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# Community Music Therapy and El Sistema : Addressing the Empowerment Needs of Marginalized Individuals and Their Communities

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### **Abstract**

Music is an accessible tool for positive change within people and societies, even in places facing socioeconomic marginalization due to poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to resources. Social capital has to do with the resources and networks available within society, which may help confront issues faced by individuals and communities. Community Music Therapy (CoMT) and the music education movement known as *El Sistema* both utilize music—understood as social capital—to address social justice. The purpose of this study was to comparatively examine the ways in which CoMT and El Sistema programs may address the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization and suggest how these two approaches may be able to work synergistically to achieve their shared goals. Its findings reveal many parallels and divergencies between El Sistema and CoMT in terms of the role of the music, program structure, social justice goals, outcomes, music education practice, areas of intersection, existing scholarly research, and criticisms each has received.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Community Music Therapy and El Sistema: Addressing the Empowerment Needs of  
Marginalized Individuals and their Communities

by

Virginia Carolina Eulacio-Guevara, MT-BC

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

May 2018

School: College of the Arts

Thesis Committee:

Department: John J. Cali School of Music



Thesis Sponsor: Brian Abrams



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COMMUNITY MUSIC THERAPY AND *EL SISTEMA* PROGRAMS: ADDRESSING THE  
EMPOWERMENT NEEDS OF MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR  
COMMUNITIES

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of Master of Arts (Concentration: Music Therapy)  
May 2018

by

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Montclair State University

Montclair, NJ

2018

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I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, and started playing the violin at an early age. Even though I was never a part of *El Sistema* myself, all the teachers I had at the beginning of my musical journey had an El Sistema background. During my undergraduate studies, I began to become more familiar with and interested in the principles behind El Sistema. The fact that free music education is offered to those with fewer socioeconomic resources across many cities in Venezuela resonated with me from the time I started learning about El Sistema. I became passionate about the topic and decided to make it an important aspect of the final project for my bachelor's degree.

For this project I spent two weeks observing classes and rehearsals at the *nucleo* in Chacao, Caracas, as well as a week with the special education program in Barquisimeto, Lara, doing observation and workshops. Since then my passion for El Sistema has only increased, particularly as I have been working as a teaching artist, and now as resident music therapist and director of education, at the Union City Music Project, an El Sistema–inspired program in New Jersey, while pursuing my graduate studies in music therapy.

My goal as an undergraduate was to continue my education by pursuing a master's in music therapy. As I worked towards my degree, I realized that the social justice aspects of the El Sistema philosophy are highly emphasized, which is not often the case in music education. Thus, I began to wonder whether aspects of El Sistema and aspects of music therapy could align. Once I became a student at Montclair State, my interest in this topic continued. I began to look for connections by spending a couple of semesters learning about instructional music therapy.

Learning about instructional music therapy was a long and frustrating task, as I found that there is little to no literature on the topic and furthermore, the existing literature is not current. This led me to begin exploring Community Music Therapy (CoMT), which seems to be more

closely aligned with El Sistema principles. During my internship at Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center, I led a music therapy group called Jam Sesh, which aims to address not only the goals of the residents but also the goals of the other professionals who participate in the group, as well as the rest of the staff and the environment. Getting to observe and lead a CoMT group for the first time in my clinical training helped to strengthen the idea that its principles have the potential to align well with El Sistema philosophies.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to comparatively examine the ways in which CoMT and El Sistema programs may address the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization and suggest how these two approaches may be able to work synergistically to achieve their shared goals. This is an important topic, because a comparative analysis of CoMT and El Sistema programs has yet to be studied. In theory, both CoMT and El Sistema see participation in music-making and the arts as drivers for social justice and change. We do not yet know, however, how these two disparate models of community practice meet in addressing the empowerment needs of individuals or indeed the needs of entire communities facing socioeconomic marginalization.

This research study will seek to investigate the following questions: What are the needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization? How do CoMT programs assist in meeting those needs? How do El Sistema programs address the social needs of those they serve? In what ways are the social justice goals within these models implicit or explicit? In what ways do selected El Sistema programs and CoMT programs parallel and/or diverge from one another? In what ways can CoMT programs and El Sistema programs work synergistically, given their respective aims and missions?

## **Literature Review**

Music has the power to promote change in people's lives. The change that occurs does not only involve gaining musical knowledge or being able to play an instrument; it can also affect social, cultural, cognitive, physical, and spiritual areas as well. While this idea has been studied and discussed across a variety of fields, it acts as a significant source of guidance and inspiration for many music therapists and music educators. Despite widespread knowledge of the power of music, music therapists and music educators often encounter resistance in accomplishing their goals. As a result, there is a never-ending need to advocate so that music can become accessible to anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, geographical place of origin, socioeconomic status, and so on. While advocacy can be difficult, the independent successes achieved so far with the CoMT and El Sistema approaches demonstrate that music can indeed be made accessible to anyone.

While there are some differences in the ways CoMT and El Sistema provide access to music, there are also some ways in which they align. One of the most important points at which these two disciplines intersect is found in the fact that both offer the capacity to promote change in those directly involved, such as students and group members, as well as those involved indirectly, such as families and the larger community. The ways in which selected CoMT and El Sistema programs align when addressing the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization have not been discussed in either current music therapy or music education literature.

## **Community Music Therapy**

CoMT is considered a practice, subdiscipline, and professional specialty (Stige & Aarø, 2012). Its principles shift from those of conventional music therapy theory and practice (Aigen,

2012; Ghetti, 2016; O'GRady & McFerran, 2007; Stige & Aarø, 2012). While still fundamentally based on music therapy principles, CoMT is challenging, redefining, and expanding aspects of music therapy, such as basic principles and aims, the role of the therapist, the setting, the client, the methodology, role of the music, and the relationships among each of these (Amir, 2004; Ansdell, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Davidson, 2004; DeNora, 2005; Ghetti, 2016; Krout, 2015; Pavlicevic, 2004; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012;; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004).

One of the main ways in which CoMT is challenging and expanding on conventional music therapy is that the focus is not only on the individuals and their needs. It is also on increasing possibilities for action, in addition to the promotion of health and well-being of the clients who often face obstacles to health due to an inability to fully participate in social and cultural life (Stige & Aarø, 2012; Ghetti, 2016; Krüger & Stige, 2015). Additionally, there is an emphasis on the value of considering aspects of culture and the context in which the process takes place (Amir, 2004; Ansdell, 2004; Krout, 2015; Pavlicevic, 2004; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2004; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). The client is both the individual and the community; working in and with the community (Ansdell, 2004; Ghetti, 2016; Krout, 2004; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004).

The acronym PREPARE is used in relation to the seven “characterizing qualities” of CoMT practice: It is participatory, resource-oriented, ecological, performative, activist, reflective, and ethics-driven (Stige & Aarø, 2012). These guidelines or qualities are applied based on context and needs (Ghetti, 2016; Pavlicevic, 2004; Stige, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012). Since the work is dependent on the environment, the context or circumstances, and the setting, it cannot be standardized; it changes with time and place (Ghetti, 2016; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2004;

Stige & Aarø, 2012;). This allows CoMT to address a broad range of goals such as cultural participation, health promotion, and the social and political issues faced by individuals and their communities or societies across a variety of contexts (Amir, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Ghetti, 2016; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012).

CoMT goals are addressed by promoting social justice and welfare in and through the community by reducing barriers, empowering and giving access to participation within the life of the community, and finding the relationship between cultural values, practices, and narrative representations through music (Ghetti, 2016; Stige, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2012). In other words, addressing goals in social justice and human rights is accomplished by deconstructing historical isolation and marginalization, addressing specific social challenges, promoting safety and engagement, encouraging community integration while building and strengthening the identity and culture of the individuals and the community, and by shifting the focus into developing and implementing new social policies in which health, education, and culture come together (Amir, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Ghetti, 2016; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2012).

Working musically with groups and individuals within communal situations is a natural part of what music can offer (Ansdell, 2004; Stige, 2002; Vaillancourt, 2012). Musicking is a “communal phenomenon” that plays an integral role in allowing the work to unfold in CoMT settings (Ghetti, 2016, p. 4; Amir, 2004; Ansdell, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Krout, 2015; Pavlicevic, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2012). Musicking in the broadest meaning of the term can be seen as a representation of what the world is like, as well as a model of what the individuals and community wish it to be, which can then address different aspects of individuals’ lives (Amir, 2004; Ansdell, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Vaillancourt, 2012).

According to Stige (2002, 2004) and Stige & Aarø (2012), the traditional therapeutic triad (client, therapist, music) is expanded to include the community, the culture, the context, and other relationships. The music therapist is not considered an expert but a collaborator in the process, and the role of the therapist expands. The music therapist becomes a “musicking community worker...who promotes social welfare [by reducing barriers to participation] in and through a community” (Stige, 2004, p. 92). These therapists carefully assess and apply the health affordances of factors such as agenda, arena, agents, activities, artifacts, and ever-evolving relationships in order to evaluate the therapy process.

The expanded role of the therapist within CoMT creates tension with conventional music therapy practice and ethical guidelines (Aigen, 2012; O’Grady & McFerran, 2007). The music therapist must get immersed in the culture of the community and make an effort to constantly evolve and understand the societies in which they practice (Procter, 2004; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). Most importantly, these therapists facilitate the natural process of connecting, healing, and evolving by staying open to the various therapeutic opportunities that music offers within the various ecological layers and systems, seeing the clients as cultural and musical beings, and taking part in the music while being there psychologically and physically in order to help clients find their place within the community (Stige, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Ghetti, 2016; Bruscia, 2015; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004; Amir, 2004; Pavlicevic, 2004).

### **Goals, Aims, and Purposes**

In CoMT, aesthetic objectives are social objectives, since playing together increases the participants’ possibilities for action (DeNora, 2000; Procter, 2004). One of the main goals in CoMT is to be able to reach musical *communitas* and flow, where participants share musical companionship and a musical community: A common world, time, and space that allows for both



individuality and unity (Aigen, 2005; Ansdell, 2004; DeNora, 2000; Krout, 2015; Ruud, 1998; Turner, 1969). Participating in CoMT allows for social change (through social learning) and for building a community in which both individual and communal cultural identity development can occur (Stige, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012). Once the cultural identity of individuals and the group starts to form, participants are able to get an increased sense of belonging and participation in the community, which helps to break down barriers and give access to hopes and dreams about what the world could be like, while at the same time addressing the health and well-being of participants (Amir, 2004; Ansdell, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Stige, 2004).

### **Methodology**

CoMT methods can include all four of traditional music therapy's methods: Recreation/orchestration, songwriting, improvisation, and receptive experiences, with an emphasis on successful and meaningful participation, as well as an opportunity for fun and free play (Davidson, 2004; Krout, 2015). Interventions are carried out within hypertextuality, in which there are many different paths to follow and explore as the relationships change and evolve throughout the music therapy process (Stige, 2004). In addition, performance takes on an important role, creating opportunities for socialization and subjectivity among members and functioning as a medium of expression, empowerment, and sharing the music with others in the community (Amir, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Davidson, 2004; Ghetti, 2016; Krout, 2015; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). The music therapist also carries out assessments that take into consideration the role of health affordances, formulates goals and objectives that can be met collaboratively with the group, implements interventions, and evaluates the therapy process in a reflective manner (Krout, 2015; Stige, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012).

## Outcomes

CoMT has a wide variety of outcomes, both for individuals and for the community. Outcomes for individuals can include increased self-esteem, self-worth and communication; emotional expression and catharsis; gaining personal control; mental stimulation; relief of stress and anxiety; gaining a sense of pride and achievement; decreased isolation through finding a place in society; an increased feeling of responsibility; finding meaning, hope, and happiness in life; increased creativity; increased independence and empowerment; discovering how to connect with a healthy place within themselves; increased ability to experience trust and recognize the humanity of others through the music; and having the opportunity to be a leader and try out different social roles (Amir, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Davidson, 2004; Krout, 2015; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2015).

Outcomes for the community include gaining a sense of emotional closeness; forming relationships and increased proximity to others; feelings of acceptance and belonging; community development and integration; reducing barriers to participation within the community; learning about social organization; reflecting the community's musical culture; the reduction of stigma and opening up of integration processes; and transmitting community history and heritage while creating bridges among different cultures (Amir, 2004; Barcellos & Mendes, 2015; Davidson, 2004; Ghetti, 2016; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Procter, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Vaillancourt 2012). Last, both the individual and the community are able to develop and strengthen their cultural identities and experience increased possibilities for action (Stige, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Ghetti, 2016; Vaillancourt, 2012; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Davidson, 2004; Procter, 2004; Amir, 2004; Ruud, 1998; DeNora, 2000).

### **CoMT in the United States**

According to Ghetti (2016), the practice of CoMT is not as common or widespread in the United States as it is in Scandinavia and Latin America. The fact that this kind of practice is less common may be due to hesitation about engaging in something that is in conflict with the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) Code of Ethics, especially number 3.5, which states that the music therapist “will not enter into dual relationships with clients/students/research subjects” (Aigen, 2012; AMTA, 2015). While working to fulfill the many roles within CoMT practice, dual relationships can easily become a reality. Despite this conflict, CoMT practice is still more common in places like New York City. Current examples include work in the Thirtieth Street Men’s Shelter, Turry’s community performance practices, Jampel’s work at Baltic Street helping individuals with mental health needs integrate into the community, Ramsey’s “Happy Hour,” and Sensory Friendly Concerts (Ghetti, 2016; Silverman, 2012).

### **El Sistema**

El Sistema, also known as Fundación del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela (FESNOJIV) or Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar (FMSB), is a music education program that started in Venezuela in February 12, 1975 (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). This program provides access to various aspects of music education to children and young adults who primarily come from a low socioeconomic status (Arvelo, 2006; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Borzacchini, 2005; Osborne, McPherson, Faulkner, Davidson & Barrett, 2015; Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016). When the program started, participants in the existing Venezuelan professional orchestras were all European immigrants, even though there were many talented Venezuelan musicians that could play at a high level (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). In other words, music was only available for the elite. Jose Antonio Abreu saw that there

was a need for orchestras in which everyone could participate and decided to take action (Baker, 2014; Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012).

According to Borzacchini (2005), Tunstall (2012), and Arvelo (2006), it all started in a parking garage where eleven musicians got together for a rehearsal. After that first rehearsal, the word spread, and the number of musicians increased at every new meeting. Some traveled from outside the city without having a place to stay or an instrument to play. Even though there were no clear immediate goals about what direction this orchestra was going to take, people knew that they wanted to participate and did whatever was needed in order to do so.

Abreu's vision was to expand as much as possible, so the orchestra rehearsed during the week, and then on weekends the musicians would travel, spread the word, and teach others what they were doing in Caracas (Tunstall, 2012). Even though Abreu's vision seemed impossible—maybe even crazy—everyone trusted him and did as asked (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). The way that El Sistema started is important because it set the stage for the immense expansion that occurred in the years that followed. There are now many educational centers around Venezuela reaching almost half a million children and young adults, and its success has inspired programs in many countries around the world, including the United States.

### **Philosophy and Principles**

El Sistema's motto is *Tocar, Cantar y Luchar*—“to play, to sing and to fight” (Arvelo, 2006; Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). While artistic excellence is one of its goals, El Sistema's focus is on music for social change, social and emotional development, and the formation of empathic human communities (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012). El Sistema is about giving access to music to all children, especially those who may not be able to have contact with music otherwise, by providing music instruction at no cost

(Borzacchini, 2005; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012). But it is more than that; it is about accomplishing “democratic ideals, justice and social inclusion, rescuing children and young people through art, increasing people’s sensitivity, [and] work and education as a road to collective and self-fulfillment” (Borzacchini, 2005, p. 25).

El Sistema is an artistic and humanitarian revolution where access to music has been democratized to anyone, regardless of socioeconomic status (Borzacchini, 2005; Osborne et al., 2015). It is a mission to create better human beings, or citizens of the world (Tunstall, 2012). This is true not only for the children who participate but also for their families and the community that surrounds them (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016). It is a fight against conventional standards that say that intellect is more important than feelings and emotions, and that the arts are only for the few (Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012). Abreu did not accept those standards as a reality and was often quoted saying that “culture for the poor must never be poor culture” (Tunstall, 2012, p. 173). In other words, a person’s socioeconomic status should not dictate the level of culture that he or she is able to experience and participate in. Once people are able to create and express beauty by playing a musical instrument, they are able to understand the essence of humanity (Arvelo, 2006).

### **Practice**

The orchestra (or choir or band) is the main driver of change in El Sistema (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012). El Sistema teaches that the orchestra is an interdependent community that fundamentally agrees and has a common goal, one in which members are responsible for each other (Arvelo, 2006). It is a place where there are no class distinctions and where social roles are equalized, yet it has its own identity and fingerprint—a sort of *communitas* (Arvelo, 2006; DeNora, 2000). The orchestra has the ability portray

representations and symbols of harmony, order, the aesthetic and the beautiful, the universal, and the language of the invisible; it represents the essence of its members (Arvelo, 2006). This is something that can be seen and is almost palpable in live performances by El Sistema's children's and youth orchestras, bands, and choirs. It has been a source of criticism about El Sistema, however, as orchestras are inherently hierarchical, competitive, and respond to the will, wishes, and rule of a single ruler, the conductor (Baker, 2014, 2016).

In Venezuela, El Sistema is mainly set up through educational centers, called *nucleos* (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). Each *nucleo* has three or four orchestras that go from the youngest to the oldest members, with some of the youth orchestras playing at a professional or semiprofessional level (Arvelo, 2006; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Tunstall, 2012). While there is a set curriculum for all of El Sistema, so children can continue to play if they move, each *nucleo* has its own personality and way of working (Tunstall, 2012). This curriculum is sometimes seen as lacking in flexibility (Baker, 2014, 2016).

Abreu insisted that it is ironic that it is called a system, because everything is carried out in a very unsystematic way (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Tunstall, 2012). In fact, he claimed that El Sistema is in a permanent state of "being and not yet being" (Tunstall, 2012, p. 173). This means that the way in which El Sistema works is constantly evolving and has the flexibility to be molded according to the specific needs that arise (Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016). This is reflected in El Sistema-inspired programs around the world, as each program follows the El Sistema guiding principles but creates its own set of missions and goals, based on the needs and culture of the community being served (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

Examples of molding that has occurred based on the needs of the community include the "paper orchestra" and the special education program. The paper orchestra, a group in which

young children “play” with paper-mache instruments, came into being both because at the time there weren’t enough instruments for all the children and also as a way of introducing the youngest children to orchestral playing (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). Additionally, there was no access to music for children with special needs in Venezuela, a *nucleo* in Lara, became the pioneer in inclusive groups and instruction (Tunstall, 2012).

The guiding principles that hold El Sistema teaching together are social and emotional development, ensemble-based instruction and learning, high musical aspiration, artistic excellence, radical inclusion, peer learning, music as passion and expressivity, intensity of instruction and music making, family and community involvement, and most importantly, providing musical access as a way for children to break down barriers, with an emphasis on passion and fun (Arvelo, 2006; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Borzacchini, 2005; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

### **Outcomes**

El Sistema has given birth to many great musicians, but not all participants pursue professional careers in music (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). While there are programs that place great emphasis on artistic excellence and high musical quality, there are El Sistema *nucleos* that give more weight to the social and emotional development and well-being of their participants (Borzacchini, 2005; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012). Nonetheless, Venezuela’s El Sistema has a number of professional orchestras and choirs that often tour around the world (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012).

El Sistema’s individual and communal outcomes include participation in culture and society, access to expression through music, transformation of adversity into hope, transformation of challenge into action, and turning dreams into reality (Baker, 2014;

Borzacchini, 2005; Osborne et al., 2015). El Sistema involves social learning about discipline, responsibility, team practice and the experience of being in agreement (Arvelo, 2006; Tunstall, 2012). It provides access to all classes, equalizes by taking away class distinctions, and has the ability to unite entire communities, thus creating a sense of belonging (Arvelo, 2006; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012). It allows for socialization and transmits values such as solidarity; the sense of harmony and order; compassion; and the expression of sublime feelings within the realms of the aesthetic, the beautiful, and the universal (Arvelo, 2006; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015).

### **El Sistema in the United States**

The El Sistema movement in the United States is strong. The number of El Sistema–inspired programs is rapidly growing across the entire country. As of 2017, there are 161 programs across the country, each serving an average of 191 students students (Schmid, 2018, January 20). There are also two organizations, El Sistema USA and Take A Stand, as well as a master’s program (through Bard College and the Longy School of Music), dedicated to the training and support of professional El Sistema teaching artists and administrators, with the aim of advancing the El Sistema presence in the United States. The configuration of programs in the United States reflects El Sistema practice around the world, as each program varies widely, even among programs that are in the same state or that are run by the same organization (Schmid, 2018, January 20).

### **Socioeconomic Marginalization**

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a term that is difficult to define, as there are many different factors that go into determining an individual’s social class. SES is commonly determined by income and education alone. It is, however, a “multidimensional concept



operating at various levels” (Fitzpatrick, Rosella, Calzavara, Petch, Pinto, Manson, Goel & Wodchis, 2015, p.163; Slinger, 2008). Factors that go into determining an individual’s SES can be economic, social, demographic, enabling, and racial (Alexander, 2012; Fitzpatrick et al., 2015).

The economic factors that determine an individual’s SES include income (personal and family), economic opportunity, unemployment rates, occupation, food security, and income segregation (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Slinger, 2008; Venkataramani, Chatterjee, Ichiro & Tsai, 2016). The social factors include level of education, housing (home ownership and residential mobility), and ethnicity (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Venkataramani et al., 2016). The demographic factors include “age, sex, and marital status” (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015, p. 162). And finally, enabling factors include community characteristics, family characteristics, access to health care, health risk factors and behaviors (smoking, obesity, hypertension, and diabetes), violent crime rates, neighborhood location (urban/rural), and racial segregation (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Slinger, 2008; Venkataraman et al., 2016).

The factors that play a role in shaping a person’s SES are deeply related to inequality and marginalization. Marginalization, separation from society, social exclusion, and detachment from social relationships are often related to stigmatization (negative labels), repression and discrimination, material disadvantage (poverty), lack of access to health care and other resources, injustice, and structural issues such as “unemployment, lack of political power, and lack of influence on processes of decision (i.e., voting)” (Stige & Aarø, 2012, p. 108; Alexander, 2012; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Woodward & Pestano, 2013). These issues in turn lead to social stress, aggression, lack of cooperation, increased risk-taking behaviors, decreased health, and a general

sense of injustice (Stige & Aarø, 2012). Individuals may also be marginalized due to race and ethnicity, age, gender, origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or mental health status.

Alexander (2012) makes a poignant case about the role of race and racial discrimination in people's inability to thrive in society. She argues that the New Jim Crow, or the rise in mass incarceration that came as a result of the War on Drugs, has created a new caste system in the United States. This new caste system leads people of color to be legally segregated and marginalized. Once someone enters the criminal justice system, which is likely for people of color, they are unable to fully reintegrate into society. The reason they are not able to reintegrate has to do with legal discrimination. This includes denial of employment (many disciplines bar people with a record from practicing), of adequate housing, of proper education, and of public benefits (welfare): A lifetime of closed doors, discrimination, and exclusion. Discrimination leads to a "closed circuit of perpetual [subordinate] marginality" (p.186). Since all communities are affected by it directly or indirectly, this becomes an issue that is passed from generation to generation (Stige & Aarø, 2012).

Socioeconomic marginalization, inequality, and exclusion can have an impact on a person's quality of life, as economic opportunity and health behaviors are related to mortality and increased likelihood of stress and of becoming a high-cost user of health care in the future (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Venkataramani et al., 2016; Woodward & Pestano, 2013). Economic opportunity, occupational success, social participation, and collaboration between sectors can however positively affect public health in communities and individuals, which can give people hope about future socioeconomic success (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Slinger, 2008; Venkataramani et al., 2016). Therefore, programs that address social and cultural

participation within a community, such as CoMT and El Sistema, can contribute to the empowerment of individuals and communities experiencing socioeconomic marginalization.

### **Social Justice**

Social justice is a complex concept, as its main linguistic elements, *social* and *justice*, have no universal definition or meaning (Silverman, 2012). It manifests differently depending on context and requires the consideration of many different aspects of humanity (Silverman, 2012). Regardless of what social justice looks like at any given place or to any given person or community, it is fair to say that social justice is absent when individuals and communities face socioeconomic marginalization (Silverman, 2012; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Woodward & Pestano, 2013). There are a variety of factors that underlie social justice work with this population.

