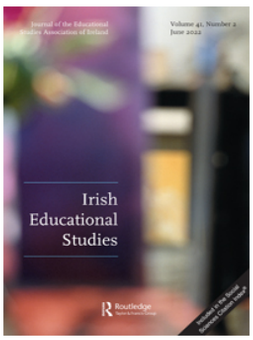

Irish Educational Studies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ries20

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To cite this article: Dorothy Conaghan (2022): Instrumental music education in Ireland: how subsidiarity and choice can perpetuate structural inequalities, Irish Educational Studies, DOI: 10.1080/03323315.2022.2093255

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2022.2093255

Published online: 08 Jul 2022.

IRISH EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2022.2093255

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Instrumental music education in Ireland: how subsidiarity and choice can perpetuate structural inequalities

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ABSTRACT

In Ireland access to instrumental music education (IME) largely operates through the private market. Unlike other European countries Ireland does not have a music school law or policy position. The purpose of this article is to examine how a long-established history of subsidiarity which is enshrined in the Irish Constitution together with the ideology of choice, has underpinned the provision of IME. This has led to the growth of a market-led system of provision that promotes inequalities. The data suggests that parents seeking IME for their children are compelled to act as customers and competitive citizens and that the private choices of those who can pay to play, masks the dearth of state-supported universal IME provision. In conclusion, it is argued that by continuing to adopt the principles of subsidiarity, the State is both exonerated from being fully responsible and accountable for the adequate provision of IME and is complicit in perpetuating structural inequalities that favour access to capitals-rich families, be in the state-supported IME, or IME in the private education market.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 13 October 2021
Accepted 15 June 2022

KEYWORDS
Subsidiarity; music education; market; policy; Ireland

Introduction

Ireland is internationally renowned for the vitality of its traditional music and dance. As a national community, the Irish are generally regarded as a people who value their musical traditions (McCarthy 1999, 3). Yet a scoping review of formal music education in Ireland in the mid-1980s concluded that the young Irish person has 'the worst of all European musical worlds' (Herron 1985). Subsequent reports bemoan the lack of state-funded specialist music provision in primary schools (O'Conor, Keating, and O'Grady 1996). Further research has identified gaps in musical knowledge and skills in the continuum from second-level to students in Irish colleges of education (CE) (Moore 2014, 249). Moore's study affirms that students who had access to private music tuition had a distinct advantage in higher education music over those who relied on the state for their musical education.

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Unlike other mainland European countries, Ireland does not have a developed specialist Instrumental Music Education (IME) policy and provision, (White and Boydell 2013; AEC 2019). In comparison to other European countries of similar population, for example, Denmark and Finland, each have almost 100 State Music Schools (European Music School Union 2015; Conaghan 2020, 50–54), Ireland's six state-supported music schools expose an under-resourcing of public funding in this area. With the absence of a Music School Law,[1] or any state-led policy commitment to ensure equal access to high-quality state-supported tuition together with a huge demand for music lessons, the vast majority of IME provision in Ireland is accessed through the private market (Conaghan 2020, 56–58).

The subject of this article is the extra-curricular IME market in Ireland, a market that is parent-driven and autonomous from mainstream education in Ireland. It is not about musical genre *per se*, but about the teaching and learning of music as a language so that children are equipped with musical skills and literacy to express themselves in the style and genre that is relevant and of their choice.

The first section of this article maps the historical, policy and cultural context of educational provision in Ireland. It traces the history of subsidiarity in relation to public services and examines the impact the State's willingness for sharing institutional responsibility has had on education in general and on IME in particular. Drawing on data from the European Music School Union (EMU), along with previously unpublished data from the author's 2020 study, a second section examines the level of IME nationally, both in the state-supported and the privately funded sector. Using findings from this study, the third section uses the voices of parents to illustrate how an embedded ideology of choice, places parents at risk when navigating the sector.

The final section discusses how the presence of the huge private IME market not only masks the absence of policy and a dearth of state provision nationally, but has exonerated the State from being fully responsible and accountable for the adequate provision and delivery of this public service. It also questions the role and responsibility of the State in being complicit in perpetuating structural inequalities that favour IME access to families with resources. The article further argues that by continuing to endorse the principles of shared responsibility and choice, parents are compelled to take on the role of key drivers, competitive customers and self-responsibilised citizens in a private, neoliberal education market.

