

¹⁵ Pseudonym used for anonymity
coordinator, Redeemer Church is comprised of approximately 450 members. Their worship planning team works to “ensure that the CCRC’s worship is faithfully Reformed while also reflecting the diversity of the universal church, relevant to the needs of our community while also welcoming to those who are visiting, and accessible for all people” (Worship Coordinator, personal communication, 2022). The worship planning team follows this broader mandate for all of worship, and while the mandate does not contain any specifics about music, the team works to select songs in the service to fulfill specific liturgical functions, such as songs of praise, songs of preparation, and doxology repertoire. My main contact from Redeemer Christian Reformed Church was the current worship coordinator who was on staff at the church. She served on the worship planning team and organized several different individual praise teams, each with their own musical leader. During the time of my data collection, Redeemer Church livestreamed their services, recording up to five musicians in the church building at a time leading music (due to COVID-19 requirements) as well as a minister preaching. Musicians would typically consist of two vocalists, a guitarist, pianist, and violinist. As the researcher, I watched recordings of the rehearsals that were sent to me by the worship coordinator. Five church musicians and one worship leader participated in the study. While Redeemer Church has several rotating music teams, the musicians and the worship leader who participated were all from the same music team.

Church Case #2. Second, *Calvin*\(^{16}\) Presbyterian Church is a multi-generational Protestant Presbyterian Church in Waterloo, Ontario. Its local roots go back to 1888 when the Presbyterian church began in its original Waterloo building. This church falls under the Presbyterian Church of Canada denomination which is further discussed in the review of

\(^{16}\) Pseudonym used for anonymity
literature. The Presbyterian Church of Canada has historical roots in the sixteenth-century Reformation and tends to be Calvinist in nature.

Similar to Redeemer CRC, I was not able to visit this church in person due to the effects of COVID-19. After speaking initially with the music director, she described the musical scene at Calvin and the aim of their church’s music. As stated on their church’s website, their church music tended to range from traditional to contemporary:

Our congregational enjoys all styles of music in worship. Each week we experience both traditional and contemporary forms of music. Our Chancel Choir, Praise Band, Music Scholars, and themed music help this to happen, through anthems and leading the congregational singing. We welcome any and all newcomers to each of our music groups!

Music at Calvin Church is primarily led by the Chancel Choir as well as the Praise Band at some points. The Chancel Choir leads the hymns and anthems each week, and it was the Chancel Choir that I observed for my study, as the Praise Band was not rehearsing during the summer months as it only consisted of students. I considered the Chancel Choir to be “contemporary” in nature, as they sought to pursue less traditional hymns and more recent choral repertoire with current topics (i.e. social justice, equality, environmental awareness). I classified them as a “virtual ensemble” in my data analysis, as they operated solely via Zoom during COVID-19.

Calvin Church also focused significantly on the education of student church musicians. Through their “Music Scholars” program, five music students serve during the academic year as musical leaders, active both in the Praise Band and choir. These students serve as accompanists, worship planners, choristers, and praise band musicians, and are mentored by the music director in the process. Some of the study participants were also music scholars. Seventeen church musicians
participated from Calvin Church, along with one worship leader. Participants were all choir members as well as the one worship leader. Rehearsals for the Chancel Choir and Praise Band were online over Zoom. After a group Zoom rehearsal, members would record their musical parts individually on Zoom, and the musical leaders would combine the songs to be used during online church services.

Table 1:

Description of study participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participants</th>
<th>*Redeemer Christian Reformed Church</th>
<th>*Calvin Presbyterian Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church Musician Participation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Leader Participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study Procedures

As described in the research ethics application, study processes and procedures ensured that consent from each church was sought in a proper order and that participants’ anonymity remained throughout the study. Consent to conduct research in each church was sought from the senior pastor, on behalf of the church council if appropriate. The senior pastor received and signed a letter of information and consent, and then each worship coordinator consented to the research study. The worship coordinators were asked to distribute invitations to participate in the research study to each church musician. At the end of the letter of information and consent, participants were able to indicate if they consented to be contacted for a follow-up interview. They were then asked to provide an email and telephone number. Each participant received a unique study ID number so the researcher could not identify participants. Once they were assigned a unique study ID, all participants received an email link from Qualtrics, which meets Western University’s data security and confidentiality standards for online surveys. If participants consented to an interview as well, the thirty-minute semi-structured interviews
further discussed research questions. Due to COVID-19 government restrictions, all semi-structured interviews took place over Zoom. Participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts following the semi-structured interviews. Ongoing verbal consent provided participants with the opportunity to leave the study at any point in data collection or analysis.

Data Collection

In all qualitative research, the use of multiple sources of evidence is understood to be integral in maintaining trustworthiness and honesty within a study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014), allowing “multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). In case study research specifically, Yin (2014) recommends using multiple sources of evidence such as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Using multiple sources of evidence is a process of triangulation, which can occur through data sources (data triangulation), among different investigators (investigator triangulation), of perspectives to the same data set (theory triangulation), and of methods (methodological triangulation) (Yin, 2014, p. 120). This study used online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation of music rehearsals, and the use of artifacts as instruments of data collection for each church case. These instruments were chosen as they were useful in considering the phenomena from the perspective of the musicians involved. Due to the focus of my research study, each of the methods of data collection focus on the subjective, individual experiences of participants. Below I describe each qualitative data collection method in greater detail.

Questionnaires. Qualitative surveys or questionnaires typically consist of a variety of open-ended questions, designed by a researcher focused on a particular topic. Fully qualitative questionnaires can produce “rich and complex accounts of…participants’ subjective experiences,
narratives, practices, positionings, and discourses” (Braun et al., 2020, p. 641), providing a “wide-angle lens on the topic of interest” (p. 643). Questionnaires provide researchers with a larger and more diverse data set, and within qualitative research hearing from multiple, diverse participants is useful to gain a richer perspective on the specific phenomena being researched. Having a variety of open-ended and closed questions on the questionnaire is advantageous as closed questions are quicker to code, analyze, and are more focused, while open-ended questions can lead to valuable information that puts more responsibility of the data to the respondents (Cohen et al., 2018).

In this study, all participants received an email link from Qualtrics and completed an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open-ended questions surrounding musicians’ participation in their church musical life, the effect of COVID-19 on their church’s worship, how they typically prepared for worship band/choir practices, how practices are typically run, and who can be part of the worship band/choir at their particular church. Beginning with closed questions surrounding demographics and participation, the survey moved towards more open-ended questions where participants could describe their worship band/choir rehearsals, the worship aspect of their musical participation, and limitations of musician participation. The questionnaire was helpful in providing the researcher with an initial understanding of participants’ church musical experiences and understandings of worship. Survey responses helped provide a wide variety of perspectives to the phenomena at hand. If participants consented to a follow up semi-structured interview, then the researcher was able to further understand their experiences in a more detailed, deeper manner. As addressed above, participants indicated on the questionnaire whether they were interested in participating in a follow up semi-structured interview.
Semi-structured Interviews. Interviews are social, personal, intersubjective encounters and modes of inquiry. They allow participants to share their understanding of the world and their own point of view focused on particular subject matter. When approaching knowledge as constructed between participants, the interview, as a method of data collection, is understood as a flexible tool that enables a wide array of sensory channels to be used; verbal, non-verbal, seen, spoken, heard, and written (Cohen et al., 2018). Seidman (2019) writes that “at the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language (p. 8). In-depth interviewing involves an interest in the stories of others.

In case study research specifically, Yin (2014) suggests that one of the most important tools of data collection is the interview. Rather than structured queries, interviews in case study research more accurately represent guided conversations. In depth interviews are typical of case study research and in such interviews, the researcher has two main tasks: (1) following the line of inquiry according to case study protocol; and (2) asking questions in an unbiased manner that focuses on the line of inquiry. Case study interviews can include prolonged interviews, shorter interviews, and survey interviews, consisting either of extended interviews (more than two hours are classified as prolonged interviews), or more focused interviews (survey interviews). In this study, the semi-structured interviews were classified as shorter case study interviews. They were focused, following the case study protocol, yet still remained open-ended and maintained a conversational nature. As the interview was semi-structured in nature, the questions were developed ahead of time in the interview guide (see Appendix D & E), yet tailored towards each individual interviewee and the responses given. Even though some of the interview questions were repetitive from the questionnaire, I was not able to determine an interview participants’ questionnaire response and link the two. I therefore began each interview with an
acknowledgement that some of the questions may be similar to the questionnaire, yet explained that I wanted to have more of a conversation and understand their perspectives in a more detailed manner.

Within qualitative research, an interviewee is understood to be “an active constructor of knowledge” along with the interviewer “rather than a vessel of answers” (Matsunbu & Bresler, 2014, p. 23). The open-ended questions were flexible, allowing me to probe and construct new meanings or understandings along with the interviewee. Such questions also encouraged cooperation and established rapport, and provided me with a more accurate understanding of each musicians’ music-making practices in relation to their church. I tended to take a “funnel-like” approach to interviewing, starting with a broad question or statement and then moving to more specific questions and details. The interview guides for church musicians and worship leaders were quite similar. I had some general, overarching questions, such as “Is there anything specific about being part of a worship context that affects your musical experience?” and then moved to more probing questions depending on the participant and their response, such as “What does it mean to make music in a worship context? Have you had conversations surrounding worship and your role as church musicians?” See Appendix D & E for the interview guides in more detail. The table below demonstrates how my interview questions related to research questions and their relation to key literature used for the study.
Table 2:  

Relationship between Interview Questions, Research Questions, and Key Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions (for Church Musicians &amp; Worship Leaders)</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Key Literature (in addition to Bourdieu)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Please provide a description of your worship band and your role within it. (Probing questions: instrumentalist vs. vocalist; number of years participating; how often) | RQ 1: How do each church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to musical/theological fields & the doxa of the fields? RQ 3: Do musical behaviours reflect and shape habits institutionally and individually? If so, how? | • Characteristics of CWM (Lim & Ruth, 2017; Ruth, 2015; Scheer, 2013)  
• Descriptions of worship bands (Ingalls, 2008, 2018) |
| 2. Please describe your musical background and how that relates to your participation in a worship band today. (Probing questions: background of music learning; practicing; elements of participation in worship band) | RQ 1: How do each church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to musical/theological fields & the doxa of the fields? | • Popular music education & informal pedagogy (Green, 2002, 2008; Woodward, 2017)  
• Musical inclusion/exclusion & excellence in music education & CM (Henley & Higgins, 2020; Small 1977, 1996; Wright, 2017, 2019; Yerick & Krar, 2021) |
| 3. How are your worship band practices run? (Probing questions: how new music is introduced; the role of the worship leader; selection of music; who makes decisions) | RQ 1: How do each church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to musical/theological fields & the doxa of the fields? RQ 2: How and why do worship leaders & musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours? | • Role of the facilitator (Higgins, 2012)  
• Musical inclusion/exclusion & excellence in music education & CM (Henley & Higgins, 2020; Wright, 2017, 2019; Yerick & Krar, 2021) |
| 4. Is there anything specific about being part of a worship context that affects your musical experience? (Probing questions: conversations surrounding worship and making music; the role of musicians; influence of worship on practices) | RQ 2: How and why do worship leaders & musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours? RQ 3: Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habits both institutionally and individually? If so, how? | • Theological approaches to worship (Best, 1982; DeMol, 1992; Jencks, 2013; Ratzinger, 2008; Wolterstorff, 2005)  
• Theology & CWM (Koenig, 2008)  
• Ritual and performance of values (Phelan, 2008, 2017; Smith, 2013)  
• Liturgy in worship (Wolterstorff, 2015) |
| 5. What is the community of your worship band like? | RQ 1: How do each church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to musical/theological fields & the doxa of the fields? RQ 3: Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habits both institutionally and individually? If so, how? | • CWM shaping participation (Koenig, 2008; Leney, 2021)  
• Critique of CWM (Crouch, 2022; Dawn, 1995)  
• Ritual and performance of values (Phelan, 2008, 2017; Smith, 2013) |

Interview times were scheduled over email once I received email addresses for those who consented to a follow-up interview. Each interview was conducted over Zoom and was recorded for myself, the researcher, to transcribe following the interview. This allowed me to make brief notes throughout the interview and focus on the conversation at hand rather than trying to write everything down in the process. Interviews were approximately thirty minutes in length.

Member checking is both an informal and formal process, and occurs continually, as participants can confirm their own interview transcriptions, and insights from one group can be tested by another (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each study participant was invited to check their
interview transcription which was helpful to confirm that I was interpreting their responses in the manner in which they meant. Methods of data collection such as questionnaires or interview questions can also be piloted to help contribute to their credibility and trustworthiness as a method of data collection (Cohen et al., 2018). This process typically includes checking for clarity, receiving feedback on the validity of items, identifying redundant questions, identifying commonly misunderstood items, and so on. In this study, I had my supervisors check the interview questions for clarity and to provide feedback.

**Non-participant Observation.** Observation as a research methodology is a systematic looking and noting of “people, events, behaviours, settings, artefacts” and more (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 542). Stake (2006) suggests that the “most meaningful data-gathering methods are often observational” (p. 4), and observations can draw the researcher into the complexities of participants’ lives, understanding various connections and correlations as they occur. Observations allow the researcher to access data on the physical setting (the physical environment and organization), the human setting (organization, characteristics, and make up of people), the interactional setting (formal, informal, planned, and unplanned interactions), and the program setting (resources, pedagogic styles) of interest (Cohen et al., 2018). The data is “live” rather than deriving from reported or second-hand accounts. “Non-participant observation” or a “complete observer” refers to an observer who is detached from the group such as an outside observer or an observer whose presence is unnoticed by the group. A complete observer would be classified as being completely detached. Cohen et al. (2018) explain that a large observation continuum exists, moving from complete participation to complete detachment. In this study, I operated as a non-participant observer, detached from the group. I assert, however, that my positioning as a Christian researcher with knowledge of the particular religious and musical
practices being observed placed me a bit closer to the middle of the continuum, where I was a detached observer yet not “completely” detached. My subject position as a religious researcher is further discussed in the reflexivity section below.

Due to the effects of COVID-19, I was not physically present for music rehearsals in either church case. Since Calvin Church had their choir rehearsals over Zoom, I was invited to join and observe their rehearsals online. I observed two different Zoom choir rehearsals that were each one hour in length. Redeemer Church still rehearsed with the five musicians in their church building. I could not observe and increase the number of individuals within a physical setting. Yet the worship leader recorded two worship band rehearsals for me. Each of them were approximately one hour in length. For every rehearsal observation I followed a non-participant observation guide that focused on the physical setting, nonverbal cues, worship leaders, and musicians’ overall participation. If participants did not consent to observation, no notes were taken concerning their role in the practice.

*Field Notes.* In each of my rehearsal observations I took field notes in a research journal. I found the research journal helpful to maintain a “chain of evidence” (Yin, 2014) and allowed for my reflection on methodology at the conclusion of the study. Further, reflection on my field notes and observations allowed me to step back and consider my biases, positionality, and role as a non-participant observer in a clearer manner. During and following each rehearsal I would allow myself time to reflect and take notes on what I was observing and my reactions as the researcher. Scholars have stated that field notes add depth to qualitative research as they provide rich data to analyze (Patton, 2015). As data for this research study was only collected virtually, field notes helped me step back and engage with the data differently, viewing it in a new light. Virtual data collection was difficult to enact and field notes helped me stay focused.
**Documents.** Documents and artifacts also serve as forms of data in qualitative research. They are more of a natural part of the research setting versus a researcher entering a setting and altering it, and are an accessible, ready-to-use form of data. A large range of visual, written, and digital material related to the study can be classified as documents, while artifacts are usually three-dimensional objects or “things” within the environment that are meaningful to the research subjects (i.e. art pieces, school symbols, awards). Documents typically exist before the research study begins (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, documents included personal email communication with the worship coordinator. For Redeemer Church, I was also able to find a general “approach to worship music” document that I received from a different church of the same Christian Reformed Church (CRC) denomination which represents how CRC churches tend to approach worship planning and music in general. The different documents contributed to a greater understanding of each data site. Although document analysis was not a significant source of data, it still provided me with an understanding of each church case’s worship practices in greater depth.

**Incorporation of Virtual Research Methodologies**

As mentioned in the different descriptions of data collection sources, each method was conducted virtually as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual research methodologies have heightened in use over the last several years due to the pandemic, and along with their use they bring various advantages and disadvantages. While conducting online research can present greater difficulties with maintaining anonymity and privacy levels, along with issues of reliability and validity, online research can also increase levels of self-disclosure, reduce bias, and balance out power relationships (Enyon et al., 2017; Marotzki et al., 2017). Online observational research can also be less obtrusive than physically entering an environment as a
researcher-observer. Online questionnaires in particular have increased in prevalence, allowing for a greater range of functions such as response completeness and format checking which can enhance reliability. These questionnaires increase access, are convenient, affordable, and tend to be more accurate (Cohen et al., 2018). Further, presentation parameters can be better controlled versus text-based emailed approaches, which has been seen to impact participants’ responses (Hewson, 2017).

Every element of the study’s data collection was conducted virtually. This was not how the study was initially designed and how I was hoping my thesis research would be conducted, but I had to remain flexible and pivot according to current world events. In my ethics application to the Western Research Ethics Board, I deliberately remained flexible in planning and acknowledged that all observations, interviews, and contact with participants may switch to virtual research if recommended so according to COVID-19 government restrictions.

**Ethical Considerations throughout the Study**

As addressed in the section above, virtual research methodologies can present difficulties for maintaining validity and reliability. Data can be less secure, and it is difficult to assess participants’ perceived risk and reactions to interview questions (Enyon et al., 2017). When observing as a non-participant through a virtual platform, it can also become difficult to observe the “naturalistic” behaviour of users (Marotzki et al., 2017).

In order to account for these various challenges of virtual research, I implemented multiple sources of evidence through data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation (Yin, 2014). The different methods of data collection and sharing findings and data collection guides with supervisors are discussed earlier.
To gain trust with participants, I worked to build a positive rapport with them over Zoom, introducing myself and beginning with some informal conversation before interviews. I was sure to remind participants that they could abstain from answering any questions of their choice during the interviews and that they were able to end the interview at any time. Each participant was given a unique study ID to anonymize data (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). Participants were invited to re-review their letters of information and consent at any point and reviewed their interview transcripts as well.

In addition to triangulation, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the implementation of several other techniques to increase a qualitative study’s credibility and trustworthiness. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation include investing sufficient time to learn the study’s “culture”, test for misinformation, and establish trust. The effects of COVID-19 prevented me from engaging with each church case for a prolonged period of time, persistently observing them. Yet my study’s time frame was deliberately left flexible for me to pivot and collect data until I believed I could fairly represent the case in suitable detail. My research journal also helped me identify a point of saturation, as I gathered data until no new properties or themes were revealed (Creswell, 2014). Member checking is another method that is essential to maintaining trustworthiness. Participants and supervisors reviewed questionnaires and transcripts. This research study was also piloted, however, and the interview questionnaire, and observation guides were quite similar to the pilot study. This process helped ensure clarity, providing me with feedback and ideas from which to implement small changes.

Throughout the study process as a whole, it is important to maintain a “chain of evidence” (Yin, 2014) from the research questions to the study’s conclusions for an external observer to review at any point in time to ensure for honesty. Merriam and Tisdell (2016)
acknowledge that replication of a qualitative study will not always yield the same results since “what is being studied in the social world is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual” (p. 251). However, I was careful to identify my position and reflexivity early in the study to help readers better understand my interpretation of the data and the conclusions that I drew.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis surrounds the concept of moving from the data towards understanding, interpreting, and explaining the research focus. Data analysis includes elements of organizing, describing, understanding, and accounting for data findings. There is not one “correct” way of analyzing data; qualitative researchers “should abide by fitness for purpose” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 643) and decide which story they want to tell as qualitative data often has multiple interpretations. Data analysis can take place during data collection and also at the end of it. When data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, the analysis can be continually modified, or subject to addition, refinement, extension, and more. Analytical tools can be pre-ordinate, or decided in advance, and some can be responsive to the emerging data and their interpretation (Cohen et al., 2018).

Data analysis in my study was ongoing as it continued to inform further action (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014). Analytical tools were pre-ordinate in the sense that my theoretical framework and research questions led to the design of interview and non-participant observation guides, which guided my analysis and coding. Codes were generally taken from the theoretical framework in dialogue with the research questions and data. Yet some categories were responsive to the emerging data analysis and interpretation. I therefore used a combination of pre-ordinate and responsive categories throughout the data analysis process.
Coding

Data collection occurred for three months (May to July 2021). I reviewed online questionnaire results as I received them from both churches. Following the first month of data collection, I began to transcribe interviews from the first church case. Codes were developed from my initial transcriptions and questionnaire analysis. My analytic memos initially generated codes and categories that also reflected my research questions. The process “should blur and intertwine continually” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 43) and my processes of data collection, coding, and analytic memo writing were cyclical in nature.

Data analysis included two types of coding: descriptive, initial coding and pattern coding. Descriptive coding consists of a detailed inventory of the contents of data collection (Saldaña, 2016). While descriptive coding often provides a significant list of subtopics, it does not typically provide more analytical meanings of the data. Description is integral to qualitative inquiry and provides the groundwork for second cycle coding. I used short, descriptive nouns or phrases to initially code each transcription as well as my other observation notes. Part of this first cycle of descriptive coding included elements of initial (previously labelled “open”) coding. As I initially began to code, I noticed myself using selected codes repeatedly, as recommended by Saldaña (2016). I then subsumed codes into broader codes and categories in a separate document as I moved forward and continued to code interviews transcriptions. At times, I began to propose some analytical codes that could be used in the second cycle of coding while also remaining flexible.

Second cycle methods involve analytic skills such as classifying, integrating, synthesizing, and theory building (Saldaña, 2016). I used pattern coding as a second cycle method to group summary codes from both church cases into smaller categories, identifying
emergent themes. (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). Along with this process, I copied and pasted any significant participation quotations that aligned with the emergent themes to use them in my data analysis and discussion.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

When studying multiple cases, one advantage is to “increase generalizability”, seeing “processes and outcomes across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus to develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 101). Cross-case analysis allows greater opportunities for generalizability and transferability to other contexts, also contributing to a deeper understanding and explanation for a research study. Miles et al. (2014) differentiate between two different approaches to cross-case analysis methods: the case-oriented approach and the variable-oriented approach. A *case-oriented approach* considers each case in its entirety, looking at causes and effects within a case before comparing them. The *variable-oriented approach*, rather, is more conceptual and theory-focused from the beginning, focusing more on the variables and their interrelationships, rather than the cases. Within my research, I used a case-oriented approach in my cross-case analysis, where I first analyzed each case individually, then compared commonalities and differences to the other (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008) using the developed codes. This is similar to Yin’s (2014) replication strategy where a theoretical framework is used to study one case, and then other cases are analyzed for similar or different patterns (Miles et al., 2014).

In each step of my data collection and analysis, it was important to acknowledge my positionality and engage in researcher reflexivity. These practices contribute to the study’s validity and are critical to consider within qualitative research, especially when the researcher is collecting data from a site that she considers to be “home”.

159
**Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity**

Positionality locates people and their practices in relation to others, framing one’s understanding and outlook on the world. Rather than defining individuals in terms of fixed identities, positionality considers one’s location within shifting, changing networks of relationships (Wamba, 2016). Reflexivity, meaning one’s awareness of their position as a researcher, has little purpose unless it is connected to a greater understanding of what they are doing, the power they are holding, and the multiple identities they possess in relation to the wider world (Hopkins, 2007). This section considers the concept of positionality and my experiences and challenges as a religious researcher within musical worship contexts.

I consider my subject position as a white, heterosexual, able-bodied woman with a Canadian, middle-class, evangelical Protestant Reformed background in relation to North American evangelicalism and its music. I have experience leading worship music in several church settings and have had to consider my own religious affiliation in relation to participants’ positions. Perspectives such as race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability are critical to acknowledge when considering researcher reflexivity. As an “observant participant” (Butler, 2005, p. 48), I could sense myself resonating with one church case over another as a result of their approach to worship. I have had to actively work against opinions surrounding theological aspects of worship within churches in relation to my own religious experiences. It was also important for me to create a space of critical distance and work against an understanding of engaging with the data sites as “times of worship” for myself. As Mall (2021) acknowledges, one’s particular religious identity can shape and influence the knowledge that they have access to and produce.
Methodological Considerations

When conducting research in a cultural context that is seen as “familiar”, I sought to follow Ingalls’s (2018) ethnographic methodological considerations in negotiating her shifting relationship with evangelical Christianity. She similarly conducted research focused on evangelical Christianity both as a Christian worshipper and musician, yet from an ethnographic perspective, which I applied to a case study context.

The standard ethnographic field-research narrative “often centers on the researcher’s journey from distance to proximity, as he or she becomes more deeply integrated within the community and as knowledge about a group of people and their practices deepens” (Ingalls, 2018, p. 25). For ethnographers who are also “culture bearers” (Burnim, 1985, p. 433), meaning they are a member of the culture working in the familiar context and conducting fieldwork “at home”, the process tends to be inverted. Following this model, musical ethnography becomes “a way to move back from focusing on musical specifics that were already deeply familiar, a means of envisioning broader concerns, musical and human alike” (Stock & Chou, 2008, p. 109). Subjectivities require acknowledgement while also forming a “responsible” space of critical distance (Kuntz, 2015), especially by those whose research endeavors closely intersect with their daily lives (Matsunbu & Bresler, 2014).

A researcher may understand the process as one of “de-familiarization”, where “familiar and thus often overlooked cultural practices are rendered as a visible source of scrutiny” (Ingalls, 2018, p. 25). The research field must be carefully and actively constructed when conducting research, possibly resulting in shifts of what constitutes “home”. Ingalls (2018) refers to the presence of intersectionality in research – which emphasizes the “multiple, mutually influencing aspects of identity that any individual must negotiate” (p. 26), reminding the researcher that there
is often no straightforward classification of an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in particular research cases where the researcher is commonly integrated in the field.

I have spent many years serving in church musical leadership settings accompanying worship services and participating in church service planning. Similar to Ingalls (2018), my background and lifelong experience in North American churches provided me with a “thorough understanding of evangelical terms and categories for describing worship and religious experience, what some have parodied as ‘Christianese’” (p. 28). My ability to “speak the language” fluently appeared to lead to a sense of trust among study participants. In my pre-planned interview questions and non-participant observation, however, I strived to keep a distance from participants. This allowed me to properly represent my position as a researcher and maintain my ability to carefully and critically analyze worship experiences. In this way, when engaging in conversations with participants, I attempted to position myself as a Christian worshipper without giving too many specifics about my theological beliefs or background in a Protestant Reformed church, as this could have stifled conversations as well as participants’ expressions of individual theological beliefs.

Models of Reflexive Religious Subjectivity

Butler (2005, 2008) and Summit (2000, 2016) provide two helpful ethnomusicological models of reflexive religious subjectivity that were beneficial in framing my research methodology and negotiating my complex subject position. Butler (2005) begins his research on Pentecostal music-making in an Afro-Caribbean context by stating his position as an African American Pentecostal Christian musician. He refers to the involvement of ‘rhetorical acrobatics’ when negotiating between the dialogues of faith and scholarship as a researcher who is both an ethnographic and religious ‘observer’ (p. 48). In acknowledging the difficulties of this
negotiation, Butler’s anthropological fieldwork moves away from ‘participant observation’ toward the ‘observation of participation’. This shift moves away from ‘dispassionate observation’ towards the ‘participatory aspects of field experience’ (Butler, 2005, p. 48).

Drawing from Butler’s (2005) work, I have focused on the participatory aspects of field experiences, observing my experience singing along in my head to songs in worship rehearsals that I have observed, and acknowledging that I perceive through observation the religion that I am studying in multiple ways.

Summit (2000) similarly maintained a complex subject position throughout his research as he continued in his role as a rabbi studying Jewish congregational music-making. He explains that as a committed Jew, he approached his research “well equipped by [his] religious and cultural background” and felt like both a “guest observer and a participant” (Summit, 2000, p. 5). When considering research participants, he writes, “I was encountering people who were simultaneously ‘me’ and ‘not me’ [and] as I studied others’ identities, my identity was constantly in flux, a situation common to researchers engaged in fieldwork” (Summit, 2000, p. 6). As an insider, Summit (2000) reflects that he had to pay careful attention to how he approached informants, taking care not to talk with informants in the ‘shorthand’, trying not to be too quick in understanding participants’ responses in order to avoid cutting short “valuable observations and explanations” (p. 8), while also trying not to ‘show off’ his knowledge of the liturgy and music which might possibly “intimidate informants and keep them from sharing information” (p. 8). I attempted to follow similar advice in my process of data collection, approaching participants carefully with eagerness to listen and engage, rather than provide quick responses.

Based on Butler (2005) and Summit’s (2000) two models of reflexive religious subjectivity and difficulties that were addressed, I found it necessary in my research to establish
honest, trustworthy relationships with participants while clearly acknowledging and reflecting upon my own subjectivities, positionalities, agenda, and thinking throughout the research process. While I was able to move in and out of various roles and vantage points as a researcher, I found that my own religious affiliation positions me in relation to participants and their religious backgrounds as well as current church contexts. I constantly worked between a sense of familiarity and distance with participants. This complex subject position, however, was not a ‘weakness’ of mine, as I found that my insider position provided me with access to interpretations not possible otherwise.

During processes of data analysis, I was able to first reflect on my own position in relation to data and then consider other interpretations. A self-reflective process was integral in helping me maintain my complex subject position as a researcher. I was also careful to include a “reference group” of other individuals, such as my research supervisors and some trustworthy colleagues. Overall, I found that study participants maintained a “well-honed reflexivity” (Summit, 2000, p. 9) when addressing their music-making practices. Some of them noted why they preferred certain genres of church music over others, acknowledging their background, experiences, and current theological positioning. They were thoughtful in their observations about their church’s worship and music and their overall participation in the church communities. Other participants had a difficult time answering questions about worship in the semi-structured interviews. With these participants, my research aimed to open critical dialogue and contribute to new ways of considering and understanding church music-making practices. Similar to Ingalls (2018), I aimed for worshippers to find my scholarly perspective on church music informative and helpful as they critically analyzed their practice and sought to make worship reflect their theological ideals. Further, I aimed to provide insights regarding the
responsibilities of positionality within the research experience, being transparent about my location, background, and religious positioning. Moving forward, I plan to share my findings with all study participants as well and continue to engage in further dialogue with them.

**Study Methodological Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study’s methodological design. Some of them involved accounting for weaknesses of case study research, and others involved the effects of COVID-19 on data collection.

As a methodological approach, general weaknesses of the case study can be seen to relate to the process of data collection and interpretation. Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that while the opportunity to gather data from a variety of sources is attractive, often there are “overwhelming amounts of data that require management and analysis” (p. 554). It is easy for researchers to quickly feel “lost” in the data and it is crucial to have a system to effectively organize one’s data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). As the researcher interprets their data and writes a report, there is a temptation to present endless illustrations that take attention away from in-depth, rigorous analysis (Nisbet & Watt, 1984).

Another weakness of the case study approach involves selective reporting and reporter bias, which I had to account for in my anticipation of particular results. In addressing my subject position, I worked to maintain a reflexive demeanor as a researcher and acknowledge any biases particularly surrounding church worship and denominations that might influence data findings. Within case studies, it is important for events and situations to speak for themselves rather than heavily interpreting them (Cohen et al., 2018). It is necessary for case study researchers to particularly avoid journalism, consisting of picking out more striking features of the case and distorting the full account, as well as selective reporting, which includes only reporting evidence
that fits a researcher’s conclusions. I attempted to balance all of my data collection with thoughtful, well rounded interpretation,

Generalizability of results should also be considered as a potential weakness of the case study in some instances. Cohen et al. (2018) classify generalizability as a weakness of the case study, where the results may not actually be generalizable “except where other readers/researchers see their application” (p. 380). Flyvbjerg (2006), on the other hand, writes that a common misunderstanding of the case study is that “one cannot generalize from a single case, therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development” (p. 219). Flyvbjerg continues by explaining that a case’s ability to be generalized depends on the particular case and how it is chosen. It is also recommended for the researcher to acknowledge that “formal” generalization is too often over emphasized in the field. If a case cannot necessarily be generalized, it still can add to the collection of knowledge accumulation in a particular field and lead to a broader understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Stake, 1995). A case study can be even more exemplary by examining data from a variety of perspectives. Even if one cannot generalize from a single case, different perspectives and alternative views all contribute to the overall knowledge within a specific research field (Yin, 2014).

