

2015

# Digital music consumption and social capital shifts within the Cape Breton diaspora in Boston

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/49045>

*Downloaded from DSpace Repository, DSpace Institution's institutional repository*

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

**DIGITAL MUSIC CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL SHIFTS  
WITHIN THE CAPE BRETON DIASPORA IN BOSTON**

by

**AMANDA ELAINE DALY BERMAN**

A.B., Wheaton College, 2003  
M.A., Brandeis University, 2006

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

2015



Approved by

First Reader

---

Brita R. Heimarck, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Music

Second Reader

---

Sally K. Sommers Smith, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Third Reader

---

Simon Payaslian, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of History

## **DEDICATION**

To my dad, Robert Edward Daly (1951-2013), who always told me my questions were good and always encouraged me to “show ‘em your moves.” You are loved and missed every day.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through whom all things are possible. I thank the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, in particular, my advisor, Dr. Brita Heimarck, for her support, encouragement, tireless editing skills, cogent and thoughtful questions that helped me dig deeper into the core of my research, and for introducing me to some of my very favorite restaurants over lunch meetings. To my beloved husband, Dmitry, for being my #1 fan, my favorite conversation partner, and my best friend. I thank the keeper of the stars that He led us to each other. I love you more each day and am proud to be starting a family with you. To our sweet new son, Jacob, I love you very much. I hope you enjoyed all the music you heard *in utero* and I look forward to teaching you about the world and watching you grow. To our dear cat, Alisdair, who has provided encouragement, support, and friendship, and has brightened our lives, and to the pets that served as my siblings during my life – Yukon, Abby, Nokuy, and Cogsworth. To my amazing parents, Robert and Carol Daly, who worked so very hard to ensure I had the best education and made sure I always knew I was (and am) loved, and who encouraged me to pursue my passion of studying music.

**DIGITAL MUSIC CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL SHIFTS**

**WITHIN THE CAPE BRETON DIASPORA IN BOSTON**

**AMANDA ELAINE DALY BERMAN**

Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2015

Major Professor: Brita R. Heimarck, Associate Professor of Music

**ABSTRACT**

While ethnomusicological scholarship has begun to address Internet studies, the field has yet to amply consider digital diaspora theory. Arguing that the increasing digital aspect of social capital — defined as “the benefits individuals derive from their social relationships and interactions” (Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe 2010, 873) — affects social, cultural, and musical capital in diasporic community groups, I discuss the pivotal role that social media, videosharing sites, and other Internet platforms play in connecting diasporic communities. I develop a hybrid ethnographic fieldwork model for examining contemporary diasporas’ music consumption and production that builds upon Putnam’s (2000) work on social capital, Song’s (2009) analysis of virtual communities, Brinkerhoff’s (2009) conceptualization of digital diaspora, Turkle’s (2011) fieldwork on technology’s impact on social interaction, Sparling’s (2006) conception of cultural capital in Gaelic Cape Breton, and O’Hara and Brown’s (2006) examination of music consumption. To address the high value of music production and consumption in Cape Breton culture, I introduce the concept of musical capital. I define this as arts currency, both tangible and intangible, which can be procured, acquired, or shared, as a more specific way to discuss the shifts in participation and consumption documented in my

fieldwork in 2014–15, conducted both online and at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Massachusetts. Forms of musical capital analyzed include Skype music lessons, songs of diasporic longing, fiddle sessions, online videos, and in-person performances. I conclude that the online availability of one's culture has long-range effects for community participation by non-musicians. While artists still gather in person to practice and perform, the greater diasporic community can now interact with other members online and virtually experience their culture, though the personal social capital benefits are not equal to in-person interactions. These changes reflect a larger social capital shift within contemporary American society and acknowledge the impact of the increased use of, and reliance upon, Internet platforms as a means for creating, consuming, and disseminating musical and cultural capital.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CAPE BRETON DIASPORIC	
COMMUNITY IN BOSTON .....	1
Research Questions .....	5
Locating Cape Breton Island .....	7
The Boston/Cape Breton Connection .....	11
Culture-in-Motion .....	18
What is Cape Breton Music? .....	21
Popular Song in Cape Breton Music.....	22
Irish Identity of Boston and the Declining Cape Breton Diaspora .....	25
Theoretical Background and Scholarly Contribution .....	29
Methodology .....	46
Chapter Outline .....	47
Conclusion .....	52

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND MUSICAL CAPITAL: A THEORETICAL REVIEW .....	53
Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam, and the Mainstream Arrival of Social Capital.....	54
Internet and Social Capital.....	74
Response to Bowling Alone as Text and Concept.....	78
Virtual Communities and Social Capital .....	96
Digital Social Capital: A New Framework.....	107
Alone Together .....	116
Civil Rights and Social Capital.....	137
Musical Capital and Digital Capital.....	140
Conclusions on Social Capital .....	148
In Conclusion .....	152
CHAPTER THREE: DIGITAL DIASPORA .....	154
Digital Diasporas .....	155
Benefits of Diaspora Communities.....	160
Identity and Diaspora.....	162
Social Capital and Diasporic Organizations .....	163
The Impact of Technological Developments on Diaspora .....	169
Social Capital and Diaspora Theory .....	172
Internet and In-Person Social Capital .....	175
Virtual Social Capital and Diaspora .....	177
Sharing and Social Capital.....	180

Social Capital and Diaspora.....	182
Civil Rights and Social Capital.....	198
Arts, Civic Engagement, and Social Capital.....	204
Conclusion .....	205
CHAPTER FOUR: DIASPORIC LONGING IN CONTEMPORARY CAPE BRETON	
SONG.....	207
E-membering: Digitally Remembering the Homeland .....	208
Diaspora and Ethnomusicology: A Recent Connection.....	210
Critical Perspectives on Cape Breton Culture and Song .....	211
Discussion of English-Language Cape Breton Songs .....	216
Application of Safran’s Characteristics of Diaspora to Cape Breton English-Language	
Songs.....	225
Diaspora: A New Fixture within Ethnomusicology.....	235
CHAPTER FIVE: CAPE BRETON MUSIC IN THE “BOSTON STATES”: IN-	
PERSON AND DIGITAL FIELDWORK AND ANALYSIS .....	236
The Boston Irish and Cape Breton Community Connections.....	238
Citizenship .....	243
The Cultures of Cape Breton Island.....	244
The Canadian-American Club, Watertown, Massachusetts .....	245
The Cape Breton Diaspora: It’s Personal.....	260
In-Person Fieldwork.....	263
Digital Fieldwork .....	268

Musical Capital in the Cape Breton Diaspora.....	272
Analysis.....	274
CONCLUSION.....	286
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	293
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	322

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1. Overall Impact Of Technology On Everyday Life. ....	117
Table 2. Positive/Negative Effects Of Technology On My Life .....	118
Table 3. How Long Could Live Without Specific Things.....	118

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. E-Card Skewering Changes in Socialization as a Result of Mobile Phone Usage.....	106
Figure 2. The author with Wally the Green Monster at Nova Scotia Weekend, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston, Massachusetts, May 17, 2014.....	285

## **CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CAPE BRETON DIASPORIC COMMUNITY IN BOSTON**

It is a Saturday night in Roxbury, Massachusetts in the 1960s. The sounds of fiddle and piano waft through the doors of The Rose Croix Hall, tunes played by any number of noted Cape Breton musicians. Angus Chisholm, Bill Lamey, Winston “Scotty” Fitzgerald, or a young Jerry Holland could all be on the stage driving sets, with Mary Jessie MacDonald, Lila Hashem, or Doug MacPhee providing a thumping piano accompaniment. Young couples, recently arrived from Ireland, Cape Breton, or other Maritime provinces, have filled the hall to the gills. They are dancing sets, making conversation, and catching up with friends from “down home.” Scottish Gaelic and Canadian English phrases are heard. Following the dances, attendees take the trolley home, or even walk back to their houses in the area.

Flash forward 60 years. The same style of music can be heard upon opening the doors of the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Massachusetts, six miles northwest of The Rose Croix Hall, on a Sunday afternoon. This time, however, the crowd is much smaller and, for the most part, older. Dancing and a spontaneous set are seen, but the sense of gathering exclusively to dance has changed. Cape Bretoners are not coming to Boston in droves, choosing instead to go west to Alberta for work and housing. Those present speak of the glory days, when families lived closer, Cape Bretoners were nearby, and Gaelic language was spoken. There is a concern about low attendance and the ability to keep events going, as many in the community live an hour away by car, or further.

At the same time, Irish music, with which Cape Breton music and musicians often shared the stage, and Irish culture as a whole, are at an all-time high. Though Irish immigration to Boston has slowed dramatically from the days of the Potato Famines, shamrockery, or the exaggerated performance of Irish culture (Vallely 2003), is nearly omnipresent. Irish pubs are consistently opening up, Irish-identity movies based in Boston are produced with regularity, sessions – informal gatherings, often at a bar or pub, at which live music is performed -- can be found throughout the greater Boston area on any given night. Families who are sixth-generation Irish-American insist that their children take up step dancing at any number of Boston-area dance schools to keep their heritage strong. However, the idea of whether a Celtic identity, particularly Irish, or the idea of Boston Irishness as a whole, has subsumed the contemporary Cape Breton diasporic musical identity, has proven ripe for study; while the Cape Breton diaspora has decreased in size and increased in age, the Boston identity has developed an Irish sense of self in the mid- to late-twentieth century, with Irish culture increasingly coming to equal the city's identity. At the same time, the demographics of South Boston, the city's historically Irish neighborhood, are rapidly changing. Irish orientalism (Lennon 2008), shamrockery, and the idea of "Gaelic" as a performed cultural concept rather than a language all play a part in the performance of the Celtic identity in the region.

Meanwhile, even though Irish and Cape Breton musical and cultural communities have frequently interacted in Boston, the Cape Breton presence in the area has shrunk dramatically, and the presence of musicians and dancers of Cape Breton origin in the region is continuing to decrease as the original tradition-bearers lose the ability to



perform due to age or health concerns or even pass away. The Scottish Gaelic language, the mother tongue of many Cape Bretoners, and a significant language within Scottish Cape Breton culture, is now only spoken by a few people in the greater Boston area, and in-person coursework in the language is nearly impossible to find in New England.<sup>1</sup>

Experiencing Cape Breton culture has transmuted into new forms with Internet opportunities such as online music lessons, the online availability and social media presence of the island's newspapers, including *The Cape Breton Post* and *The Chronicle-Herald*, and the vast amount of resources located on YouTube and social media sites. An increasing number of students are turning to the Internet to learn the Scottish Gaelic language of their ancestors, as well as to study Cape Breton music, particularly fiddle and piano. The trading of media and recordings is nothing new, but the instantaneous means of sharing and transferring materials has evolved greatly in the past 10 years – which parallels the decline in attendance at Canadian-American diasporic events in the Boston area. One can hear the music now on demand from the comfort of home, and no longer need to attend a local community event, such as the dances and concerts at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, to hear this music and share in the camaraderie of the community. Gone are the days where music could only be heard live and one had to travel to Cape Breton to see artists and purchase musical items. Members of the diaspora are able to view and share videos of Cape Breton music produced both locally and “down home” via Facebook and YouTube, and can order tune books via the Internet.

---

<sup>1</sup> Irish Gaelic, though related to Scottish Gaelic, is a distinct language; the former is present in slogans and symbols seen around the Boston area, and several expressions are recognized by local residents.

In addition, the live music experience is increasingly available in one's home. Celtic Colours, a 10-day-long festival featuring cultural events and concerts across Cape Breton Island, livestreams a concert each night of the festival. The website ConcertWindow (<http://www.concertwindow.com>) allows artists to broadcast concerts live from their computers. The site is relatively new: two musicians created the concept in 2011, and their own traditional music background (co-founder Dan Gurney is a six-time U.S. champion on Irish button accordion) is reflected in the profiles of the artists who utilize the site (Morris 2011). ConcertWindow allows audiences to virtually attend a show, chat with all other "attendees" via a message board, and even give the performers monetary tips using their credit card. Andrea Beaton and Troy MacGillivray gave a concert on the site on April 7, 2014, and many New England-based Celtic/trad musicians have used the site as an e-venue.<sup>2</sup>

In a March 26, 2014 interview on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Butthole Surfers band member Gibby Haynes notes that former Trenton, New Jersey club City Gardens was in part popular because it was a place for misfits to gather – but now they can find each other on the Internet. I argue that the same holds true for music and diaspora. Whereas previously, diasporans and traditional musicians would have had to gather at a few specific venues or homes to experience their culture, today, all that is needed is the click of a mouse. Thus, your culture can come to your home, even if the

---

<sup>2</sup> Further, as ConcertWindow only collects a third of the total admissions fees that viewers choose to pay (the website allows for both a sliding ticket charge and the ability to give tips afterwards), artists receive two-thirds of the money contributed, and thus are able to gain income without having to budget for travel.

homeland itself remains geographically far away. The kitchen party has in fact come to our computers.

### **Research Questions**

In this dissertation, I examine various facets of the Cape Breton musical diaspora in the greater Boston area. Given the increased role of technology in maintaining diasporic relations by articulating, showcasing, celebrating, and reinforcing family and cultural ties, I analyze the role the Celtic digital diaspora has in the preservation of the Boston segment of the Cape Breton diaspora. This includes the presence and role of online musical and linguistic study with tradition-bearers in the genre, the use of Facebook, YouTube, livestreaming, videosharing, and online lessons, whether interactive or prerecorded. I investigate the sharing of both new and old videos of Cape Breton instrumental tunes and vocal songs via social media, and the significance of this common activity. I also examine the interpersonal interactions that occur on Internet platforms, for example, Facebook.

I address performance practice by looking at how events at the Canadian-American Club and other venues serve as a liminal zone, or a location culturally separate from everyday American life, for experiencing Cape Breton culture and maintaining a marked Canadian identity rather than assimilating fully into mainstream American culture. While the New England diasporas of the different Maritime provinces interact socially and musically, the fiddle music and distinct performance techniques, the

emphasis on dancing in conjunction with live music, and the unique style of piano playing help distinguish Cape Breton diasporic music.

In conjunction with the concept of shamrockery, I examine how the tartanization, or the performance of Scottish identity via images and symbols, of Cape Breton presents itself in the diaspora of Boston, as well as the relevance of authentic Cape Breton tradition and practice in the New England region. The presence of Scottish Gaelic, both as a spoken language, and as a linguistic informant of diasporic music, is addressed, with consideration of the role of cultural revival in this process. I also investigate how the local musicians in Cape Breton and the diasporic Cape Breton musicians in the Boston area utilize Maritime diasporic longing and identification to their advantage. Politically, I consider the annual dedication of the Boston Common Christmas tree by a Nova Scotian family and the ensuing celebration of the Boston-Nova Scotia connection.

In addition to paying close attention to ways in which Cape Breton music has flowed into the diaspora, I utilize my coined term of culture-in-motion to address the reverse flow as well, which is how music produced in the diaspora has informed the performance and development of Cape Breton music on the island itself. In addition, I discuss the role radioscaping have played in Cape Breton music, both in providing country-western influences to the island, and as a source in the diaspora for Maritime, Celtic, and specifically Cape Breton music, as seen in the weekly Downeast Ceilidh program on WUMB 90.9 FM.

Lastly, I conclude with a discussion of the current role of music in the Cape Breton community, both at home and in the Boston area, and the role that music may play in its maintenance, preservation, and continuance.

### **Locating Cape Breton Island**

Cape Breton Island, the northeast island of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, has long had a strong connection with New England, and the Boston area in particular, due to its maritime location and relative geographic proximity. At its peak in the mid-twentieth century, the Boston Cape Breton community is estimated to have numbered close to 100,000 members. However, as Sean Smith writes in the June 3, 2010 issue of the *Boston Irish Reporter*,

Greater Boston's Cape Breton community is undergoing a transition, with the graying of the generation that played such a major role during the 1950s and 1960s in establishing this area as a legendary outpost for music and dance of the Canadian Maritimes. Subsequent generations of Cape Bretoners have simply not come down to the so-called "Boston states" on the same scale, according to the elders; what's more, they add, the overall commitment to traditional music and dance hasn't been as strong as in past generations.<sup>3</sup>

Further, he notes that it is "non-Cape Bretoners [e.g., members of other Maritime communities, non-Cape Breton Bostonians] who seem to make up more of the attendance at these monthly dances" held at the Canadian-American Club (also known as the Cape Breton Gaelic Club) in Watertown, Massachusetts. The club serves as a gathering site for area members of the Cape Breton and the greater Maritime diaspora, offering a monthly Cape Breton Gaelic Club Ceilidh – a gathering featuring vocal and instrumental music; a

---

<sup>3</sup> Much of the local reporting on Cape Breton and its music is published in the newspaper *Boston Irish Reporter*.

session – an informal gathering of musicians, often led by one person, playing a variety of tunes, determined as the session goes on; fiddle and step dancing lessons; plentiful food and beverages; There are also weekly Maritime open mic sessions. The Canadian-American Club is also home to twice-monthly gatherings of the Reynolds-Hanafin-Cooley branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann, which promotes the teaching and performance of Irish music, dance, and culture,<sup>4</sup> and weekly Irish step dancing lessons.<sup>5</sup> Individual Irish, country-western, and Cape Breton artists also play dances and concerts on occasion; and a new weekly Irish session, led by Joey Abarta, a noted Boston-area Irish musician, began in the summer of 2014.

In spite of this, Cape Breton diasporans do not find themselves attending cultural events in the same manner as even ten years ago (Mike Kerr, personal communication, March 16, 2014). Members of the community are getting older, and they live further from the venue sites. Further, it is hard to draw in attendees unless the event features big-name performers, even if the performing artist is superb (Jim MacLeod, personal communication, February 16, 2014). Again, there is a paradox: why has a genre that for generations was local, community-based, had the largest density of fiddlers in the world, and often was not done as a full-time career -- though there were numerous legendary performers who packed concert halls -- changed in the course of a short span of time to the point that music does not happen regularly in homes, does not draw crowds when gatherings occur unless there is a big name performer, and the number of Cape Bretoners

---

<sup>4</sup> “Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann,” accessed October 16, 2013, <http://www.cceboston.org/>.

<sup>5</sup> Mary McDonald, Canadian-American Club of Massachusetts, accessed October 16, 2013, <http://www.canadianamericanclub.com/Dance-Lessons-at-the-club.html>.

playing the island culture's traditional music has dropped dramatically in the course of a single generation? All the while, people bemoan this loss and miss the sense of community. It is my argument that this rapid community shift is due in large part to a change in American communities as a whole (as I describe in detail in Chapter Two), a shift in social capital that has resulted from demographic shifts, an aging population, and the ubiquity of the Internet, which allows people to experience their culture from the comfort of their own home -- or phone -- via YouTube, Facebook, online music and language lessons, and virtual concert attendance, not to mention other cultures and popular cultures from all over the world that may also vie for people's attentions.

Robert Putnam, in his 2000 book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, notes that the decline of social capital mirrors that of the decrease in bowling leagues. In the mid- to late twentieth century, bowling leagues were a common occurrence -- an affordable, pleasant, non-taxing way to gather regularly with others, socialize, and, tangentially, work on a skill, even though this was not necessarily the focus of the gatherings. Today, bowling alleys continue to close, and leagues are in much smaller numbers than before. Upon mentioning this to former Canadian-American Club Vice President Jim MacLeod, he told me that the Club in fact used to have two separate bowling leagues, but they folded in the past 15 years or so. While membership totaled over 900 total members at the Club's height of popularity, the current total membership stands at 246 members as of the November 2014 Club newsletter.

Around 15 years ago, the Internet also largely came into the public consciousness. This made it easier for a lot of people to access information that previously would have

required a trip to the island to experience -- or to purchase recordings on the island itself. Many recordings by Cape Breton Island's main artists are still sold in local stores, e.g., supermarkets and dollar stores. This means of selling the music maintains the tradition's local feel -- there is a more direct connection between the artist and the consumer. The majority of Cape Breton artists list their home addresses and phone numbers on their websites -- if they have one. Jerry Holland's website features free downloads of some of his most popular compositions, including "In Memory of Herbie MacLeod," written about a founding member of the Canadian-American Club (and father of Jim MacLeod).<sup>6</sup>

In order to stay connected to the culture, many diasporic Cape Bretoners have turned to the Internet for cultural, social, and familial fulfillment. Cousins separated by geographic distance may share experiences and maintain connections on Facebook. YouTube videos, many of which both visually and lyrically reflect the island's beauty and the longing of those who have left in search of a reliable livelihood, are frequently uploaded and viewed; reflections on the videos often appear in the comments section. While the number of tradition-bearers available in the greater Boston area to give in-person music or language lessons has diminished, prospective students can now learn how to "drive 'er" (a commonly used term for the force put into Cape Breton-style fiddle bowing) from the comfort of their own couch via one-on-one Skype or pre-recorded video lessons, and several interactive and e-correspondence schools for Gaelic language exist. The Gaelic College in Cape Breton Island, one of the most well-known on-site locations for studying Cape Breton music, has also created several online programs of

---

<sup>6</sup> Jerry Holland, "Tunes," <http://jerryholland.com/tunes.htm>, accessed August 19, 2015.



study in language, music, and dance. Attendance at the Gaelic College serves as a vetting of sorts, as it indicates a true dedication to the island and the music of Cape Breton, and many Celtic musicians' biographies makes mention of their attendance at the college's programs.

In addition, many Cape Bretoners shares videos of lyrics online, posting songs regularly to their Facebook pages and sharing videos others have posted. Further, these videos often feature images of the island's natural beauty, for example, scenes of the majestic Bras d'Or Lakes and the lush forestry found across the island. Yet, in a placeless oxymoronical occurrence, as the appreciation of the island's music increases and spreads around the world, there are fewer and fewer people living and practicing the culture in Cape Breton itself,<sup>7</sup> even though cultural tourism widely promotes the prominence of music and dance on the island.

### **The Boston/Cape Breton Connection**

The island of Cape Breton, originally settled by Mi'kmaq First Nations peoples, was the arrival point for many Scottish people following the Highland Clearances in the mid-1800s. The Clearances were a highly controversial event in Scotland's history that still spark debate. At their core, however, the Clearances were a claiming of Scottish Highland farmland by the English, and thousands of Scottish people were forced to flee their homeland, with many settling in Canada; the exilic move created great shifts in clan

---

<sup>7</sup> The 2011 Census shows the population of Cape Breton Island at 101,619, "representing a percentage change of -4.1% from 2006". Statistics Canada, "Census Agglomeration of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia," last modified January 8, 2015, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=225>

society, a hallmark of Scottish Highland culture, and this forced exile is one argument in favor of considering this community to represent a diaspora, first from Scotland to Canada, and subsequently from Canada to the United States. The latter move was based more on economic factors than political necessity. A number of families set up towns upon their arrival to Cape Breton, and certain last names are still associated with regions of the island, for example, the Beaton family of Mabou, who are famed for their musical legacy.<sup>8</sup>

Cape Breton Island has been home to many different cultures, in part due to its coal and steel mining industries, which attracted workers from Barbados to Ukraine, and the immigration of Acadian, Irish, and aforementioned Scottish peoples. Nonetheless, efforts in the 1950s to paint the island Scottish gave agency to the tartanization of the island. This image has remained to the present day, even though, according to MacKenzie (1999), only 60% of the island is of Scottish descent. Cape Breton and Nova Scotia both have their own tartans, and the tartan features prominently in the Tourism Nova Scotia logo. In addition, Nova Scotia's flag features the emblem of Scotland at its center.