As a context for examining the impact of subsidiarity and choice in education, the article turns to the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1986) Lareau, Evans, and Yee (2016) and Vincent and Maxwell (2016) to provide a theoretical framework. It draws on concepts of private family capitals, such as time, economic means, cultural knowledge and knowing the 'rules of the game' as effective means of creating educational advantage in the context of IME in Ireland.

The formation of Irish social policy

While early architects of social policy were active in England and on mainland Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, Irish social and educational policy was being shaped by planners who were responding to other needs in a post-colonial and post-revolutionary era. In crafting such policy the new State was not especially focused on intervening in economic or social life in ways that would significantly improve human welfare

for those who were poorest. Even though efforts were made by the State to play a greater part in the control and management of second-level schools, with proposed funding for a universal education service,[2] these efforts were fended off by the Catholic Church as the religious orders and schools were resistant to reform, as were the minority religions (Coolahan 1981). Through the focus on Home Rule, and ultimately the drawing up of the Irish constitution in 1937, the new Irish State was a close collaborator with the Catholic Church for the next 70 years (Fahey 1998; Inglis 1998).

Subsidiarity and the link to the private music education market

The emergence of the private music education market in Ireland is not new and can be traced back in part to the principle of subsidiarity. This organising principle indicates that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralised competent authority; political decisions should be taken at a local level if possible. This principal was institutionalised in Ireland after independence in 1922 when the State devolved the delivery of many public services to non-statutory (most religious) bodies, including schools. This suited the denominational churches as it gave them ideological control over key social institutions in education, health and welfare (Fahey 1998). What this in effect means, is that the Irish Constitution formally recognises the role of the State as subsidiary or supplementary to private and corporative educational initiative:

> The state shall provide for free Primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative.
>
> (Article 42.4 of Irish Constitution)

Thus, the Irish State has assigned the accountability, delivery, control, management and distribution of large sectors of education to religious bodies and religious orders (Darmody and Smyth 2013).[3]

The religious orders and IME

Throughout the twentieth century a particular feature of Irish IME was that members of the religious orders and visiting specialist music teachers gave instrumental and vocal music lessons on an extra-curricular, fee-paying basis in their schools. These lessons were explicitly targeted 'to teach piano and orchestral instruments to the daughters of respectable well-off parents who had opportunities for practising at home' (McCarthy 1999, 87). This practice continues to exist in a number of primary schools today where fee-paying, IME lessons are arranged between the parent, the music teacher and by accommodation the school principal and the board of management.

The practice of privately accessing IME through private teachers mostly operating from their own homes has always been a feature of IME in Ireland. This is reflected in a register of private teachers where a total of 594 music teachers, mostly females, is recorded (Fleischmann and Bax 1952, 339–357). Today, while few religious are involved, a large, unregulated private market continues to serve the well-off minority who can afford lessons; it operates in tandem with provision in the six state-supported music schools.

Cultural and policy shifts

However, in the latter half of the twentieth century there were two socio-economic changes that altered the profile and availability of IME provision for the foreseeable future. First, the marriage bar[4] in the public service was lifted after Ireland joined the European Economic Community (now the EU). As more women joined the workforce outside of the home, a decrease in the availability of private music teachers was evident over time (Beausang 2002). The widespread availability of employment for women, together with a decline in the number of religious vocations from the 1990s onwards, led to the extensive private IME market being replaced, not by an increase in state-supported investment in music schools, but by the development of independent private music schools and private music teachers in all areas of the country.

Choice as ideology in Irish education

In Ireland, parents are facilitated through a school choice ideology and policy that is constitutionally protected; an ideology which has both politically and structurally dominated the character of education since the foundation of the Irish State (Lynch and Moran 2006). Within some limits, parents have the freedom to choose whatever school they wish for their child. This is due to the complex relationship the Irish State has with education which involves accommodating different religious interests in schools and the position of recognising parents as primary and natural educator of the child (Article 42.1 Irish Constitution).