Advancing social justice signifies working for the good of all in order to reach socioeconomic equality and democracy (Green, 1998). In other words, working for social justice means promoting and securing basic human rights (Krüger & Stige, 2015). The task is accomplished when everyone has equal access to goods, resources, opportunities, and welfare, promoting a more equal society (Green, 1998; Silverman, 2012; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2012). Social justice can be advanced by focusing on social inclusion, health and well-being, people's right to exist, and engendering a sense of belonging to groups and/or society (Vaillancourt, 2012). Social welfare is deeply connected to social justice, as welfare and equality are the antithesis of poverty, inequality, and discrimination (Stige & Aarø, 2012).

### **Social Welfare**

According to the World Health Organization (1986), prerequisites for health include peace, shelter, education, food, income, stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity. Social welfare pertains to the overall well-being, prosperity, and health of both the

community and the individuals that live within it (Stige, 2004). Due to lack of access, marginalized individuals often face obstacles that prevent them from reaching an optimal state of health and well-being (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Slinger, 2008; Venkataramani et al., 2016).

The welfare state is a concept that is applied by government and social agencies in order to attempt to guarantee social stability and justice by putting in place minimum public safety nets for the community and its individuals (Stige, 2004). Such public safety nets usually include programs that aim to improve health and provide access to services to people in the community (Stige, 2004). Even though traditional health programs are necessary in order to maintain the health of individuals in a community, there are different ways in which health issues can be addressed. In fact, at times these programs can address the health of the community as a whole and as a result can also affect the health of individuals within that community.

Welfare programs can motivate individuals to improve on their health behaviors and thus improve their quality of life (Jones & Langston, 2012; Ruud, 1998). When implemented across a group within the community, these health behaviors can be manifested as mutual care in which people's biological, psychological, social, and cultural well-being is being addressed (Stige, 2004). In other words, health can come to be represented by the quality of interactions and activities that the community and its individuals engage in (Stige, 2004). By taking into account the quality of the interactions, health becomes a part of the relational and communal aspects of a person's life (Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2004). As a result, health is no longer only about the individual but also actively seeks to address human coexistence (Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2004). Social justice and social welfare can therefore be advanced with resources that exist within individuals and society, such as social capital.

## **Social Capital**

Social capital plays a role in the health of both individuals and society as a whole. Social capital can be a positive resource that consists of social networks, connections among people, relationships (friends, family, groups), norms and values, the sense of reciprocity and social obligations, trust, and individuals' overall feelings of group membership and belonging (Bourdieu, 1986; Jones & Langston, 2012; Putnam, 2007). Social capital is the basis for a civil society, as it is the “glue that holds communities together” and helps generate cooperation and trust in a mutually beneficial manner (Jones & Langston, 2012, p. 122).

According to Putnam (2007), there are three basic forms of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding involves the strong ties between homogenous group members, such as family or community; it is considered to be the superglue. Bridging involves opportunities for interaction between individuals in a group or between groups; it is considered the lubricant. Lastly, linking involves the relationships between groups from different diverse social strata or power levels, or resources outside of the immediate social network. Each of these basic forms come together and contribute to or inform any given person's or group's resources in society.

There are several indicators of social capital. These include active group participation, community and civic involvement, the presence of social networks or connections (at any level), trust, the formation of norms and values, empowerment, reciprocity, and formal or informal learning (Jones & Langston, 2012). It is essential that participation be active, as it strengthens social capital development by becoming a basis for inclusion, praxis for social goods, a source of information flow, and the using and sharing of resources among people (Jones & Langston, 2012; Silverman, 2012). Since social capital has to do with resources, one of the ways in which

welfare state programs can address the health of communities and individuals is by providing them with opportunities for and access to social capital.

It has been argued that the arts and cultural activities in which the community participates can be promoted as a means of increasing social capital (Jones & Langston, 2012; Procter, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012). In other words, social capital can be an important by-product of cultural activities, such as music, that require active participation and have an artistic purpose (Jones & Langston, 2012; Putnam, 2007). Music can be a resource for the development of social capital and community building, as it strengthens individuals and communities by encouraging people to engage positively in the world and society (Jones & Langston, 2012). Social capital can therefore be expanded through musical participation within a community by decreasing barriers and increasing the possibilities for action (Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2002; Procter, 2004).

### **Music as Social Capital**

Humans are social and cultural beings (Amir, 2004). Being involved with social and cultural activities is an important part of human development. A person's culture is formed through interactions with a variety of frames such as history, environment, ethnicity, language, beliefs and values (including religion), knowledge, the arts, morals, law, customs, habits acquired by participating in society, and the always evolving frames that are developed through human interactions (Stige, 2002). Interacting and participating in musical activities can have a significant impact on individuals and their communities. Music offers a variety of affordances, and its effects are related to the way in which participants appropriate it (Ansdell, 2004; DeNora, 2000).

Music can influence an individual's overall quality of life (Amir, 2004; DeNora, 2000; Ruud, 1998). It can influence an individual's health and mode of being and play a role in the

process of forming and strengthening an individual's social and cultural identity (Amir, 2004; DeNora, 2000; Ruud, 1998). It provides resources for increasing feelings of vitality; increasing emotional awareness; constructing an environment conducive to feelings of belonging, integration, and community; planting a sense of agency; instilling hope and security; and providing a sense of meaning and coherence in life (Amir, 2004; DeNora, 2000; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Ruud, 1998, Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). Participating in music-making activities can increase an individual's social competency and communications skills and provide sense of trust, while increasing the ability to see other people's humanity (Krüger & Stige, 2015; Ruud, 1998; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004).

Music-making is a communal form of expression that occurs in an aesthetic environment (DeNora, 2000; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). It is a semiotic activity that can act as symbolic capital, enabling people to feel at home in the surrounding culture and environment (DeNora, 2000; Ruud, 1998;). In addition, music-making activities can be a representation of human interaction and can lead to cultural innovations within noncultural realms (Davidson, 2004; DeNora, 2000).

In working with musical capital, aesthetic objectives are social objectives (Procter, 2004). Musical capital can therefore act as a template for nonaesthetic matters, making musical capital a cultural and political enterprise (DeNora, 2000; Procter, 2004). Musical capital can be a source of world building, which includes social formation, social ordering, and social enrichment, and a vehicle for cultural development (DeNora, 2000). Musical capital represents the performance of relationships and roles in communal practices through musicking and musicing, and the formation of musical *communitas*, which allows for building bridges and utopian imaginations (Aigen, 2005; Ansdell, 2004; DeNora, 2000; Stige, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Veblen, 2013;

Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). One example of programs that have addressed social capital through music throughout history can be found in the practices of community music around the world (Veblen, 2013).

### **Musicking and Musicing**

Musicking is “moment-to-moment expression, communication, and experience” in performance (Stige, 2002, p. 107). It is not an object but an activity that people participate in within any capacity, whether by performing, listening, rehearsing, composing, or dancing (Small, 1998). Musicking is a communal phenomenon through which participants are able to access different layers of the musical community (Ansdell, 2002). This musicianship in action is comprised of a variety of factors, including an individual’s personal history, social and cultural context, and cultural history (Stige, 2002). This process is made possible by the appropriation of music as culture and as a cultural system, in which new meanings are created when new interactions between people and artifacts, such as art and music, occur (Stige, 2002).

Musicking is about the “creation and performance of relationships” (Ansdell, 2004, p.71). The participants do not become the music but instead come to represent the music as it is filtered through them, through both their individual and communal experiences (DeNora, 2000). Participants play a number of social roles, articulate and represent ideas through the music, work both inside and outside the musical narrative, and slowly form and represent a collaborative sense of self for the group (Davidson, 2004).

Musicing, on the other hand, encompasses any type of music-making, such as performance, improvisation, composition, arranging, conducting, recording, dancing, and so on, within the context of any social or cultural situation (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). It includes all of the dimensions of musical engagement, including listening, which is a part of all music-making



activities (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). It is related to the environment where the action of the music, production or perception, takes place (DeNora, 2005). In addition, it is utilized as a medium for social relationships (DeNora, 2005). Musicing brings the individual and the community together within a flow experience, or *communitas* (Aigen, 2005; DeNora, 2005).

### ***Communitas***

*Communitas* is a phenomenon that occurs when two or more individuals experience cosubjectivity, or “[exhibiting] similar modes of feeling and acting, constituted in relation to extra-personal parameters,” such as music (DeNora, 2000, p. 149). It occurs in the process of musicking/musicing within a specific context (Aigen, 2005; Ansdell, 2004; Ghetti, 2016). It happens in the here and now, existing within a specific time and space (Ruud, 1998; DeNora, 2000; Turner, 1969). It is a common and collaborative musical experience, a form of musical companionship, where a spontaneous and immediate community is formed with others as distinctions are blurred, helping everyone become equal (DeNora, 2000, 2005; Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2002; Turner, 1969).

*Communitas* allows for a simultaneous process in which the culture and identity of the group or community and the identity of individual participants within that context are being formed (Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2002; Turner, 1969). Music becomes a resource by means of which the community can perform their identities (Ruud, 1998). The experience becomes a transcendental and liminal space, a transformed social space, where social roles are leveled out, thus allowing individuals to feel security, closeness, and mutuality among each other (DeNora, 2000; Ruud, 1998; Turino, 2016; Turner, 1969). As a result, the music-making activity becomes an ecology, an environment conducive to musical experiences, and a means of accessing religious and spiritual experiences, where the different components of society and community, as

well as of the individuals within it, are sustained (Aigen, 2008; Ansdell, 2004; Bruscia, 2015; Stige, 2002;). Musical *communitas* can lead to mutual connectedness, healing, and evolving (DeNora, 2005; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004).

### **Community Music**

Community music practices have and continue to address issues of social justice and social change by utilizing musical capital through a wide variety of representations around the world (Veblen, 2013). Community music resists categorization, as there is no national or global consensus about what it entails (Silverman, 2012; Veblen, 2013). In its most basic form, community music involves teaching, experiencing, and performing music (Veblen, 2013). Community music programs do not have a global definition, but they do adhere to a few principles.

The basic principles of community music include active participation, mixed age and ability, group communication, skills sharing, and inclusion of diverse groups and people (Woodward & Pestano, 2013). Each program develops its own interpretation of these basic principles as it adapts depending on variables such as the people involved; the communities or institutions involved; its aims, purposes and needs; the amount of financial support it receives (or doesn't); and the relationship between the program and the geographic, social, economic, religious, cultural, and historical circumstances that surround it (Elliott, Higgins & Veblen, 2008, p. 3–4). Community music practice is responsive to local needs and values (Silverman, 2012). Different interpretations of the basic principles and the imperative to respond to local needs and values call for different kinds of structures.

Community music can have a wide variety of structures. Such structures can be planned or unplanned, formal or informal, institutional or noninstitutional, and amateur or professional

(Veblen, 2013). They usually emphasize lifelong learning and access for all, however, whether the projects are occasional, one-time, or ongoing (Veblen, 2013). In aiming to offer equal access to all, community music can serve a restorative social justice role, where the focus is on supporting a more equitable social order and building or restoring the community served by increasing its social capital (Jones & Langston, 2012; Silverman, 2012; Veblen, 2013). Some initiatives may focus on music aesthetics; others may focus on personal and social well-being; and still others may focus on both (O'Grady & McFerran, 2007; Veblen, 2013). The flexibility and adaptability of community music lets it address a variety of goals and outcomes.

Community music programs utilize music as a way to meet the social, cultural, emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual needs of individuals and their communities (Woodward & Pestano, 2013). Community music has a positive impact on individuals, families, schools, and community relationships (Woodward & Pestano, 2013). Active participation in community music not only results in acquiring musical skills but also in emotional growth, increased confidence, increased self-worth and agency, a sense of mastery, a sense of fulfillment, and empowerment (Woodward & Pestano, 2013). Furthermore, community music can increase social capital by emphasizing shared experiences, participation and engagement, sense of belonging, mutual respect, trust and reciprocity, collaboration, the development of social networks and resources, shared norms and values, and fellowship (Jones & Langston, 2012; Woodward & Pestano, 2013).

Due to the great variety of structures, goals, and purposes of community music programs, practitioners find themselves needing to perform a number of different roles. These include musician, teacher, researcher, and activist; the role taken is determined in response to the particular situation (Veblen, 2013). The community music practitioner's skills are important, but

knowledge and understanding of the community being served is essential, as that plays a part in determining a program's ability to successfully address its goals (Woodward & Pestano, 2013). Ethics should also be at the forefront of the community music practitioner's skill set (Silverman, 2012). Since there is no governing body that community practitioners respond to, their standards of practice and ethics are determined by each practitioner's own set of morals and values (O'Grady & McFerran, 2007; Silverman, 2012).

### **Finding Connections**

Community music practices have deep similarities with both CoMT and El Sistema. Given community music's aims and purposes, its focus on equity and access, and the ways in which community music practices are structured according to the needs of the community served, it can be said that El Sistema programs are a community music practice. The same can be said about CoMT. An important difference, however, is that El Sistema focuses on children, while community music works with people across the life span. In this sense, community music practices are more like CoMT.

According to O'Grady & McFerran (2007), health should be considered as a nonlinear continuum in which people move back and forth throughout their lives. This health care continuum involves four stages: acute illness/crisis, rehabilitation, community, and well-being. The authors go on to state that community music practices work with people in the community and well-being stages while CoMT practices work with people throughout the entire health care continuum (Ansdell, 2002). When taking this into consideration, the notion that El Sistema can be considered a community music practice is strengthened, as El Sistema programs are most likely to serve people in the community and well-being stages of health. Regardless of the health stages that are addressed through El Sistema and CoMT programs, aspects of their essence and

practice have the potential to aid, inform, and be mutually beneficial in achieving their shared goals.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Musical capital can be a powerful source of change and health in communities and individuals, a fact demonstrated by the values, principles, and outcomes of CoMT and El Sistema. CoMT focuses on the health and welfare of society and its individuals, while El Sistema focuses on artistic excellence, social and emotional change, and well-being through music. While the focus of these programs lies in different aspects of the health care continuum, both CoMT and El Sistema rely on the fundamental positive outcomes that can be obtained when communities and individuals have access to and are able to participate in music-making and culture. There is no literature that comparatively examines the ways in which CoMT and El Sistema programs may address the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization and suggests how they may work synergistically to achieve their shared goals. This study was undertaken to begin to answer such questions and provide a basis for further research.

## **Method**

### **Design**

The study utilized a multiple case study design. This allowed the researcher to learn about CoMT and El Sistema programs from experts with a variety of perspectives. The multiple-case design was comparative and explanatory, as the researcher was seeking to find parallels and divergencies in the ways CoMT and El Sistema programs address the needs of individuals and communities (Silverman, 2014). All the cases were studied simultaneously.

The researcher conducted qualitative interviews, using a constructionist approach, with participants in CoMT and El Sistema or El Sistema–inspired programs. Interviews were the sources that made up the data corpus, as they provided the information necessary to learn about the essence of what each program offers from experts in the field. This type of qualitative research was chosen because it allows for enough flexibility to be able to fully explore all aspects of the programs (Silverman, 2014).

The information obtained from the interviews was coded and categorized into emerging themes and subthemes. The themes and subthemes were utilized to see if there are areas in which CoMT and El Sistema programs show parallels and divergencies in addressing the needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization. The theoretical sensitivity of the design was evaluated by triangulating with existing peer-reviewed literature, relating to the researcher’s personal and professional experience, and by member-checking, i.e., obtaining feedback from participants by sharing the study results after the initial analysis.

### **Participants and Setting**

Due to the amount of information obtained from each interview and the amount of time needed for a thorough analysis, only four participants were recruited for the study. They included professionals who provide CoMT and professionals who work in El Sistema programs around the world. Expert input from all interviewees was essential in understanding the picture from different angles and thus continuing to reach an understanding about the ways in which these programs intersect or depart from each other, as well as their potential for working synergistically toward their shared goals.

**Recruitment.** Two of the participants recruited were professional music therapists who provide CoMT services. The other two participants were music educators and researchers who

work in El Sistema or El Sistema–inspired programs. The sampling method used for recruitment was both purposive and convenience-based; based on prominence in the literature as well as suggestions and referrals from thesis committee members. The participants had to be at least 18 years old to participate. The recruitment process involved an e-mail (see Appendix A).

Interviews were conducted in person or via Skype.

**Consent process.** All participants were asked to sign the informed consent form (see Appendix B) prior to beginning the interview process. All participants were informed about the study, including its aims and purposes, as well as their role in choosing to participate.

Participants were offered the option to receive the results at the end of the study.

### **Instruments and Equipment**

A set of basic questions (see Appendix C) drawn from both CoMT and El Sistema served as the point of departure for the interviews. All interviews were conducted in person or via Skype. All interviews were recorded with a Zoom H2n audio recorder, as well as with an iPhone 6s Voice Memo for backup.

### **Procedure**

The set of basic questions in Appendix C served only as a guide for the interviews. Interviews were allowed to evolve per participant responses. The researcher asked participants to expand, dig deeper, and continue exploring important concepts that came up and to recount anecdotes or describe cases that related to the topic at hand. In other words, the interviews were semistructured yet open-ended. The participants could decide to move on to a different question at any time.

**Data collection.** As mentioned above, data was collected in the form of participant interviews. The raw data was transcribed rigorously and culled prior to data analysis. Data

transcriptions were checked against the original recordings to ensure accuracy and to ensure they captured the original nature of the participants' responses. The researcher compiled a written case summary record for each interview as well as a master inventory of the data corpus for the study (see Appendix D, Table 1). Data analysis alternated with data collection. Member-checking was performed after initial data analysis.

**Data analysis.** The researcher conducted a thematic analysis of the data. The data was approached through an inductive perspective, where the data drove the analysis. Due to the nature and goals of these programs, the researcher focused on a constructionist approach, in which meaning and experiences are socially produced. The researcher inspected the themes and subthemes at the latent level, in order to identify and explore the ideas that lie underneath the mere semantic content of participant responses.

As per thematic analysis procedures set forth by Braun and Clarke (2006), there were six steps to data analysis; these were not carried out sequentially but in a recursive manner. The first step to data analysis was becoming familiar with the data. This process involved an immersion in the data through reading and rereading the entire data corpus, as enhanced during transcription of the raw interview data. The second step in data analysis was separating the interview data into meaning units for the entire data set. Meaning units were the most basic segments and elements of the data, which aided in organizing the data into meaningful groups (Appendix D). Each meaning unit was assigned a unique code. Data extracts were copied from individual transcripts, making sure each code was inclusively collated.

The third step in data analysis was searching for themes. This involved sorting the different meaning units into as many themes or categories as they fit into. The data was first analyzed against the same topic (A vs. B, C vs. D), and then against the other topic (A and B vs.



C and D). The researcher began thinking about the relationships among meaning units, themes, and subthemes (if any). No themes, patterns, or meaning units were abandoned at this stage. The fourth step in data analysis was reviewing the themes for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. The researcher made sure that the data in the themes and subthemes cohered meaningfully by reviewing the individual meaning units and by determining the validity of each theme across the entire data set. Recoding of the data occurred throughout this process, as expected, but the coding process ended once refinement of meaning units, themes, and subthemes ceased to add anything meaningful to the analysis.

The fifth step in data analysis was defining and naming each theme and analyzing the data within the themes. This meant determining what each theme is about and what it captures about the data while also determining what it is not. The researcher refined each theme and subtheme until it was possible to describe the content of each theme in a couple of sentences and develop a concise name for each of them. A visual representation of the themes and subthemes together was developed (Fig. 1), as well as individual diagrams for each theme, subtheme, and their codes (Figs. 2–26).

The last step in data analysis was writing the report. The researcher wrote about what story the data is telling in a way that is convincing and that points to the merit and validity of the analysis. Internal validity was assured by triangulation with existing literature, member-checking, and making the researcher's bias explicit. External validity was assured by providing a rich description of the data collected and by means of expert review from thesis committee members. The last step of data analysis involved providing sufficient data for each theme and subtheme, providing vivid examples, and producing an analytic narrative that makes a specific argument about the themes and subthemes in relation to the research questions and the literature.

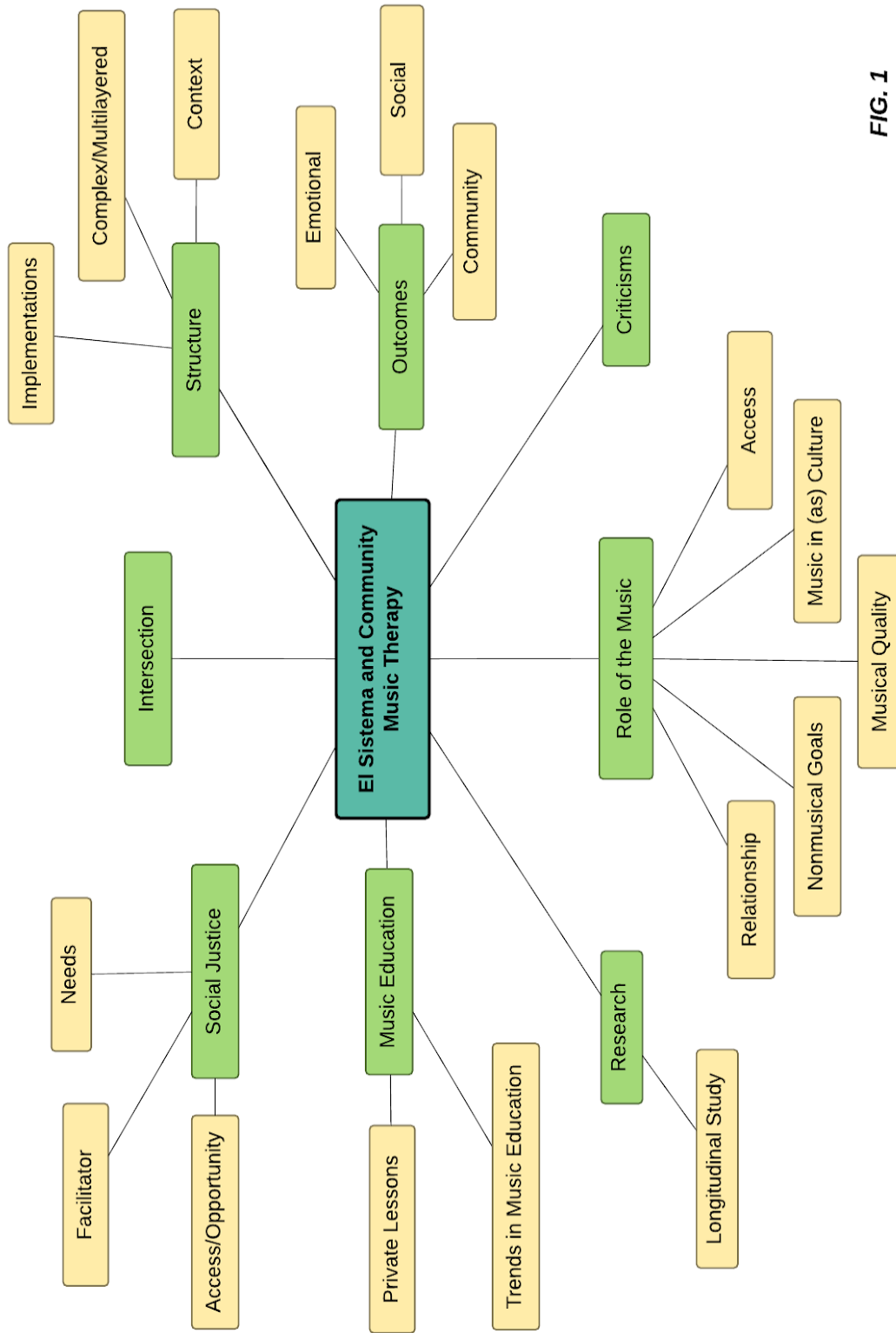
## **Ethical Considerations and Precautions**

The study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Montclair State University for approval prior to beginning the recruitment process. Participation in the study was completely voluntary. Participants could choose to stop at any time. Interviews were transcribed and coded so that there was no identifying information from the participants. All material from interviews was kept confidential. Identifying information from participants was not shared with anyone not directly involved in the research study. The identity of individuals mentioned within interview narratives was disguised. In order to ensure and maintain privacy, security, and confidentiality during and after the completion of this project, the researcher maintained all digital files and media in a password-protected personal computer.

