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Doing music. Musikvereine and their concept(s) of community

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Table of Contents

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Doing Music

Musikvereine and Their Concept(s) of Community

Introduction

Musikvereine (amateur wind orchestras), also known as *Blasmusikkapellen* (brass bands), have been a common musical phenomenon in Germany and Austria since the 19th century. They are volunteer-run associations in the amateur music scene that usually meet for weekly rehearsals and play on various musical and/or social occasions in their village, town, or region. Especially in rural areas, they fulfil important tasks as institutions of the musical education landscape: previous studies highlight their importance in music education in general (e. g., offering ensembles, public concerts etc.) and their educational function in providing instrumental training for individuals (Ardila-Mantilla, 2016, Berg, 2010, Deutsche Bläserjugend, 2018, Ernst, 2006, MLR, 2013, Oebelsberger, 2011, Overbeck, 2014, Röbke, 2004, Schmitz, 2012). Besides, many reports and studies emphasize the social function of *Musikvereine*: Laurisch describes them as places of socialisation, identification and sociability (2018). Oebelsberger highlights their function for networking in the (rural) community as well as their special social structure which is characterized by mixed age groups and diverse social backgrounds:

> The members of the band represent all different ages. There is, however, one other important characteristic of such village bands and that is the fact that people from all different walks of life come together to play music: blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, farmers, academics, students, pensioners, schoolchildren and many more. (Oebelsberger, 2011, p. 285)

With regard to the Youth Section of the Austrian Brass Band Association, she draws particular attention to the fact that, besides their role in supporting their members musical

development, their function in the social life of their town or village is a unique selling point for *Musikvereine* (Oebelsberger, 2011, p. 286).

However, apart from articles like this one, there is little social science research on *Musikvereine*. An important step in this perspective is taken by Ardila-Mantilla (2015) who, in her research on music school work in Austria, following Lave & Wenger (2008), works out to what extent *Musikvereine* can take on the role of a "community of practice" in the perspective of young musicians (Ardila-Mantilla, 2015, p. 435–459). Here, it is rather the interplay of different music-making practices (e.g. music school, *Musikvereine*) that is examined. However, a praxeological perspective that focuses shared everyday practices of the actors within the *Musikvereine* is missing so far.

With this paper, we would like to give more insights into the close connection between music and social relationships in the *Musikvereine* by reconstructing their everyday practice and their members' perspectives, especially with respect to social aspects. Furthermore, our results regarding the praxis of *Musikvereine* illustrate that music is what people do and music-making is closely interwoven with social processes of the individual, regional communities, and society as a whole.

Research Approach: The Documentary Method

Our chapter aims to shed light on the perspective of those who form and influence the *Musikvereine* as musical and social institutions: their active members. Our goal is to reconstruct their explicitly expressed views, norms and opinions, as well as their implicit knowledge that underpins everyday practice. To analyse *Musikvereine* as a social practice in this way and to understand its inherent logics, we use the Documentary Method (Bohnsack, 2014) as this qualitative approach aims at reconstructing the common-sense theories and the "implicit knowledge that underlies everyday practice and gives an orientation to habitualized actions" (Pfaff, Bohnsack & Weller, 2010, p. 20).

In order to give deeper insights into our research approach, we will briefly explain the methodological background of the Documentary Method and its different steps of analysis. Ralf Bohnsack adopted Karl Mannheim's concept of the Documentary Method and developed it further as an empirical approach in different sociological studies. At the same time, he reflected the methodological foundations of his empirical work and developed the *Praxeologische Wissenssoziologie* (praxeological sociology of knowledge) (Bohnsack, 2017) regarding his empirical findings. Bohnsack could show that social practice is underpinned by different types of knowledge. On the one hand, acting in practice is guided by "communicative knowledge" (ibid., p. 103) represented in explicit common-sense theories, beliefs, and norms of the interviewees. This type of knowledge follows a *propositionale Logik* (propositional logic) (ibid.). On the other hand, practice is following a *performative*