Research aims and rationale

In broad terms, the Irish educational context provides the rationale for this article, and in particular the tuition for the practical component of the Leaving Certificate (LC) music examination. There are strong indications to suggest that due to multiple demands placed on secondary school music teachers, the teaching of vocal and instrumental music within the allocated class time is particularly challenging, a lacuna which highlights the lack of foresight on the part of policy makers to provide adequate infrastructure for instrumental provision (Moore 2014, 263–264). More recent evidence suggests that parents are compelled to engage with the market to source tuition for the practical component of this state examination subject (Conaghan 2020).

Within this context, the aim of this article is to examine how a long-established history of subsidiarity in the provision of public services, including education has contributed to the rise of the private IME market in Ireland. More critically, the article seeks to explore how the ideology of choice, which underpins subsidiarity, gives distinct advantage to those with field-specific capitals and cultural knowledge.

Study design, ethical consideration and data collection

The article is part of a larger study where the data were collected from multiple sources. Qualitative, quantitative and participatory observations recorded in a reflective diary which provided the structure that has shaped the design of this work. The qualitative

data were sourced from a series of 33 semi-structured interviews with parents who had children age 10–19 who were learning a musical instrument in both private and state-supported settings. Care was taken to source participants who were living in both rural and urban settings, ensuring *a purposeful sampling* (Creswell and David Creswell 2018, 189). Following the drawing up of an interview protocol, ethical permission was applied for and granted by University College Dublin, Human Science Research Ethics Committee (UCDHSREC). All interviews took place between 2018 and 2019 and were audio recorded. Special attention was given to protecting the anonymity of each participant and to ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were employed.

The quantitative data collection sought to ascertain the size and nature of IME provision in Ireland in terms of providers, student capacity, annual fees and level (if any) of state-subsidy per student. Secondary quantitative data from state-supported music schools along with reports from the European Music School Union (EMU) (2015) have also informed the analysis and serve to draw comparisons. Also contributing to the dataset is a body of empirical knowledge sourced over a period of four years and recorded in the author's reflexive diary 2016–2020.

IME provision: Ireland in a European context

> Ireland has … an underdeveloped specialist music education, which outside major urban centres, is largely the remit of private enterprise or voluntary provision … the lack of a consistent country-wide system of state supported instrumental and vocal education has led to uneven and unequal access to performance music education on geographic, financial and cultural grounds and does not compare well with provision in other European countries. (White and Boydell 2013, 342)

This excerpt from the *Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* (White and Boydell 2013), succinctly captures the issues at large for IME. The failure of central government to lead and to commit to any form of universal IME policy is evidenced in Table 1, where the level of state-supported music school provision and capacity in Ireland is compared to levels in place in four European countries of similar population. These figures show that Ireland has eight times fewer places in state-supported music schools than either Denmark or Finland. Further, the International Music Council (IMC) frames the learning of musical language and skills as a basic right and has drawn up the 'Five Music Rights',[5] the first three of which relate directly to learning and participation and call for the right for all children and adults:

1. To express themselves musically in all freedom
2. To learn musical languages and skills

Table 1. State-supported music school provision and capacity.

Country	Total population	Population of under 25's	Number of state-supported music schools	Number of students in state-supported music schools
Switzerland	8.5 m	2 m	421	183,543
Denmark	5.7 m	1.2 m	86	80,000
Finland	5.5 m	1.6 m	97	60,000
Belgium	11 m	3 m	92	40,000
Ireland	4.8 m	2 m	6	7500 approx.

Source: http://www.musicschoolunion.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/EMU-Statistics-2015-08.09.2017.pdf

3. To have access to musical involvement through participation, listening, creation and information (IMC 2001)

Within this context, IME is seen as a capacity-building, public good that is governed by rights. In certain jurisdictions,[6] these rights are protected by law, and are not defined as privatised goods. In European advocacy terms, there is a notable absence and official avoidance in Ireland, of naming the provision of IME as either a component of education or as an independent sector in itself. As a result, attempts at forming a national music schools association were short-lived. In the 2010 annual reports to the EMU Ireland is listed as a member, represented by The *Irish Association of Music Schools*. However, absence of regulation, variances in funding structures, teacher qualifications, teaching standards and fee structure, along with a declining economy after the 2008 financial crisis, led to the demise of this brief collective effort to coordinate music schools and IME in Ireland.