My focus on theory and investigator triangulation helped account for these possible weaknesses of the case study approach while also contributing to trustworthiness and data triangulation. I was careful to carefully position myself as a researcher and Christian worshipper, acknowledging to the best of my ability my biases, position, and understanding of worship.

The effects of COVID-19 also contributed to several study limitations. As mentioned previously, I had minimal participation interest from churches. I reached out to several and churches seemed apprehensive to participate, thinking that their musicians were burnt out
enough due to COVID-19. My original study design intended to have participation from three church cases, yet I ended up shifting my focus slightly and engaging in “thick description” with two churches, going “deeper” until a reached a point of saturation. It was difficult collecting data virtually, as I felt that it was harder to make connections with participants over Zoom. Yet on the other hand, online research may have been advantageous in terms of reducing bias and perceived power relationships (Enyon et al., 2017; Marotzki et al., 2017).

In terms of non-participant observation, I found it difficult that I could only view recordings of Redeemer Church’s worship team rehearsals, rather than physically or virtually sitting in as an observer. It was more convenient for Redeemer Church to simply record the rehearsals, but it felt more “distant” than joining in on a live rehearsal, whether in person or virtual, such as Calvin Church’s choir rehearsals. I took many notes in my journal while watching the rehearsal videos but it was still a different perspective and experience than engaging in “live” observation.

It is necessary to note that findings from the two church cases in this study are likely limited to those churches alone and not to other churches in the same denomination. For example, findings focused on music, worship, and the social field from Redeemer Church cannot and should not be generalized to represent musical experiences at all Christian Reformed Churches in North America.

Summary

This chapter explored my methodological decisions and choices, exploring ethical procedures, processes of recruitment, data collection, and analysis, and more broadly qualitative, case study, and virtual research methodologies. I acknowledge researcher reflexivity and measures to maintain validity and reliability. The data gathered at the two churches are presented
and discussed in the forthcoming chapters. Chapter five addresses data findings at Redeemer Christian Reformed Church and chapter six addresses data findings at Calvin Presbyterian Church, each in relation to Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977). Chapter seven discusses data findings and results from the cross-case analysis. Chapter eight concludes by presenting final thoughts, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY ONE: “MAKING THE IMPLICIT EXPLICIT”

Introduction

This chapter presents data findings from the first church case, *Redeemer* Christian Reformed Church. In this comparative case study of two churches, Redeemer Church was purposefully selected as one of four churches in the Kitchener-Waterloo region that I was expecting to have differing approaches to church worship according to their theological positioning. Data findings in this chapter are organized in relation to themes expressed in the study’s three research questions:

1. How do two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located?
   a. What are the doxa of these fields?
2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their (two different) CWM settings?
3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?

In what follows, I address each research question in relation to concepts present in Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) through the use of several sub-themes. In my analysis, the research questions served as pre-ordinate themes and codes became sub-themes that related to each research question. The first research question addresses sub-themes of selection of repertoire, theological approach to worship, and musical participation in response to the presence of musical and theological fields. The second research question addresses the strategization of musical behaviours in accordance with perceptions of musicianship. Lastly, I explore themes related to
the third research question while highlighting practices of intentional dialogue and leader-facilitator reflection.

As addressed in chapter three, Bourdieu approaches religion overall with a rather “mechanistic” understanding of the Catholic church. Several critiques of Bourdieu suggest that he reduces the open-ended elements of production and consumption (Dillon, 2001), and these critiques advocate for more of an every-day cultural analysis of phenomena. Drawing from this approach, this chapter conceptualizes a specific church case from a micro, individual level, considering how meaning is constructed and derived through everyday practices. The table below demonstrates how this chapter’s data findings relate to each of the research questions, and how the sub-themes, as developed from codes, respond to the three pre-ordinate themes.

Table 3:

Relationship Between Research Questions and Data Themes at Church #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Themes at Redeemer Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located? | A. Selecting repertoire  
   - Repertoire selection reflected “bleded worship”; different understandings of what constituted “bleded worship”  
   - The approval process involved with repertoire selection; themes of possible misrecognition, illusio, and collusio  
B. Approach to worship  
   - Worship leader and musicians pursued musical excellence (according to one’s skillset) while avoiding a performance mindset  
   - Worship musicians’ practices aimed towards facilitating congregational worship through congregants’ participation  
C. Musical participation in the worship team  
   - Open, thoughtful approach to participation but with musical standards  
   - Legitimization of classical musical capital |
| 2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of (two different) CWM settings? | A. The role of the worship leader  
   - Worship leader as religious specialist; coupling of church’s theological values with musical practices/decisions – focus on participation  
B. Perceptions of musicianship  
   - Worship leader subtly perpetuated notions of “one form” of musicality; connection between musical capital and theological beliefs  
   - Moderate shifts in musical behaviours occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic |
| 3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how? | A. Intentional dialogue from the worship leader shaping habitus  
   - Individually, habitus was impacted as the worship leader valued each musicians’ opinions, shaping their identity and perceptions of knowledge; focus on individual musical processes  
   - Institutionally, habitus was impacted through the worship leader’s relational interactions with musicians, potentially highlighting processes of legitimization and forces in place |
Making the “Implicit Explicit”

Wolterstorff (2015) writes of the importance of examining the construction of liturgy, making “explicit [what is] implicit in the liturgy” (p. 18). While Wolterstorff is distinctly referring to making explicit the understanding of God that is implicit within church liturgy, the concept connects directly to the intention behind Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) which was to unveil what was commonly accepted as “normal” or “legitimate” within society according to systems of power in place. In a sense, Bourdieu was making the “implicit explicit” as the key elements of his theory – habitus, capital, and field – intended to expose individuals’ social positioning and order in society.

Within church music-making settings, multiple fields are involved within each church’s production of worship. The data presented below considers the musical and theological fields within which Redeemer Christian Reformed Church is located, including the *doxa* of these fields. I consider Redeemer Church to be a subfield, operating according to rules that exist in its given religious field as well as the greater religious, ecumenical Protestant field, among other fields in society. As Phelan (2008) reminds scholars, musical practice must be understood within the “context of its specific socio-political reality” (p. 150). The specific socio-political reality that Redeemer Church is situated within is discussed in the following themes, beginning with an analysis of the “rules of the field” in place.

**Theme 1: Understanding the “Rules of the Field”**

Redeemer Church had multiple worship teams of musicians, directed by the worship coordinator and worship committee, and the worship teams would play regularly each month. The worship leader and musicians on the worship team were required to be professing members of the church. They did not have any additional theological training. The worship coordinator
tended to work at a “higher” level than the musicians, maintaining the overarching perspective on how worship would be run. She would attend various practices regularly, but more to offer guidance rather than “lead”. Individual worship leaders were assigned to specific teams for Sunday worship services and they often served regularly with the same musicians. Sub-themes, which emerged from codes, include repertoire selection, theological approach to worship, and musical participation. These are each discussed in the following.

**Selecting Repertoire**

Redeemer Church maintained a balanced approach in terms of musical repertoire of traditional and contemporary songs. The worship team that I observed tended to select more contemporary songs, yet the church did have a policy that required the implementation of “blended worship”. Worship documents from the same denomination (Worship Service Statement and Vision, 2003) strongly suggested that churches should strive to achieve a balance of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, representing diverse musical styles from many time periods. Their document states that worship should represent the diversity of the congregation’s personalities and tastes, thus constituting the need for “blended worship”. As Ian, one musician, articulated:

Most people interpret [blended worship] to mean you got to have some hymns and some contemporary songs depending on who’s arranging the service, right? I think some of them roll their eyes a little bit about the hymn requirement and, like, oh ya, okay, so here’s the token hymn that I stuck in there. Or they might even, you know, that means it’s got to be from the hymnal and so well, *The Trees of the Field will Clap Their Hands* is in the hymnal, so that’s my hymn (Musician Interview, Redeemer).
Ian’s response was slightly sarcastic in nature, as *The Trees of the Field* is in the Christian Reformed Psalter Hymnal, yet is a “praise and worship” song that emerged in 2001 with some more “contemporary” elements such as syncopations and hand clapping, to be led by a piano or guitar. Contrasting the typical traditional elements of hymns, this song fulfilled the hymn “requirement” for those who viewed blended worship as needing to simply “plug in” a hymn and a contemporary song. Yet as indicated here, musicians and worship leaders didn’t necessarily always understand the purpose behind the incorporation of blended worship; they simply viewed it as adding one song in a service over another. I viewed this as problematic in nature, as there was minimal dialogue that occurred surrounding the *purpose* behind the incorporation of blended worship and song selection. Worship leaders and musicians, at times, were simply fulfilling the “rules of the game” and becoming immersed in following the musical “requirements” of the church.

There was a process for selecting new congregational song repertoire that was indicative of the musical and theological fields, as well as the *doxa*

17 in place. Redeemer Church has a worship committee, comprised of a diverse range of people from other ministries in the church, such as ushers, the head of Sunday school, and sound technicians. They would have meetings every couple of months and in those meetings worship leaders could bring forward new songs to add to the repertoire list. As the process was described by Paul, the worship leader,

Committee members meet together to brainstorm bits and they’ll decide on songs and whether or not they make sense, based on the existing song list repertoire. And if they kind of want to do it, then they’ll play it…When a new song is added in, we kind of beat it to death at first, like just every week, maybe like three weeks out of a month we play

---

17 *Doxa* refers to “rules of the game”, including taken for granted assumptions within the field (Bourdieu, 1977)
the song, just so everyone can get on board. And then it can go to a regular schedule like
every couple of months (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).
Yet even though the worship committee approved new songs, it appeared that the songs didn’t
always align with the theological positioning of the church. One interviewee noted,
Sometimes there’s a song that maybe we’ve done hundreds of times before and then we
have a service and the pastor will say, I don’t really like this song. You hear these lyrics?
That’s not really right…(Musician Interview, Redeemer).
Julia, a second interviewee, also indicated the pastor’s process in approving songs based on their
theology, saying,
Sometimes we’ve had issues with pastors about songs that are not theologically correct.
Sometimes, ya, but sometimes that’s the author and is not the point of the song
(Musician Interview, Redeemer).
As evident in these two comments, music-making practices and musical repertoire were
meant to reflect the theological and musical positioning of Redeemer Church. Yet there were
differing opinions regarding the theological “correctness” of repertoire and the pastor was the
one who would point out theological inaccuracies according to Redeemer’s positioning. This
would include selecting songs that generally support the five-point Calvinist system of doctrine
(these include humanity’s total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible
grace, and preservation of the saints). As Julia agreed, at times the pastor made a point and
cautious observation of the theology was necessary. At other times, though, Julia suggested that
the expression of the theology in the song was simply the composer’s decision and should not
require much thought if the church did not agree with it.
Study participants varied in terms of the level of thought that went into song selection, thus presenting potential opportunities for misrecognition\textsuperscript{18} in extreme cases. If liturgy, and more specifically music, is understood to have an impact on worshippers’ formation, faith, theology, habitus, and more, the theology expressed in musical selections contains more influence than often acknowledged. Using Bourdieusian language, Julia’s particular comment could be understood to be indicative of misrecognition and symbolic violence within the religious field. Some religious critics could look at such a comment and argue that misrecognition was occurring by creating an *illusio*\textsuperscript{19} that the pastor deserved privilege and power, thus interpreting what theology was “right” and making the “final decision”. Keeping with this perspective, misrecognition would be reproducing the *illusio*, legitimating dominant social status and power of the pastor and confirming musicians’ place in the social order, which was below the pastor. Worship musicians shared a “feel for the game”, participating through *collusio*\textsuperscript{20} in terms of understanding the decision-making processes for song selection and appropriateness. When wanting to suggest new repertoire, they would email the worship coordinator so it could be presented to the worship committee to approve, rather than simply bringing it to practice and asking Paul, the worship leader, if they could use it for an upcoming service. Some may argue that they knew their position within the field.

From a different, more agentic perspective, however, theology expressed in worship music can be seen as central to worshippers’ habitus formation and singing has the ability to

\textsuperscript{18} Misrecognition is described by Bourdieu as the process of legitimating the power and social statues of dominant classes. It occurs by creating an *illusio* (illusion) those in religious power, the elite, appear to naturally deserve their position (Rey, 2007). Misrecognized ways of thinking and perceptions result, and social order and inequalities are unquestioned (Bourdieu, 1991b).

\textsuperscript{19} See note on misrecognition; *illusio* is an illusion produced and reproduced by misrecognition, legitimating dominant social status of those in power (Bourdieu, 1991b)

\textsuperscript{20} *Collusio* is a shared “feel for the game”, or a collective habitus or a group’s collective grounding in a doxa (Bourdieu, 2000)

The pastor, as appointed by church council and the congregation to lead the church, could be understood to be responsible for approving songs that fit with the church’s theological positioning and the greater narrative that the service is expressing, thus contributing to the congregation’s personal and corporate worship of God. Formation through worship is addressed in literature in relation to liturgy, where individuals’ identities or loves are re-ordered to point towards God (Smith, 2016; Wolterstorff, 2016). Music selected for worship services at Redeemer was meant to follow the general theme of the worship service and in my observations it appeared that music processes reflected the church’s understanding of the formative effect of liturgy. Redeemer Church used a worship planning program, “Planning Centre”, where various planners could find the service outlines. Worship leaders were able to simply “plug in” gathering songs, songs of confession, songs of praise, and so on. It was a common practice for worship leaders to follow themes chosen by the pastor, selecting music that aligned with the theme. Musicians noticed this and appreciated the unified nature of the services in their own personal worship. A survey response indicated this, noting:

Music chosen for worship services always enhances the theme of the worship service. That is the one thing that I appreciate so much about worshipping in this church. I find that the pieces express my personal faith and by being able to sing them they become more a part of me and I feel more a part of the service (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer Church).

Paul described the planning of repertoire that goes on behind services, as worship leaders strive to fit the overarching service theme:
Pastors will send out the sermon series ahead of time so you can look at what the themes are, and then try to figure out songs that fit in with the theme. Look up, look up the Bible passage. I'll read their synopsis of what the service might be about and try to pick some songs (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).

When I asked what his goal of song selection for the service was, Paul responded,

My goal usually in putting together [the service] is the flow…right from the gathering, welcoming, the praise time, but even to the end, you felt like that the service kind of tied together, it wasn’t a bunch of songs and the minister had a sermon. It always feels the best when at the end of it you kind of felt that flow. I often have it where I didn’t even catch it when I was planning but…it’s sort of like, those words fit perfectly. Or I’ve even had it where people come up afterwards and said hey, that song fit and I didn't even realize how well it fit. And that's when it feels best when it all fits together like that and that's where the plan, just picking your favorite songs isn't the way to go (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).

I followed up by asking how often he has musicians on his team suggest songs for use in the service. Paul explained that they try to incorporate suggestions once a song is approved by the worship committee, yet sometimes it doesn’t work out, stating,

There’s some songs that we definitely have done that you just find out they’re just not congregational; people just aren’t catching on. They don’t have to be hymn-like, but they have to have some consistency and almost some musical expectation of which way it’s going, you know what I mean? That it doesn’t just go off in some different…and it just doesn’t seem natural. Some songs just don’t seem natural. It’s the best way to put it (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).
When examining the “rules of the field” in terms of repertoire, it is evident that worship leaders and musicians strived to design services and select musical repertoire that reflected the church’s approach to worship as well as their theological positioning. Redeemer Church aimed to integrate a “balanced” approach to worship music, providing worshippers with multiple musical genres to engage with musically throughout a worship service. While Redeemer’s theological approach to worship is further discussed in the next theme, it appeared that musical repertoire was the most meaningful to musician-worshippers when it “fit in” with the rest of the service or expressed their personal beliefs. When repertoire aligned with participants’ positioning in musical and theological fields, they could “feel a part of the service” and their faith could “be expressed”, as indicated in the survey responses.

Redeemer’s repertoire selection was quite typical of the Christian Reformed Church denomination’s service repertoire. While services vary from church to church, their use of CWM repertoire and hymnody was consistent with other CRC churches that I have attended. In the specific worship team that I observed, their use of instruments such as the piano, guitar, violin, and drums added more of a “contemporary flair” to hymns. Their repertoire was one element, among others such as prayers, litanies, and various rituals that I did not observe, that characterized their religious community. Their church culture was produced through many elements, including repertoire and other musical practices, contributing to a shared sense of *collusio* and “social know how” among musicians. It appeared from my conversations with praise team members and the worship leader that social agents with similar positioning in the religious field displayed similarities in cultural (musical) tastes. Julia, for example, was positioned differently than Paul, the worship leader, who placed more of an emphasis on theological accuracy and the thematic arch of the service. In terms of selecting repertoire for its
musical elements, Paul also referred to musical preference when mentioning consistency and musical expectation. While I cannot speak to his individual musical preferences, it appeared that he contributed musical consistency and expectation to congregational participation – and alluded to his approach or philosophy of worship and planning. This theme is further discussed in the following.

Each of the components discussed in this section fall under the sub-theme developed from codes entitled “repertoire selection”. I explored how processes of repertoire selection, which included a focus on the enactment of “blended” worship, were indicative of the doxa or “rules of the game” in place. Even though not every musician understood the purpose behind “blended” worship, music-making practices and repertoire were meant to reflect the theological positioning of the church. The processes of repertoire approval in place indicated the church’s emphasis on accurate theology and music-making practices that aligned with the church’s focus. Each of these findings indicate how music-making reflected and responded to the musical and theological fields in place. While from a critical sociological understanding, these “rules” and “norms” could be understood as legitimizing social inequalities and constraints, the “rules” and “norms” can also be conceptualized in relation to unified musical practices of a church, where music in worship reflects its systems of beliefs. Next, I discuss how Redeemer Church’s approach and theology of worship were reflected in music-making practices and decisions.

*Approach to Worship*

As discussed in more detail in this study’s review of literature, churches have varied philosophies and approaches to worship that are indicative of their denominational slant and overall positioning in theological fields. The doxa, or “rules of the game” also contribute to these approaches. The verbal data below represent the opinions of Redeemer Church’s worship leader
and musicians, which I understand to be representative of the greater congregation according to my observations and interactions. I intend to show the *doxa* of Redeemer Church through this data.

In my semi-structured interviews, I attempted to focus on participants’ opinions of what worship is and how that is expressed through the worship team’s actions. I asked,

So what is your goal as the leader of the worship team practices? What would you say your philosophy of worship and approach to worship is? (Interview, Redeemer)

After speaking about worship planning and repertoire selection for a few minutes, Paul stated:

We're here to lead the congregation, we're not here to perform it's not how well we do - obviously as musicians and singers you want to do well. You're not doing, worshipping, that well, shall we say, if you're not doing your best, but you're not doing it to perform, you're not doing it to glorify yourself…you have to try and meet everybody where they’re at and you can’t just be all one flavour, shall we say, because other people will get nothing out of it right? (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer)

Here, Paul was referring to a tension between “doing well” and “doing your best” musically in worship for the glory of God rather than for human recognition. He equated worshiping “well” with reaching musical excellence according to one’s skillset while simultaneously avoiding a performance mindset. When asked about repertoire and performance in worship, Paul explained,

Sometimes I really like [certain] songs and sometimes it’s interesting because…it’s like ya, that’s a nice song, we tried it, it’s not congregational, it’s not a group singing song.

It’s a solo song. It’s a performance song (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).

A different musician echoed the necessity of facilitating congregational worship and participation within a service rather than performing “at” the congregation:
And the purpose [of the praise team] is, well, it’s not a musical performance. The purpose is to be there as part of a worship service where a congregation is coming together for a service, and so the role is really about facilitating that participation from everybody (Musician Interview, Redeemer).

Paul explained that he typically feels the most gratified when congregants find meaning in the service through worship, stating,

That’s when I feel the best. Not that I did such a good job but it actually meant something to someone else about how this service meant to them and that’s the goal right, that the congregation feels engaged and they feel that our 15/20 minutes, whatever, was worthwhile being there (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).

Similarly, a survey response spoke to the perceived value of musical leadership for musicians:

Specifically, just being part of the worship service providing good quality musical leadership for our congregation. The accolades we receive are more than enough reward for our efforts (Survey Response, Redeemer Church)

In addressing musical performance, I found it interesting that Paul classified “group singing songs” as congregational in nature, and solo songs as “performance” songs. In his language, I noticed that Paul alluded to a hesitation towards using repertoire in worship meant for soloists. His comments represented a common wariness of churches and their use of contemporary repertoire when wanting to maintain a “balance” in their musical worship

Typically, in a CRC church context, hymns are seen as participatory, group singing songs and other praise and worship songs/CWM vary in nature depending on the particular song. While some argue that CWM is more participatory in nature with its musical “simplicity”, four-chord structure, and popular music associations by some congregations, others are hesitant of its
performance-oriented, “exclusive” nature with musical elements (such as lack of singability and solo components) that discourage congregational participation.

Using a different lens, some would argue that hymns are more exclusive by nature with their four-part harmony that requires a certain level of musical knowledge to read the musical line and anticipate musical directions. These different approaches to genres of worship music demonstrate why Redeemer focused on “blended” worship, and how such an approach or aim of worship dictated the rules of the musical and theological fields in place.

Another assumption and consideration presented in Paul’s statements above is that solo performances in worship cannot be participatory in nature. Even if the congregation is listening rather than singing, can they still “participate” in worship through listening? Could soloists still be facilitating congregational worship yet in a different manner? In this case, listening was not seen as a form of participation or engagement. What appeared to be most prevalent in data findings when addressing congregational participation through musical leadership was the directional focus of the music-making. Music-making within worship was linked with the facilitation of congregational worship in such a way that it was focused on the congregation’s ability to join in on song. When the focus was not on the musicians themselves and their “performance”, then it was considered participatory. Yet this is a difficult middle ground to achieve, as participants did still need to “do their best” to glorify God.

Ian, however, was the only respondent who indicated that there is always a part of worship that involves the musician themselves and their preferences. He explained,

Like just to be perfectly honest about it, there’s always an element that is about yourself too, right? Like I’m there playing music because I like it, and I play it a certain way because I like the way that sounds. And part of it is, ya, wanting to play the sounds the
way that I like them, right? And there's a bit of a tension between that and also knowing that well it's, it's not the purpose here is not to be a performance. It’s to facilitate that worship from the congregation as well, right? But it’s all tied in together…the congregation also responds to that, you know, the inspiration that the musicians or the praise team are putting into it as well (Musician Interview, Redeemer).

I found Ian’s response fascinating because he articulated the tension between wanting to play music with a strong musical quality and strive for sounds that he enjoyed, while also understanding that his music-making was not a performance. Yet, as Ian acknowledged, there is a need to pursue excellence in music-making, not only as an offering to God, but also to inspire the congregation, which they then respond to in their worship to God.

This sub-theme described Redeemer Church’s approach to worship, which was enacted musically in several ways: (1) I observed that Paul, the worship leader, and musicians pursued “musical excellence” (according to one’s individual skillset) in their music-making practices, while carefully avoiding a performance mindset; and (2) worship musicians’ practices were aimed towards facilitating congregational worship through participation. Both of these findings contributed to Redeemer’s approach to worship, indicating how their music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located, including the doxa of the fields.

When considering Redeemer Church’s position in the social field in relation to literature, most of the language used by participants aligns with Joncas’s (2013) concept of the contemplative dimension of worship and Wolterstorff’s (2005) view of the role of music in worship in service to the liturgy. As Joncas acknowledges, the order of worship should reflect its ultimate purpose to praise God. Contemplative music focuses on the praise and adoration of God.
Wolterstorff similarly reflects on the multifunctional nature of music in worship, and argues that music should fulfill its particular function in worship which is to enhance the actions in the liturgy. If the liturgy is meant to be directed towards God, then music should be enhancing the liturgy in people’s worship of God. Such a purpose can be enacted in different ways, but it is evident that musicians at Redeemer Church believed that their role was to facilitate congregants’ worship of God through musical participation, rather than simply listening. The end focus was vertical in terms of worship being directed towards God, and horizontal between musicians reaching and contributing to congregants’ worship through musical participation.

From a critical sociological standpoint, it is important to consider the level of power and capital that musicians have if they are essential in the facilitation of congregants’ worship. Using Bourdieusian language, religion can be seen to impose structures of consecrated practices that may be misrecognized within social formations. Some might argue that these practices become engrained over time and become assumed to be “normal”, part of the “rules of the field”. For example, it could be argued that musicians should not have the power or responsibility to contribute to the facilitation of congregants’ engagement in worship. Bourdieu’s suspicion of religion provides a necessary warning for an awareness of the systems and practices in place within worship, considering who is making the decisions in terms of music in worship, who is deciding what an appropriate approach to worship for a particular church is, as well as the incorporation of traditional versus contemporary repertoire within the specific worship setting.

Finally, a church’s approach to worship is also indicative of the religious habitus in place. Religious habitus is the religious aspect of one’s habitus as expressed in the religious field (Rey, 2007, 2018), and congregants generate dispositions that are consistent with the norms of a church’s religious understanding of the world. I understand religious habitus to include a
philosophical stance regarding one’s approach to worship, and more specifically musical components, which will influence musicians’ approach to worship. Redeemer Church musicians’ religious habitus varied in slight ways, yet musicians generally maintained similar beliefs in conceptualizing the purpose of their role as to lead and facilitate congregants’ worship of God. Their overarching understandings of worship, referring to praise and dialogue between God and his people, were consistent overall, reflecting a “systematic view of the world and human existence” (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 126), indicative of a religious habitus. While certain participants shifted slightly in their musical preferences and perceived need for “strong musical quality”, their religious habitus influenced their religious interests, tastes, dispositions, and beliefs in a manner consistent with Christian Reformed denominational stances on worship. The religious habitus maintained by Redeemer Church influenced “rules” for musical participation as well, which is further discussed below in the next sub-theme.

This sub-theme addressed how Redeemer’s music-making practices related to their approach to worship, indicative of the musical and theological fields in place. I explored two significant areas of data findings surrounding Redeemer’s approach to worship to respond to the first research question: (1) Musicians and the worship leader focused on the pursuit of “musical excellence”, meaning “to the best of one’s abilities” in their music-making practices. In the pursuit of musical excellence, however, a performance mindset was avoided. (2) Redeemer Church musicians focused on the facilitation of congregational worship through musical participation (i.e. specifically singing, not simply listening). Each of these findings related to music-making reflected Redeemer’s approach to worship, which reflected and responded to the musical and theological fields, and “rules of the field” in place. Next, I discuss the third and final sub-theme that responds to research question one.
Musical Participation in the Worship Team

Musical participation is the third sub-theme that I discuss in relation to Redeemer Church’s music-making practices and the musical and theological fields at hand. Similar to any other church, Redeemer Church has a specific approach to musical involvement in the church. It is quite open in nature and leaders attempt to find a role for all those who wish to participate musically.

It appeared in my conversations with congregants and worship team members that Redeemer CRC encouraged participation from anyone who expressed interest in participating. As Ian commented, worship leaders would find a way to work with those who wanted to participate:

The worship committee may do a little bit of distributing that way, you know, making…I guess distributing talent, to some degree, and, and perhaps matching personalities, somewhat where necessary (Musician Interview, Redeemer).

I responded to Ian’s comment by asking for more detail regarding Redeemer’s approach to musical participation. Ian explained,

To me it’s an opportunity of drawing from the talents of the people in the congregation, right? And so there’s lots of different ways that people can participate… And I see it also just as a way of drawing people in to establish a connection to church and a way to contribute and participate. To me it's such an enjoyable way of contributing to a church. There’s, you know, other people who you know, they sit on a finance committee or something and have to go to these boring meetings where they're talking about balance sheets and stuff like that and you know what, what a drag that is compared to just, you know like, just getting to show up and make music (Musician Interview, Redeemer).
Redeemer appeared to make as much room as possible for those who wished to participate. There was a baseline level of musical competency required, however. Terms such as “skill”, “competency”, and “being musical” were used in interviews and survey responses, which are further reflected upon below. These comments were indicative of Redeemer’s “ordering” of worship, and more specifically music, in service of the liturgy directed towards God. There was a certain level of musical excellence that they aimed to reach. As one survey response indicated:

At *Redeemer* Church, we do not have try-outs, and we certainly do not discourage those who want to participate, but there is a general expectation of being musical. Not everyone can read music, but those who do not are pretty good at listening to the songs at home and having the tune in their heads (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer).

A different survey response responded to my question about anyone participating:

Yes, with an asterisk. There is an expectation of a minimum level of competency in your musical ability (vocal or instrumental) but if you want to join then there is generally a role that can be found for you (and the audio techs are good at adjusting levels accordingly) (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer).

I asked Nate, one of the musicians, if anyone can participate in the worship teams or whether there are typically auditions. Nate replied,

It’s kind of said [that] it’s open to everyone, but there’s also kind of an expectation of skill. Singers – there’s a lot of singers – so if somebody offered to sing they might try to work it in the schedule. Musicians, we can always use more musicians, but it’s also, they want to kind of determine your competency as well so then they’ll try [to] get you in on practices…before [COVID-19] it was usually come to Thursday night practices, we’ll get you playing on these along with the songs, kind of get a feel for playing with the team.
And if the competency is there, then sure, join on Sunday and there's not like even…they might put you on stage but turn your volume way down or something like that just so you can get comfortable (Musician Interview, Redeemer).

Musical participation was seen as valued in Redeemer Church. This church tended to thoughtfully conceptualize musical participation both in terms of congregants participating in the worship team in various manners as well as through the encouragement of congregational song and their ability to worship. There is a tension present for worship team leaders in relation to wanting to encourage anyone to actively partake in the worship team while also maintaining a level of “musical quality” in their pursuit of musical excellence. This is where active discernment on the part of the worship leader would need to take place to decipher how one could serve in a music related setting while encouraging the development of the individual’s particular skills.

It is important to consider how elements of worship at Redeemer Church reflect, or constitute, part of the church’s cultural capital. Considering the impact of capital in relation to musical participation may help describe the musical and theological fields in place at Redeemer more accurately. For Bourdieu (1984), cultural capital included certain types of knowledge, tastes, cultural preferences, and language. Capital is part of the overall “game” in the social field, and the amount of capital individuals hold in specific fields position them in the overall field of power. Practice is the relationship between individual habitus, and their position in the field, which is determined by their possession of capital. As agents, Redeemer Church musicians occupy positions in the overall social space. Through their encouragement of musical participation from the congregation, they tend to contribute to a fluidity of the social space, making it slightly easier to obtain cultural capital than, perhaps, in more hierarchical
congregations. Yet Redeemer Church maintains particular musical standards that reflect their conceptualization of worship music being an offering to God, which would indicate the moderately hierarchical nature of their structure. There is still an emphasis on who is perceived as musical and who is not, as well as what spaces are provided for everyone who wants to participate. Each of these interrelated theoretical elements addressed in this paragraph contribute to the forces in play that shape the musical and theological fields in place at Redeemer Church.

In order to understand how Redeemer Church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to these fields, the interrelated complexities of the fields must also be addressed, which I understand to come to the forefront when “rules of participation” come into play, determining who can participate while the pursuit of musical excellence remains an ultimate aim.

It is interesting to examine the particular social “know-how” present at the church that reflects rules of participation, or the doxa of the field. Generally, it appeared from comments that congregants had an idea of their level of musicality and knew whether they should or could ask to participate in a music team. Although worship leaders tried to find ways for anyone to participate musically, there was still a “general expectation” of musical training and skill. Connections can be made here to Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence within the religious field, which occurs when forms of capital are transformed into forms of symbolic capital (Rey, 2007). When symbolic violence occurs, distinctive hierarchies within the established order of society are legitimized through practice (Bourdieu, 1991a). Legitimization can be linked here to differing forms of musicality and/or musicianship in regard to musical participation, evident within church worship. When participants referred to “musical skill” or “competencies” they often referred to classical, “proper” musical training. One survey response indicated that not everyone can read music, but those who can’t have different methods of learning the tunes (i.e.
listening to songs at home). Certainly, the ability to read music was most valued within the worship teams, as evident in my non-participant observations of rehearsals. The worship leader would often refer to sheet music with the musicians and they were generally expected to know how to follow along. Traditional forms of musicianship, rather than principles of informal music learning (Green, 2002), appeared to be of value. Although participation was encouraged, I saw movement away from practices that tend to be associated with popular music-making. Therefore, I suggest that traditional, classical or elite musical capital was being legitimized and imposed within the musical field. The presence of classical musical capital, then, affected the musical habituses of musicians, meaning their general beliefs surrounding musical ability. This thread is further explored in the second theme below, which addresses the strategization of musical behaviours at Calvin Church.