## **Data Results**

Eight themes and seventeen subthemes were generated from the meaning units from all the interviews (Fig. 1). The following themes were found: *role of the music*, *music education*, *outcomes*, *structure*, *social justice*, *intersection*, *criticisms*, and *research*. The subthemes for role of the music were *relationship*, *nonmusical goals*, *musical quality*, *music in (as) culture*, and *access*. The subthemes for music education were *trends in music education* and *private lessons*. The subthemes for outcomes were *social*, *emotional*, and *community*. The subthemes for structure were *applications*, *complex/multilayered*, and *context*. The subthemes for social justice were *facilitator*, *needs*, and *access/opportunity*. Lastly, the subtheme for research was *longitudinal study*. There were no subthemes identified for the themes of intersection and criticisms. A complete list of the themes and subthemes with the meaning units found within them can be found in Table 1.

**THEMES AND SUB-THEMES**



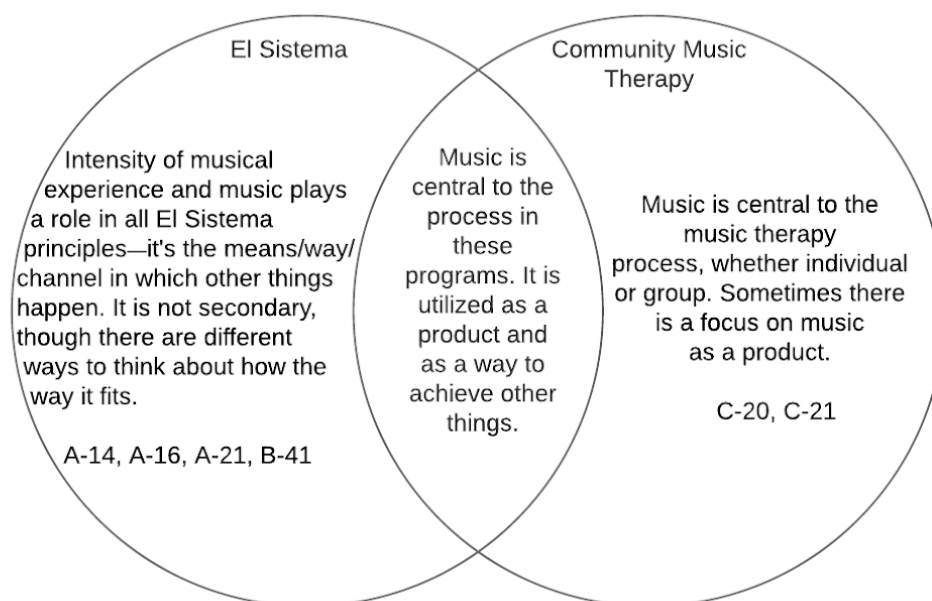
**FIG. 1**

## Role of the Music

This theme is about music as a fundamental aspect of El Sistema and CoMT; neither of these programs could exist without music. The fundamental role of the music within these two programs was evident in the data (Fig. 2). Data on El Sistema shows that music has a role in all of the basic tenets of El Sistema as it is “the way, it’s like the means through which all these other things happen” (Interview A). El Sistema programs also focus on intensity of musical and social experience. While the focus appears to be in a spectrum between social and musical aims, where some programs focus on one more than the other, the music is not secondary to El Sistema process and practice. Data on CoMT shows that “music is often central to the therapeutic processes” and it belongs to the whole group (Interview C). At times, music as a product in the form of performance and skill acquisition is a focus within CoMT practice. The data reveals that El Sistema and CoMT align in considering music as central to the process and as something that can be utilized, whether as a product or not, to achieve other things (goals).

### ROLE OF THE MUSIC

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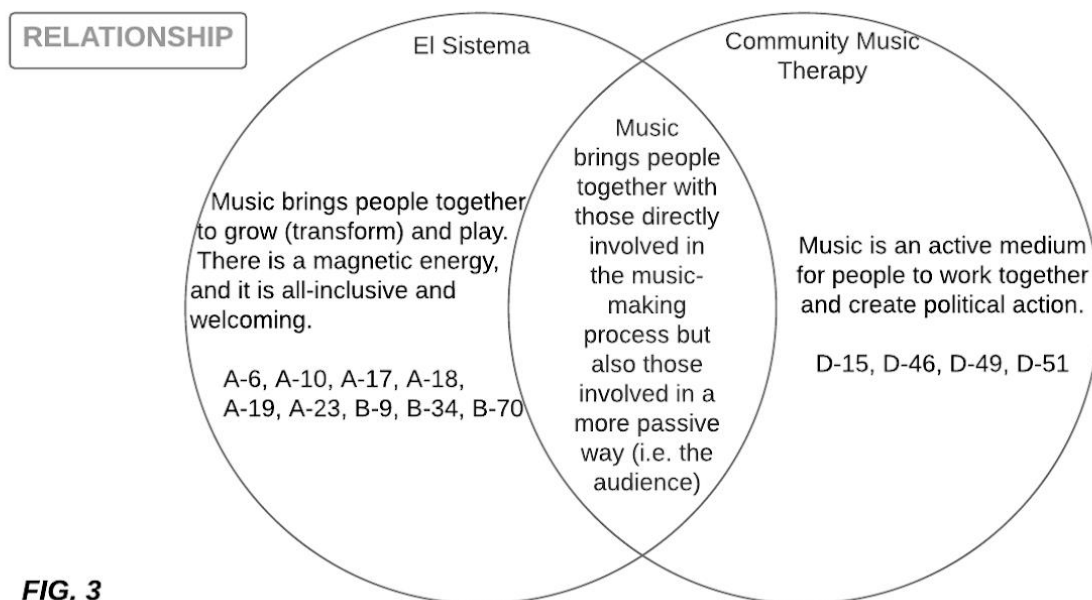


**FIG. 2**

**Relationship.** This subtheme concerns the role of music as a source of people coming and working together (Fig. 3). The data pertaining to the role of music in relationships reveals that several aspects of El Sistema practice deal with relationships. These include ensemble learning and playing experiences (making music together), radical inclusion, peer learning, family and community involvement, engagement, and bringing people together as a whole. “[It’s about] developing relationship, it’s about understanding that music is about relationships. In my view, the relationships are so important to build because otherwise it becomes these two parts that are coming together, but not” (Interview B).

The role of music in relationships also emerges in the CoMT data. Music is an active medium for people to become equal, work together, and create political action. It “is an active medium that you work through, with people in action” (Interview D). It can act as a vehicle of communication between groups. The role of the music in relationships is emphasized in the data

## ROLE OF THE MUSIC

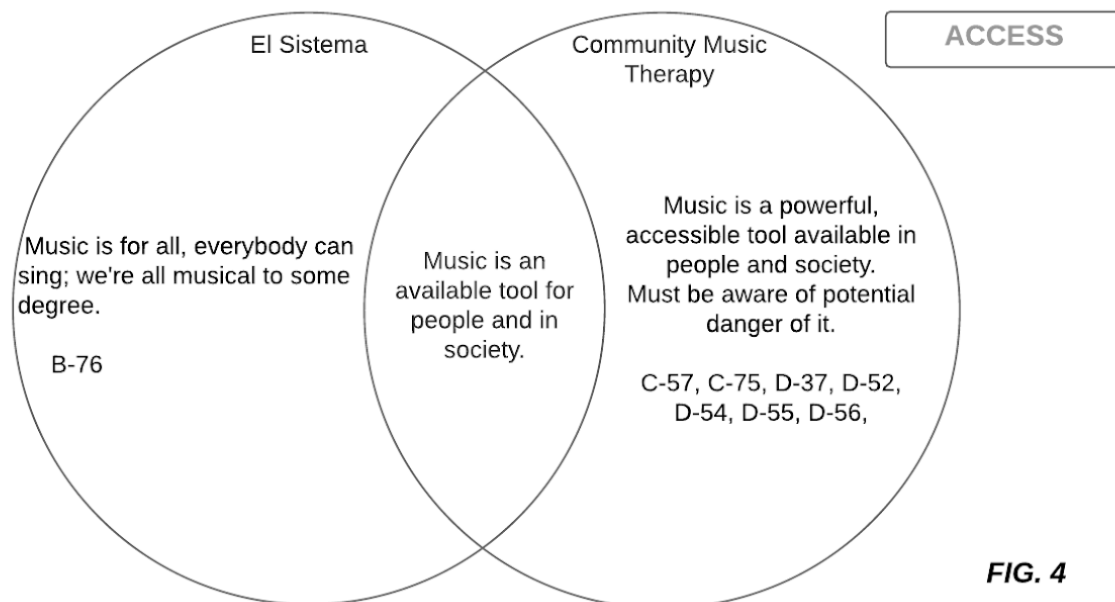


**FIG. 3**

for both CoMT and El Sistema, as it brings people together both directly in the music-making process and indirectly for those involved in a more passive way (i.e., families, the community, audiences).

**Access.** This subtheme has to do with the role of the music and access (Fig. 4). The data gathered about El Sistema regarding the role of the music and access characterizes music as being for all. It is accessible because “everybody can sing...we’re all musical to some degree” (Interview B). On the other hand, the data gathered on CoMT has more to do with music as a powerful and “accessible tool” available to people and society (Interview C). Music has a high degree of social and cultural capital, which can be used to promote movement up the social justice ladder. The data also shows, however, that “music can [also] be dangerous, it can be harmful, it can be boring, it can be annoying,” which is important to keep in mind when working in marginalized communities (Interview D). In sum, data from both CoMT and El Sistema programs shows that music is a readily available tool for people and in society.

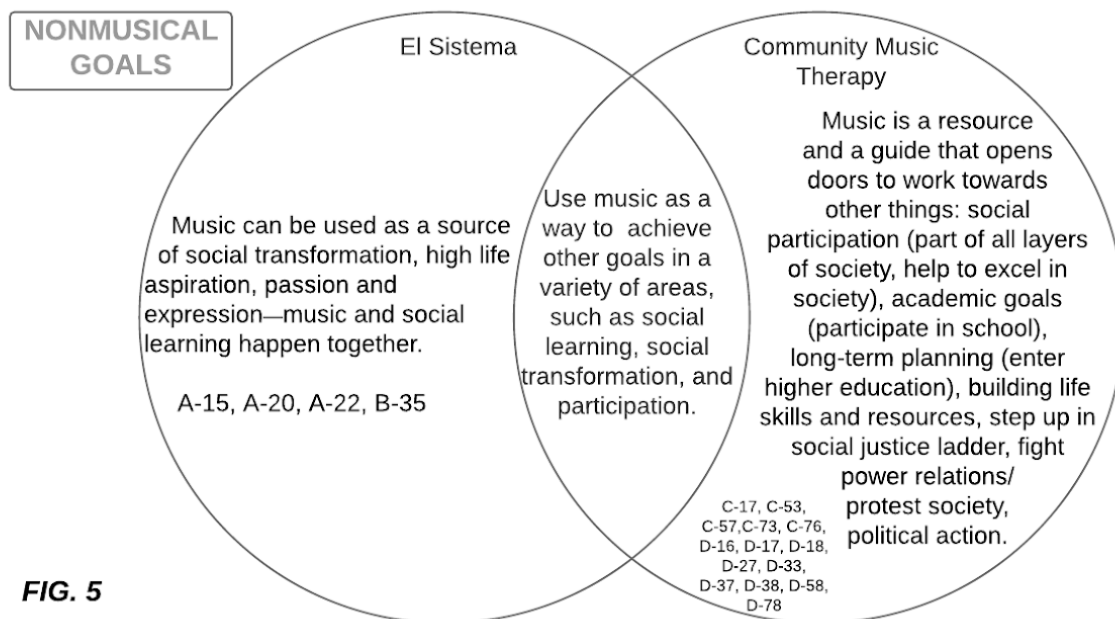
## ROLE OF THE MUSIC



**FIG. 4**

**Nonmusical goals.** This subtheme has to do with the role of music in addressing other things, or nonmusical goals (Fig. 5). The data gathered about El Sistema and the role of music in addressing nonmusical goals shows that music can be used as a resource or instrument of social transformation, high life aspiration, and passion and expression. It shows that music and social learning happen together: “[Y]ou can’t separate it out, like there is social learning over here and music learning over there. They are together, and at the same time” (Interview A). Similarly, the data gathered about CoMT shows that music can be seen as a resource and a guide that “opens different doors” (Interview C) and can be used to work towards other things, such as social participation; academic goals; long-term and future planning; building life skills and resources; and moving up the social ladder by getting involved in political action, fighting power relations, and protesting society. The data gathered about El Sistema and CoMT intersects in demonstrating the use of music as a way to achieve nonmusical goals such as social learning, social transformation, and social participation.

## ROLE OF THE MUSIC

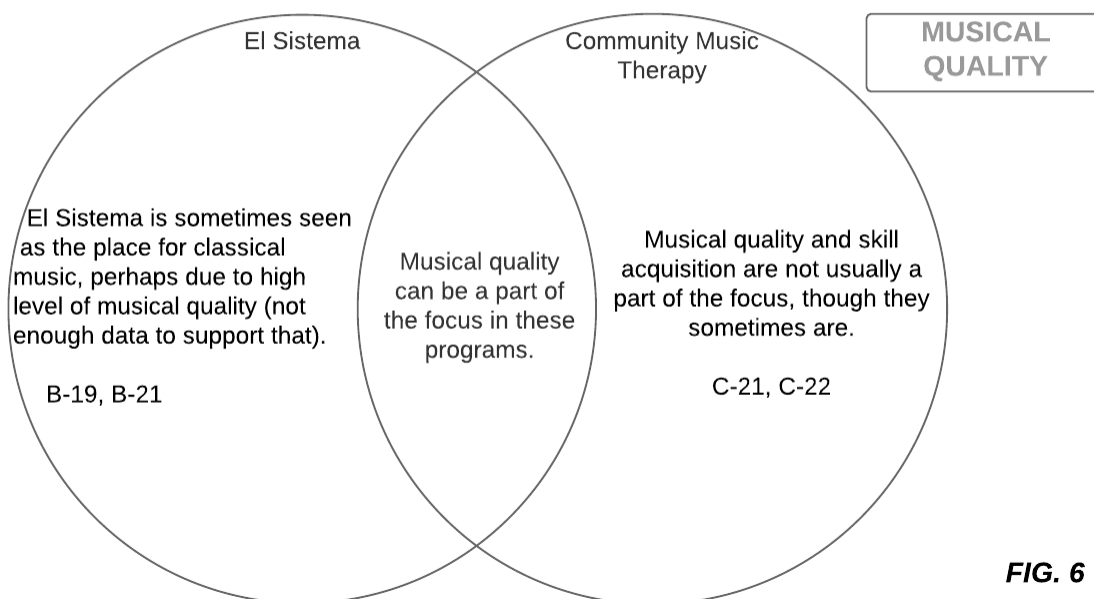


**FIG. 5**

**Musical quality.** This subtheme has to do with the role of musical quality in El Sistema and CoMT (Fig. 6). The data collected about El Sistema reveals that it is sometimes seen as *the* place for classical music. This perhaps has to do with people saying “that there is that rigor in El Sistema, in terms of the musical quality,” yet there probably isn’t “enough data to be able to say that” (Interview B). El Sistema seems to place a much greater emphasis on musical quality, but this all depends on the focus of the specific program. Musical quality is not usually the focus in CoMT. This is reflected in the data: “[S]ometimes there could be more of a focus on the music as a product” (Interview C). The data collected on both El Sistema and CoMT shows that although musical quality can be part of the focus in these programs, it all depends on the needs of the population being served.

## ROLE OF THE MUSIC

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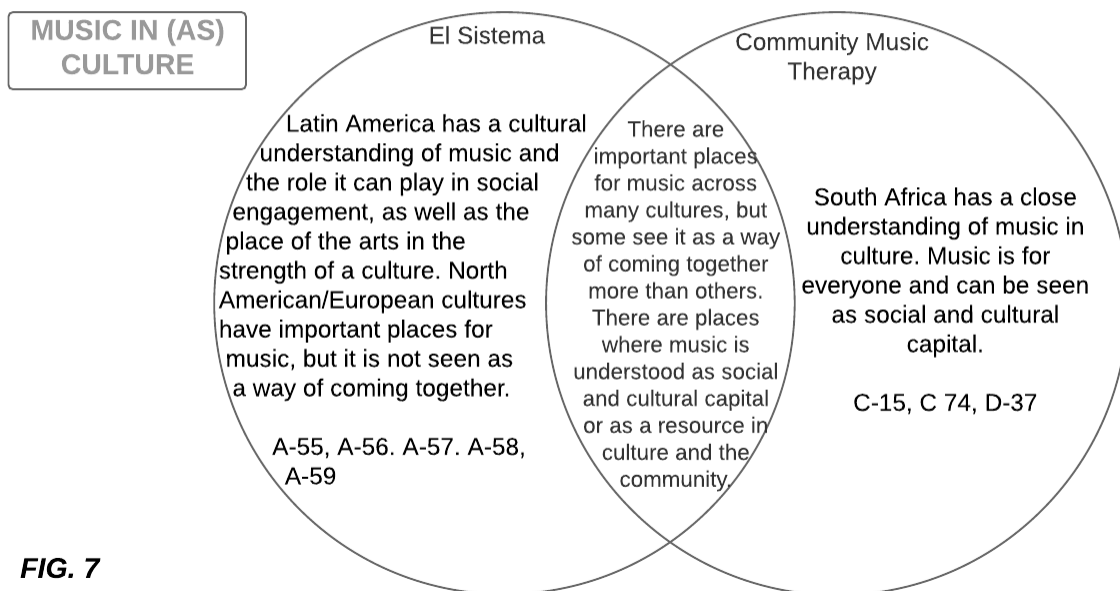
**FIG. 6**

**Music in (as) culture.** This subtheme has to do with the role of music in and as culture (Fig. 7). The data gathered on El Sistema shows that Latin America has a deep cultural understanding of music and the role it can play in social engagement, as well as of the place of



the arts in the strength of a culture. North American and European cultures value music highly, but music is not prized so much as a “way of coming together” (Interview A). Latin America is “more farsighted, more advanced in their understandings about this, more advanced in the practice than anyplace else” (Interview A). The data collected on CoMT shows that South Africa has a deep understanding of music in culture, in which music is seen as being for everyone: “[M]usic has a very high degree of social capital” (Interview D). The data on both El Sistema and CoMT shows that there is an important place for music in many cultures but that practitioners in these programs place a greater value on music as a way of coming together. In addition, there are places where music is understood as social and cultural capital or as a resource in culture and the community.

## ROLE OF THE MUSIC



**FIG. 7**

## Music Education

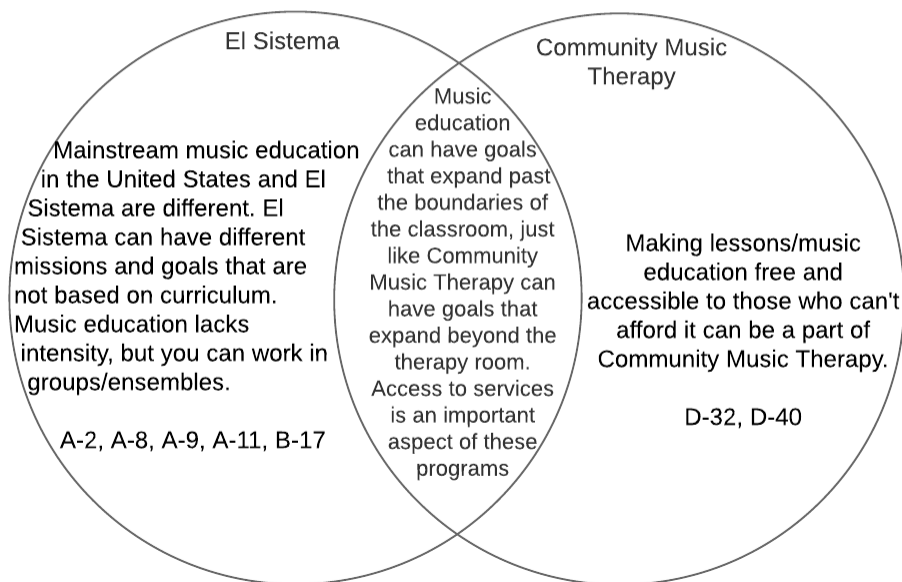
Music education also appeared as a theme within the data (Fig. 8). The data regarding music education throws into relief the fact that mainstream public music education in the United

States is very different from that provided within El Sistema-inspired programs. The main reason for this disparity has to do with the fact that “El Sistema–inspired programs tend to have the ability to afford to have different missions and goals, where in the schools the goals are based on the curriculum and the national and state standards” (Interview B). Further, music education in schools is perceived to lack the element of intensity often found in El Sistema.

The data gathered on CoMT showed that making lessons or music education free and accessible to those who can’t afford it can be a part of CoMT. One interviewee gave as an example a program that helps “a young man [to] learn some guitar chords, [which he] can easily exchange...into social capital” (Interview D). The data on El Sistema and CoMT shows that music education can have goals that expand past the boundaries of the classroom, just as CoMT can have goals that expand beyond the therapy room.

## MUSIC EDUCATION

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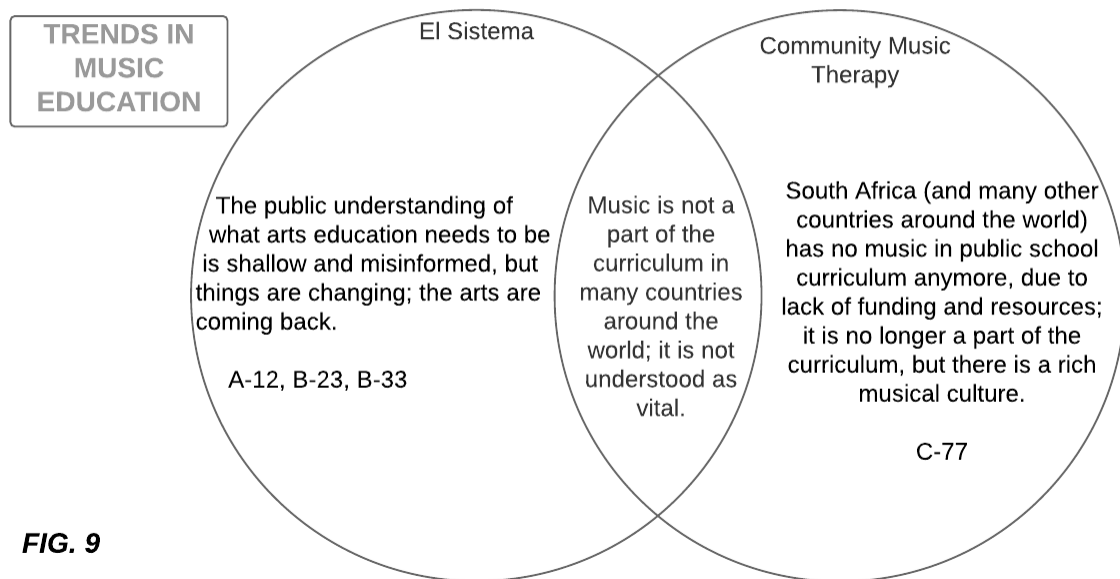


**FIG. 8**

**Trends in music education.** This subtheme has to do with trends in music education across the world (Fig. 9). The data received on El Sistema shows that the “public understanding

of what arts education needs to be is shallow and misinformed” (Interview A). However, “music education is coming back...and in some ways, we have to thank El Sistema for that” (Interview B). There is also a “positive trend in music education to...try new things and break the norm” (Interview B). The data collected on CoMT and music education shows that South Africa, as well as many other countries around the world, has no music in schools any more: “[M]usic education is not part of the [public] school curriculum any more, [due to lack of resources],” despite the country’s rich musical culture (Interview C). The data obtained on both El Sistema and CoMT reveals that music is not a part of the educational curriculum in many countries around the world and that music education is not often seen as vital.