Literature review

An initial literature search for Irish-based peer-reviewed research on access to the teaching and learning of specialist IME yielded scant results. While debates on access and inequality in education are extensive (Lynch and Baker 2005; Lynch and Moran 2006; McCoy, Quail, and Smyth 2014; Lynch and Crean 2018; Fleming and Harford 2021), there is very little research on specific out-of-school, education-related subjects such as IME. Much excellent work has been published on in-school, general music education (Kenny 2010, 2011; McCarthy, O'Flaherty, and Downey 2019), yet this corpus is primarily concerned with classroom music delivered by the generalist teacher and does not deal with IME *per se.* An early reference to music as a Leaving Certificate examination subject was made by O'Súilleabháin, where reference is made to the need of help of an outside teacher (1985). More recent notable examples are Moore's (2014) thorough analysis on the distinct advantage that students in higher education music have, in terms of their previous access to private music tuition, over those who have relied on the state for their music education. Deloughry's (2014) research serves as a compelling study on the social class background of *who* accesses publicly-funded IME in Ireland today.[7] Findings from this latter study reveal that those who access and benefit from state-supported IME during their school-going years are predominantly middle and upper middle-class families. Moore's (2021) book chapter investigates the ways in which Bourdieu's theoretical tools of habitus, cultural capital and field can further our understanding of how different musical pathways shape students' experiences in higher music education in Ireland.

There are published reports which found a lack of IME provision on a national basis and a near absence of music specialism in the Primary School (Herron 1985; O'Conor, Keating, and O'Grady 1996). The 'review' specifically on IME services (O'Brien 2001), a debate, the Music Education National Debate, (MEND) (Heneghan 2002), and a report on IME services nationally (Drury 2003) are efforts that serve to draw attention to the dearth of IME provision. These reports are limited and under-theorised in that they fail to question why, as a result of lack of policy, some families can and do access

the very limited and highly subsidised, publicly-funded tuition, or the expensive private market, while visible and hidden barriers continue to exclude others. The exception is the more recent ESRI[8] report (Smyth 2016, 102) on arts and cultural engagement among children and young people which concluded that the vast majority of structured cultural activities in which children and young people engage require payment.

A similar search for European literature on IME provision, teaching and learning reveals more results. The research synthesis by Hallam describes the numerous benefits that have been associated with learning a musical instrument (Hallam 2015). In terms of research on parental involvement in IME the work by Creech (2010) explores the time- and support-intensive nature of IME, whereas findings from the more recent UK-based study by Purves (2019) show that the level of children's engagement in IME is directly influenced by what is referred to as the 'neo-liberal parent' concept, where parents scan the market to identify advantageous educational opportunities for their children (Purves 2019, 270). The work of Lilliedahl (2021) provides insights into parents' behaviours in extra-curricular specialised music programmes.

State-supported IME provision

Ireland has six music schools that offer state-supported IME tuition for 'pre-college students'. Responsibility for this public provision lies with regional Education and Training Boards (ETB) in Cork, Dublin and Limerick, the Institute of Technology (CIT) in Cork, TU Dublin and the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) in Dublin. Small-scale self-financing music services offer lessons in some counties and operate under local Education and Training Board (ETB) and County Council Arts Office management. While the scarcity of IME provision has been openly acknowledged and lamented there has been very little reporting on why provision is high in some areas and absent in others. Table 2 outlines the number of individual music places available at each of the six state-supported music schools. The music services that exist in various counties are not included since at the time of data collection, student numbers were not available. Also, these services although they do provide much-needed tuition, are not music schools *per se*, in that they are self-financing and there is no statutory obligation on them to provide associated classes such as orchestra, music theory and choir, although some do. Table 2 also gives the cost per annum and the level of state-subsidy for student fees. The fees were for the academic year 2018–2019.

Table 2. State-supported music schools in Ireland cost and capacity.