Connected to the Scottish image, a particularly significant factor in Cape Breton culture is the reification of the Gaelic language due to the island's status as the last remaining North American *Gàidhealtachd*, or Gaelic-speaking location. Musicians who excel in Cape Breton fiddling are often described as "having the Gaelic," meaning that their playing mimics the rhythms and intonations of the Gaelic language. Many Cape Breton events and happenings are advertised with both English and Gaelic slogans. The

---

<sup>8</sup> Andrea, Betty Lou, and Kinnon Beaton are all members of this family.

island's most prominent event, the Celtic Colours Festival, added a slogan in Scottish Gaelic for the 2013 gathering: "Mealaibh ar dualchas" ("Experience it all").<sup>9</sup> While many countries and cultures use their heritage as a marker for tourist purposes, Cape Breton has gone one step further with its steadfast goal of reviving the Gaelic language. The island created an Office of Gaelic Affairs in 2006 to aid in these efforts (Feintuch 2010), and several elementary and secondary schools offer Gaelic language study or even Gaelic immersion programs.<sup>10</sup> While early- and mid-twentieth century residents of the island were physically punished in school for speaking Gaelic, their descendants are now encouraged to speak and sing in the lilting language. Notably, "Gaelic" as a performative idea is commonly seen in the Boston area, as mentioned earlier with regards to shamrockery and tartanism, but the contemporary presence of the language within the area is neither widespread, nor well documented.

The completion of the Canso Causeway in 1955 made travel from Cape Breton to mainland Nova Scotia and from there to (and from) "the Boston States" much more feasible. Prior to the building of the Causeway, Cape Breton was only accessible via boat, train, or airplane; even today, the long, snowy winters of the region can impede travel. Young, single women often came to Boston in the early-to-mid-twentieth century for

---

<sup>9</sup> The 2014 and 2015 programs feature the image of the island of Cape Breton surrounded by a Celtic knot, with the center of the knot located where the island is geographically separated by the Bras d'or Lakes.

<sup>10</sup> The government of Canada recently created a Department of African Nova Scotia Affairs. Intriguingly, Halifax (the capital of the province of Nova Scotia, which encompasses Cape Breton) formed the African Nova Scotia Affairs Integration Office in 2012. The use of the loaded term "integration" indicates a separated status of Africans as not "full" members of the Nova Scotian community. However, the Office of Gaelic Affairs seeks to promote the Gaelic language and culture, regardless of the heritage of those studying it. Notably, both an African Heritage Month and Gaelic Awareness Month are celebrated each year in Nova Scotia. "Celtic Colours International Festival," *Irish Music Magazine*, last modified May 29, 2013, <http://www.irishmusicmagazine.com/2013/05/29/celtic-colours-international-festival-11/>

domestic jobs, similar to Irish women. Construction work in the greater Boston area provided young men with an income that farming or fishing often could not. Whole families also moved to the Boston area to make a better life for themselves (see Burrill 1982; Beattie 1992), though older relatives or those with young families of their own sometimes chose to stay in Cape Breton.

The cultural coupling of music and dance served as a popular way for new arrivals to meet other Cape Bretoners living in the Boston area, to see the people that they knew from “down home,” and to enjoy the culture so familiar to them. Cape Breton dances often shared space with or occurred in close geographic proximity to Irish dances. These events, detailed vividly by Susan Gedutis (2005), peaked between the 1940s and the 1960s, with musicians playing to packed houses several nights a week at halls in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. Some of the finest Cape Breton fiddlers and pianists, including Holland, Winston “Scotty” Fitzgerald, Angus Chisholm, Bill Lamey, and Lila Hashem, “cut their teeth” or displayed their virtuosity at these events, and many permanently moved to the Boston area during these decades. They also held kitchen parties – musically-centered gatherings often held, as the name indicates, in the kitchen of a home -- as showcased in the recording *Full Circle: From Cape Breton to Boston and Back: Classic House Sessions of Traditional Cape Breton Music 1956-1977* (Rounder 2000). In an ironic twist, Rounder Records, founded in Massachusetts, also made some of the first commercially available recordings of Cape Breton artists, albums that were listened to both in the homeland and the diaspora.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Rounder Records is now based in Nashville, Tennessee.

With the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, there came great demographic changes to the neighborhoods around Boston, and the popularity and frequency of the dances in the Roxbury area faded away; events shifted to gatherings in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston and the neighboring town of Brookline, as well as Watertown, the new home of the Canadian-American Club, and Waltham, site of the French-American Victory Club (more commonly known as the French Club). The Hibernian Hall, one of the most recognized sites for Cape Breton and Irish dances, recently celebrated its hundredth anniversary with “an evening that included the presentation of awards to members of Roxbury’s arts community and performances by Irish step dancers, an Irish string quartet, a steel drum band, and a James Brown impersonator,”<sup>12</sup> a reflection of the different communities present then and now in the area. The Cape Breton and Irish diasporic communities have now largely moved to the South Shore and MetroWest suburbs, with a sizable Irish community proudly remaining in the Dorchester and South Boston neighborhoods of Boston. There are numerous festivals and dozens of pubs in the greater Boston area devoted to Irish music and culture, and sixth-generation Irish-Americans are signed up for step-dancing lessons as toddlers simply because they are Irish and that is what is done. Irish immigrants continue to arrive in Boston, but the Cape Breton diasporic population has taken a downward curve. Cape Breton artists are

---

<sup>12</sup> Jasper Craven and Jeremy C. Fox, “Time Capsule Found in Hibernian Hall,” *Boston Globe*, October 11, 2013, accessed October 11, 2013, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/10/10/time-capsule-found-wall-hibernian-hall-just-time-for-centennial-celebration/ojdKLzksAvtfoUdBgHtlaO/story.html>.

featured performers at Irish, Scottish, and pan-Celtic festivals, but are rarely featured on their own; rather, they are often grouped under the Celtic umbrella.<sup>13</sup>

At its peak, Cape Breton provided coal for 40% of Canada (Morgan 2008), but due to changes in fuel production and consumption combined with mismanaged companies, the last coal mine closed in the mid-1990s. Even during the height of production, the wages paid to coal miners was moderate at best. The island's formerly strong steel industry has also collapsed due to issues with the economy and management; paradoxically, the island touted by publications the world over for its pristine and pure beauty also faced structural blight and environmental waste as a result of the closed mills and mines. Notably, an American-run coal mine is set to reopen in the Cape Breton town of Donkin in late 2015.

The Boston area once served as a second home for Cape Bretoners, with nearly as many Cape Bretoners in greater Boston as on the island (Smith 2010). In addition to Boston, many of those who left Cape Breton went to larger cities, such as Halifax, Nova Scotia; Windsor, Ontario; and its border city, Detroit, Michigan, which is itself facing economic peril.<sup>14</sup> There have long been sizable Cape Breton communities in both Windsor and, across the river, Detroit, Michigan, though these diasporic groups have also risen in age and decreased in population size and influx. However, once the Vietnam War

---

<sup>13</sup> While there are variants of what regions or countries are considered "Celtic," the following areas are commonly considered to have Celtic connections: Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Isle of Man, and Brittany. Galicia is sometimes categorized as Celtic as well.

<sup>14</sup> Even less is written about the Cape Breton communities in Detroit/Windsor and Toronto than Boston, but there are still Cape Breton clubs in both areas; these clubs are known within the Cape Breton community, but websites or other documentation remain scarce. Noted Cape Breton fiddler Sandy MacIntyre holds a monthly session in Scarborough, Ontario, which is just outside of Toronto; a full calendar is posted on his website (<http://www.sandymacintyre.com>).

draft began in the early 1970s and many of the jobs in New England that first attracted Cape Bretoners to the area, such as manufacturing<sup>15</sup> and construction, decreased, Cape Bretoners stopped coming to Boston, opting instead to move to Toronto and Windsor, Ontario. Boston's school busing program, which began in 1974 and lasted until 1999 and bussed students to other neighborhoods and schools in an effort for desegregation, remains a notorious piece of the region's legacy; the busing decision, along with racial tensions and violence leading up to and surrounding the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., accelerated the demographic changes to the metropolis (see Lukas 1985 for an in-depth discussion and analysis of Boston during this time period). There is evidence of large-scale migration of families from the Boston neighborhoods where many immigrant families first settled, to the South Shore, MetroWest, and North Shore regions of the metropolis during the 1960's and 1970's. This geographic shift, caused in part by both upward mobility and white flight, greatly affected the proximity of members of the Cape Breton and Maritime diaspora to each other.

Today, islanders who leave Cape Breton for work are increasingly heading west within Canada to Calgary and Fort McMurray, Alberta; the latter provides a steady income in the oil industry and flights to the city leave daily from Sydney's (the capital of Cape Breton) small airport. David Wray's article "Daddy Lives at the Airport: The Consequences of Economically Driven Separation on Family Life in the Post-Industrial Mining Communities of Cape Breton" (2012) is a reflection of this liminal zone in which many Cape Bretoners reside today. This halt in immigration to the Boston area, along

---

<sup>15</sup> For example, the South Shore town of Rockland and the city of Brockton were once home to dozens of shoe factories. The factory buildings now largely sit empty or have been repurposed as lofts.

with the aging members of the diasporic community, has caused the Boston segment of the diaspora to decrease in size, and, as a result, cultural presence in the area is also diminishing. Further, fewer performers who know the repertoire leads to fewer performances, and, often, fewer attendees.

### **Culture-in-Motion**

The titles of fiddle tunes have served for years, unintentionally or not, to help locate the geographical and emotional journeys and associations of composers: “Sandy MacIntyre’s Trip to Boston,” “In Memory of Herbie MacLeod,” “Brenda Stubbert’s Reel,” and many others. This is seen not only in contemporary compositions, but also in 18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish collections, for example, “Niel Gow’s Lament for the Death of his Second Wife,” a tune played today by such artists as the Barra MacNeils. In addition, the work by Paul Cranford, Kate Dunlay, David Greenberg, and others from “away”—that is, not born in Cape Breton proper or not of Cape Breton descent—to document the island’s fiddle music in descriptive and prescriptive formats allow for printed versions of a hybrid oral-written tradition. The lyrics of traditional and contemporary songs tell the tale of needing to leave the island and longing to see its landscapes and people again; this phenomenon is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

While Cape Breton is geographically isolated and limited travel options can make visiting the island difficult, technology has served an invaluable role in promoting the island’s music, performers, and the Gaelic language. Prominent fiddlers such as Kimberley Fraser and Andrea Beaton, from the famed Beaton line of musicians, offer



Skype lessons, and the celebrated Celtic Colours festival features livestream broadcasts for several nights of performances, allowing members of the diaspora, as well as traditional music enthusiasts, virtual access to the festival. Though Cape Breton is a small geographic area, technology is allowing its cultural reach to emerge in the growing discourse on digital diaspora (Karim 2003; Brinkerhoff 2009; Everett 2009; Alonso and Oiarzabal 2010). A number of Maritime-based online Scottish Gaelic programs are also available. Yet, as mentioned previously, the Gaelic language is far less prominent in the Boston area.

Both Scottish and Irish cultures have taken on a caricatured symbolism in American culture. Many Irish pubs exist that are only Irish in name and utilize strategically deployed symbols, such as shamrock/Celtic patterns, as well as items such as Guinness beer and bangers and mash on the menu to denote Irishness; however, Irish music, either pop or traditional, is seldom featured. In an extreme case, some pubs have been constructed in Ireland and shipped over to the United States as a marker of authenticity; the Kinsale in Boston's Scollay Square is one example of this. Untranslated Gaelic songs can be heard on WROL 980 AM's weekly Irish Hit Parade program and WUMB 90.9 FM's Downeast Ceilidh, also a weekly show; and in-person Irish Gaelic courses are offered in a number of locations, including at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, the Boston Language Institute in Boston, and the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton. However, Scottish Gaelic is only available for a two-semester, and irregularly offered, course of study at Harvard University. The Canadian-American Club formerly offered

informal lessons in Scottish Gaelic, and Gaelic songs can be heard at the Club's monthly Gaelic Club meetings.

Scottish culture largely lives in the public eye via the presence of Highland Games celebrations, including a large gathering at New Hampshire's Loon Mountain, and Titled Kilt pubs, marketed as a bekilted equivalent of Hooters. In this mix, Cape Breton culture seems to serve almost as a Celtic floater, with musicians appearing both at Irish cultural festivals and Highland Games. Cape Breton artists, both from the island proper and from the diaspora, also perform regularly as part of broader Celtic music events. However, they rarely play to large crowds as solo performers; Natalie MacMaster is the most well-known exception to this rule, and she still often visits house parties after her performances in venues such as Sanders Theatre in Cambridge or Mechanics Hall in Worcester. While broadly Celtic artists such as Celtic Woman, Celtic Thunder, John McDermott, and the Irish Tenors play concert halls and arenas, the most esteemed local Cape Breton artists are often found at the local diasporic halls such as the Canadian-American Club and French-American Victory Club, at house concerts, or at kitchen parties. This is seemingly a reflection of the performance practice of the Cape Breton tradition, where music tended to be community-based and less formally performed until the recent rise in tourism to the island and Celtic studies as a whole; even with this shift, the island's most well-known artists continue to play small-scale shows at a very affordable price.

### What is Cape Breton Music?

While some in Scotland may eschew “the Cape Breton bandwagon,” as “for them, Scottishness is defined as what Scottish people do, not what they might have done in the past” (Dembling 2005, 186), Hunter states that “today, any reticence there may previously have been about Cape Breton Island’s Scottish connections has given way to a widespread desire to know more about them” (2005, 154). Dembling reflects on this, stating that “a small but influential segment of the traditional Scottish music and dance community is in effect arguing that Cape Breton’s traditions are more authentically Scottish than their own. This argument represents a “counterflow of cultural authenticity from the diaspora to the source” (2005, 180). Dembling is referring here to musical movement from Cape Breton to Scotland; the music of the Cape Breton diaspora has played a large role in the tradition’s maintenance and dispersal.

The question of just what constitutes Cape Breton music remains to be fully answered. Holland speaks to this: “I’d say Cape Breton music is in general a stew pot, in a sense—there’s no one music that stays exactly the same, as least that I’m aware of, as far as traditions go” (Feintuch 2010, 106). Further, he notes,

There’s [*sic*] so many Irish tunes that are in the Cape Breton repertoire here, that are not so much played with the Irish embellishments which defines the styling. I think if you were to take the Irish tunes out of the Cape Breton repertoire you’d have a pretty bare-looking skeleton. You’d be taking at least a minimum of 35 to 45 percent of the tunes away. You’d be taking the biggest part of the jigs away from here, and a lot of the reels. (105)

The types of fiddle tunes played —jigs, reels, strathspeys, airs, hornpipes, and waltzes—confirm both Scottish and Irish, and even English, influence. What is recognized as the hallmark of Cape Breton music is the “dirt,” or driven bow sound of the

fiddle; the expression “driv’er” (Feintuch 2010, 264), meaning to drive the music, bow, and rhythm forward, is frequently used. The Gaelic language and the connection between Gaelic speech patterns and the rhythms of the music (see Sparling 2008) are seen as essential to the tradition. In addition, Acadian culture has recently been the subject of both emic and etic perspectives in scholarly discourse and a focus in performance, for example, the Canadian Society for Traditional Music’s journal *MusiCultures*’ 2015 special issue is devoted to Acadian and Celtic Musical Intersections. Joe Cormier, a noted Cape Breton fiddler who is from Chéticamp and has lived in Waltham, Massachusetts for decades, showcases the Acadian influences in the Cape Breton genre; however, his recordings are largely associated with the Scottish Cape Breton tradition.

### **Popular Song in Cape Breton Music**

Less discussed in scholarly discourse is the popular song in Cape Breton music, particularly its role in the diaspora. While there is some question of authenticity versus created sentimentality and longing in this genre, with some of the songs coming off as forced balladry, many in both the homeland and diaspora do connect with these songs. Song lyrics often reflect longing, as seen in such titles as the folk song “Farewell to Nova Scotia” and “If I Can’t Take the Island with Me,” a contemporary piece sung by coal-miner choir Men of the Deeps and written by Cape Bretoners Shauna Lee MacKillop and Aaron C. Lewis.<sup>16</sup> “Song for the Mira (1975),”<sup>17</sup> which described the beauty of the

---

<sup>16</sup> Tom Knapp, “Review of Men of the Deeps,” *Coal Fire in Winter* (Atlantica, 1996), *Rambles*, accessed October 31, 2013, [http://www.rambles.net/mendeeps\\_coal.html](http://www.rambles.net/mendeeps_coal.html). Full disclosure: Lewis is my second cousin.

island's Mira River and the people of the area, is considered an unofficial anthem of Cape Breton. The lyrics of "Song for the Mira" are geographically specific to Cape Breton; nonetheless, the song is covered by numerous artists from different countries; one of the most famous versions of "Mira" is by Irish popular artist John McDermott. Many artists in the country music and Celtic spheres have covered the song, and "Mira" has been translated into several languages, including Japanese.<sup>18</sup>

I argue that the songs are popular in the diaspora because they transmit diasporic longing. There are numerous songs written over the past half-century that reflect this diasporic longing, with common lyrical themes of the island's beauty, people being drawn away, and island pride. Aficionados of Cape Breton music do not revere these English-language songs as at the core of the genre in the way that fiddle, piano, bagpipe, and Gaelic-language songs are recognized. Nonetheless, the songs' central role in the culture cannot be ignored. It is striking that even those who live on the island acknowledge the sense of loss so often present in Cape Breton culture. Clarifying the role and meaning of such song lyrics in the diaspora will be telling, and forms Chapter Four of this dissertation.

Further, country music has also long been played both on the radio and in conjunction with Cape Breton-style music, and the genre has influenced fiddling and vocal traditions today; country songs, both classic and contemporary, often pepper the kitchen party set list. Vocal performances by Cape Breton artists such as the Rankins and the Barra MacNeils, and legendary Nova Scotian singer Anne Murray are usually

---

<sup>17</sup> Music and lyrics by Allister MacGillivray (1976).

<sup>18</sup> Krista L. Roberts, 2012, "Song for the Mira," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed March 24, 2013, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/emc/song-for-the-mira>.

categorized on music charts as either roots/traditional or Canadian country music.<sup>19</sup>

Rankins member Jimmy Rankin and Cape Breton singer-songwriter Aaron C. Lewis both traveled to Nashville in 2014 and 2015 and released country-tinged singles (Lewis) and albums (Rankin).

Marquis performers seldom come to Cape Breton Island, with recent concerts by Elton John and Alan Jackson being among the exceptions; Cape Bretoners often travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia, or Moncton, New Brunswick, to hear major artists, such as when Metallica came to Halifax in 2011, and the Eagles and U2 came to Moncton in 2008 and 2011, respectively. The first iteration of Nashville Nor'East, a festival celebrating Nova Scotia's connection to country music and featuring both Nova Scotia country artists and marquee names in country music, was scheduled in Sydney, Cape Breton's capital, in May 2014.<sup>20</sup> Notably, the original nominations for the top-billed artist were all American country singers (e.g., Luke Bryan, Toby Keith). Though a formidable line-up was selected for the event, including The Band Perry<sup>21</sup> and Canadian group Emerson Drive, the entire festival was cancelled with less than two weeks' notice after slow ticket sales could not match the cost of the event; Aerosmith and Bryan Adams also came to Sydney in close proximity to Nashville Nor'East, and many Cape Bretoners were thought to be selecting only one concert to attend, given their costs. This last-minute change was met with outrage over the tarnish that this put on Cape Breton, and there was concern that this exemplified that the island could not regularly draw the audience for large events.

---

<sup>19</sup> In his 2003 autobiography *Fiddling with Disaster: Clearing the Past*, Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac says that meeting Murray was as big or bigger than meeting the Pope.

<sup>20</sup> Nashville Nor'East, <http://www.nashvillenortheast.com> (accessed October 18, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> The entire festival was moved back a week from the original date to accommodate The Band Perry's tour schedule.

Economic instability remains a common concern on Cape Breton Island, and discussions about the island's fate are frequently seen on Facebook in response to stories posted by *The Cape Breton Post* and *The Chronicle-Herald*, two of the island's main newspapers.

The country music connection is seen in the diaspora as well. The Boston-area quartet The Country Masters regularly performs at both the French Club and the Canadian-American Club; the French Club serves as the group's home location. The Canadian-American Club has also recently hosted Lynette and Ed's Honky-Tonk Party, featuring the Boston-based rockabilly group The Pioneer Valley Pioneers and the Boston-area band Honky Tonk Masquerade, on several occasions.

### **Irish Identity of Boston and the Declining Cape Breton Diaspora**

The greater Boston area is a hub of Irish culture, and the city has taken on an increasingly fierce sense of Irishness and Irish pride. Though the international movement of Irish pride was largely spearheaded by the widespread popularity of the show *Riverdance* in the 1990s, the Boston area continues to espouse a particular Irish identity for the whole city, a stark change from the city's infamous "No Irish Need Apply" days in the early twentieth century. While it is belittling and embarrassing to those in Ireland proper (O'Dowd 2013), shamrockery (Vallely 2003) can be seen throughout the area. As part of the region-wide display of performative identity, both the Boston Red Sox and the

Boston Bruins have Irish-themed alternate uniforms.<sup>22</sup> Shamrocks also adorn many construction companies' logos.

As mentioned previously, Irish pubs are prominent throughout the region, and while Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic music events occur less frequently, an Irish music session can be found nearly every night of the week at pubs in the greater Boston area. Sixth-generation Irish families enroll their young children in step dancing courses as a means of ensuring authentic traditions are passed on. This is notable, as Cape Bretoners often align with the Irish both in heritage (as many Cape Bretoners are partly of Irish descent) and in tradition; the two groups often performed at each other's dance hall gatherings during the golden era of Irish music and dance in Boston in the 1950s and 1960s (Gedutis 2005).

A factor to consider when examining a Canadian-based diasporic community is that Canada is often thought of by some Americans as "America, Jr.," or "America North." Many of the United States' most beloved and/or notorious performers, athletes, celebrities, and public figures are Canadian-born (or of Canadian descent): Jim Carrey, Peter Jennings, Pamela Anderson, Sarah McLachlan, Céline Dion, Mike Myers, Michael J. Fox, Steve Nash, Michael Bublé, Rachel McAdams, and Ryan Reynolds, to name a few. When the Boston Bruins played the Vancouver Canucks in the 2011 Stanley Cup Playoffs, and there was pro-Canada/anti-Boston sentiments – and even riots following the Bruins' win – there was great irony, as the Bruins' roster had more Canadians than the Canucks' did. Canadian culture, when generalized and stereotyped, is often not seen as

---

<sup>22</sup> The Boston Celtics have a shamrock on their main uniform. It is unknown why the New England Patriots do not have an Irish-themed alternate uniform.



much different from that of the United States, with the exceptions of free health care, the propensity of the term “eh?,” and a universal sense of politeness.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, there are distinctions between the two countries, something which was brought boldly to light by 9/11. The hijackers of the planes that attacked the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon, and that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, all left from Boston via Portland, Maine, and entered the United States via Canada – one further way in which the two countries were inextricably intertwined. While travel between countries used to be permissible until without a passport until 2005, immigration laws still applied. However, travel between the states in the years preceding 9/11 was easier. Many diasporans, particularly in younger days, could hop in the car for a weekend and drive all night to go to Cape Breton, a 900-mile trip that takes approximately 16-18 hours by car.

People stopped coming to the United States from Cape Breton in the 1970s for fear of being drafted; the recession of the 1980s in the U.S. was also a factor, as was the greater ease in moving to another province within one’s country for work (Wray 2012). Thus, the population’s size is decreasing, and many of the tradition-bearers have passed away. The requirement of a passport in recent years to travel between Canada and the U.S. has also prohibited residents in either country who do not hold a passport from crossing the border, and it can take months to acquire a passport or visa, particularly as many of the Cape Bretoners living in Boston have retained sole Canadian citizenship. This legal change, coupled with the ever-increasing cost of transportation between the

---

<sup>23</sup> I presented a paper in Toronto in June 2014 and was amazed how many people said “thank you” to the subway conductors upon exiting the train. Even one gentleman who screamed for the entire ride made a point of stopping screaming to say “thank you” to the driver before continuing to scream and shout. This is a rarity on Boston’s trolleys.

two locations, limits the interaction between the diaspora and its homeland much more than in earlier years.