## MUSIC EDUCATION



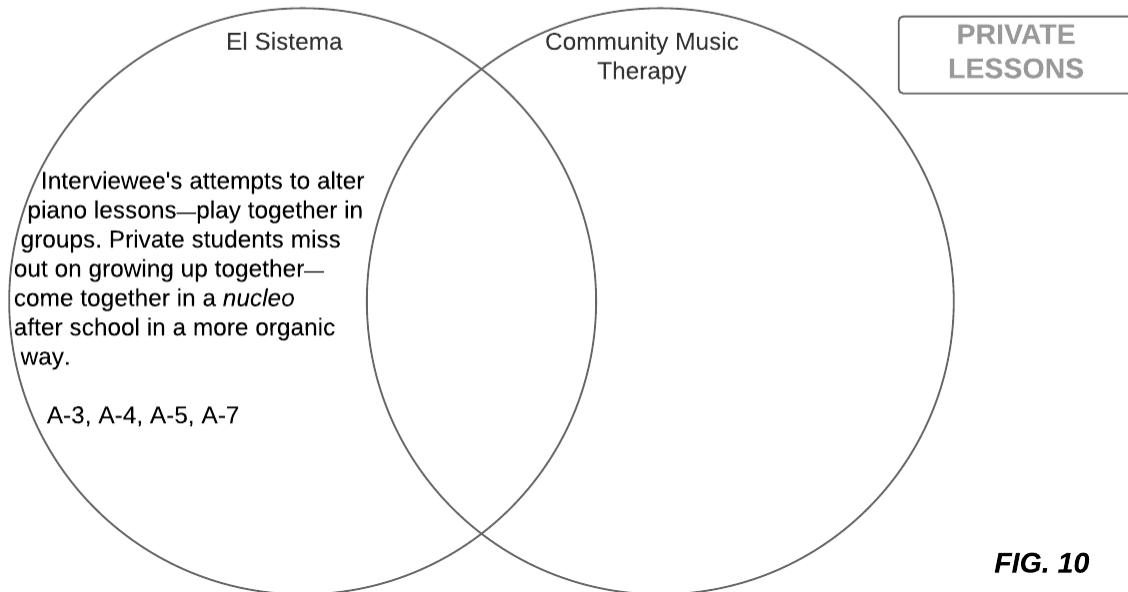
**FIG. 9**

**Private lessons.** This subtheme has to do with data on private music lessons (Fig. 10). The data collected on El Sistema includes an account of one interviewee’s attempts to alter piano lessons so as to include some of the experiences that El Sistema offers. She had students play together in groups, as “piano students miss a lot in the fact that they don’t grow up playing with other kids. They grow up playing by themselves” (Interview A). Students in El Sistema “come

together in a *nucleo* after school in a more organic way” (Interview A). There was no data obtained on private lessons from CoMT practitioners, even though private lessons can be a part of CoMT practice.

## MUSIC EDUCATION

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**FIG. 10**

## Outcomes

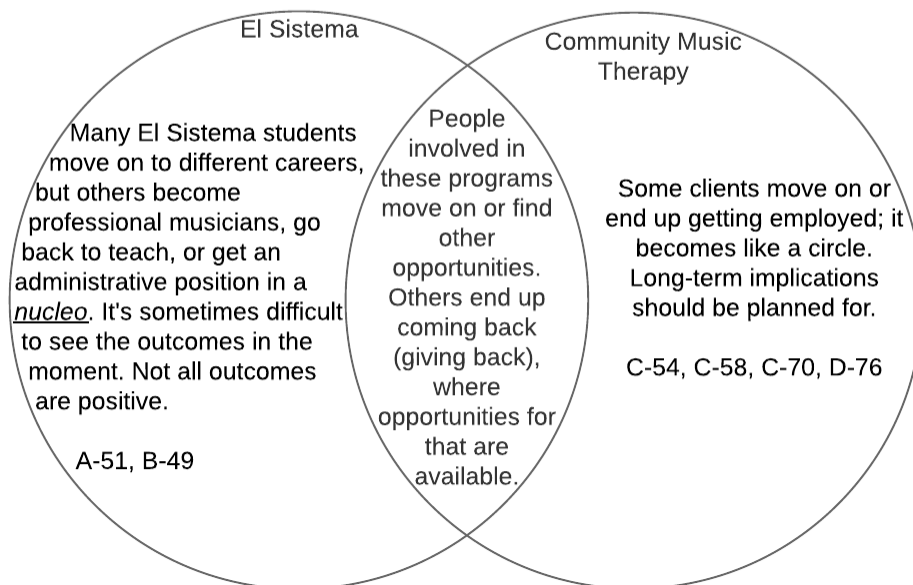
This theme has to do with the outcomes that participants in these programs have been observed to experience (Fig. 11). The data collected about El Sistema reveals that many students move on to different careers while others become professional musicians, go back to teach in a *nucleo*, or even obtain an administrative position in a *nucleo*. Not all outcomes are positive, however, as some students become too dependent on the program and can't move on when the time comes, as illustrated by the following excerpt from one transcript: “[T]his documentary...show[s] one kid who becomes very dependent on the program. Most kids are saying I learned this, and some had opportunities and are now studying in the U.S., and they developed musicianship. Others found a place where they could [express] their emotions, their

frustrations, their everyday problems. But this kid, he became so dependent on the program that when the time came for him to leave, it was hard for him to leave, so he went back into the world of drugs” (Interview B). It is often difficult to know what the outcomes will be in the moment while working “in the trenches” (Interview A).

Data from CoMT shows that while some clients move on from therapy, others end up employed to run younger groups as a community musician (if such an opportunity is available for them in the program). Thus “it [can be] like a circle: Start in therapy, then the after-school program, and then come back as an employee/intern” (Interview C). These long-term implications need to be planned for. Data from both El Sistema and CoMT showed that people who participate in these programs may either move on and find other opportunities or come back and work in the program, when this is possible.

## OUTCOMES

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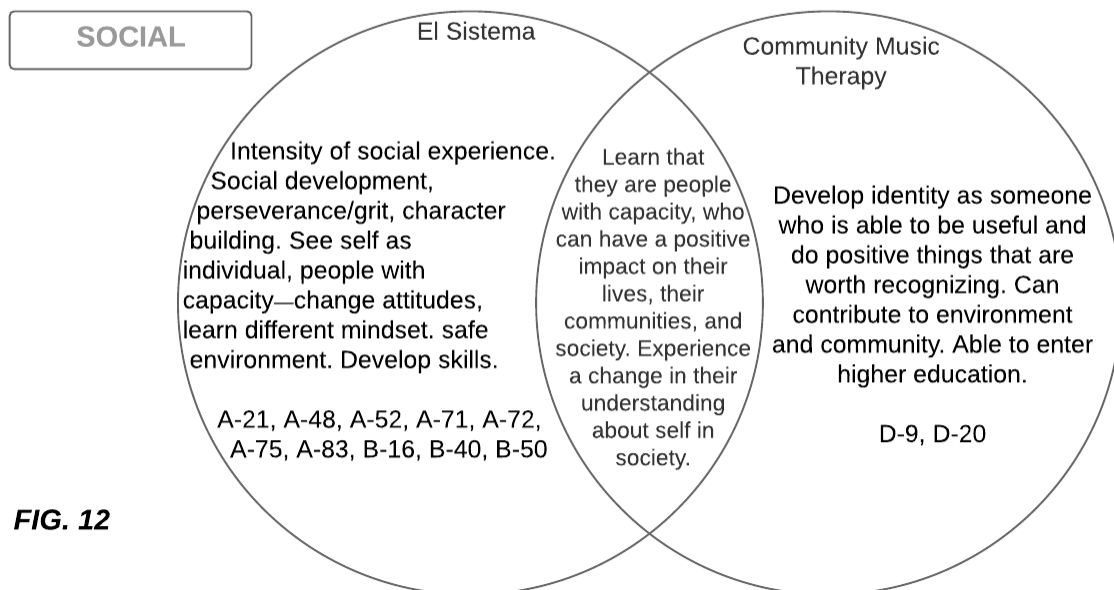


**FIG. 11**

**Social.** This subtheme has to do with the social outcomes experienced by participants in these programs (Fig. 12). The data obtained on social outcomes reveals that El Sistema students

experience transformational social development through the intensity of the social interactions they encounter within a safe environment. This aids in learning perseverance and grit, builds character, changes attitudes and capacities for intellectual growth and social cooperation, and helps participants learn to see themselves both as individuals and people with capacity, which is a “different mindset than a lot of kids grow up learning” (Interview A). The data collected regarding social outcomes in CoMT shows that participants develop an identity “as someone who is able to do something positive, something useful, something worth recognizing” (Interview D), as well as someone able to contribute to the environment and the community. Participation in music can also “facilitate the possibilities the individual has to have to enter higher education” (Interview D). The data gathered on both El Sistema and CoMT shows that participants are able to learn that they are people with capacity, people who can have a positive impact on their own lives, on their communities, and on society. Participants experience a change in their understanding about themselves *in* society.

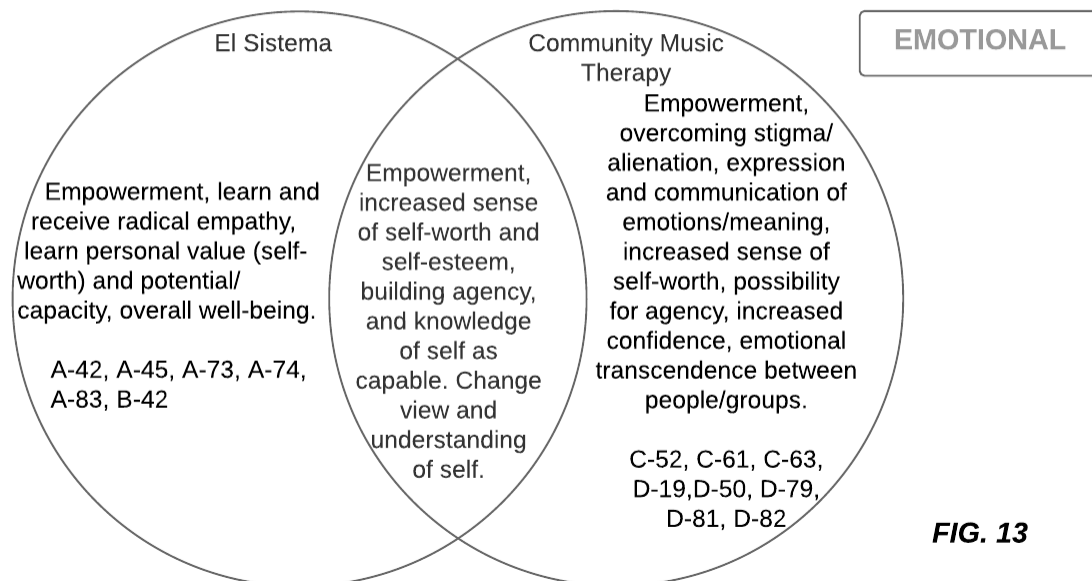
## OUTCOMES



**FIG. 12**

**Emotional.** This subtheme concerns the emotional outcomes experienced by participants in these programs (Fig. 13). The data reveals that emotional outcomes for El Sistema participants include empowerment, learning and receiving radical empathy, increased self-esteem and sense of self-worth, improved overall well-being, and learning “that each one of them is a person with value, who is really important and has good things to offer” (Interview A). The data shows that the emotional outcomes for CoMT include empowerment, overcoming stigma and alienation, expression and communication of emotions or meaning, increased sense of self-worth, increased possibility for agency, the sense of mastering a skill, increased confidence (self-esteem), and “emotional transcendence between people, and [experiencing a] community of understanding” (Interview D). The data collected about both El Sistema and CoMT substantiates the idea that the emotional outcomes for participants include empowerment, increased sense of self-worth, increased self-esteem, building agency, and knowing and understanding oneself as capable. These programs can fundamentally change the view and understanding of the self.

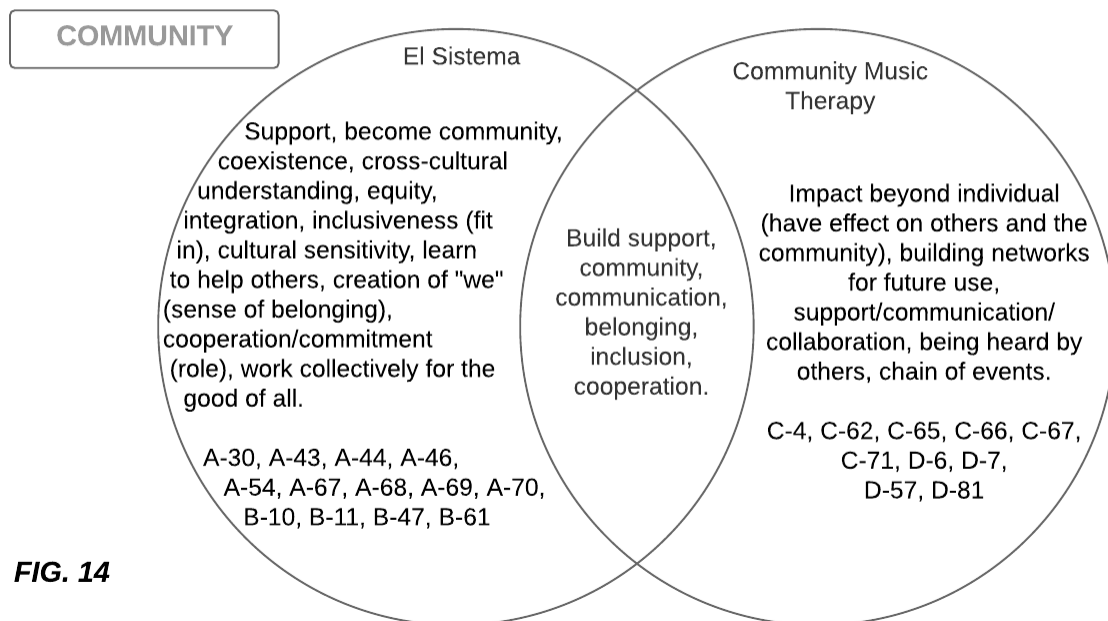
## OUTCOMES



**FIG. 13**

**Community.** This subtheme has to do with the outcomes related to community that participants in these programs experience. (Fig. 14). The data collected for El Sistema shows that community outcomes can include receiving support, community building, gaining cross-cultural understanding and cultural sensitivity, increasing equity, facilitating “fitting in” (inclusiveness), learning about people’s capacity to help others, the creation of a “we” (sense of belonging), increasing cooperation and commitment, and “coexistence [among participants], integration, and working collectively for the good of all” (Interview A). The data obtained about CoMT shows that community outcomes include building networks (social capital) for future use, building structures of participation, support, communication and learning collaboration, being heard by others, and creating a chain of events or “ripple effect,” which means that the outcomes are “broader than just the one person, that [they stretch] out back into the community” (Interview C). The data collected about El Sistema and CoMT showed that for both types of program, community outcomes can include building support, building a community, strengthening

## OUTCOMES



**FIG. 14**



communication among people, creating a sense of belonging, the inclusion of all, and encouraging cooperation and collaboration.

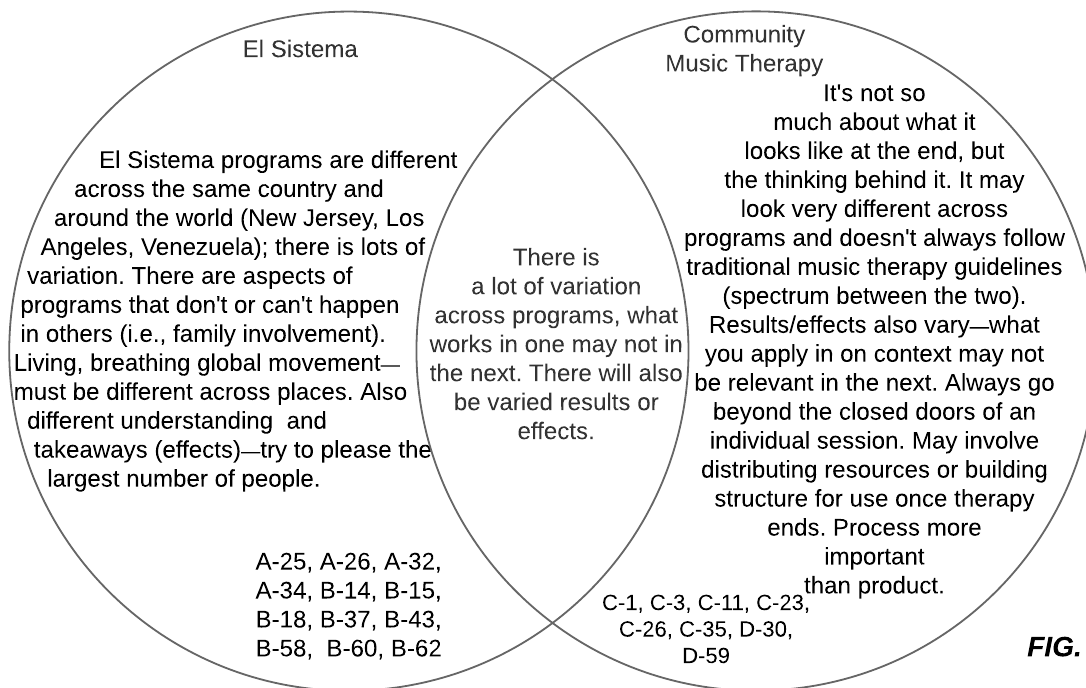
### **Structure**

This theme has to do with the way in which El Sistema and CoMT programs may be structured (Fig. 15). The data obtained from El Sistema participants showed that there is a lot of variation among El Sistema programs around the world; each program, even within the same country, is different. This is the case for the programs in New Jersey and Los Angeles, as well as in Venezuela. There can be certain aspects of one program that don't or can't happen in others. Family involvement is one example: "[T]here are some Sistema programs where it's overflowing with family and community involvement, and I would say Union City Music Project is one of those, but I have been places [such as northern Europe] where it's literally impossible to create it," said one interviewee (Interview A). Such variation across programs makes sense if El Sistema is to be considered "a living, breathing, global movement" (Interview A). Furthermore, different people are going to have different understandings of the program and different takeaways, but the idea is to attempt to please "the largest number, not just two or three" (Interview B).

The data obtained with respect to structure in CoMT shows that it is not so much about what the structure looks like but the thinking behind it; the process is always more important than the product. In other words, "CoMT has more to do [with] how you're thinking about it and how you're understanding the work" (Interview C). There is also a spectrum between traditional music therapy and CoMT practice, and the latter does not always follow conventional guidelines. The results and effects also vary, since what "you apply in one context [may] get similar results, but it might not necessarily be relevant to another context" (Interview C). The idea is to allow the

work to expand beyond the closed doors of a session by distributing resources or building structures for use once therapy ends. The data collected on El Sistema and CoMT shows that there is a lot of variance across both types of programs; what works in one may not work in the next. As a result, there will also be varied results and effects.

## STRUCTURE

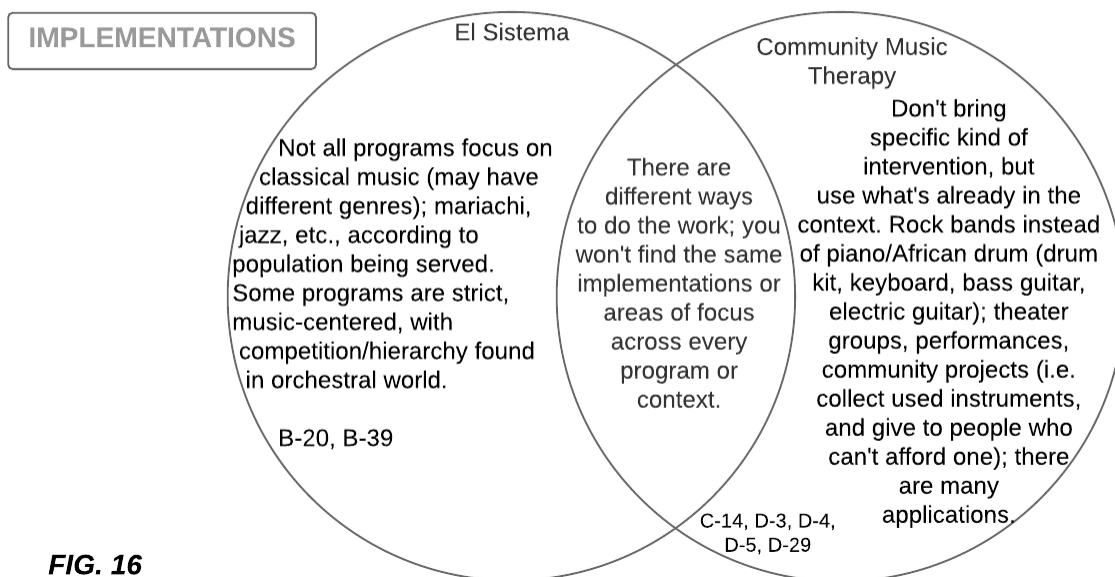


**FIG. 15**

**Implementations.** This subtheme has to do with the different implementations of El Sistema and CoMT (Fig. 16). The data obtained for El Sistema reveals there are programs that are not based just on classical music. Some El Sistema programs also have mariachi groups or jazz bands and combos. Each program is implemented to best suit “the population [and community] that they serve” (Interview B). There are, however, some El Sistema programs that are strict and music-centered and where one finds the competition and hierarchies that are common in the orchestral world. The data on CoMT shows that therapists don’t bring specific interventions but use what already exists and is already available in the contexts in which carry

out the work. There are many different types of CoMT implementations, such as rock bands, theater groups, performances, and community projects. One interviewee gave as an example of a community project collecting “used music instruments to hand them over to people who can’t afford their own” (Interview D). Another type of implementation is the use of instruments usually associated with rock bands (drum kits, keyboards, and electric guitars) instead of the more “traditional” music therapy instruments (piano, African drum). The data obtained about El Sistema and CoMT shows that for both approaches, there are many different ways to do the work; one is unlikely to find the same areas of focus and implementations across every program or context.

## STRUCTURE



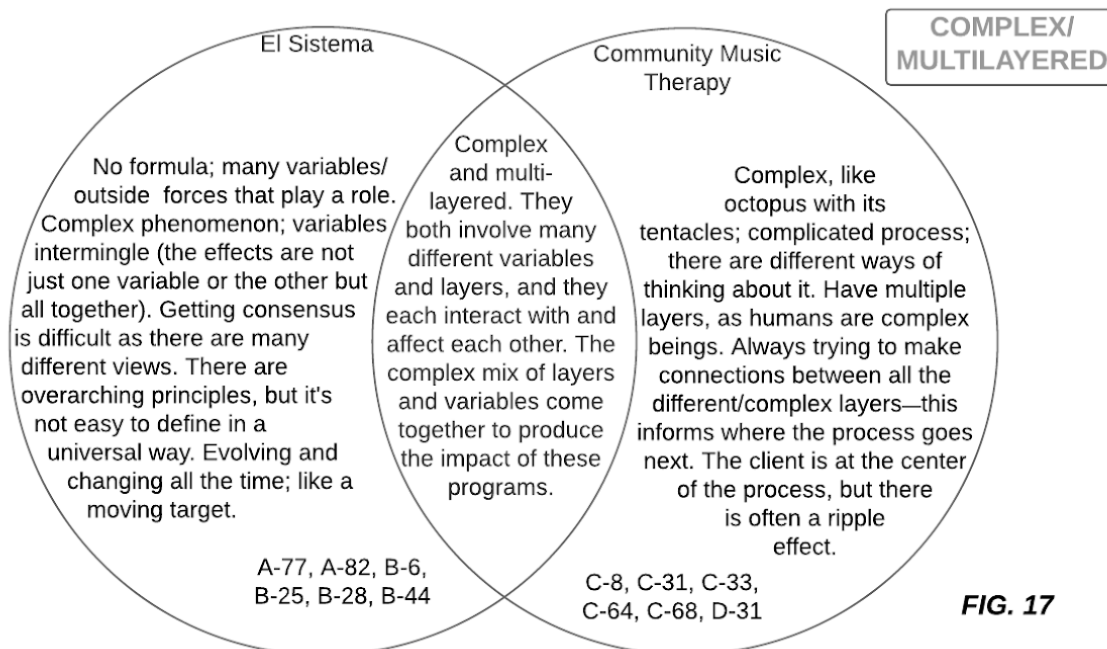
**FIG. 16**

**Complex/multilayered.** This subtheme has to do with the complex and multilayered nature of El Sistema and CoMT programs (Fig. 17). The data collected on the complex and multilayered structure of El Sistema reveals that there is no one “formula.” There are many variables and outside forces that play a role in creating the structure of El Sistema programs; it is “always changing; it’s like trying to pinpoint a moving target” (Interview A). El Sistema is a

complex phenomenon, whose variables intermingle. It is difficult to get a consensus, as there are many different views. There are overarching principles, but it's not easy to define or "universal in any way" (Interview B).