When situating these themes within a music education field, current trends in music education tend to focus on socially just ends, as discussed earlier in the introduction and literature review chapters. Popular music pedagogies are often seen to be more inclusive as they invite student participation from individuals with multiple musical knowledges and backgrounds, using music that they interact with on a daily basis. Particularly for those who were raised in the tradition of Redeemer Church, the multiple musical knowledges and backgrounds would be understood as an inclusive, common ground between individuals. Inclusion of students, regardless of their individual musical backgrounds, is a significant, necessary focus of music education pedagogy today. Yet when transferring these themes to a church music context, Redeemer Church demonstrates that inclusion in terms of musical participation can be a goal but is not always the end focus in all music-making settings. There is a careful balance maintained
that was demonstrated in my observations, and the maintenance of such a balance constitutes the musical culture at Redeemer Church, and doxa of the field.

This sub-theme focused on musical participation in the worship team. Redeemer’s music-making practices reflected their beliefs surrounding musical participation, which could be seen to be indicative of their musical and theological field positioning. While Redeemer Church had an open approach to musical participation, encouraging anyone to participate who expressed interest, there was still a baseline of musical competency that needed to be reached. Data findings indicated that there was a social “know-how” present at the church that shaped rules of participation and the doxa of the field, which could be linked to perceptions of musicality and the legitimization of traditional, classical musical capital in place. Yet Redeemer maintained a thoughtful, intentional approach to musical participation in relation to congregants’ musical participation and a focus on the congregation’s participation in worship.

Conclusion of Theme 1: Elements of the Theological Field

In this first section, I attempted to explore how Redeemer Church’s CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to musical and theological fields in which they are located. Further, I considered the doxa of these fields. In terms of a congregation’s positioning, denominations and religious traditions “provide an institutional source of structure in worship” (Chaves, 2004, p. 143) where denominations “are most similar, more distinctive, in their worship practices than in their demographic composition” (Chaves, 2004, p. 164). This first theme focused on Redeemer Church’s positioning through its worship practices, specifically in regards to music-making. While the positioning of participants varies slightly according to their individual preferences regarding musical participation, inclusivity, musical excellence, and so on, the overall positioning and practices of the church shape their beliefs, conceptions, and practices.
Further, the church’s music-making practices both reflect and respond to a church’s positioning – both musical and theological.

Monnot’s (2018) work on relations of power within the religious field attempts to map cultural elements from Swiss National Congregations, comparing various Christian denominations’ positioning according to specific cultural elements (i.e. prevalence of organ, drums, ritual gestures, reading, speaking in tongues, and so on). Monnot places the church denominations on a scale to visually represent their emphasis on formal versus individual dimensions of worship (see diagram below).

**Figure 2:**

_Elements Composing Two Cultural Dimensions of Worship in Swiss Congregations (Monnot, 2018, p. 129-130)._
significant in church music, theology, community music, and music education literature. As this thesis explores musical behaviours, I attempt to locate Redeemer Church’s positioning in the religious musical field below in relation to the data presented above. The pursuit of musical excellence and participation/inclusivity are not mutually exclusive categories; yet certain denominations tend to emphasize one more than the other, as expressed in the philosophy of worship section of the literature review. As evident below, Redeemer Church is situated in the middle, focusing on participation and inclusivity and the pursuit of strong musical quality of music as an “offering to God”. A church’s positioning can be understood to be enacted through practices while also informing future practices and musical decision-making.

**Figure 3:**

*An analysis of musical excellence and participation with Church Case #1*

---

**Theme 2: Strategization of Musical Behaviours**

The second research question is addressed in the present section, where I consider how and why worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours at Redeemer Church. In this section, I address worship leaders’ and musicians’ practices and
behaviours at Redeemer Church, conceptualizing musical practice as a phenomenon that is enabled and influenced by social and religious norms in place. From a Bourdieusian framework, while musical agents intentionally transform elements of their world, there are rules and forces in place that limit behaviours. Using such a lens, intentions, desires, and emotions of agents are understood to be socially constituted (Boeskov, 2020).

Data that addresses my second research question focus on the concept of strategically generated activities that reflect social positioning. Such activities demonstrate beliefs, tendencies, positioning, and so on through their practice. Drawing on Phelan’s (2008) analysis of community music practices, music-making is a performative practice and can demonstrate community music principles through the embodiment of behaviours such as inclusivity, accessibility, or empowerment. Rather than understanding community conceptually, one may analyze performative musical choices as strategies towards the realization of values. Therefore, this theme considers how and why both worship leaders and musicians strategize musical behaviours through a variety of decisions such as modes of performance, pedagogical practices, and perceptions of musicianship expressed through discourse. I also note the significant impact of COVID-19 on musical behaviours. Sub-themes that respond to the strategization of musical behaviours include (1) the role of the worship leader and (2) perceptions of musicianship, as expressed throughout this second theme.

**The Role of the Worship Leader**

I begin by analyzing the role of the worship leader, Paul, at Redeemer Church, as I understood his practices to clearly indicate the strategization of musical behaviours towards certain values. When referring to strategization, the notion of strategy is “the feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 62), something that occurs when engaging in social activities. Agents have
different levels of “know-how” as they balance playing according to the rules and acting in their own interests. When speaking with Paul, he outlined several of his pedagogical practices that I viewed to be the strategization of musical behaviours. The dialogical, informal nature of his leadership style is further discussed in the next section in relation to habitus, yet his pedagogical practices expressed in terms of the approach to the worship team learning and rehearsing music is explored here. Paul was careful to slowly introduce new songs to encourage congregational familiarity, where each worship team in the rotation would learn the repertoire and lead it multiple weeks in a row. In terms of the design of rehearsals, Paul noted that there was an expectation of a level of preparedness when arriving at practice which allowed the team to focus more on musical decisions during the practice, stating,

So ya, the practice is more about how we’re going to present the song. Not that we’re performing, but to give it that musicality that gives it some meaning at least from a musician…I think most people can kind of pick up the emotion that’s being put through in a song, right? With how you present it. I’m going to say present, not perform (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).

When asking Paul about what preparedness looks like, he explained in more detail:

I won’t say you have to read music because some of our praise group people don’t technically read music, they listen to the CDs – or now it’s Youtube, right, to learn the songs. And they do much better at learning by listening, I do much more learning by music (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).

A different worship team musician noted, however, that most of the learning occurred right in the practices. A survey response similarly explained:
I usually will play through the songs once on my own before practice and again between practice and Sunday service. I’m not sure if everyone else does the same though. Expectation is that you are prepared and ready to go but I don’t always get the feeling that is the case with other people during practice (Survey response, Redeemer).

Through these practices and routines in place, behaviours were also strategized towards a “norm” or musical culture of the church.

In my observations of musical rehearsals, I observed Paul direct the musicians in their musical behaviours within songs to encourage congregational participation. More specifically, I noted in my research journal that in my first rehearsal observation, the worship team was attempting to transition from one worship song (Christ the Lord is Risen Today) to the next (You are Holy) without stopping. Paul spoke to the pianist and encouraged him to start slowing down the tempo midway through the last verse to set up both the congregation and musicians for the transition to You are Holy. The pianist mentioned that he was going to transition through three chords several times to prepare the congregation for the next song. These behaviours and decisions can be understood to be performative choices, musically embodying values of participation. Through the call and response elements found in You are Holy, musicians as well as the congregation were able to join and respond to one another through repeated vocal lines. The chorus consisted of two sections singing different lyrics in harmony, creating a polyphonic effect. Similar to McGann’s (2004) analysis of call and response songs, You are Holy included “calls” from one section with some personal, musical expressions in tension with “responses” that represented communal, unified action. It was through the ritualized act of music-making that values of community, harmony, and dialogue with and worship of God were generated. The
coupling of the church’s theological values with the musical practices constituted the emergence of these new values, which were embodied through practice.

According to a *Theory of Practice*, music-making must be understood within a web of social activity, where Phelan (2008) advises in relation to music that current and past musical acts, as well as behaviours related to music-making, contribute to an understanding and analysis of the specific act. Bodily, performative practices within worship rehearsals, such as conversational, collaborative dialogue, positioning one’s self towards another, and listening and responding through music-making embodied each worship leader’s values. Pedagogically, Paul explained how he introduces new songs in practices, signifying values of collaboration, participation, and opportunity for musicians. As evident in the next quotation, Paul would simplify musical elements and break songs down, section by section. When observing his practices, I noted in my researcher journal that his musical behaviours encouraged musical participation coupled with musical excellence, slowly scaffolding learning by adding instrument to instrument. As Paul described,

I’ll send out the song list two weeks ahead of time…Whenever there was a new song, I always send the [Youtube] video, encourage people to listen to it. When we had practices, I would always stop and say okay, we're going to play that video right now, let's all listen to it together. And I would, from a music point of view, often, depending on the challenge of the singing, I may not play my guitar, I may just have the piano. Let's keep all the other instruments out let's just listen to piano and add in the vocals and try to follow that and then we'll add the instruments back in (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).
In my further conversations with Paul he explained that he facilitated learning in such a manner so that all musicians could focus on the melody. Again, this musical behaviour reflected his beliefs surrounding the need to facilitate congregational participation in worship. He attempted to create a solid musical foundation, viewing the melody as most significant since it is the vocal line which the congregation would be able to communally sing.

Drawing again from Bourdieu’s writings on religion, Bourdieu (1991b) understood the process of obtaining religious capital from a categorical view, between producers (specialists) and consumers (laity) (Dillon, 2001). Religious specialists were those who held competence to produce and reproduce knowledge. Transferring these concepts to this church case, I view the worship leader as a type of religious specialist. Technically religious specialists have a systematic “mastery” of knowledge and have religious competence. Therefore, it is their behaviours that reflect and perform the knowledge mastery, dictating what is of value in relation to religious capital. Paul could be understood to serve as a religious specialist, demonstrating knowledge of the field. He implemented appropriate (theologically and congregation-friendly) repertoire, he encouraged strong vocal lines to share with the congregation, and he promoted the use of the same songs multiple weeks in a row, each of which are practices focused on congregational participation. The careful joining of musical practices with the expression of the church’s theological values were indicative of his role as a specialist. When the two are aligned through a religious specialist’s practices, it is then that new values might emerge, such as musicians’ and congregants’ ability to engage in worship of God. Further, Paul’s musical practices demonstrated that he knew, and fully understood, the culture of the church. He engaged in the “social know-how” and comprehended the nuances and complexities of the field.
This sub-theme explored the role of the worship leader and their practices to describe how and why behaviours were strategized at Redeemer Church. I argued that it was the combination of Paul’s musical practices intertwined with the theological values of the church that demonstrated his role as a religious specialist. Behaviours were intentionally strategized, and theological values of participation encouraged, as Paul directed musicians to focus on vocal lines (to promote congregational singing), simplify music (to promote congregational participation), perform clear transitions between songs to prepare congregants for their singing of a new song, and through the implementation of musical elements such as call and response. In the next sub-theme, I address perceptions of musicianship that were consciously and unconsciously expressed through musical behaviours, strategizing or placing musicians within the greater social field.

**Perceptions of Musicianship**

There were distinctive perceptions of musicianship that were expressed throughout my observations and conversations with worship musicians, related to the strategization of behaviour at Redeemer Church. I understood these perceptions of musicianship to be strategized and constituted through musical behaviours, whether that was intentional or not on the part of the worship leader. Worship team musicians demonstrated an awareness of leaders’ musical backgrounds and how that related to their pedagogical practices. I asked one musician, Nick, what his experience was like with the role of the worship leader. He responded,

> It depends on the leader. Some of them are more musically inclined, they have that background, and so they can very explicitly say what they want, [like] I want more guitar here, can you play softer, things like that. Other ones, they just don’t have it, they give more of an overall idea and hope that the band members kind of pick up on it and they can kind of interpret it. (Musician Interview, Redeemer)
Nick’s comment reflected a perception of musicianship as either “having it” or “just not having it”, which indicated less of a musical understanding on his perspective of how interpretation and specific directions of music could influence the performance. Similarly, Nick’s comment could also indicate why or why not leaders are able to convey musical ideas to the rest of the worship team; some “have it” and some do not “have it”. I was curious in my conversations with Nick whether certain leaders felt as if their lack of “proper” musical training was a deficit and, if so, whether they specifically directed their musical behaviours in such a way as to not bring attention to that deficit. Paul was the only worship leader at Redeemer Church that I interviewed as I interacted with only one of the rotating worship teams. This would be an interesting area to further explore in a possible follow-up study.

One survey response acknowledged a participant’s awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as a musician:

I feel like I’m a mediocre musician but I think I’m helpful in filling in roles to round out the band to create a fuller sound as well as to give other band members regular breaks so they don’t have to play every week. I think that other guitarists in the band have similar or better skills than myself (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer).

Several other survey responses also demonstrated musicians’ awareness of their musical skill and how they were able to interact with other musicians and contribute to musical leadership at the church:

Although my guitar playing is certainly not professional, I feel that the way I play or strum can contribute to the mood or feel of the song. As a leader, I use my voice to reinforce the melody for the vocalists, but also lead by counting in entrances and timing
of songs (4/4, 3/4, etc.) Personally, I have a good ear for music and can sight read very well (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer).

A second survey response indicated:

I’m able to sight-read well and can help vocalists with timing and voice lines. Some of the other musicians have similar skills. I also think I have at least a general understanding of different styles of music (e.g. Baroque, choral, hymns, Gospel, contemporary) and can help guide appropriate interpretations for each (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer).

As further explored in this study’s theory chapter, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus has been linked to music by several scholars (Burnard, 2012; Hall, 2015; Rimmer, 2010, 2012; Wright, 2008). Musical habitus, meaning a general disposition relating to perceptions of musical ability, was present in some of the survey responses mentioned above. Musical habitus relates to musical capital which includes skills, knowledge, and musical understanding, as well as conceptions of one’s musical potential and sense of musicality (Wright, 2015). Through the strategization of musical behaviours, worship leaders can reflect – and perpetuate or challenge existing ideologies and beliefs surrounding musical ability.

Although such beliefs weren’t significantly addressed in my process of data collection as I was focused more on philosophical and theological approaches to worship and their interaction with CWM, I viewed an overall connection between musical capital and theological beliefs. There was a reproduction of beliefs surrounding one form of musicianship, and “subtle descriptions” in narratives and practices reinforced notions of musicality, affecting musical identity. Conversations surrounding theological beliefs in worship and the pursuit of excellence as an offering to God reinscribed certain musicians’ perceptions of musicality. However, one’s lack of “proper” classical musical training didn’t necessarily impact their ability to participate
according to unwritten “rules of the game”, and it appeared that worship leaders’ informal, dialogical practices within a nonformal music learning setting were forms of strategization allowing them to move away from traditional ways of musical knowing in the church. There was a tension here between subtle messages expressed surrounding musicality that possibly affirmed some musicians’ habitus while undervaluing others. The incorporation of more CWM music in the church also contributed to a moving away from traditional ways of learning, ways that had previously aligned better with classical music training. The popular musical nature of CWM contributed to more musical opportunities to play from chord sheets, to switch keys to encourage congregational singability, and to make changes and adaptations by ear. Redeemer Church did not attempt to include CWM music at a so-called “professional” level; rather, in their blended services CWM was implemented to reflect a greater number of worshippers’ preferences in terms of style while promoting congregational participation.

Lastly, recent shifts in Redeemer Church’s musical life occurred because of COVID-19 restrictions. While I never observed or interacted with the church before the presence of COVID-19, data expressed that their music was much more simplified with an absence of gathering songs, offertory, and postlude music. Since there were some points in the pandemic where only five musicians could be in the sanctuary at a given time, there were significantly fewer musicians and less variation of instruments. Multiple survey results indicated that there was much less participation overall. One respondent noted,

I want to play well to make the overall worship experience better for the congregation, which has been tougher during the pandemic. Working together as a team, as well as trying to make worship accessible for the congregation are strong drivers in how I approach/play the instrument (Survey Response, Musician, Redeemer).
The pandemic prompted musicians and leaders to thoughtfully consider how they could still make worship accessible and participatory for the congregation even when they were not able to physically be present in the church building. Musical habitus and musical capital were in modes of moderate transition during the pandemic. As Reay (2010) explains, habitus operates unconsciously until new familiar fields are encountered with ruptures, disjunctures, and edges of coherence. It is in these moments that habitus can become transformative.

While musical habitus and musical capital were more often linked to classical musical training, even though open participation and accessibility were valued among the worship teams, the pandemic allowed room for shifts and disjunctures in musicians’ habituses. Musicians suddenly had to work with a much smaller ensemble and needed to be able to work together as a team and “really know” their music. There was less of an emphasis placed on an ideal musical “product” or “level” to be reached that would encourage congregational participation, and instead any sort of live music via livestream was valued. Music was simplified and flexibility became the norm. The doxa was slightly shifting in nature and musicians maintained fluid positions within the field. Bourdieu (1988) refers to two opposing forces in the social field, the dominant and dominated. Boundaries between the two were blurred – as an effect of the pandemic – as each force’s possession of capital, typically associated with their musical backgrounds, shifted in nature. Even though there were some shifts in doxa and musicians’ habituses, I argue that disjunctures in musicians’ habituses due to the pandemic were even more prevalent at Calvin Church, as explored in chapter six. Here, overarching belief systems surrounding musical and theological approaches to worship generally remained consistent even while musical habitus and musical capital shifted in nature.

When considering the second research question, perceptions of musicianship were
strategized and constituted through musical behaviours at Redeemer Church. This sub-theme indicated that there were subtle, underlying messages expressed throughout interactions within the worship teams. While Redeemer Church had a call for open participation, worship team musicians still spoke of being “musically inclined” or serving as a “mediocre musician” (survey responses). I found that musicians’ theological beliefs that focused on the necessary pursuit of musical excellence legitimized notions of classical musical capital and musicians’ perceptions of musicality.

Summary of Theme 2

This section analyzed the concept of Redeemer Church’s strategically generated musical behaviours that impact social positioning through two sub-themes: (1) the role of the worship leader; and (2) perceptions of musicianship. The strategization of musical behaviours involve behaviours that are representative of beliefs and tendencies and are enacted through practice. There are “musical norms” present in Redeemer Church which are representative of social positioning. Particular elements such as level of preparedness for music rehearsals contribute to the doxa present and are directed towards a belief in the pursuit of musical excellence that encourages congregational participation. I observed several performative decisions and musical behaviours that encouraged this goal, particularly encouraged by Paul, the worship leader. Paul served as a “religious specialist” and contributed to the doxa present through his focus on the alignment of the church’s theological values with musical practices and decisions.

Throughout this second theme, I addressed perceptions of individual musicianship along with concepts of musical habitus and musical capital. While participation and inclusion were key elements of Redeemer Church’s musical life, I noticed subtle assumptions made about levels of musicality that contributed to the classical musical capital prevalent within the field. Theological
values could be understood to have contributed to the perpetuation of perceptions of musicianship. In some cases, worship leaders were noted to have more difficulty directing practices when they had informal musical backgrounds. Yet the effects of the pandemic appeared to contribute to the fluidity of musicians’ musical habituses and capital. Boundaries blurred and expectations moderately shifted. As further explored in the final section, I understood these shifting musical behaviours to both reflect and shape habitus institutionally and individually in a transformative manner.

**Theme 3: Musical Behaviours Shaping Habitus**

This study’s third theme explores whether musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, how this process occurs. Through the strategization of musical behaviours as mentioned in the section above, habitus both at the individual and societal level is shaped. While habitus is structured or shaped by one’s past and present circumstances, it is “structuring” as it shapes present and future practices (Maton, 2014). According to Bourdieu’s theory, the habitus includes past and present dispositions that impact social positioning. Yet this study suggests that the habitus is permeable and responsive according to present-day circumstances. As further discussed in the theory chapter, critics of Bourdieu acknowledge that habitus cannot only emphasize its pre-reflective dimension (Crossley, 1999; Noble & Watkins, 2003; Reay, 2010; Sayer, 2005); indeed, actors can engage in reflexive, conscious, formative behaviour that can contribute to change. Here, I consider whether musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs. Chapter seven presents a visual description of the transformation of the habitus in greater detail, while this section examines whether habitus is shaped through musical behaviours at Redeemer Church.
The body maintains a particular role wherein culture “imprints” itself, impacting the habitus (Jenkins, 2002). Pedagogically, Redeemer Church’s worship leader (Paul) maintained a role as a facilitator through his behaviours, interactions, and bodily positioning. The informal, dialogical, and reflective nature with which he conducted rehearsals promoted conscious awareness of norms, rules, and tendencies within church music. Paul was quick to ask for other musicians’ input and served as a leader yet maintained a leadership style of facilitation. Paul explained how he perceived his role in our interview, stating,

“Usually the practices are run by me. But that doesn’t mean I don’t take input. When we’re done I’ll say, how did that feel? Did you think it was too slow? And the pianist is very quick at that, he says, should we drop the key? Do you think the dynamics work? I certainly do never, never pretend to be the one that's going to tell everybody else how to do it…generally speaking, it’s a collaborative practice (Worship Leader Interview, Redeemer).”

Paul articulated what I observed in the rehearsals. At the conclusion of each song he would always ask for each musicians’ input, encouraging a collaborative process of making musical decisions together. Paul stepped back and provided a chance for every musician to take equal ownership of the learning process. His practices demonstrated how he valued each musicians’ opinion, contributing to their own perceptions of knowledge and identity as a musician. His methods of leading prompted me to think of the role of the teacher in Green’s (2002) research on principles of informal music learning. Paul would set up the practice and prepare songs but learning occurred quite “informally” as the team copied recordings by ear. Musicians who were...

---

21 Here, I refer to the community music facilitator who contributes to community music-making, engaging with participants, maintaining an unconditional welcome (Higgins, 2007), finding a balance between being prepared, being able to lead, and being able to hold back (Higgins, 2012). The facilitator places faith in their relationship with participants, which contributes to respect and responsibility (Higgins, 2012).
prepared would come to practices with ideas, ready to jam and enact those ideas and make a collaborative decision regarding how the particular song could be used in a Sunday service setting. Ian, a musician, explained the process of musical decision making in such a manner, noting,

> Praise team practices are run a little bit informally...And then during practice, we might both show up with ideas...his would be more fitting his song to the service, right? Like I thought all these songs worked really good, but this is a little more than, you know, an extra song than we usually have so we're going to shorten them a bit. And not do any repeats or verses or anything like that. I might come with some ideas too like I really don't like how we repeat the bridge, it just seems like extra stuff in there, something like that. And then we, yeah, I don't know, we just work it out. I'd say between [Paul] and I and others on the praise team as well, I don't know, we've been doing this for so long and we're I think we're both pretty comfortable to be blunt and say whatever we think and not take offense if we hear it that way either and we can come to an agreement pretty easily (Musician Interview, Redeemer).

Intentional dialogue was a key component in Paul’s practice. By physically speaking and positioning himself in a relationship with the other musicians, Paul’s actions were, on the one hand, contributing to the imprinting of culture and shaping of habitus within the church’s musical life. Other musicians affirmed Ian’s description of the informal nature of practices:

> We don’t have too many suggestions for particular instrumentalists in the practices, we more do our own thing. (Musician Interview, Redeemer).

As a survey response indicated,
Practices are somewhat informal. Usually one or two people kind of naturally emerge as leaders who guide it through one song to another. The Worship Coordinator helps the team leaders plan the services and pick the songs, and sometimes helps to guide the practices, especially for more complex services such as Easter, Christmas, etc. (Survey Response, Redeemer)

On the other hand, these “informal” behaviours – combined with intentional dialogue – not only reflected the habitus of Redeemer Church but also contributed to future habitus transformation.

On an institutional level, this chapter has addressed typical norms and rules of musical and theological fields present at Redeemer Church. Behaviours were strategized in accordance with these rules. Yet recent events such as the pandemic and the implementation of dialogically based practices of worship leaders as a result could also be understood to contribute to the shaping of institutional habitus. From a critical lens, if other worship team leaders implemented similar pedagogical practices, the rules of the game and power structures within the field could possibly be illuminated more clearly when more processes of intentional dialogue, opening space up for difference, and processes of listening occur. Taking a different perspective, if such practices were more regularly implemented, perhaps musicians at Redeemer Church would have a more robust idea of the theology and values expressed in the repertoire selection and musical behaviours, better understanding and articulating why they believe what they believe.

On an individual level, these dialogical, intentional, and informal behaviours attributed value to each musicians’ musical ideas and preferences. While Paul still upheld a decision-making process, he appeared to place more emphasis on the process of music-making and worship verses the product. It appeared to me that Paul had an awareness that his knowledge and skills were not neutral in nature, as his habitus – including his theological and philosophical
beliefs—impacted his choices and decisions. The focus here on process over product aligns with similar movements in the educational field such as Green’s (2002, 2008) focus on popular music pedagogy. Perhaps such an intentional shift towards process over product through dialogical interactions and conscious conversations could result in slow shifts in habitus and changes in the field.

It is through dialogical interactions and ongoing reflection that the interruption of cycles of reproduction can occur. Through a dialogical view of habitus and a conscious awareness of deterministic tendencies and power structures in place, a consciousness of habitus may result (Catron, 2021, 2022). I suggest that one’s habitus is able to be transformative in nature, with porous boundaries that are shaped through practice. Practices of critical reflection, then, present opportunities for educator-facilitators to engage in questioning and slowly make adaptations in their practices if they so choose. Reflection and conscious awareness of one’s practices are especially critical within a worship context if one believes that rituals in worship have the ability to shape musicians’ spiritual formation (Benjamins, 2021b).

Musical behaviours are performative in nature; they position actors within the greater social field, influencing their tastes, dispositions, and tendencies. Musical behaviours embody values and have the ability to dismantle a community of musicians. Musical communities emerge through dialogue, sharing of ideas, decision-making processes, and engaging in music-making together. Drawing on Smith (2016) and Wolterstorff’s (2015) writings on the formative aspect of liturgy in worship, I argue then that musical behaviours and practices should align with the theological values of a church, as practices in worship are more formative in terms of habitus and social positioning than one may initially realize. If one views worship as formative both individually and institutionally, what is done in worship “has greater importance and demands
greater intentionality” (Strawn & Brown, 2013, p. 11). Worship leaders and musicians alike may want to intentionally consider and discern the formative aspect of their practices, understanding how they interact with the social field in which they are situated. Whether or not the concepts presented in this thesis are applied specifically to a worship context or a non-religious context, it is necessary to acknowledge that considerations of one’s practices are of utmost importance when acknowledging humanity’s need for community, dialogue, and connection with others.

Summary and Concluding Ideas

I now bring together the three overarching themes, along with their sub-themes, that were addressed throughout this chapter. I organized this first data findings chapter in relation to the order of this study’s research questions and addressed findings from my first church case, Redeemer Christian Reformed Church. Chapter six of this thesis presents data findings from the second church case, Calvin Presbyterian Church.

My first theme addressed how Redeemer Church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which the church is located. Through sub-themes of repertoire selection, approach to worship, and musical participation in the worship team, data indicated that each sub-theme reflected and responded to the doxa of the fields. Redeemer Church’s repertoire selection reflected their theological focus on “blended worship”, indicative of the “rules of the field”, both musical and theological, at Redeemer. While musicians understood what constituted blended worship in different ways, there was a consistent approval process for new repertoire in place, contributing to the stability of the musical and theological fields.

In terms of approach to worship, Paul, the worship leader, and musicians pursued musical excellence while acknowledging and understanding music-making as an offering to God, one
which should be focused on musicians playing to the “best of their abilities”. Various worship musicians’ practices were aimed towards facilitating congregational worship and emphasized the need for congregants to physically participate in worship. The worship team, too, focused on a model of musical participation where almost anyone could participate, yet there were still some musical standards or a “level of musicality” in place. These standards, derived from theological beliefs, could have been understood to contribute to the legitimization of the classical musical capital that was prevalent at Redeemer Church.

The second theme addressed in the chapter responds to research question two, which examines how and why worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their CWM settings. Data findings indicated that Paul, the worship leader served as a “religious specialist” as he attempted to couple the church’s theological values with musical practices and decisions. Paul focused significantly on the congregation’s ability to worship and his role to “facilitate worship”. Yet even with this worship focus, perceptions of “proper” classical musicianship were still expressed. In the conclusion of the second theme, I acknowledge that there were moderate shifts in musical behaviours that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I understood the pandemic to lead to more of a fluidity and flexibility within musicians’ practices, acting as an external force that moderately shifted the musical life at Redeemer Church.

Lastly, the third theme examined whether musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs. Paul’s dialogical practices as a worship leader were understood to value each musicians’ ideas and forms of knowledge when making musical decisions, even as perceptions of musicianship were legitimized in other ways as mentioned previously. Paul’s focus on the process of music-making
rather than the product was highlighted in his focus on dialogue, which I suggest impacted
musicians’ individual habitus in relation to the social field – which he was impacting through his
practices. The habitus of the institution was also fluid and slightly shifting in nature, as affected
by Paul’s dialogical form of leadership. In this way, I suggest that if other worship leaders might
consider implementing similar pedagogical practices in their worship teams, perhaps the rules of
the game and power structures present within the field could be illuminated more clearly. I
wonder how processes of intentional dialogue could open up more spaces for the
acknowledgement of difference and encourage processes of listening. In the next chapter, I
present data findings from my second church case, Calvin Presbyterian Church. Themes are then
explored across the two cases in the chapter seven discussion.
CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY TWO: A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO WORSHIP

Introduction

This second data findings chapter presents findings from the second church case, *Calvin* Presbyterian Church. As part of the comparative case study, Calvin was chosen along with *Redeemer* Christian Reformed Church as one of four churches with varying approaches to worship. In a similar approach to chapter five, findings are organized to respond to the study’s three research questions. Research questions served as pre-ordinate themes, where codes, then became sub-themes in relation to each research question. My first research question examines how each church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located, also considering the doxa of the fields. In response to this question, my first theme describes the “rules of the field” through sub-themes of repertoire selection, approach to worship, and musical participation. My second research question analyzes how and why worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their (two different) CWM settings. In addressing this research question, I emphasize how perceptions of musicianship may contribute to the strategization of musical behaviours. Lastly, I consider whether such musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs.

It is necessary to note that due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the particular lockdown that occurred when I was scheduled to engage in data collection, the regular worship team was not leading services or rehearsing over Zoom. Instead, a church choir led worship in services during this period. The data collected in this second case were therefore from a church choir who served as a virtual ensemble, rather than a worship team. While the choir
performed a range of repertoire, I would loosely conceptualize their music-making practices as “contemporary” in nature, reflecting elements of CWM and shifting more towards modern repertoire. These shifts, particularly with the addition of a new choir director, are further discussed in the following. In this setting, I frame the choir director’s role as a worship leader-facilitator, directing and leading the overall direction of the choir and their music-making.

Each theme is addressed in relation to Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) as my theoretical framework. I consider key elements of his theory throughout the chapter, examining how meaning and values are expressed through everyday musical practices. Calvin Presbyterian Church is part of the greater Presbyterian Church of Canada denomination, a denomination which is explored in more detail in my review of literature. As addressed there, the Presbyterian Church in Canada denomination tends to emphasize more external, social justice-oriented concerns such as missions, ecumenical relations, and issues such as inclusion, poverty, and education, among others. Partially impacted by the twentieth century Social Gospel movement in its theology, the Presbyterian church is understood in this study to be aligned more closely with a mainline, Evangelical denomination. This study considers Calvin Church to operate within given rules of its specific musical and theological fields as well as the greater religious Protestant field, in a similar way to Redeemer Christian Reformed Church.

The table below provides a visual demonstration of how this chapter’s data findings relate to each of the research questions, acknowledging how the sub-themes, developed from codes, respond to three pre-ordinate themes.
Table 4: Relationship Between Research Questions and Data Themes at Church #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Themes at Calvin Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located? • What are the doxa of these fields?</td>
<td>A. Selecting repertoire • Repertoire selection was generally “balanced”; the choir director began implementing more contemporary repertoire and received pushback • Repertoire responded to doxa in place but the music-making practices responded to the doxa in a way that made some musicians uncomfortable; choir director may not have maintained enough social capital or power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their (two different) CWM settings?</td>
<td>B. Approach to worship • Musicians had varied approaches to and understandings of music in worship • Music-making practices took more of a focus on community and musicians’ individual experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?</td>
<td>C. Musical participation in the choir • Open, inclusive approach to musical participation, without a focus on performance • The effects of contemporary elements of repertoire indicated that some musicians needed time for preferences and dispositions to shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their (two different) CWM settings?</td>
<td>A. The role of the choir director • Generally the choir director’s traditional pedagogical practices aligned with the doxa of the field, “choosing” the best strategies for the game and focusing on dialogue, yet, at times, her practices did not align with the specific values she spoke of aiming to enact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?</td>
<td>B. Perceptions of musicianship • Contemporary repertoire, along with recording of musical parts, perpetuated perceptions of musicianship and lack of “formal training” throughout the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?</td>
<td>A. Musicals behaviours reflecting and shaping habitus • Individually, habitus was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through changes in musical behaviours surrounding musical ability and confidence • Institutionally, habitus was impacted through the worship leader’s relational, dialogical interactions with musicians, facilitating a community-feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 1: Understanding the “Rules of the Field”**

In the following, I address Calvin Church’s repertoire selection, approach to worship, and musical participation as three sub-themes that all respond to my first research question which examines the “rules of the field”, or doxa, at Calvin Church. I consider how Calvin Church’s music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which the church is located. I draw extensively on the choir director and several musicians’ interview responses as I understand them to represent as accurately as possible the positioning of the church case in its totality.