An added dimension to this shift in travel is that many Canadians, though they have been in the United States since they were children or young adults and do not ever plan to live in Canada again, are still Canadian citizens. Thus, they must procure a Canadian passport from the Consulate, as well as an updated green card, to travel. This is an additional added step that may throw a wrench in some people's plans, and can affect attendance at sudden family events such as funerals. Further, with a rising age for the Boston diaspora segment as a whole, the car trip to Cape Breton becomes less appealing. Given the distance between the locations, unless people split the driving and drive all night, an overnight hotel stay is involved.<sup>24</sup> Though it eliminates some driving time, the Nova Star Cruise, the overnight ferry trip between Portland, Maine, and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, still necessitates an 8-to-10-hour drive to arrive in Cape Breton. The cruise costs approximately US\$600, again making a trip prohibitively expensive.

In addition, flights between the two locations are infrequent, and near prohibitively expensive. There are also no direct flights from Boston to Cape Breton. One must stop over in Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, or Montreal; some routes make two or three stops each way. Given the size of the Sydney (Cape Breton's capital) airport, few airlines fly through there. AirCanada is the most direct flight options from Boston, so one is at the

---

<sup>24</sup> There are two main routes to get to Canada from Boston. One involves taking Route 95 and entering Canada via the checkpoint at Houlton, Maine. The other requires driving on approximately 60 miles of Route 9 in Maine and crossing at Calais, Maine, into St. Stephen, New Brunswick. While the former adds more miles, the higher speed limit can make it feel faster. Further, the latter does not have any rest stops and is poorly lit. However, there are not many hotels for the last hour of the ride on either route, so one often drives through to Fredericton or Moncton in the province of New Brunswick.

mercy of their offered fares.<sup>25</sup> Flights remain at, as of 2014, at around \$600. So, just for a family of four to fly between the two locations, the cost would be at least \$2400. Cape Breton is also largely inaccessible by public transportation, so one has to rent a car upon arriving or hope that the family has an extra car or is willing to chauffeur them around. For many, going home involves visiting with family, so this may not be a concern. The point is the irony that for its relative geographic, particularly nautical/oceanic/maritime proximity, it is a difficult trip to take. Newfoundland-based band Great Big Sea sings that “there isn’t that much ocean between Boston and St. John’s,” but there are a lot of obstacles.

### **Theoretical Background and Scholarly Contribution**

In his research on the decline of community in the U.S., Putnam (2000) documents a downward shift in attendance at community organizations and activities in general in contemporary American society. Putnam attributes this change to the decline of social capital, and though others have explored the concept of social capital, academic writing continues to use his trademark phrase of “bowling alone” as a means for examining social capital changes. Song (2009) goes so far as to title her text on virtual communities *Bowling Alone, Online Together*. Sherry Turkle’s *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (2011) provides a scathing analysis of social media and technology’s effects, examining, via in-depth interviews, the personal effects of Second Life, Facebook, and texting on communication. while her

---

<sup>25</sup> United, WestJet, and Delta also fly in conjunction with AirCanada, but necessitate stops in Newark, Chicago, or Atlanta, all of which are in the opposite direction.

training as a clinical psychologist provides her with keen insight into why and how people have created distance and fashioned “mediated selves” (Kristen Edwards, personal communication, April 18, 2014) via texting and Facebook, she places heavy focus on the presence and function of virtual worlds, such as Second Life. Ironically, while she loudly bemoans throughout her book the decline of the telephone call as texting rises, her personal and institutional websites only feature an email address, and not a phone number. I discovered this when I decided to call her, rather than email her, to discuss a potential meeting.

However, none of these scholars discuss the suturing of music, the Internet, and technology, even though advancements in computers have revolutionized the production, performance, and consumption of music. I argue that the Internet and consequent ubiquity of social media has created a means for interaction with both diasporic communities and the homeland. This ability to seek out said culture, and music, from the comfort of one’s home has paradoxically led to a disconnected diaspora. To analyze this effect, I put these authors in conversation with Turino’s (2008) writing on the positive aspects of musical participation as a means of stimulating community cohesion. In addition, I consider O’Hara and Brown’s (2006) study on “social and collaborative aspects of music consumption technologies.” I also utilize the concept of digital diaspora to show the importance of live music in the Cape Breton identity.

This dissertation draws upon the theories of Cohen (2008), Brubaker (2005), and Tölölyan (1994; 2000) to make a case for classifying the Cape Breton community in Boston as a diaspora, and further, explaining why such a categorization is a useful

analytical tool. I use my coined term of ‘culture-in-motion’ in conjunction with the music-diaspora connection theorized by Slobin (2012) to discuss the history, demographics, and current status of the Boston diasporic community.<sup>26</sup> As mentioned above, I link this analysis of diaspora with Putnam’s reflections on declining social capital in the American community to investigate how the omnipresence of the Internet affects the performance of Cape Breton music and its attendance.

Tölölyan (2000), in his examination of the Armenian diaspora, discusses the community’s “shift from exilic nationalism to diasporic transnationalism” (107). He notes that the institutions organized in different diasporic sites take on “local, host-country-specific, ‘ethnic’ features” (108); these hybrid identities thus reflect both the culture of the homeland, as well as the influences of the hostland. This hybridity is reflected in the name of my main fieldwork site: the Canadian-American Club. As a sizable portion of the Cape Breton population originated by an exilic arrival from Scotland following the Highland Clearances, the music and culture of Scotland, as I discuss in Chapter Five on fieldwork, continue to be privileged in the homeland and diaspora alike.

Further, Tölölyan speaks of *residual*, *emergent*, and *dominant* factions of the Armenian diaspora, meaning those sections that are fading, developing, and serving as main sites of the diaspora, respectively. In the case of the Cape Breton diaspora in

---

<sup>26</sup> The ethnomusicological case studies of Irish music in America by Mick Moloney (1992) and Polish-American music in Detroit by Paula Savaglio (2004) have been used as helpful templates for preparing research, as the former provides an in-depth discussion of the performance and role of Celtic music in the United States, and the latter details the musical activities of a diasporic community in an American city that happens to also be home to a large Cape Breton population.

Boston, the community is both residual – as the region no longer receives an influx of Cape Bretoners – and dominant, as it nonetheless remains a prominent diasporic site, due to the area's multigenerational population that continues to reside in the area.

Tölölyan declares that

In the Armenian diaspora, as the associational bonds provided by older groups, especially those sustained by bonds of village and regional origin, fade, and as many consequently assimilate, a few seek out commitment, status, and the opportunity to be connected to a larger, multilocal network of people and arena of action. (113)

Tölölyan's comment can be applied to the Cape Breton diaspora in Boston's connection to the greater Celtic community, particularly regarding music. The Canadian-American Club today hosts Irish and Scottish events, as well as country music concerts, and many Cape Bretoners attend broader Celtic events. In particular, Irish-themed gatherings are perpetually popular and accessible.

While a number of scholars have written on the subject of Cape Breton music, there are still a number of gaps in the ethnomusicological literature, both in Canada and in the diaspora. Edith Fowke (1972) and Helen Creighton (1972) blazed a path with their fieldwork and recordings of Nova Scotian and Cape Breton folk songs, and Allister MacGillivray (1981) provided an essential resource on the biographies of many of the main fiddlers around the island. Glenn Graham (2006) uses surveys to gain the perspective of Cape Breton fiddlers, but he only gathers data from nineteen people, and they are all concentrated in the Inverness County area of Cape Breton; thus, while the data is extremely rich and useful, it does not give a true sense of the various approaches, styles, and beliefs present across the island.

Paul M. McDonald's chapter in A.A. MacKenzie (1999) on Irish music in Cape Breton is one of the only such sources available. Jasmine McMorran (2013) provides a much-needed history of piano accompaniment in the Cape Breton tradition. Barry Shears (2008), in his writing on the bagpipes' role in Nova Scotia, springboards off of the work of Roderick Cannon (2002) and John G. Gibson (2002). Heather Sparling (1999a; 1999b; 2008) writes on the potential for creating a theory of Cape Breton music. In addition, Sparling writes on *puirt-a-beul* (Gaelic mouth music, a style that often involves vocables) and disaster songs.<sup>27</sup> Thomas Pease (2006) writes on recent developments in Gaelic music on Cape Breton Island, but the article is limited in size and scope, as it only covers the years 1991 to 2006.

Folklorist Burt Feintuch (2010) provides one of the richest recent reflections on Cape Breton based on interviews with more than a dozen of the main players in the island's cultural development, including Celtic Colours co-creator Joella Foulds, Kimberley Fraser, Jerry Holland, Buddy MacMaster, and Alistair MacLeod.<sup>28</sup> Notably, of these authors, only Graham, MacDonald, MacGillivray, and Shears are actually from Cape Breton in the "born and raised" definition, and only Graham presents his work through an ethnomusicologically-trained lens.<sup>29</sup> A few books have been written about Canadian music as a whole (Diamond and Witmer 1994, Morey 1997, Wells 1978) but

---

<sup>27</sup> Disastersongs.ca is an online repository of over 500 collected Atlantic Canada songs that discuss the topic of disasters and accidents; mining disasters are a major topic of the canon.

<sup>28</sup> Surprisingly, this book was published in China; many of the other texts cited above list Canadian layout designers and publishing sites.

<sup>29</sup> Sheldon MacInnes (1997) and Richard MacKinnon (2009), both Cape Bretoners, address Cape Breton music; however, MacInnes's account reads more as an autobiography that reflects on his role in the music industry, and MacKinnon discusses solely protest music's history on the island. Charles Dunn (2003) provides documentation of many of the Gaelic poems that may soon be lost, given the diminishing strength of this oral tradition.

they do not address Cape Breton in depth. Further, writing on Scottish studies seems to have grown even in the past five years, as apparent in the recent publications listed in my bibliography.

A good amount has been written about Cape Breton being home to Scottish diasporans (Campey 2007, 2008; Dunn 2003; Hunter 2005; MacIsaac 2006; Ray 2005). However, very little information exists about Canadian diasporas.<sup>30</sup> Burrill (1982), Beattie (1992), Feintuch (2002; 2010), Gedutis (2005), Lavengood (2008), and Woods (2011) all discuss the Cape Breton diaspora in its main sites of Boston; Detroit; Windsor, Ontario; and Toronto, Ontario, but only in passing. The Boston Irish diaspora has been discussed in detail by Thomas O'Connor (1994; 1997). However, music receives little attention in O'Connor's research. However, music receives little attention in O'Connor's research. What remains insufficiently documented in the literature on diaspora are the diasporas of the main destinations for diasporic members, namely, the diasporas that stem from the United States and Canada. Instead, those who leave these two countries are often thought of as expatriates, a term that implies a voluntary and permanent departure and also breaks down to read as formerly from the country; thus, their diasporas remain underexamined, perhaps because Canada is seen by some as a "diasporized nation-state" (Brazier and Mannur 2003, 18), that is, a country composed of different diasporic groups. Nina Varsava (2008) writes of Canada as lacking a unified identity, and the country prides itself on its policy of multiculturalism—it is touted as the most multicultural country in

---

<sup>30</sup> As Canada itself is still considered a commonwealth of the United Kingdom, and thus tied to the British colonial legacy, the work of Hesse (2001), Hall (1996; 1997), Clifford (1994), and Gilroy (1991; 1993), all of whom are Afro-Caribbean British postcolonialists, could prove fruitful for theoretical discussions of diasporas residing in Canada.



the world.<sup>31</sup> In a similar vein of fragmentation over uniformity, many Cape Bretoners in the homeland and in the diaspora think of themselves as Cape Bretoners first and Canadians second. This tendency might suggest that local identities are more prominent to these citizens than their national identity. Further research would be needed to clarify these dimensions.

Diasporas in Canada (Trew 2003; Dlamini and Anucha 2009; Varsava 2008) have been studied, but extremely little is written about diasporas OF Canada. Lucas and Purkayastha (2007) is one exception. Their remark that “Canada as home was most often described in terms of family, while home in the U.S. was associated with work (243),” is reflected in the lyrics of Cape Breton diasporic-themed songs, as discussed in Chapter Four. Given the fact that Canadian immigrants often disperse within their new homelands, rather than remaining in a cultural or ethnic community (246), music can serve as a means for connecting to fellow members of the diaspora, particularly the Cape Breton diaspora.

The term diaspora has become so frequently used that Brubaker contests that a “‘diaspora’ diaspora” (2005) exists: the term itself has dispersed and become part of many disciplines and/or conceptual framings. Overwrought though many feel the term may be, diaspora is a useful tool for critically examining a group of people away from its place of origin whether due to globalization, immigration, or the continued exposure to

---

<sup>31</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Fall 2013 issue of *Ethnomusicology* features a review essay on music and diaspora (Witzleben), an article about the chop in North Atlantic fiddling (Risk), and also mentions a low amount of writing in the journal on Canada (Witzleben). Despite the lack of coverage cited above, Canada often gets lumped in with United States organizations, including the assumption that Canadian ethnomusicologists will or should join the American-based Society for Ethnomusicology. Even Canada’s beloved sport, hockey, is played at the professional level with the American-based National Hockey League.

other cultures facilitated by technology and improvements in transit. I will be applying the term diaspora to those from Cape Breton who have come to the Boston area, and will refer to the characteristics of a diaspora as outlined by William Safran (1991; 2005) and further developed by Robin Cohen (1997; 2008), given that many of the characteristics they suggest can be applied to the Cape Breton community. Among the most salient of these characteristics are 1) leaving the homeland to go to two or more locations in search of work, 2) the collective memory of the homeland, and 3) their

wish to survive as a distinct community—in most instances as a minority—by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from the ancestral home and the symbols based on it. In so doing, they adapt to hostland conditions and experiences to become themselves centers of cultural creation and elaboration. (Safran 2005, 37)

To many, diaspora still holds the connotation of involuntary movement, even though the definition has expanded to include groups who have elected to leave their homeland, usually for employment purposes, as well as those who make a second move to a third location, as seen with Cape Bretoners who moved to the United States, Australia, or other parts of Canada.<sup>32</sup> These moves enabled musical imprints on the geographic sites and the peoples involved— a phenomenon I am calling *culture-in-motion*. I will use this coined term in conjunction with Ric Knowles' (2009) idea of “cultural memory as...performative” to examine the Cape Breton musical community. The above concepts will serve as lenses for analyzing how music's progression serves as a means for studying the results of influences, intermixtures, and other interactions between the diaspora and

---

<sup>32</sup> See McCabe, Harlaftis, and Minoglou 2005 for case studies of numerous entrepreneurial diaspora networks and Akenson 2010 for a critical re-evaluation of the Irish diaspora across the globe, including the acknowledgement that being a member of a diaspora, particularly in the first generation, does not universally indicate abject poverty.

the hostland, as well as how the music has provided cultural continuity through two separate diasporic moves, that is, from other nations to Cape Breton, and then again from Cape Breton to Boston.

Though Cohen tips his hat to Safran for providing parameters that prevented diasporic definitions from going haywire, Mark Slobin (2012) notes that the boundaries of the term diaspora, much as with the borders of diasporic communities, are impossible to neatly corral; yet, Slobin reminds us that world changes must be considered and worked with when locating a group in question “under the increasingly broader circumference of the diasporic umbrella” (2008, 5).<sup>33</sup> Diagrammatic approaches, as seen in Kay Kaufman Shelemay’s work on the Ethiopian diaspora (2010), are particularly useful given this etymology of diaspora as indicating multidirectional movement.<sup>34</sup>

Slobin notes that migration and movement are not new phenomena by any means, but the way and the amount to which groups of people interact, be it in person or virtually, allows for “everyday multi-sitedness” (2012, 99), and his call for intra-diasporic music (102) is a useful contemporary lens for focusing on the everyday musical interactions that occur among diasporic cultures and their shared homelands. This mimics Tina K. Ramnarine’s 2007 concept that “diasporic music-making can be understood in the ordinariness of creative production, as musicians working as individual agents in their everyday environments, making musical choices that suit them and their audiences” (2007, 7). Slobin’s declaration that music and food are the two most powerful provokers

---

<sup>33</sup> Bohlman writes of “Irish and/or Celtic diasporas” (2007, 187).

<sup>34</sup> A Venn diagram would effectively show locations and overlap.

of memory is indeed true – music’s ineffable quality allows it to trigger remembrances of one’s past, imagined or actual. Music is particularly useful for showcasing this culture-in-motion as sound waves, much the same as wafting scents of food, travel through the air to reach a different destination. Furthermore, Martin Stokes (2004) acknowledges, as does Slobin, that music indeed “plays an active role in creating and shaping global spaces that otherwise would not have ‘happened’” (67) and that music has an unparalleled ability to speak to collective experiences. Shelemay, in her 2010 discussion of musical communities, declares that, much as with culture-in-motion, “community is a term that needs to be approached ‘in action’” (364).

Thomas Turino and James Lea’s edited volume, *Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities* (2004), features nine different examples of arts engagement in diasporic communities, several of which are located in the United States, including Gregory Dietrich’s “Dancing the Diaspora: Indian Desi Music in Chicago.” In the introduction to the volume, Turino provides some perspective on the topic of diaspora and the arts, remarking that “the roles of the arts in the creation and continuities of diasporas have yet to be investigated in any detailed way. Likewise the special nature of arts produced by diaspora communities has received little attention” (4). Notably, while Turino alludes to new technology, the volume was published before the launches of Facebook and YouTube, and thus does not amply consider the sizable impact of recent technology on diasporas’ cultural expression.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Facebook launched in 2004 but did not become publicly available until 2006. However, MySpace, which also allowed the embedding of videos, began in 2003, though its video capability was less shareable and more individualized than Facebook or Twitter.

J. Lawrence Witzleben (2013), in a review essay on music and diaspora, the latter of which terms “seemed tailor-made for ethnomusicologists” (525), praises Turino and Lea’s volume, noting that it, along with collections by Um (ed., 2006) and Ramnarine (2007), has been underrecognized within the field, yet texts by Bohlman (2007), Monson (2000), Radano and Bohlman (2000), and the 1994 *Ethnomusicology* issue devoted to music and diaspora, with articles by Slobin and Averill, all have a central place in the canon. While he lauds Turino and Lea in particular, Witzleben is critical of the overlap of theories used, as well as the scholars’ engagement with diaspora in conjunction with music:

Interestingly, the editors of all three collections (and many of the individual authors) repeatedly gravitate toward the definitions and arguments of Tölölyan (1994), Safran (1991), Clifford (1994), and Hall (1994) as touchstones (Ramnarine makes the most concerted effort to break new theoretical ground). Safran’s paradigm is often quoted in full. Briefly, he suggests that diasporas are communities that share ‘several’ of six characteristics: dispersion from an original center, collective memory of the homeland, marginalization by the host countries, an idea of return to the homeland, belief in maintaining or restoring the homeland, and having ‘ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity’ defined in part by the community’s relationship to the homeland (1991, 83–84). His list is flexible and adaptable, in that the reference to the presence of ‘several’ of the elements (no single element is identified as essential) conveniently sidesteps protracted discussions of which cultural groups are or are not archetypal diasporas.

*Even more interesting is the fact that, for the most part, the editors (and authors) of these collections do not relate their work to a common body of previous work in the field of ethnomusicology or in any branch of music studies.* This seems to simultaneously support and contradict Timothy Rice’s observations on music and identity (2007, 2010): that is, unlike the ethnomusicologists whose work Rice analyzes, the majority of these authors do cite and discuss multiple definitions of their object of study, but like those scholars they pay little attention to previous work on diaspora and music. Nonetheless, the articles in the three volumes discussed here should go a long way toward establishing a canon for future study of the intersections of ethnomusicology and diaspora. (531, emphasis added)

To frame my argument in light of Witzleben’s call, I work off Turino’s (2004) statement

that

as social formations based on subjectively recognized and objectively articulated cultural similarities, diasporas depend on expressive cultural practices for their very existence; this is all the more crucial for dispersed diaspora communities since geographical location does not function as social boundary. Thus, the study of the arts in relation to diasporic identities is not a peripheral concern, but rather is central to the very understanding of this type of social formation. (2004, 4)

A hallmark of Turino's theory is engagement with Peircean semiotics, and his discussion of identity and the arts is no exception: "Like nations, diasporic formulations are not objective entities but are constructed identity units, based on signs and discourses of similarity and unity" (5).

Nations and diasporas are both dependent on people subjectively joining up, as opposed to being a subject of a state where legal means define membership. The same types of expressive cultural practices are semiotic means used to coalesce both these types of identity formations that function beyond face-to-face or localized communities. The members of both types of identity units have to perceive themselves as related to others within the formation and to the formation itself. This recognition occurs through *shared concrete emblems and practices as well as symbolic discourse*, all of which are realized, importantly, in highlighted forms through art. Benedict Anderson suggested that the emergence of nationalism was made possible by 'print capitalism,' which fostered common languages and information beyond face-to-face communities. Apparent in various studies ... newer electronic media have been extremely important in connecting transnational diaspora communities by creating the basis, at least, for a common semiotic environment, 'signscape,' and cultural experiences." (7-8, emphasis in original)

Digital diaspora allows for instant, constant, and explicit expression of such emblems and practices. Members of the Cape Breton community frequently post images of homeland-themed tattoos, memes, and photographs of days gone by.

Turino notes that "in some cases ... 'home' may retain an elevated symbolic status, but in terms of influencing actual cultural production is but one of many diasporic

sites, and not even the most important.” (6) Appropriately, the rise in homeland tourism (Powers 2011) seems to signal the next theoretical direction – cultures are now not only studied in their new homeland, but also are discussed in regards to how they can be drawn back to their original location, however many generations removed that may be.

Turino, and others, most notably Brubaker (2005) and Akenson (2010), caution of the ubiquity of the term “diaspora” for discussion, conceptualization, and analysis. Turino suggests that we must be clear in our definition of the term “diaspora” when utilizing it, as “the term has become so general and popular ... at this point it may have emotional salience but little analytical utility” (2004, 4). Witzleben (2013) does not acknowledge Turino’s awareness of diaspora’s theoretical ubiquity when reviewing Turino and Lea’s text. Despite these cautions and the manifest awareness of such theoretical concerns, the word “diaspora” shows no signs of paradigmatically slowing down, and continues to be a focal area in current ethnomusicological scholarship.

Witzleben comments on the identity of the performers themselves:

Somewhat surprisingly, only a few ... authors ... even touch on the involvement of cultural outsiders in diasporic performing arts—a somewhat striking gap, given the central place of such phenomena in the field of ethnomusicology and the extensive discussion surrounding them in publications such as Ted Solís’s *Performing Ethnomusicology* (2005). Diasporas are unquestionably understood primarily as groups of people, but, is a set of instruments or a repertoire performed in a location distant from its homeland not in some sense a diasporic representation of that homeland, irrespective of the people doing the performing? Javanese and Balinese gamelan, Andean panpipes, and West African drumming are but a few examples of diasporic musics that are increasingly performed and even taught in far-flung locales from the US midwest to Paris and Tokyo by people with no ancestral connection to the musics’ places of origin. (2013, 530-1)

As generations go on, does it “matter” that the musicians are not all Cape Bretoners? I agree with Witzleben that the music itself can be diasporic, even if the musicians

performing the pieces are not. Nonetheless, the decision by non-community members to play a specific style of music, such as West African drumming, may for some raise questions of authenticity. Wong (2004) discusses music performance's authenticity if its performers – and even the music itself -- are not from the culture in question. No clear-cut answer is readily apparent. What is known is that many recognized experts in a genre are indeed not of the same heritage as the genre. For example, noted local Irish musician and luthier Armand Aromin is not of Irish descent, but is deeply steeped in the tradition and a recognized and respected scholar within the Irish music community. Paul Cranford, a transplant to Cape Breton Island from Toronto, has become a prolific publisher and collector of Cape Breton, Irish, and Scottish music.<sup>36</sup> The Cranford series of publications are the definitive source of artists' collections, including revered Cape Breton fiddler Jerry Holland. For Cranford, time, residence, devotion, and expertise have engendered him to both the Cape Breton homeland and diasporic music communities. Music performed – or digitally experienced – within a diasporic community has appeal of its own right, but the music also serves as a means through which to perform and feel nostalgia. Hearing artists from the homeland perform in the diaspora also reinforces the cultural connections between the two locations. This connection can be upheld even if artists are not from the culture by means of heritage or birth, provided that the artists' level of skill and devotion to the genre is apt.