Logik (performative logic) (ibid.) that structures the *konjunktives Wissen/Habitus* (conjunctive knowledge/habitus) (ibid.) and can be approached by reconstructing the *modus operandi of practice* (ibid.). Both types of knowledge frame acting in everyday practice and are therefore described as an *Orientierungsrahmen im weiteren Sinne* (framework of orientation) or as *konjunktiver Erfahrungsraum* (conjunctive space of experience) (Bohnsack, 2017, p. 102–141). The Documentary Method allows us to reconstruct these types of knowledge, especially in social contexts, as they are shared by people who take part in a common everyday practice and have a joined or comparable horizon of experience – like musicians playing in a *Musikverein* or even in the same *Musikverein*. Reconstructing the (shared) orientations that guide acting in practice, by analysing group discussions, is a complex multistage procedure: first, the "formulating interpretation" (Bohnsack, 2010, p. 110) reveals the content and the thematic course of the discussion. The subsequent "reflective interpretation" (ibid.) analyses how the contents are processed by the group. Comparing different group discussions brings out the similarities and differences in the way the topics are dealt with. In this way, the specific *modi operandi* as well as the norms of the interviewed groups become visible. In short, the formulating interpretation reconstructs what is said, whereas the reflective interpretation analyses how it is told. In the analytical steps of formulating and reflecting interpretation, the orientation scheme – which contains the theoretical, explicit knowledge of the interviewees, and the orientation frame, which describes their atheoretical, implicit knowledge – were reconstructed.

In our study, findings arise from data collected within group discussions (Bohnsack, 2010) with members of amateur wind orchestras in the ongoing project *Musikvereine als Orte kultureller Bildung* (amateur wind orchestras as places of cultural education). For this paper, we use data from group discussions of 4–6 participants from the field of *Musikvereine*. In detail, we refer to the following groups:

Name of the group	Date/length	Description
#"Youth leaders_younger"	11 January 2020 1:28:48	Group discussion among 5 youth leaders of younger age with little experience as youth leaders
#"Youth leaders_board"	11 January 2020 1:27:42	Group discussion among 5 coordinators of the youth work in their *Musikverein*, that at the same time hold a position in the board of the Youth Section of an interregional Musikverein Association
#"Younger members_A"	8 December 2020 1:09:29	4 younger members of a *Musikverein* from a very rural region

Tab. 1: Overview over the data sample

The groups are composed in such a way that the discussants have a shared everyday practice or share comparable experiences. Conversations in groups like this are guided by shared knowledge that can be reconstructed in the research process. In order to make their "conjunctive space of experience" (Bohnsack, 2010, p. 105) accessible, we do not ask the participants specific questions, but invite them to exchange informally about their experiences and everyday practice in the *Musikverein*. After an initial impulse of the interviewer like *'What does Musikverein mean to you?'*, the participants talk freely about topics such as their personal relationship to the *Musikverein*, musical aspects, the changed situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and how and why they became members of the *Musikverein* etc. It is important for our approach that we are less interested in individual perspectives rather than the conjunctive knowledge of the group. We can proceed from the existence of a conjunctive knowledge because the interviewees are all either members of a specific *Musikverein* or have an identical function in different *Musikvereinen* (for example they are all coordinators of the youth work). Also, the fact that in some of the group discussions we tried to achieve a broad age homogeneity among the participants was intended to create the possibility of arguing from a bonding horizon.

Social Aspects and their Importance for the Members of *Musikvereine*

In the following we will illustrate our findings regarding the social dimension of *Musikvereine*. At first, we will give an overview of the common-sense theories, beliefs, and norms the active members have named that could be reconstructed on the explicit level of the analysed group discussions. Afterwards we will use excerpts of our data to show the logics of the actual practice with respect to the aspect of community. Comparing the norm and the habitus regarding different ways of how members discuss community and describe how they deal with community in their practice, we are able to show how the members want the *Musikvereine* to be and how they actually seem to be.