The data obtained that relates to the complex and multilayered structure of CoMT shows that it is complex, like an "like an octopus with its tentacles" (Interview C). CoMT is a complicated process, and there are many different ways to think about it. It has many different layers, as it reflects the complex nature of human beings. The client is at the center of the process; the therapist is always trying to make connections between all the different, complex layers; and there is often a ripple effect. The data collected for both El Sistema and CoMT demonstrates that both of these programs are by nature complex and multilayered. They both involve many different variables that interact with and affect each other. The complex mix of layers and variables comes together to produce the impact of these programs.

## STRUCTURE



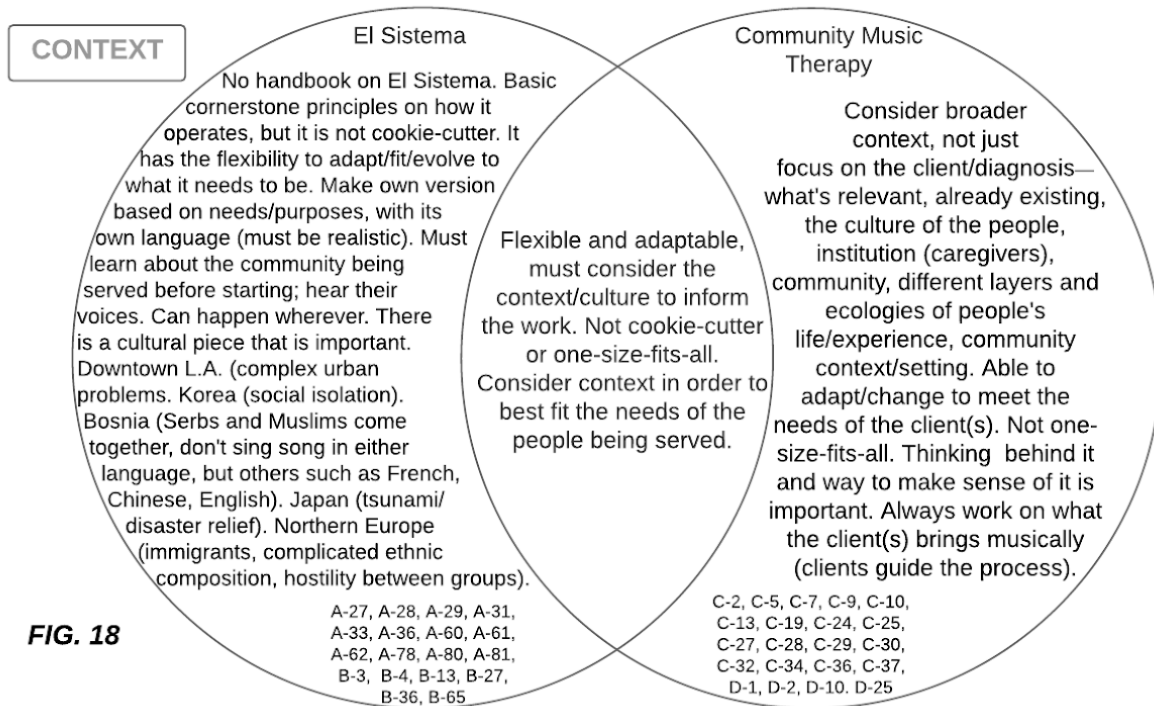
**FIG. 17**

**Context.** This subtheme has to do with the context-specific nature of the structure of El Sistema and CoMT programs (Fig. 18). The data obtained on El Sistema's structure and context reveals that while there are basic, cornerstone principles regarding how El Sistema operates, there is no "handbook" for it. El Sistema is "not cookie-cutter" (Interview A), as it has the flexibility to adapt, fit, and evolve into what it needs to be. It's up to each program to create its own version of the El Sistema core ideas and its own language, based on its particular needs and purposes. It is important to learn about the needs and hear the voices of the community being served before beginning a program, as the cultural piece is important. Examples from downtown Los Angeles, Korea, Bosnia, Japan, and northern Europe—places that have vastly different needs—show the context-specific nature of El Sistema (Interviews A and B).

The data collected about CoMT structure and context shows that programs consider the broader context in which the work occurs rather than merely focusing on the client and the individual diagnosis. CoMT programs must account for what's relevant; resources that already exist (resilience, skills, understanding, energy, ways of being); the culture of the people, institution and/or community; the different layers and ecologies of people's lives and experience; and context and setting. CoMT programs are therefore able to adapt and change to meet the needs and demands of the clients and the context; CoMT is "not a one-size-fits-all approach" (Interview C). The thinking behind the work and the way to make sense of it is important, as the process is guided by what the clients bring in musically. Examples of the diverse contexts in which CoMT work can occur include schools; child welfare programs (in institutions, in foster care); mental health units; and elder care. The data collected for El Sistema and CoMT shows that both of these approaches are flexible and adaptable; they both use careful consideration of

the context and culture of the people and community served to inform the work and best meet the needs of their participants. Neither approach is cookie-cutter or one size fits all.

## STRUCTURE



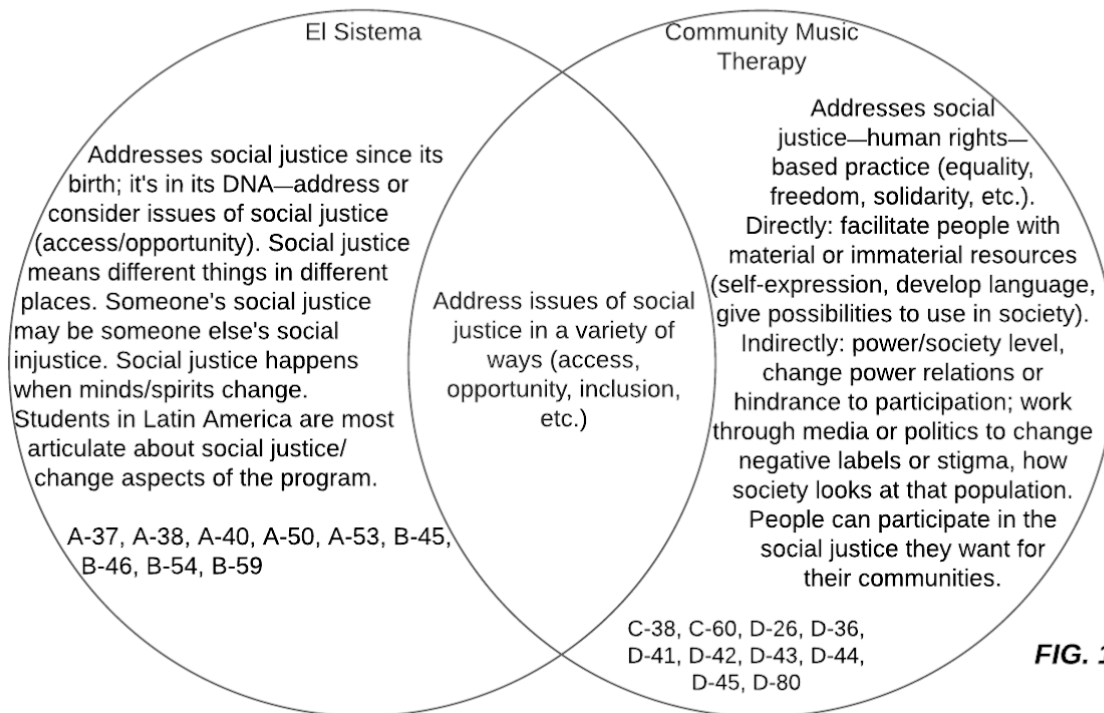
**FIG. 18**

## Social Justice

This theme has to do with the ways in which El Sistema and CoMT address social justice goals (Fig. 19). The study data on social justice and El Sistema shows that El Sistema has addressed or at least considered issues of social justice, such as access and opportunity, since its birth. Social justice is “like in its bones, in its DNA” (Interview A). Social justice is a difficult, complicated, yet important topic (Interview B). It means different things in different places, and one person’s social justice may be someone else’s social injustice (Interview B). Social justice happens when minds and spirits change (Interview A). El Sistema students in Latin America appear to be the most articulate about the program’s connection to social justice and change (Interview A).

The data obtained in the study with respect to social justice and CoMT shows that it also addresses social justice, as “the practice is human rights–based” (Interview D). It focuses on issues such as equality, freedom, and solidarity. Social justice goals may be addressed directly or indirectly in CoMT practices. They are addressed directly by providing people with material or nonmaterial resources, such as self-expression, language development, and giving possibilities to use in society. Social justice is addressed indirectly through changing power relations or removing hindrances to participation. In other words, CoMT practice works at the level of power and society, through media and politics, to attack negative labels or stigmas and change how society views a particular population. It also works by showing people that they can be a part of the social justice they want for their communities. The study data collected for El Sistema and CoMT shows that both of these programs address issues of social justice in a variety of ways. They both work to promote access, opportunity, and inclusion, among other goals.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

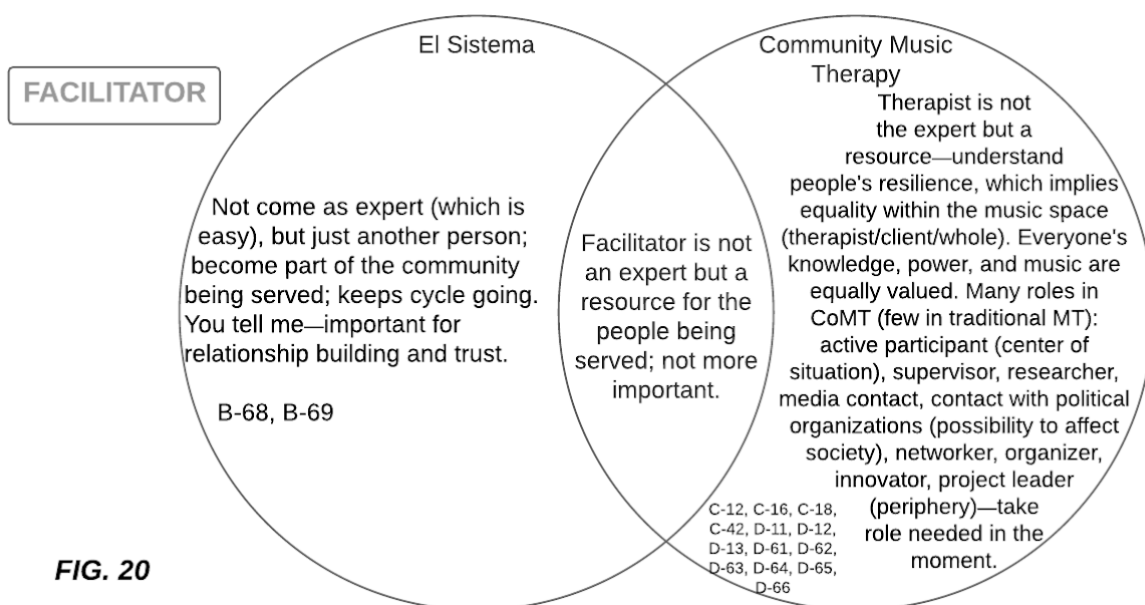


**FIG. 19**

**Facilitator.** This subtheme has to do with the role of the facilitator in achieving the social justice goals of El Sistema and CoMT (Fig. 20). The data obtained on the role of the facilitator in El Sistema shows that the facilitator must “not come in as the expert, which is easy, but just a person just like everybody else” (Interview B). Imposing things on people only keeps the cycle going. Instead, facilitators should aim to become a part of the community being served by sharing, relating, finding middle ground, and asking about participants’ needs. It is important for relationship building and the development of trust that facilitators listen to those being served.

The data obtained in the study on the role of the CoMT facilitator (the therapist) shows that the therapist is not the expert but looks at the resources and resilience within the space and the client population, which implies equality within the therapy space (therapist/client/whole). Everyone’s knowledge, power, and music are equally valued. While the therapist only has a few roles in traditional music therapy, the CoMT therapist is perceived to perform many different roles, “[taking on] the role that they need to in the moment” (Interview D). All of these roles fit within the three strategies in which the work can occur: 1. Work[ing] with individual[s] in an

## SOCIAL JUSTICE



**FIG. 20**



active way; being a participant in the musicianship, 2. Be[ing] an organizer or facilitator of network or organization work, [making] connections for various purposes, and 3. Be[ing] a person who has the possibility to impact society (Interview D). The data collected about El Sistema and CoMT showed that in both models the facilitator is not an “expert” or seen as more important. Instead, the facilitator is a resource for the people being served.

**Needs.** This subtheme has to do with the types of needs that are addressed in El Sistema and CoMT programs (Fig. 21). The data obtained on the types of needs addressed in El Sistema underlines that although it is easy to assume what people need, it is important to ask to make sure one’s understanding is correct. The types of needs addressed include structural changes, such as redressing inequities between the incomes of the highest and lowest in society, and changes within the person, such as giving people a voice, understanding people’s concerns, encouraging and providing support, building a relationship over time, widening the opening opportunities to let everyone in, and changing the way people think about themselves both individually and in relation to their community and society. Even though El Sistema can have an impact in many areas, it “can’t do it all by itself; there has to be progress in many fronts” (Interview A).

The data collected on the types of needs addressed in CoMT reveals that we need resources to make things work in the community. The types of needs addressed include safety, prevention of stigmatization and marginalization, and dealing with structural hindrances, such as poverty and discrimination. Emotional needs include giving people a choice and voice; providing opportunities for self-expression; empowerment; and improving people’s sense of agency, self-esteem, and self-worth (Interviews C and D). Participation needs include providing opportunities to participate in leisure activities, building communities for people to lead and govern for themselves, and giving a constructive alternative to life on the streets (Interviews C and D).

Guiding needs include providing guidance in economic, health and legislative questions, building a legacy and long-term planning, providing support during transitions, and providing help in finding a job or enter higher education (Interview D). The data obtained about El Sistema and CoMT shows that both of these programs address a wide variety of needs. Most of these needs are related to empowerment, giving people a voice and form of expression, building relationships, and giving people a way to address structural issues, such as lack of opportunities and access, poverty, and discrimination.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

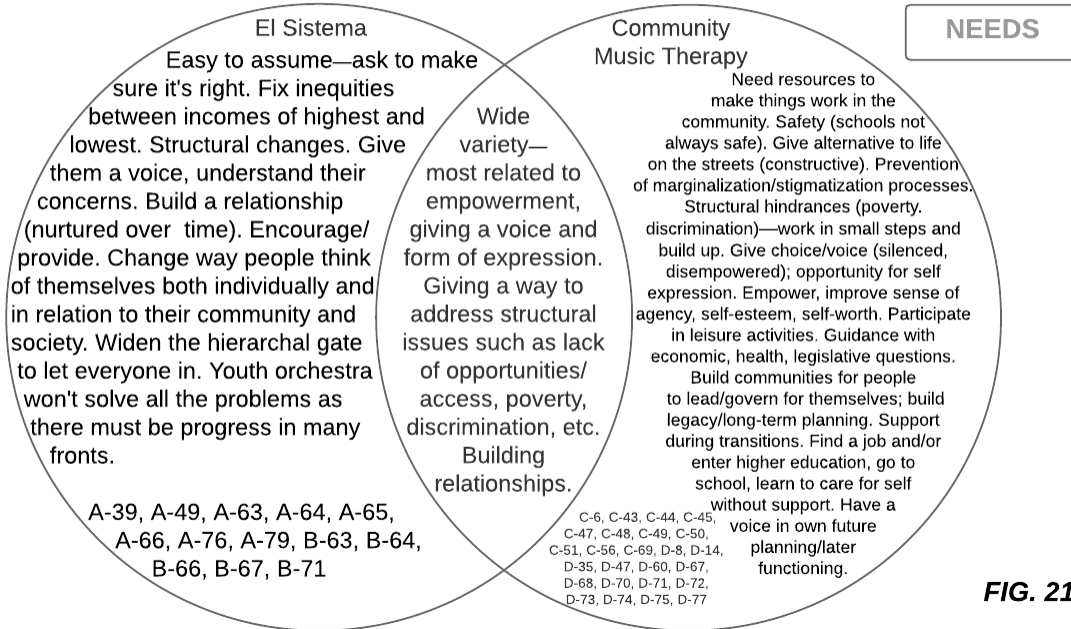


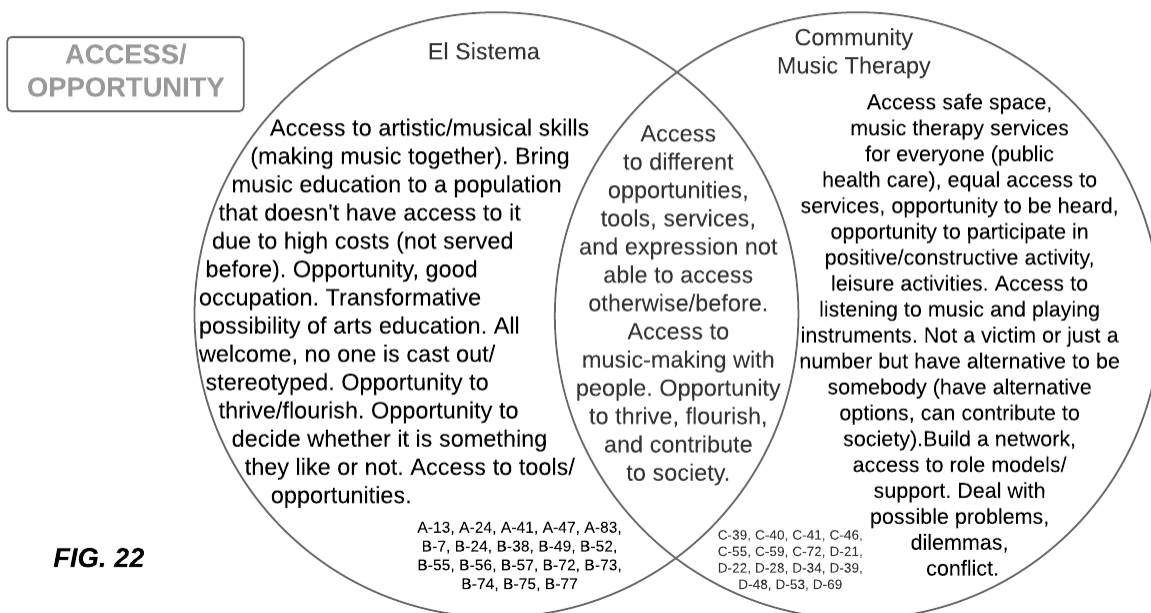
FIG. 21

**Access/Opportunity.** This subtheme has to do with the ways in which El Sistema and CoMT provide access and opportunity (Fig. 22). The data collected that touches on the way in which El Sistema provides access and opportunity shows that there is a focus on providing access to transformational artistic and musical skills, as well as to other tools and opportunities, by learning an instrument and making music together. The idea is “bringing [music education to] a population that doesn’t necessarily have access because these things cost so much” (Interview

B). In this way, no one is cast out or stereotyped. El Sistema is perceived by practitioners as providing an opportunity to thrive and flourish, as a good way to occupy one’s time by providing opportunities for advancement, thus having implications in the long-term (Interviews A and B). Students are given the opportunity to decide whether playing a musical instrument is something they like or not.

The data collected on the way in which CoMT provides access and opportunity shows that CoMT practice can be about being able to access a safe space where there is equal access to services—music therapy services for everyone (Interview C). Access is not “a question about giving music therapy to those who can pay for it but a question about facilitating music therapy for everyone” (Interview D). It is an opportunity to be heard (empowerment) and to participate in positive and constructive leisure activities (Interview D). It is about providing access to listening to music and playing musical instruments and in that process learning that one is not just a number or a victim of circumstances: There are alternative options (Interviews C and D). It is

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**



**FIG. 22**

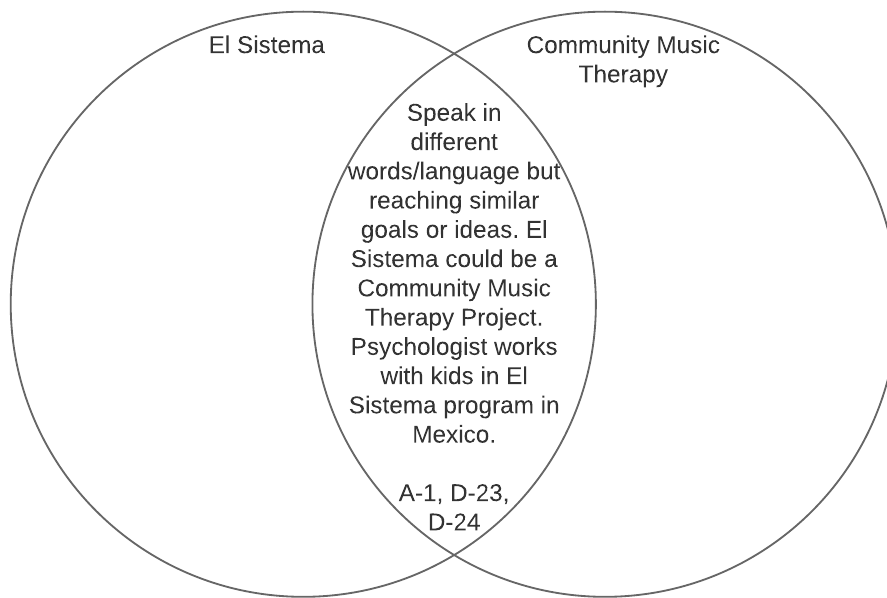
also about building a network; having access to role models and support; and dealing with possible problems, dilemmas, and conflicts (Interview D). The study data from both El Sistema and CoMT reveals that these programs provide access to opportunities, tools, and services that participants have not been able to access otherwise or before. These programs give participants the opportunity to thrive, flourish, and contribute positively to society.

### Intersection

This theme has to do with areas in which El Sistema and CoMT intersect (Fig. 23). In Mexico, there is a psychologist who works with the kids in an El Sistema *nucleo*—bringing education and therapy into one place. The data shows that even though these programs speak in different words or language, they are reaching toward similar goals or ideas. According to interviewee D, El Sistema “sounds like a CoMT project...we share some of the same thinking here a bit...it is spoken [about] in different words [or] language but [it seems to be] reaching same goals [and] ideas.”

### INTERSECTION

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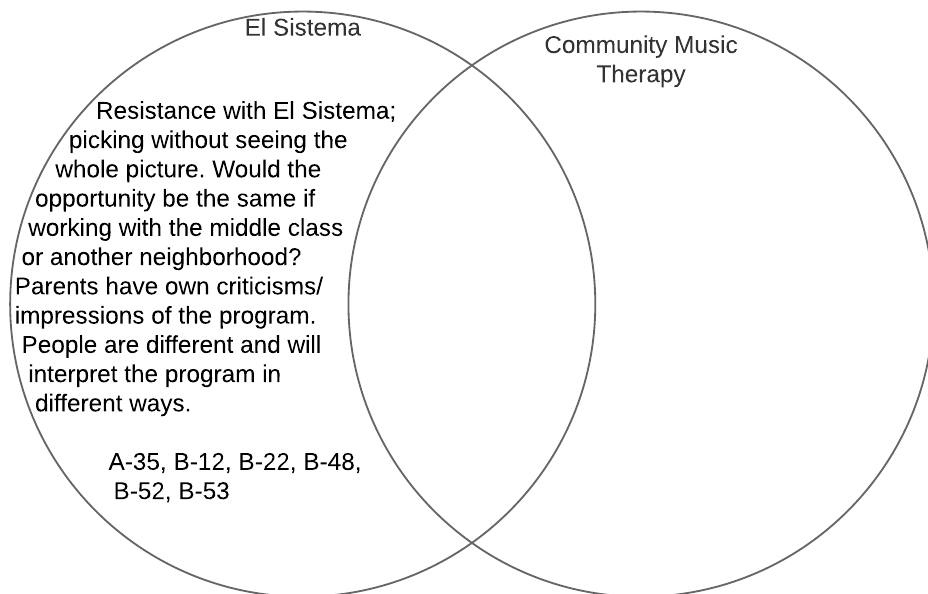
**FIG. 23**

## Criticisms

This theme has to do with criticisms of El Sistema (Fig. 24). The data collected reveals that “some people have resistance with El Sistema” (Interview B). These critics seem to be picking at something without seeing the whole picture (Interview A). Some questions came up during one interview: Would this opportunity be the same if the program were working with middle-class children or in another neighborhood? Parents also seem to have some criticisms and negative impressions of the program; this makes sense, as people are different and will interpret the program in different ways (Interview B). The data obtained for the study reveals no specific criticisms of CoMT, though some criticisms exist especially in terms of boundaries.