Music School	Number of pre-college students	Cost of 30 min individual lesson	Cost of 60 min individual lesson	Percentage of state-subsidy per fee
Royal Irish Academy of Music	1400	€690	€1365	68%
Conservatory of Music and Drama TU Dublin	880+	€630	€1335	80–83%
CIT Cork School of Music	1000+	€720	€1200	82–85%
Music Centre, Kylemore College of Music	700+	€400	€800	Unavailable
Limerick School of Music	700	€400	Unavailable	Unavailable
Cork ETB School of Music	2600	€345	€600	80–85%

It would appear from Table 2 that the two large cities of Dublin and Cork have adequate provision in this area of education. However, this level of provision has remained the same for almost 40 years. On a closer look, the above data reveals a random country-wide distribution, from total absence in Fingal which has the fastest growing youth populations in the country, to the largest provision in the country in Cork city and county. Cork has over four times the allocation of instrumental places compared to Dublin city and county combined, yet Dublin has a total population over twice that of Cork. Thus, a child in Cork has approximately eight time greater chance to access publicly supported IME tuition than a child in Dublin.[9] These figures also reveal a stark absence of provision in the growing population areas in counties surrounding Dublin and the notable absence of a state-supported music school in Galway, a city with a population of almost 80,000.

The private IME market

Today, while few religious are involved in the teaching of musical instruments, an unregulated private market continues to serve those who can afford lessons outside of State provision. However, the size of this private market has never been systematically measured in terms of capacity, conditions of access and cost to individual families. With no reliable tool to measure the size of this market, it is estimated that the market is far higher than the listed 40,000 students who annually enter for the RIAM examinations throughout Ireland (RIAM 2018). This is not an accurate tool with which to measure the size of the private IME since not all students who learn an instrument in Ireland present for examinations with the RIAM. Many students choose examination boards in the UK when, at the time of writing, candidate numbers were not available for Ireland. Further, there are students who choose not to do any music examinations at all. In sum, the number of students taking private music lessons on a national basis is most likely far higher than 40,000. Even without exact figures and the fact that there are less than 8000 state-supported IME places in the country (see Table 1), it is reasonable to deduce that by far the vast majority of IME tuition is sourced from private providers. These estimated figures not only demonstrate a lack of investment in this education-related activity, especially compared to other European countries, but they also draw attention to how the private market has expanded and developed as a way of compensating for this lacuna.

Other pathways to IME

While this article is about the formal access and provision of musical skills, music literacy and performing opportunities within a music school setting, it is important to note some of the other pathways that have for many years and more recently played a role in providing music participation opportunities for children and young people throughout Ireland.

For over 20 years a number of *whole class string projects* have been developing in Irish schools (PSP), (Conaghan 2014). Initially rolled out by the National Concert Hall Education Office to DEIS[10] schools, funding is the responsibility of each individual school. The *Irish Association of Brass and Concert Bands* list over 25 bands in its membership

where much of the tuition is carried out on a peer and /or voluntary/ professional basis. A striking feature of the musical provision landscape in Ireland is Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. This organisation comprises a rich network of folk music instruction and performance opportunities. It is community-led with regular classes largely organised by voluntary tutors. Another significant contribution to arts education is the 2020 Arts in Education Charter (Department of Education and Skills 2020). Within this Charter, a pledge has been made to 'place the arts, alongside other subjects at the core of our education system'. Local Arts Education Partnerships are key to the Charter 2020 which is also the case of the agency known as Music Generation (MG). Established in 2010, MG originated from a government-funded initiative in 2001, which sought to address how a national system of publicly supported local 'schools of music' might be provided in Ireland.

This resulted in the publication of a report which outlined the creation of a model that would be 'publicly supported, socially inclusive, community focused, of high quality, to complement the teaching and learning of music in the classroom', (Drury 2003) and a later independent evaluation (Thompson 2007) which concluded that the model provided a 'workable and replicable framework for the development of music education services … on a wider scale throughout Ireland'. Today, with philanthropic donations from U2 and The Ireland Funds together with support from the Department of Education, MG operates through a devolved model of local delivery within an overall national framework. Local Music Education Partnerships (MEP) operate a matched funding model which is led by ETB and Local Authorities under the leadership of Music Development Officers, who work in tandem with the National Development Office.