Social Dimensions of the Musikverein – Everyday Theories and Beliefs.
Looking at the explicit level of our data – the level of communicative knowledge – we can say that discussions about social aspects occur in all group discussions. Often terms such as *'community'*, *'clique'* or *'camaraderie'* indicate a thematic shift away from musical and towards social aspects. These aspects are discussed extensively and in different contexts. Some of those explicitly expressed, everyday theories and beliefs (orientation schemes) appear in different group discussions with almost the same wording. We have listed the most common of these orientation schemes concerning social aspects of the *Musikverein* and assigned them to various thematic categories, which we call social dimensions.

The Members' Perspective on the Social Dimensions of the *Musikverein*: *Common Orientation Schemes*	
Social dimensions	**Aspects: Musikverein …**
Structure	• is intergenerational • covers all social classes • is interprofessional
Individual Significance	• accompanies events of personal life (birthday, wedding, funeral) • provides a counterbalance to the job • provides social connectedness • is something like family • means to help each other • means to feel at home, to be in touch with the hometown • allows "to try out different roles", to make personal experiences • helps newcomers to find connection to the (new) hometown (-community) • allows to meet friends and to make friends • is the place where you can talk about 'everything under the sun' • is a place where you exchange experiences
Significance for the hometown and/or the region	• organises (social/musical) events • enriches social events with music • is part of the hometown traditions and community • holds up traditions (i. e., carnival) • creates links with other associations, villages, regions, etc.
Significance for the society in general	• provides social work • prevents juveniles from delinquency • provides education in democracy • helps to learn to accept/tolerate different opinions • helps to learn to take care and to overcome selfishness • helps to learn to deal with diversity • provides education in general

Tab. 2: The Members' perspective on the social dimensions of the *Musikverein*

It becomes obvious that, in the eyes of the participants, doing music is a social practice in many ways and the members attribute a high significance to *Musikvereine* with regard to different social aspects. Similar to the positions portrayed in the literature review, the members describe the *Musikverein* as an institution of high prestige that has a meaning on a personal level, as well as a significant social impact on the level of the regional community and society as a whole. *Musikvereine* are characterized not only by their great influence on everyday life and society, but also by its distinctive social structure. However, following our praxeological approach, we assume that everyday practice is also shaped by implicit knowledge, or, in a praxeological wording, by implicit, action-guiding orientations. In the

following our aim is to analyse the relationship between these explicitly expressed theories and beliefs and the level of conjunctive knowledge that influences the everyday practice of the *Musikvereine*.

A central aspect of our group discussions that encompasses several social dimensions is the thematic focus on community. Therefore, we will reconstruct *Musikverein*'s members' orientation frame concerning community.

Musikverein as a Community of Musicians: 'Society-like Community' vs. 'Homogeneous Community'

In several group discussions, the participants describe the *Musikverein* as a diverse community. By comparing the *Musikverein* with other associations or institutions, they emphasize this aspect as extraordinary. However, our research reveals contradictions between the orientation schemes and the implicit orientations. As an example, we will analyse the following excerpts that come from a group discussion with members holding a position in the board of the youth section of an interregional *Musikverein* Association.

```
Em: I'm [at the university] with these scientists; international;
    all people who did their PhD focussing on any deep question that
    are (.) very narrow, (.) I mean very very specialized and then
    in the orchestra you have this other world. where (.) well. of
    course there is not (.) does not cover society one-to-one?
    but much larger
Bm: └ but more than ┘
Af:     └hm ┘
Cf:        └hm ┘
Dm:              └ more than in the university context
```

Transcript 1: Academic world as counter horizon to the *Musikverein* (#Youth leaders_board)

In this excerpt, the participant Em[1] describes his own university experience as an example of the contrast between a narrow academic specialism (negative counter horizon) and the *Musikverein*. While, on an explicit level, the academic world appears as a homogenous community, the *Musikverein* is characterized as an approximate representation of society. Since the participants interrupt each other and complete each other's sentences in this excerpt of the discussion, a high degree of interaction can be assumed. This can be an indication that the thesis formulated by Em is shared by the group.