Though Safran and Cohen have both provided updated versions of their own tenets/characteristics, it is worth remembering that for over 20 years, two male, Western

---

<sup>36</sup> "Paul Cranford Bio," last updated November 28, 1999, [http://www.cranfordpub.com/cranford\\_bio.htm](http://www.cranfordpub.com/cranford_bio.htm)



scholars have provided the tenets against which we “test” all diasporas. As mentioned, Ramnarine has paved new ground with her concept of calibration for examining diasporas, but I find this framing to be unwieldy and overly metatheorized. Notably, as with Safran and Cohen’s writing on diaspora, Putnam’s theoretical framing of social capital is nearly universally cited, though Fischer (2001) serves as a main dissenter of *Bowling Alone*’s arguments.<sup>37</sup>

Milton Esman (2009), after starting his chapter on definitions of diaspora with Cohen’s 1997 template, calls Cohen to task, electing to emphasize *types* of diasporas – “*settler, labor, and entrepreneurial* – focusing on the functions they perform in their host country ... [as] these three classes encompass all transnational migrant communities, historical and contemporary” (15, emphasis in original). Esman finds Cohen’s five types – “victim, trade, labor, imperial, and cultural ... emphasiz[ing] the origin and causes of transnational migrant movements” (15) to be too focused on motivations for arriving to a new hostland, rather than focusing on the groups’ current function and “*central tendency*” upon settling. Thus, Esman’s perspective emphasizes forward motion, much as with my theoretical concept of culture-in-motion as a means for analyzing diaspora. Nonetheless, Esman relies on Cohen to provide the basis for his own theoretical frame, which is an important acknowledgement of the central role Cohen maintains within diaspora theory.

---

<sup>37</sup> Fischer’s 2001 paper “Bowling Alone: What’s the Score?” argues that several of Putnam’s conclusions “that do not fit the story line of *Bowling Alone*” (2) are not amply supported with data, for example, “some of the contradictions are reported but are buried in footnoted. Others are evident but not fully confronted” (2). Similar to Brubaker’s concerns about the “‘diaspora’ diaspora,” Fischer cautions against the ubiquity and broad-scale use of the term “social capital”: “the ‘social capital’ metaphor tends to expand in all directions like a swamp in wet weather. Yes, ‘social capital’ has become a quite popular term, one of the many species of ‘capitals’ that have infected sociologists’ prose” (4). Nonetheless, he acknowledges Putnam’s contribution to scholarly discourse, while still expressing concerns with the wide variety of concepts Putnam places under the umbrella of social capital.

Digital diaspora is also a new area of focus within diaspora studies, with Karim Karim (2003), Anna Everett (2008), and Jennifer Brinckerhoff (2009) leading the way. However, Everett exclusively focuses on African diaspora studies, and neither Karim nor Brinckerhoff examine diasporic engagement with music and/or the arts. Given the increased digital interaction with music both in the homeland and in the diaspora, theory on and analysis of these intersections is paramount.

The dispersion of diasporas' cultural productions, in particular, their music(s), has been greatly modified and mediated by the rise in social media, technology, video-sharing sites, and Internet-capable devices. The dispersion of culture digitally is, I argue, yet another step of removing the culture from its central location in the homeland. While still available in the homeland, the culture now lives on the Web, marketed to some, yet available to all. Thus, there are two central issues at hand: do we need new theories, or do the longstanding go-to approaches remain? Do previous theorizations of diaspora consider hybridity and the increasingly mobile (and mobile-phone-wielding) transnational? Cosmopolitanism has recently made its way into the lexicon, though I find the word classist, unwieldy, and unreasonable for examining diasporic behaviors and trends.

In addition, the writings of a diasporic group may be affected by changes in publication outlets, resulting from the decline of the printed text. However, for those who are technologically literate, chat rooms, Facebook pages, and message boards can provide a means of connection. Paul Basu's (2007) work on the Scottish diaspora recognizes that such boards allow a platform for e-gniting (igniting emotions via the Web) glorification

of the homeland. Further, the imagined homeland can find a new borderless, spaceless home online. Jennifer Brinkerhoff's (2009) argument states that

migrant integration can be eased when diasporans (members of diasporas) have opportunities to express their hybrid identities (a sense of self that is neither wholly of the homeland nor exclusively reflective of the hostland) collectively (2).

This lens is helpful for considering the phenomenology of the musicodigital experience of Cape Breton for diasporic individuals and communities who want to connect to and perhaps learn from the homeland. These individuals may be anywhere from one to three generations removed from the homeland of Cape Breton.

Bryce McNeil's (2009) dissertation, "Building Subcultural Community Online and Off: An Ethnographic Analysis of the CBLocals Music Scene," which focuses on CBLocals.com, a website for musicians in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM), provides a solid literature review of the Internet as relating to communication. Notable sources include Howard Feingold's *The Virtual Community* (1996) and Quentin Schultze's *Habits of the High Tech Heart* (2002). McNeil also cites Putnam's (2000) engagement with the Internet in regards to social capital, noting that *Bowling Alone* appeared before the Internet truly gained its central role in everyday life. Importantly, McNeil states that in his dissertation "we discover how online participation is incorporated into a pre-existing offline community" (14). His study also provides an example of a netnography (Kozinets 2010) focused on Cape Breton music,<sup>38</sup> though McNeil does not examine the connection to the diaspora in depth. Recent writing by Janice Waldron (2012); Jennifer A. Whitaker, Evelyn K. Orman, and Cornelia

---

<sup>38</sup> A netnography is an ethnographic study conducted on the Internet.

Yarborough; and Ailbhe Kenny (2013) analyze the online music education and music website experience, but all of these pieces are published in music education journals, and thus may not easily come into an ethnomusicologist's purview. The same is true of McNeil's dissertation, completed for a degree in communications. Thus, when examining online music and diaspora studies, it is imperative to cast one's research scope wide, as sources may be hidden in unexpected areas.

This dissertation seeks to analyze and bridge the gap between music and digital diaspora studies. The completed dissertation will serve as a template for examining and analyzing the musical activities of diasporic communities undergoing rapid changes, reflecting the call in the field for additional consideration of the music-diaspora connection. It is also my hope that my research may stimulate—via oral history and data collection—further interest in and preservation of Cape Breton music and culture in the Boston area, as well as provide an in-depth investigation of the declining social capital of certain community events and cultural gatherings in the context of twenty-first century American society.

### **Methodology**

A phenomenological approach to diaspora is both theoretically supported and feasible for this project.<sup>39</sup> To utilize this approach, I experience, document, and analyze the day-to-day musical happenings and practices of the Cape Breton diaspora. My research methodology includes interviews, examinations of and participation in

---

<sup>39</sup> See Berger (2013) for a reflection on the role of phenomenology in ethnomusicology.

performance practice, and online research on the role of technology in musical engagement, in addition to literature reviews, gathering of primary sources through fieldwork, and documentation of performance events. As part of my digital fieldwork, I took a year and a half of Skype lessons with Andrea Beaton. I did some archival work as well, including reviewing original membership records from the Canadian-American Club. My Cape Breton “halfie” status (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984), as well as my presence as a vocalist and fiddle student in the Boston Celtic music community, has also provided inroads into this research.

## **Chapter Outline**

### *Chapter One*

Chapter One introduces the reader to the main topics and the overarching research questions of the dissertation. The chapter locates Cape Breton Island as a homeland and situates the Cape Breton diasporic community in the greater Boston area. Further, I provide theoretical background and a literature review of the topics examined, and I outline the methodology of my research.

### *Chapter Two*

The second chapter focuses on the topic of social capital and the effects of and reasons for diminishing social capital, particularly technological innovations that have affected in-person music practices. I begin with a discussion of Putnam’s (2000) theory of social capital, applying his concept of bonding social capital to diasporic groups. I critically apply his idea of “bowling alone,” along with Song’s (2009) view of “bowling

alone, online together,” Turkle’s (2011) fieldwork on technology and isolating social shifts, Sparling’s (2006) conception of cultural capital in Gaelic Cape Breton, and O’Hara and Brown’s (2006) examination of music consumption to build a foundation for developing the concept of musical capital. Given that so much of this community’s activity has revolved around music, musical capital, which I define as arts currency, both tangible and intangible, which can be procured, acquired, or shared, provides a more specific way for considering the shifts in participation and consumption.

### *Chapter Three*

In Chapter Three, I bolster the current writing on digital diaspora with analysis of cultural consumption and practices within the Cape Breton diaspora, particularly within the Boston area. I examine the shift in modes of dissemination of music recordings from copying cassette tapes, and then CDs, to videosharing on social media sites, in particular, Facebook. Paired with this shift is the change from announcing events via postal mail to sending newsletters and updates via email and social media, and the distributional schism this causes across generations and among those without regular access to, or those who elect not to use, email and social media. I then discuss the pivotal role that Facebook played in allowing me increased access to and insight into the daily activities and events of the Cape Breton diasporic community. This ease of access also creates a collapse of boundaries between the public and the private that is essential to address, as it greatly affects both the contemporary fieldworker and the collaborators.

I then address how the Internet allows contemporary diasporans to e-member, or digitally remember. As with the digital in-roads that I experienced as a fieldworker,

bonding digital social capital forms on Facebook; the connection among distant relatives, be they separated by geography or otherwise removed, is renewed and strengthened. Many who would not regularly correspond via telephone, letters, or even in person, yet friend each other for the sake of staying connected to family, find themselves seeing photographs, videos, statuses, and shared posts from each other's lives, and thus feel digitally closer. Many of these shared videos are of Cape Breton music, and several pages, including Cape Breton Music Media Historical Society, are solely devoted to showcasing and preserving Cape Breton music. Liking, following, and viewing the content of these pages and sites connects with Turino's (2004) remark that "for people to identify strongly with a diaspora, perhaps equally or more than with the 'host' society, they have to subjectively distinguish themselves" (6). One can be thousands of miles away, yet still listen to dueling fiddles playing at a kitchen party in Baddeck. Nonetheless, people may regularly enjoy these videos, but rarely attend in-person concerts, a rather perplexing occurrence, even after much research.

#### *Chapter Four*

Chapter Four is devoted to diasporic longing as expressed through contemporary Cape Breton popular song. A textual analysis identifies core themes, key words, and geographic identifiers within the lyrics, as well as how the lyrics inform a diasporic mindset that shapes cultural memory. The connections of the songwriters and performers to Cape Breton Island are considered. As mentioned previously, the dispersion of the unofficial anthem of Nova Scotia, Allister MacGillivray's 1975 "Song for the Mira," is discussed, as it has been covered by artists the world over. The songs' consumption,

associations, and their place within the present-day diaspora, including their presence on YouTube and Facebook, are noteworthy. Building on Creighton (1972) and Fowke (1972), this chapter will add to the scarcity of writing on contemporary English-language Cape Breton songs.

### *Chapter Five*

Chapter Five provides an in-depth history of the Cape Breton diaspora in the Boston area. The chapter utilizes fieldwork, archives, interviews, and recordings, in conjunction with the previously presented theories on diaspora, to paint a picture of the central role music and dance plays within the community. I provide a detailed timeline of the Canadian-American Club and the way it functions within the community, and discuss the history of kitchen parties, music sessions, concerts, and the Scottish Gaelic language as they relate to Cape Breton music and dance in the Boston area.

Factors that led to a downward shift in the community's production and practice are analyzed, namely, an aging population; demographic dispersion from urban to suburban areas; a decrease in the number of musicians performing – and students taking up Cape Breton music; and travel, work, and immigration changes in the wake of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

I document the demographic shifts in this community through a consideration of how Cape Breton culture is practiced today, and by whom; what ages or generations are participating, whether or not children are present at these events, and the degree to which diasporic members study Cape Breton dance in the same way as Irish-Americans study Irish stepdancing. This ethnographic chapter documents the weekly and monthly events



at the Canadian-American Club, and draws upon interviews with scholars in the field, members of the diaspora, and members of the greater Cape Breton and Celtic musical community. In addition, I address the role of Scottish Gaelic within the community, as well as the presence of non-Celtic Cape Breton diasporans and their interactions within or reactions to Celtic Cape Breton culture.

In the second half of this chapter, I discuss my fieldwork experiences as a digital student via my Skype lessons with Andrea Beaton. I review the various options available for those interested in electronically studying Cape Breton culture, including language lessons by the Gaelic College, the online learning site [tradlife.com](http://tradlife.com), developed in 2014 by Boston-based Celtic fiddler and crwth player Emerald Rae, and prerecorded fiddle and piano lessons by Kimberley Fraser. I examine the effects of posted videos, lessons, and recordings on the way the student learns, showing that regardless of one's location or access to a teacher, certain keys to Cape Breton music are available online.

Finally, I discuss the politics of the annual dedication by the Province of Nova Scotia of the Boston Common Christmas Tree, and the performance of Maritime music at the tree lighting, as a means of maintaining cultural ties and political affiliations between the two regions. This yearly event serves as a prime example for the public display of performed Nova Scotianess in Boston.

### *Conclusion*

I conclude the dissertation with a synopsis of the topics discussed. I provide an analysis of the current state of the Cape Breton diaspora in the greater Boston area, and discuss developing initiatives for maintaining and reinvigorating the community.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation situates the Cape Breton diasporic community within the greater Boston music scene, and analyzes the musical interactions, as well as potential hybrid forms, that have developed in the Boston area. It also considers potential future trajectories of the Cape Breton diaspora within the Boston area, and the seminal role that the Internet plays in the community.

## **CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND MUSICAL CAPITAL: A THEORETICAL REVIEW**

In this chapter, I argue that social capital shifts, particularly an increasing shift to digitally performed social capital, have affected cultural and musical capital in diasporic community groups. Though the increased availability of musical performance and resources on the Internet has great value, the electronic sharing and distribution of these video and audio clips does not equal the full, four-dimensional experience provided by in-person music-making. To examine the meaning of social capital and analyze the shifts that have taken place, I begin with a detailed exploration of Robert Putnam's theories on the topic of social capital (2000), critically applying his idea of "bowling alone," to my case study of Cape Breton music in the Boston diaspora. Drawing further on Felicia Wu Song's (2009) analysis of virtual communities, Sherry Turkle's (2011) fieldwork on technology and isolating social shifts, Heather Sparling's (2006) conception of cultural capital in Gaelic Cape Breton, and Kenton O'Hara and Barry Brown's (2006) examination of music consumption, I gradually build a scholarly framework for the concept of musical capital. Given that so much of this Cape Breton community's activity has revolved around music, musical capital provides a more specific way to consider the shifts in participation and consumption documented in my fieldwork in 2014-15.

## Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam, and the Mainstream Arrival of Social Capital

While the idea of social capital is not a new concept in sociology and culture studies, political scientist and public policy scholar Robert Putnam's seminal 2000 text *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* brought renewed focus to the subject. Putnam notes that the term "social capital" has been redefined numerous times during the twentieth century, "each time to call attention to the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties" (20). While some definitions include "social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity (21)" and "those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individual and families who make up a social unit (Hanafin in Putnam 2000, 19)," current scholars use the term as a means for "fram[ing] concerns about the changing character of ... society" (18).<sup>40</sup> He explains,

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital – tools and training that enhance individual productivity – the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contracts affect the productivity of individuals and groups. Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, *social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them*. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue.' The difference is that 'social capital' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. *A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital ... A well-connected individual in a poorly connected society is not as productive as a well-*

---

<sup>40</sup> The term has also been utilized by German, French, and Canadian theorists (Putnam 2000, 19).

*connected individual in a well-connected society.* (Putnam, 18-19; 20, emphasis added)<sup>41</sup>

Working from this concept, Putnam then addresses the different factors that could affect the decline in social capital.<sup>42</sup> Putnam acknowledges that the change is not completely downward, but rather “a story of collapse and renewal” (25); nonetheless, he sees it as “within our power to reverse the decline of the last several decades” (25). Thus, his intentions of resurrecting and maintaining community relations, and increasing social capital, are clear. His follow-up text, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (2004), written with Lewis Feldstein and Donald J. Cohen, provides anecdotal evidence of social, civic, and community engagement, further supporting his aim and initiatives first presented in *Bowling Alone*. His most recent book, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (2015), also serves as a call to arms for changing societal issues, this time regarding the increasing gap between rich and poor youth in America.

After providing his theoretical framework, Putnam precedes to show how social capital has positively or negatively impacted a number of areas of American society. He devotes a chapter each to the following topics: political participation; civic participation; religious participation; connections in the workplace; informal social connections; altruism, volunteering, and philanthropy; reciprocity, honesty, and trust; and small groups, social movements and the Net. He then analyzes the reasons for the changes in the following section, entitled “Why?” The issues he highlights are pressures of time and

---

<sup>41</sup> Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, and Cliff Lampe (2010), in their study of Facebook’s connection to social capital, provide an additional useful definition: “The concept of social capital describes the benefits individuals derive from their social relationships and interactions; resources such as emotional support, exposure to diverse ideas, and access to non-redundant information. Social capital is embedded in the structure of social networks and the location of individuals within these structures (Burt 2005) (873).”

<sup>42</sup> Putnam notes that “‘community’ ... is ‘social capital[‘s]’ ... conceptual cousin (21).”

money, mobility and sprawl, and generational shifts. Section IV: “So What?,” written with the assistance of Kristin A. Goss, details the effects of these changes. Finally, the closing section, “What Is to Be Done?,” highlights social capital’s ebbs and flows over the past 145 years, beginning with the Gilded Era (considered in the text to be 1870-1900); provides a six-point call for action agenda for promoting social capital; and explains how the data was collected and analyzed. The latter section of the text, which details the importance of taking multiple surveys over time and examining club membership records, rather than solely relying on “frail recollections of ‘how things used to be’” (414), is incredibly useful for anyone preparing the methodology of social capital-based fieldwork and survey collections. Putnam urges restraint, however, in the use of this data, as “organizations have life cycles” (416) and

not all community activity is embodied in record-keeping organizations – indeed, probably most is not ... If we combine our attention to membership rosters, we may miss massive change or massive stability. Worse yet, if community life is, for whatever reason, becoming richer, but less formally organized, tracking membership figures alone would lead us to precisely the wrong conclusion. (416)

Further, he notes to take caution in painting broad-swath conclusions from data, as “literally nothing at all can be said sensibly about change from a single photo or a single survey” (417). Rather, repetition of surveys, large numbers of poll-takers, and a longitudinal approach to data collection is important; “Since social change proceeds unevenly, *measurement periods must be matched to hypotheses about the scale and timing of change* ... [s]o we must always ask about any trend not just ‘What’s changing?’ but ‘What’s changing over what period?’” (417), as “our social camera can be jiggled

easily” (416). I utilize this methodology, mindful of the time constraints of the dissertation, in my chapter on fieldwork (Chapter Five).

### *Bridging and Bonding Social Capital*

Putnam calls the distinction between bridging and bonding social capital, terms attributed to Ross Gittel and Avis Vidal (1998), “perhaps the most important ... of all the dimensions along which forms of social capital vary” (22). Bridging social capital involves “networks [that] are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages” (22); Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, and Cliff Lampe note that “empirical research confirms the practical importance of bridging social capital” (2010, 875), citing Jeffrey Boase et al.’s 2006 findings “that those with a wider range of occupations represented in their social circle were more likely to get help doing things like changing jobs or finding health information” (875). Putnam gives the examples of “the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations” (22) as those which fall under the bridging social capital umbrella, that is, those groups which seek to transcend boundaries, divides, and differences. Putnam cites “ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women’s reading groups, and fashionable country clubs” as organizations which arouse bonding social capital, as these groups are “by choice or necessity ... inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups ... bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity.” (22). He cogently summarizes, stating, “bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves ... bonding social capital constitutes a kind of

sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40” (23). Putnam alludes to the power the Internet will soon play in this regard when stating that “Internet chat groups may bridge across geography, gender, age, and religion, while being tightly homogeneous in education and ideology” (23).<sup>43</sup> He also notes that the division between the two types “are not ‘either-or’ categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but ‘more or less’ dimensions along which one can compare different forms of social capital” (23). The intention of nationality, diasporic, or cultural groups such as the Canadian-American Club is not to increase bridging social capital. Rather, their aim is bonding social capital, that is, uniting those with similar interests, histories, and backgrounds, though introducing potential or new members or “outsiders” to the Club and its happenings is never discouraged.

### *Listening and Viewing Alone: Television and Media*

The convenience and speed of technology had an impact on social capital long before the invention of the Internet. Putnam himself states that “the new communications technology triggered a lively debate among turn-of-the-century social philosophers that prefigured with remarkable fidelity the quickening controversy in contemporary America about the effects of the Internet” (376). He notes that “the railroad and rural free delivery, mail-order firms and (somewhat later) chain stores, and the automobile disrupted local commerce and threatened place-based social connections. Sears, Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, the A&P, and Woolworth’s [*sic*] were the counterparts to today’s Wal-Mart and Amazon.com.” (376) Early twentieth century social observers such as John Dewey and

---

<sup>43</sup> I discuss the connection between social capital and the Internet in depth later in this chapter.



Mary Parker Follett raised concern about the impact of technology on human interaction. Dewey stated that “the invasion of the community by the new and relatively impersonal and mechanical modes of combined human behavior is the outstanding facet of modern life.” (377) Boston-based Follett remarked, that taking the trolley from Roxbury, a neighborhood of Boston, to the city, meant “that ‘a full community life lived within the sustaining and nourishing power of the community bond ... is almost unknown now’” (377). Putnam also speaks of historian Jean Quandt’s desire to reinvigorate community centers as a means of “overcoming civic apathy” (377). Lastly, in a comment that foreshadows the omnipresence of at-home (or on-the-go) entertainment, Putnam cites Dewey’s remark that “what is significant is that access to means of amusement has been rendered easy and cheap beyond anything known in the past” (378). Given his concerns in the early twentieth century about the ease of finding activities and gatherings, surely Dewey would be alarmed by the present-day decline in civic engagement and the predominance of in-home or cell phone entertainment.

In Putnam’s estimation, “a new culture of leisure and materialism” formed around the turn of the twentieth century, and “the invention of the phonograph and movies between 1896 and 1902 portended a radical transformation in the nature of *mass leisure* in the new century” (372, emphasis added). He adds that “progressive intellectuals articulated a broader yearning for the community values of small-town life, nostalgia provoked by the materialism, individualism, and ‘bigness’ of the new America” (378).<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> I detail in the following chapters how the promise of a life as it should be or used to be is a key aspect of Cape Breton’s tourism campaign, and that the amplified sense of community relations on the island is longed for by those who have emigrated.

Putnam also cites novelist Booth Tarkington's reflection that before the busyness of the cities, "there was time to live" (379) and states that while urban historian Robert Barrows viewed such statements as "nostalgic oversimplification" (379), there is truth in the fact that "such neighborliness constituted an informal network of mutual aid, social capital in particularly pure form" (379).

Putnam says that the end of The Gilded Age, in the early twentieth century,

was, in short, a time very like our own, brimming with promise of technological advance and unparalleled prosperity, but nostalgic for an integrated sense of connectedness. Then, as now, new modes of communication seemed to promise new forms of community ... a new spatial organization of human settlement threatened older forms of solidarity ... above all, then, as now, older strands of social connection were being abraded – even destroyed – by technological and economic and social change. (381-2)

This argument supports the crux of Putnam's argument that ebbs and flows in social capital occur. It also furthers my argument, made throughout the chapters of this dissertation, that dispersion and technological advances affect social capital.

Though Putnam could not in the year 2000 fully anticipate the power of YouTube, Netflix, on-demand cable, online radio, and other digital audio-visual resources,<sup>45</sup> he foreshadows some of the deep changes to entertainment brought about by the Internet in his chapter on technology and mass media. He declares,

First, news and entertainment have become increasingly individualized. *No longer must we coordinate our tastes and timing with others in order to enjoy the rarest*

---

<sup>45</sup> One example of the datedness of the text is Putnam's statement that unlike those who rely on newspapers, radio, and television for news, those few technologically proficient Americans who rely *primarily* on the Internet for news are actually *less* likely than their fellow citizens to be civically involved. Of course, this does not prove that the Net is socially demobilizing. Those 'early adopters' of Internet news may well have been socially withdrawn to begin with. Nevertheless, Internet and cable news outlets seem unlikely to offset the civic losses from the shrinking audiences for network broadcast and print news. (221)

*culture or the most esoteric information.* In 1900 music lovers needed to sit with scores of other people at fixed times listening to fixed programs, and if they lived in small towns as most Americans did, the music was likely to be supplied by enthusiastic local amateurs. In 2000, with my hi-fi Walkman CD, wherever I live I can listen to precisely what I want when I want and where I want. As late as 1975 Americans nationwide chose among a handful of television programs. Barely a quarter century later, cable, satellite, video, and the Internet provide an exploding array of individual choice.