## CRITICISMS

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**FIG. 24**

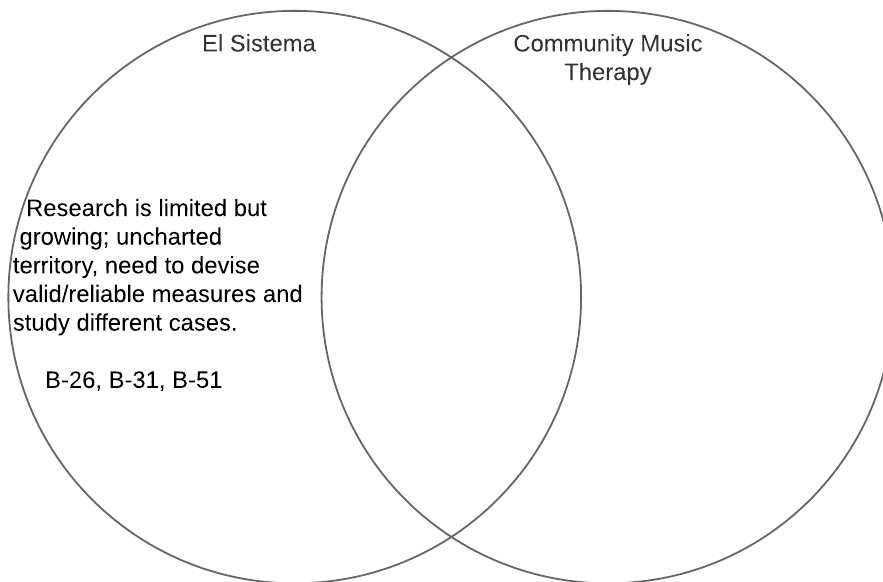
## Research

This theme has to do with research about El Sistema (Fig. 25). The data shows that there is a limited body of research on El Sistema. It is growing, however, and diverse cases must be studied (Interview B). Since this is “uncharted territory in some ways,” it is a “problem of us

devising [valid and reliable] measures, really capturing what we're looking for" (Interview B). In terms of research in CoMT, neither interviewee made comments with respect to research within the data collected.

## RESEARCH

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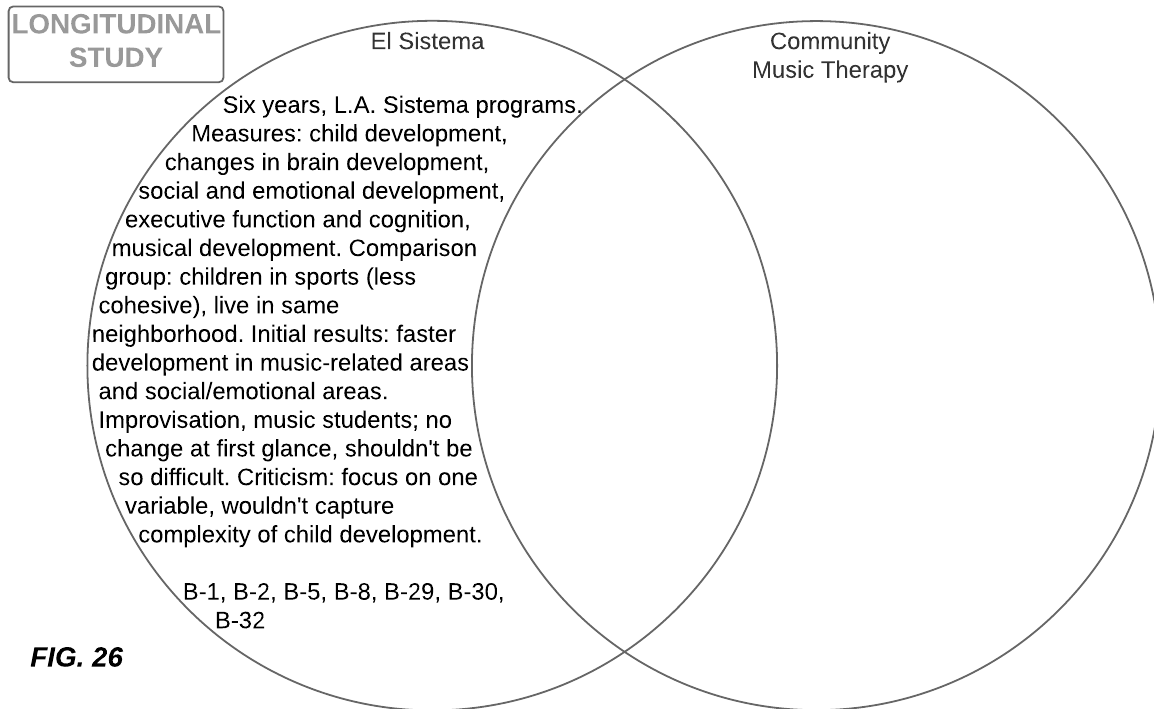
**FIG. 25**

**Longitudinal study.** This subtheme has to do with a longitudinal study of El Sistema that has recently been published (Fig. 26). The study is about the Los Angeles Sistema programs, and it has been done over the course of the past six years. It looks at a variety of measures, such as child development and changes in brain development, executive function and cognition, social and emotional development, and musical development. The comparison group is made up of children in sports and children who live in the same neighborhood but do not participate in an El Sistema program. Initial results have found faster development in music-related areas and social and emotional areas for El Sistema participants. Music students were asked to improvise and showed no changes at first glance. Researchers utilized case studies and found that young musicians can be strong improvisers only under certain conditions. The study was criticized by those who say it should focus on just one variable. That would not capture the complexity of

child development, however. The data obtained did not reveal anything specific regarding research in CoMT.

## RESEARCH

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**FIG. 26**

**Table 1**

Theme	Subtheme	El Sistema	CoMT
Role of the Music		Role in all basic tenets of El Sistema; means/way/channel through which other things happen; intensity of musical and social experience; not secondary	Central to group process; belongs to the whole group; focus is sometimes on music as product (performance, acquiring musical skills)
	Relationship	Ensemble learning and playing experience; making music together, magnetic energy, feed each other; radical inclusion in musical ensemble; ensemble learning of music; peer learning of music; family and community involvement, engagement/coming together; enter as cohort, grow together, live in same neighborhood; bring people together; developing relationships, music is about relationships (important to build)	Active medium that you work through with people in action; sing onstage, music as vehicle for message between young people and adults; channel young people's stories in social way that can be recognized, messenger of the suppressed; everyone becomes equal, experience same aesthetic moment, experience intense connection (powerful)
	Access	Everybody can sing, all are musical	Open different doors; accessible tool, vibrant source in communities with deprivation, easy to use for change work; high degree of social capital, used as social/cultural capital, step up ladder of social justice; must be aware of powerful tool (music); can easily go wrong if there is a rush to performance; choose audience carefully, vulnerable, dangerous, nontherapeutic; can be harmful, dangerous, boring, annoying
	Nonmusical Goals	Music learning and social learning happen together; passion and expression; high musical to further high life aspiration; instrument of social transformation	Central to MT processes, focus on nonmusical goals; surpass barriers given by structure; open different doors; tool to work toward other things; help with academic goals; way to organize social participation, music as part of society; use to fight



			power relations, protest society, break down barriers to progress; part of all layers in society (ecological), facilitate CoMT practice; resource, driver for different possibilities; participation in school, enter higher education; social/cultural capital, step up in social justice ladder, possible to excel in society; participate in music classroom; build toolbox, use when help is no longer available; possibility to tell story, expose meaning, implement long-term planning
	Musical Quality	El Sistema as <i>the</i> place for classical music; rigor in musical quality (not enough data to support)	Sometimes focus on music as product, performance, skill acquisition; traditional MT has little focus on skill acquisition
	Music in (as) Culture	Latin America, understanding of music and social engagement, more explicit in culture, part of government planning for social justice goals; large part of culture; ahead in more farsighted understanding/practice in using music for social change; ahead in understanding place of arts in strength of community/culture; North American/European culture, important place in culture for music, don't see as engagement and answer to cultural crises	South Africa, people are musical, already exists; music is for everyone, close cultural understanding of music; social and cultural capital
Music Education		Deep difference between El Sistema and mainstream music education; elementary music, more closely related (limited time); work in groups/ensembles; mainstream music education lacks intensity element; El Sistema-inspired programs can have different missions and goals, not based on curriculum and standards	Norway, pay for music education, CoMT can involve making it free and accessible to those who can't afford it; help someone learn guitar, exchange for social capital in the form of participation in music education at school

	Trends in Music Education	Public understanding of arts education is shallow/misinformed; music education is coming back, can partly thank El Sistema for that; positive trend to try new things, break the norm	South Africa, no music education in public schools, not part of curriculum any more, still has rich musical culture, helps understanding role music can play
	Private Lessons	Piano lessons, one on one; attempts to alter piano teaching, groups/playing together; students come to <i>nucleo</i> in more organic way; piano students miss out, grow up playing alone	
Outcomes		Sometimes difficult to see takeaways in the moment; students often move on to different careers, others become professional musicians, go back to teach or get job in administration in a <i>nucleo</i> ; not all outcomes are positive (kids can become too dependent on program)	Grew out of MT, move on to after-school music groups or end up employed/interning, running younger groups; don't take on being community musician as a profession, move on to different careers; can work like a circle (coming back); music can help with academic goals
	Social	Intensity of musical and social experience; students not always able to articulate effects, but living it and building into their character; learn to persevere with difficulties and the value of that; learn different mindset from what they grow up knowing; understanding of self as individual; change attitudes, change capacity for intellectual growth and social cooperation; see a future, transformational experience, may go on to study music at university; social and emotional development; develop skills, be in safe environment; world transformation (may be difficult)	Successful band collaborator, identity as somebody who can be positive, useful, and worth recognizing, can contribute positively to environment and community; music participation, facilitate possibilities to enter higher education
	Emotional	Empowerment; learn and experience radical empathy; learn they are people with capacity and potential; person with value,	Strengthen sense of self-worth (can contribute); empowerment, from alienation (stigma) to message of hope; increased confidence, sense of

		important, has things to offer (don't grow up understanding/believing); increased self-esteem and sense of self-worth; programs with concern for music but also well-being	mastering a skill; possibility of agency; create emotional transcendence between people, community of understanding; expression of meaning; emotional expression; communication through music/art/dance/theater
	Community	Cultural sensitivity; inclusiveness; equity; cross-cultural understanding; learn of capacity to help others; creation of "we" (sense of belonging); coexistence; integration; work collectively for good of all; cooperation and commitment; cultural aspect, support, become a community; opportunity to fit in; impact on people being served	Help individual and the community; legacy, positive chain of events; constructiveness/positivity/hope gained individually can also affect broader community; impact beyond individual; client's process had an impact on caregivers and nonprofit organization; ripple effect, stretches back to community; learn collaboration; individual contribution and collaboration with others; build structures of participation, building a network of people to use in the moment and the future; adults learn from what young people have to say
Structure		Some things happen in some programs and not others; family/community involvement overflows in some programs, impossible to create in others; global movement, must be different in different places; each N.J. program is different; UCMP high level of family involvement; all programs are different in nature, vary; lots of variance in Sistema programs; L.A. programs, slightly different principles, understood/applied differently; <i>nucleos</i> in Venezuela, different from each other; dealing with different personalities (may disagree); try to please largest number; family involvement not always secondary	Spectrum between traditional MT and CoMT; CoMT process doesn't always follow traditional guidelines; allow work to go beyond closed doors of therapy session; process always more important than product; not about what it looks like, but the thinking and understanding of it, affects decision making; applications in one context or cultural group may not be relevant in another; part of CoMT, distribute resources in the community; build community for use without the therapist

	Implementations	There are Sistema programs not based on classical music, mariachi, jazz, etc., according to population served; some programs strict/music-centered, with competition/hierarchy as in orchestral world	Do not bring specific intervention, looking at what's already available in context; rock band, theater groups, performances, community projects, many applications; use band instruments (drum kit, keyboard, bass guitar, electric guitar) instead of piano/African drum; rock bands, can have a mix of representations; project collecting used instruments and giving them to those who can't afford them
	Complex/ Multilayered	No formula, many variables/outside forces play a role; evolving/changing all the time, like a moving target; complex phenomenon, variables intermingle, affects not just one variable but all together; getting consensus, difficult task, confusing to navigate, lots of views, decide stance and acknowledge diversity; complex; overarching, guiding principles, not easy to define in universal way	Complicated process; different, complex layers, always trying to make connections between them (informs where process goes next); multiple layers, humans are complex; client at center of the process, there's a ripple effect; complex, like octopus with its tentacles; many ways of thinking about CoMT
	Context	Northern Europe, immigrants, complicated ethnic composition, hostility between groups; Bosnians, Serbs, and Muslims come together; don't sing in either language, but others such as Chinese, French, English; flexibility to be what it needs to wherever, based on needs; Venezuela, not a franchise, go and evolve, not cookie-cutter, adhere to few principles but create own version; flexibility, strong and attractive across world; Japan, tsunami, disaster relief; Korea, no high level of poverty, social isolation; flexible, can happen everywhere; must be realistic about what we can do; no handbook, essential principles of operation; each program invents around its	Not only consider individual but also broader context, different layers/ecologies; residential facility (caregivers); everyone welcome/free to participate; focus not only on individual or diagnosis, but also the individual's community; ways of understanding how community/context affect the individual; communities as resilient, with skills, understanding, energy, ways of being; always work on what client brings musically; U.S., CoMT not common; what context demands; focus on how therapists are thinking and making sense of it; school (children, teachers, parents); internship, think about culture and context of institution and their role in practice; considering different

		<p>own needs/purposes, make own language; cultural piece is important; Downtown L.A., complex urban problems; circumstances of participants vary from middle class (which can afford lessons); transform experiences to suit needs of communities, adapt/fit; learn about community before starting, understand needs, hear their voices</p>	<p>contexts (culture of people, institution, community); process guided by clients; adapt/change to meet needs in each context, not one-size-fits-all; bring something relevant to context; adaptable to different places where MTs work; Norway (CoMT practice); school, child welfare (institutions, foster care), mental health unit; elder care; use resources in community to make structures for participation; U.S. MT has specific definition (neat square)</p>
Social Justice		<p>Addresses social justice; about social justice since birth, in its DNA; means different things in different places; happens when minds/spirits change; students in Latin America are the most clear about social justice/change aspects of the program; address or at least consider issues of social justice (access/opportunity); somebody's social justice may be someone else's social injustice; how is it operationalized?; difficult topic, complicated, but important</p>	<p>Addresses social justice; people can be a part of the social change they want for their communities; human rights-based practice (equality, freedom, solidarity); facilitate material and immaterial resources, help with self-expression, develop language, giving possibilities to use in society; work through media/politics, how society looks at a population, changing labels/stigma; work through media and power of people, change negative label; concrete examples or power/society level; work directly with people in concrete situations; work on structural, organizational, society level; change power relations, hindrance for participation; can work on both levels at the same time; adapt U.N. convention for rights of children/adolescents in human rights-based practice</p>
	Facilitator	<p>Not coming as an expert, just a person like anybody else; become part of community, share/relate; easy to come in as important person, impose things, keeps cycle going, ask instead, important for relationship/ trust</p>	<p>Not going in as the expert, understanding role as resources; look at resources/resilience within the space and client population; not expert musician; not being an expert implies equality, therapist/client/whole/music space,</p>

			<p>everyone's knowledge, power music are equally valued; Strategy 1, work with client in active way (participant in musicianship); Strategy 2, organizer/facilitator of network/organization, make connections for various purposes, organizer of projects; Strategy 3, possibility to affect society, work with media, science, politicians, make things possible in society; organizer of network, apply for money; in center of situation or in periphery, take the role needed in the moment; few roles/functions in traditional MT; CoMT therapist has wide variety of roles (all connected), active participant, supervisor, researcher, media contact person, contact in political associations, networker, innovator, project leader; make structures for use after the helping system leaves; identify resources in community (material, immaterial)</p>
	Needs	<p>Widen hierarch gate, let everyone in; encourage, provide; youth orchestra does not solve poverty; need structural changes; fix inequities in income of highest/lowest; change way people think of selves (individually, relation to community/society); can't affect progress on its own, must be progress on many fronts; what we can do is essential in what people need; give them a voice; easy to assume needs without asking; learn about community, understand needs, hear their voices; having a voice/say builds over time; understand concerns, build relationship; relationship needs to be nurtured over time</p>	<p>Sustainability; address structural issues that lead to silencing/disempowerment; increase sense of agency; provide place to speak for themselves; safety; structural issues (poverty, discrimination); opportunity for self-expression, give them a voice; self-esteem, sense of self-worth; alternative to life on the street (something constructive); give people a choice; support to cope with everyday life, identity formation; resources to make things work in a community; prevention of marginalization/ stigmatization processes; address structural hindrances in small steps; build communities for people to govern/lead/work for themselves;</p>

			<p>help navigate the helping system; support person in transition phase; help to navigate economic, health, legal questions; guidance to use resources; help to participate in leisure activities and cultural life; help to go to school, finish, and enter higher education; help finding a job; help with elements for immediate and future functioning; engage in future planning</p>
	Access/ Opportunity	<p>Intensive arts education can be transformative; FiddleFest, access for many people to participate; access to artistic/musical skills; ensembles, everyone included/welcome, no one cast out/stereotyped; access to instruments/music/ensemble; good occupation, good for the kids; students not properly served before; opportunity to make music together; opportunities for advancement; opportunity; activity not available otherwise; access for those who can't afford music education; long-term opportunities; access to tools; opportunity to thrive; can choose that it's not for them</p>	<p>South Africa, lack of access to music therapy services without private medical aid; equal access to public health care and MT services; opportunity to be heard (empowerment); sense of agency, empowerment, access safe space, being heard; constructive activities; see alternative options, and option to contribute, not just be a victim; what people can access, music beyond the therapy room; possibility to enter higher education, higher chance with opportunity for music participation; facilitating music therapy for everyone, music therapy as platform for political ideas, break down structures/barriers; participation in leisure activities; play/listen to music; provide alternative to be somebody, take ownership of story; dealing with possible problems, dilemmas, conflict; opportunity to have a support person in life transitions</p>
Intersection		<p>Psychologist works with kids in El Sistema program in Mexico</p>	<p>El Sistema and CoMT speak in different words/language but still reaching toward same goals/ideas; El Sistema sounds like a CoMT project, shares some of the same thinking</p>
Criticisms		<p>Picking at something without</p>	

		seeing the whole picture; parents have own criticisms/impressions of the program; there is some resistance with El Sistema; people are different and will interpret the program in different ways; would the opportunity be the same if working with the middle class; another neighborhood?	
Research		Research is limited but growing; uncharted territory; need to devise valid/reliable measures and study different cases	
	Longitudinal Study	Six years, L.A. Sistema programs. Measures: child development, changes in brain development, social and emotional development, executive function and cognition, musical development. Comparison group: children in sports (less cohesive), live in same neighborhood. Initial results: faster development in music-related areas and social/emotional areas. Improvisation, music students; no change at first glance, shouldn't be so difficult. Criticism: focus on one variable, wouldn't capture complexity of child development.	



## Discussion and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to comparatively examine the ways in which CoMT and El Sistema programs may address the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization and suggest how these two approaches may be able to work synergistically to achieve their shared goals. Interview data provided insight into aspects of the purpose and questions of this study that both reflect and expand on the information that already exists in the literature about these approaches. This study found that these programs show parallels as well as some divergencies in several areas, including the role of the music, their structure, their social justice aims, their outcomes, their implementation of music education, the existing research, and the amount of criticism each has generated.

Music, both as an object and as a resource, is central to both El Sistema and CoMT practice. This study found that for El Sistema and CoMT, music is an accessible resource that exists within people, communities, and culture and that can provide a way to accomplish nonmusical goals, such as forging relationships between people who participate in music-making. These programs rely on the basic premises that all people are innately musical, and that music is a resource that exists in some form across many different cultures (Aigen, 2005; Amir, 2004; Stige, 2002). They also focus on the fact that participation in music-making can lead to positive change in other areas of individual and community life and thus have an impact that goes beyond the immediate action of making music together (Ansdell, 2004; Davidson, 2004; DeNora, 2000).

In these programs, the music is not only about the art, but also about other social objectives; the musical and nonmusical goals are intertwined and interrelated (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015; Procter, 2004; Tunstall, 2012). Their social objectives include the

formation and performance of relationships, which reflect aspects of daily life and society—by reaching *communitas*, a state where social distinctions disappear, allowing everyone to become equal within the community that is being formed in the moment (Aigen, 2005; Arvelo, 2006; DeNora, 2000; Stige, 2002; Veblen, 2013). Being able to access *communitas* within the social space of the *nucleo* or the CoMT program can have a positive impact on other aspects of life outside that space, such as health, emotional well-being, and social development (DeNora, 2005; Stige & Aarø, 2012).

One main difference between the role of the music in El Sistema and CoMT practice has to do with the emphasis on musical quality. While performance can be an important aspect of both programs, CoMT places a greater emphasis on the process that takes place and the thinking behind what's offered, rather than the product that results (Ansdell, 2004; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012). While El Sistema programs vary as to how much emphasis they place on the music versus the social and emotional well-being of their participants, there seems to be a greater emphasis on overall musical quality and excellence in general (Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

A lack of structural uniformity is also one of the main similarities between El Sistema and CoMT. There is a lot of variation of designs and implementations across different El Sistema and CoMT programs, as each implementation is context-based and addresses a number of complex and multilayered variables to best serve the needs of the particular population being served. Both of these programs are flexible and evolve according to the needs of the participants. This is reflected in the literature. In CoMT, practitioners always consider the culture and context in which the work is taking place, and practice is not standardized (Ansdell, 2004; Stige, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012). In El Sistema, each *nucleo* has the flexibility to develop its own personality

and way of working while evolving constantly to meet the needs of the children and community being served (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

Even though each approach starts out with a superficially similar structure for its programs, the way of working is fundamentally different, especially as they come from two different fields. In other words, the structure of El Sistema and Community Music Therapy programs is similar in the sense that they are varied, flexible, and evolving, yet these approaches don't always meet in the way in which the work is carried out. Both El Sistema and CoMT place an important emphasis on performance (Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Tunstall, 2012). But El Sistema focuses on orchestra, choir, and band, with an emphasis on musical excellence (Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Osborne et al., 2015; Tunstall, 2012), while CoMT makes use of different types of interventions, such as theater groups, community projects, and musicking in any form it may take; for CoMT, the process is always more important than the product (Ansdell, 2004; Ghetti, 2016; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012). Regardless of the structure in which the service is provided, both of these programs may show a deep commitment to addressing social justice goals.

El Sistema and CoMT both work to address the needs of people or communities facing social and/or economic marginalization. This study found that El Sistema and CoMT practice may address issues of social justice, especially in terms of access, opportunity and inclusion, by making an effort to understand and listen to the needs of the people and the community being served and by emphasizing that the facilitator is not an expert but just another member of the community. People dealing with socioeconomic marginalization face a host of issues, including lack of access and opportunities, structural issues such as poverty and discrimination, inequality, and injustice; these issues often lead to stress, disconnection from people and society, decreased

health, and a persistent and debilitating sense of injustice (Stige & Aarø, 2012, p. 108; Alexander, 2012; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Woodward & Pestano, 2013).

El Sistema and CoMT work to address issues of social justice in a variety of ways, but primarily by providing access to and opportunities for music-making and social participation (Stige & Aarø, 2012; Tunstall, 2012). They accomplish this by addressing the most basic human rights, promoting empowerment, providing equal access to resources and opportunities participants would not otherwise have, creating opportunities for expression through music-making, giving people a voice, building relationships, encouraging a sense of belonging in a group, and making sure that everyone is included (Green, 1998; Kruger & Stige, 2015; Silverman, 2012; Stige & Aaro, 2012; Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016; Vaillancourt, 2012).