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[1]   The participants of a discussion are named alphabetically in the order of their first speech in capital letters. The letters "m" and "f" ("d" would also be possible) after the capital letter indicate the gender of the participant (masculine, feminine, diverse).

In the course of the passage, however, it becomes clear that on the level of the implicit knowledge, the *Musikverein* is associated with a homogeneous group. This can particularly be noticed when another participant (Bm) reports about a new member of his *Musikverein* who has a doctor's degree and apparently a completely different social background as most members of the *Musikverein*:

> Bm: 'We were then also with him at his wedding […] there was vegetarian food, which is not normal in the Musikverein, and the whole Musikverein got into a different mentality, so it was totally funny.'

Although Bm intends with this passage to emphasize the ability of the *Musikverein* to integrate, the image of the *Musikverein* is implicitly clarified as a relatively homogeneous and closed world in which the members speak the regional dialect (as mentioned in another section of this passage that we have not included here), eating vegetarian food is unusual and academics are the exception. Another participant (Af) shows her approval of Bm's statement by rephrasing the narrative on a more general level: *'There are worlds clashing'*. This stereotypical topos does not emphasize the integrative power of the *Musikverein*, but also – again rather unintentionally – its closed and homogeneous social structure.

Musikverein as a Diverse Community: Narrative vs. Reality

The orientation scheme of the *Musikverein* as a diverse community exists in other group discussions, too, for example in the following passage, which comes from a group discussion with young adults:

```
Cm:            ⌐ another interesting thing is; that
    in the Musikverein you come together with (.) all kinds
    of people because music, well, there isn't a (.) typical
Af:                    ⌐ mhm ⌐
Cm: (.) musician or something like that speaking of character or
Af:                    ⌐ @mh@ ⌐
Cm: something like that everything comes together and well,
    (.) ahm it doesn't bother you at all that you are sitting
    together with so many different people in=a room and (.)
    achieve something together at the end.
Df:        ⌐ mhm ⌐
Af:                ⌐ yeah that's right ⌐
Bm: mhm
Cm: an: I mean otherwise you would never meet with them
    voluntarily (.) or something like that
Af:              ⌐ @no:@                   ⌐
Df:                  ⌐ mhm=yes ⌐
Df: yes and even in terms of age groups; otherwise you would
Cm:  ⌐ but with the Musikverein, ⌐
Cm: yes
Df: never really have anything to do with them.
Cm:                                  ⌐ yes and=right. you also
    get to know other; other points of view
Af:                                ⌐ mhm. ⌐
Cm: because you just have to do with those.
    with whom you normally wouldn't have anything to do anymore.
Df: yes
Bm: mh
Cm: that's actually pretty cool. yeah,
```

Transcript 2: *Musikverein* as a heterogeneous community (#Younger members_A)

In this passage, too, the participants draw the picture of the *Musikverein* as a heterogeneous community, which is defined by different characters, age groups and points of view. By emphasizing that all these different people come together despite their differences, they present the orientation scheme of the *Musikverein* as a diverse community. However, it is revealing that the characteristic of diversity is always expressed in relation to the members, who are not part of the actual group discussion. Diversity is not discussed among the group members themselves. This is of course strongly related to the fact that the group itself was put together thematically for research methodological reasons – it consists of younger members of a *Musikverein* in a rural area. However, the course of the group discussion shows that the criterion of age is more than a presupposition by us as a research group, but rather an aspect that can create a conjunctive space of experience for the group. This is reflected in the fact that this criterion has the ability to form a basis that enables the speakers to mutually assume that each individual would not meet any other age cohorts outside of the music association.