Throughout several COVID-19 lockdowns in southwestern Ontario from 2020 to 2021, Calvin Church continued having weekly worship services online, led by pre-recorded videos of
the choir as well as the pastor leading the service. Calvin Church’s services were not livestreamed and were, instead, prepared ahead of time for congregants to view on Sunday morning in their individual homes. Each Thursday evening, the choir would meet for a rehearsal over Zoom that was approximately one hour in length. Musicians were asked to submit individual recordings of them singing their choral parts each week, which were then edited and compiled by the choir director as a song to be used within the weekly Sunday service. In this way, the choir served as a virtual ensemble as described in literature (Cayari, 2021a; Datta, 2020). Services would include several hymns of the month (both traditional and contemporary in nature), an anthem or liturgical piece, and then a Benediction or sending song. Since the choir only rehearsed virtually, this allowed for some new members to join who were not always physically present in the Kitchener-Waterloo region.

In my experience, the common refrain among church circles during the pandemic was that online worship was draining, taxing, and put significant strain on churches. Yet several of Calvin’s choir members described some positive aspects of COVID-19, as it brought new members to the choir with increased energy, strengthening the musical lives of those present. Further, the choir director started in the role at Calvin only a few months before the pandemic began, which shifted the direction of the choir and probably impacted some of the “new energy” and musical changes that were spoken about. The various shifts that the choir was undergoing are further discussed throughout the following three sub-themes in relation to my first research question. I consider each theme and its interaction with Calvin Church’s musical and theological fields.
Selecting Repertoire

Calvin Church appeared to maintain a balanced approach to repertoire in terms of traditional versus contemporary music. Yet in the particular timeframe that I observed their musical practices, “contemporary music” referred more to the incorporation of jazz elements such as syncopations, vocal techniques, swing rhythms, as well as some repertoire based on the blues scale. Typically, CWM would be associated with popular music instruments and tends to focus more on pop music elements (i.e. four chord structure, simple rhythms, etc.) as evident in the contemporary repertoire at Redeemer Christian Reformed Church. In a non-pandemic time, I would have been able to observe the worship team who typically leads CWM and who might have selected repertoire more closely associated with CWM.

I asked Sophia, the choir director, about her choice of contemporary repertoire. She explained the process that she goes through in selecting repertoire:

I’m very much about the thematics first, so there has to be a reason for us to sing whatever we’re singing and have it be meaningful. From that perspective, I feel like I choose the repertoire that I think is suitable for them, first of all, that will be achievable for them, but that will be meaningful in worship as well. It’s not just thrown in…And from that perspective, I feel like I’m primarily the person who chooses the rep, and I also feel like I’ve been slowly infusing my style into the rep as well. I still feel like I want to infuse some more contemporary stuff, some more justice pieces, some social justice equality…I feel really, really strongly about that as someone who’s, you know, I’m younger than a lot of them (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).
Language was a significant element of repertoire selection for Sophia. In my non-participant observations of online choir rehearsals, Sophia was explicit about changing language in repertoire to be more inclusive and reflect more of a “social justice equality” direction:

I’ll change language in old anthems as well to make it more inclusive, and I’m kind of always like bracing myself, is there going to be an email in my inbox that someone doesn’t approve of this? (Choir Director Interview, Calvin)

I observed Sophia changing the language in one of the rehearsals. The choir was rehearsing an anthem entitled “Down to the River to Pray” and she explained to the choir that they were going to substitute the term “siblings” for fathers and “parents” for mothers. After announcing that the language would shift, choristers didn’t respond much. Sophia attributed this partially to the Zoom environment, and noted that when there was any pushback with her decisions, she would more often receive critiques over email or in conversations after the rehearsals. This reality spoke to the different nature of the online communities facilitated through Zoom. It would be interesting to further consider how the online nature of the choir rehearsals changed the dynamics between musicians and Sophia, the choir director. Perhaps an emphasis on language was more at the forefront in comparison to a musical emphasis, partly due to the musical challenges of an online environment such as Internet problems, difficulty to hear other choristers and difficulty in making music together. Further, the virtual aspect of the choir may have shifted the dynamic and typical sense of open communication between musicians and Sophia.

Characteristics of the Zoom online environment accentuated the “rules of the field” within a particular snapshot of time that represented Calvin Church’s musical life during the pandemic. The fact that Sophia was typically “bracing herself” for pushback with emails in her inbox spoke to her comprehension of characteristics of the musical and theological fields of
Calvin Church. Such behaviours – musical and interpersonal – were demonstrated in this small comment as some musicians were resistant to linguistic, and musical, changes in the repertoire.

For many musician-choristers, Sophia’s introduction of more contemporary repertoire affirmed their interest in repertoire that supported different ways to worship, both through language and musical genre. Musicians spoke of their appreciation for the new repertoire in relation to their ability to worship, or express their faith. Elaine articulated,

I had really been yearning for more things that helped express my spirituality.
That was the issue. And so that’s why I was so excited about the music that [the music director] was choosing which I think reflects what the church is trying to do…as I’m getting to know what their ministry is I’m seeing…it’s all fitting together (Musician Interview, Calvin).

I responded by asking Elaine if the church has been shifting its direction and focus more recently. Elaine responded,

The feeling I get is that the older people are saying, you know, we need to be moving forward [with contemporary music], and they can see the value in that (Musician Interview, Calvin).

When describing Calvin’s current repertoire, George appeared ready for new contemporary pieces, as he expressed frustration with the performance of certain songs from the Presbyterian hymnal:

Sometimes we’ll do these [old] songs and I think, how can [the congregation] like this stuff? I don’t know what type of music this is, but it’s, you know, not even the 1980s Keith Green or the 1990s contemporary, you know, As a Deer, there’s other stuff that comes from the Presbyterian hymnal that I have no idea what this
stuff is and it drives me nuts. The Lutheran hymnal has them too. They’re these atonal weird songs. And we’ll perform them and people will love them. So obviously it hits a chord with them (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Yet not all of them were entirely comfortable with this “contemporary” repertoire:

I think we’re doing more upbeat songs. We do the odd classical, but…a lot of new Christian related [songs], they’re certainly not all in the hymn book. I like them but they were always singing the songs that went back to my childhood [in the past], and we’re not singing any of those…And it all feels like new songs that are just brand new (Musician Interview, Calvin).

I continued by asking Winona why she missed some of her old childhood songs. She responded,

Like when you hear a song that you’ve sang for years and years, just sort of singing out loud and enjoying it because you don’t even need to look at the words. But [now] we have to look at the words and continually learn how the tune goes etc. without the basics (Musician Interview, Calvin).

It appeared that the respondents who indicated a difficulty embracing contemporary repertoire felt as though they couldn’t fully engage in worship through the genre of music. These musicians encountered a sense of “disjunct” when they were attempting to learn and record the repertoire. This concept is further explored in my third main theme that examines musical behaviours shaping habitus. Sophia described her attempt to introduce more popular music-based repertoire to the choir, knowing full well that it would be a challenge prompting some pushback from the members due to the repertoire’s “contemporary” musical elements:

Back when we were still in person, I gave [the choir] one piece that I knew would be a challenge and that was kind of on purpose. It was a piece about Martin
Luther King. It was by U2, “MLK”, but it was kind of a choral arrangement and it was a cappella and it was punchy. I just felt really, I wanted to kind of show them, like, here’s an avenue we could go down. Not to say that we always have to go down that avenue. But I thought they could, I knew they could do it. But there were complaints about like, oh, what line do we read? The tenor two line? Like, it was one of those scores that it’s like, yeah, you know, every line that I have to go somewhere else, it’s like, oh, is this a ‘hum’ or is this a ‘ooh’ or is this the melody? And it was a tricky score to read and navigate. So that was when I felt - not push back - but frustration like, oh jeez, if she's going to give us this stuff every week, like…(Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

I affirmed what Sophia was saying, explaining that I understood what she was describing. She continued,

But then the flip side of that is when they performed, the response from the congregation was so great. So they have people coming up to them saying that was so beautiful, that was so meaningful, that resonated with me. And so they then, you know, all of that other stuff is forgotten (Worship Leader Interview, Calvin).

When questioned about her future actions and how the experience shaped her future repertoire selection, Sophia explained further.

There’s still a line that I like. I don’t go as far as I would like to, you know. I still kind of keep it pretty…safe and vanilla (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

Sophia’s comment was indicative of the culture of Calvin Church. The demographics of the church included a majority “white”, intergenerational congregation with more of the choir members in a middle-age to senior stage of life. The repertoire that I observed the choir learning
and rehearsing was representative of Sophia’s typical repertoire selection, including the shift in language. But as evident in the various comments above, there was a sense of hesitancy present in terms of language, thematic focus of the repertoire, and its musical characteristics. Sophia wanted to introduce even more popular-based repertoire, and expressed some frustration about the pushback of the choir. As noted above, she had to keep things pretty “safe and vanilla”.

When considering the comments expressed in relation to my first research question, the data reveal how Calvin’s music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located, specifically through repertoire selection. There was a general “social justice end” to the repertoire, which reflected the greater theological field of Calvin Church. As explained in my review of literature and mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, the twentieth century Social Gospel movement was seen to influence the Presbyterian Church of Canada, embracing leftist political causes and focusing more on religious and cultural pluralism (Evans, 2017). Calvin Church’s repertoire reflected the denominational stance and was reflected in Sophia’s focus as a choir director. She mentioned incorporating a focus on “social justice equality” with contemporary elements. In this way, the theological focus of the repertoire aligned with the doxa, or “rules of the game” of the field. The music-making practices that Sophia was implementing, however, were responding to the doxa of the field in a manner that some musicians felt uncomfortable with. In Sophia’s opinion, she was walking a careful line between introducing new repertoire and keeping things “safe”. Others appeared to express a sense of discomfort.

Winona as a particular respondent indicated a sense of feeling like all the songs were “brand new”, not knowing “the basics” of the repertoire in terms of where the tune would go and how the words would align with the tune. It appeared that there was typically a sense of
familiarity with repertoire for musicians. Hawn (2001) argues that through cyclical, repetitive
structures in church music, a physical response is evoked and worshippers can participate more
easily in the liturgy. In some ways, the *doxa* of the field contributed to a reliance on repetitive,
familiar tunes that musicians could associate with and engage with due to familiarity with
musical elements. They were not accustomed to regular shifts in the musical genre of repertoire.
And since the choir was typically comprised of middle-aged to senior members, the popular
music elements of the repertoire were likely not an “easier” genre for musicians to create an
association with in comparison to other genres. While musicians in Green’s (2002, 2008) study
of popular music in the school appreciated the implementation of popular music pedagogies and
repertoire because it aligned with their listening preferences outside of the school, musicians at
Calvin Church didn’t express that the contemporary repertoire necessarily aligned with their
listening preferences. It is important to note, however, that the ages of the choir were generally
much older than school-aged students and that the age cohort may have an effect on listening
preferences and the incorporation of CWM.

In Bourdieu’s conceptualization of the *doxa*, each field’s condition can affect what
players do in the field. It is possible that since Sophia, the choir director, was relatively new to
Calvin Church, she did not yet hold enough social capital to maintain a position in the social
field permitting her to effectively make a change. Musicians also may not have viewed her as
possessing “enough power” to want to therefore align or “buy in” to her changes. Sophia, however,
developed strategies to operate within the game. Although the religious field of Calvin
Church is “relatively autonomous” (Rey, 2007) in nature, there is an overall uniform logic of
operation. Thus, Sophia still had to operate in the overall “game” and she may have not held
enough of the necessary capital to transfer or maintain capital from or within one field or another.

Remaining with Bourdieu’s critical theory, it is possible for some to view Sophia’s actions as a form of the Bourdieusian concept of misrecognition\(^\text{22}\) of the \textit{illusio}.\(^\text{23}\) \textit{Illusio} affirms the established orders in place, impacting the reproduction of the social order that is produced from the relationship between habitus and field (Bourdieu et al., 1993). In analyzing Calvin Church’s choir from this perspective, Sophia’s actions could therefore be understood as influencing musicians’ misrecognition of their position in the field, unable to push back or disagree with her repertoire preferences. The choir could have upheld a collective habitus, or \textit{collusio},\(^\text{24}\) grounded in the \textit{doxa} of the church, where those who disagreed with repertoire selection felt that they should not disagree. Further, the theological positioning of the church and its focus on external, social justice issues, may have complicated the matter as objectively, there was nothing “wrong” with the repertoire since it aligned with the theological positioning of the church. The virtual component of the choir rehearsals could have also been understood to add to the misrecognition of the \textit{illusio}, where it became more difficult to interact in a typical, interpersonal way, and have some of these conversations surrounding repertoire selection.

The conversations expressed among musicians were relatively typical in my experience as a musician in various church settings. Using Bourdieu’s framework, however, provides a different, critical perspective to the dynamics at play. The examination of repertoire selection at

\(^{22}\) Misrecognition is described by Bourdieu as the process of legitimating the power and social statues of dominant classes. It occurs by creating an \textit{illusio} (illusion) that those in religious power, the elite, appear to naturally deserve their position (Rey, 2007). Misrecognized ways of thinking and perceptions result, and social order and inequalities are unquestioned (Bourdieu, 1991b).

\(^{23}\) See note on misrecognition; \textit{illusio} is an illusion produced and reproduced by misrecognition, legitimating dominant social status of those in power (Bourdieu, 1991b).

\(^{24}\) \textit{Collusio} is a shared “feel for the game”, or a collective habitus or a group’s collective grounding in a doxa (Bourdieu, 2000)
Calvin Church is helpful in providing a picture of the landscape of the musical and theological fields at Calvin and how music-making practices both reflect and respond to these fields. This section demonstrated that while repertoire selection was traditionally “balanced” at Calvin Church, Sophia, the choir director’s implementation of new contemporary repertoire prompted some pushback. While the theological content of the repertoire aligned with the *doxa* in place, musical elements and practices responded to the *doxa* in such a way that made some musicians uncomfortable. Sophia, the choir director, may have not maintained enough social capital or power. These themes are further explored next in relation to the second sub-theme, which is approach to worship.

*Approach to Worship*

Calvin Church’s theological and philosophical approach to worship, as expressed in interviews and survey responses, impacted music-making practices and their reflection and response to musical and theological fields in place. In this second sub-theme related to the first research question, I discuss Calvin Church’s philosophy and approach to worship.

In my interviews and conversations with musicians, I found this theme to be fascinating, as responses regarding what constitutes worship and why people engage with music at church significantly varied in nature. When I asked Sophia, the choir director, what her overall approach to worship was, she remarked,

I come at it from my own life experience. I don’t think I would be a music director at any other church other than this church, because I know where they stand in terms of social justice and the lines where I align. And if anything, as they have become a more affirming congregation, it's only become more welcoming and more open to having those dialogues. Which is awesome, because
I don't think that's the story everywhere. But yeah, I'm not sure if some of the choir has felt maybe silenced by that. I'm not sure if they felt silenced by the inclusion that they now feel like they can't speak to how they feel. But from the people that I know in the choir who make their feelings known, they say to me, thank you for including this. Thank you for bringing this music to us. Because I've been struggling with how I identify as a Christian in these times…[there’s] discussion that I think we all need to be having. So for me, I really thought, if I can't infuse this, I don't want the job. (Choir Director Interview, Calvin)

I asked other musicians how they viewed worship in light of their musical participation at Calvin Church. While Sophia expressed that some people in the choir appreciate the inclusive nature and the external, “horizontal” focus of worship at Calvin, others had different opinions:

So singing is not a strong point in this church compared to the Mennonite churches or Christian Reformed Churches I’ve been to. And so the choices of music… I find that the music is less prayerful than it could be sometimes. The reason I’m saying this is that sometimes I find that music’s done for music’s sake, as opposed to a worshipful sake at [Calvin] (Musician Interview, Calvin).

I pressed George on this comment and asked how his idea of worship affects his participation and music-making at Calvin. He responded,

I don’t want to compare [another local choir] but I really have to. Because being in [the other choir] is a worship service in itself, both the practices and performances. And I don’t get that from [Calvin]. I get a sense of community, of people who want to be together to support, kind of broadly, the small ‘w’ worship
of [Calvin], but with Inshallah there’s a capital ‘W’ there, this is…we are making a change (Musician Interview, Calvin).

I found George’s response to be critical to my research findings regarding worship at Calvin, as he succinctly described his understanding of the role of music in worship, as well as what he believed the focus of worship should be. George made a distinction between participatory and presentational music-making (Turino, 2008), articulating that community and a focus on music alone should not necessarily be the primary focus of worship. It was interesting that George explained that singing was not “strong” in comparison with other church denominations. Yet music was “done” for music’s sake alone. It appeared from his interview that George equated Calvin’s music-making to a focus on community and inclusion. He connected “strong” music-making and singing in other churches with “prayerful” music and also compared his experiences in another choir to his participation in Calvin’s choir, associating his participation in the other choir with a worship service, capital ‘W’ worship, and making a change.

To me, George’s comments aligned with some of Joncas’s (2013) descriptions of the “pragmatic” dimensions of worship, including evangelization, catechesis, and building community, among others. Yet since Calvin Church placed a significant emphasis on such “horizontal” focuses, ordering functions of worship according to its purpose, meaning the adoration of God (Joncas, 2013), shifted in nature. Wolterstorff (2005) suggests that music is multifunctional in nature and that music in the liturgy should be in service of particular liturgical actions. Using George’s description of worship at Calvin, it is possible that music at Calvin fulfilled its particular “community” function, but perhaps, it was missing the actual “worship of God” function of the liturgy.
Other interviewees also highlighted the musical emphasis of their participation in the choir. Sandy stated,

I think it’s important to have it as just something that…makes people feel good. I think music does that for people, you know, it hits your heart. Sometimes when they’re doing their sermons and that sort of thing. Sometimes that doesn’t hit you the same way as the music. To me, music touches the soul (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Lorraine similarly indicated the impact of music in church, explaining,

I go to church because of the music. Although I have to admit that [the lead pastor] is amazing. But music just makes me happy (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Cheryl articulated the need for music as part of worship as she remarked,

I always think singing in the choir is my worship. Even with the praise band, singing is part of worship. It’s not supposed to be a performance, you know, one the things that has kind of gotten to me a little bit is, [the congregation] kind of claps for everything. And that doesn’t make it worshipful, I think it should be the music as part of the worship. It’s a response to the message, it’s a response to Scripture, and that’s, to me, what it should be (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Mark, too, connected singing with his expression of praise and supporting the community at Calvin. He stated,

I think that singing is a great way to express ourselves and, and that, you know, to be able to express our praise. And it’s great to be able to do that with others. And so I think again there's that that communal like we're, we're working together to offer something that hopefully can help us all with our worship. So that’s where
for me it’s a community, that choir is supporting the community with our worship (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Sandy and Lorraine highlighted music as a primary emphasis or role of worship, to the extent that Lorraine primarily goes to church for music. As Sandy explained, for her, sometimes music is much more powerful for her than other elements of the liturgy, such as sermons. I found that musicians at Calvin expressed a significant range of opinions on the role of music within church which reflected a less unified and more diverse nature of Calvin’s theological field and musicians’ positioning within it. Cheryl and Mark articulated a slight shift in their view of the role of music as part of worship. As Mark explained, their role as musicians was to support their church community in their worship. I understood Cheryl and Mark’s views to align more with Wolterstorff’s (2005) description of music in service of liturgical actions, where it is used to enhance the community’s worship. In some ways, Cheryl and Mark conceptualized Calvin’s music as fulfilling a functionalistic role, where it served as “utility music” directed towards a communal, “horizontal” focus (Ratzinger, 2008).

In my interview with George, he also spent some time articulating differences between Calvin’s musical positioning in relation to other local churches which helped describe their overall approach to worship. I asked about choir performances within services and the role of the choir within worship overall. He stated,

When you say that question, I think of those big mega-churches where they have the typical praise band with drums and all that stuff. With Knox, or the other side would be a Mennonite church or a Christian Reformed Church where it’s not that at all, where people are invited to kind of sing along. So there’s that side. And I would say [Calvin] is in the middle somewhere. If you were in the pews at
[Calvin], you might be hard pressed to hear people around you singing. And there is kind of a performance aspect because people listen to us…but on the other hand, during congregational hymns, the choir always stands up and sings along, kind of leads the singers. So it’s probably kind of a mixture of the two. I wouldn’t go either and say it’s a performance or whatever the other side is. It’s somewhere in the middle at [Calvin] (Musician Interview, Calvin).

George’s overarching description of Calvin’s musical positioning within the greater social field provides a strong conclusion for this sub-theme in relation to my first research question. The choir director and musicians’ description of their approach to worship helped paint a picture of the musical landscape at Calvin and contributed to my understanding of the musical and theological fields in place. As indicated in this sub-theme, musicians had varied approaches to and understandings of music in worship, where some placed more of a primary emphasis on it than others. Sophia, the choir director, also reflected upon her approach to worship, acknowledging that her inclusive approach may be actively silencing some musicians, and, in fact, excluding their opinions surrounding worship. The religious habitus in place along with the “rules of the game”, or doxa, likely directed many musicians’ conceptualizations of worship and, perhaps, their understanding of what constituted “worship”. Calvin Church’s music-making practices, which expressed their approach to worship, reflected and responded to their positioning in the social field, which I would argue, overall, took more of a focus on “community” and musicians’ individual experiences. Next, I discuss musical participation as a third sub-theme in relation to Calvin’s musical and theological positioning, concluding this section of the data findings.
**Musical Participation in the Choir**

When considering musical participation in the choir at Calvin, anyone was welcome to join, regardless of their musical background and training. Different from Redeemer Church who encouraged participation but there was still some element of musical leadership and “musicality” necessary, Calvin’s choir consisted of a varied and musically diverse group of people. Multiple participants noted their appreciation of the inclusive nature of the choir’s musical community.

While the choir, in a sense, “performed” music for Sunday services, performance was not at the centre of any of the interviewee’s understandings of the purpose of the choir. As Sophia, the choir director, stated,

> Music above else is community first. It’s not like the music result is great, but it’s really about…the fellowship or the community time that they - that we all - share

(Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

This sense of inclusivity was particularly evident in terms of who could be part of the church choir. Interviewees indicated that anybody could join, regardless of their ability to “carry a tune”. While several interviewees noted that there were tone-deaf people in the choir, they indicated a sense of “letting go” musically and being okay with this different end goal of the choir:

> I think [the choir is] quite open to anybody. Sometimes I’m singing beside people that I’m feeling like aren’t carrying a tune but they’re there as well and I think they’re learning from those that can carry a tune…Everybody’s welcome which is awesome (Musician Interview, Calvin).

George similarly articulated,

> So there’s at least two tone-deaf people in the choir, and from a musical sense…I’m in pain when I hear [them] but my heart, I think it’s winning over…
my ear. Knowing that they’re coming every week and these two people in particular, they’re there all the time. And it warms the depths of my heart. I imagine it would hurt the director’s ears too and yet they don’t bat an eyelash. And really, that makes me a bit emotional…It’s quite encouraging I find (Musician Interview, Calvin).

It was interesting to observe the blending of presentational and participatory music-making (Turino, 2008) through the choir’s practices. Musicians linked the sense of inclusivity of the musical community to participation for all in singing in the choir. By opening up the choir to any member of the congregation, congregants listening could join in a participatory nature simply by “worshipping” alongside the choir members singing. This focus on inclusivity and participation was intentional on the part of the choir director, Sophia. I asked Sophia about her focus on inclusivity and she explained it in the following way:

First of all, [Calvin’s choir] is really not like a community choir that needs an audition process or something like that. Which does have its challenges as someone who's a perfectionist and who desires a certain sound, that can get tricky sometimes.... But it's always community first…and that's how I've lived…And sometimes the question they'll ask me, well, is there a minimum artistic requirement for those to enter? And my answer is always no. What are you talking about? Like anybody can come and do this. And I’m fine with that because it’s kind of been my philosophy all along. That being said, they know when…I’m kind of asking them to rise to the occasion, and I would say they’ve honestly done some of their best work during COVID-19 (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).
I appreciated Sophia’s honesty and I viewed her position on Calvin’s choir to filter down to repertoire selection, interactions with the choir, and rehearsal style. For one choir member in particular, he mentioned that the repertoire was a “bit simple”, yet this spoke to the participatory nature of the choir that Sophia tried to reach. George described the music of Calvin’s choir in comparison to the other local choir that he is a part of:

The music might be a little bit more simple. It’s hard to gauge that for sure, but I would hazard a guess that ya, I’m sure [Sophia] has been choosing the less difficult pieces. There’s been less of a focus on the musicality elements, so dynamics, and there’s only so much you can do with that. I would say so…I’m a fairly competent singer, but it’s possible, I can’t speak for everyone for sure (Musician Interview, Calvin).

While George appeared a bit critical of the “simple” musical nature of Calvin’s choir, every other interviewee indicated how much they appreciated the inclusive nature of the choir, impacting their willingness to be part of it. As Barb, a choir member jokingly stated to me when we were talking, “It’s very inclusive and that’s why I thought this was something to try because I thought, nobody’s gonna fire you from a church choir!” Barb’s comment was humorous in nature as it was indicative of the mindset of the majority of the choir members, which some would appreciate and others would probably be critical of depending on their approach to church worship according to their conceptualization of the role and purpose of church worship.

Calvin Church’s music-making practices reflected and responded to their musical and theological fields. The level of musicians’ embeddedness in the social field was evident from an outsider’s perspective as almost every musician aligned with the choir’s participative, inclusive focus. While shifting slightly in understandings of the purpose of music in church, musicians
generally aligned in their approach to worship and understanding of the field’s positioning. It is important to note that musicians, for the most part, aligned in their opinions surrounding repertoire selection but it was Sophia, the choir director, who presented different opinions as enacted through practice. At first glance, it appeared that Sophia reflected the general positioning of the Presbyterian Church’s denomination but overall, musicians seemed a bit wary of her introduction of “contemporary” (elements of popular and/or jazz focused) repertoire.

When viewing these concepts through a lens of Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of practice, practice is the product of one’s relationship between their habitus and their position in a field, defined by the amount of capital held in the field (Wright, 2015). Agents bring evolving habituses to the social field and therefore occupy positions as determined by their capital. Calvin Church, as an individual religious field (that is also part of the greater social field) has embedded rules and norms. Dispositions are acquired through gradual processes of inculcation (Mills, 2008) and the bodily participation – which I would connect to participation in Calvin’s choir – over time will imprint and encode a socialization process of “norms”. Musicians have developed an illusio over time and know what type of capital is valued within the church. Most of the participating church musicians have been part of Calvin Church for a significant amount of time. They are aware of the “norms” or “rules” of the game in the field, doxa in Bourdieu’s terms, and some of their habituses, or dispositions, have been iteratively shaped through the process. When Sophia, the new choir director, entered the field she brought with her a different musical habitus – her own dispositions, tendencies, and preferences. While she advocated for new contemporary music that she thought aligned well with the church’s positioning, others, perhaps, needed time for preferences and dispositions to continue to take shape and possibly shift. For certain musicians such as George, he didn’t think participation in the choir constituted “really
worshipping” – possibly when the new choir director started - because of the disjunct that he felt with the end focus of the choir and his personal values of worship. George’s experiences were indicative of some of the “rules of the game” present at Calvin Church.

**Conclusion of Theme 1: Elements of the Theological Field**

This first theme explored how Calvin Church’s CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located, as well as the *doxa* of these fields. Similar to chapter five, this first theme focused on the first research question and considered how Calvin Church is positioned through its worship practices, as evident through processes of music-making. As evident in different musicians’ responses surrounding the function of music in worship, there were varied opinions on music facilitating congregants’ worship of God, therefore enhancing elements of the liturgy versus some musicians participating in the service only for the music alone. Overall, I understand Calvin Church’s positioning to be more focused on participation/inclusivity and a bit less on the pursuit of musical excellence. My discussion chapter includes a cross-case analysis, comparing and contrasting Calvin Church’s positioning with Redeemer Church. In the previous chapter, I drew on Monnot’s (2018) research on relations of power within the religious field. Monnot uses cultural elements to place church denominations on a scale, comparing formal versus individual dimensions of worship. Reflecting the previous data findings chapter, I attempt to locate Calvin Church on a scale as well, as demonstrated below. Both churches’ positioning will be further discussed in the next chapter.
Figure 4:

*An Analysis of Musical Excellence and Participation with Church Case #2*

Theme 2: Strategization of Musical Behaviours

My second research question focuses on the strategization of musical behaviours within two different CWM settings. This section of the chapter examines how worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours at Calvin Presbyterian Church. This theme addresses worship leaders’ and musicians’ practices and behaviours and how social and religious norms or “rules” in place influence such behaviours. In accordance with chapter five, this second theme understands music-making as a performative practice that embodies behaviours and values including inclusivity, accessibility, and empowerment (Phelan, 2008). Similar to Redeemer Church, I consider the strategization of musical behaviours through a variety of themes such as modes of performance, pedagogical practices, and perceptions of musicianship expressed through behaviours and discourse.
Bourdieu (1990) refers to the notion of strategy as “the feel for the game” (p. 62), a feel that is acquired through taking part in social activities. It is a so-called “strategy” in terms of playing in conformity with rules, while also acting in accordance with one’s interests.

Individuals have varied levels of “feeling” for the game and this “know-how” for the game is unequal between different players. When referring to the strategization of musical behaviours, I acknowledge how musicians and worship leaders “play the game” through their enactment of behaviours that express values, beliefs, and so on, through music, i.e. their musical habitus. Whether or not they are consciously aware, as they enact such musical behaviours, I suggest that they are contributing to the legitimization or “embeddedness” of social norms or the field conditions in place, thus contributing to Calvin’s positioning in the greater social field. This section addresses the strategization of behaviours first through the choir director’s musical practices, followed by an examination of perceptions of musicianship expressed through practice.

The Role of the Choir Director

First, in considering the role of the choir director in relation to the strategization of musical behaviours, I spent time reflecting upon Sophia and her pedagogical practices within rehearsals. My semi-structured interviews were completed around the same time I observed multiple choir rehearsals. During the rehearsals, musicians seemed enthusiastic, engaged, and excited to be part of the choir. While many of the interview responses were positive about Sophia, there were a couple musicians who felt that her pedagogical practices were too “traditional” in nature. I understood these responses to come from those whose musical habituses did not align with Sophia’s, or appear as valued by her. As Elsie, one musician, articulated,
The choir director kind of does it by teaching the pieces. Once we’ve learned them then we sing the whole thing, which is opposite to [another local choir]. At first I thought I can’t handle this, because it was like a very traditional way. But anyway, I’m getting used to it…and of course the mic [on Zoom] is off so nobody knows what I’m doing…it’s hard to know how it sounds because the mics are all shut off so she doesn’t know whether we’re getting it or not. We have to tell her where our problems are (Musician Interview, Calvin).

When asked how Sophia taught or introduced new repertoire, Elsie expressed some frustration:

I [sing] soprano, [and] when she goes through each part, I just keep singing soprano. But I probably have ADD and if we’re gunna have to wait for the basses and the tenors to learn their part before we sing, that would drive me crazy. So, yeah, I don't know if I would want to do that if we meet in person (Musician Interview, Calvin).

I responded to Elsie by asking how the method of introducing repertoire was different in other choirs. She described it in the following manner:

With [the other local choir director], she’ll get us to learn the melody. Just by maybe going, ‘ooh, ooh, ooh’ or ‘la, la, la’ or…we learn the rhythm, and just get the feel of the whole piece. And then if people want to start putting in the harmonies, then they might start. Or she’ll just say, Okay, Now let's try it with harmony and then eventually, she goes to the problem points of the harmony (Musician Interview, Calvin).
Others appeared to be content with Sophia’s method of choral leadership, even with its traditional elements. As evident below, the survey comment describes all the work that Sophia puts into the practices and affirms its traditional nature, stating,

Choir practices are led by our music director. For each piece, she will play/sing each part for the section we are running and members of the choir are welcome to indicate any sections they are having problems with, in which case we will run those sections again, or any questions that they may have, in which case our music director will answer them…After running through sections, our music director will lead us through run throughs of the piece where she will either play the accompaniment or conduct (Survey response, Musician, Calvin).