Second, electronic technology allows us to consume this hand-tailored entertainment in private, even utterly alone. As late as the middle of the twentieth century, low-cost entertainment was available primarily in public settings, like the baseball park, the dance hall, the movie theater, and the amusement park, although by the 1930s radio was rapidly becoming an important alternative, the first of series of electronic inventions that would transform American leisure. In the last half of the century television and its offspring moved leisure into the privacy of our homes ... *mirth is enhanced by companionship ... companionship [can] now be simulated electronically.* At an accelerating pace throughout the century, the electronic transmission of news and entertainment changed virtually all features of American life (216-7, emphasis added).<sup>46</sup>

Though not able to speak to the Internet's potential for isolating (while also uniting), Putnam does note television's sweeping effect upon civic engagement and social capital: "the single most important consequence of the television revolution has been to bring us home" (223).<sup>47</sup> He acknowledges the central role television has taken in American lives, in that many families have the television on for several hours a day, even without actively engaging with the program being broadcast – "habitual viewing is especially detrimental to civic engagement" (224) -- that viewership has changed across generations, and that watching television has now become a top leisure activity that is part of most Americans'

---

<sup>46</sup> While the Internet and television have become the first-line sources for information, following the June 2009 death of Michael Jackson, people turned to the radio and called in to make requests, as they had first heard his music there.

<sup>47</sup> Notably, this lack of needing to meet at a central location to work or be involved with others is even seen in education, with the exponential growth of online education. Offered at the secondary school through doctoral degree levels of education, many can fully digitally participate in a course without ever meeting the professor. Notably, this puts greater emphasis on written communication, as, unless a live classroom component is part of the class, students and faculty communicate solely via email and written assignments.

days: “watching TV at night has become one of the few universals of contemporary American life” (228). Clearly, when reading this, one can also substitute “using the Internet” or “viewing Netflix” for “watching TV at night” in the previous sentence. Notably, Putnam is not totally off-put by the Internet; rather, he wants to ensure that its role is positive and complementary to offline life: “the key, in my view, is to find ways in which Internet technology can reinforce rather than supplant place-based, face-to-face, enduring social networks” (411).

Though he analyzes many different factors that can cause the social capital to shift, Putnam declares “dependence on television for entertainment” to be “*the single most consistent predictor ... of civic engagement*” (231), or lack thereof. Further, while many would take media’s use for granted, Putnam’s declaration that “in short, just as television privatizes our leisure time, it also privatizes our civic activity, dampening our interactions with one another even more than it dampens individual political activities” (229) is particularly poignant in contemporary society, where technology and social media are omnipresent:

As TV ownership and usage spread across populations, it was linked, both in this country and abroad, to reduced contacts with relatives, friends, neighbors. More TV watching meant more time not just at home, but indoors, at the expense of time in the yard, on the street, and visiting in others’ homes. (234)

Yet, television “provides a kind of pseudopersonal connection to others” (242).

Television does in fact serve as a common point of conversation, from the 1970s phenomenon of Dallas and the question of “Who shot J.R.?” to the *M.A.S.H.* series finale breaking viewership records, to Super Bowl Sunday parties serving as an unofficial

holiday for many – even if they do not follow football and only choose to place bets on the score and watch the hyped commercials. However, even the anticipation of seeing the new, exciting, entertaining commercials has been lost, with most debuting online days or even weeks before the Super Bowl. Television programs, and at times movies, also serve as a source for many quotes and allusions in popular culture. Song adds to the discussion about television and society (while alluding to Putnam), noting that

Scholarly works such as Dayan and Katz's *Media Events* (1992) regarded electronic media as a catalyst for solidarity among geographically dispersed citizens. The living room in which people gathered to watch television was argued to be a new form of 'public' and the sheer spectatorship a new form of civic involvement. Further scholarship would show how television played a key role in the ritualistic formation of public experience and national memory as seen in the funerals of statesmen and celebrities, the Olympics, high-profile court cases, and, most recently, the on-air devastation of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Cerulo and Ruane 1998). Of course, television would eventually become reviled and criticized as a pacifying technology that turned Americans into a society of couch potatoes, instead of active members of local associational life (Putnam 2000 cited in Song?). (Song, year? xiv)

Though her remarks are more recent than – and slightly different from -- those of Putnam, they carry the same thinly-veiled sense of criticism, as well as a sense of the shifts that may occur in social capital in relation to technology use over time.

Digital video recording, or DVR, has also changed how many people interact with television, and even further separates the interaction in time. Instead of having to watch a program at the time of air, anyone with a DVR cable box can tape a program to watch whenever is convenient for them. Current cable company advertisements showcase the crossmedia availability of their programs – one can now begin watching a program at home and continue to watch it on their cell phone or tablet. Rather than sharing the unified experience of people making plans to watch a specific program when it airs for

the first time, e.g., *Friends* at 8 P.M. EST on Thursday nights, television shows can be pulled up whenever one chooses. In addition, the on demand feature of cable services provides viewers with program availability even without taping shows. The title “on demand” itself implies an increased level of convenience. Anchor Lester Holt began, in the winter of 2015, to end the live broadcasts of *NBC Nightly News* by announcing that the station knows viewers cannot always watch the broadcast live, and thus, all episodes are available on demand. Moreover, binge-watching, or watching an entire season (or more) of a television series in a row, has become a recognized, and acceptable, social activity, made easier by the release of entire seasons of programs at a time on Netflix, such as *Orange is the New Black* and *House of Cards*.

In spite of the availability of such programs at a time of one’s choosing, media has subtly made a suggestion for digitally raising social capital via live-Tweeting.<sup>48</sup> Commercials for television programs such as the NBC drama *Scandal* encourage viewers to tweet while watching the show. Special hashtags are created for programs, and viewers see them listed in the corner of the television, along with the station identifier, for the duration of the program. For example, the TLC bridal gown shopping reality show *Say Yes to the Dress* features the hashtag #SYTTD on the screen. The majority of newscasters now have their Twitter handles, or user names, listed under their names during each

---

<sup>48</sup> Twitter, a microblogging social media platform launched in 2005, allows users to “tweet,” or write and upload a post of up to 140 characters. Posts often include tinyURLs (shortened links for webpages) for the purpose of space, and express emotions, mark platforms, and display solidarity via hashtags, or words or phrases preceded by the number sign “#”; these tags are then publicly searchable, and are utilized by many data scientists to analyze trends, etc. Hashtags were first incorporated into Facebook’s site in 2013.

report. The May 2015 birth of Her Royal Highness Charlotte, Princess of Cambridge, was even announced by Kensington Palace via Twitter.

Many tend to not just watch sporting events of notable programs or performances, such as the Super Bowl, but to digitally engage with others by reading their commentary on Facebook.<sup>49</sup> Solely sitting to watch an episode of *Downton Abbey* to many now feels incomplete without providing their own mini-report or analysis of it on social media. Stars of the shows themselves will also live tweet during broadcasts, whether as a publicity stunt or by their own initiative to engage with fans. Thus, the wall between fans and celebrities breaks down further, as many artists make efforts to directly connect with fans. Musician Taylor Swift is particularly infamous for this. Retweets by a celebrity are seen as a badge of honor.

### *Generational Shifts*

Putnam highlights the key role that generational differences have made in shifts in social capital, declaring that “it seems fair to say that about half of the overall decline in social capital and civic engagement can be traced to generational change” (266). He continues,

Generational succession is, in sum, a crucial element in our story. However, it has *not* contributed equally powerfully to all forms of civic and social disengagement. The declines in church attendance, voting, political interest, campaign activities, associational membership, and social trust are attributable almost entirely to generational succession. In these cases, social change is driven largely by differences from one generation to the other, not by changing habits of individuals. By contrast, the declines in various forms of *schmoozing* [*sic*], such as card playing and entertaining at home, are attributable mostly to society-wide

---

<sup>49</sup> A variety of social networking sites (SNSs) exist. In this dissertation, I focus on Facebook, as it is the most widely used SNS within the Cape Breton communities both in Boston and in Cape Breton proper.

changes, as people of all ages and generations tended to shift away from these activities. The declines in club meetings, in dining with family and friends, and in neighboring, bowling, picnicking, visiting with friends, and sending greeting cards are attributable to a complex combination of both society-wide change and generational replacement. (266)

Once again, Putnam places weight on technological developments, proclaiming, “The allure of electronic entertainment is a likely explanation for these trends, as it has transformed the way all of us spend our time” (266). Clearly technology offers not simply entertainment but also new forms of social networking. I will return to these digital social networks in the next chapter on the digital diaspora and social media. Putnam cites quantitatively-marked indices of these social changes, stating that club meetings have declined by 60 percent – though he does not indicate the range of years from which this number was derived, nor the types of clubs to which he refers.

### *Community*

The term “community,” as with “culture,” “identity,” and other frequently-used terms in ethnomusicology and the social sciences, can be difficult to precisely define.

Putnam notes this, stating that

‘community’ means different things to different people. We speak of the community of nations, the community of Jamaica Plain, the gay community, the IBM community, the Catholic community, the Yale community, the African American community, the ‘virtual’ community of cyberspace, and so on. *Each of us derives some sense of belonging from among the various communities to which we might, in principle, belong.* For most of us, our deepest sense of belonging is to our most intimate social networks, especially family and friends. Beyond that perimeter lie work, church, neighborhood, civic life, and *the assortment of other ‘weak ties’ that constitute our personal stock of social capital.* (273-4, emphasis added)



*Music and the Arts*

Music is but one of the many topics that Putnam addresses in his analysis. We first see it mentioned in the chapter on informal social connections. Putnam notes that as with sports, music as a concept has become less interactive and more observed:

...by many measures, ‘doing’ culture (as opposed to merely consuming it) has been declining. Take town bands or jazz jamming or simply gathering around the piano, once classic examples of community and social involvement. According to surveys conducted every year over the last quarter century, the average frequency of playing a musical instrument has been cut from nearly six times per year in 1976 to barely three times per year in 1999. The percentage of Americans who play an instrument at all has fallen by fully one-third (from 30 percent to 20 percent) over this period, and exposure to music lessons has been dropping in recent generations. According to surveys commissioned by the National Association of Music Merchants, the fraction of households in which even one person plays an instrument has fallen steadily from 51 percent in 1978 to 38 percent in 1997. We certainly have not lost our taste for *listening* to music, any more than for watching sports, but fewer and fewer of us play together. (114-5)

Nonetheless, Putnam notes that Americans’ general amount of allotted time available for, and used for, leisure activity has not decreased (190); rather, our use of it has changed, and its availability may often be scattered into smaller pieces than in previous generations. For example, workloads may carry over later into the evening, and both parents of a household are often working, unlike the 1950s and 1960s, when far fewer women tended to work outside the home. This is obviously not an argument against working women, but instead an acknowledgement of a societal shift. However, many would argue that workloads and attachment to technology and office phones and emails, even on nights and weekends, have dampened one’s full availability and ability to relax outside of the standard work hours.

During the later portion of his book, in which he issues calls for civic engagement, Putnam cites the potential of the arts and sports for increasing the bridging form of social capital that would connect different groups of people. While they are regularly utilized as a means for public engagement, Putnam believes that the arts and sports remain underutilized. He declares,

singing together (or bowling together) does not require shared ideology or shared social or ethnic provenance. ... *Let us find ways to ensure that by 2010 significantly more Americans will participate in (not merely consume or “appreciate”) cultural activities from group dancing to songfests to community theater to rap festivals. Let us discover new ways to use the arts as a means for convening diverse groups of fellow citizens.* (411, emphasis in original)

Putnam notes that “social capital is a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely artistic” (411). Clearly, while he selects the arts as just one means of addressing social capital concerns, he sees great value in the role the arts can play within communities. I integrate Putnam’s suggestions into my theoretical framework in the chapter on fieldwork, and I build on his theories in my final conclusion, but more importantly, I use my own case study to critique Putnam and to develop a new hypothesis on social capital decline based on my research in this area. I will consider Putnam’s conclusions here as a basis for my own conceptualizations in this area of concern.

Putnam makes exceptional points at the conclusion of *Bowling Alone* that succinctly summarize the current social capital “crisis” facing American society. He notes that

weakened social capital is manifest in the things that have vanished almost unnoticed – neighborhood parties and get-togethers with friends, the unreflective kindness of strangers, the shared pursuit of the public good rather than a solitary quest for private goods. Naming this problem is an essential first step toward confronting it. (403)

Of course these social gatherings and the social good have not disappeared entirely, but it is a matter of the degree of presence of these sorts of neighborhood events or proactive policies, not that they have utterly ceased to exist. Putnam argues that “entertainment electronic” (403) plays a large role in the depletion of social capital, and states that in order to “replenish our stocks of social capital ... we need to address both the *supply* of opportunities for civic engagement and the *demand* for those opportunities” (403). He states that civic leaders and activists play a role in this re-engagement, but “at the same time we need to fortify our resolve as individuals to reconnect, for we must overcome a familiar paradox of collective action.” He then drives his point home:

Even if I privately would prefer a more vibrant community, I cannot accomplish that goal on my own – it’s not a meeting, after all, if only I show up, and it’s not a club if I’m the only member. It is tempting to retreat to private pleasures that I *can* achieve on my own. But in so doing, I make it even harder for you to solve your version of the same problem. Actions by individuals are not sufficient to restore community, but they *are* necessary. (403)

Thus, while Putnam ardently recognizes the changes needed, and is willing to rally American society to work towards increasing social capital even noting the development of the Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America, a program which he helped lead, with the explicit aim to do the following:

first, make Americans more aware of the collective significance of the myriad minute decisions that we make daily to invest – or disinvest – in social capital and, second, to spark the civic imaginations of our fellow citizens to discover and invent new ways of connecting socially that fill our changed lives. (404)

Further, he once again emphasizes that

[T]he single most important cause of our current plight is a pervasive and continuing generational decline in almost all forms of civic engagement. Today’s youth did not initiate the erosion of Americans’ social capital – their parents did –

and it is the obligation of Americans of all ages to help rekindle civic engagement among the generation that will come of age in the early years of the twenty-first century. (404)

Putnam hopes for a return to previous generations' levels of social capital by 2010, noting that these changes will be achieved differently than before, "and the new forms of connectedness will mark our success" (404). He also states that "the roles of national and local institutions in restoring American community need to be complementary; neither alone can solve the problem" (413); and furthermore, "America's major civic institutions, both public and private, are somewhat antiquated a century after most of them were created, and they need to be reformed in ways that invite more active participation" (413).<sup>50</sup> He concludes the book with the following call:

In the end, however, institutional reform will not work – indeed, it will not happen – unless you and I, along with our fellow citizens, resolve to become reconnected with our friends and neighbors. Henry Ward Beecher's advice a century ago to 'multiply picnics' is not entirely ridiculous today.<sup>51</sup> We should do this, ironically, not because it will be good for America – though it will be – but because it will be good for us. (414)

Clearly, Putnam sees the onus to implement the recommended changes as an onus on Americans, as well as on the institutions they utilize and attend. While his proclamations and calls come off at times as overly idealistic, he also displays a pragmatic side through his acknowledgement of the demands of contemporary work life, "the new politics of time," (407), and "the sprawling pattern of metropolitan settlement that we [have] built

---

<sup>50</sup> The co-sponsorship of the March 7, 2015, Barra MacNeils concert at the Chevalier Theatre in Medford by a number of organizations, including the Canadian-American Club, the City of Medford, Friends of Chevalier, Chevalier Auditorium Commission, and Chevalier Theatre Organ Society is one successful example of this.

<sup>51</sup> Church picnics were a common occurrence in nineteenth and twentieth century Cape Breton.

for ourselves in the preceding five decades [that impose] heavy personal and economic costs – pollution, congestion, and lost time ... metropolitan sprawl has also damaged the social fabric of our communities” (407).<sup>52</sup>

*Immigrant Communities and the Canadian Diaspora*

Putnam (2000) places emphasis on the developments of technology, enterprise, and industry over time, particularly focusing on The Gilded Age (1870-1900) and The Progressive Age (1900-1915) (367). He notes that

by the turn of the [20<sup>th</sup>] century America was rapidly becoming a nation of cities, teeming with immigrants born in villages in Europe or America but now toiling in factories operated by massive industrial combines. Technological change was one key to this transformation. (368)

Later, he states that “in merely twenty years between 1870 and 1890, Boston’s population rose by 79 percent to nearly 450,000” and that “year after year, an endless stream of hopeful emigrants from American farms and European villages poured into the anonymous teeming cities of tenements and skyscrapers” (370-1). He adds that “most of the new urban dwellers were also living in a new country,” noting that “the immigrants came from a wide variety of European countries as well as Canada and East Asia.” (371) Though he makes mention of “Germans, Irish, French Canadians, British, and Scandinavians” arriving in highest amounts prior to 1890, Putnam neglects to mention the large impact French Canadians, Canadians from the Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island), and

---

<sup>52</sup> Putnam also mentions the changes coming to American culture via “the new urbanism ... an ongoing experiment to see whether our thirst for great community life outweighs our hunger for private backyards, discount megamalls, and easy parking” (408). We see these changes in the lifestyle centers currently opening in suburban regions that seemingly are modern-day reincarnations of the local butcher, dress shop, and general store.

Canadians as a whole had after this time, a particular surprise given both his focus on Boston at numerous times throughout his argument, and the attention he pays to enterprise and economy, of which the New England-Maritime link is intractable and remains strong in the twenty-first century. Putnam does, however, acknowledge that following the changes in urban dwelling, “traditional social nets of family, friends, and community institutions no longer fit the way new urban workers had come to live” (371). Thus, in-person social capital began to shift and change; we continue to see the effects of these technological and demographic changes today.

Putnam continues,

To those who lived through this epoch, what was most striking was simply the overwhelmingly accelerated pace of change itself. We often speak easily about the rapid pace of change in our own time. However, nothing in the experience of the average American at the end of the twentieth century matches the wrenching transformation experienced at the beginning of the century by an immigrant raised as a peasant in a Polish village little changed from the sixteenth century who within a few years was helping to construct the avant-garde skyscrapers of Louis Sullivan in the city of ‘big shoulders’ beside Lake Michigan. (372-3)

Further regarding these immigrant communities, Putnam quotes historian Steven Diner, who states that

‘immigrants, mostly Catholics and Jews from the unfamiliar countries of Southern and Eastern Europe, poured into America in record numbers to work in its expanding industrial economy. Often living in dense urban neighborhoods where foreign tongues predominated, they created their own churches,<sup>1</sup> synagogues, and communal institutions’ (371).

For the Canadian immigrant arriving from Cape Breton, this change would have been deeply felt. Many roads in Cape Breton remained unpaved well into the twentieth century, with mail delivered by boat or by horse. Communities and villages were largely composed of the descendants of a small group of Scottish Highlanders who had arrived

during the 1800s (Morgan 2009). Further, many of these communities were largely Scottish Gaelic- and French-speaking, and Gaelic was widely viewed as a backwards language that would prevent people from getting ahead. The Celtic renaissance and renewed emphasis on Gaelic language and culture have undone some of the damage done by the shaming of the Gaelic identity, but the social and cultural impact of denying use of one's language cannot be underestimated. Its effects are still felt today, as very few Scottish Gaelic speakers, either native or by dint of education, remain today in North America.

While I argue that for diasporic groups, bonding social capital is at greater stake than bridging social capital, as a sense of culturally distinct community maintenance is these groups' aim, Putnam's (2000) comments can also be applied to cultural organizations and groups such as the Canadian-American Club and the French-American Victory Club. Putnam writes that

Immigrants and ethnic associations illustrate other aspects of social capital building at the end of the last century. Generally speaking, emigration devalues one's social capital, for most of one's social connections must be left behind. Thus immigrants rationally strive to conserve social capital. So-called 'chain migration,' where immigrations from a given locale in the 'old country' settle near one another in their new homeland, was and remains one common coping strategy. (390)

He continues,

according to historian Rowland Berthoff, 'The immigrants, who had been accustomed to a more tightly knit communal life than almost any American could now recall, were quick to adopt the fraternal form of the American voluntary association in order to bind together their local ethnic communities against the unpredictable looseness of life in America.' (390)

Connected with this reflection on community shifts, Putnam remarks that

social dislocation can easily breed a reactionary form of nostalgia. On the contrary, my message is that we desperately need an era of civic inventiveness to create a renewed set of institutions and channels for a reinvigorated civic life that will fit the way we have come to live. (401)

This declaration regarding the human response to separation is a huge statement, and we must not neglect the integral role that technology will now play in recruitment for interaction, social capital engagement, and revitalization, as Turkle (2011) and others have shown.

I now turn to a step-by-step analysis of the different sections Putnam addresses in order to build my own argument concerning shifts in and definitions of social capital in the twenty-first century. While my work is primarily focused on issues of musical capital in the Cape Breton diasporic community of Boston, outlined below, Putnam's theories might also be usefully applied to shifts in social capital in Canada as compared to the U.S. especially with regard to political and social engagement in Canadian communities and political life.

### **Internet and Social Capital**

Written at the dawn of the Internet's mainstream usage, Putnam is not able in *Bowling Alone* to fully analyze its effect on social capital. He is somewhat aware, however, at the time of writing, of the potential impact on our lives that the Internet will have in the twenty-first century, and cites the Internet as one of the six points of his challenge to society. He notes,



No sector of American society will have more influence on the future state of our social capital than the electronic mass media and especially the Internet. If we are to reverse the adverse trends of the last three decades in any fundamental way, the electronic entertainment and telecommunications industry must become a big part of the solution instead of a big part of the problem. So I challenge America's media moguls, journalists, and Internet gurus, along with viewers like you (and me): *Let us find ways to ensure that by 2020 Americans will spend less leisure time sitting passively alone in front of glowing screens and more time in active connection with our fellow citizens. Let us foster new forms of electronic entertainment and communications that reinforce community engagement rather than forestalling it.* (410)

Attempts at analyzing social capital's connection to the Internet have been undertaken by a number of scholars, many of whom play off of the "bowling alone" term in their title, including Felicia Wu Song's 2009 *Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone Online Together*. Song investigates technology's connections to social capital; I discuss her contributions later in this chapter.

A central tenet of Putnam's prolonged argument is the recognition that the Internet will play an essential role in social capital reinvigoration. He states that

No sector of American society will have more influence on the future state of our social capital than the electronic mass media and especially the Internet. If we are to reverse the adverse trends of the last three decades in any fundamental way, the electronic entertainment and telecommunications industry must become a big part of the solution instead of a big part of the problem ... *Let us find ways to ensure that by 2010 Americans will spend less leisure time sitting passively alone in front of glowing screens and more time in active connection with our fellow citizens. Let us foster new forms of electronic entertainment and communication that reinforce community engagement rather than forestalling it.* (410)

Harry Hochheiser and Ben Shneiderman (2010), as with Putnam, see the value in the Internet for community-building and democracy:

Building on early visions of the Internet as an open platform for communication and information exchange, these new social and civic-participation tools provide people with the ability to work together to address mutual concerns, solve

problems, and build consensus – potentially restoring the social capital that has been lost and improving the lives of citizens in every country. (64)

Putnam notes that it is known that

the Internet can be used to reinforce real, face-to-face communities, not merely to displace them with a counterfeit ‘virtual community.’ Let us challenge software designers and communications technologists to heed the call of University of Michigan computer scientist Paul Resnick to make the Internet social capital-friendly... (410-1)

While he acknowledges that there are some obstacles, such as “anonymity and single strandedness” (411), “several early studies of well-wired communities suggest – tentatively, but hopefully – that residents who have easy access to local computer-based communication use that new tool to strengthen, not supplant, face-to-face ties with their neighbors and that some of them become more actively involved in community life, precisely as we social capitalists would wish” (411). He emphasizes that “*the key, in my view, is to find ways in which Internet technology can reinforce rather than supplant place-based, face-to-face, enduring social networks*” (411, emphasis added). For example, by advertising certain events on the Internet, social media sites and twitter can increase the audience.<sup>53</sup> Hochheiser and Shneiderman also echo this call, asking, “Can we develop evidence-based scientific theories that yield actionable guidelines for usability and sociability?” (64) They state that the burden is in large part on the developers, declaring,

If responsible designers and researchers for this new generation of social-participation tools can provide compelling interfaces while weighing the dangers, they will encourage large numbers of users to participate. Frequently updated content presented attractively, tutorials and FAQs, clear navigation paths, online

---

<sup>53</sup> In my fieldwork at the Canadian-American Club I document their shift from hard copy mailings to an online newsletter of upcoming events. Getting new members on the mailing list is another matter.

help, and well-designed features for reading, searching, browsing, and sharing will help engage people<sup>54</sup> ... Social networking tools illustrate the importance of leveraging existing social ties to generate perceived community. (65)<sup>55</sup>

As with others who echo society's changing speed, Hochheiser and Shneiderman cite busyness as a reason for people not always participating in online communities: "particularly during economic downturns, people may feel too overwhelmed and overburdened by the demands of everyday life. *Even in the best of times, social participation may be difficult to sustain*" (66-7, emphasis added), whether in an online or a 'real world' situation. Since online interaction is also part of the so-called real world, the comparison of online with "in-person" seems a more appropriate distinction.