Market choice, capitals and risk

The abovementioned work of the PSP and MG is commendable in that it focuses on the provision of performance music education that enriches the mainstream music curriculum. However, it is important to note that these programmes work within a context where there is no national or collective body to regulate and register qualified, trained IME teachers within the large pre-existing private instrumental music teaching market in Ireland: a sector that counts for at least 85% of IME tuition nationally (Conaghan 2020, 57–58). This places parents at considerable risk when navigating access for their children, where quality assurance can be problematic. And although there are many excellent private teachers and music schools operating throughout the country, data from the research show that for parents without local field-specific knowledge, it can take several years to find a fully qualified teacher (Conaghan 2020). In the excerpts below, we see how Bourdieu's concept of private family capitals can be mobilised to create educational advantage within the Irish IME context. Starting with Phillipa, a parent from mainland Europe who assumed that all music schools were state-supported. Below she recounts her negative experience due to lack of cultural knowledge:

> Well, when we first moved here to Ireland it was quite difficult. I tried to get lessons for my eldest and the local [private] music school was full … and we had to go to the next town, but that was very, very bad … . (sigh) you know, the awful journey of finding a teacher … Well, I'm sure she had some qualification, but [pause] no, she never brought her instrument to the

> lesson … … it was bad, I had to take her out [daughter], because I wasn't happy. (Phillipa, mother of three teenagers)

Phillipa's experience contrasts with that of Margaret, an insiders in the field:

> I knew there was going to be five years of a waiting list. I know some [families] who never got called. You see they don't need to advertise it. So only I was … … [pause] **in the know** and I'm teaching myself like. So you really wouldn't see it on any notice boards. You have to know someone doing it really. (Margaret, mother of three teenagers attending a state-supported music school).

Margaret's local, field-specific knowledge concurs with the findings of Vincent and Ball (2007) and Vincent and Maxwell (2016) who assert that parental agency guided by cultural knowledge can be useful for navigating institutions; claims that are all the more poignant when accessing an under-resourced and over-subscribed state-supported sector such as IME in Ireland. Further findings from the author's study show that parents require additional hidden capital of time to maintain engagement for their children. In the excerpts which follow, we see the interaction between time and finance which highlight further differences in family capitals:

> **Interviewer**; and is getting to lessons a challenge for you?
>
> **Ena;** absolutely, we only get to lessons once every two weeks, so it is on at 4.30 on a Wednesday and if me or my husband are both working, it just doesn't happen. But you know, it's a bit on the challenging end (Ena, mother of two at state-supported music school)

Ena was glad of the offer in this subsidised and affordable music school, yet the primary reason for her children's access was restricted, by her own lack of time. This dependency on parental availability of time together with economic means is further described below by Greta and it demonstrates the power of multiple, interacting capitals.

> I'm a qualified engineer, but I was having to choose between, how and I going to manage all these after-school music classes and working myself. We're constantly on the road, up to eight classes a week, violin, piano, theory, orchestra … in different places and on different days. And from 2.30pm in the afternoon … right in the middle of a working day for parents. So I gave up [work] because I could. (Greta, mother of two teenagers)

The dependency on parental availability and time together with economic means as described by Greta demonstrates the power of multiple, interacting capitals as described by Bourdieu.

Together with these capitals, the institutional structure of IME learning requires and expects specific, home-based hidden forms of parental support. These expectations were explicitly posted on the website of the Dublin-based elite music school, The Conservatory of Music and Drama (TU Dublin 2019-2020):

> As a parent or guardian you are expected to provide active support for your child's musical education, [which includes] encouraging and monitoring of [home] practice, the provision of all necessary books and other learning materials; and access to a suitable instrument and practice space. (TU Dublin)

Such institutional expectations, or 'rules of the game', assume the possession of a blend of hidden capitals that align with middle-class family habitus, (Lareau, Evans, and Yee

2016), as well as knowledge and parental agency (Vincent and Ball 2007; Vincent and Maxwell 2016).

The above-described criteria and conditions of engagement do not take into account that customers or competitors for these places are not equally resourced and positioned in terms of social networks, time and finance. Not only do these access conditions create classed inequalities that provide a selective service for a pre-selected group, they also perpetuate the structural inequalities within which they operate.

Discussion

Today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the factors that served as barriers to participation in IME in the early years of the Irish State have changed little in the intervening years. These factors include the required and necessary resources of considerable cultural knowledge, finance and parental time; the possession of which constitute advantage for those who have this blend of field-specific capitals within their grasp.