The fact that the majority of participants did not have any concerns with Sophia’s leadership and pedagogical style affirmed to me that her methods probably aligned with the majority of the musicians’ musical habituses. As a leader, she could be understood to strategize her musical and pedagogical behaviour in accordance with the doxa at Calvin. Similar to Bourdieu’s (1990) description of the habitus as a feel for the game, Sophia’s habitus enabled the enactment of her behaviours; she “chose” the best strategies for the game (whether that was conscious or unconscious) and enacted practices and musical behaviours that fit well with Calvin’s positioning in the field. The only exception to this was the addition of some contemporary repertoire that musicians pushed back on, as addressed in theme one. As I acknowledge in the third theme, the implementation of practices of dialogue may interrupt and open up contexts such as these for conversation, increasing Sophia’s “know-how” of the field at hand. In fact, Sophia could strategically use dialogue for a purpose of gaining capital and social
“know-how” to further influence the musical direction and social positioning of the choir, which is another aspect to the strategic generation of behaviours.

Sophia’s method of leadership was traditional in terms of musical leadership yet she tried to regularly encourage collaborative repertoire selection while being a “leading voice” in Calvin’s musical expression:

I always encourage [participation], some of them would say, oh, I really like that piece you did in worship… Could the choir record that or I saw this other choir do this piece, what do you think of this? And so I always welcome those because sometimes there's some really great ideas or there's an introduction to a piece that I didn't know or…Some of our most meaningful pieces came from that.

So I would say it's a balance, some of it I feel very strongly about. And so I program it and then other stuff comes in and some of it I say no kindly to some of it. But yeah, I do feel strongly that there... not in the authoritarian way, but I feel that there should be a leading voice in what the music is saying, and so I view myself as that (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

While I appreciated Sophia’s aim to be a “leading voice” in what the music was saying, I also wondered from a sociological perspective if she felt that she had enough capital to influence the direction of the choir and if she also properly understood the conditions of the field, which influences what different agents in the field could do. For example, I was curious if her leadership style focused on directing the message of the music aligned with the church’s theological positioning. Further, it would be beneficial to question the conditions of the social field at Calvin – and how musicians strategized their musical behaviours in accordance with, or in response to, those conditions. Perhaps the conditions of the social field at Calvin minimized
Sophia’s ability to make changes, especially in the midst of COVID-19. While Sophia was clear about her aims as a leader, it is possible that such aims could not be enacted in their entirety because of the conditions.

Sophia expressed a sense of reflexivity regarding her leadership style and values, enacted through repertoire selection and a focus on accessibility:

I think I have a good eye for choosing repertoire that is both meaningful and accessible to the choir…and I now have the skills to do video and audio editing as well (Survey Response, Choir Director, Calvin).

In George’s interview, he affirmed how Sophia described her leadership style, describing it in the following manner:

I think it’s probably a good combination of bottom-up and top-down choices of music. And I think there’s always the element of ability – our ability collectively in what’s chosen (Musician Interview, Calvin).

As a non-participant observer, I noticed that Sophia’s practices aligned with George’s statement in that there were a mix of bottom-up and top-down decision-making processes. In the rehearsals, I observed her asking musicians how they felt about the song once they finished singing it. She focused on dialogue and participation and would ask if musicians wanted to sing through repertoire again. As a chorister suggested repeating the piece to allow one person a chance to sing through the song in its totality, Sophia happily agreed and adapted her plans in the process.

I also noticed that Sophia was particularly mindful that not all choristers were able to read music. The language that she chose was not exclusive to those with previous musical training. If there were instances where she needed to address music theory-related matters,
Sophia would do so openly, acknowledging that some might not be as familiar with what she was addressing. She would ask for ongoing feedback throughout rehearsals and would make friendly comments such as “Don’t worry about how many mistakes you’re making because I can’t even hear you [over Zoom]”.

In this way, I viewed Sophia’s role as focused on “leveling out the playing field” for different musicians, where there was a less stratified structure dependent on previous musical training within the choir. Sophia understood her role in making necessary decisions. And while she introduced repertoire in a traditional pedagogical way, her possession of capital within the religious field did not seem to hold a significant amount of power, possibly because she was newer to this religious field and choir. As several interviewees noted, Sophia had a background as a jazz vocalist. It is possible that her association with a non-classical music genre caused her to be less focused on a classical musical habitus within the choir, giving less power and significance to musicians’ classical music training. Her evaluation of musicality probably therefore derived from her musical habitus, as she was previously immersed in the jazz music field.

Sophia’s pedagogical practices may have shifted because of the online environment of choir rehearsals, which complicated the roles of capital and habitus within the social field. Even if Sophia was intentionally trying to focus and “strategize” musical behaviours towards participation and inclusivity through her actions, the online environment probably shifted the dynamics, and may have prompted her to be more pedagogically traditional in nature. In a way, as musicians rehearsed over Zoom, a new “space” was created, where different places – meaning homes – were transformed into interwoven “fields” (Bryson et al., 2020). The habitus of the choir was changing, as further discussed in the third theme. Yet Sophia’s role may have also
shifted according to the space; her leadership style was probably in flux for the majority of her first year in the role. As Sophia described, COVID-19 began only a few months after she started in her role. Negotiations and considerations of her habitus, both musical and otherwise, may have taken place as she entered the role, and then with the subsequent lockdowns, Sophia may have had to negotiate and reflect upon her values and positioning even more, thus affecting the strategization of musical behaviours.

Shifting constitutions of “space” within Calvin’s choir likely occurred in the midst of COVID-19 and, when considering research question two, musicians’ and Sophia, the director’s strategization of musical behaviours may have also shifted in the process. While I argue that musical behaviours reflect values upheld by the church, Sophia’s musical behaviours and her role as a choir director may have reflected her personal musical values, but perhaps not the musical values of the rest of the church. In Bourdieu’s (1991b) writings on religion, he describes the religious specialist as having the competence to produce and reproduce knowledge in the religious field. In some cases, a worship leader can be understood as a religious specialist. Yet in Sophia’s case, I would be wary to suggest that she had a systematic “mastery” of knowledge and competence in relation to Calvin’s religious and social positioning, as demonstrated through her strategization of behaviours through repertoire selection, musical decisions, and responses from choir members. I wonder if Sophia may have consciously been trying to strategize her musical behaviours and actions to respond to the doxa, or rules of the game in place, possibly aiming to slightly shift Calvin’s positioning in the social field.

This section has attempted to demonstrate how Sophia’s practices were pedagogically traditional in nature, generally aligning with the doxa of the field. I suggest that she generally “chose” the best strategies for the game, implementing dialogical approaches while attempting to
“level out the playing field”. Further, I suggest that Sophia may have not had the “specialist knowledge” required to produce or reproduce knowledge within the social field, as demonstrated through some of her repertoire selection and musical practices. These concepts are discussed in more detail in the next section, which focuses on perceptions of musicianship expressed through musical behaviours, and their relation to how and why Sophia and the musicians may strategize their musical behaviours at Calvin Church.

**Perceptions of Musicianship**

In my observations and interviews, I found that there were distinct perceptions of “proper” musicianship expressed by musicians and enacted through musical behaviours. COVID-19 added another aspect to these perceptions, as choristers recorded their individual vocal lines following rehearsals and sent them to the choir director to edit and put together. For some choristers who noted that they felt uncomfortable with more “contemporary” repertoire, their insecurity particularly related to an anxiety with recording their individual vocal parts. Several participants specifically noted that they felt out of their comfort zone recording themselves and listening to themselves, and the addition of contemporary repertoire made it more difficult. As participants spoke of their uneasiness in recording themselves, it was often linked to their perceived lack of “formal training”, or not feeling like a “real musician”:

I have no formal training, I’ve just learned things from choir directors over the years. And I’ve been afraid to actually get some formal training because I’m afraid I’m doing everything wrong (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Elaine, a different participant stated,
At first I thought no, I can’t let anyone hear [my recording]. It’s amazing when you’ve only sung in a choir and when you hear yourself, you think, oh my.

Anyway, I’ve worked at it (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Sophia, the choir director, acknowledged the difficulty in recording solo vocal lines as she remarked,

You know, we all know that’s a humbling experience…when you don’t have the security of those other voices around you, that can be a pretty vulnerable thing (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

While George felt fairly confident in his singing ability, he also noted that others likely felt uncomfortable with their recordings:

I’m a fairly competent singer, but it’s possible…I can’t speak for everyone for sure – but I wonder if this has put some – throwing people into a musical situation out of their comfort zone. So not only, like they have to sing on their own and sing in front of the camera, just their voice. I mean, it’s kind of unsettling even to me sometimes when I listen to myself. So I don't anymore. I recorded it and I sent it off. So I'm sure that's maybe caused some people to have a different experience that way, maybe in a positive way (Musician Interview, Calvin).

Several musicians affirmed what George said. By the time the participants were interviewed, they had been experiencing the effects of COVID-19 on their choral experience since the previous fall, and either became more comfortable taking ownership of their musical learning and recording themselves individually, or adapting and choosing not to listen to their recording before sending it off to the choir director. Most notable for me in these interview and survey responses is the multiple musical shifts that choir members engaged in throughout the previous
year, both in terms of contemporary repertoire and in terms of technological shifts in adapting to COVID-19. These shifts are addressed further in my third theme which examines habitus formation and adaptation.

In considering how and why worship leaders and musicians strategize their musical behaviours specifically in relation to perceptions of musicianship, I suggest that musicians’ musical capital, meaning knowledge and skills related to music but also perceptions of musicality and musical potential (Wright, 2015), were expressed in their behaviours and discourse. In what I observed, certain musicians did not want to speak up in rehearsals in a fear of being “less musically competent”, and other, perhaps more “competent” musicians spoke up for them, encouraging the choir director to rehearse a section again for those who joined late or “weren’t getting it”.

Although Sophia, the choir director, didn’t seem to value classical music training as much as other directors may have, or as those in the other church, Redeemer CRC, expressed, I found one of her comments interesting as it did not align with the majority of her practices enacted when running rehearsals. As expressed throughout this chapter, Sophia was quite focused on participation and inclusion regardless of individuals’ musical backgrounds. It was clear to me that she differentiated between presentational music-making that focused on a “performance” versus participatory, “meaningful” music for the congregation. As evident in Sophia’s statement below, the “end goal” of music for her was a positive musical experience for musicians and congregants listening in the pews, rather than an end “product” of a musical performance. She described the musical experience in this way:

What makes people emotional is the memories that flood them as the music plays, not the music itself. You know, it’s not like, look at this presentation how
artistically beautiful [it is]. And I think some of them feel pressure for it to be that.

And I think maybe the former music director kind of drilled that into them too,

like it must be this, you know (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

Sophia compared herself with the previous music director who appeared to require a certain level of musicality or artistic “end” from the choir, to whom she attributed some of the musicians’ sense of pressure to perform. Yet later in the same conversation, Sophia and I were discussing video editing. She spoke of the benefits of editing choristers’ videos, mixing them in such a way that she could minimize certain musicians’ vocal lines, stating,

And the other silver lining of the video editing is I can mix it which I can’t do in person…so if there’s someone who like really didn’t nail it at all, they’re none the wiser if I kind of just, you know, turn their gain down a bit (Choir Director Interview, Calvin).

This comment indicated to me that Sophia still aimed to reach a particular level of musicianship or a specific musical “end” within church worship, even if that was partially related to her goal for the congregation to have a “positive musical experience”. While this goal is common to all churches that I’ve been involved with, it was an important aspect in my understanding of the full picture of Calvin Church’s musical life. In some ways, Calvin Church was significantly focused on the “horizontal” or “social justice” end to music-making, therefore prompting a philosophical question from me regarding whether they still wanted to achieve a particular musical “product” or level of “excellence” through their musical participation.

Sophia’s comment also prompted me to consider her strategization of musical behaviours differently within Calvin Church. This thesis argues that musical practice embodies values, and it is important to note that through practices of misrecognition, practice can move past its
articulated sense of its own agenda to complexities of various natures regarding power and obligation (Phelan, 2008). When there is a lack of conscious knowledge present, the activity can become even more meaningful. Community musicians, including church musicians, may articulate certain values, while their musical practice may embody or contest those values in manners unaware to participants.

While I do not think Sophia’s actions were problematic and misaligned in nature, taking her various comments and practices into account from a critical sociological perspective may suggest that forms of misrecognition were occurring in a loose sense, where even though it appeared from discourse that there was a level playing field in the choir regardless of musical training, the “level playing field” was misrecognized and misunderstood, legitimizing differences and inequalities in place. As demonstrated in Phelan’s (2008) research, the “intent” expressed by a community before music-making may be partially embodied in musical practices, but also has the ability to be “completely transformed and subverted in the process (p. 155). Similar to my suggestions in chapter five, there is a conscious level of discernment that should take place on the part of the worship leader/choir director. Musical behaviours are strategized both consciously and unconsciously and, I argue, it is through active practices of dialogue and entering into a relational space with others that awareness of practices can come to the forefront and musicians can strategize their behaviours to either reflect or respond to the “rules” in place.

Summary of Theme 2

This section examined Calvin Church’s strategization of musical behaviours in terms of the role of the choir director, Sophia, as well as through perceptions of musicianship expressed by Sophia, choristers, and the greater culture of Calvin Church. These two sub-themes are significant as they influence Calvin Church’s positioning in the overall social field. The musical
behaviours discussed represent various beliefs and tendencies present within Calvin Church. The effects of COVID-19 on the church probably influenced musicians’ strategization of behaviours. Further, since Sophia only started serving in her role a few months before COVID-19 began, she was still negotiating her identity and role as a choir director. Her practices and comments did not necessarily align with regard to the values that she aimed to enact. Further within these shifting musical behaviours, musicians’ and the choir directors’ habituses were also impacted institutionally and individually. This theme is further discussed in the following section, as I argue that musical behaviours at Calvin Church reflect and shape habitus institutionally and individually in a transformative, influential manner.

Theme 3: Musical Behaviours Shaping Habitus

In this final theme, I address my third research question, exploring whether musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs. I present data from Calvin Church that responds to the third research question, focusing on changes in musicians’ and the choir director’s habituses through musical behaviours that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These musical behaviours included the online recording of individual vocal parts and the introduction of more “contemporary repertoire” by Sophia, the choir director, each of which caused “disjunctures” in multiple musicians’ habituses.

As noted in theme two, perceptions of musicianship were prevalent among musicians and their conceptions of what “proper musical training” looked like. The addition of the online recording aspect perpetuated insecurities and perceptions surrounding notions of musicality. Their musical habitus, involving unwritten “rules of the game”, provided each musician with a
general disposition with beliefs surrounding musical ability (Burnard, 2012). Brittany described her level of musicality in this way:

I’m a terrible singer…but I sing all the time. So I thought I should try [the choir] and I did and I love it (Musician Interview, Calvin Church).

Lorraine acknowledged that there were some “very qualified” people in the choir. She did not group herself in that category:

We’re all on mute so it doesn’t really matter to me. And I can sense that there are some very qualified people in the choir. They know what they’re doing. And I think some of them are music students too. So I’m quite happy that I’m on mute (Musician Interview, Calvin Church).

As one survey responses indicated:

I have no specific skill. I am limited in reading music, but have gotten better over the years. Others have much better skill levels than I do (Survey Response, Musician, Calvin Church).

A second survey response indicated similar perceptions surrounding musicianship:

I can follow music and read notes to know if the music goes higher or lower, know the treble clef and can sing alto notes if taught. I feel many others have much better skills but I enjoy the music. I sometimes get frustrated that I can’t do more technically but will seek help when needed (Survey Response, Musician, Calvin Church).

While musicians alluded to their “lack of skill” and “not having as much training as other people” in the choir, as they became more accustomed to recording their individual vocal lines to send to Sophia, the choir director, it appeared that they became more confident in their own
musical skill levels as well. It’s interesting to consider this reality in relation to the effect of the online environment and its impact on musicians’ musical habitus. Since musicians were not listening to others around them and could only hear Sophia on Zoom, it is possible that their confidence and dispositions surrounding musicality changed over time. By this, I am referring to them becoming more confident as they did not regularly hear fellow choristers singing and they didn’t necessarily have a “scale” that they could compare themselves to. They also interacted with Sophia in a different manner, as Zoom may have broken down some of the barriers that existed and shifted away from a perceived power imbalance.

Similar to Redeemer Church, however, Sophia’s dialogical processes of facilitation may have also contributed to the building of community and musicians’ increased confidence in their ability. Sophia alluded to an increased sense of community during the pandemic:

I've always gotten the vibe from [the choir] that it's music first, but they enjoy the time together at the same time… But I think it's actually strengthened during COVID because maybe for some of them… it's their only real social engagement of the week. So for that reason, I’ve started a format where we start to have social time kind of at the beginning of choir rehearsal (Choir Director Interview, Calvin Church).

Scholars such as Phelan (2017) highlight the physical aspects of singing – and I would add music-making in general – and their ability to facilitate belongingness. Phelan suggests that singing in ritual contexts, through resonance, somatics, performance, temporality, and tacitness has the ability to create experiences of belonging. I specifically consider the physical “performance” aspect of this in relation to musicians’ experiences at Calvin during the pandemic.
When considering how musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus, it is important to note the performative positioning of the body through the virtual environment and its effect on habitus formation. I suggest that the added component of the online environment helped facilitate increased modes of dialogue, as sometimes the “unspoken” and “underlying social cues” are lost in virtual settings. Musicians may have been able to engage in a habitus shift or transformation even sooner than if they were in person, as I argue they quickly experienced a “disjunct” in their habitus while beginning to record their individual parts.

As musicians became accustomed to recording their parts, they expressed confidence in themselves and their ability to perform contemporary repertoire. This reality prompted musicians to encounter a shift. The shift initially caused discomfort as musicians entered into a realm of the “unknown”, many of them feeling completely lost when recording individual vocal sections. I noted in theme two that much of musicians’ uneasiness in recording themselves was linked to a perceived lack of formal training or not being a “real musician”. I therefore suggest that being “thrown into” such circumstances and musical behaviours as a result of COVID-19 influenced musicians’ habitus formation, both musical and religious, which are further discussed below.

First, when examining how musical behaviours shape musical habitus formation, one might consider how the ritualistic nature of performing and recording individual vocal sections, in conjunction with mid-week choir rehearsals, engendered a sense of confidence within musicians. Literature states that ritual singing – and I would extend that to ritualistic musical behaviours – can be understood as a responsive performance forming the identity and generating values through practice (Caccamo, 2004; Phelan, 2008, 2017). As musicians performed musical behaviours, regardless of whether these behaviours were initially appreciated or accepted with enthusiasm by musicians, they performed “contemporary” repertoire and therefore positioned
themselves differently within the social field. Rather than simply reproducing and performing Western Art Music principles (Hall, 2015), musicians’ engagement with contemporary repertoire and technological practices provided an increased amount of capital to those who associated themselves more readily with such a genre. If there were members of the choir who previously expressed a familiarity with technological aspects of music-making, they, too, held a certain level of musical capital that transferred to symbolic capital during the pandemic.

Keeping with the concept of symbolic capital, Bourdieu (1990) suggested that as forms of capital are transferred into forms of symbolic capital, symbolic violence may also be occurring, “misrecognizing” dominant systems of meaning in the social order as natural (Rey, 2007). Within the religious field, shifting music behaviours during the pandemic may have shaped the collective habitus of the church while also misrecognizing “dominant systems of meaning” which I equate with the “new normal” of the church during the pandemic. Not only did churches need to shift and adapt their musical practices, but their “new normal” – such as online church, the implementation of virtual choirs through editing of recordings, the lack of community, and possibly lack of theological discernment of repertoire due to the fact that what was often used was what “worked” for churches – may have been misrecognized as natural. Further, Sophia, the choir director, may have been understood to hold a dominant form or system of meaning, where musicians may have misrecognized her authority, viewing the order and decision-making process as “natural” when, in fact, she only entered her position a few months prior and didn’t necessarily understand how repertoire aligned with the theological positioning of the church.

The performance of embodied musical behaviours provides an intellectual, aesthetic, and bodily education. Combined with the fact that online performance of contemporary repertoire was the “norm” during the COVID-19 pandemic, musicians’ habituses were constantly being
formed, expressing and responding to something different than the dominant cultural narratives of Western Art Music (see Hall, 2015). As also addressed in the previous data findings chapter, the habitus has a transformative aspect when it operates “at the level of consciousness and the person develops new facets of [the] self” (Reay, 2010, p. 81). The habitus can be understood to be in a state of constant flux and transformation (Hardy, 2014), and individuals’ symbolic capital, then, fluctuates in response to changing field positions. The complicated addition of the pandemic, the online recording, and Sophia’s focus on contemporary repertoire disrupted the relationship between habitus and field. Dispositional habituses of musicians, based on the church’s historical field, did not correspond to contemporary field requirements. Bourdieu calls this concept *hysteresis*, describing disruptions or a mismatch between habitus and field and when habitus is out of sync with field in terms of a time dimension (Hardy, 2014).

Second, from a religious habitus standpoint, I suggest that musicians’ musical behaviours, with the addition of contemporary repertoire and online technological elements, shaped their religious habituses, meaning the religious dimension of habitus within the religious field (Rey, 2007, 2018). A religious habitus impacts one’s religious interests, tastes, and dispositions. I wish to further consider the constitution of space and place in relation to church worship with the technological aspects of the pandemic. As musicians engaged with repertoire which may have expressed theology or values that they were not entirely comfortable with at that point in time, these musical behaviours still likely implanted upon them various dispositions and tendencies through the performative practice of music-making. Drawing on Smith’s (2013) research, within liturgical contexts, states of the body can “give rise” to states of the mind, implanting a habitus within worshippers. This process is further constituted through the spiritual, ritualistic process of music-making. Yet on the other hand, some may suggest that since the
musicians weren’t physically together in person, experiencing the “tangible” elements of community and embodied music-making with others, it could also be argued that engaging with new repertoire may have impacted them less than if they were in person.

Finally, when considering the formation and transformation of musicians’ musical habituses, it would be beneficial to follow up further with musicians in a future study and examine how their musical habitus particularly related to their religious habitus. In the data collected from Calvin Church, as presented in this chapter, it was evident their religious habitus was transformed in tandem with their musical habitus but at times did also not align. Musicians were able to “really worship” and “make a change” (in George, the musician’s words) when his musical habitus – dispositions and tendencies – were drawn upon by the choir director and he could enter into a state and space of worship. Musical habituses influence repertoire preferences and ideas surrounding musical participation, and religious habituses, then, influence one’s approach to worship. This process is cyclical in nature and constantly in flux.

I suggest that the physical body serves as a meeting point between the two; mind – which the religious habitus is more significantly comprised of – and body, which the musical habitus influences through practice. As addressed in my review of literature, Sagiv and Hall (2015) write extensively on the “classical musical habitus” of musicians. Extending their work to this study, I suggest that a specific “religious musical habitus” was present at Calvin Church, bringing together musical bodily knowledge and religious social know-how, responding to particular socio-cultural nuances of the church. Musical behaviours shaped and responded to this particular “religious musical habitus” present within the institution of Calvin Church and within individual musician-worshippers. This concludes my third theme, addressing whether musical behaviours
shape habitus – both institutional and individual – at Calvin Church, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs.

**Summary and Concluding Ideas**

This concluding section brings together findings and themes expressed throughout the chapter in relation to my three research questions. This chapter was organized similarly to the other data findings chapter focused on my first church case, Redeemer Christian Reformed Church, and findings from the two are compared and contrasted in the next discussion chapter through cross-case analysis. My first theme addressed “rules of the field” where I explored sub-themes focused on repertoire selection, approach to worship, and musical participation, each of which I suggest are indicative of Calvin Church’s positioning in musical and theological fields. While the repertoire selection aligned with the new choir director’s preferences and musical habitus, there were varied conceptualizations of worship expressed by musicians, some of which acted in tension with Sophia’s actions. I consider these themes in relation to the amount of capital that I understood Sophia to hold within her new role, and I address the “disjunct” that some musicians felt with the contemporary repertoire and shifts in language. I concluded the first theme by proposing where Calvin Church would be positioned in the larger church music, specifically acknowledging tensions surrounding the pursuit of musical excellence versus musical participation and inclusivity as “ends” of church worship.

The second theme addressed in this chapter relates to research question two, considering how and why the choir director, conceptualized as a “worship leader”, and musicians, strategize their musical behaviours at Calvin Church. I examine this theme through sub-themes that focus on Sophia’s pedagogical practices, as the choir director, as well as perceptions of musicianship expressed through her actions. Calvin Church focused quite significantly on the “horizontal” or,
broadly speaking, “social justice” end to music-making, and in conversations, there was minimal emphasis placed on the musical product produced by the choir. Yet in this theme I explore one comment from Sophia that indicated to me that there was still a “level” of musicality that she wanted to reach in the choir as expressed in her video editing decisions. Throughout this section, I acknowledge shifting notions of “space” and the effects of COVID-19 which likely influenced musicians’ strategization of behaviours.

Lastly, the third theme focused on research question three, which examined whether such musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs. In this theme, I reflect upon the introduction of increasingly “contemporary” repertoire by Sophia, the choir director, as well as musicians’ process of recording individual vocal lines of the repertoire, which prompted levels of discomfort for multiple musicians. I associate musicians’ initial discomfort with “disjunctures” in multiple musicians’ habituses, and address the fluid nature of musicians’ musical and religious habituses, thus contributing to the re-shaping of the institutional habitus of Calvin Church.

Thinking through the data findings as a whole in relation to the three research questions, themes arise that speak to the transformative nature of habitus through the implementation of dialogical processes by the choir director. As evident in Calvin Church’s musical life, not only did a disjunct occur for musicians who had to encounter new contemporary repertoire and online recording, but the relationship between their individual and institutional habitus with the field was disrupted, thus resulting in hysteresis. Through the ongoing, performative nature of their ritualistic musical practices and behaviours, I suggest that these changes and shifts became embodied in musicians over time, resulting in a transformed “religious musical habitus”. I propose that increased dialogical processes, which were not always present with Sophia the choir
director, can contribute to greater inter-subjective ways of knowing and a better understanding of how patterns, tendencies, and dispositions may be shifting. As one’s habitus shifts and adapts according to field conditions and the implementation of slight shifts in repertoire both in terms of music and theology, musicians’ as well as the greater church’s positioning in the social and religious field may also change. In this way, it is necessary to acknowledge the permeability of musicians’ habituses as sites where the “logic of practice” is played out through music-making within worship, thus legitimizing or moving away from the different narratives in place. The process of legitimization and transformation of habitus addressed throughout this chapter is further explored and compared between the two church cases in the following discussion chapter.
CHAPTER VII
DISCUSSION

Introduction

This discussion chapter provides a synthesis of data and themes from the study. In it, I compare and contrast data findings and themes from the two church cases, which were explored and analyzed through the sociological lens of Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977). Bourdieu’s approach to religion along with his three main concepts in his *Theory of Practice* – capital, habitus, and field – depict humans’ actions according to social rules, dispositions, tendencies, and social conditions in place. Church worship, consisting of “embodied…rituals and routines” (Smith, 2013, p. 4) shape desires, theology, and “rules of the field” over time. The study examined themes that centered around two churches’ music-making practices and the “rules of the field” in place, thereby influencing agents both institutionally and individually. This chapter returns to the study’s three research questions, each of which draw upon Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977) (see below):

1. How do two selected churches’ CWM music-making practices reflect and respond to the musical and theological fields in which they are located?
   a. What are the *doxa* of these fields?

2. How and why do worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in each of their (two different) CWM settings?

3. Do these musical behaviours reflect and shape habitus both institutionally and individually? If so, how?
In this chapter, data findings are compared and contrasted in relation to each research question, organized according to the order of the questions. For the purpose of analysis, the research questions became pre-ordinate themes, and codes served as sub-themes relating to each research question. The study used a case-oriented approach to cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2014), wherein I examined each case in its entirety before exploring commonalities and differences from each other using the previously developed codes (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). I adopted an analytical framework drawn from the work of Bourdieu while remaining open to new themes arising from the data. While Bourdieu’s theory has been used to frame each data findings chapter in detail regarding each church case, it is necessary to implement his theoretical concepts in a larger meta-analysis of the data across both cases, as presented in this discussion chapter.

While acknowledging shortcomings of case study research and understanding that findings are not necessarily generalizable to other contexts (Cohen et al., 2018; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014), different perspectives and views presented in this study can contribute to knowledge within the fields of music education, church music, community music, and theology. It is particularly critical to understand that one church case cannot be generalizable to other churches even within the same denomination as they can vary significantly in regard to musical approaches, theology, congregational context, and so on. It would be interesting, however, to consider these findings in relation to readers’ experiences if they belong to one denomination versus another.

It is also important to note that my data findings have been significantly altered due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data findings relate to each churches’ practices within the constraints of the pandemic, altering and shifting their worship musical approaches overall.
While it is difficult, therefore, to form any definitive conclusions regarding the totality of each church’s worship practices during normal conditions, conclusions can be expressed that describe each church’s music-making practices from May to July 2021, during the pandemic. These are of interest in and of themselves as they derive from data gathered during an unprecedented period of change in church music-making practices and allow interrogation of the effects of this disruption on habitus, field, and capital.

Following a presentation of data findings in the following, which examines commonalities and differences between the two church cases, I present a model of the transformational, fluid habitus that can be applied to religious fields and practices. I then acknowledge various shortcomings of dialogue, presenting limitations to the study and the proposed model. The subsequent, final conclusion chapter provides overall conclusions and implications for practice in music education and church worship, proposing future directions for research.

**Research Question 1: Musical & Theological Fields**

This study’s first research question examined each church’s CWM music-making practices, and their reflection of, and response to, the musical and theological fields in which they were located. Further, I explored the *doxa* of each of these fields. The purpose of research question one was to uncover what is typically accepted as “normal” in regard to church worship within each setting. Similar to Wolterstorff’s (2015) call to examine what is “implicit in the liturgy” (p. 18), I focused on the musical and theological fields in place which influence the music-making practices at Redeemer Church and Calvin Church. In my organization of the data findings, I understand each church case to be situated within multiple sub-fields: a musical field;

---

25 *Doxa* refers to “rules of the game”, including taken for granted assumptions within the field (Bourdieu, 1977)
the church’s individual religious or theological field; a greater ecumenical, Protestant religious field; and the even larger social field. Each of these fields contain “rules of the game” and agents, meaning musicians and worship leaders, contribute to the conserving or transforming of its structure. Music-making in worship responds to and reflects the fields in which the church is situated.

**Selecting Repertoire**

Both churches incorporated contemporary repertoire to some degree, yet with varying emphases on performance versus participation, partially through repertoire selection. Redeemer Church’s worship team strived to maintain a balanced approach between traditional and contemporary repertoire to promote congregational participation which was different than Calvin Church. The contemporary repertoire used by Redeemer Church was typical CWM repertoire, yet led in a more traditional, “simple” manner with straightforward instrumental sections, vocal lines that promoted congregational singability in terms of keys and musical direction, and clear performance techniques to encourage congregational song. Redeemer’s repertoire was not “performance-oriented” but was rather participatory and data showed that musicians appeared to be “able to worship” when engaging with this repertoire. Repertoire selection aligned with the *doxa* and *illusio*\(^{26}\) in place at Redeemer, where its focus was quite typical of the CRC denomination. Calvin Church, on the other hand, loosely incorporated “contemporary” repertoire with some jazz elements that was generally focused on modern-day concerns and external, social justice matters. Since the virtual ensemble would perform this repertoire weekly for services, Calvin Church maintained more of a performance mindset in their repertoire selection and

\(^{26}\) *Illusio* is a Bourdieusian concept referring to an “illusion” that is produced and reproduced through practices of misrecognition, causing those in religious power appear to naturally deserve their position, legitimizing their dominant social status (Bourdieu, 1991b)
pedagogical practices when learning the repertoire. Similar to Redeemer, Calvin Church’s repertoire selection aligned overall with the doxa and illusio of the denominational religious field.