The configuration of the group reveals that the implicit We-feeling of the interviewees, which is expressed in the frequent use of the (informal) 2nd person singular, by no means extends to the whole *Musikverein*. It remains limited to their own group which, starting from the shared age base, now addresses the other members as 'others'.

It also reveals that the added value resulting from this age diversity is formulated in an almost self-interested manner. When Cm says that he encounters different points of view through contact with other age groups, he ascribes a function to these groups, to put it quite strongly: They are useful because they expand his perspective.

So, the idea of a community in which age differences do not play a role cannot be reconstructed on the level of the actual practice or the conjunctive knowledge. Rather, it shows that the *Musikverein* consists of different age cohorts, among which the younger ones clearly see themselves as a closed group facing a large number of *'others'*.

The statement that people in *Musikverein* come into contact with age groups with which they would otherwise have no contact also shows that the *Musikverein* is not a mirror of society. It is a space that is intergenerationally shaped in a specific way that does not exist outside of it. However, when analysing the way the interviewees talk about the *Musikverein*, this intergenerational character does not appear as a mixture but as a parallel existence of different age cohorts, which are still recognizable as separate entities.

We can therefore assume that the idea of a cross-aged community is an orientation scheme that is expressed here like a narrative. However, the level of implicit knowledge reveals an orientation towards a community composed of homogeneous cohorts. It is interesting that the passage takes a turn towards the end: at the beginning, you can see a distance between the speakers and the positive portrayal of diversity as they state that diversity *'doesn't bother'* them. At the end, they recognize a positive value of the *Musikverein*'s diversity: getting to know other points of view – that's *'pretty cool'*.

Musikverein as a Diverse Community: Utopia (come true) vs. Reality

While the participants in the previous examples spoke rather argumentatively about aspects of the community in their *Musikverein*, the next passage shows an example of a concrete description of a practice. In a village we call *Redford the *Musikverein*'s low brass section usually goes on a big excursion once a year.

```
Bm:                              […] in *Redford it is
    like this? there is (.) every year [a trip] […]
    uh low brass, right? they always make once a year,
    or (.) more often=they meet.
Cf: hm.
Bm: an- you know=th- there is (.) from the sixty-year-old
?m: └ okay ┘
Cf:        └ yeah ┘
Bm: tuba player who has been for twenty-five years with the Musikv-
    for thirty years with the Musikverein=up to the new tuba player
    everyone is there, (.) they go for example? (.) once a year
Cf:   └ °right° ┘
Bm: they go on a trip for a whole weekend; (.)
Cf: woah
Af:   └ wow
Bm: really incredible but, really cool because they: (.) the
    exchange of experiences between the (.) fourteen-year-old
    who is new; and the sixty-year-old=and (.)
    that's really (.) interesting. they also have an
    exchange. right,
```

Transcript 3: Trip of the low brass section (#Youth leaders_board)

As in the previous example, the orientation scheme of an intergenerational community is emphasized in this excerpt: everyone takes part in the excursion – from the *'new tuba player'* to the sixty-year-old tuba player who has been with it *'for thirty years'*. This makes an intergenerational *'[experience] exchange'* possible.

On an explicit level, this example ascribes a generation-unifying force to the *Musikverein*. The emphasis on the harmony between the different age groups and the surprised reactions of the other participants (Cf and Af) make it clear, however, that the description of Bm is not common everyday practice, but rather an exception. Thus, this exception appears to reflect a common-sense theory of those involved. The example seems to be something ideal-typical that may not be feasible everywhere, but still contains the essence of the *Musikverein*. Implicitly, behind this evocation of successful practice, one can recognize the necessity of presenting the *Musikverein* as the home of a lived utopia.

The inevitable discrepancy between utopia and reality is thus made unrecognizable. The participants share a conjunctive knowledge that consists of jumping back and forth between utopia and reality, hiding the inevitable gaps between the two levels.