Though they do not answer the question, Hochheiser and Shneiderman raise an important concern: "Does online social participation have unanticipated negative impact on 'real world' engagement?" (67) However, they stress the significance of determining the answers to such questions and responding accordingly in order to ensure "the participatory citizenship needed for fully functioning democratic societies" (67), citing initiatives, including the National Initiative on Social Participation (NISP), that seek to increase the study of social media and the role that technology plays in social participation. They also emphasize the importance of future work on the topic, stating that "there is much academic research to be done, theories to be developed, and courses to be revised" (67). As with Putnam, Hochheiser and Shneiderman feel it is important to document the changes occurring in society, and to encourage awareness of the

---

<sup>54</sup> "As many Facebook users ... can attest, the premier social-networking site often succeeds in spite of an interface that may not always adhere to accepted guidelines for interface design" (65).

<sup>55</sup> Notably, this call predated Facebook.

contemporary social capital situation, noting that “the harm from declining social participation is clear and substantial, but there is hope for the future.” Once again, as noted earlier, this “declining social participation” refers to “in-person social capital,”<sup>56</sup> whereas online social capital is on the rise.

## **Response to Bowling Alone as Text and Concept**

### *Critiques of Putnam and Bowling Alone*

The influence of *Bowling Alone* continues to be felt in scholarly writing, both in critique and in reference to the coined phrase “bowling alone.” There is an entire volume dedicated to responses to Putnam’s book, titled *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives on Community and ‘Bowling Alone’* (2002), edited by Scott L. McLean, David A. Schultz, and Manfred B. Steger. The analyses in the compilation largely focus on the political aspect of Putnam’s work, as signaled in the introduction, where McLean, Schultz, and Steger declare that “in short, Putnam’s analysis misses the fact that civil society is historically amorphous and has an ambiguous relationship with order, revolution, and democratic politics” (9). They argue against “the implications of Putnam’s view of social capital as an attribute to private individuals” (9) and find his, and similar “rational-choice interpretations of social capital and civic engagement [to be] severely flawed because they are remarkably ahistorical and contextless” (10). They add,

A civic culture cannot simply be ‘re-invented,’ no matter how much social capital theorists such as Putnam would like to see that happen. Thus, to the extent that economistic assumptions are built into the social capital paradigm, *it is difficult to*

---

<sup>56</sup> In-person distinction raised by Brita Heimareck, May 22, 2015.

*see whether attempts to build up more social capital can successfully revive American community.* (11)

In this dissertation, I assert that social capital may refer to not only in-person situations, but also online social networks, and I also extend Putnam's view of in-person communities to include online communities as well.

In his individual reflection, David Schultz finds fault with Putnam's heavy emphasis on the individual while he repeatedly emphasizes the collective good (80). Further, Stephen Samuel Smith and Jessica Kulynych take a degrading tone in their reflection, declaring,

Although *Bowling Alone* is replete with statements about the wondrous qualities of social capital, few are as grandiose as the claim linking it to one of the most famous, lofty, and inspiring slogans in Western political theory. Given the grandiosity of the claim, it is made with surprising nonchalance. No evidence, historical or otherwise, is offered for the putative equivalence of social capital and fraternity. Rather, it is presented as self-evident.

We call attention to this nonchalance because it is our thesis that the term *social capital* is used much too casually, with little regard to the problems of using the language of capitalism to talk about civic engagement and community, many of whose presumed virtues are exemplified by the historic meaning of fraternity. (127)

Smith and Kulynych place great emphasis on the discord between Putnam's use of the term "social capital" and the stratifications that exist in society, as well as the differences in civic and corporate culture. Though their intentions are to systematically discredit Putnam's conclusions, Smith and Kulynych's tone, as with that of the other contributors to the edited volume, becomes weighed down by theoretical jargon and excessive deconstruction of small concepts. While Putnam's work and conclusions certainly show his intended aim – increasing civic engagement and community collaboration – sometimes at the risk of neglecting objectivity, his optimistic, albeit idealistic, aims are

not achieved through academic mockery. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to question the use of the term “capital” for social relevance, as if the rewards of social interaction could or should be likened to financial gain.

Sociologist Claude Fischer penned a reflection and critique of *Bowling Alone* in 2001 entitled “*Bowling Alone: What’s the Score?*” Fischer cleverly notes that “*Bowling Alone* is a ten-pin strike, a major contribution to sociology” (1). Nonetheless, he asks “[w]hether, at the end of ‘game,’ Putnam ... scored highly enough to convince most spectators” (1). Fischer commends the thorough statistical analyses done by Putnam (particularly regarding television’s effect on social interaction), as well as the accessibility of the text; yet, Fischer questions Putnam’s broad-swath use of the term “social capital” to incorporate

a vast range of individual behavior, including voting, belonging to sororities, church outings, playing bridge, having family dinners, do-good volunteering, and professing one's faith in one's fellow humans to a pollster, not to mention league bowling (4),

asking, “Are these really all of a kind? And, if not, what different things have been squeezed under this single rubric?” (4) In the case of voting for example, individual actions when compiled begin to have a group impact. Certainly the outcome of elections has an impact on social relations and social networks in the political arena and beyond. So how does one define the interrelationship between individual actions and social capital? Fischer uses a cursory statistical analysis to demonstrate that, in fact, these events are not all connected under a wide umbrella, and the ways in which one interacts personally or civically are not, in actuality, related, convenient though it would be:

Maybe these attributes are components of the same thing in a different sense: Instead of being parallel manifestations of personal ‘social capital,’ they are ‘assets’ in people’s ‘social capital portfolios,’ different kinds of ‘capital stock.’ Some people ‘invest’ in churches, some in political campaigning, some in family dinners, and yet others in being trusting souls. If people invest differently -- I do friends, you do volunteering, she does churches -- then we would not expect high correlations among these activities. (4)

To remedy this discord, Fischer suggests that “social capital” could instead be referred to as “individualism,” and “eroded social capital” could be considered “privatism” (6):

Even if we stipulate, for the discussion, that Americans have withdrawn from public activities such as politics and civic clubs, the question arises as to whether they have withdrawn all the way into their isolated, lonely selves (ultimate individualism), or have withdrawn into a more private world of family, work, and friends -- a story of greater, but still social, privatism. (6)

I agree that individualism and privatism as defined above are widely rampant in American society across the U.S., but there are an increasing number of digital social media being adopted by American youth and young professionals that are redefining social capital in this context. I will investigate the effects of digital media on the Cape Breton diaspora of Boston in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

Fischer contends that Putnam’s arguments are not fully supported by reality, e.g., that generational difference has caused a vast decrease in civic association and engagement:

To say that generational turnover -- or historical time -- ‘explains’ something is not really to explain, but to label. What about different generations would lead those who are now senior citizens to be highly civic-minded and their children to be much less so? Television provides a partial answer: Perhaps because baby-boomers were the first to grow up watching television, that habit permanently sapped their social energies. But, beyond television, the generational explanation is vague and weakly supported ... Perhaps what we have in the generational differences is some sort of long-term cyclical pattern. Some ideas and customs -- just like some organizations -- wax and wane. (10-11)

He declares that

disaggregating the topics now lumped together under ‘social capital’ would also yield a better empirical understanding of what has been going on. The contradictions in data and trends might be better resolved by seeing the social changes as roughly coincident but different phenomena” (11).

Fischer concludes by stating the accomplishments of Putnam, namely, stimulating discussion on the topics addressed in his text, presenting an idea that provides rich information that those in the social sciences can further elaborate, and “mightily contribut[ing] an impressive catalog of well-documented social changes and a set of provocative ideas about those changes” (11). Further, he notes that “[f]or now ... *Bowling Alone* is the prime reference on ‘Whither America?’” (11).

Fischer’s critique is approachable, focused, and based on empirical research and analysis. In short, his eleven-page working paper provides a much more thorough and functional review, as well as substantive thoughts on where scholars can go from here, than the entirety of McLean, Schultz, and Steger’s edited volume. As with Putnam, Fischer is available to deliver cogent ideas without becoming bogged down by theoretical jargon or microanalysis. Given the topics being discussed, the latter approach is preferable, and holds greater potential for pragmatic, wide-ranging effects.<sup>57,58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> It is important to remember that Putnam (2000) was also marketed as a crossover trade book, whereas McLean, Schultz, and Steger (2002) is a scholarly publication.

<sup>58</sup> In addition, David Halpern wrote a book entitled *Social Capital* in 2005. In its introduction, Halpern talks about his working relationship with Robert Putnam, and Putnam provides the sole review on the back of the book jacket, in which he states, “It is a book that I wish I had written myself – the best overall introduction so far to the rapidly increasing literature on social capital.” Clearly, this text takes a different approach than that of McLean, Schultz, and Steger.



*“Bowling Alone” as Catchphrase in Scholarly Writing*

“Bowling alone” as a catchphrase continues to appear in scholarly literature, fifteen years after Putnam’s publication. Due to the catchiness of the phrase “bowling alone,” theorists often use it to signal a discussion of social capital and social participation, even if not engaging with Putnam’s work in depth.<sup>59</sup> Though purists take umbrage with Putnam’s definition and use of social capital as a basis for his argument, his questionable invocation of Alexis de Tocqueville, and his methodology and data sources, what cannot be argued is the influence that his phrase, and the views of the contemporary occurrences encased within the idea of “bowling alone,” has had on twenty-first century scholarship. Indeed, it is the cover jacket – a drawing of a solitary man standing in a bowling alley -- and the title that originally drew me to Putnam’s work nearly a decade ago. I, too, find fault with some of Putnam’s claims regarding effects of issues and politics on social capital. I do not heavily rely upon the topic of democracy, as he, Song, and other public policy scholars have done; and his claims and arguments or even solutions can read as a bit grandiose at times. However, his main argument – that society is rapidly changing, and technology, demographic shifts, and generational changes play a role in our interactions – is notable, worthwhile, and able to be supported by empirical evidence, fellow scholars’ research, and hybrid online – in-person fieldwork. This all raises the

---

<sup>59</sup> See Stefan Bauernschuster, Oliver Falck, and Ludger Wößmann, “Surfing Alone? The Internet and Social Capital: Evidence from an Unforeseen Technological Mistake,” SOEP WP.392. The study examines the effect of access to the Internet on social capital, with Germany serving as the site of data collection. They find “no evidence that the Internet reduces social capital. For some measures including children’s social activities, we even find significant positive effects.” As with other studies discussed in this chapter, the researchers make extensive use of statistical analysis. They also only make brief mention of Putnam, even while using a twist of his catchphrase as their article’s title.

question – when a term, such as “bowling alone,” takes on a life of its own, does the original definition of it matter?

Harry Hochheiser and Ben Shneiderman, professors of biomedical informatics and computer science, respectively, discuss the social media phenomenon in their 2010 article, “From Bowling Alone to Tweeting Together: Technology-Mediated Social Participation.” Intriguingly, as with Song, though they make the title of Putnam’s 2000 text a key part of their own piece, they make little use of his theories and data. Hochheiser and Shneiderman make one sole reference to Putnam’s research in the first sentence of the article, broadly stating that “many observers suggest that the remarkable growth of social media is reversing the 40-year decline in civic and community-group participation” (64); never once is the connection between the phrase “bowling alone” and Putnam mentioned. However, their focus on tweeting and social media online as a stimulus for group participation and civic engagement that can even lead to revolutionary politics in some instances (consider the Arab Spring), is relevant to my own concern with digital media and the types of communities it fosters.

Angelo Antoci, Fabio Sabatini, and Mauro Sodini also title their 2014 article “Bowling Alone but Tweeting Together,” but use the subtitle “The Evolution of Human Interaction in the Social Networking Era.” A main point on which their research focuses is that with Internet correspondence and engagement, “interactions are synchronous, i.e., they allow individuals to relate different moments, *whenever they have time to*” (1911, emphasis added). They continue,

When the social environment is poor of participation opportunities and/or the time pressure on time increases (for example due to the need to increase the working time),

the stock of information and ties stored in the Internet can help individuals to defend their sociability (1911) ... Web-mediated interaction can play a major role in the preservation and development of interpersonal relations (Subrahmanynam et al. 2008, Park et al. 2009, Matzat 2010, Pénard and Poussing 2010, Bauernschuster et al. 2011, Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2012) (1912).

Thus, they recognize the connection opportunities that the Internet affords, all the while recognizing that society has placed time crunches upon its members to a degree that in-person socializing is widely affected.

Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici declare that social networking sites (SNSs) “in the last five years ... have literally revolutionized our lives. Social networking has made it simpler to interact with others without the limitations of geography and lack of time” (1912).<sup>60</sup> They note that Web-mediated interaction has several benefits:

- It allows individuals to express themselves better
- “SNSs can foster the creation of new relations” (1912)
- An increasing amount of individuals are making online-first connections, and then meeting these people in person, e.g., via LinkedIn and Academia.edu
- Engaging people affected by social anxiety and providing them forums for inclusion
- Improving already-established friendships’ strength
- A return to letter-writing skills
- “Web-mediated interaction contributes to the building of what has been called *Internet social capital*, i.e., the accumulation of a stock of knowledge, information, and trust within virtual networks (Gaudel and Peroni 2010,

---

<sup>60</sup> I return to the concept of deterritorialization in the following chapter on digital diaspora.

Vergeer and Pelzer 2009, Chaim and Gandall 2011, Matzat 2010, Antoci et al 2012a)” (1913, emphasis added).<sup>61</sup>

They cite Putnam in passing as a source of social capital research and theory, but do not address his work in depth. While they acknowledge that “the spread of this mode of participation [Internet-based communication] can lead to second-best scenarios, in the case that face-to-face interaction is socially optimal” (1913), they also recognize Internet connections “may prevent the economy from falling into a social poverty trap” (1913), as “the social capital stored in the Internet can help individuals to defend their sociability” (1913). This point is extremely significant, as it highlights the digitally tangible aspect of Internet social capital that is not present in in-person social capital: an accrual of searchable information and resources. For instance, the Facebook group pages dedicated to Cape Breton music can easily be reviewed to find a variety of videos, postings, links, news stories, and resources. Though in-person interactions with tradition-bearers may be difficult, digital stock of information on a culture can be a viable substitute, even if it lacks the full picture; nonetheless, a video clip does not allow for the full sensory experience of hearing the crowd around a concertgoer stomp and clap, to smell the tea brewing at a house party, etc.

Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici’s approach is positive in attitude and supported by data that links Internet use and well-being. The approach is informed by the reality that “Internet usage can support well-being by counterbalancing the effects of time pressure on mental distress and the disruption of social ties” (1913). Their citation of data that

---

“show[s] the existence of a significant and positive correlation between Internet usage and happiness (Pénard et al. 2011)” (1913), while recognizing that “the digital divide” caused by Internet access among different socioeconomic groups “may increase existing inequalities in subjective well-being” (1914), neglects the divisive role that Internet addiction can play in personal interactions and relationships.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, they do state that

beyond a certain threshold, the development of human relationships by the exclusive means of online interaction may destroy social capital, thereby preventing users from enjoying those emotional benefits normally associated with face-to-face interactions. (1914)

Though they acknowledge that many people check their phones and SNSs first thing in the day or as the last thing they do at night, they do not address the fact that many family members will all sit next to each other on their phones, not interacting, but rather only *being* together.

Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici mention the changing role of the pre-SNSs Internet from “predominantly an individual activity like watching TV or reading newspapers “(1915) to today being “strongly related to being connected to social networking sites, which in turn entails forms of engagement and social activities” (1915);

In December 2010, U.S. Internet users were found to be more likely than others to be active in some kind of voluntary group or organization: 80% of American Internet users participate in groups, compared with 56% of non-Internet users. Moreover, social media users are even more likely to be active: 82% of social network users and 85% of Twitter users are group participants (Rainie et al. 2011). *This evolution makes any comparison between the Internet and TV anachronistic.* (1915, emphasis added)

---

<sup>62</sup> Farmville and Candy Crush Saga, games that are played on Facebook, are known for having addictive qualities.

Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici state that “the Internet supports increased contacts with weaker ties, without causing any deterioration in strong ties” (1915). They note that

according to Ellison et al. (2007), Facebook might make it easier to convert latent ties into weak ties, in that the site provides personal information about others, makes visible one’s connections to a wide range of individuals, and enables students to identify those who might be useful in some capacity, thus providing the motivation to activate a latent tie (1916);

in addition, “highly engaged users are using Facebook to ‘crystallize’ relationships that might otherwise remain ephemeral” (Ellison et al. 2007, 1916). Certainly many people reinvigorate old social ties through social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn, and organize events or gatherings through email and other digital resources.

In their thorough analysis of the literature on the emerging topic of SNSs and social capital, Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici declare that

the growing literature on Facebook suggests that the social network – and, more generally, Internet-mediated communication – serves more the preservation of relations among offline contacts than the activation of latent ties or the creation of connections with strangers (Ellison et al. 2007, Steinfeld et al. 2008). Most Facebook friend connections indeed represent in-person relationships (Ellison et al. 2011). (1917)

Further, they cite Pénard and Poussing’s 2002 finding that “people who already have a large stock of social capital are more likely to use the Internet to take care of their social relationships” (1917), and Bauerschuster et al.’s 2011 finding that high-speed Internet access at home is an indicator of greater participation in “children’s out-of-school social activities, such as doing sports or ballet, taking music or painting lessons, or joining a youth club” (1917). They cite Hampton and Wellman’s 2003 finding that ““not only did the Internet support neighbouring, it also facilitated discussion and mobilization around local issues”” (1915). Further, “Kavanaugh et al. (2005) [found] that computer-mediated

interactions have positive effects on community cohesion, involvement, and social capital in the village of Blacksburg, Virginia” (1915). Lastly, they mention “the cooling of online relationships related to the lack of care (social ties developed online need care to be preserved just as traditional ties do)” (1920).

Community cohesion can indeed be expressed on Facebook. Connections can be made to either a virtual community (e.g., Moms supporting moms, a Facebook group of over 3700 members that only exists in cyberspace), or to a geographic location, such as town online yard sale pages (e.g., Marshfield Online Yard Sale), where members can post items for sale, similar to Craigslist. Networks can also be used to quickly share news of Amber alerts, traffic accidents, etc. Notably, this ease of access has also affected the arts – many may read about a community event, but not actually attend it – perhaps the feeling is that reading of an event is good enough, and that one really has to be devoted to or passionate about the event, not to mention available, to attend in person.

Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici conclude that “it ... seems reasonable to argue that Internet use can support well-being by counterbalancing some detrimental effects of the increasing pressure of time” (1924). They note that their research serves to add to “a research programme [*sic*] aimed at analyzing the evolution of social participation and the accumulation of social capital in relation to economic growth and technological progress” (1924), much as with Putnam’s (2000) call for computer scientists to get involved in social capital-related projects.<sup>63</sup> The authors declare that “the asynchronism that is a

---

<sup>63</sup> Notably, publications such as the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* are a main source for current writing on Facebook and social capital, but little work is done in the fields of ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, etc., on the role of social media in advancing or deteriorating social connections.

feature of online interactions can play an important role in reconciling working activities and pervasive busyness with the need to manage human relationships” (1925).

Increasingly, people may hesitate to answer the phone when they are busy, but they can respond to a text or email when they have time. Further, they

are persuaded that this paper makes a contribution to the literature by being the first to provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the interdependence between increasing busyness, social participation and phenomena such as online networking, and, in general, Internet-mediated communication, which are literally revolutionizing our lives. (1925)

One flaw with Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici’s methodology is their assumption that “leisure time is entirely devoted to social participation” (1918). More and more leisure time is involved in solitary activity, such as reading and posting on Facebook, and watching television and films online – this seems in direct contradiction to their statement. Further, as with Eunsun Lee, Yeo Jung Kim, and Jungsun Ahn (2014), Antoci, Sabatini, and Sodici prove their results with difficult-to-interpret, high level statistical analyses. While these analyses are important and necessary, they leave the lay reader or even the skilled qualitatively-focused reader at a loss. Putnam gracefully filled this gap with clear prose and multiple graphs and charts that supported his quantitative research, and it serves as a good model for other researchers engaging in social science studies. Further qualitative analysis will be extremely beneficial to any work on social capital.

### *Facebook and Collective Social Capital*

In his Master’s thesis, “Facebook’s Impact on Collective Social Capital: Revolutionary Social Movement – or Narcissistic Playground?” (2012), Joe Bobrowskas

---



puts Facebook into conversation with *Bowling Alone*, noting that while “Facebook is examined ad nauseam ... prevailing analyses fall short in identifying the social underpinnings that, at once, drive and determine its use” (ii). However, Bobrowskas gives stronger analytical weight to David Reisman’s 1963 *The Lonely Crowd* and Reisman’s “‘modes of conformity’ theory” (3), arguing that Reisman “provides a framework for understanding what compels individuals to connect on Facebook, as well as their collective societal and cultural impact” (10). However, Bobrowskas’s use of a pre-Internet theory to examine digital connections seems weak and insufficient.

Nonetheless, he raises a number of points relevant to social capital discussions:

- Facebook allows “dormant relationships [to] spring miraculously to life ... [as well as] ... ‘long-dormant high school identities, best left forgotten’” (11)
- “With an increasingly global reach, Facebook is emerging [as] a primary means of communication within multiple cultures” (11)
- “Facebook is a viable means by which political and community activists can plan, organize, and strategize to affect social change” (12)
- Facebook predated widespread use and acceptance of social networking as a means of communication. “In addition, its inception occurred largely before social networking sites assumed their current form, i.e., as a *reflection* of society, as opposed to online communities in and of themselves” (14)
- In a rapid social shift, Facebook was one of the first social networking sites, including Friendster,<sup>64</sup> to personalize and identify its members, whereas “online forums assumed anonymity” and “‘deprive[d] users of the sense of belonging and connection with real- world contacts’ (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher 2003)” (15)
- Online networks were perceived in the early 2000s to be a means of increasing social *isolation*; their anonymity caused users to become “emboldened to communicate in riskier ways, perhaps unacceptable in offline settings” (15)

---

<sup>64</sup> Friendster, a now-defunct SNS, was a social network-turned-gaming-site that launched in 2002. Its platform was a blend of Facebook, LinkedIn, and America Online, with “friends” able to write endorsements of each other on personal pages. Photos could be added, and profile pages listed favorite quotes, hobbies, etc.

Bobrowskas provides a definition of social capital by Wacquant (1992) given in Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe: “the sum of the resources, *actual or virtual*, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe 2007, emphasis added). Bobrowskas remarks that “even comprehensive sociological studies centered on narcissism rely on opinion and observation of current cultural trends” (32). Reliance on opinions, rather than either qualitative or quantitative observations, does not a science make.