Musicians from Redeemer Church expressed, in a unified manner, the need for the facilitation of congregational participation through repertoire selection. These musicians also demonstrated a greater sense of individual agency in striving to achieve this goal. Ian, for example, referred to the tension between focusing on congregational participation as a musician and pursuing music of a strong musical quality. He understood that music-making in worship was not a performance and I, as a researcher, was able to observe him actively choosing to position himself with a focus of producing strong, quality music for the congregation’s participation. This was expressed in his interactions with musicians in rehearsals, providing musical suggestions to the worship leader and speaking of this focus within conversations. When describing Redeemer Church’s use of CWM, most would not understand it as a “high quality” musical performance, as one may picture when thinking of an accomplished popular music worship band leading evangelical worship at a megachurch. By megachurch, I am referring to the type of unusually large Christian evangelical church that CWM has become associated with, where worship music is “performed” in services, sometimes replicating Christian concerts in the performance-oriented nature. Redeemer Church, however, incorporated CWM in their “blended” services, adapting it and simplifying it in such a way as to encourage congregation’s ability to engage in worship. While in this way it affirmed Porter’s (2016) critique of the use of CWM failing to be “substantial” or “musically unique”, musicians’ focus on the congregation and the juxtaposition of CWM with traditional repertoire in services added to the “substance” of CWM. The common critiques of CWM in literature (i.e. its lack of singability, its repetitive nature, its
use as a “performance” (Dawn, 1995; Porter, 2016; Scheer, 2013; Woods & Walrath, 2007)) were not enacted in my observations of Redeemer Church’s worship services.

While I understand both churches to be sites of nonformal music learning, in some ways, Calvin Church’s musical practices were more traditional or formal in nature. This was evident when Sophia, the choir director introduced repertoire to musicians, section by section, carefully scaffolding their learning in a sequential manner even though their repertoire was more “contemporary” in genre. Data indicated that musicians from Calvin Church were focused more on their individual experiences as musicians, rather than a unified focus on the facilitation of worship for the congregation. It should be acknowledged that this may have partly been a result of the pandemic and musicians’ recording of their individual vocal parts over Zoom for the virtual ensemble.

I found Calvin Church’s focus on the individualistic nature of music-making to align with a common critique of CWM, as literature suggests it focuses on the individual worshipper’s experience, “treating worshippers like consumers” (Woods & Walrath, 2007, p. 16), empowering individuals to decide whether they accept theological readings of music (Nekola, 2009). Some musicians at Calvin expressed concerns with the focus of the repertoire, and music being “done for music’s sake, as opposed to a worshipful sake”, as George stated. In contrast to Redeemer, Calvin Church therefore approached music with more of a consumption, performance-oriented mindset. While some musicians such as George expressed agency as they critiqued the focus of repertoire, the “lack of prayerfulness” of the music, and too much “brand new repertoire” (Elsie), data indicated that they didn’t feel they had the agency or capital to express these concerns with the choir director or be involved in the musical decision-making process. In this way, musicians’ lack of agency at Calvin Church affirmed critiques of traditional performance-oriented
approaches to music-making, which the introduction of popular music performance practices has sought to debunk (Green, 2002, 2008; Wright, 2017, 2019).

With both cases, repertoire aligned with the *doxa* of the field in place, where the lyrical content of the repertoire generally affirmed the specific denominational stance on theology and the overall focus of the church. Yet it was the enactment of such repertoire in rehearsals and the musicians’ comments outside of the rehearsals – particularly at Calvin Church – that indicated differences in approaches to and philosophies of worship, as well as certain disjunctures and misalignments in the religious fields. This will be further discussed across both cases in the following.

*Approach to Worship*

Each church’s individual approach to worship was explored in the data findings chapters, indicative of their understanding of what worship *is* and *should be*, which music-making practices were, for the most part, directed towards. While this thesis suggests that the enactment of music-making practices should reflect the theological positioning of the church, this was not always the case, particularly at Calvin Church. I found Calvin Church’s approach to worship difficult to describe. Calvin Church’s music was performance-focused as the virtual ensemble prepared anthems *for* the congregation rather than *leading* the congregation in song. Typically, one would expect more traditional hymnody to be present at a Presbyterian Church of Canada institution. This was likely an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic as the choir was “performing” more often, and likely wanted to incorporate repertoire other than hymns.

The musical level of Calvin Church’s performances was, from my experience in other church worship settings, quite average for a community, intergenerational ensemble. Yet as they performed, their approach to worship was still very much focused on the directed “end” of the
repertoire focused on a “community” and “experiential” function, raising awareness of different social issues. As evident in interviews, survey responses, and observations of rehearsals, musicians’ overall understandings of worship were diverse and tended to focus more on the “horizontal” nature or communal “end” of worship, which Ratzinger (2008) would likely have described as “comfortable and serviceable…utility music” (p. 440) There was little to no conversation that I observed about the choir’s role in leading the congregation in song, or the worship of God that they were engaging in. These “consecrated [musical] practices” (Bourdieu, 1991b) shaped the religious field in place, which was seen by some as “less prayerful than it could be sometimes” (George).

Redeemer Church contrasted Calvin in this way, presenting a different approach to worship and a different doxa of the field. The worship leader and musicians from Redeemer Church tended to differentiate between “facilitating worship” and “leading the congregation” versus the pursuit of musical excellence for worship. Musical excellence at Redeemer was conceived in a two-part model, both in terms of strong musical quality and facilitating congregational participation. I found that Redeemer Church affirmed DeMol’s (1992) description of musical excellence in music, in terms of craftsmanship and performance but also directed “in joyful and obedient response to God” (p. 9). One may infer from the data findings that Redeemer Church focused overall on the role of music in service to the liturgy (Wolterstorff, 2005), focusing on the “vertical” dimension of worship. Musicians generally engaged in a unified collective habitus, or collusio, grounded in the theological doxa of the church. In order to fulfill this purpose of a unified theology, Redeemer Church implemented a process of song approval where the worship committee would approve songs that fit with this theological positioning. In this way, Redeemer Church could critically be understood to be participating in
the legitimation of the established order in place, contributing to the *illusio* that the worship committee could make the final song decisions and the assumption that more people could participate in blended worship.

It can be understood that Redeemer Church’s incorporation of CWM affirms Green’s (2002) work which encouraged the incorporation of popular music repertoire to engage a greater number of students in the classroom. The way in which Redeemer Church maintained a balanced approach to worship and intentionally designed services to alternate between CWM and hymns could be understood to engage an increased number of worshippers within the service. They worked against the legitimization of one form of musical knowledge or preference, incorporating worshippers’ diverse tastes, yet all music was still grounded in a unified theological *doxa*. CWM, in combination with other music, was relationally oriented as it encouraged active congregational participation and their personal worshipping dialogue with God (Koenig, 2008). Similar to Calvin Church, Redeemer Church enacted a type of “utility music” (Ratzinger, 2008, p. 440) which was first directed towards a horizontal, sanctification focus, drawing in worshippers, but then placed more of an emphasis on a second part of the process, where worshippers then entered into a space of dialogue with God. Church music at Redeemer, then, serves as a multifunctional phenomenon (Wolterstorff, 2005), serving the diverse actions of the liturgy. Further, Redeemer seemed to acknowledge more of music’s pragmatic dimensions (catechesis, moral conversion, and so on) which then contributed to its focus on its contemplative dimensions (the ‘disinterested’ praise and adoration of God) (Joncas, 2013).

Comparing and contrasting the two churches in their approach to worship helps position the churches in the various musical and theological fields that are in place, which they reflect and respond to through their practices. As expressed throughout this thesis, musical practices embody
values, and I suggest that values align with a church’s approach to worship. These themes will next be addressed in terms of musical participation within the worship team and choir, further comparing the musical and theological fields of both churches.

**Musical Participation**

Data findings addressed the sub-theme of musical participation with both church cases, focusing on who could participate musically in the worship team or choir. Both churches approached musical participation with an open mindset, attempting to find a role for anyone who wished to participate. Calvin Church demonstrated in their actions that inclusivity was at the centre of the musical and theological fields in place. Redeemer, on the other hand, maintained a philosophy towards musical participation that focused on drawing out the talents of congregants, finding a way for them to participate even if their participation would not be as a musical leader on a worship team. It appeared that they would find some sort of musical participation opportunity in a different way. Still, there was a “standard” to musicianship that needed to be reached.

When considering these findings from a music education perspective, Calvin Church – who maintained more of a traditional music learning approach in choir rehearsals – was inclusive in their discourse and invitation to participate, but it was evident that their institutional musical habitus was tailored more towards a formal, classical-music learning approach to music. While repertoire was contemporary in nature, the choral format of learning repertoire sequentially, section by section, did not incorporate more inclusive music learning pedagogies. In this way, traditional understandings of musicality and perceptions of musical capital were perpetuated in Calvin Church. Interestingly, for those who wanted to pursue a higher musical quality of performances than was actually produced (George), their musical needs and preferences could be
understood as being excluded and not necessarily acknowledged by the choir director. In some ways, this data finding affirmed scholars’ critiques of Green’s (2008) model of informal music learning, where classical musicians’ skills in informal music learning settings may not appear to be as valued as popular music skills, and classically trained musicians may encounter difficulties when shifting to informal music learning settings (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010; Rodriguez, 2009). Even though I did not consider the choir to be an informal music learning setting, George’s engagement with the repertoire and musical expectations of the choir, probably deriving from a classical music background, did not align with the choir’s positioning. Generally, Calvin Church’s choir reflected nonformal learning practices, but when understanding their learning practices as sliders on a scale with informal and formal learning as the poles (Wright, 2016), their placement in a “nonformal” category was becoming closer to formal music learning approaches. Calvin Church’s musical practices clearly depicted the messiness of real-life learning as they were difficult to categorize.

While Redeemer Church also implemented contemporary repertoire in their services, they incorporated a few more popular music learning pedagogical approaches such as copying recordings or learning by ear, and reflected an overarching nonformal framework of music learning. Musical participation was encouraged to allow for many congregants to serve musically if they so desired. Literature suggests that informal music learning environments, when coupled with popular music, can result in increased cultural capital for more students whose listening experiences and musical enculturation may allow them to access popular music in an easier manner (Green, 2002; Mariguedi, 2022). Data from Redeemer Church supported this notion of familiarity with popular music elements in CWM, as musicians did not appear to have a difficult time picking up new repertoire and quickly adapting in rehearsals according to musical decisions.
made. I would classify Redeemer Church as a nonformal learning setting, as there were systematic, deliberate practices occurring within real life, professional or community contexts (Veblen, 2012). Nonformal processes can move between orality, notation, conserving, and experiential approaches. While there is a leader or director present in nonformal music learning settings, members tend to own the group interactions. In this way, Redeemer Church reflected a nonformal music learning setting with Paul, the worship leader assuming a nonformal leadership role in his interactions with the worship team. As expected in nonformal learning, the musicians still controlled the group interactions and contributed ideas, which Paul encouraged through his dialogical practices.

I posit that the diverse musical repertoire at Redeemer and the transient repertoire at Calvin, which was in flux at the time of my observation, both worked to counteract the legitimization of classical musical preferences and forms of musicianship that could have been more deeply engrained. While I do note the legitimization of classical musical capital within both churches, I suggest that it could have been even more deeply engrained than it was. Bourdieu (1991a) emphasizes symbolic violence and the legitimation of the established order through hierarchies within society throughout his writings, which Rey (2007) suggests is especially prevalent within the religious field. Since religion represents a crucial legitimizing force in societies today, I suggest that the doxa, rules and norms in place within the religious field, are even more static and engrained with the added element of religion within the social structures. As explored in the discussion of the next research question, musical behaviours as rituals within religious contexts can be understood to be even more powerful as they signify and legitimize values through worship settings.
This first section of the discussion chapter has considered sub-themes of repertoire selection, approach to worship, and musical participation as elements of musical practice that exhibit how each church reflects or responds to the musical and theological fields in which it is situated. While Bourdieu’s theory has been used to frame each data findings chapter, I have implemented some of his theoretical concepts in more detail in this larger meta-analysis of the data across both cases while also responding to literature in music education, church music, community music, and theology fields. Before concluding this significant section, I provide a brief connection to the concept of social justice below, as it informs how data findings are framed.

**Connection to Social Justice**

This thesis has acknowledged the theme of social justice in framing the study as well as in the description of data findings. While Calvin Church focused on “socially just themes” of their repertoire, it is important to consider socially just approaches to music-making, especially when situating this study within the music education field. As described in the review of literature, discourse in music education often connects popular music education to social justice as it can be seen to promote greater equality of opportunity, involving a greater number of students, challenging power structures in place, and focusing on increased accessibility (Woodward, 2017). I consider the concept of social justice in relation to research question one, as each church’s selection of repertoire, approach to worship, and stance on musical participation could be seen to work towards the promotion of social justice. That is, if one is to understand it through a framework of recognizing differences while encouraging diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning settings (Benedict et al., 2015). The concept of social justice aligns well with the application of Bourdieu’s theory to music education contexts. Since Bourdieu operated
under a hermeneutic of suspicion when approaching religion and sought to demonstrate how religion legitimized and reproduced social inequality and injustices in society (Rey, 2007), one could simply use his framework in the study of church music and suggest that when church musical practices are more inclusive, they enact “socially just” elements and work against power structures in place that reserve music for the elite musicians to pursue musical excellence.

While some may interpret the musical practices presented above as either directed towards “social justice” or not, I posit that a dichotomy between “socially just approaches” and “non-socially just approaches” cannot exist in church worship, without considering the complex, interrelated fields of musical and theological positioning in play. Even then, greater participation and inclusivity cannot necessarily be equated with being “better” than other approaches, as these themes participate in the interconnected web of philosophies and theologies of church worship in place. As the discussion surrounding research question one comes to a close, I attempt to locate each church within the larger church music field, while acknowledging that I would not call one approach “more just” than another.

**Locating Both Churches**

In each data findings chapter, I presented a diagram to visually represent where each church might be positioned within the greater church musical field. I articulate in both chapters that approaches in churches differ in regard to themes of musical excellence, inclusivity, and congregational participation, as well as within fields of church music, theology, community music, and music education literature. Below I draw from Monnot’s (2018) table that compares Christian denominations’ positioning in the religious field in relation to specific cultural worship elements of church. Each church is located in relation to the pursuit of musical excellence at one end and participation/inclusivity at the other. As I mention in both chapters, the two are not
mutually exclusive categories, yet certain denominations tend to emphasize one over the other. I placed Redeemer Church slightly to the left of Calvin Church. While Redeemer Church focused on participation and inclusivity, it was not seen as a final “end” in terms of letting anyone participate in the worship team. They focused on the pursuit of strong musicality, focusing on offering their best to God. Their music was “simple” and musical in nature, but not “excellent” in musical quality terms. Calvin Church was positioned a bit more to the right of Redeemer Church as their emphasis on participatory, functionalistic music prompted much of their decision making. Even though the choir led in a performance-oriented nature implementing traditional pedagogical approaches, data suggest that their religious musical field was dictated much more by a communal focus.

Overall, I suggest that positioning in relation to each of the axes are enacted through musical practices while positioning also informs musical decision-making processes on behalf of the worship leaders and the church as a whole. Certainly, this is not a cookie-cutter process and often practices may not align with the musical and theological positioning of the church. I emphasize, however, that a church will need to focus on musical and theological alignment, where the field and habitus reflect and respond to one another, in order to function and serve congregants in a beneficial way in which they can engage in worship. As Lemley (2021) articulates, churches are called to examine whether their gathered worship and confession of faith affirm each other. I equate Lemley’s statement to music and theology affirming one another, resulting in “authentic participation” as Lemley further explores. Next, I move on to research question number two, discussing the data between both churches to address how and why worship leaders and musicians, as agents, strategize their musical behaviours in two church settings.
Research Question 2: The Strategization of Musical Behaviours

As I designed this study, I was intrigued with the formative aspect of church worship which church music theologians and philosophers such as Smith (2013) and Wolterstorff (2005, 2015) address, suggesting that music in worship, as a liturgical practice, shapes the unconscious. Other community music scholars, such as Phelan (2008, 2017) and Hall (2015) refer to the embodiment of values within musical participation in ritual contexts, also contributing to the formation of the unconscious and one’s habitus. My second research question explores the strategization of musical behaviours in two churches, referring to worship leaders’ and musicians’ enactment of behaviours and how religious and social norms and rules in place – or field conditions including doxa and illusio – influence those behaviours. Both data findings chapters represent my conceptualization of music-making as a performative practice, embodying behaviours and values through pedagogical practices, perceptions of musicianship, and modes of
performance. I understand musicians and worship leaders to “play the game” through the enactment of behaviours that express their values and beliefs through music.

The data presented in this thesis indicate that musicians and worship leaders at Redeemer Church and Calvin Church varied in terms of their enactment of musical behaviours. Different rules and norms, understood to be socially constituted (Boeskov, 2020), were in place that limited behaviours. At Redeemer Church, Paul, the worship leader, served as a “religious specialist” (Bourdieu, 1991b), demonstrating religious competence and knowledge of the religious field. His musical behaviours reflected what was of value to the church and he selected theologically and musically appropriate repertoire that aligned with the culture of the congregation. The coupling of the church’s theological values with his musical practices and decisions contributed to the emergence of new values such as community and dialogue with, or worship of, God. On the other hand, Sophia, the choir director at Calvin Church was new to her role, and while she selected repertoire that reflected the church’s positioning in the religious field, the repertoire did not necessarily align with the musical habituses of the musicians. Adding the complexity of COVID-19 and musicians’ need to record individual vocal parts led to a significant disjunct between habitus and field.

As mentioned previously, the content of Calvin’s repertoire selection aligned with the doxa of the field in place and the denominational stance of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Yet in other ways, musicians expressed difficulty embracing the contemporary repertoire. As a whole, the doxa at Calvin Church could be understood to be relatively unstable, responding to the effects of COVID-19 as well as with Sophia’s entrance into the role. While Paul, the worship leader at Redeemer Church, could be understood to hold a significant amount of religious and social capital and “social know how” in and of the church’s field in order to make musical
decisions that aligned with the church, Sophia may have not held enough social capital within the church’s religious field, possibly contributing to a misrecognition of the *illusio*. Both leaders’ actions were integral in influencing musicians’ practices, either contributing to the reinscription of field tendencies or to the transformation of structures in place.

The worship leader and choir director’s roles were fluid in nature. Paul particularly expressed strong skills in adapting to “in the moment” experiences, shifting his practices according to occurrences within rehearsals, and engaged in dialogical, reflexive practices that allowed him to make decisions alongside other musicians. Such dialogical, reflexive practices can be understood through Paul’s tendency to ask for other musicians’ input in musical decisions, his encouragement of a collaborative process with the worship team, and the facilitation of processes where both parties (the worship musicians and him) could regularly interact (Biesta, 2013b). In accordance with Biesta’s (2013b) description of dialogue, there was not necessarily a verbal exchange that needed to constantly take place; rather, both parties – Paul and the worship team – interacted, and both were affected in the process. In some ways, both parties were “encountering something new”, and through their mutual decision-making processes and ongoing dialogical practices, they could be understood to experience something new in their encounter with the world. Paul could be understood as contributing to the facilitation of such spaces. Elsewhere, I connect a pedagogue’s facilitation of such spaces with a “practice of care” (Noddings, 1984, 1992), promoting opportunities for musicians to enter into such relational spaces of dialogue and reflection (Benjamins, 2021a).

Understanding Paul as a leader-facilitator in this way also reflects community music’s role as an active intervention that constitutes “a form of thoughtful disruption…an encounter with ‘newness’…seek[ing] to create situations in which new events innovate and interrupt the
present toward moments of futural transformation” (Higgins, 2015, p. 446). The facilitator in community music settings similarly welcomes participants, encourages active musical dialogue (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018), and contributes to the creation of spaces where musicians can venture into the unknown (Higgins, 2012). Paul, as a facilitator, led participants’ music-making processes and encouraged active, inclusive participation (Higgins, 2012) for the musicians on the worship team.

Indicative of nonformal musical learning, the musicians owned and partially controlled the group interactions (Veblen, 2012). Musicians’ musical learning moved between orality and notation, even though notation was typically the norm, and music learning was deliberate and systematic, yet occurred within a real-life professional context. In some ways, the leader, Paul, and musicians were co-constructing “curriculum” as they experimented with new musical techniques and collaboratively suggested new worship songs to the worship committee. Paul provided opportunities for musicians to take part equally in the learning process. He would simplify musical lines and was careful to scaffold music learning by slowly adding musical instruments. In this way, there were moderately low entry barriers to music-making (Ng, 2018) for musicians who had some type of musical background and Paul scaffolded between formal and nonformal approaches, yet leaned more towards nonformal practices as a whole.

In Redeemer Church’s data findings, I emphasize that there were still perceptions of “proper” musicianship in place in terms of classical musical training. “Subtle descriptions” within discourse and practice reinscribed notions of proper musicality along with the theological aim towards excellent worship music as an offering to God. While there were these various nuances present within the musical life at Redeemer Church, the doxa within the musical and theological fields at Redeemer Church appeared to remain relatively consistent overall. There
were small shifts in musicians’ habituses and the *doxa* due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have contributed to the blurring of boundaries surrounding musicians’ habituses. Yet overall, the belief systems within the musical and theological fields remained relatively stable.

Sophia’s role and aim as a leader, however, was not consistent. She promoted a sense of inclusivity and talked about welcoming any level of musicianship, yet the traditional method in which she taught new music and her practices of minimizing certain voices in the final video edits did not align with the philosophy of which she spoke. Sophia, albeit unconsciously, engaged in the strategization of behaviours towards the reinscription of tendencies in place, rather than the promotion of change. Sophia’s behaviours reinforced perceptions of musicianship, further perpetuating any assumptions or notions of “proper musical training” already in the fields, thus contributing to the traditional *doxa* and *collusio* of the field. I do acknowledge in chapter six, however, that the *doxa* of the field was associated with traditional pedagogical practices and most musicians felt comfortable with her pedagogical practices in virtual choir rehearsals. Yet it is important to note that her practices were reinforcing the *doxa* in place.

Sophia also did not demonstrate an awareness of her leadership or teaching style. As Wright (2016) mentions, when considering real-life learning situations, it is necessary to understand that learning constantly moves between formal and informal modes on a continuum. What is most important, however, is that teachers or leaders are aware of the shifting, fluid ground which they are standing on and are willing to adapt according to what is “in the best learning interests of…students” (p. 212). Sophia was not quick to adapt her leadership style according to comments she heard from choristers, or observations of choristers’ hesitation to send in recordings, or perhaps their lack of eagerness to participate. I would infer that Sophia
was not aware of the shifting, fluid musical culture at Calvin Church that was presenting tensions among musicians.

When considering virtual ensembles, Cayari’s (2021a) suggestions for practice would have been helpful to implement in this regard. Within Cayari’s studies, choristers would prepare their individual vocal parts and receive some training in musical technology to prepare and edit their audio recordings. With the age demographic of the choristers at Calvin Church representing an older population, it probably would have been extremely beneficial for them to receive some sort of training simply in terms of the processes of recording individual vocal lines and sending them in. Perhaps the implementation of such training would demonstrate Sophia’s engagement in dialogical practices, responding to the needs of the field and social conditions that were present.

In my framing of data findings, I found it helpful to consider the role of the teacher within Green’s (2002) model of informal music learning against each worship leader’s dispositions and tendencies. As I mentioned earlier, I classify both churches to be sites of nonformal music learning, with the choir at Calvin Church falling more on the “formal” end of the continuum between informal and formal learning. The worship team at Redeemer Church reflected more of the typical characteristics of nonformal music learning.

Critiques of Green’s model of informal music learning, however, address the role of the teacher in informal learning settings, suggesting that they do minimal work (Allsup, 2008; Gower, 2012) which has led to a “disappearance of the teacher” in some settings (Allsup, 2008, p. 1). In both cases, Paul and Sophia actively served as leaders and while Paul’s leadership style appeared to be less directive, authoritative, and tended to take a “facilitation” style, his leadership role was not diminishing. In fact, one may infer that Paul may have been placing even more intentional effort into his facilitation practices than those engaged in traditional music
learning models as he critically directed his actions and decisions towards the facilitation of the congregation’s worship. One may argue that this contrasts a pedagogue who repetitively engages in modes of teaching and learning in which they are familiar. This argument affirms other scholars such as Väkevä, (2009) who suggest that rather than the teacher fading from the situation, the teacher, in fact, “takes more responsibility as basic skills are internalized” (p. 16).

As Paul took less of a formal, instructive position to that of a facilitator, musicians’ sense of autonomy was stronger than that viewed at Calvin Church, he was involved in more complex music learning skills, and his role as a facilitator was consistent with sites of nonformal music learning as expressed in literature (Ng, 2018; Veblen, 2012).

Further, I suggest that Paul strategically generated his behaviours to position himself and the worship team within the religious field in such a way that aligned with the denomination’s overall approach to worship. Even if he tended to lead in a different manner, he displayed a level of reflexivity that allowed him to critically consider his musical behaviours, practices, and role that reflected more of a facilitation style. He did not engage in reflexivity to the extent that he critically analyzed the *doxa* and *illusio* in place in his discourse, but at an unconscious level his actions were reinforcing his dialogical, reflective, and responsive approach as a leader.

In both church cases, Paul and Sophia had the power or capital, as a result of their roles as leaders, to shape the musical culture of the church. Yet as I reflected in chapter six, Sophia may have not held enough social capital to promote change in the field. I posit that it is only through slow adaptations, through dialogical and performative practices, along with the accumulation of capital over time, that leaders can contribute to the changing of field conditions. It is through this process that I suggest leaders are *strategizing their behaviours* towards a particular end, which may or may not align with the denomination’s positioning.
Finally, I wish to emphasize that one form of musical leadership – whether that be more traditional/formal, informal, or nonformal facilitation model cannot be recommended over another in church settings. Again, it depends on the setting at hand, the culture of the church, and the congregation’s positioning in theological and musical fields. The two can easily blend into one another and a setting does not need to be labelled as one or the other. As Green (2009) articulates, “Formal and informal ways of learning cannot usefully be conceived as mutually exclusive, or even as having clear boundaries between them” (p. 125). It is more important to consider in this conversation, then, the need for a critical awareness of the formative nature of one’s musical behaviours and the end to which they are directed. Through the body, musical behaviours express values, and ritual contexts are specifically powerful in their ability to promote particular beliefs “not only as an intellectual position, but as a somatic experience” (Phelan, 2017, p. 81). The enactment of the body adds another “layer” to the practices, further legitimizing norms and rules in place. As this section concludes, the ideas expressed in this discussion surrounding the strategization of musical behaviours are further considered in relation to research question three. In the next section, I address whether musical behaviours reflected and shaped habitus in both churches and I present a conceptual framework that visually demonstrates how shifts and transformation in habitus may occur in some cases.

**Research Question 3: Musical Behaviours Reflecting and Shaping Habitus**

This final research question addresses whether the musical behaviours discussed above reflect and shape habitus, both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurs. This thesis assumes that actors within social fields can engage in reflexive, conscious, formative behaviours that lead to the transformation of habitus. This argument has been touched on throughout the discussion of the first two research questions, where I suggest
that dialogical approaches and reflexive forms of musical leadership can contribute to an awareness of one’s habitus or the “rules of the field” in place. Further, traditional perceptions of musical habitus and capital were in place within both cases, which Sophia, the choir director, perpetuated through her musical behaviours and practices while Paul, the worship leader, focused slightly less on these traditional perceptions and values.

In order to disrupt or interrogate the doxa of the musical field in place, musical behaviours must be intentionally positioned to do so. Habitus cannot only be acknowledged in terms of its pre-reflective nature (Crossley, 1999; Noble & Watkins, 2003; Reay, 2010; Sayer, 2005), but rather I suggest its fluid, transformative aspect can be useful in understanding church worship as well. At Redeemer Church, musical behaviours were strategized according to the rules of the field in place. Generally, the individual and institutional habituses were not in flux during the time of my observations. The COVID-19 pandemic slightly shifted Paul’s musical decisions in terms of incorporating certain instruments and performance practices, but behaviours were, for the most part, aligned with the institutional field.

Musicians and the choir director at Calvin Church, on the other hand, underwent changes in their habitus as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of more contemporary repertoire from Sophia. As they recorded their individual vocal parts, the online recording aspect perpetuated insecurities surrounding their musical ability and reinforced the musical habitus in place. Over time, some musicians became more comfortable with the online recording and became accustomed to the contemporary repertoire. As I articulate in chapter six, this may have partially been because of the online, virtual setting, where some of the unspoken cues could have been lost.
In order to properly understand how habitus was shaped and transformed particularly within Calvin Church, I focus below on the transformative nature of habitus, indicating how musical behaviours can reflect and shape, or contribute to the transformation of habitus, over time.

The Transformative Nature of Habitus

Elements of Bourdieu’s theory have been drawn upon in this discussion chapter in relation to data findings. I propose two visual diagrams below to more accurately conceptualize habitus, both in terms of its reproductive function within the religious field and its transformative nature in relation to music-making in a worship context. I adapt Maton (2012) and Wright’s (2016) diagrams of elements of habitus and have included several additional elements as addressed in the chapter. First, habitus (including one’s religious and musical habitus) is structured by past social experiences and beliefs surrounding religion, theology, and musicality. It structures current dispositions, religious practices, beliefs, and musical behaviours. In the first diagram (see Fig. 7) habitus continues to operate in a linear manner, shaping present and future actions, and contributing to the overall reproduction of habitus.

Figure 6:
The Reproduction of Habitus Within the Religious Field (Adapted from Maton, 2012 and Wright, 2016)
The process of habitus reproduction may also divert through dialogue, practices of disjuncture, and conscious interrogation of the *doxa*. From here, a reorientation and conscious awareness of present and future actions may occur. I understand engaging with music-making in worship as a phenomenon that emphasizes dispositions, religious practices, beliefs, and musical behaviours in a performative manner that is difficult to shift away from and change due to its ritualistic nature. Practice, then, is the relationship between an individual’s (religious) habitus – even if it is transformative in nature – and their position in a field, which is determined by the amount of (religious) capital possessed.

While Bourdieu’s concept of *hysteresis* is not the primary focus of this thesis, it is helpful to note the role of *hysteresis* in my description of the transformative nature of habitus in music-making contexts, which is further discussed below. I refer to transformation regularly throughout the thesis. Due to the interrelated nature of habitus and field, change is a necessary consequence of the two as they are constantly in flux. Field conditions vary over time and habitus, too, is constantly transforming. Generally, in times of stability, change occurs gradually through generational shifts (Hardy, 2014). Yet in other circumstances and in times of crisis, the habitus evolves and responds to abrupt, and sometimes catastrophic changes in the field. During these circumstances, the habitus adapts in unpredictable ways in response to an individuals’ field positioning. A disruption takes place, indicating a mismatch between the habitus and field structure, which is a state described by Bourdieu as *hysteresis*. In the visual diagram below, and as the church case data indicate, when there was a disjunct and interrogation of *doxa* – particularly evident at Calvin Church with online recording of songs and the introduction of contemporary repertoire – there was a misalignment between individual and institutional habitus and the current field conditions, resulting in tensions among musicians, the choir director, and
the church. I therefore understand dialogical processes of reflection and discussion as contributing to the reshaping and reframing of current circumstances, helping individuals and institutions understand the discomfort that may be occurring. Using the concept of dialogue, I argue that it is not only changing field conditions, confronting something new, that influence shifts and changes in habitus, but it is also the dialogical process of intentional, conscious conversation and reflection between active agents within the shifting field conditions that contribute to the transformation of habitus. Through open-ended encounters between agents, an interruption might occur, where musicians engage, using Biesta’s (2013a) description, with “being taught” or “encountering something new”.

During my time at Calvin Church, I often saw a “mismatch” and tensions present between the religious field and musicians’ habituses. In the short time period that I observed, I was not able to significantly view how habitus was shaped and transformed in regard to musicians’ future actions, and changes in habitus are slow to occur. While some individuals became more comfortable with recording themselves over time, it was evident that there was still an obvious misalignment occurring during my time of observation.

Keeping with Bourdieu’s description of hysteresis and the transformation of habitus, if musicians wanted to achieve a desirable field position in their church, transformation of some kind would be necessary as both churches were shifting in relation to the presence of CWM. Transformation would thus result in an altered habitus, matching the new field structures. Bourdieu (1990) explains the process in the following way, stating, “Not only can habitus be practically transformed (always within definite boundaries) by the effect of social trajectory leading to conditions of living different from the initial ones, it can also be controlled through awakening consciousness and socioanalysis” (p. 116).
I therefore propose the implementation of dialogical, actively conscious practices and intentional conversation as elements that promote encounter, contributing to the awakening of one’s consciousness and socioanalysis. Hall’s (2015) study of choirboys’ habituses acknowledges that resistant practices do not always lead to long lasting results. As stated by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), “Practices often hailed as ‘resistant’ may have an impact only on the relatively superficial ‘effective’ relations of a field rather than its deeper structural relations” (as cited in McNay, 1999, p. 105). For example, “resistant” practices in church worship such as shifts in theology of church music, the implementation of virtual elements, and the role of the choir director/worship leader may minimally impact field relations on a short-term level rather than deep, structural relations. Those second type of relations take a significant amount of time and in some ways are unpredictable as the habitus evolves in unknown ways. It would be interesting to conduct a follow-up study at both churches and observe how musicians’ habituses – both individual and institutional – may have changed and if any “resistant” practices that I observed led to long term structural change, both positively and negatively.