El Sistema and CoMT view the role of the facilitator differently and target different populations as participants who will engage in music-making. Even though not coming as an expert is an aspect of El Sistema practice, it does not appear to be emphasized in the literature. CoMT places a relatively greater emphasis on the many different roles that a therapist can play in the process. These include participating actively in music making; being a supervisor, researcher, or contact person for media and political organizations; performing organizational work; and leading projects, i.e., taking on the role that is needed across the different ecologies (Bruscia, 2015; O'Grady & McFerran, 2007; Stige, 2002, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004).

El Sistema and CoMT emphasize access and inclusion for everyone within their practice. El Sistema, however, only provides access to children and adolescents, while families and other community members are not directly involved in active music-making (Arvelo, 2006; Booth &

Tunstall, 2014; Tunstall, 2012; Tunstall & Booth, 2016). Families and other community members are only involved musically by attending concerts, and they may still receive some benefits, but if so, they are not due to direct involvement in active music-making. On the other hand, CoMT works with people across the life span (O'Grady & McFerran, 2007; Stige & Aaro, 2012).

This study found that participation in El Sistema and CoMT brings outcomes related to issues within the social, emotional, and community realms. Participants experience social outcomes, such as learning that they are people with capacity who can contribute to society, while experiencing trust and trying out different social roles (Arvelo, 2006; Stige, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012; Tunstall, 2012). The emotional outcomes that participants experience include empowerment, gaining a sense of hope, an increased sense of self-esteem and self-worth, the ability to express themselves through music, and a sense of pride and achievement (Borzacchini, 2005; Osborne et al., 2015; Stige, 2002; Stige & Aarø, 2012). Lastly, the outcomes experienced by the community include healthy community and relationship building, an increased sense of belonging, experiencing equality and inclusion, increased cooperation, and participation in society and culture (Arvelo, 2006; Booth & Tunstall, 2014; Krüger & Stige, 2015; Tunstall, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2012).

Participants in both El Sistema and CoMT may have the opportunity to move on or create a career out of working in these programs, wherever the opportunity is available, though the literature on CoMT does not emphasize this (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012). In Venezuela, however, El Sistema is well known for producing many great musicians and has a number of professional groups that travel around the world giving concerts and providing outreach to other El Sistema-inspired programs (Borzacchini, 2005; Tunstall, 2012).

Though this study finds that El Sistema and CoMT intersect in a variety of ways, it also shows that they digress from each other in two principal areas: criticism and research. There are a number of criticisms that have been leveled at El Sistema over the years, a fact that is evident in some of its literature (Baker, 2014, 2016). Criticism of CoMT exists, especially in terms of defining the boundaries in which music therapy starts or ends, but these were not evident in the literature. Furthermore, this study finds that the literature about El Sistema is limited but growing. The same can be said about research in CoMT, even though this study did not produce data directly confirming this.

As explained above, this study finds that both El Sistema and CoMT often incorporate goals that go well beyond their immediate setting (classroom or therapy room) and differ from the goals pursued by conventional music education and music therapy (AMTA, 2015; Baker, 2014; Ghetti, 2016; O'Grady & McFerran, 2007). This study also confirms that music is not a part of the public-school curriculum in many places around the world and that making lessons and music education free and accessible to those who can't afford it can be a part of CoMT. Although this fact does not appear in the CoMT literature surveyed (except perhaps as implied by the emphasis placed on providing resources), it is extremely important as it places what El Sistema does directly into the framework of what CoMT could look like. The literature does show that there are connections between CoMT and Community Music practice (O'Grady & McFerran, 2007). If El Sistema were to be considered a Community Music practice, then the connection with CoMT would become even more apparent and clear.

### **Implications and Applications**

This research study has helped me learn that CoMT and El Sistema cannot be conceptualized as fixed models but should instead be considered terms that encompass a broad

range of contextually-based practices. Taking this into consideration, I believe that CoMT and El Sistema practice would each benefit from combining with each other. Given the flexible and adaptable nature of these programs, there is almost an infinite number of possible ways they could come together. I believe that El Sistema would benefit from combining with CoMT by expanding the populations served and by allowing the positive outcomes to reach more people and areas of society. CoMT would also benefit from combining with El Sistema by incorporating its high level of musical excellence into the outreach that performing groups engage in, where that is in accordance with the needs of the participants being served.

When I visited the special education program in Lara, Venezuela, in 2012, I was told that what they do is not music therapy. To my surprise, this comment seemed to contain a certain amount of hostility. I did not try to figure out the reasons for that, though I wish I had. Although I agree that the work they are doing is not fundamentally music therapy—there are no certified music therapists there—I believe that music therapy would not replace but aid in realizing the program's goals and aims.

From what I have seen across a number of programs in the United States, El Sistema-inspired programs are doing a wonderful job of providing access to music for many different children and adolescents. Yet there does not seem to be an emphasis on including students with disabilities. There could be many reasons for this, but if one has to do with staff members' not feeling prepared to work with children and adolescents with disabilities, then that opens up an opportunity to consult and work with music therapists. Doing so would both address the lack of opportunities for disabled children and adolescents to engage in music-making and increase the type of access and resources the programs are able to provide.

Another way services could be expanded in El Sistema programs is to serve populations other than just children and adolescents. Given that music is an accessible resource within many people and communities, it makes sense to try to provide access to music to people across the life span. The specific implementation would of course vary across contexts and the needs within them. Furthermore, musical performances could become more than just aesthetic experiences: They could serve as advocacy or as political protest and action. If these performances demonstrate a high degree of musical excellence, then the impact on the target audience and the message would be even stronger.

I have recently begun providing music therapy services at Union City Music Project. This part of the program is in its infancy at this time. Music therapy occurs separately from the regular activities of the after-school program. As the program continues to grow, however, my goal is to find ways in which both aspects of the program can be integrated. I have begun thinking about different possibilities. Some of my ideas include preparing music therapy clients to perform with the orchestra or choir by providing specific parts or adaptations as needed. I would also like to start an ongoing group in which everyone in the program can participate, including students, clients, staff members, caregivers, and other members of the community.

Potential interventions for this group could be improvisation (instrumental, vocal, or movement-based) or even creative composition. I came across this idea at this year's El Sistema USA Symposium. It is used by OrchKids, an El Sistema-inspired program in Baltimore. It is an accessible and fun way of writing music, in which participants work together to create a product and everyone's input is welcome. I still need to learn more about it, but I think it has great potential, especially in trying to bring El Sistema and CoMT practice together.



## **Limitations**

There are two principal limitations to this study: sample depth and researcher bias. The sample depth was kept small, mainly due to the amount of information obtained from each interview. Even though each interview contained a great deal of information and gave a complete overview of each interviewee's expertise about each approach, this information probably only scratches the surface of how El Sistema and CoMT practice is carried out around the world. Conducting additional interviews would have likely provided more perspectives about these practices.

Even though the main investigator was explicit about her stance on the topic (bias) and despite the measures taken to prevent such bias from affecting the results (triangulation, member-checking, and expert review), the subjective nature of the analysis calls into question the validity and reliability of the process and of the results obtained. The researcher's bias, however, helped to inform the results. An additional limitation to this study lies in the difficulty of finding parallels and divergencies between two non-fixed models that come from two distinct disciplines.

## **Future Research**

The areas of focus in this study would benefit from further research. This study has focused on the theoretical side of how El Sistema and CoMT could come together to work synergistically towards their shared goals. The next step would be to use the theoretical framework developed in this study in action research. There are many different forms and configurations that such research could take, but perhaps the best course would be to study a pilot program where both of these practices are taking place together. Given the many variables

involved in both practices, it appears as though there may be endless possibilities for the design of such a research program. Having the ground open makes for many exciting opportunities.

### **Reflection**

I have learned a great deal throughout this process. Even though I had done some research before, nothing prepared me for the breadth, depth, and focus that this study required. Even though it was difficult to continue through all the ups and downs of the process, I am extremely grateful that I had the encouragement and support that I needed to see it through. It would have been hugely disappointing for me if I had stopped somewhere in the middle, because I never would have been able to answer the burning questions about these programs that had been occupying me for quite a while.

Research projects of any kind are not easy, and I have come to have even more admiration and appreciation for anyone who dedicates his or her life to finding new knowledge and meaning. The process of conceptualizing the purpose of the study and research questions was a long and difficult process, due to working with terms that describe a broad range of practices, as opposed to fixed models. I understood this aspect of the project from the beginning, but the challenge was being able to portray it through the writing. I now have many more questions that I would like answered, but this experience has given me a broad set of tools to use in my future work, whether it is research-related or not. I believe we are facing a very exciting time in the field, and I am looking forward to contributing in whatever way I can.

### **Conclusion**

Socioeconomic marginalization causes a number of barriers to participation in life and society. People facing socioeconomic marginalization deal with issues such as lack of access to resources and opportunities, lack of connection with people and society, stigmatization,

inequality, and injustice. Even though El Sistema and CoMT show parallels in the role of the music, the way in which the programs are structured, addressing social justice, and potential outcomes to participants, there are still some significant differences that likely stem from the fact that these approaches draw from two disparate fields. Despite these differences, it is probable that working synergistically would be beneficial to both CoMT and El Sistema.

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## Appendix A

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study about Community Music Therapy and El Sistema. This study is being conducted by Virginia Eulacio-Guevara from the Music Therapy Department in the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. This study will involve an interview about Community Music Therapy/El Sistema.

It will take approximately 60 minutes of your time.

If you are music therapist that provides Community Music Therapy services, or a music educator or administrator who works in an El Sistema or El Sistema- inspired program, you may be eligible to participate. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

If you have any questions, please contact Virginia Eulacio-Guevara at [eulacioguev1@montclair.edu](mailto:eulacioguev1@montclair.edu) or +1 (317) 289-0664

Thank you for considering participation in this study. This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Virginia Eulacio-Guevara, MT-BC

Masters Student, Music Therapy Department

John J. Cali School of Music, Montclair State University

## Appendix B



*College of the Arts*  
 Cali School of Music  
 Voice: 973-655-7212  
 Fax: 973-655-5279

### CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

**Study's Title:** Community Music Therapy and El Sistema Programs: Addressing the Empowerment Needs of Marginalized Individuals and their Communities.

**Why is this study being done?** The purpose of this study is to comparatively examine the ways in which the manifestations of Community Music Therapy models and El Sistema programs may (or may not) address the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** The researcher will conduct an interview, in person or via Skype/FaceTime/Google Hangouts. Interview questions will include aspects of interviewees' experiences in Community Music Therapy or El Sistema. All participants will sign informed consent. All interviews will be recorded with a Zoom h2n recorder, which will be used to transcribe interviewee responses. Data will be kept in the researcher's password-protected, personal computer for at least three years after the completion of the study. After this time, data will be destroyed.

**Time:** This study involves one session lasting approximately 60 minutes.

**Risks:** we anticipate that your participation in this interview presents no greater risk than conversations or everyday use of the Internet.

Although we will keep your identity confidential as it relates to this research project, if we learn of any suspected child abuse we are required by NJ state law to report that to the proper authorities immediately.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from this study by learning about the parallels and contrasts in the ways in which Community Music Therapy models and El Sistema programs address the needs of marginalized individuals and their communities.

Others may benefit from this study because music therapists and El Sistema teaching artists may be inspired to begin a program in which the benefits of both modalities are combined to better serve the children and the community. Upon completion, the study will be published at Montclair State University's Sprague Library. Additionally, findings will potentially be presented at professional conferences and/or published in a peer-reviewed journal.

**Who will know that you are in this study?** You will not be linked to any presentations. We will keep who you are confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in any presentation of this study. However, you should know that New Jersey requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

**Do you have to be in the study?**

You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Nothing will happen to you.



*College of the Arts*  
Cali School of Music  
Voice: 973-655-7212  
Fax: 973-655-5279

<b>Do you have any questions about this study?</b>		
Virginia Eulacio-Guevara 168 Washington Street Apt. 5C Bloomfield, NJ 07003 <a href="mailto:eulacioguev1@montclair.edu">eulacioguev1@montclair.edu</a> (317) 289-0664	Brian Abrams Associate Professor of Music John J. Cali School of Music Chapin Hall 1 Normal Ave. Montclair, NJ 07043 <a href="mailto:abramsb@montclair.edu">abramsb@montclair.edu</a> (973) 655-3458	
<p><b>Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?</b> Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or <a href="mailto:reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu">reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu</a>.</p> <p><b>Future Studies</b>            It is okay to use my data in other studies:            Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No</p> <p><b>Study Summary</b>            I would like to get a summary of this study:            Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No</p> <p>As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape me:            Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No</p> <p><b>One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.</b></p> <p><b>Statement of Consent</b>            I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.</p>		
_____	_____	_____
Print your name here	Sign your name here	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Faculty Sponsor	Signature	Date

## Appendix C

### Sample Questions

1. Could you state your level of experience with Community Music Therapy/El Sistema?
2. Do you have experience in other areas of music therapy/music education?
3. In your opinion, what are the basic tenets and principles of Community Music Therapy/El Sistema?
4. What makes Community Music Therapy/El Sistema stand out from other programs/models/etc.?
5. How does Community Music Therapy/El Sistema address social justice?
6. Which kinds of techniques are used for Community Music Therapy sessions/El Sistema lessons? Describe methodology.
7. How do people with different needs benefit differently from Community Music Therapy/El Sistema?
  - a. For the individual?
  - b. Families?
  - c. The community?
8. Could you describe at least one case vignette related to Community Music Therapy/El Sistema from your personal experience? Please give as much details as possible.

## Appendix D

### Interview A

- Laura Calderon de la Barca, psychologist, works with kids in Sistema program in Tepoztlan, Mexico.
- Deep differences between El Sistema and “regular” music education.
- Huge difference with piano lessons: they’re one-on-one.
- Have attempted to alter piano teaching: more group experiences, have kids play together as much as possible.
- Kids come together in a *nucleo* after school in a more organic way.
- Sistema offers: ensemble learning experience, ensemble playing experience.
- Piano students miss a lot in the fact that they don’t grow up playing with other kids; grow up playing by themselves.
- Classroom teaching in elementary school, more like Sistema: one teacher with vast groups of children, but only get 30 min a week with each class; feels like what you can do is limited.
- Elementary music classroom: working with groups, little ensembles, group singing.
- Kids making music together can be magnetic, energy can feed/teach each other.
- Mainstream music education lacks the El Sistema aspect of intensity.
- 4 of what arts education needs to be is shallow, misinformed.
- Intensive arts education can be transformative.
- Music plays a role in all of the basic tenets and principles of El Sistema.
- Can’t separate, social learning over here, music learning over there; they happen together and at the same time.
- Music is the way, the means through which all these other things happen; the through line and the means; the channel through which these things happen.
- Radical inclusion within a musical ensemble.
- Ensemble learning of music.
- Peer learning of music.
- Music as passion and expressivity.
- Intensity (meaning frequency) of musical and social experience.
- High musical aspiration to further high life aspiration.
- Family and community involvement, the means is music, the end is engagement; coming together.
- Family/community involvement: El Sistema New Jersey Alliance (ESNJA), Fiddle Fest 2017 biggest, partly because of access (central area); many people came together outside of the ensemble; true sense of ‘we’re all here’; sense of unification, regardless of where they come from; all in one focus.
- There are things about Sistema programs in some places that don’t happen elsewhere.
- Family/community involvement: some Sistema programs it’s overflowing (i.e. UCMP; other places it’s impossible to create it (i.e. cities in Northern Europe, Denmark, Sweden, Italy).
- Northern Europe Sistema programs: programs made of primarily immigrant kids; complicated ethnic composition; hostility between different ethnic families; kids all together in the program; parents don’t want to come together with those other people;

parents don't want to be involved; resistance; ethnic suspiciousness and hostility; best the programs can do is try; can't hope for family involvement, especially in the beginning; concentrate on the kids; don't make big pressure about families all gathering together; encourage, can't be forced; can slowly evolve.

- Bosnian program: Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims (not talking to each other); Sistema program, kids from both sides; parents don't want to interact with the others, but allow their kids to go to school with them.
- Sistema Europe camp: allow kids to go on buses with the other group together; week in a foreign country. Parents will start talking to each other (kids are friends and play music together); don't sing songs in either language (only other people's languages, French, Chinese, English).
- Cultural sensitivity.
- El Sistema has the flexibility to be what it needs to be at whatever place; evolve in each place to become what they need to be there.
- Living, breathing, global movement; must be different in different places.
- Venezuelan Sistema: clear from get-go, never allow it to become a franchise; go and evolve to what it should be in all these places; not cookie cutter; adhere to few central principles, but make own version of that.
- NJ: each program is very different.
- Critics: picking at something without seeing the whole picture.
- Flexibility makes it strong and attractive across the world.
- El Sistema addresses social justice; different ethnicities, kids coming from different places.
- About social justice since its birth (bones, DNA); allowing Venezuelan musicians to play classical music (instead of European/North American).
- Widening of hierarch gate to let everybody in.
- Social justice means different things in different places.
- Access to artistic/musical skills.
- Empowerment.
- Inclusiveness.
- Equity.
- Radical empathy.
- Cross-cultural understanding.
- Ensembles, everyone is included; no one outcast/stereotyped; everyone welcome to do whatever they can.
- Students not always able to articulate the effect of the programs, but they're living it with experiences given and day to day in classes; building it into their character.
- Encouraging, providing.
- Social justice happens when minds and spirits change.
- Sometimes difficult to see what the students are taking away while working in the trenches.
- Nothing is as easy as it seems; if it's worth doing it's probably going to be hard.
- Students in Latin America, most articulate and clear about social justice/change aspect of the program; programs are much older/established; more understood culturally.
- Kids are learning, even at most basic level, that they can help another person.

- Latin America has cultural understanding of music and social engagement; more explicit in the culture, easier for a kid to understand it; part of government planning to achieve social justice goals.
- Music is a large part of Latin American culture.
- Latin Americans are ahead in using music as social change; more farsighted; more advanced in understanding and practice.
- Latin America is ahead in understanding the place of the arts in the strength of a community and culture.
- North American and Northern European cultures: important places for music; don't understand it as part of getting together or as an answer to certain needs or cultural crises; it's evolving.
- Japan: people lost everything by tsunami; person in local school district saw information on El Sistema, reached out of cultural comfort zone, don't need clothing drive, El Sistema is the answer.
- Korea: no high level of poverty (as Latin America/developing countries); government saw social problem for them, kids isolation from others; only child, go home alone, do homework, play video games; government worried about isolation; started a high-level El Sistema program, funded by federal government. Effect: children wouldn't talk to their parents before but now they do.
- Countries can learn from each other; El Sistema is flexible, it can happen wherever.
- A youth orchestra does not solve the problem of poverty.
- Needs structural changes.
- Need to fix the vast inequities between the incomes of the highest and the lowest.
- Change the way that people think of themselves, both individually in relation to larger community, opens the possibility for all kinds of change.
- Sistema success in creation of 'we'; inclusive, no little tribe; 'we', larger 'we', larger 'we,' not in competition with others
- Coexistence.
- Integration.
- Working collectively for the good of all.
- Learn different mindset from what they grow up learning.
- Understanding of self as individual.
- Learn they are people with capacity and potential.
- Each is a person with value, who is important and has good things to offer; something many kids don't grow up understanding or believing, especially in areas of harsh poverty.
- Sistema can change attitudes profoundly, change people's capacities for intellectual growth and emotional/social cooperation.
- Sistema cannot affect change on its own; there must be progress in many fronts.
- Difficult to pinpoint/predict what's going to happen (the effects); there's no formula; many variable/outside forces that play a role in their lives.
- Must be realistic about what we can do.
- What we can do is an essential part of what people need.
- No handbook for starting an El Sistema program; there will never be, good thing; there are essential cornerstone principles on how El Sistema operates.
- It's up to each program to invent around their needs/purposes, in their own language; make it up.



- Evolving all the time, always changing; like trying to pinpoint a moving target.
- Case example: Ciao, 10 years old, Campos, Brazil (extremely depressed city, interior of Brazil; kids live in danger/ poverty); young piccolo/flute player; found program by mistake, walked by and heard the music; didn't know anything about music but it was compelling to him; lives in most basic accommodation in favela with mom and several siblings. Came to program at 7/8 he was sad all the time, all he remembers about that time is sadness, but saw the program as a place that could give him a future; difficult at first, started on flute, thought it sounded beautiful; difficult to find place to practice, mom would yell that she couldn't hear the tv, would practice in a back alley, fearing getting mugged/killed; now stays as long as possible at *nucleo* and practices; progressed quickly to advanced orchestra and is very good (plays all the time); transformational experience going on inside of him; program going to equip him to study music at university; won't join a gang. Years after, not sad, engaged, eager to get back to rehearsal.

### *Interview B*

- Longitudinal research story (6 years); aspects of children development, LA Sistema programs. Children 6/7 at beginning, now 11/12 (moving to adolescence). Brain institute looking at changes in brain development, social and emotional development, executive function and cognition, musical development, what happens with the families/what they say about participation (what changed). Started with children before joining program (lottery based system); comparison group, children in sports, children who live in the same neighborhood (no intensive extra-curricular program involvement). Music program, tutoring, concerts, ear training, social services (i.e. homework improvement).
- First year of study: changes in cortical thickness as we grow/develop, kids in music program, faster development in some music-related areas; vocal improvisation skills; social/emotional measures, empathy, prosociality, other pieces Sistema claims to develop (want to see what happens).
- There's a cultural piece that's important; 90% of participants of Mexican, Honduran, Guatemalan or Salvadorian origin.
- Latin American perspective, family aspect is important (big families); cultural piece often independent variable in psychology, but they're not, they're important here.
- Criticism of study, focus on just one thing; would not capture complexity of child development in and through music.
- El Sistema is a complex phenomenon, variables intermingle with each other; it's not just music, it's not just the program, [the effect] is everything [working together].
- Population is going a lot of distress; a lot of single moms, struggling; still find time to bring kids to classes, rehearsals, program as a whole; partly because it helps with caregiving, shared aspect; believe this is something good for their kids, good occupation.
- Sports program (comparison group): less cohesive, spend less time together.
- Music program, kids enter as cohort, growing together, live in same neighborhood.
- Parent of one child with sometimes bring somebody else's child to university to participate in study; other parent is working; high level of cooperation and commitment, impacts how children respond to social tasks; nanny or grandparents more common.
- Cultural aspect, helping each other, don't see that everywhere; supportive, know each other, know the families; become a community.

- Parents have their own criticisms and impressions of the program; some having problems, may pull out kid, too much homework from school; ask researcher for help talking to schools; high level of trust.
- Downtown L.A.: some kids in foster care, see all kinds of situations; poorest, most complex area; urban problems.
- UCMP: high level of family involvement, help each other, know each other, struggles of making it to rehearsals and homework; complex.
- All Sistema-inspired programs are very different in nature; the programs vary very much; every program is different.
- In a lot of El Sistema programs, there is a concern about the social piece; the social and emotional development, and some of the non-musical attributes; Sao Paulo.
- One of the main differences between group school music and El Sistema is that El Sistema-inspired programs tend to have the ability to afford to have different missions and goals; schools' goals are based on curriculum, national and state standards that need to be followed.
- There is a lot of variance in El Sistema programs, and in group school music programs.
- People think of El Sistema-inspired programs as -the- place for classical music.
- There are El Sistema-inspired programs that are not necessarily based on just classical music; try to offer different genres; Little Kids Rock, Mariachi bands, jazz bands, combos; similar in the population that they serve.
- Some people say that there is rigor in El Sistema in terms of musical quality; don't have enough data to be able to say that.
- Resistance with El Sistema.
- Colleague mentioned that music education is coming back to California; some ways, have El Sistema to thank for that, has opened up window for conversation.
- Now serving students who were not properly served before; positive impact.
- Trying to get a consensus of what El Sistema is and what it is not is a difficult task for researchers of people interested; what you read or see in one place is likely different from what you read or see in a different place; confusing to navigate available information; there are lots of views; must decide your stance, while acknowledging the diversity of information.
- Information (research) on El Sistema is limited but growing.
- The circumstances of kids in El Sistema may be very different from wealthy middle-class children, whose parents can afford instruments and private lessons; there is an impact, but is it that different?
- Reporting findings, mindful of population, portrayal being presented; want immediate answer, but it's more complex.
- Not changing improvisation at first glance; students prefer to improvise on their primary instrument; just experimental portion, message would be program is not delivering.
- Ask kids in music program to improvise in free way, give lots of options, they do very well; problem of method.
- Uncharted territory so need to devise measures that capture what we're looking for.
- Improvising shouldn't be so difficult, but it is because of how we teach; there is room to explore things, will still grow and develop.
- Positive trend in education to try new things and break the norm.
- Music can bring people together.