And while there is considerable merit in developing services already set in place by civil society, such as those set up by the religious orders and music teachers working from their own homes and building on these for provision, there is a very real sense in which the previously mentioned constitutional principle of subsidiarity endorses inequalities in that it allows educational and other social services to be offered to those who can afford them through the private market (Murphy and Dukelow 2016).

And although IME crosses between education, arts and cultural spending, the figures in Table 1, reveal how the reality of an *arm's length* and *ad hoc* approach can and does impact on and allows the growth of a private music education market. Further, the virtual disappearance of the group of previous private IME providers has been replaced, not by any state-led policy initiative of equal access and countrywide provision system, but by a larger more expensive private market. This is problematic. IME in Ireland has mutated from church-led subsidiarity to the neoliberal ideology of market choice, a choice where parents are treated as customers in managing choice within education (Mau 2015; Streeck 2016), giving rise to the 'neo-liberal parent' concept (Purves 2019). Consequently, and because Ireland does not have a countrywide law or policy for universal publicly-funded IME provision, parents are compelled to initiate engagement using whatever knowledge and capital resources they have at their disposal to secure music lessons for their children. This finding which sadly applies today concurs with Bourdieu's theory who asserts that:

> the transmission of musical privilege is not earned, nor is it the result of intelligence, talent or effort; rather it is the result of individuals being in privileged social locations and being privileged with time and money. (Bourdieu 1984)

Moreover, there is a moral imperative on parents to use whatever resources they possess to advantage their children in whatever way they can in the field of IME (Savage 2019), differentials in family capital resources have unintended consequences. First, the freedom of choice given to parents through 42.4 of the Irish Constitution in reality means that choice is only open to those with means and resources to exercise this choice; consequences that are compounded by limited choice and the market-based nature of this educational service. Because all IME tuition in Ireland is only available through the market,

and with less than 15% of that market state subsidised, this effectively means that choice is only available to parents with sufficient means, time and knowledge to do so.

In *Bourdieu and Passeron (1964)* Bourdieu and Passeron analyse the more subtle mechanisms of social and cultural selection that can and often do the same work as financial selection. In practice IME in Ireland abounds with the deployment of these mechanisms or capitals; none of which work alone. Illustrated in the interview excerpts is the relational and interconnectedness of family capitals where Bourdieu (1986) envisages that one form of capital can be transformed into another. Also illustrated in the excerpts from the study participants is testimony to Bourdieu's claim that the transmission of musical privilege is not earned, but is the result of individuals being in privileged social locations, and being privileged with knowledge, time and finance (Bourdieu and Nice 2010, 68–69).

Conclusion

A consistent feature of the Irish State's strategy for social policy, including education, has been its willingness through the principle of subsidiarity, to share institutional responsibility for the welfare of its citizens with private, non-state organisations. By adopting this approach, the State is exonerated from having responsibility for the adequate provision and indeed quality, evaluation and regulation of an education service such as IME. Given that the vast majority of tuition in Ireland is unquestionably sourced privately, in this instance the State is complicit in creating structural inequalities that place capitals-rich families at distinct advantage in accessing any form of IME for their children. In doing so, the growth of the private market as a solution to access has allowed government to legitimately depoliticise its own responsibility and in turn depoliticise any form of critical opposition to its policy position.

Subsidiarity as a policy position represents the government's stance on provision for services, including education, which embraces the principle that decisions are taken by the local, least centralised authority. Along with this position is the constitutional principle of parental choice. The outcome of this national laissez-faire policy has three consequences. First, the limited provision that is in place is only available to students and families who possess a blend of IME- related private family capitals as described in this article. Second, for families who cannot access the state-supported music schools, there are considerable risks involved due to lack of legislation and regulation. And last, differences in private family capital resources lead to a type of parental support that encourages and displays concepts of self-responsibilised citizenship and prudentialism within education; actions that are individualised rather than collective (Peters 2005; Frericks 2014; Mau 2015). These outcomes combine to perpetuate rather than address structural inequalities.