Musikverein as a Large Community vs. Several Communities
In the previous examples, the participants focused on the aspect of community as a large, coherent group of musicians. In this passage, they emphasize the importance of *"cliques"* for the *Musikverein*'s everyday work:

```
Bm: (2)it is very important for the work of the Musikverein to (.)
Af:                        └ uhm ┘
Bm: successfully form these cliques? it's very important, to have an
    eye on the transition between the youth orchestra and the
Af:                                            └ uhm ┘
Bm: orchestra of the grown-ups if there is some kind of clique in
Cf:                          └ uhm ┘
?m:                               └ yes ┘
Bm: the youth- in the youth orchestra whenever possible
    you have to
Cf:              └ take them all. for.
Bm:                └ take them all together and then it works=this=is my
Cf:                                          └ yes. ┘
Bm: experience? (.) than integrating them works, if there are
    five=six people that come along well,(.) and then friendships
    grow that last until:- (.) until the end of life; right,
```

Transcript 4: Cliques within the *Musikverein* (#Youth leaders_board)

Here, the participants agree that building and supporting clique formation and friend-ships is an important task for the *Musikverein*. It seems as if the successful, everyday work of the *Musikverein* would be unthinkable in the long run without functioning friendship cliques. On the level of explicit knowledge – and in contrast to the previous example, the participants here draw the picture of different (fixed) groups (which can also be described as small communities) within a large community (the *Musikverein*). The consensus of the participants indicates that this picture is normal for them and therefore not questioned. The two main ensembles *Jugendkapelle* (youth orchestra) and *Erwachsenenorchester* (main orchestra, orchestra of the grown-ups) are not described as one large musical commu-nity, but as communities that are composed of several cliques. These cliques are essential, especially during the transition from the youth orchestra to the main orchestra, as they have a central integrational function.

This insight into the practice of *Musikvereine* is contradictory – or at least a differ-entiation of the aforementioned narrative – of the orchestra as a community that brings together people of all ages and social backgrounds. It is not the orchestra or *Musikverein* as a large community that seem to be key for lifetime friendships, but subgroups within the community. Even though the cliques are described very positively in this passage, the question remains: to what extent can fostering subgroups have exclusive effects and impede community-building in the orchestra as a whole?

Another aspect can be worked out from the passage. The proposition formulated jointly by Bm and Cf – that it is of great importance for the *Musikverein* to form the cliques – indirectly shows that this is not a self-fulfilling task, but must be organised through good management. The community building effects across all age groups of the *Musikverein* are repeatedly stated on the explicit level but seem not to come into effect automatically. Skil-ful management is needed to ensure that there are enough peers in the respective cohorts.

On an implicit level it becomes obvious that the central activities in the *Musikverein* (making music together) are not, in themselves, enough to keep especially the members engaged, especially the younger ones. In addition, the reconstruction shows how important it is that the members have the feeling of being in a circle of peers of the same age and have the possibility to grow old together in the *Musikverein*. As we have already worked out (see above), this seems to be in contrast with the picture of an intergenerational community of the *Musikverein*. The whole ensemble consists of several age-homogeneous groups (*'cliques'*). Implicitly, this also shows that the invoked picture of a diverse and cross-age community in the *Musikverein* is more a utopia that has to be aspired by the functionaries. In this context it becomes obvious that the interviewees share the implicit belief in the importance and necessity of functionary work. In doing so, they assign themselves a position that is clearly distinct from the members who do not have a function.

Conclusion

Our analysis shows that all participants share the orientation that *Musikvereine* are places where community is generated. Regarding the reconstructed explicit knowledge, this norm is shared in all group discussions. The social aspect of *Musikvereine* has an impact on the individual, the continuity and development of the ensemble, the regional community in the village and society as a whole. However, on the level of implicit knowledge, it becomes clear that different concepts of community are underpinning the practice.