Figure 7:

*The Transformation of Habitus within the Religious Field*
Religious Musical Habitus

This thesis also introduces the concept of a “religious musical habitus”, describing church musicians’ habituses in their totality including musical bodily knowledge, social know-how and the church’s socio-cultural nuances. I suggest that the embodied nature of habitus lends itself to habitus formation through performative, ritualistic practices directed towards an “end”, which I view as present in church worship. As drawn upon extensively in this thesis, music-making performs values through a tacit knowledge of performance (Phelan, 2008, 2017). Values are not simply embraced conceptually but are embodied, where the physical body acts as a meeting point between the mind and practice. Each church had an institutional “religious musical habitus” (that was present as an institution) conveyed through doxa and illusio but also among individuals, enacted through practice. Musical bodily knowledge along with religious social know-how are brought together, enacted according to the socio-cultural positioning of the individual church.

The role of CWM, which both churches loosely incorporated in the rehearsals that I observed, can be understood to contribute to the formation of a religious musical habitus. As addressed in my review of literature, scholars recognize the repetitive nature – both musically and lyrically - of CWM, reflecting characteristics of popular music (Crouch, 2022; Long, 2001; Ruth, 2015). Hawn’s (2001) research describes the impact of cyclical structures with repetition in ritual performances, evoking a physical response within participants. Since characteristics of CWM include its cyclical and repetitive nature, its role as a musical genre in worship may be seen to have an even more significant impact on religious musical habitus than initially understood. Lemley (2021) affirms that CWM can be understood to have popular musical associations which I argue can be connected to the premise of Green’s (2002) argument for the
inclusion of popular music in schools. Students connect with popular music as they associate it with the music they engage with in their everyday lives. There is an even more significant connection made when musical associations occur and music aligns with a familiar “cultural liturgy”. Thus, in church worship contexts, I suggest that one’s religious musical habitus is particularly formative and fluid in nature when contemporary, popular musical sounds are involved, such as with CWM.

The discussion of these three research questions has attempted to examine each churches’ music-making practices and their reflection of, and response to, the musical and theological fields in which they are located. The use of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (1977) was beneficial in understanding how music-making practices are situated within a greater church’s denomination and how musicians, and the church’s, tendencies, dispositions, and preferences are formed through practice.

**Significance of Research Study and Dialogue**

While Bourdieu alludes to the transformative nature of the habitus, data findings indicate that habitus is more permeable and fluid than Bourdieu describes. Drawing from Bourdieu’s work, other scholars suggest that habitus can change when it meets new field conditions and faces a “disjunct” (Reay, 2010; Wright, 2008), considering the phenomena of hysteresis (Hardy, 2014) as a disruption between habitus and field. In the context of this study, religious habitus further complicates matters as it structures dispositions, tendencies, and beliefs surrounding music, and theology in general, as situated within the religious field.

This thesis expands upon the concept of “dialogical habitus” (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Catron, 2021, 2022), exploring it in relation to dialogical processes of reflection and conscious conversation specifically within church worship settings. While the dialogical habitus
has been addressed in a community music setting (Catron, 2021, 2022), I address its construction and the resulting transformative nature of habitus in an innovative, detailed manner, considering the impact of religion and the religious field in which it is situated. Data findings from this study support the notion that dialogical processes can contribute to inter-subjective spaces of encounter, knowing and being, affirming or reshaping patterns, dispositions, tendencies, and pedagogical practices within church music, music education, and community music settings. Within church worship settings in particular, “dialogue can potentially uncover perspectives which are more capable and deserving of engagement than seems to be implied by their absence from church discourse” (Porter, 2016, p. 124). Areas of the church’s worshipping practice can be brought to the forefront, and assumptions and “rules of the field” in place can be critically analyzed.

A Note about Dialogue

This thesis proposes dialogical practices among worship leaders and musicians, suggesting that practices of dialogue have the ability to disrupt the “rules of the field”, interrogating the doxa, and reorienting musicians along with their present and future actions. I posit that dialogue has the ability to bring unconscious actions to the forefront of one’s practice and contribute to the active transformation of one’s habitus. In this way, dialogue is seen as an “ideal”, as a practice that necessitates conscious awareness of one’s actions, whether or not the norms in place are then affirmed or disputed from such a process. It should be emphasized that the process of the transformational habitus that I propose cannot view dialogue alone as an ideal “solution” to many changes that may need to take place within religious music-making settings. It is often assumed in educational settings that dialogue promotes communication across differing perspectives and encourages the co-construction of knowledge (Burbules, 2000).
Dialogue is assumed to promote an openness to difference, equality, reciprocity, while upholding an “emancipatory rhetoric” (Burbules, 2000, p. 252) While dialogue can bring together different perspectives – philosophical, theological, and pedagogical, to name a few – dialogue does not necessarily create equal opportunities for all to engage or ultimately result in an ideal change.

Dialogue can too quickly be approached as a pedagogical ideal, yet all learners, learning styles, subject matters, and circumstances require a differentiation to approaches. In some cases, more traditional forms of leadership and instruction may align better with the specific context. A focus on dialogue as open conversation can still contribute to certain people not speaking and certain things not being spoken. As Burbules (2006) remarks, since the level of engagement with dialogue is perceived to be reasonable and well intentioned, “what gets left out, or who gets left out, remains not only hidden but is subtly denigrated” (p. 108). Further, an emphasis on pedagogical dialogue arose with the Freirean tradition of critical pedagogy. While various poststructuralists, feminists, and postcolonial perspectives have criticized dialogue, returning to a focus on the unconscious and what is not expressed, dialogue within church music-making settings is different as there is still a theological truth or “end” with which worshippers seek to align their beliefs and dialogue. As expressed throughout this thesis, there are social, musical, and theological fields in place within church worship settings. A denomination’s positioning within the theological field will direct the dialogue towards a particular end. While dialogue and differences may be expressed surrounding music-making practices and musical decisions, again, decisions are often made according to the church’s field positioning. A church’s positioning does not necessitate consensus, however, and the worship leader’s practices and processes of decision making may also slightly shift from the church’s stance. Finally, it is important to note that any model that promotes dialogue and conscious conversation among agents must be fluid and
responsive to the particular setting at hand. This reality, then, leads to implications for the worship leaders in church settings, as I suggest that engagement in active discernment is needed, understanding the culture and environment of the church.

**Choosing Not to Engage in Transformative Practices**

It is necessary to acknowledge in the concluding chapter of this thesis that transformation from unconscious and deterministic tendencies, at times, does not always occur even through active dialogue and conscious awareness. In addressing musical habitus specifically, some worship musicians may actively consider their beliefs, dispositions, and tendencies, and choose to continue to operate in the manner in which they were operating previously. This may be due to theological or religious beliefs surrounding genres of worship music, theological concepts expressed in the music, or conceptions surrounding excellence and musical quality linked to their theological positioning and musical tastes. The habitus may be so deeply engrained through social and/or cultural positioning. Even if that is the case, my research seeks to, at the least, open up the possibility for actively considering one’s practices, behaviours, potential power structures in place, and “rules of the game” within a variety of teaching and learning settings.

**Conclusion**

This discussion chapter has attempted to compare and contrast data findings from both church cases, Redeemer Church and Calvin Church. In it, I addressed each research question and reflect upon findings from each church. I considered musical and theological fields in place, the strategization of musical behaviours, and the role of habitus within both churches. I emphasized the need for dialogical, intentional, conscious conversation between active agents in settings, which contributes to the affirmation or transformation of habitus within shifting field conditions. Each church’s “religious musical habitus” included musical bodily knowledge, social know-how
and the church’s socio-cultural nuances and was thus enacted through performative practices. The final conclusion chapter will consider the thesis in its totality, providing implications for worship leaders, church musicians, and music educators. I present limitations to the study and provide areas for future research.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Introduction and Overview of Study

This final chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis, addressing significant study themes, providing implications for music educators and worship leaders in their facilitation of spaces of dialogue, and looking forward to future directions for research. The purpose of this study was to examine two churches’ music-making practices and their reflection of, and response to, the musical and theological fields in which they were located. Using central concepts from Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* (1977), including habitus, capital, and field, I considered how worship leaders and musicians strategized their musical behaviours and “disrupted” or affirmed traditional norms of music-making in each contemporary worship music-making setting. I further explored whether such musical behaviours reflected and shaped habitus both institutionally and individually, and if so, the ways in which the process occurred.

I used case study research (Yin, 2014) to examine two churches’ music-making practices in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. Data findings from the cross-case analysis indicated that each church’s music-making practices reflected and responded to the musical and theological fields in which they were situated, evident in their approach to repertoire selection, philosophies of worship, and musical participation within the worship team or choir. I explored the doxa, or rules of the game within each of the research fields, and examined what was accepted as “normal” elements of church worship within each setting. I related each of the “rules of the field” within the churches to their denominational positioning. Results spoke to the tension that musicians and leaders encountered between the pursuit of musical excellence and the encouragement of participation and inclusivity. This was particularly so at Redeemer Christian Reformed Church,
whereas Calvin Presbyterian Church placed a slightly stronger emphasis on participatory, functionalistic music. These varying approaches to worship influenced contemporary repertoire selection as well as opinions surrounding musical participation in the worship team or choir.

A theme of this study was the formative nature of music, assuming that music has the ability to enact beliefs through performative practices, thus shaping the unconscious (Phelan, 2008, 2017; Smith, 2013; Wolterstorff, 2005). I therefore explored how musicians’ and leaders’ musical behaviours were strategized towards a particular end, embodying or “disrupting” the church’s values through practice, and positioning them within the field. Each worship leader strategized their behaviours differently. While Paul’s practices, from Redeemer CRC, aligned more directly with the musical and theological fields in place at the church, Sophia, from Calvin Presbyterian Church, experienced apprehension from musicians when introducing contemporary, unfamiliar repertoire and asking musicians to record vocal parts online. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted field conditions in both churches, particularly resulting in a disruption, or state of *hysteresis*, caused by conflict between musicians’ habituses and the religious field at Calvin Church.

Based on these findings, I expanded upon the concept of “dialogical habitus” (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Catron, 2021, 2022), exploring it in relation to dialogical processes of reflection and conscious conversation among agents within church worship settings. I argued that when there was a disjunct and an interrogation of the *doxa*, or rules of the game in the field, dialogical processes of reflection and discussion contributed to a transformation of (religious musical) habitus – both institutionally and individually. I posit that it is not only shifting field conditions that influence changes in habitus, but it is also the dialogical processes that can contribute to inter-subjective spaces of encounter, knowing, and being, thus re-shaping
dispositions, tendencies, and pedagogical practices within church music, music education, and community music settings.

This thesis therefore suggests that habitus is more permeable and transformative than Bourdieu initially describes. Even though Bourdieu does acknowledge some transformative structures of habitus in his writings (Mills, 2008; Reay, 2010), he still takes a moderately reproductive and deterministic rather than transformative stance in regard to the social world and human agency, diminishing one’s ability to engage in reflexivity or conscious behaviour (Crossley, 1999; Farnell, 2000; Noble & Watkins, 2003; Sayer, 2005). This thesis adds to the literature as it moves beyond calling for increased dialogue in music-making settings towards a higher-level theoretical analysis of dialogue and its interrelatedness to habitus formation. I posit that social forces in place as well as the worship leader’s practices of dialogical facilitation all contribute to the transformation of habitus, thus resulting in the possibility of change. The study’s findings are applicable and provide an original perspective to church music-making practices, specifically in terms of the incorporation of CWM and understanding the significance of religious practices. In presenting further conclusions regarding the implications for music educators and worship leaders, I acknowledge limitations of the study and provide directions for future research.

**Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations that I wish to address in relation to the study. As I mentioned throughout this thesis, the impact of COVID-19 resulted in diminished participation from both churches. Overall, I would have liked to increase the number of participants in the study to provide me with a more accurate representation of each church case. At Redeemer Church, it would have been beneficial to immerse myself in the practices of several worship leaders.
teams. Only one worship leader and their team expressed interest in participating and being observed, however. Although I spent a sufficient amount of time with them (via online technology in the midst of the pandemic), it would have been helpful and interesting to have a greater data set from this church case.

Although there was lots of interest from participants at Calvin Church, I was not able to observe the regular praise team that leads services once a month. Rather, I could only observe the church choir through online Zoom rehearsals. This shifted the original study’s focus which was to examine CWM music-making practices as expressed through worship teams. I decided to adapt and extend my definition of CWM to loosely include the “contemporary” music of the choir, but this was not the original intent of the study.

As I mentioned in chapter seven, case study research is not generalizable to other contexts. It may be easy to quickly read this study’s findings and make inferences about each church denomination as a whole. While readers can make connections to their own church experiences, it is important to acknowledge that each church context is different and the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the conclusions that I developed. The virtual research methods provided difficulty in some aspects as I had to be a “distant” observer and was not able to observe “in the moment” rehearsals at Redeemer Church. Limitations and advantages to virtual research methods are further addressed in my methodology chapter.

In noting that a particular description of an individual congregation by a sociologist may not necessarily be indicative of its social positioning in the larger religious field, Monnot (2018) reminds sociological researchers that such an analysis can, in fact, reproduce the structures in place. Sociologists must take care to acknowledge the social positioning of congregations and denominations and work to understand the relations of power between them. By providing an
overview of these relations, and carefully identifying the particularities of the specific field and how agents are situated, a sense of reflexivity enters the analysis, strengthening it without participating in the field’s constitutive discourses.

As a researcher, I wonder if I was participating in these constitutive discourses even with my effort to maintain trustworthiness and honesty. As addressed in my methodology chapter, my lifelong experiences in North American churches tended to legitimize me in the field. My background, similarities, and familiarity with the Christian Reformed Church helped me gain trust quite easily in this church. While the role of trust in relation to my demographic as a researcher (Canadian, white, middle class, classical musical background) is an important theme to explore in future work, I acknowledge that my demographic aligned with the majority of others in the church as well as the *doxa* of the field. I am curious how the interpretations of this church case would vary for other researchers from a different demographic or church/lack of church background. I wrestle with the concept of reinscribing power imbalances simply through my research practice and choice of data site. This thread would be beneficial to further address if a follow up study were to occur. In the next section, I move from limitations within this research study towards a discussion of possible implications for the disciplines of music education and worship leadership, which can also be extended to community music and liturgical studies.

**Implications for Music Education**

*Informal, nonformal, and formal learning*

I have drawn upon concepts of formal, informal, and nonformal learning throughout this thesis and data findings have indicated that there is not one “right” way to conduct worship leadership, whether it represents formal, informal, or nonformal music teaching and learning practices. Issues and tensions were raised by musicians particularly at Calvin Church
surrounding the choir director’s pedagogical practices and musical decisions. I considered both church cases to be sites of nonformal music learning due to the presence of learning that was related to, and situated within, a real-life context. The skills and knowledge attained were directly applied within the learning situation (Veblen, 2012). While Sophia, the choir director, engaged with more traditional, “formal” music teaching practices within a nonformal music learning context, the presence of dialogical interactions could have still been prevalent, contributing to the transformation of habitus which I address in my discussion. Music teaching and learning settings do not necessarily have to reflect one approach to teaching, and while I believe that informal music learning pedagogies are particularly helpful when introducing and learning popular music in the classroom, it is also important to acknowledge critiques of Green’s (2002) model surrounding the skills of traditional classical instrumentalists (Georgii-Hemming & Rodriguez, 2009) as well as the content of curriculum being primarily based on individual students’ musical preferences (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010). It is important, therefore, for music educators to find ways to draw upon the skills of classical instrumentalists and ensure that curriculum still has a wide breadth of diversity.

Participation and inclusion should be important goals of music teaching and learning within formal school contexts. Yet when one model of teaching and learning is seen as an ideal in its promotion of inclusion, exclusion can still be present for students who are classically trained, or students who perhaps are not familiar with popular music and may not have the “social capital” to be chosen to be part of peer learning groups. Green (2009) advocates for a music education that provides students access to informal and formal realms and it may be helpful to frame a music teaching and learning setting as one that incorporates the “both/and” (Hess, 2020), where students and teachers “reside in the space where the affordances of informal
learning can be experienced” (Mariguddi, 2022, p. 451) while also placing value in traditional, theoretical approaches to music teaching and learning. In this way, it is necessary to teach the “both/and” and facilitate opportunities for both formal and informal learning in the classroom and within teacher education contexts (Hess, 2020). I argue that the same would be true for church music contexts, where a balance between formal and informal learning practices may benefit musicians and their individual backgrounds, preferences, and styles of learning.

Throughout this thesis, I have referenced the blurring of boundaries between formal and informal learning. Scholars suggest that learning is messy, and it may be more accurate to conceptualize learning as operating on a continuum between two poles (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2009; Wright, 2016). Folkestad’s (2006) four factors of analyzing whether learning is formal or informal include the situation, learning style, ownership, and intentionality, as expressed in this study’s review of literature. When understanding these factors in relation to real-life learning, both within the classroom and in worship music-making settings, Wright (2016) recommends visualizing these factors as “sliders on a control panel” (p. 212), where each can be anywhere on the continuum between formal and informal learning, constantly moving between the modes. In considering the worship setting as another space of music learning beyond the school, I wonder how this study’s proposed model of dialogical practices and their influence on the transformative habitus may shift a church’s positioning on the continuum between formal or informal learning. For example, could the enactment of dialogical practices lead to a greater awareness and/or shift in learning styles within church music and music education settings? Could the category of ownership change in terms of who makes the decisions, how, where, and when? And if these categories change in nature, intentionality would likely change too, as the mind of the learner could, and likely would, be directed towards something else.
It would also be interesting to consider how dialogical practices impact each learning factor and which one would likely be impacted first through practices of reflection coupled with changing field conditions or hysteresis. Further, it could be assumed that the social constraints in place due to the embeddedness of religious habitus and “rules of the field” present greater difficulties for the sliders to move or make any change at all. I visualize the added element of religion within the mix – due to the theological values and belief systems that shape music-making practices – to add a sort of “stickiness” to the control panel, where shifts can still occur but there is a “sticky resistance” present. In the next paragraph, I discuss musical excellence in relation to implications music education, which I view as adding another layer of “stickiness” and “resistance” to the control panel.

**Considering Musical Excellence**

This study has centered around concepts of the pursuit of musical excellence, “walking the boundaries” (Mantie, 2021; Willingham, 2021) between inclusion and exclusion within musical communities, and the pursuit of social justice through practices. While I emphasize that the pursuit of social justice in a worship context holds a slightly different meaning or end as it intersects with religion, theology, and church worship, a modern-day conceptualization of social justice in music education could be understood to support my argument for increased dialogue within music teaching and learning settings. As I acknowledge in the review of literature, dialogical practices can counter-act processes of reproduction, challenging “taken-for-granted ways of knowing…and being” (Benedict & Schmidt, 2007, p. 34). Through dialogical practices and the transformation of habitus, individuals and institutions may have more of an ability to interrogate and re-construct who they are and the values that they embody.
When considering musical excellence, Henley and Higgins’s (2020) framework of understanding excellence as the process of music-making and inclusion as the product of the process may contribute to educators’ reconceptualization of excellence enacted through pedagogical practices. I do not necessarily view inclusion to be the ultimate “end” of the musical process in every setting such as church worship, for as Mantie (2021) acknowledges, an “ideal of inclusion can only exist in the presence of exclusion” (p. xv). Yet in teaching and learning settings, I believe that each student’s music education and experiences are of value and pedagogues may need to re-evaluate how they draw upon each individual student’s musical background, knowledges, and values. With that aim, there is a need to consider how musical participation may reinforce inequalities, social constraints, and issues of hegemony (Boeskov, 2015, 2020), questioning who and what is included within the music classroom. Similar to church worship, music educators may want to re-think what values are being embodied through their musical practices and how musical practices may be contributing to social and institutional embeddedness and the “rules of the field” in place.

A fruitful area of future research could focus on redefining excellence according to the process, drawing on Henley and Higgins’s (2020) framework. Regardless of where musicians are positioned in terms of their perceived “level of musicality”, I wonder how excellence could be redefined as individuals pursuing the musical process to the best of their individual abilities. The blurring of boundaries between modes of learning could be seen to contribute to such a goal, where pedagogues and worship leaders’ practices might reach a variety of learning styles and contribute to each musician’s musical development, moving towards one’s best. Drawing together the theological perspectives of this study as well, it is important to acknowledge the theological complexity of the term “excellence”. In Scripture, there is an element of perfection
that is not necessarily focused on being flawless but rather on being made whole. Such a framing of excellence could be drawn upon more regularly within classroom and community music contexts, and worship leader-facilitator’s practices may shift as a result of this framing as well.

When redefining excellence in terms of the process, I would suggest that such a shift in focus aligns with calls for socially just practices in music education. Educative action, in this way, would focus primarily on participation, accessibility, and engagement (Green, 2006; Westerlund & Karlsen, 2016) and focus more on the whole person, rather than simply their perceived level of musicality. While individual skill development is still maintained, it may become less of a focus and naturally flow from “excellent processes” of engagement in participation and accessibility. Through a shift in musical behaviours focused on excellence through process, behaviours may become strategies toward the realization of values (Phelan, 2008), forming and shaping an institution’s habitus and culture, which has the ability to interrupt cycles of reproduction and previous values in place.

When considering theological approaches to church music, a focus on excellence as a process would counteract several theologians’ approaches to music that were discussed in this thesis. Ratzinger (2008), for example, understood excellence in church music only in relation to its ability to display the glory of the cosmos and Jesus Christ. Yet in his reaction against the active role of congregants in worship, it is possible that he was diminishing the ability of individuals – from all backgrounds and skill levels – to focus on “being made whole” through their lack of musical participation in the liturgy. As individuals are encouraged by worship leaders to focus on the process of moving towards one’s best, it is important to note that there is not a place of “flawlessness” that must be reached. Even so, focusing on the process through a lens of excellence in this manner counteracts some of the criticisms of church music (specifically
CWM) as being of “poor quality” (Porter, 2016, p. 116), cultivating a faith “too…simple [and] too repetitive” (Long, 2001, p. 59). Rather, musicians may develop more of their whole being through such a response in their worship of God. As musicians’ individual skill levels are encouraged through a focus on individual wholeness, it is likely that the quality of the music, while secondary, may also improve in the process as they move towards their “best”. This, in turn, may inspire the congregation in their worship of God as well. As worship leaders encourage their musical development, spiritual development, relational development, and so on, they are reflecting their belief and pursuit of the whole person in the process.

When considering the role of dialogical processes in relation to musical excellence, this study has suggested that when there was a disjunct and an interrogation of the doxa, dialogical processes can contribute to inter-subjective spaces of encounter, knowing, and being, re-shaping dispositions and tendencies. Yet theorists such as Buber (1958) believe that one enters into an immediate stand or relation with another while maintaining their own whole being or concreteness. In order to “meet” and engage in dialogical practices, one could infer that there is a “being made whole” and pursuing excellence in such a process first before encountering others. Practically speaking, this could look like working on one’s own musical skill or spiritually preparing before worship team rehearsals, preparing to pursue excellence in the process. There is an openness to “being made whole” necessary to pursue both before engaging in the process and once one is engaged in the process of music-making through dialogical encounters. In this way, a focus on excellence through process may contribute to the interruption of cycles of reproduction in place, as further discussed in the following.
**Interruption of Cycles of Reproduction**

Practices focused on collaboration, musicians’ sense of voice, fostering critical thinking, regularly engaging through different stages of the creative process, and ongoing conversation can be essential to contributing to musicians’ sense of community. In circumstances where dialogue occurs among musicians with differing perspectives, and facilitators/worship leaders and musicians develop a greater understanding of their practices, that is when transformation and interruption of cycles of reproduction may occur. In relation to this study, cycles of reproduction could relate to the privileging of classical musical backgrounds, or on the other hand, the privileging of instrumentalists who are proficient on popular music instruments. Other areas of reproduction could include “taken for granted” processes of decision making in terms of repertoire and approaches to music-making that may or may not align with the church’s social and theological positioning in the greater field. Perhaps churches are not accustomed to regularly examining the theology expressed in their sung repertoire. Or maybe assumptions are regularly made regarding service planning and there is a level of discomfort to implement a shift within liturgical practices. I posit that the facilitation of spaces of dialogue may contribute to a sense of community, encounter, and relationality. Next, I address the facilitation of spaces of dialogue.

**Facilitating Spaces of Dialogue**

The concept of “dialogical habitus” (Akrivou & Di San Giorgio, 2014; Catron, 2021, 2022), has been drawn upon and explored in relation to dialogical processes of reflection and conscious conversation specifically within church worship settings. I suggest that dialogical processes can contribute to inter-subjective spaces of knowing and being in a variety of teaching and learning settings. In this study, both the worship leader and choir director served as leaders in nonformal music learning settings. Paul demonstrated more of a community music facilitation
model of leadership than Sophia, however, and his approach to facilitation demonstrated a distinct balance between sharing knowledge and bringing something new to the learning setting, contributing to the dialogical relation between the “teacher” and “student” or, in this case, the facilitator and musicians. Paul had a clear understanding of the why behind his teaching or facilitation, which transferred to the unique relation between him and musicians. Musicians could be understood to be “interrupted” in traditional ways of knowing as they engaged in an ongoing dialogue between themselves and the “other”, meaning Paul.

When considering a facilitator’s creation of spaces of dialogue, it would be interesting to take this thesis a step further and re-conceptualize dialogue as a fluid forming and transforming of the “self” and “other” that requires an interruptive encounter involving resistance. Drawing on Biesta’s (2013b) description of the gift of teaching, such a process can only occur as a facilitator enters a learning situation with a clear understanding of what they can bring, whether that is a new way of seeing the world, a reminder of theological truths, new musical knowledge, and so on. Dialogue does not necessarily need to be a distinct, verbal process (Biesta, 2013b), but part of the complex, intricate “meeting” of the facilitator and musicians instead.

Within processes of dialogue between the “self” and “other”, times of resistance may occur which could involve hysteresis, or a disjuncture between musicians’ habituses and field conditions. Similar to the way in which hysteresis is a necessary element of the transformation of habitus, I wonder if resistance is necessary for the “self” and “other” to enter into a relation of dialogue and encounter, thus contributing to inter-subjective spaces of encounter, knowing and being, promoting change. Dialogue can be understood both in terms of what has been suggested in this thesis – as a process that contributes to the transformation of habitus along with changing field conditions – and as a reflexive, responsive encounter between the self and other without
verbal components. While the second may be broadly occurring when field conditions are changing, it may also add another layer to the complexity of the doxa within the field as one experiences a sense of resistance when encountering something “new”. This other “layer” in conceptualizing dialogue could be helpful for music educators in practice, considering how they enter into relationships through their encounters with others, and how interruptive engagements with resistance might occur as well. This would be a fruitful area of future research that draws on some of the themes addressed in this study.

Next, I discuss implications for worship leaders in a variety of worship contexts, demonstrating how themes addressed in the study can be extended to multiple disciplines due to the study’s interdisciplinary nature.

**Additional Implications for Worship Leadership and Church Music**

Throughout this thesis, I have suggested that musical practices in worship are more formative than one may initially assume; music-making practices are performative in nature and embody values – theological and musical – of the theological field. In accordance with Phelan’s (2008) research, a community’s “intent” can be embodied in musical practices but can also be “completely transformed and subverted in the process” (p. 155). Phelan (2008) emphasizes the performative power of music in ritual contexts, since singing, and as I argue music-making, can promote and reinforce specific beliefs as an embodied, somatic experience. Liturgical theological perspectives could be understood to affirm this in their conceptualization of formation through liturgy, where the unconscious formed through participation in worship, understood as the enactment of liturgy (Myrick, 2021; Smith, 2013; Wolterstorff, 2015).

I therefore posit that worship leaders intentionally consider the musical and theological values that they are embodying through their practices and the interfaces of the two. Through
musical decisions and actions, including repertoire selection, they are determining the culture of the worship teams and also influencing the theological truths that are sung. As I argue elsewhere (Benjamins, 2021b), worship leaders have a particular role in facilitating musicians’ engagement in relational music-making, entering into a space of dialogue and meeting with others. In evangelical settings, worship leaders may be understood to have a role in a worship team to help facilitate musicians’ engagement in their worship of God (Benjamins, 2021b), demonstrating “spiritual leadership” as well (Kurian, 2016). Worship leaders’ practices could be seen to contribute to some musicians’ ability to worship, as expressed by a musician at Calvin Church, and are influential in expressing theological and musical values. I assert that worship leaders consider all three of the denominational, theological, and musical positioning of the specific church setting in which they are located in order to be intentional, discerning leaders.

This thesis has considered CWM as a significant musical genre in worship settings today. As expressed in the review of literature, the introduction of CWM into church music has been fraught with tensions and conflict across denominations and church traditions. In service planning, it may be helpful for worship leaders to juxtapose CWM repertoire with other, perhaps more traditional repertoire, to account for some of the critiques of CWM being “simplistic” or “repetitive” in nature. I find Crouch’s (2022) re-framing of CWM as “choruses” to be useful for service planning, where CWM can be understood to enhance and build upon other, possibly more “complex” musical repertoire in worship. Thinking about the overall arch of the service is important, where I believe it should reflect the focus of the sermon and the Gospel message, focused on a dialogue between God and his people. Both CWM and traditional repertoire can serve in that regard. The manner in which Porter (2016) describes a “dichotomy that seems to exist between the top-down and relatively fixed musical style…and the grassroots-focussed
fluidity of musicking” (p. 139) within a particular church setting in his study can be used to describe the dichotomy that is all too prevalent between CWM and traditional repertoire. Perhaps more could be done to blend the two as they both aim to reflect the theme of specific worship services.

Due to the small-scale nature of this study, as well as the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study did not examine congregants’ experiences or how the worship team’s music-making practices influenced the congregation and their ability to worship. I suggest, however, that many of the implications I have provided for worship leaders extend to the congregation and to the larger field of congregational song. This thesis emphasized each church’s different approach to musical participation and musicians’ ability to learn repertoire. Some of the data findings regarding the “disjunct” that musicians felt at Calvin Church when learning new repertoire can be extended with implications for those who are worship planning with the congregation in mind. Practically, rather than introducing “all new repertoire” (as some complained that Sophia did), it may be helpful to slowly introduce new repertoire week by week, perhaps introducing a song one Sunday and repeating it weekly throughout the month.

Further, themes of “performance” and “participation” have been drawn upon repeatedly throughout this thesis. While CWM tends to be commonly associated with performance-oriented approaches, as it sometimes is, it is possible to simplify CWM repertoire to enhance congregational song. Even though CWM repertoire is not always congregational-friendly with its complex, often soloistic vocal lines and other popular musical elements, it can be adapted to serve the congregation in their song. Performance practices such as changing keys, minimizing repetitive bridges, simplifying instrumental solos, and singers “stepping up” to the microphone
so the congregation knows when to join in are a few simple, practical ways to encourage congregational participation.

Finally, I have found it helpful to frame the role of the worship leader as a facilitator from community music literature. Processes of facilitation can be distinctly enacted within church worship (Leis, 2021), and the concept of facilitation involves “walking the boundaries” (Mantie, 2021; Willingham, 2021) of inclusivity and exclusivity in relation to communities. I wonder how worship leaders can re-consider inclusion and exclusion, finding ways to draw on congregants’ gifts and talents and finding a way for everyone to serve, even if that is not musically. It could be helpful, as Yerichuk and Krar (2021) suggest, to match musically inclusive strategies with socially inclusive strategies, and also re-consider the relationship between the facilitator and participants.

Ludolph’s (2021) recommendations for those in musical leadership positions highlight the importance of leadership qualities that support “singing with difference amid relational connectedness” (p. 179). I found Ludolph’s suggestions for leaders to “hold space” for the community, facilitating the negotiation of “meaningness” (Higgins & Willingham, 2017, p. 17) to be particularly insightful. As humans engage with music, they seek meaning in its various forms. Meaning is not conceived as the conveying of direct information or the achievement of verbal understanding; rather, it is a type of “meaningness” that is related to a feeling or a “holding space” that involves the negotiation of music’s effect on one’s life (Higgins & Willingham, 2017). In other community music contexts, this process may more broadly represent an openess to spirituality. Yet within this study, the concept can be extended to musicians negotiating “meaningness” through their engagement with worship music, finding meaning in their worship of God and in the theological truths expressed through the music.
In essence, I suggest that worship leaders consider the context and the culture of the church in which they are situated, making decisions and directing their actions towards the theological positioning of the church. Musical practices in worship are immensely formative in nature, and it is critical to understand why one is engaging in particular practices and the impact which they may have. Worship must consider the formation of the communal body of the church, considering the social embeddedness and experiential knowing of worshippers, rather than considering theoretical knowledge alone (Strawn & Brown, 2013).