As with a number of other scholars, Bobrowskas emphasizes social capital’s connection to democracy. Yet, he recognizes that other endeavors, “even those that frame online networking in sociologic terms – miss important political influences and cultural norms that determine both why people connect online, and the impact of their interaction” (16).<sup>65</sup> He notes that “future examinations must acknowledge both (and all) social functions of online social networking” (37). He declares,

to assume that all Facebook users are ‘committed to self-exposure’ [Rosen 2007], and that ‘conspicuous consumption of intimate details and images of one’s own and others’ lives’ [*Ibid.*] is Facebook’s ultimate function, fails to appreciate Facebook’s nuanced influence in the context of the diverse societies and cultures in which it is used. (18)

I add to this that the interaction of Facebook and the arts is largely underexamined as well. Bobrowskas makes brief mention of the arts, but only to declare that posts such as “a proud artist showcasing his latest creation ... will not make a remarkable societal

---

<sup>65</sup> Babrowskas also notes the limited scope of Facebook-focused studies to “(advanced) Western culture” (17). Thus, wide-ranging conclusions and assumptions about the site’s universals cannot be drawn from the work completed to date.

impact” (19), even while acknowledging the power of the video posting and sharing site YouTube. Given the integral role that film and the arts have played in democratic movements, and in Facebook’s usage as a whole, omission of such analysis only weakens Bobrowskas’s argument. However, he cites Yochai Benkler’s *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (2006), stating that

a hallmark of the industrial information economy is ‘the decentralization of communication, which transfers control of information and cultural production from the state and specific market-driven entities, to ‘individual, decentralized action’ ... from viral *YouTube* videos, to user-controlled information banks such as *Wikipedia*, individual actors ‘can reach and inform or edify millions around the world.’ (Benkler 2006, 3-4, in Bobrowskas 2012, 34)

Further,

‘whenever someone, somewhere, among the billions of connected human beings (and among those who will be connected) want(s) to make something that requires human creativity (with a computer, and a network connection), he or she can do so – alone, or in cooperation with others.’ (Benkler 2006, 5, in Bobrowskas 2012, 34)

I return to this concept of technological connectedness in my discussion of digital diaspora.

While he does not link this idea directly to bridging social capital, Babrowskas notes that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg decided to create the site as a means of “bridging the physical and virtual worlds” (24). He cites a 2004 article by Sarah E.F. Milov, which states that “as Zuckerberg sees it, Facebook is not the epicenter of its users’ community, but rather, ‘a place where community is formed’ and where, he acknowledges, social interaction is lubricated” (24). I add that the portability Facebook affords its users is key.

After noting that Putnam's analysis of collective social capital is absent from most examinations of Facebook—an analysis that Bobrowskas, also omits—Bobrowskas cites a 2007 study by Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe and its introduction of the concept of *maintaining social capital*, which “speaks to the ability to maintain valuable connections as one progresses through life changes” (27-8). As with their other research, Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe base their results on a limited collection of data gathered from Michigan State University students – clearly not an accurate sample for determining Facebook's broader usage, as they themselves note (30).

Bobrowskas cites Peggy Orenstein's March 10, 2009 *The New York Times* article, which notes that “Facebook's ‘most profound impact may be to alter, even obliterate conventional notions of the past’” (32). Further, he states that “Facebook indeed distorts traditional social space, to myriad effects” (32). Bobrowskas notes the paradigm shift that SNSs create: “indeed, networking tools such as Facebook *have* upended our traditional sense of friendship, community, and communication (37); with almost nine hundred million members, Facebook is bending the rules of traditional communication and reshaping the concept of friendship” (31), albeit for those who use it. There are still those who prefer alternate modes of communication, and do not have or make the time to correspond on Facebook or other social media sites. For some, privacy is still paramount.

Bobrowskas at times makes big and bold statements that lack support, including declaring that “Putnam's bonding social capital concept ... assumes a strong offline connection” (33) – a statement which Putnam never makes. Yet, he sharply critiques William Deresiewicz (2009), noting that his analysis of “Facebook's nuanced impact on

contemporary friendship” does not cite “the changing dynamics of modern information exchange” (33).

Regarding clubs, Bobrowskas cites a 2009 *Fortune* article by Jessi Hempel entitled “How Facebook is Taking over Our Lives.” In it, Hempel says,

‘The ‘stickiness’ of the site is a key part of ... Zuckerberg’s plan to build an online version of the relationships we have in real life. Offline we bump into friends and (can) end up talking for hours. We flip through old photos with our family. *We join clubs. Facebook lets us do all that in digital form.*’ (25, emphasis added)

Still we need to consider, if hours are spent online talking to people, responding to or viewing others’ posts, does that not necessarily suggest also that *less* time will be spent talking to people or responding to people *in person*? Without judging right or wrong in this instance, we must at least recognize that time is limited each day, and choices that are made in one context may influence choices made in other contexts.

Song notes that the data available on Internet impact and engagement can have many different interpretations:

In many ways, the social impact debate suggests that many ambiguities still persist about whether the Internet fosters or inhibits social connectedness. Knowing how to interpret these conflicting quantitative results is complicated by the fact that each study is based on very different samples of Internet users and conducted at different stages of Internet penetration in the wider society. (23)

She continues to explain cleavages that may exist:

What makes the social impact debate in the quantitative approach so rife with contention, however, is that the conflicting conclusions between enthusiasts and skeptics often correspond with or threaten particular beliefs that are held about technology and community. Much like the contested perspectives in the qualitative studies of the Internet, the quantitative approach exists within a cultural context in which the notions of the individual and community are increasingly destabilized and questioned. As a result, both quantitative and qualitative analyses of Internet sociability and online communities attempt to

define online communities in reference to these contested notions of conventional offline communities and public life. (23-4)

Indeed, the different ways in which online communities are formed, expand or diminish, and function needs to be understood, without a default assumption that they must function similarly to in-person friend groups or social gatherings. Thus, establishing a clear methodological template for Internet studies can prove near impossible at this time in the history of the Internet, unless one explicitly narrows one's focus and range of data analysis. While some data cited within this dissertation chapter shows that the Internet can, in fact, increase, or at the least not decrease, social capital, it is telling that in-person attendance does not delimit us from following the goings-on at club events and family gatherings. Further qualitative data should emphasize the transitions that have occurred as a result of SNSs. My fieldwork will address some of these concerns in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

### **Virtual Communities and Social Capital**

Felicia Wu Song addresses social capital's connection to virtual communities in her 2009 text *Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone, Online Together*. Song's thesis states that "*what is needed is a sober assessment of what effects our technologies actually produce in our social and cultural spheres, and an account that sets the promises and fears in appropriate context historically and socially*" (xvi, emphasis added). She continues,

This book, therefore, is a modest attempt to delve beyond the discursive volleys that clutter our understandings of the Internet and its virtual communities and focus on what our technological practices and artifacts show us about ourselves and this present age. It will suggest that a slow and incremental shift from local solidarity to remote or networked solidarity has been under way ... and that the Internet has acted

both as a catalyst and an accelerator for the formation of a new way of thinking, engaging, and imagining public life. (xvi-xvii)

Song cites a Pew Internet and American Life study that indicates that only 30 percent of Americans are “‘high-end’ elite users” (xvii), – yet this number is now over a decade old and is not an accurate reflection of regular Internet usage, a clear indicator that Internet usage data frequently changes and must be updated.

A clear example of this moving target to which Song refers is shown in her own data. Though Song published her text in 2009, she did her fieldwork on virtual communities between 1998 and 2004; thus, by the time her work reached a broad audience, the examples that she uses in her analysis are outdated, e.g., Friendster, a social networking site that reached its peak in the years 2003-4 before falling out of the public’s consciousness, along with other sites, such as mySpace. She brings the reader up to date on the latest with the communities in question in a brief epilogue. While it is helpful that she provides this update, the text would be far more beneficial had this information been more extensively incorporated into the main body of the book, as she herself makes note of the rapid changes that occur with the Internet, saying that “researching the Internet is akin to following a moving target” (133). As a result, the text reads as more of a history of Internet community engagement rather than a modern-day primer.

A key focus of Song’s analysis is the concept of virtual community. She defines virtual communities as “a term that has come to loosely designate all groups of networks that enable individuals to communicate with each other on the Internet,” contrasting it with “a ‘community’ – something traditionally understood as physically embodied in a particular locale” (1), and asks how a “‘community’” can be “‘virtual’” (1). She notes

that with the advent of Internet development, there are “implications of a social world and public life increasingly mediated by technology” (1). Song also details the appeal of virtual communities:

The paradoxes of the virtual community are, in fact, the very sources of its appeal. On the Internet, people have the potential to experience the benefits of communal life with none of the burdens ... Simultaneously, illusions of persona can be easily constructed with little social repercussion. While the community is available 24/7, there is never fear of overbearing neighbors or unexpected guests.<sup>66</sup> When relationships become complicated or conversations grow dull, virtual communities are easy to leave and easy to replace. For many, these new forms of social connection promise not only a fundamental change in our experience and understanding of interpersonal relationships but also a change in the process, a transformation of public life and democracy as we know it. (1)

Song also mentions Putnam’s acknowledgement of the positive potential of virtual communities:

In ... *Better Together*, Putnam points to one virtual community, craigslist, as a rare example of how virtual communities can enhance the locality of personal relationships (Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen 2005). In this example, he reaffirms his conviction that the local setting is phenomenologically significant for cultivating the type of social capital that can strengthen American public life. (143)

These statements make several points essential to the consideration of the Internet’s effects on human behavior. While I do not focus on democracy’s effects on social capital, Song’s remarks regarding interactions changing as a result of virtual engagement are *en pointe*. While she refers to specific communities which she studied, the ways in which we as a society engage with the Internet as a whole have rapidly changed, and day-to-day

---

<sup>66</sup> There are, however, certain rules – implicit and implied – of Netiquette that are to be observed, though there are flagrant violations of these seen regularly (overposting, posting inappropriate or spam information on public forums, etc.)



miniscule interactions have been forever altered.<sup>67</sup> It is rare to enter a grocery store now and not see most of the people reading stories or their Facebook newsfeed while waiting in line – queueing alone, online together. The interactions with cashiers remain, but the level of engagement may be altered, with added stimulation needed to pass the time – again, a hearkening back to the glorification of busyness that pervades contemporary society. Song reflects upon this, noting that

[t]he new digital technology progressively has become an ‘embedded technology’ that mediates the everyday practices of businesses, government, schools, churches, and private homes ... The extent to which we have so ably enmeshed this *electronic dimension of relation* into our pre-existing forms of sociability speaks to how much (and how long ago) our mental and psychic understanding of what community is – and how we participate in and experience social solidarity – has, in fact, changed. (4, emphasis added)

For example, customers locate local businesses through their iPhones, navigate to locations through MapQuest or their car’s GPS system, and even families use text messaging to communicate from one floor of a house to another, to resolve conflicts between parents and children, or to tell their child when they have arrived to pick them up, rather than ringing the doorbell and bothering the parents of their friend, or entering a social gathering of timid teens. More and more communications that used to be in-person are now mediated through technology, meaningful ideas and thought forms become disembodied text messages that convey heartfelt or deeply pondered insights or practical realities across space and time. No doubt, some people are over time may become more comfortable communicating via text than in-person. In a similar vein, over time, recorded performances online or YouTube videos begin to supplant live performances and the

---

<sup>67</sup> I discuss this again in the section “Alone Together” that appears later in this chapter.

social encounters and practical necessities they entail. I will speak further to these occurrences with regard to my case study in Chapter Five.

Song (citing Taylor) speaks to the fears of many when she states:

It seems that the long-preferred local community of yesterday will gradually give way to the liberating dynamics found in the computer-mediated communities of our contemporary age. As the imperatives of local settings grow distant, whatever benefits had been wrought from those forms of solidarity will be difficult to remember and rarely experienced. The prospect of more and more Americans spending time online, e-mailing each other, and discussing both public and private issues in virtual communities means that this online terrain and the technological practices themselves will also function to change and shape our social imaginary for community and civic engagement (Taylor 2004). (5)

Despite the vast increase in virtual communities and the consequences this may have on local communities, Song also considers the Internet's potential to re-engage,

re-energize and reconnect American citizens to each other and the public sphere ... many consider online communities as the answer to the decline in local communal ties and civic participation. As contemporary Americans, we have largely grown accustomed to the fact that we live in a social world where families and friends are not locally situated but remain connected in geographically distant configurations. The American household and the local community that had once acted as the context for those households have been weakened as primary units of society. (2)

But for children and youth attending public or private schools in their towns this might not seem the case. There are still local conditions that influence one's experience of school, sports, music, and local events such as parades, fireworks, Girl Scouts, play dates, first dates, and class trips. Though mediated through technology to a greater and greater extent, life still has a local flavor. Online and offline experiences interact and influence each other every day.

Song notes that

the Internet has become a key player in an age that many deem revolutionary. While some have wrung their hands over the detrimental effects that the Internet might have on existing relationships, communities, and even personal identities, there are many who feel quite confident that the Internet can improve and strengthen social ties” (2).

Her main argument is thus “that the growing ubiquity of the Internet in public life lends cultural legitimacy and structural power to particular conceptions of the individual and community, freedom and human flourishing” (6).

Song succinctly updates the role of the Internet mentioned by Putnam in 2000, while also acknowledging the Internet’s now-integrated role, noting that

[i]n the last fifteen years, while Internet adoption has catapulted from being a marginal pastime of antisocial hackers to a taken-for-granted piece of our contemporary communication and information landscape, we have not become a society of alienated persons whose online preoccupations draw all the lifeblood out of real-world relationships and activities. Instead of abandoning prior social practices oriented around phone calls and face-to-face visits, *the majority of Americans are engaged in media multiplicity* – using several different methods to stay in touch, connect, and live their lives (Wellman and Haythornthwait 2003; Howard and Jones 2004 in Wu Song 2009,2; italics added).

Song poses salient questions for the reader to consider when examining the text, asking

“what we have *adapted* to and what indeed we have *adopted* into our lives” (2). Her

questions present well as bullet points:

- What is happening to us on the most deeply phenomenological level as human beings when our experiences are increasingly mediated by technology?
- What working notions of the self and community do we possess that so seamlessly ‘fit’ with this new virtual landscape?

As the technological imperative continually bears down on the various realms of public and private life, the need to better understand how new communication and media technologies are used to mediate and reframe our everyday experience becomes greater. (2-3)

Song also considers the Internet as “a distinctly *cultural* product ... its development and implementation are ultimately not about mere technical arrangements but function on the level of social order” (3). Addressing this statement in depth is outside the confines of this dissertation, but its mention is important nonetheless, and I will address the cultural changes evident in my case study and the implications thereof in the later chapters of this dissertation.

In the introduction to *Bowling Alone, Online Together* (2009), Albert Borgmann wistfully reflects on the fracturing effects technology’s omnipresence seems to have, musing,

What’s happening to the encompassing order that is the foundation of the common welfare and the warrant of our shared hopes? What’s happening to American democracy? Is it getting thinner and emptier or richer and more energetic? Does it look worse to older folks and better to youngsters? Is the difference of vistas due to the ignorant nostalgia of the traditionalists and the expert vigor of their children? *Is communal life actually ailing or is it simply drifting to virtual settings and in fact diversifying and intensifying?* The confusions are made worse when misgivings and boasts are bolstered by anecdotes and dressed up with theories. (viii, emphasis added)

He concludes his introduction by stating that

Internet communities have refined and radicalized the forces they were intended to reform, and there is a danger that these newly potentiated and etherealized versions of commercialism and self-centeredness will further if not fatally inform and infect American democracy. (ix)

The sentiments expressed by Borgmann are not unique. Rather, the scholarship writ large has an undercurrent of nostalgia – things *used* to be done differently, the previous generation did it better or had it better, technology has negatively altered life. Sherry Turkle’s (2011) reflections on the Internet, while meticulously researched, often have a tone bordering on fear about the disjunctures caused by technology. Though he writes

from an earlier era of the Internet, Putnam's (2000) musings surely do not paint the role of the Internet in a completely favorable light either. Notably, as part of their argument, Song, Putnam, Hochheiser, and Shneiderman all emphasize democracy's connection to social capital, which, while important, is outside the confines of this dissertation. Rather, I emphasize the cultural impact and influence the increased online presence of a community's musical engagement has on the social capital associated with various dimensions of that community.

Song begins her second chapter with two quotes particularly relevant for my research:

Lolling in your underwear in front of an electronic screen while accessing with dancing fingers the pixels generated by anonymous strangers across the world is not my idea of forging a community of concern or establishing common ground, let alone cementing a trusting friendship. If large-scale modern societies are already troubled by isolation, civic alienation, and a decline of trust, a cyberpolitics rooted in apartness hardly seems to offer appropriate remedies. (Barber 2000 in Song 2009, 13)

I resent the shallowness of the critics who say that if you sit in front of a computer and participate in online conversation worldwide you are not leading an authentic life. I question the premise that one person can judge the authenticity of another person's life. Millions of people passively watch television all day long. Don't tell me that having an email relationship with someone on the other side of the world is less authentic than sitting alone and watching the tube. For many people, this new medium is a way of breaking out of the virtual world they already live in. (Rheingold 1996, quoted in Brockman)

Song juxtaposes these two quotes to acknowledge the "pit[ting of] face-to-face community against virtual community, creating a stark—and misleading dichotomy between the technological and the real" (14). While Song showcases these statements as a means for discussing democracy and community, her example serves as another argument in favor of taking a realistic, yet pragmatic look at the intersections of Internet vs. in-person community, rather than subjecting them to separate research studies.

The recent growth in writing devoted to online fieldwork, such as Robert V. Kozinets' 2010 *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*, must be utilized when considering how to address the rapidly-changing shifts occurring in community at all levels of discourse and interaction. Song makes brief mention of the Digital Future Project, which

found that Internet users not only find friends online but also are increasingly finding ways to meet them in person. In the 2007 Digital Future Project study, Internet users reported having an average of 4.65 friends online whom they have never met in person and 1.6 online whom they did meet in person (this is twice the amount found in 2000) (22).

She also cites "the Internet's ability to maintain *existing* ties," referencing

a Pew Internet and American Life study from 2001 [which] reported that 55 percent of Internet users said that e-mail improved their family connections, and 66 percent reported that they improved their connections with significant friends. Those numbers seemed to hold steady seven years later when 59 percent of Internet users reported that communication and information devices have significantly improved their ability to keep in touch with friends and family (Horrigan 2007). (22)

Song also makes brief mention of the uniting powers of sites such as classmates.com, mySpace, and Facebook "to enhance social reconnection" (22).

Contrary to Putnam's cry, Song cites research showing that families often gather around using the Internet, e.g., watching a film together on the computer (23). High-definition multimedia interface, or HDMI, cables, allow users to stream films, television programs, and often video footage from a computer and broadcast it on a properly-outfitted television. An increasing number of consumers are opting out of cable subscriptions, choosing to instead stream films, videos, and broadcasts via Hulu, broadcast websites (e.g., watching a news broadcast on a station's website), Amazon, or

Netflix. Some television series are even now released exclusively through the latter two platforms. She concludes the portion of the argument by quoting Jeffrey Cole from the Digital Future Project, who states that ““our studies continue to show that Internet users are often more socially active than non-users, and are less alienated from others. And thanks to e-mail and instant messaging, the Internet has become a useful tool to build relationships; Internet users communicate with others more, not less”” (2001, in Song 2009, 23). At the same time, as I will discuss later in the chapter, scholars such as Sherry Turkle (2011) show that technology can create an increased sense of isolation. We see this caricaturized often on television – even on the Internet itself (see Figure X) -- and portrayed in everyday life – that a group of people can be sitting together, but all lost in their phones, or “tagging” each other in Facebook statuses rather than enjoying the moment in itself. These interactions in themselves are presentations of digital social capital, in that they build up documentation of interaction and bonding – yet these digitally-marked milestones may come at the price of missing out on the actual events themselves.

Nonetheless, as Mieke Schrooten (2012) declares, technology has become so intertwined within our everyday lives that to separate online and offline interactions is impossible and detrimental to analysis.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> See Maurice Vergeer and Ben Pelzer (2009), “Consequences of Media and Internet Use for Offline and Online Network Capital and Well-Being: A Causal Model Approach,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15(10): 189-210 for a hybrid examination of network capital.

**Figure 1. E-Card Skewering Changes in Socialization as a Result of Mobile Phone Usage<sup>69</sup>**



Interestingly, self-projection plays a large role in Internet appearance and presentation. Country music singer Brad Paisley calls attention to this phenomenon in the song “Online,” which features the following lyrics:

I'm a Sci-Fi fanatic  
 Mild asthmatic  
 Never been to 2nd base  
 But there's a whole 'nother me  
 That you need to see  
 Go check out mySpace

'cause online I'm out in Hollywood  
 I'm 6'5 and I look damn good  
 I drive a Maserati  
 I'm a black belt in Karate  
 And I love a good glass of wine

<sup>69</sup> Happygirl22, “Somewhat Topical,” Someecards, accessed May 15, 2015, <http://www.someecards.com/usercards/viewcard/MjAxMi00MjVjNDY3MmYzMzY4YzE4>



...

I'm so much cooler online  
So much cooler online<sup>70</sup>

Civic associations are no exception. Organizational websites may brag of a great turnout at an event, and post photos, but, as is often the case with real estate photography, the pictures only show a snippet of the action that paints the event in the best possible light, showing only the crowd in attendance, and not the empty seats. Again, this question of perception versus reality is something that is naturally clarified when you attend an event in person versus solely experiencing it online. Online, the way an event is represented can be more tailored and glossed.

### **Digital Social Capital: A New Framework**

Digital capital, digital social capital, virtual social capital, and Internet social capital are all terms that have recently begun to appear in scholarship; yet, the terms are only mentioned in passing, and are not given ample definition (e.g., Ryan, Erel, and D'Angelo 2015). I argue that digital social capital is a better way of framing this concept, as it implicitly includes Internet social capital under its broader umbrella of addressing how communities are digitally curated, nourished, performed, maintained, and sustained. One can also think of digital cultural capital to address the performance of culture online, via such aspects as online music lessons, video posting, and the performance of livestreaming concerts via such outlets as concertwindow.com; however, the inclusion of

---

<sup>70</sup> Brad Paisley, "Online," Bradpaisley.com, accessed May 15, 2015, <https://www.bradpaisley.com/music/songs/online>

the term “cultural” implies a social aspect to its formation and sustenance. Considering a digital aspect of social capital bolsters Putnam’s theorization of social capital, and it also reminds us that online and offline interactions can no longer be considered separately, as Schrooten so sagely reminds us. Notably, of the scholars that address any of these terms, Schrooten is one of the few to take an ethnographic approach to his work; much of the research on this topic is published by computer science, information technology, and business sources. Further ethnographic examination of the digital aspects of community life are essential to gaining a more complete understanding of contemporary society; Nguyen et al. (2013) note that “insights from such analysis [of digital social capital] have wide applications, from sociology where the Web is viewed as a very large community sensor, to business where e-commerce is now the norm.”

I argue that digital social capital cannot be ignored, and must be considered in future analyses. As it is a relatively new phenomenon, the concept cannot be applied to most of history. Nonetheless, it can be useful going forward when delineating shifts. For instance, examining social capital in conjunction with digital capital, or digital social capital, more specifically, can show us how clubs and communities are interacting socially via mediums such as the Internet. The exponential growth of the digital humanities field displays the ripeness for digital community studies within academia. I apply the concept of digital social capital to diaspora in the following chapter.