For instance, the members are not orientated towards a global, community-generating logic in the *Musikverein* but towards the importance of age-homogeneous cliques whose bonding-power extends over the entire lifespan. These cliques essentially keep to themselves, yet they guarantee a seamless succession of generations: the young slip into the role of the old at some point, new youngsters grow up, etc. However, this model presupposes that the younger cliques will remain in the paths set by the *Musikverein* and will take over the role of the old ones: it is not envisaged that the younger generation might decide at some point to leave the *Musikverein* because it no longer seems up to date to them. Implicit in this picture is the ideal of transmission from generation to generation, which we also see in narrations of older members who report that they took up learning a certain instrument in the *Musikverein* because of their parents (mostly fathers) were doing the same. This logic fits to the concept of "post-figural" family constellations coined by Margret Mead (1970, p. 27) in relation to family structures. It describes a characteristic that, in her eyes, is an essential feature of traditionally structured societies. In this constellation, the younger generation essentially repeats the biography of the older generation, without expressing any noteworthy characteristics of its own that could possibly lead to a change to, or even displacement of, existing structures.

In our findings, however, it becomes apparent on the implicit level that the image of generational cohorts – which stay together throughout their biographies due to their firm internal ties, and thus ensure the continuity of the *Musikverein* – is more of a utopian goal or an idealised memory from the past, serving as a positive counter-horizon to illustrate the reality of today's *Musikvereine*. Today, *Musikvereine* seem to face the problem that a somewhat "natural" principle of transmission now appears as something that must be actively produced by the management. This situation is quite paradoxical, insofar as the quasi-natural course of events is no longer natural if it has to be kept alive or produced specifically through targeted activities. Keeping age-homogeneous cliques together and integrating their interests and needs in the *Musikverein* work seems to be key for stability and continuity. Furthermore, it could be an important task in the future to win members from outside the social proximity of active members; whereas, in the past, members were recruited from the next generation of the families and through close social contacts.

This leads us to a second aspect. Parallel to the image of generationally closed cliques, there is also an attempt to present the *Musikverein* as a framework that creates both intergenerational exchange and encounters with people from other milieus. Here the *Musikverein* now appears as a place whose security enables encounters with "strangers" and thus contributes to integration. However, in the concrete description of such integration processes, the *Musikverein* does not appear as a place of diversity, but unintentionally reveals itself as a relatively homogeneous entity, shaped by a common habitus. If one wants to speak of integration ability here, then it consists of welcoming a stranger who knows and accepts the implicit rules of the association; his habitual strangeness is then accepted – possibly even with a certain amusement. With regard to the need to win new members – especially those from outside the close and familiar networks – changing this logic and developing actual *Musikverein* practice towards the shared norms of social integration could be an important future goal for institutional change.

Finally, discussing our findings about the social aspects of *Musikvereine* leads us to question if and how this is connected to the central activity of doing music in this community. In the music education context, it is interesting that the integrative power of music and the social effects of music education – a very common narrative in music education research and policy (c. f. Yap, Kwan, Tan, Ibrahim & Ang, 2017 or Kirscher & Tomasello, 2010) – is not used in our discussions. Although community and music belong together in the Musikverein, music is not pointed out as the reason for sociability or vice versa. Both sociability and music are important and central characteristics for the practice, but each seems to have its internal logics and stands for itself. Our research shows that pointing to music and sociability as the main characteristics and supporting pillars of *Musikvereine*, and highlighting the institution's positive effects on both fields, is typical for the self-image of the members. In our point of view, this is a strong selling point compared to (only) allocating music transfer effects for community building and developing social skills.

Consequently, with instrumental teacher training in higher education, the central role of dealing with and caring for the community in amateur ensembles should be more deeply considered as a part of education. One central critique from the field is that graduates enter the field with a high expertise in music – playing their instruments and conducting – but are lacking skills in reflecting upon and caring for community-building in the *Musikverein*. Finally, we can state that our results point out that the community is as important for *'what people do'* in the *Musikverein* as playing music.

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