**Future Directions for Research**

This thesis provides ample themes to be addressed in future research studies. As an interdisciplinary thesis that includes music education, church music, community music, and theological disciplines, it is my hope that more research studies will be conducted that interact with these various disciplines in an interdisciplinary manner. There is significant overlap between church music and music education, and there is lots of room for research on music teaching and learning within religious contexts to be completed. Canadian society is diverse in nature and students within music classrooms are involved in many distinct traditions, upholding countless worldviews, backgrounds, and knowledges. The multifaith context of a classroom is unique in its essence, and I argue that educators have a responsibility to be informed about these diverse cultural practices, which include music and its role in spiritual and religious development within different traditions.

Within church music research, the study of CWM is increasing, yet there is room for much more research to occur that focuses on teaching and learning processes surrounding it. From my research, there is minimal literature that addresses the pedagogical training of worship leaders, and it would be important to consider the type of training that worship leaders are
engaging in, both musical and theological. A future significant area of research would be a study on training programs for evangelical worship leaders that also considers the philosophies and theologies of worship expressed in both the programs and the models of musical instruction. It would be helpful to continue to thoughtfully examine the role of “horizontal” versus “vertical” ends to worship, considering whether music should have a missional, approachable focus, as commonly associated with CWM, and further explore the role of “inclusion” and “listening” in conjunction with the congregation’s ability to participate across a variety of church contexts.

The discipline of community music is another area which would benefit from more research into church music-making as a site of community music and practices of facilitation. Community music has minimally addressed spirituality, and the discipline could benefit looking at informal and nonformal music-making practices with religious components as forms of community music through its emphasis on authenticity, connectedness, and solidarity (Ludolph, 2020). Church music-making practices can continue to serve as a resource to inform community music as they provide a distinct religious, spiritual aspect to the already formed principles of community music (see Higgins, 2012).

When considering directions for future research, it is important to simply acknowledge that a post-COVID-19 pandemic replication or follow up study could be useful. Many of the conclusions drawn in this study were from a “snapshot” in time of the musical life of two churches during the pandemic. A lot of the disjunct that members at Calvin Church were experiencing was impacted by the pandemic. Similarly, my conclusions that drew upon findings from Redeemer Church could have shifted completely if more musicians were present other than the five during the lockdown and the role of the worship leader likely would have shifted as well.
Each of these thoughts suggest the need for a future study to examine the same themes in present-day church life.

**A Final Thought**

As I conclude this thesis writing process, I think back to where the thesis started and where it has moved towards. I consider common threads of wanting to understand what is occurring relationally between musicians in church music, community music, and music education contexts, and my passion for musicians across contexts to thoughtfully consider the “why” behind their music-making, including what or who their practices are directed towards. If there is a passion for change in each of the research disciplines, change will only be prompted through careful consideration and interrogation of dispositions, tendencies, and values in place. It is my hope that educators, church musicians, and community musicians will continue to understand the immense potential of music to shape and form musicians through practice.
References


https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme_00004_1


https://doi.org/10.3726/b17925
https://doi.org/10.1177/00393207211033993


https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-012-9312-9


https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975510368471


https://doi.org/10.2979/PME.2009.17.2.184


https://doi.org/10.31380/sotlched.12.1.31


https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12436


https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708605282817


https://doi.org/10.2307/851798


https://doi.org/10.1177/153660060402500203


https://doi.org/10.1023/B:RYSO.0000004968.91465.99


https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761410362854


https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Hindemith


https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051706006887


https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800701384383

https://doi.org/10.2307/3398884


https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051709990179

https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.53.3.a67x4u33g7682734


[https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761420917226](https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761420917226)


https://doi.org/10.1007/s12397-021-09363-5


Monnot, C. (2018). Unmasking the relations of power within the religious field. In C. Monott, V. Altglas & M. Wood (Eds.), *Bringing back the social into the sociology of religion* (pp. 119-141). https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004368798_007


Ruth, L. (2021). In case you don’t have a case: Reflections on methods for studying congregational song in liturgical history. In A. Mall, J. Engelhardt, & M. Ingalls (Eds.), *Studying congregational music: Key issues, methods, and theoretical perspectives* (pp. 11-24). Routledge.


https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2003.00434.x


https://doi.org/10.17570/stj.2021.v7n2.a6

https://presbyterian.ca/resources/resources-od/

The Presbyterian Church in Canada (2023). *Who we are*.  
https://presbyterian.ca/about/

https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864919844804


https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2017.27.2.191


Wamba, N. (2016). Inside the outside: Reflections on a researcher’s positionality/multiple “I’s”. In L. Rowell et al., (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of action research* (pp. 613-626). Palgrave Macmillan.


Schmidt, G. Spruce, & P. Woodford (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social justice in music education* (pp. 372-387). Oxford University Press.


Yob, I. (2011). If we knew what spirituality was, we would teach for it. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(2), 41-47.


APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT – SENIOR PASTOR

Letter of Information and Consent – Senior Pastor

Project Title: Perceptions of Agency, Relationality, and Inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music Settings

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent – Senior Pastor

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright, Ph.D., Music Education

Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins, Ph.D. Candidate

1. **Why are you here?** Your worship leader and musicians are being invited to participate in this research study about perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music settings. Your church has been chosen as one of the groups of Christian church musicians to participate in this research since your church incorporates Contemporary Worship Music in your services.

2. **Why is this study being done?** The purpose of this study is to investigate musicians’ perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion in a Contemporary Worship Music setting, and to understand how the worship leader’s decisions and actions affect these perceptions. Musical agency refers to "an individual's capacity for action in relation to music" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 110). Relationality refers to a relational space of encounter with the other, through processes of music making or "musicking" (Small, 1977/1996, 1998). We also explore the concept of inclusion in conjunction with musicking, considering how worship music practices might implicitly strategize inclusive behaviours through repertoire, modes of performance, or participative choices. We consider who perceives themselves to be included versus excluded in worship musical environments, thus affecting their ability to use music to enter into a relational space with others and God. The worship leader’s decisions as a facilitator are also likely significant in impacting these perceptions, yet minimal research has looked at these themes from music education and community music literature within a church music setting. This study is part of Laura’s PhD research about church music and music education.

3. **How long will you be in this study?** The study will take place during February to May 2021. Laura will be attending two of your church’s praise band practices to observe how the praise band interacts and the music learning that may take place (approximately 30 minutes for each practice observed). Depending on COVID-19 restrictions, Laura may ask your worship leader to livestream the practice instead to follow safety measures. If you consent to your church taking part in the study, participants will be asked to complete an online baseline questionnaire about their musical background and current participation.
in church music. This baseline questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and will be submitted online. If they volunteer to be interviewed according to their response on the letter of information and consent, their interview will consist of further questions relating to the baseline questionnaire and music learning. The interview will take about 30 minutes.

4. **What are the study procedures for participants?** If your church musicians agree to participate and complete a signed letter of information and consent, they will be sent an anonymous email link to complete an online questionnaire regarding their general information, musical background, and experiences of music-making within a praise band. The survey data will be collected using Qualtrics, as recommended by Western University for data security and confidentiality. At the end of the letter of information and consent, participants will be asked whether they consent to take part in an interview. If they agree to also partake in an interview, they will provide Laura with their contact email and phone number. Laura will contact them to arrange an interview at a place of their choice. They will also be provided with a hard copy of their letter of information and consent for them to re-review at the time of their interview. If they consent, their interview responses will be audio recorded and transcribed by Laura. If they choose not to be audio recorded, they are still able to participate. Notes of their responses will be taken instead by Laura. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these interviews will take place over Zoom. Finally, two praise team practices will be observed by Laura (no video or audio recording). This study will take place within your church where your praise band regularly meets. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these observations will be livestreamed by the worship leader to allow for the researcher to still observe them. If praise team participants choose not to be observed, no notes will be taken regarding their involvement in the rehearsal.

5. **What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?** There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

6. **What are the benefits?** You and your musicians may not directly benefit from participating in this study but the information gathered may provide benefits to society as a whole which include an increased understanding of music-making engagements within Contemporary Worship Music church settings. This may also have benefits for community music and music education fields, understanding the worship leader as a musical facilitator whose decisions contribute to musicians’ music-making experiences overall.

7. **Can you choose to leave the study?** If you or your musicians choose to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request withdrawal of your interview data. If you wish to have your data removed, please let the researcher know. Since the survey data is anonymous, it will not be able to be withdrawn after submission. Similarly, observational data will not be able to be removed due to its inclusion of contextual details and relational dynamics of the church & musicians.

8. **How will your information be kept confidential?** The information will be kept private, only between the principal investigator and additional research staff, unless it is required by law to report. Representatives of Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to the study-related records to monitor the conduct of this research. While we do our best to protect the information there is no guarantee that we
will be able to do so. The researcher will keep any personal information about you or your church musicians in a secure and confidential location for a minimum of seven years as per regulatory guidelines. A list linking participants’ study number with their name will be kept by the researcher in a secure place, separate from their study file. If participants provide their email address and telephone number to be contacted to be further interviewed, their study ID and contact information will be kept in a separate place from their letter of information and consent. Any data that will be reported in the dissemination of results will use de-identified descriptors of all participants and their responses. If results are published in the future, you or your church’s name will not be used.

9. Will you be compensated to be part of this study? You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

10. What are your rights as a participant? Your church’s participation in this study is voluntary. Your church may decide not to be in this study. Even if the worship leaders and musicians consent to participate they can withdraw from the study at any time. If your church chooses not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on future opportunities for collaboration. We will give you any new information that is learned during the study that might affect your church’s decision to stay in the study. You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

11. Whom do participants contact for questions? If you have questions about this research study, please contact:
Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright 519-670-6294
Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins 519-532-4372
If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics (519) 661-3036, email: ethics@uwo.ca

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.
Written Consent

Project Title: Perceptions of Agency, Relationality, and Inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music Settings

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent – Senior Pastor

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright, Ph.D., Music Education

Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins, Ph.D. Candidate

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and agree to my church’s participation. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I wish to receive a copy of the final publication of this study:

☐ Yes
☐ No

____________________  ____________________  ____________________
Print Name of Participant  Signature  Date (DD-MM-YYYY)

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

____________________  ____________________  ____________________
Print Name of Person  Signature  Date (DD-MM-YYYY)

Obtaining Consent

Please return this form by email to

Laura Benjamins
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT – WORSHIP LEADER

Letter of Information and Consent – Worship Leader

Project Title: Perceptions of Agency, Relationality, and Inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music Settings

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent – Worship Leader

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright, Ph.D., Music Education

Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins, Ph.D. Candidate

1. **Why are you here?** You are being invited to participate in this research study about perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music. Your church has been chosen as one of the groups of Christian church musicians to participate in this research since your church incorporates Contemporary Worship Music in your services.

2. **Why is this study being done?** The purpose of this study is to investigate musicians’ perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion in a Contemporary Worship Music setting, and to understand how the worship leader’s decisions and actions affect these perceptions. Musical agency refers to "an individual's capacity for action in relation to music" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 110). Relationality refers to a relational space of encounter with the other, through processes of music making or "musicking" (Small, 1977/1996, 1998). We also explore the concept of inclusion in conjunction with musicking, considering how worship music practices might implicitly strategize inclusive behaviours through repertoire, modes of performance, or participative choices. We consider who perceives themselves to be included versus excluded in worship musical environments, thus affecting their ability to use music to enter into a relational space with others and God. The worship leader’s decisions as a facilitator are also likely significant in impacting these perceptions, yet minimal research has looked at these themes from music education and community music literature within a church music setting. This study is part of Laura’s PhD research about church music and music education.

3. **How long will you be in this study?** The study will take place during February to May 2021. Laura will be attending two of your church’s praise band practices to observe how the praise band interacts and the music learning that may take place (approximately 30 minutes for each practice observed). Depending on COVID-19 restrictions, Laura may ask your worship leader to livestream the practice instead to follow safety measures. If you consent to your church taking part in the study, participants will be asked to complete an online baseline questionnaire about their musical background and current participation.
in church music. This baseline questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and will be submitted online. If they volunteer to be interviewed according to their response on the letter of information and consent, their interview will consist of further questions relating to the baseline questionnaire and music learning. The interview will take about 30 minutes.

4. What are the study procedures for you? If you agree to participate, you will be asked to fill out an online questionnaire regarding your general information, musical background, and process of musical learning within a praise band. Your survey data will be collected using Qualtrics, as recommended by Western University for data security and confidentiality. At the end of this letter of information and consent, you will be asked whether you consent to take part in an interview. If you consent, you will provide contact information in the form of email and telephone number. Laura will contact you to arrange an interview at the place of your choice. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these interviews will take place over Zoom. You will be provided with a hard copy of your letter of information and consent for you to re-review at the time of your interview. Your responses may be audio recorded and transcribed by Laura. If you choose not to be audio recorded, you are still able to participate. Notes of your responses will be taken by Laura and you will be provided with an opportunity to review your transcript. The transcript will be placed in a special project site on OWL and you will be provided access only to your data to review and verify. Finally, your praise team practice will be observed by Laura (no video or audio recording). If you do not wish to be observed, no data will be collected on your role in the practice. This study will take place within your church where your praise band regularly meets. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these observations will be livestreamed by the worship leader to allow for Laura to still observe them. You will also be asked to distribute by email an invitation to participate in research and a letter of information and consent for your praise team musicians to participate in the research. This will be returned by participants through email to Laura.

5. What are the study procedures for other participants? If your church musicians agree to participate and they return their written consent to Laura via email, they will be sent a link to complete an online questionnaire regarding their general information, musical background, and process of musical learning within a praise band. Their survey data will be collected using Qualtrics, an online survey platform recommended by Western University for its data security and confidentiality standards. If they agree to also partake in an interview according to this letter of information and consent, they will provide Laura with their contact email and telephone number. Laura will contact them to arrange an interview at a place of their choice. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these interviews will take place over Zoom. They will also be provided with a hard copy of their letter of information and consent for them to re-review at the time of their interview. If they consent, their interview responses will be audio recorded. If they choose not to be audio recorded, they are still able to participate. Notes of their responses will be taken instead and participants will be provided with an opportunity to review their transcripts. Transcripts will be placed in a special project site on OWL and they will be provided access only to their data to review and verify. Finally, your praise team practice will be observed by Laura (no video or audio recording).
audio recording). This study will take place within your church where your praise band regularly meets. If praise team participants choose not to be observed, no notes will be taken regarding your involvement in the rehearsal. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these observations will be livestreamed by the worship leader to allow for Laura to still observe them.

6. **What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?** There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

7. **What are the benefits?** You and your musicians may not directly benefit from participating in this study but the information gathered may provide benefits to society as a whole which include an increased understanding of music-making engagements within Contemporary Worship Music church settings. This may also have benefits for community music and music education fields, understanding the worship leader as a musical facilitator whose decisions contribute to musicians’ music-making experiences overall.

8. **Can you choose to leave the study?** If you choose to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request withdrawal of your interview data. If you wish to have your data removed, please let the researcher know. Since the survey data is anonymous, it will not be able to be withdrawn after submission. Similarly, observational data will not be able to be removed due to its inclusion of contextual details and relational dynamics of the church & musicians.

9. **How will your information be kept confidential?** Your information will be kept private, only between the principal investigator and additional research staff, unless it is required by law to report. Representatives of Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to the study-related records to monitor the conduct of this research. While we do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. The researcher will keep any personal information about you in a secure and confidential location for a minimum of seven years as per regulatory guidelines. Your signed letter of information and consent will be assigned a unique study ID, which will be written on the top of each page by the researcher and will be kept in a secure place. After consenting to participate, you will receive an anonymous link to complete a survey. Your survey responses will be collected anonymously through a secure online survey platform called Qualtrics. Qualtrics uses encryption technology and restricted access authorizations to protect all data collected. In addition, Western’s Qualtrics server is in Ireland, where privacy standards are maintained under the European Union safe harbour framework. The data will then be exported from Qualtrics and securely stored on Western University’s server. Survey responses will not be able to be linked to you in any manner and your IP address will also not be collected by Qualtrics. If you provide your email and telephone number for the purpose of consenting to an interview at the end of this letter of information and consent, this separate page will be taken from the rest of the letter of information and consent and destroyed after the data is transferred to a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will only list participants’ study ID numbers with their email and telephone numbers. If results are published in the future, you or your church’s name will not be used. A list linking your study number with your name will be kept by the researcher in a secure place, separate from your study file. Any data that will be reported in the dissemination of results will
use de-identified descriptors of all participants and their responses. If results are published in the future, you or your church’s name will not be used.

10. **Will you be compensated to be part of this study?** You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

11. **What are your rights as a participant?** Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on your praise band participation or future opportunities for collaboration. We will give you any new information that is learned during the study that might affect your decision to stay in the study. You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

12. **Whom do participants contact for questions?** If you have questions about this research study, please contact:

   Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright
   Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins

   If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics (519) 661-3036, email: ethics@uwo.ca

   This letter is yours to keep for future reference.
Written Consent

Project Title: Perceptions of Agency, Relationality, and Inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music Settings

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent – Worship Leader

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright, Ph.D., Music Education

Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins, Ph.D. Candidate

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Contact for future studies:
☐ I agree to be contacted for future research studies.
☐ I do NOT agree to be contacted for future research studies.

I agree to be audio recorded in this research:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I agree to be observed during praise band practices:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I wish to receive a copy of the final publication of this study:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I consent to be contacted for a follow-up interview:
☐ Yes
☐ No
If you have consented to an interview, please provide your email and telephone number below so that we may contact you to arrange the interview:

Email: __________________________________________________________

Telephone Number: ________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please return this form by email to L


356
APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT – MUSICIAN

Western

Letter of Information and Consent – Church Musician

Project Title: Perceptions of Agency, Relationality, and Inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music Settings

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent – Church Musician

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright, Ph.D., Music Education

Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins, Ph.D. Candidate

1. **Why are you here?** As a church musician, you are being invited to participate in this research study perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music settings. Your church has been chosen as one of the groups of Christian church musicians to participate in this research since your church incorporates Contemporary Worship Music in your services.

2. **Why is this study being done?** Church musicians’ perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion can be seen as impactful in their ability to enter into a space of worship and music-making with other musicians. The worship leader’s decisions as a facilitator are also likely significant in impacting these perceptions, yet minimal research has looked at these themes from music education and community music literature within a church music setting. The purpose of this study is to investigate musicians’ perceptions of agency, relationality, and inclusion in a Contemporary Worship Music setting, and to understand how the worship leader’s decisions and actions affect these perceptions. This study is part of Laura’s PhD research about church music and music education.

3. **How long will you be in this study?** The study will take place during February to May 2021. Laura will be attending two of your church’s praise band practices to observe how the praise band interacts and the music learning that may take place (approximately 30 minutes for each practice observed). Depending on COVID-19 restrictions, Laura may ask your worship leader to livestream the practice instead to follow safety measures. If you consent to your church taking part in the study, participants will be asked to complete an online baseline questionnaire about their musical background and current participation in church music. This baseline questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and will be submitted online. If they volunteer to be interviewed according to their response on the letter of information and consent, their interview will consist of further questions relating to the baseline questionnaire and music learning. The interview will take about 30 minutes.

4. **What are the study procedures?** If you agree to participate and you return your written consent back to Laura via email, you will be sent a link to complete an online
questionnaire regarding your general information, musical background, and process of musical learning within a praise band. Your survey data will be collected using Qualtrics, an online survey platform that is recommended by Western University for data security and confidentiality. At the end of this letter of information and consent, you will indicate if you consent to take part in an interview. If you consent, you will provide contact information in the form of email and telephone number. Laura will contact you to arrange an interview at a place of your choice. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these interviews will take place over Zoom. In the interview, you will receive a hard copy of this signed letter of information and consent for you to re-review. If you consent, your interview responses will be audio recorded. If you choose not to be audio recorded, you are still able to participate. Notes of your responses will be taken instead by Laura and you will be provided with an opportunity to review your transcript. The transcripts will be placed in a special project site on OWL and you will be provided access only to your data to review and verify. Finally, your praise team practice will be observed by Laura (no video or audio recording). If you do not wish to be observed, no notes will be taken regarding your involvement in the rehearsal. This study will take place within your church where your praise band regularly meets. If in-person contact is not recommended due to COVID-19 government restrictions, these observations will be livestreamed by the worship leader to allow for Laura to still observe them.

5. **What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?** There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

6. **What are the benefits?** You may not directly benefit from participating in this study but the information gathered may provide benefits to society as a whole which include an increased understanding of music-making engagements within Contemporary Worship Music church settings. This may also have benefits for community music and music education fields, understanding the worship leader as a musical facilitator whose decisions contribute to musicians’ music-making experiences overall.

7. **Can you choose to leave the study?** If you choose to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request withdrawal of information collected about you. If you wish to have your information removed, please let the researcher know.

8. **How will your information be kept confidential?** Your information will be kept private, only between the principal investigator and additional research staff, unless it is required by law to report. Representatives of Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to the study-related records to monitor the conduct of this research. While we do our best to protect your information, there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. The researcher will keep any personal information about you in a secure and confidential location for a minimum of seven years as per regulatory guidelines. Your signed letter of information and consent will be assigned a unique study ID, which will be written on the top of each page by the researcher and will be kept in a secure place. After consenting to participate, you will receive an anonymous link to a survey on Qualtrics, the online survey platform that meets Western’s data security and confidentiality standards. Survey responses will not be able to be linked to you in any manner and your IP address will also not be collected by Qualtrics. If you provide your email and telephone number for the purpose of consenting to an interview at the end of this letter of information and consent, this separate page will
be taken from the rest of the letter of information and consent and destroyed after the data is transferred to a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will only list participants’ study ID numbers with their email and telephone numbers. If results are published in the future, you or your church’s name will not be used.

9. **Will you be compensated to be part of this study?** You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

10. **What are your rights as a participant?** Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on your praise band participation or future opportunities for collaboration. We will give you any new information that is learned during the study that might affect your decision to stay in the study. You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

11. **Whom do participants contact for questions?** If you have questions about this research study, please contact:
    Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright [contact information]
    Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins [contact information]
    If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics (519) 661-3036, email: ethics@uwo.ca

    **This letter is yours to keep for future reference.**
Written Consent

Project Title: Perceptions of Agency, Relationality, and Inclusion in Contemporary Worship Music Settings

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent – Church Musician

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruth Wright, Ph.D., Music Education

Additional Research Staff: Laura Benjamins, Ph.D. student

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Contact for future studies:
☐ I agree to be contacted for future research studies.
☐ I do NOT agree to be contacted for future research studies.

I agree to be audio recorded in this research:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I agree to be observed during praise band practices:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I wish to receive a copy of the final publication of this study:
☐ Yes
☐ No

I consent to be contacted for a follow-up interview:
☐ Yes
☐ No
If you have consented to an interview, please provide your email and telephone number below so that we may contact you to arrange the interview:

Email:_________________________________________________________________

Telephone Number:______________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please return this form by email to [Laura Benjamins]
Hello, thank you for taking time today to speak with me and for filling out the questionnaire. I am asking questions similar to the questionnaire surrounding your role as a church musician and I may ask additional questions for clarification and understanding or may further explore your questionnaire responses. Please feel free to answer questions at your own pace and you may abstain from answering any questions of your choice. If you need to end the interview early, please let me know and we will conclude it. All information provided today in the interview is confidential and you will have the opportunity to review my transcript of the interview and your responses.

Please provide a description of your worship band and your role within it.

Probing Questions (may have been answered in questionnaire but will further explore)

- Are you a vocalist and/or instrumentalist?
  - What does this role involve?

- What instruments do you play in the worship band (if an instrumentalist)?

- How long have you been participating in a worship band at your church? How long have you been serving specifically as a worship leader at your church?

- Are you regularly playing with the same people in a set worship band? Or do the musicians consistently alternate?

- How often do you tend to participate in leading worship services?
  - Has COVID-19 affected this? How has your church’ worship services shifted due to COVID-19? Has this affected your role as a worship leader? If so, how?

Please describe your musical background and how that relates to your participation in a worship band today.

Probing Questions

- How did you begin singing/playing your instrument? How many years have you been singing/playing this instrument?

- Did you ever take private music lessons?


• How do you prepare for worship services today?

• What skills did you feel you have as a worship leader (musical and other)?

• Can anyone participate in your worship band? How does this relate to their musical background?
  o Does the presence of Contemporary Worship Music impact this at all?
  o Is there a church policy on who can be leading worship?

**How are your worship band practices run?**

*Probing Questions*

• How is new music introduced?

• How do you view your role as a worship leader?
  o What is your role in musicians’ learning processes?

• What skills do you think an effective worship leader needs to have?

• Who selects new music? Who makes the decisions?
  o Do other musicians contribute to the decision-making process? Are suggestions and ideas presented in rehearsals?

• What is the ultimate goal of your rehearsals?

**Is there anything specific about being part of a worship context that affects your music-making?**

*Probing Questions*

• Is there anything specific to the church/worship context that influences your music leadership practices/decisions?

• Is there anything specific to the church/worship context that influences your music performance experiences?

• Do you have conversations with your musicians focused on worship and their role both musically and spiritually? If yes, can you give an example?

• What does it mean to make music in a worship context?

**What is the community of your worship band like?**
Hello, thank you for taking time today to speak with me and for filling out the questionnaire. I am asking questions similar to the questionnaire surrounding your role as a church musician and I may ask additional questions for clarification and understanding or may further explore your questionnaire responses. Please feel free to answer questions at your own pace and you may abstain from answering any questions of your choice. If you need to end the interview early, please let me know and we will conclude it. All information provided today in the interview is confidential and you will have the opportunity to review my transcript of the interview and your responses.

Please provide a description of your worship band and your role within it.

Probing Questions (may have been answered in questionnaire but will further explore)

- Are you a vocalist and/or instrumentalist?
  - What does this role involve?

- What instruments do you play in the worship band (if an instrumentalist)?

- How long have you been participating in a worship band at your church?

- Are you regularly playing with the same people in a set worship band? Or do the musicians consistently alternate?

- How often do you tend to participate in leading worship services?
  - Has COVID-19 affected this? How has your church’ worship services shifted? Has this affected your participation as a church musician? If so, how?

Please describe your musical background and how that relates to your participation in a worship band today.

Probing Questions

- How did you begin singing/playing your instrument?

- How many years of your life have you been playing this instrument or singing?

- Did you ever take private music lessons?
• If so, what was your practising like? How often did you practise? Is this different than your preparation for worship services today? If so, how is it different?

• Can anyone participate in your worship band? How does this relate to their musical background?
  o Does the presence of Contemporary Worship Music impact this at all?

How are your worship band practices run?

Probing Questions

• How is new music introduced?

• How do you view the role of the worship leader in your band?
  o What is their role in the learning process?

• Who selects new music? Who makes the decisions? How much control do you feel you have?
  o Do other musicians contribute to the decision-making process? Are suggestions and ideas presented in rehearsals?

• What is your role in the learning process? What is your responsibility?

Is there anything specific about being part of a worship context that affects your musical experience?

Probing Questions

• Is there anything specific to the church/worship context that influences your music learning experience?

• Is there anything specific to the church/worship context that influences your music performing experience?

• If yes, have you had conversations surrounding worship and your role as church musicians?

• What does it mean to make music in a worship context?

What is the community of your worship band like?
Email Script for Recruitment – Senior Pastor

Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research

Dear Senior Pastor,

I have obtained your email address from your church website. Your worship leaders and church musicians are being invited to participate in a study that we, Dr. Ruth Wright and Laura Benjamins are conducting. Briefly, the study involves your worship teams completing a short online questionnaire that should take less than 15 minutes, two half hour observations of worship team rehearsals, and if the worship musicians wish, an interview lasting no more than half an hour. No compensation will be provided for their participation in this research.

If you agree to participate and allow the potential participation of members of your worship teams, please sign a consent form at which point we will contact members of the team to inquire about their willingness to participate.

Thank you,

Laura Benjamins
University of Western Ontario, Don Wright Faculty of Music

[Redacted]
Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research

Dear Worship Leader,

I have obtained your email address from your church website. You and your worship teams are being invited to participate in a study that we, Dr. Ruth Wright and Laura Benjamins are conducting with the consent of your senior pastor. Briefly, the study involves your worship team completing a short online questionnaire that should take less than 15 minutes, two half hour observations of worship team rehearsals, and if you and your musicians wish, an interview lasting no more than half an hour. No compensation will be provided for your participation in this research.

If you agree to participate and allow the potential participation of members of your worship teams, please sign a consent form at which point we will contact members of the team to inquire about their willingness to participate.

Thank you,

Laura Benjamins
University of Western Ontario, Don Wright Faculty of Music
Laura Benjamins
Curriculum Vitae

Education
2023 Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education, Western University, London, ON
Dissertation: Musical behaviours, dispositions, and tendencies: Exploring church
music-making through a Theory of Practice

2017 Master of Music in Music Education, Western University, London, ON
Research Focus: Elementary Music Curriculum Development
Capstone: Musicians for life: Curriculum for the non-specialist educator

2016 Bachelor of Education, Redeemer University, Hamilton, ON
Dean’s Honour List, Ontario College of Teachers Certified

2015 Associate of the Royal Conservatory Toronto (ARCT), Piano Performance, Toronto, ON, Royal Conservatory of Music, First Class Honours

2015 Bachelor of Arts, Piano Performance, Redeemer University, Hamilton, ON
Dean’s Honour List

Teaching Related Experience – Higher Education
Principal Course Instructor
2022 Creativity and Interdisciplinary Arts, MU622, Wilfrid Laurier University, Winter 2022 (Graduate Course)

2022 Why Am I Here? Worldview, Meaning Making, and Authenticity, GC 205, Martin Luther University College, Winter 2022

2022 Understanding Progressive Pedagogies in Popular Music Education, M4858, Western University, Winter 2022

2021 World Musics, MUS 326, Redeemer University, Fall 2021

2021 Teaching and Learning Music, MUS 1802, Western University, Winter 2021

2021 Music in Everyday Life, MUS 385, Redeemer University, Winter 2021 - Independent Study

2020 Music in Culture, MUS 322, Redeemer University, Fall 2020

2019 Teaching and Learning Music, MUS 1802, Western University, Fall 2019

2019 World Musics, MUS 326, Redeemer University, Fall 2019

369
Invited Lectures
2022  **Leading the People's Song in Worship**, Martin Luther University College, March 2022; “Worship Leader as Pedagogue, Practitioner, and Facilitator”

2022  **Teaching & Learning Music**, Western University, January 2022
“Intersections between Church Music and Community Music Research”

2021  **Teaching & Learning Music**, Western University, November 2021
“The Role of Religion in Community Music”

2021  **Church Music**, University of North Carolina Pembroke, March 2021
“Intersections of Music Education and Church Music Research”

Research Activities: Assistantships, Publications, Presentations

Research Assistantships
2022 -  **Research Assistant**, for Dr. Daniel Cockayne, University of Waterloo
Grant funded research focused on evaluating the impact of social justice themes in a contemporary choral group on singers and audience

2018 -  **Research Assistant**, for Dr. Sophie Roland, Western University
Grant funded research focusing on the *Canadian Operatic Arts Academy & Accademia Europea Dell’Opera* experiential learning program;

2018  **Research Assistant**, for Dr. Ruth Wright, Western University
Formulated SSHRC Partnership Development Grant

2017  **Research Assistant**, for Dr. Paul Woodford, Western University

Peer-Reviewed Publications
http://79.170.44.82/transformiccm.co.uk/?page_id=880

https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614211043224

https://doi.org/10.1177/00393207211033993

https://doi.org/10.1177/14740222211007403

https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme_00004_1

**Book Chapters**


https://doi.org/10.3726/b17925

**Practitioner/Trade Journal Publications**


**Selected Papers Presented at Refereed Academic Conferences**


371

**Benjamins, L., Bylica, K., & Roland, S. (2021, June).** *This is just as important as practicing: Integrating purposeful, guided reflection in post-secondary music experiences*. Paper presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education conference, online.


**Panel Presentations**

**Benjamins, L., Johnson, D., Loepp Thiessen, A., & Busman, J. (2022, March).** *Possibilities and potentialities: An exploration of theological, musical, and linguistic boundaries in evangelical worship*. Organized panel presentation at the 2022 Society for Christian Scholarship in Music (SCSM) annual general meeting, Mercer University, Macon, GA.


**Awards & Grants**

**2020 -** Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship-Funded Research

**2019 - 2021** Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)

2019 George Black Memorial Scholarship, *The Hymn Society*

2018 Canadian Music Educator Pat Shand Essay Competition Winner

2017 - Western University Graduate Research Scholarship

372