While significant improvements in access to general education have developed over the last half-century and are safeguarded by robust equality-based mandates, today in Ireland apart from a small number of privately funded, school-based IME projects in low-income schools, (Conaghan 2014; 2020) match funded MEPs in certain areas, and a small number of part-scholarships for the state-supported music schools, access conditions and criteria for IME participation have changed little since the first music schools were established in the late nineteenth century. Further, the very existence of

instrumental music projects in low-income schools and the offering of tuition scholarships, generally legitimates rather than challenges the exclusionary practices at the heart of elite schooling (Courtois 2018, 8), exclusionary practices that also apply to IME. In sum, without parental drive, knowledge, financial resources and time, structural inequalities within IME are perpetuated.

As IME provision continues to advantage the privileged few through institutional and social class-related structured arrangements, IME is not organised on principles of equality of opportunity and social justice. What in effect has happened with all IME in Ireland is that the widely agreed principle of equality of educational opportunity for all, is neither constitutionally nor legislatively supported. Unfortunately, as educational insiders in the IME world, the mostly middle- and upper middle-class families who benefit from state-supported music services (Deloughry 2014) are happy with the status quo. This means that there is no onus on successive governments from a political perspective, to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for access and for conditions of engagement.

Individual parents creating bespoke paths of access to accommodate their children does not challenge the anti-democratic politics that characterise a contemporary neoliberal market within IME structure and provision where choice-and market-led practices are at odds with universalistic welfare thinking.

This study is testament to the impact a subsidiarity-led, neoliberal policy project has had on education in Ireland, where the marketisation of education and the emergence of an ideology of consumer choice has been normalised and legitimised. It now seems natural to have most IME provided through the private market. Even though most welfare capitalist states have invested in making education more egalitarian, ideologies of subsidiarity and choice, which are central to neoliberal market thinking, have greatly altered the concept of a level playing field within IME access and provision. What is demonstrated from the data is how the organisation of IME in Ireland undermines equality and social-justice-based opportunity, where access and opportunity criteria are devoid of consideration for the capital differences in and between families.

This research raises further questions and asks, why should IME be treated as a type of private property rather than a public good to which all are equally entitled and where the predatory takeover of IME by capital-rich, middle-class families is enabled by the State. In conclusion, in the sphere of negotiating IME access, the guiding principles of Church-led subsidiarity have been replaced with neoliberal market ideals; both selective and requiring class-related capitals.

Notes

1. 18 out of 25 country members of the European Music School Union have a 'music school law' (EMU 2015).
2. Attempts were made early in the century to introduce a universal service for secondary education through the proposed MacPherson Education Bill 1919/20. Included in its proposal were, local education committees which would aid, maintain and equip schools; provision for free school meals and books; provision for scholarships and care for afflicted children.
3. There are three second-level sectors in Ireland: voluntary, vocational (including community colleges) and community/comprehensive. Voluntary, or denominational schools make up over half of all second-level schools, catering for almost 60 percent of all second-level school intake, (Darmody and Smyth 2013, vii, 44). The majority of primary and second-

level schools in Ireland today are privately owned and are managed by the Catholic Church (Darmody and Smyth 2013, 48). A pattern in recent years has seen the creation of Educate Together non-denominational schools, Community National Schools, both under community patronage and also Irish Language Medium primary and second-level schools.

4. In 1932, the Irish government introduced the marriage bar, requiring women to leave paid employment on marriage. It remained in place until 1973 and meant that women, through no choice of their own were denied the right to work in the public service for almost 50 years. Some were compelled to find ways of earning their own income and those who were musicians, turned to giving music lessons from their own home.
5. First proclaimed at the International Music Council's General Assembly in Tokyo in 2001, the Five Music Rights are inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the PEN charter and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
6. The right to music education is made possible through music school laws in Denmark, Sweden and Finland from as early as the 1970s. In Denmark in the mid-1970s, a Music Act established music schools as public institutions with national, municipal and political regulation and support. In 2005 this Act was updated, and funding is now allocated to local councils to maintain 99 local music schools on a population basis throughout the country. In Switzerland, a law was passed in 2014 in favour of providing high quality music education to all children, as the result of a referendum. This right is enshrined in the Swiss Constitution Article 67a.
7. Deloughry's research sample was from the ETB music services in Ireland, and focused on the perspective of music teachers and administrators working in these services.
8. ESRI, Economic and Social Research Institute.
9. These figures are a rough calculation on Central Statistics Office population figures in Dublin City and County and Cork City and County for 2016.
10. Delivering Equality in Schools.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was supported by the Irish Research Council.

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