- Music as an instrument of social transformation.
- Each program transforms the experiences to suit the needs of their own communities; people adapt and fit with the communities they are serving.
- Los Angeles: 3-4 programs run by the same organization; each program the principles are slightly different, understood or applied in different ways.
- Keyword: opportunity. Giving people an opportunity they probably wouldn't otherwise, make music together.
- Some programs are very strict/music-centered; competition/hierarchy as is common in the orchestral world.
- Some programs are focused on the social piece, giving children opportunity, develop skills, be in safe environment.
- Venezuela: music-driven, but each *nucleo* is different, all teachers are different; there are different ways of thinking about where the music fits in, but it's a big portion; music is not secondary.
- Programs where there is a concern with music, but also a bigger concern with making sure the children are well.
- NJ, six programs, all different from each other; *nucleos* in Venezuela also different from each other.
- There are specific principles that are overarching, or meant as a guide, but it's not easy to define in a universal way.
- The goals are to address or at least consider issues of social justice; from perspective of access and opportunity.
- Somebody's social justice may be someone else's social injustice.
- El Sistema programs give people the opportunity to fit in.
- It's important to understand that people are different, and will interpret the program in different ways; what they will take away from the program will be different.
- Contratempo: biggest shanty town in Rio, stories from different students, track them; almost salvation discourse to these programs; coming from deficit program; shows one kid who become very dependent on the program, hard for him to leave, went back to world of drugs; most kids had opportunities and now studying in US, developed musicianship, found place where they could express their emotions/frustrations/everyday problems.
- Dialog of world transformation happening (ideal behind it); maybe for some kids it is very difficult to happen.
- Need to study different cases.
- There is an opportunity, but is this opportunity different than the one that happens in a neighborhood with middle class children, who are not undergoing the same problems? Are we connecting with this population in the same way that we're connecting to middle class children across the road, or someplace else?
- Parent: teacher is strict, would they be so in a different neighborhood? also get this dialog in Brazil.
- How are we operationalizing our notions of social justice, and what is it, and where?
- There's opportunity, there are kids who are flourishing.
- Child playing violin, unhappy, wanted harp; found him on, super happy, probably going to be professional, doing well and happy; opportunity he wouldn't otherwise have had.

- There are all these things that the program is doing; bringing a population that doesn't necessarily have access because music education costs so much.
- Dealing with people, different personalities, what someone thinks is great, the next person could completely disagree.
- Social justice, difficult topic, complicated, but important especially in current times.
- It brings it to a humane level; not a simple task; there are always going to be people who are happy, and people that are not, and that's okay; go for the largest number, not two or three.
- We can have an impact on the people we are serving.
- Family involvement seems to always be secondary, and it isn't necessarily always the case.
- Needs: giving them a voice; it's important; not so top-down, more participatory in a way; sometimes they are not used to being asked because no one has given them a voice.
- Easy for us to assume what their needs are, without asking or making sure that it's right.
- Must learn about the community before starting; understand their needs, hear their voices.
- Having a voice and having a say builds over time; has to be a conversation, it's a relationship.
- Needs: understanding their concerns, build the relationship.
- Not coming in with all expertise; just a person like everybody else; let me become part of community, come be part of mine; share/relate; find middle ground.
- Easy to come in as important person, impose things on people; keeps the cycle going; have someone come in and say, 'you tell me'; important for creating relationship/having trust.
- It's about developing relationships; understanding that music is about relationships; relationships are important to build because otherwise it becomes these two parts that are coming together, but not.
- Relationships need to be nurtured over time, can't ignore that; not going to open up quickly, need to protect themselves.
- Started program, arrived early to concert, most seats already taken; families there in best attire; special occasion; one of the moms cut and did the hair of a lot of the performing children; parents very proud, important role model for them; for the families it's not just the program, but what it means to them; see in the program opportunities for their kids in the long term; asked about aspirations for their children, lot of parents want their children to get college degrees; example of everything the program represents.
- Do we give opportunities? Some people say they're not interested; people are interested in a bunch of things, if you give them the right tools and opportunities.
- Most concerts, parents are there early, very proud; there supporting their kids, see value in the program; see opportunity.
- Give kids an opportunity to thrive, and they will; some will say that's not my call, that's fine, they had the experience.
- Everybody can sing, if you're confident; all musical to some degree; just getting it out, making sure that you have confidence to get your voice out.
- El Sistema: it's a great opportunity; seen kids who have grown so much through being in the program; also kids who tried and decided it wasn't for them; it's a great thing.

### *Interview C*

- There's a spectrum between more traditional music therapy and Community Music Therapy.
- Not only considering the individual child, but always considering the broader context around this child, and the different layers and ecologies that is also a part of this child's life and experience.
- The music therapy process doesn't always follow traditional guidelines.
- How can music be helpful not only to this child, but to the community that this child is growing up in?
- Residential facility for children with disabilities, could music be helpful to the caregivers who are working with these children on an everyday basis, and should we actually do music work with the caregivers? How can we also benefit the caregivers.
- Because of the context where we work (under-resourced, underprivileged communities), must think about sustainability. Once the music therapist leaves this place/child, then what kind of sustainability is there? often leads to skills training for children or people working with the children.
- How can we do this in a context that everyone feels welcomed and can feel free to come in and participate?
- Having lived experiences of CoMT makes it easier to wrap your head around; it's a complicated process.
- Basic tenets: considering the broader context of the clients; focus is not just on the client and diagnosis, but also what is in the child's community.
- Aggressive child in school context, ask what is happening in child's life; community with lots of violence; think about different ways of understanding how the community context and settings is impacting this child.
- Allow the work to go beyond the closed doors of an individual music therapy session.
- Role of the music therapist: important in CoMT; emphasis on not going into a context as the expert, but understanding they are resources.
- Understand communities and people as resilient, not just a diagnosis; coming with skills, understanding, energy, ways of being in the world.
- Not bringing a specific kind of intervention, but looking at what is already within the context, and what we can work with.
- South African context, people are very musical, often music exists already, the resources are there already; how can we help to strengthen and broaden already existing resources?
- Not the therapist as expert, but looking at resources and resilience within the specific space/within the specific client population.
- Music is often central to the therapeutic processes; always music with a focus on other non-musical goals; music is often what guides the process.
- Therapist is not the expert musician.
- Always working on what the client brings in musically.
- Music still stands central to the group process; it's not that different working individually to working in a group' the music belongs to the whole group.
- One aspect of music that could be different in CoMT, not always, sometimes there could be more of a focus on the music as a product; i.e. using performance as part of the process; choir, acquiring the musical skills of singing.
- In more traditional music therapy process, there would be very little focus on acquiring skills.

- CoMT, the process is always what's more important than the product.
- In the U.S. you don't hear much about CoMT, though there are probably people doing it; uncommon; perhaps a stigma, but there are many ways in which we can provide services, provide the music, do the work.
- In the U.S. you don't hear much about CoMT, though there are probably people doing it; uncommon; perhaps a stigma, but there are many ways in which we can provide services, provide the music, do the work.
- It's not as much about what the work looks like in the end, small or big group, or even individual session, CoMT probably has more to do with how you're thinking about it and how you're understanding the work, impacts the decisions you're making during the music therapy process.
- There's a lot of thought that goes into it: what is the context? It's how you're thinking and making sense of it.
- Community with gang violence, school context, working in sessions with children, also working with teachers, working with parents; long-term planning place; start with music therapy access, then after-school music groups; sometimes work looks more like traditional music therapy, but in terms of thinking, it is more within the CoMT framework.
- Internship: had to think about context and culture of the place, and how they play an important part in what you're going to do; bring it into context and think about the different aspects, and how they're reflective of the place and the people.
- Considering the different contexts, whether it has to do with the actual culture of the people, or the culture of the institution in which you're working in, or the culture in the community.
- It's all these different, complex layers, and you're constantly trying to make connections between all these layers, and all of these things are helping you make decisions about what to do next, and where the process needs to go.
- The process is completely guided by the clients.
- Always going to face multiple layers; humans are complex beings.
- Because CoMT is specific on the context, it allows you to adapt and change to meet the needs of the clients in each context; not a one size fits all approach.
- If you apply one thing in a context, may get similar results, not necessarily relevant to another context; one approach with one cultural group might not be appropriate for another kind of group.
- CoMT allows you to bring something to a client that is relevant within their specific context, allows you to adapt and change what you're doing to meet the needs of the client in that context; very useful.
- Adaptable to the different places that you end up working as a music therapist; it allows you to do the work that you need to do with each group/peoples.
- CoMT addresses social justice.
- South Africa: people that don't have private medical aid are not able to access music therapy services.
- Music Works: create opportunities for children who have access to public healthcare, to also access music therapy services; central to organization is social justice issue of equal access to services; work has a lot to do with empowerment.

- Working with marginalized communities, children growing up in low-income areas, high levels of violence; giving children an opportunity to have their voices heard (empowerment).
- Implicitly, therapist isn't going in as expert, implies equality, therapist/client/ whole, equality within the music space; one doesn't hold more power or more knowledge than the other, but everyone's knowledge, power, music are equally valued.
- Implicitly, therapist isn't going in as expert, implies equality, therapist/client/ whole, equality within the music space; one doesn't hold more power or more knowledge than the other, but everyone's knowledge, power, music are equally valued.
- Have very little sense of agency in their own lives.
- In areas with high levels of poverty and violence, what happens to children isn't always known, and children don't have anywhere to go to go speak for themselves.
- Sense of agency, empowerment, having their voices heard, accessing safe spaces (don't have safe spaces, even in schools).
- Schools can be dangerous places for children to go to, teachers aren't always better.
- Safety is central to the work that we do.
- Structurally, there are many things that are usually beyond the control of the people, affects them on a day-to-day basis; structural issues such as poverty and discrimination on many levels.
- Important to give them an opportunity to express themselves, and give them a voice.
- Self-esteem or sense of self-worth is often something that we identify as a need; experiencing enhanced feelings of self-worth; structural issues have a negative impact on people's sense of self-worth.
- Music therapy spaces can be powerful ways for people to strengthen their sense of self-worth; realizing they have something to contribute.
- The non-musical aspects that they are working on can stay with them and help them go through those barriers that the structure is giving them.
- Have had cases where young clients grew out of music therapy, and moved on to after-school music groups; sometimes also end up employed or doing an internship running groups with younger children.
- In these communities there is a high prevalence of males becoming involved in gangs and destructive activities.
- Give alternative to life on the streets; choosing to do music, something constructive, rather than the destructiveness of gangs.
- Music opens different doors.
- People don't necessarily decide to make a life out of being a community musician; sometimes move on and find different career opportunities.
- Helping people to see that there are alternative options and they have something to contribute to their communities; not just a victim of circumstances.
- People can be a part of the social change and the social justice that they want for their communities.
- Young girl found out HIV+ recently; marginalized group due to stigma; wrote song about status, shared with others, giving message of hope to other young people, important to know status, can still have a full life (hopeful/positive message); did an event, share message with peers/people in the community; very empowering, moving from someone

alienated in the community, because of stigma, to moving to a position where she was giving a message of hope to community, powerful process.

- Create a legacy; go through process herself, but also bring it into context, give it to someone else, hopefully creating a positive chain of events.
- Increased confidence, sense of mastering a skill; lots of layers of what it contributed to her personal development, and her community.
- The goals often go beyond the client/room; child you're working with is central to the process, but there is often a ripple effect.
- The constructiveness, positivity, hope that comes out of therapeutic process for a person, can also be hopeful/constructive/ positive for those around this person, and for the broader community.
- There are different layers, and the impact goes beyond the individual, the one session, or the one song.
- Had positive impact on the relationship with the people caring for her; positive impact on the non-profit organization taking care of her; shifted their culture/ dynamics in terms of how they listen to young people, hearing what she had to say, providing spaces for young people to make their voices heard.
- It's quite complex, it feels like an octopus with its tentacles.
- Giving people a choice is important, empowering; structure and oppression weigh down on a community of people, giving them a choice/voice can help stop that.
- It can work like a circle, start in therapy, then after-school program, then come back as an employee/intern; it's not just the fact that an individual can come back, but how other people can look up to them.
- Ripple effect, broader than just one person, stretches out back into the community.
- It has to do with what people can access; music can do more than just being closed within a music therapy room.
- There's something children (people) want from music, can be used as a tool to work toward other things.
- South Africa: music is for all children (everyone), not just something that is for some; culturally people understand music closely; who are we to say that music is exclusive for some?
- Music is an accessible tool; in communities with deprivation in many levels, economically, physically (shelter/ food); music is still a vibrant source, easy tool to do change work, whether with individual or within community [cultural context].
- Being involved with music can help children with academic goals.
- South Africa: public schools, no music teacher anymore; only find music teachers where schools can afford to generate an income to appoint a teacher; music is not part of the curriculum anymore; yet there is still a rich musical culture, which helps in understanding role music can play.

#### *Interview D*

- CoMT has much to do about the way of working in Norway.
- Work with adolescents in contemporary school; child welfare (institutions, foster care); mental health with adults; elderly care; use personal experiences with rock band as a music therapist.



- Activities such as rock band, theater groups, performances, community projects; there are many applications.
- Instead of just using the piano or African drums, using drum kit, keyboard, bass guitar, electric guitar; everything related to bands.
- Rock bands: start with easy way to play drums, or bass guitar, playing in a group; can start groups with all newcomers, or with people who have been learning for some time, or a mix of newcomers and experts.
- Many possibilities with this work because playing in a band has to do with not only playing instruments, but also how to operate, and give each other support, to communicate, being able to handle bad feedback/behavior; good resource for adolescents who need automatic social practice, where they can learn collaboration.
- Working in a group you must be able to contribute with your part, but also to collaborate and to listen to each other, and create the nuances that go into having a good experience.
- Adolescents at risk: need support to cope with everyday life; way to handle school and make their way into adult life/ become grown-up, learn to take care of themselves without support; identity formation, figuring out who you are in the world.
- If you can be a successful band collaborator (guitarist, vocalist, drummer), then have identity as somebody who is able to do something positive, useful, worth recognizing; can contribute positively to your environment, your community.
- CoMT is about using the resources in the community to make structures for participation for young people who need support to make their way from being adolescents to adults.
- Strategies in CoMT: 1. Work with the individual person in an active way; being a participant in the musicianship (playing, listening to music, talking about music).
- Strategies in CoMT: 2. Be an organizer, or facilitator of network, or organization work, where you make connections for various purposes (i.e. need a place to be, need money/resources/collaborators); music therapist music be an organizer of projects.
- Strategies in CoMT: 3. Be a person who has the possibility to impact society; work with the media, work with science, work with politicians, work to make things possible in society, help adolescents to gain a way into society so their story can be heard.
- You need all kinds of resources to make things work in a community.
- Music is an active medium that you work through with people in action.
- Music could be a way to organize social participation; you can have music as a part of society.
- Music is a powerful social capital you can use to fight power relations, or to protest society; use it to break down barriers to progress.
- Music is a part of all layers in society, and we can use the layers to facilitate CoMT practice; like the ecological approach, where all these systems come together.
- It goes right into the ecological thinking of music; it's not only a question of what you're listening to; it's the question about which possibility of agency you have for finishing school, having a job, or enter higher education.
- If you can facilitate music participation, then you can also facilitate the possibilities the individual has to have to enter higher education; child welfare context, it's exactly what you need.
- Individuals in welfare don't have the same possibilities to enter higher education as other people do.

- Venezuela: poor people who don't have the same possibilities to go into education, but give music education, or musical participation, then they'll have a higher chance of going into education.
- Finding connections between CoMT/ES: spoken in different words/language, still reaching same goals/ideas.
- El Sistema sounds like a CoMT project; share some of the same thinking.
- In the U.S. there is a need for a specific MT definition; has to be in a neat square; CoMT aligns well with my thinking and how I see the potential for the work.
- The main ingredient in CoMT thinking is that the practice is human rights based; what we do in practice is based on values such as equality, freedom, solidarity, etc.; CoMT is a way to implement human rights-based practice.
- In a lot of places, music is ingrained in the culture, and who we are as people; makes sense to have music as a resource, and as a driver for different possibilities.
- It is not a question about giving music therapy to those who can pay for it, but about facilitating music therapy for everyone; becomes political action, where music therapy is a platform for political ideas; breaking down structures and barriers; it's for everybody.
- Have a project where we collect used music instruments to hand them over to people who can't afford their own.
- Part of the CoMT approach is to distribute resources in the community.
- There are many ways of thinking about CoMT.
- Norway: pay for music education; CoMT program could make it possible to participate in music education program without paying; make it free and accessible for those who can't afford it; lessons and instruments are costly; providing the opportunity for music lessons can lead to many other opportunities.
- Make a connection between being able to access music education program with instruments, and how that leads to being able to participate in school, or enter higher education.
- If you have a leisure activity, and are able to be with friends and have a network, then you have a better chance to make your way in life; not in the streets doing who know what.
- It has to do with the prevention of marginalization processes, and the stigmatization to processes, which comes from poverty and drug abuse, or criminal activity.
- CoMT has to do with social justice explicitly, facilitating people with both material and immaterial resources; help with self-expression, develop language, giving possibilities, which they can use straight away in society.
- Music has a very high degree of social capital; can be used straight away as social capital, or cultural capital, help them step up in the ladder of social justice; accessible; possible to use to excel in society.
- One of the young people learned to play guitar, and could straight away go to school, and play guitar in the music classroom.
- Often inequality is happening at school; kids with rich parents, help them with all kinds of things, know how to play instruments, know how to be a music listener; people not living at home/living at institutions, don't have family resources, don't know how to play guitar.
- Help a young man learn some guitar chords, can easily exchange that knowledge into social capital at school because you need to learn to play guitar in music education.

- CoMT addresses social justice in an indirect way; if you work through media/ politics with a whole group of people (i.e. child welfare), you can work with how society looks at that population; changing labels/stigma gives them a place to go.
- If you work through media, and work through the power of people, and try to change the negative label, that would be a more implicit way to work to change social injustice.
- We can work for social justice directly with concrete examples, or can work more on the power/society level (larger group).
- The way CoMT addresses social justice relates to the three main strategies; we can work directly with young people in concrete situations, or you can work more on a structural, organizational, society level with them, changing power relations and hindrance for participation; can be so powerful in many ways.
- Work on both levels, make leans between them; advocating in the political level to help engage young people in telling their stories through the media; if you have somebody with storytelling, which will reach politicians and power people directly, then you can lean to both levels in a very good way.
- Conference with people working in the child welfare system; young people (write and) sing directly on stage for the power people; use the music as a vehicle, make a message from the young people to the adults, may be able to change, not all system, just a little bit of it.
- There are many levels of structural hinders, improving in small steps, will undoubtedly become bigger; start out writing song in small setting, then start spreading; powerful for individuals to take ownership of that song, and be able to share it with other people.
- Many of these peoples find themselves in the roles as victims, or just a number in a list, hidden away in the bureaucratic system; having alternatives to be somebody, take ownership of your story in front of an audience who listens to you, take notice, and tries to do something about the message, is a big difference from the bureaucratic system.
- Need to channel young people's stories in a social way that can be recognized, and be taken notice of; that's the role of the music; history has shown you can do that with music (blues in 20s and 30s, hip hop in the 70s, jazz, hymnals); can use all sorts of examples from music history, where music is the messenger of the suppressed; those types of music carry a lot of meaning, they're powerful, have had legacy over the years.
- Work with a group of young people from child welfare, make powerful/emotional message, channel that to a group of leaders/touch their feelings, create emotional transcendence between people, and the community of understanding.
- Elements of music where everyone becomes equal in process; everyone experiences the same aesthetic moment, and experience an intense connection that's difficult to describe, or experience unless you're there; extremely powerful.
- Community Music therapist must be aware of the powerful tool that music is.
- CoMT also has to do about dealing with the possible problems, dilemmas, and conflict which can appear, and handle it, and try to structure a good practice.
- You have people who can easily go wrong with this; if you rush through this performance piece, do it too soon, put people on a stage when they're not ready for it, or have wrong people in the audience, put poster up in community ('everybody look at the child welfare people'), becomes a freak show.

- Have to choose your audience carefully, have to be careful when you put people/ anybody on stage; being on stage can be dangerous, very non-therapeutic, vulnerable place.
- Music in itself it not a good thing; music can be dangerous, harmful, boring, annoying.
- Need to try to find ways of working with this, which is building structures of participation, and doing something positive, building a good, dependable network for the young people, so that they can use this not only in the moment, but in their own way, in the long term, or into their own future; understand how they can implement it as a resource for them in the future, part of their toolbelt.
- Try to help people build a tool box by using music, which they can carry with them when the music therapist is no longer there; music therapist is part of helping system, sooner or later pull out, take away money.
- Music therapy is no longer there, have helped them build a community of their own, they can use without the use of the music therapist.
- Try to build communities for the young people, which they can govern, lead, and work for themselves.
- Organizer of the network, applying for money so young people can use it without the music therapist.
- Music therapist in CoMT approach can be in center of situation with the young people, or in the periphery, trying to help with supporting activities; therapist takes the role that they need to in the moment.
- Traditional music therapy perspective, music therapist has few roles/functions.
- CoMT perspective, music therapist has wide variety of roles, active participant, supervisor, researcher, media contact person, contact person in political associations, networker, innovator, project leader; every role is connected with each other in some ways and can change during the transition phase of helping one single person over time.
- Possibility in CoMT, organizations will help you with volunteers, supporting a project; music therapist can be in contact with those organizations, try to build structures so that these communities last after the helping system has closed down the money.
- Identify resources in the community, both material and non-material (networks/ volunteer organizations); important, people often don't know about available resources.
- Norway: people who come into trouble with the law, need help from lawyers to help solve problems; have organizations who facilitate free lawyers, with help concerning legal questions; difficult to contact, music therapist helps them find out how to use it, help them navigate the helping system; often have resources for free, but you have to find it (be willing/ able to fight your way through).
- Guidelines for the alternative care for children welfare/institutional care, developed by United Nations; emphasizes need for young people to have a support person in the transition phase, when moving from one place from another, need to have a close relationship with at least one adult person.
- One of the most important factors in a young person's life; if you don't have that one person, then you're vulnerable for having big problems.
- Need help to navigate economic, health, legislative questions.
- Need guidance to use this or that in society. Need help to participate in leisure activities and cultural life.
- Need help to participate in leisure activities and cultural life.

- Need help to go to school, finish school, and later enter higher education.
- Need help trying to find a job; a part time job, or if you don't enter higher education, then a full-time job.
- Need help with elements that will go into helping them function later, or immediately and then later.
- Help them then and there; bear in mind that the help given should last for a long time; the plan and direction should have a long-term implication.
- Need to engage the young people in their own planning of the future; not just deciding what to do, but also have decisions implemented in the long-term planning; more empowering; have a voice, often not possible within the system.
- Idea that giving young people the possibility to tell their stories, and have meaning exposed, is crucial if you want to implement long-term planning based on what they want to do; more likely to follow through and try, if they have a say in planning/implementation.
- Practice of making it possible for young people to express their meaning in the deeper sense has to do with trying to help them to have a role in how their own lives should be planned in the long term.
- United Nations: convention for the rights of children; CoMT is human-based rights; try to adapt model for children/ adolescents based on the U.N convention; complex document; law in many countries are based on U.N. perspectives.
- Conference on child welfare with leaders in the field; theme, what happens when parents divorce; make a play based on that; one of the young people in the theater group had experienced her parents divorce personally; took role of playing out to the people in the conference; example of how young people can perform something for adults, who can learn a lot from what the young people have to say, not just through lyrics/ language, but through bodily communication; way she expressed herself through her body, expressing her own frustrations/conflict with her parents divorcing; powerful.
- Young people can communicate important things through art/music/dance/theater; our job is to facilitate that.