*Internet Communities in Society*

Song devotes considerable energy to examining wherein the Internet community lies. She details the history of community studies within the field of sociology, noting that the concept of community

has traditionally centered on three key variables: place, number of ties, and quality of interaction. Given these variables, it is not surprising that interest in the Internet has emphasized its capacity to redefine community from its conventional dimensions of geographic physical space and face-to-face communication to bodiless, spaceless, and computer-mediated interactions. (24)

She then argues that “it is this primary comparison that so often makes Internet scholarship rooted in a literature that tends to favor face-to-face interactions over any form of mediated interactions” (24). Though, as Mieke Schrooten shows, a slow shift has occurred with the Internet’s continued interweaving into contemporary life, “normative claims about the nature of community dominate the discourse so much so that Internet debates are oriented around contested understandings of community more than the technology itself” (24). While several different viewpoints have been considered – e.g., Jones 1997 (cited in Song 2009) contesting that “the archive of e-mail postings for a group was not merely a chronicle of what members have said but actually the substance of the community and its activities themselves (24);” others citing Benedict Anderson’s (1982) classic theory of imagined communities as paralleling online communities – Song remarks that such discussions and problematizations often occur “without any serious attempt to fully understand online communities as a socially and culturally embedded phenomenon” (25). Further, she notes that

[e]ven without the Internet, it is typical for the modern person to belong to nonlocal social networks that are multiple and specialized rather than solitary and

geographically bounded. To continue to think about ‘community’ in terms of a spatial relation or a kinship group is to be blind to the fact that the modern-day community has fundamentally become ‘an egocentric network’ (Wellman 1979). (25)

Scholars, thus, must urge caution and restraint before rushing to judgments about the ills that the Internet may have created – for better or for worse, the Internet is firmly entrenched within contemporary society, and its presence can no longer be discredited or cast aside.

Song notes that while many, including Putnam, focus on the way community used to be, “these claims about the decline in American communal life ... are frequently criticized for being motivated by nostalgia” (27). However, she argues that changes that have occurred in community interactions and modern-day life are not without their benefits:

[W]hile communities have certainly changed in form through history, the resilience of communities proves that people still care about and are capable of fostering meaningful relationships. Communities may indeed have become more porous and loose; however, this merely indicates how people have adapted their social interactions to the demands of modern life. (28)

She refers to Robert Wuthnow’s (1994) writing, stating that “given the structural and cultural circumstances of our times, the move from stable, exclusive, and place-oriented communities to porous, multiple, and lifestyle-oriented communities may actually be the key to enhancing the personal well-being of modern individuals and lead to the revitalization of public life” (28). While the idea of “community” as a term and concept has drastically changed from the time of Alexis de Tocqueville, the scholar to whom so many community theorists, including Putnam, defer, Song declares that “it is within this historical context that virtual communities represent – to the excitement of some and the

chagrin of others – a stunning possibility that exacerbates pre-existing uncertainties about how to define community and public life” (28). She states that

virtual communities do not so much introduce a completely new dynamic of membership to the public sphere but actually reinforce a set of assumptions about the self and community that have undergone their own transformation over the last 300 years. With assumptions about the personalist mode of engagement designed and structured into the very configuration of the Internet and its virtual communities, this shift becomes fully realizable and augmented in radically new ways through the novel experiences of social interaction and collective action online. The technology itself functions to grant further legitimacy as its design and configuration implicitly justify and ‘hardwire’ these assumptions into the very entities we choose to call ‘communities.’ Therefore, the particular location of the market and the contemporary self in public life affirmed in virtual communities indicates a new set of coordinates by which any subsequent form of civil society that we work toward—regardless of technology or political commitments—will be bounded and guided. (130)

Song notes that research must consider that while many online communities exist exclusively online, there are also “those that correspond to a geographically bounded space of pre-existing organization” (29), e.g., the Facebook page for the Canadian-American Club. Further divisions of mores, rules, expectations and interactions can be made within each of the two types of virtual groups. However, given such a wide range of difference, comparison between the types of virtual communities proves to be extremely difficult. Further, there remains dissonance regarding what the term “online community” even refers to, as it

is used to describe anything from discussion forums, multiuser domains, chat rooms, and newsgroups to blogging websites, networking services, and community networks. The fact that the term is applied to so many different modes of computer-mediated interaction and online social collectivities in common parlance reveals how empty and meaningless the term has become. (32)

Song's words are reminiscent of Brubaker's heed to take caution in using the term "diaspora," lest it lose all theoretical value. Further, Song acknowledges the broad swath used to discuss the Internet:

[a]sserting that Internet technology can build or enhance communities is often as vague and in need of clarification as saying that the Internet contributes to democracy. Understanding and identifying the many different ways in which a technology can be used to influence a social institution such as a community or democracy is critical to assessing these broader statements (101-2).

Song provides an extremely useful chart, "Taxonomy of Online Communities," to display the differences.

Schrooten (2012) seconds the confusion that can arise with respect to taxonomy.

He states,

I ...argue that the term 'virtual' does not contribute to a better understanding of people's online activities, as it suggests a sharp distinction between the 'real' world and the 'virtual' world. In contrast to this view, I argue that the Internet and its many communication modes have become increasingly and undeniably central for its many users. Therefore I propose to speak of 'online togetherness' rather than 'virtual togetherness.' (1807)

I have also chosen to use the term "online" rather than "virtual" for similar reasons, but I will not tackle these comparisons in depth in this chapter.<sup>71</sup> Rather, my focus is to acknowledge these digital dimensions, while specifically addressing musical and cultural postings on the social media platform of Facebook, and to recognize that online groups have had an impact on social capital's in-person production and maintenance.

---

<sup>71</sup> While not directly related to my argument here, I have found some interesting work occurring in data visualization, such as the work of Lev Manovich (ongoing).

### *Identifying Social and Cultural Groups*

Song succinctly details the means by which groups that are mainly social or cultural in purpose function and engage their members:

Groups primarily conceived *socially* or *culturally* rely heavily on strong communication, social norms, and solidarity. These groups—such as sports clubs, hobby groups, and cultural and religious groups—are invested in maintaining and reproducing particular group identities and affinities ... groups that meet primarily as a social unit tend to be less deliberative and more homogeneous [than those focused on concerns of finance, economy, or politics] *because the stakes for maintaining solidarity and identity maintenance are higher and more vulnerable to disruption.* (61; italics added in second half of quote)

In addition, she notes that “the identity and function of groups vary according to their *purpose*—the intended goals or desired ends” (61); this declaration aligns with the different purposes of bonding and bridging social capital. Song’s phrase “the many-to-many communication that the Internet offers” (70) is on point and essential to remember when considering how digital interactions affect social capital.

As her book predates Facebook’s widespread use, Song’s examples of social media and group interaction sites/platforms include LiveJournal, Friendster, and ICQ.

Nonetheless, her description of this type of group is apt and applicable to contemporary manifestations of social media:

[These groups] are devoted to enhancing interpersonal identity goods, providing individuals with powerful supplementary means of contact with pre-existing friends or family. Friendster defined itself as ‘an online social networking community that connects people through networks of friends for dating or making new friends.’ Rather than creating social spaces for wholly new relationships, these three groups rely largely on pre-existing networks of contacts. Although such a focus on interpersonal relationships is fundamentally apolitical, these groups can still help develop a sense of agency and mutual obligation. (71)

Song goes on to note that the majority of the groups she examines “are highly or moderately porous, socially engaged, and committed to exclusive group identity goods,” with a strong ability to produce bonding social capital but less able to cultivate bridging forms (71-2).

She continues,

The structures of online communities are not only representative of the community founder’s sense of what membership and participation in a group means but also indicate idealized and normative notions of what communities ought to be. Put another way, given the highly normative context of virtual community building, the field of virtual communities may find great resonance with the prevailing civic habitus, therefore explaining the fast popularity and ease with which Internet users have taken to experiencing community and engaging in civic activism through the Internet. (72)

Song references Sherry Turkle’s research with multi-user domains and virtual reality, noting that “the virtual experience of identity and belonging appears worlds apart from the current trends in social networking services such as Friendster, Facebook, and mySpace” (100), as social networking profiles theoretically match one’s real-life identity, but virtual reality intentionally does not (though Turkle 2011 discusses in depth the manicuring that such profiles require to achieve and maintain a desired image). Song questions the impact of the Internet on social relations for today’s youth, who are already deeply engaged in social media of all kinds.

It is very likely that the full impact of the Internet on social relations and public life may not be clear until the generation that is presently growing up with the Internet and its social technologies solidly enmeshed in their experience of sociability reaches adulthood. The question is: what will become of this generation raised on social networking sites, where they experience little dissonance over having close friends, favorite rock bands, preferred presidential candidates, Hollywood celebrities all on their Friends lists? This simultaneous ‘thinning out’ of personal relationships and ‘thickening’ of ties to public figures



conventionally encountered through the mass media suggests a leveling of what is public and what is private.<sup>72</sup> (136-7)

Thus, it is hard to determine the long-range effects of the Internet on the performance and levels of social capital in American society until more time has passed for the Internet to become fully integrated into everyday life. As both Putnam and Song note, the Internet is still in a relatively nascent stage. Nonetheless, as I discuss in the next section, there are some troubling signs that technology has already had strong effects on interpersonal, and in-person interactions, even while making communication as a whole easier.

What scholarship must do is consider the whole picture, rather than producing a polarizing ethnography of Internet-based social destruction. As Schrooten cogently realizes, we are no longer in a place that any ethnographic work can separate the on- and offline behaviors of culture. Rather, working with this new hybrid reality, we must best assess the most appropriate ways for the two worlds, in-person and virtual, to engage and interact. Song is aware of the delicacy with which one must approach Internet studies, comparing studying the Internet in its nascent stages to “writ[ing] about the effects of the Gold Rush a few months after the first news of fortune found its way back to the East Coast” (xi). She acknowledges that “critical observations about the very processes of change in technology and society” are crucial to “cultivat[ing] healthy public discourse on the Internet and help[ing] society become better informed in order to collectively steer the direction of how technology continues to develop and how it is used in our daily lives” (xi-xii).

---

<sup>72</sup> This is especially useful for considering the worldwide broadcast, via YouTube and Facebook, of recordings of house parties and kitchen parties.

As part of my explication of the meanings of social capital in the context of social media, I now turn to a discussion and critique of Turkle's work on identity in the technological age.

### **Alone Together**

Computer science scholar and clinical psychologist Sherry Turkle completes her trilogy on computers' connection to culture in 2011 with *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, following 1984's *The Second Self* and 1995's *Life on the Screen*. Turkle makes solid use of extensive fieldwork to support her main thesis, that technology has caused humanity to become disconnected. She notes that the 1990s led Internet users to "discover ... a new sense of 'place'" (xi), with "views of self [becoming] less unitary, more protean ... through the prism of technology ... I ... felt witness ... to a shift in how we create and experience our own identities" (xi). As networking grew, "the network was with us, on us, all the time. So, we could be with each other all the time" (xii). Now, with the first generation of digital natives coming into adulthood, combined with the omnipresence of technology, Turkle argues that we have become "insecure in our relationships and anxious about intimacy, [thus] we look to technology for ways to be in relationships and protect ourselves from them at the same time" (xi); society has reached "a turning point in our expectations of technology and ourselves. We bend to the inanimate with new solicitude. We fear the risks and disappointments of relationships with our fellow humans. We expect more from

technology and less from each other” (xii). She adds that “we seem determined to give human qualities to objects and content to treat each other as things” (xiv).

While personal connection is an essential part of human life, studies confirm the increasingly important role played by “Crackberries” (a word play on the druglike power Blackberry mobile devices have to many). A 2014 study by Harris Interactive shows that many place the same value on mobile devices and IT communications as sex (see Figure 3). The study also shows that people simultaneously feel that technology has both improved their lives and has a distracting effect (see Figure 1).<sup>73</sup> Clearly, the impact of technology on personal interactions has great applicability to social interaction, and social capital as a result.

**TABLE 1**

**OVERALL IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON EVERYDAY LIFE**

**Summary of "Strongly/Somewhat Agree" and "Strongly/Somewhat Disagree" Responses**

"Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements."

Base: U.S. ITDMs (IT Decision Makers) & Adults

	<b>Agree (NET)</b>		<b>Disagree (NET)</b>	
	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Technology has improved the overall quality of my life	<b>86</b>	71	<b>10</b>	23

<sup>73</sup> The figures are taken from the Harris Interactive study result website, accessed April 13, 2015, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/NewsRoom/HarrisPolls/tabid/447/ctl/ReadCustom%20Default/mid/1508/ArticleId/1373/Default.aspx>.

Technology encourages people to be more creative	<b>79</b>	65	<b>14</b>	27
<i><sup>1</sup> My employer expects me to always be "on call" or online because technology makes it possible [<sup>1</sup>among applicable respondents for U.S. Adults sample]</i>	<b>75</b>	43	<b>19</b>	5
Technology enhances my social life	<b>69</b>	52	<b>24</b>	40
Technology is corrupting interpersonal communications	<b>65</b>	68	<b>31</b>	25
I use technology as an escape from my busy life	<b>65</b>	47	<b>30</b>	46
Technology has become too distracting	<b>59</b>	69	<b>38</b>	26
Technology is creating a lazy society	<b>57</b>	76	<b>39</b>	19
My friends/family think I use technology too frequently	<b>51</b>	25	<b>42</b>	63

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2**  
**POSITIVE/NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ON MY LIFE**

**Summary of "Positive", "Negative" and "No" Effect**

"How do you think technology is affecting the following aspects of your life?"

Base: U.S. ITDMs & Adults

	<b>Positive effect (NET)</b>		<b>Negative effect (NET)</b>		<b>No effect at all</b>	
	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>

My work productivity	<b>82</b>	34	<b>4</b>	9	<b>15</b>	29
My work life	<b>76</b>	34	<b>7</b>	7	<b>17</b>	29
My ability to live life the way I want to	<b>66</b>	42	<b>9</b>	8	<b>25</b>	47
My productivity at home	<b>64</b>	34	<b>14</b>	23	<b>23</b>	39
My safety and security	<b>62</b>	36	<b>11</b>	20	<b>26</b>	40
My happiness	<b>61</b>	41	<b>9</b>	8	<b>30</b>	48
Relationships with friends	<b>57</b>	47	<b>9</b>	8	<b>34</b>	41
My social life	<b>56</b>	41	<b>10</b>	8	<b>34</b>	46
Relationships with my family	<b>48</b>	39	<b>11</b>	11	<b>40</b>	46

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 3**  
**HOW LONG COULD LIVE WITHOUT SPECIFIC THINGS**  
**Summary of "Couldn't", "A few days" and "A week or more"**

"How long could you live without each of the following?"

Base: U.S. ITDMs & Adults

	<b>Could not live without it</b>		<b>A few days</b>		<b>A week or more (NET)</b>	
	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>	<b>ITDMs</b>	<b>U.S. Adults</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Social networking sites	<b>8</b>	7	<b>18</b>	9	<b>72</b>	78
Navigation system	<b>10</b>	8	<b>18</b>	7	<b>70</b>	69
eReader	<b>7</b>	5	<b>12</b>	5	<b>71</b>	63

Tablet computer	<b>8</b>	6	<b>23</b>	9	<b>63</b>	59
Mobile phone	<b>31</b>	26	<b>26</b>	19	<b>43</b>	51
Television	<b>21</b>	23	<b>24</b>	21	<b>56</b>	55
Sex	<b>28</b>	20	<b>24</b>	12	<b>45</b>	58
Computer/Laptop	<b>30</b>	24	<b>30</b>	25	<b>40</b>	49
Internet access	<b>38</b>	28	<b>29</b>	26	<b>33</b>	44
Spouse/significant other	<b>43</b>	45	<b>19</b>	9	<b>31</b>	29
Car	<b>42</b>	42	<b>29</b>	23	<b>29</b>	30
Food	<b>69</b>	73	<b>18</b>	15	<b>13</b>	11

Turkle's focus on "the networked life" (xiii) places a large emphasis on virtual worlds, e.g., Second Life, which is outside the confines of this dissertation. However, her writing on "mobile devices, texts, instant messages, social networks, [and] Twitter" (xiii) is apt, if slanted at times, and appropriate for placing contemporary technological shifts in conversation with social capital's present state, as "what I report here is nothing less than the future unfolding" (xiv).

Turkle's thesis, that "our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other," exemplifies the current concern with social capital and in-person interaction. She gives a striking example of an experience between herself and her then-fourteen-year-old daughter Rebecca at a Charles Darwin exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York:

At the exhibit's entrance were two giant tortoises from the Galápagos Islands, the best-known inhabitants of the archipelago where Darwin did his most famous

investigations. The museum had been advertising these tortoises as wonders, curiosities, and marvels. Here, among the plastic models at the museum, was the life that Darwin saw more than a century and a half ago. One tortoise was hidden from view; the other rested in its cage, utterly still. Rebecca inspected the visible tortoise thoughtfully for a while and then said matter-of-factly, ‘They could have used a robot.’ I was taken aback and asked what she meant. She said she thought it was a shame to bring the turtle all this way from its island home in the Pacific, when it was just going to sit there in the museum, motionless, doing nothing. Rebecca was both concerned for the imprisoned turtle and unmoved by its authenticity.

It was Thanksgiving weekend. The line was long, the crowd frozen in place. I began to talk with some of the other parents and children. My question – ‘Do you care that the turtle is alive?’ – was a welcome diversion from the boredom of the wait. A ten-year-old girl told me that she would prefer a robot turtle because aliveness comes with aesthetic inconvenience; ‘Its water looks dirty. Gross.’ More usually, votes for the robots echoed my daughter’s sentiment that in this setting, aliveness didn’t seem worth the trouble. A twelve-year-old girl was adamant: ‘For what the turtles do, you didn’t have to have the live ones.’ Her father looked at her, mystified: ‘But the point is that they are real. That’s the whole point.’ (3-4)

It is obvious that Turkle has used a particularly striking example to showcase “our shifting cultural expectations of technology” (7) at a time when holograms of dead music artists, e.g., Tupac Shakur, Selena Quintanilla, and Michael Jackson, as well as of large crowds, such as April 2015’s first-ever hologram protest in Madrid, Spain in conjunction with concern over the new Citizen Safety Law,<sup>74</sup> are becoming increasingly common – one does not even need to be alive to appear, sing, and dance! Though she places strong emphasis on robots for much of her research, her comments on “technological communion” (10) and “machine-mediated relationships on networked devices” (11) speak to the shifts in cultural consumption:

As we instant-message [*sic*], e-mail, text, and Twitter, technology redraws the boundaries between intimacy and solitude ... We build a following on Facebook

---

<sup>74</sup> Jethro Mullen, “Virtual Protest: Demonstrators Challenge New Law with Holograms,” CNN, accessed April 13, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/12/europe/spain-hologram-protest/>.

or mySpace and wonder to what degree our followers are friends ... yet, suddenly, in the half-light of virtual community, we may feel utterly alone. As we distribute ourselves, we may abandon ourselves. Sometimes people experience no sense of having communicated after hours of connection. And they report feelings of closeness when they are paying little attention. In all of this, there is a nagging question: Does virtual intimacy degrade our experience of the other kind and, indeed, of all encounters, of any kind? (11-12).

At no point does Turkle explicitly use the phrase “social capital” or mention any of its main scholars, but it is clear that her analysis meshes well with current theoretical discourse.

Her comments on “performances of identity” (12) regarding online gaming or virtual worlds can also be applied to long hours on Facebook, email, or texting:

I was enthusiastic about online worlds as ‘identity workshops’ when they first appeared, and all of their possibilities remain. Creating an avatar – perhaps of a different age, a different gender, a different temperament – is a way to explore the self. But if you’re spending three, four, or five hours a day in an online game or virtual world (a time commitment that is not unusual), *there’s got to be someplace you’re not. And that someplace you’re not is often with your family and friends* – sitting around, playing Scrabble face-to-face, taking a walk, watching a movie together in the old-fashioned way. And with performance can come disorientation ... Not surprisingly, people report feeling let down when they move from the virtual to the real world. It is not uncommon to see people fidget with their smartphones, looking for virtual places where they might once again be more ... And this is because what technology serves up we reduce our expectations of each other. (12, emphasis added)

She continues,

Networked life takes on a new cast. We imagine it as expansive. But we are just as fond of its constraints. We celebrate its ‘weak ties,’ the bonds of acquaintance with people we may never meet. But that does not mean we prosper in them. We often find ourselves standing depleted in the hype. When people talk about the pleasures of these weak-tie relationships as ‘friction free,’ they are usually referring to the kind of relationships you can have without leaving your desk. Technology ties us up as it promises to free us up. Connectivity technologies once promised to give us more time. But as the cell phone and smartphone eroded the boundaries between work and leisure, all the time in the world was not enough.



Even when we are not ‘at work,’ we experience ourselves as ‘on call’; pressed, we want to edit out completely and ‘cut to the chase.’

Online connections were first conceived as a substitute for face-to-face contact, when the latter was for some reason impractical: Don’t have time to make a phone call? Shoot off a text message. But very quickly, the text message became the connection of choice. We discovered the network – the world of connectivity – to be uniquely suited to the overworked and overscheduled life it makes possible. And now we look to the network to defend us against loneliness even as we use it to control the intensity of our connections. Technology makes it easy to communicate when we wish and to disengage at will. (13)<sup>75</sup>

Turkle’s engagement with the social capital key terms “weak ties” and “bonds” smoothly links her words in with those of Putnam and Song. Technology allows us to increase social capital, albeit in a digital format, through the sharing of videos, staying in touch with like-minded people, e.g., Facebook communities devoted to fans of a specific sports team, and accessing of message boards, e.g., BabyCenter.com and TheBump.com’s online communities for all expectant mothers that are due in a specific month. As I discuss in the following chapter, there are also a plethora of diasporic and community-related groups, such as “We Love Nova Scotia,” “Boston Canucks,” and “Originally from Dorchester,” in which members post musings, relevant articles, nostalgic images, videos, and so on.

However, these connections do not match the feeling of gathering in person with fellow fans at a baseball game and singing the team’s anthems in unison, or speaking face-to-face with fellow pregnant women when expecting a child. Nonetheless, technology’s presence is still seen in these situations, with many game attendees texting friends and looking up information on the phone, even as they sit in the seats that cost

---

<sup>75</sup> During the preparation of this dissertation, I looked up Turkle, planning to telephone her and have a conversation, rather than communicating solely via the Web. Her website does not have a phone number listed; the only way to reach her is through sending an email.

several hours' pay. Those that gather at community events, including at the Canadian-American Club's monthly Gaelic Club meetings, can often be seen texting or looking down at one's mobile device.

The new technologies allow us to 'dial down' human contact, to titrate its nature and extent ... *texting offers just the right amount of access, just the right amount of control*. She [a thirteen-year-old Turkle interviews] is a modern Goldilocks: for her, texting puts people not too close, not too far, but at just the right distance. The world is now full of modern Goldilockses, people who take comfort in being in touch with a lot of people whom they keep at bay. A twenty-one-year-old college student reflects on the new balance: 'I don't use my phone for calls anymore. I don't have the time to just go on and on. I like texting, Twitter, looking at someone's Facebook wall. I learn what I need to know. (15, emphasis added)

Turkle adds to this,

we want it [technology] to make us more efficient in our private lives. But when technology engineers intimacy, relationships can be reduced to mere connections. And then, easy connection becomes redefined as intimacy. Put otherwise, cyberintimacies slide into cybersolitudes. (16)

With the ability to stream movies, video conferences, and view pre-recorded television shows, "our new devices provide space for the emergence of a new state of the self, itself, split between the screen and the physical real, wired into existence through technology" (16).

Turkle argues that the current generation, the first generation of digital natives, experience "digitized friendships – played out with emoticon emotions, so often predicated on rapid response rather than reflection" (17), yet this is seen with multiple generations. The mailed birthday card is for many replaced by a "happy birthday!" posting on one's Facebook wall (or even the shorter "HBD"), with a supplemental birthday text sent to one's close circle of family and friends. Phone calls are reserved for

important or urgent events – and even this may not always occur. For many, sympathy on the loss of a family member is shared via a post on one’s wall or a text. It is outside of the confines of this particular project, but digital grieving is also an important shift in social capital. Turkle adds that

We don’t ask the open-ended ‘How are you?’ Instead, we ask the more limited ‘Where are you?’ and ‘What’s up?’ These are good questions for getting someone’s location and making a simple plan. They are not so good for opening a dialogue about complexity of feeling. We are increasingly connected to each other but oddly more alone: in intimacy, new solitudes. (19)

Turkle’s alarmist tone resonates from her psychology background, which is especially tuned in to social shifts and deviations. In addition, her keen insights regarding computer science’s developments alert her to the ever-powerful impact technology can have:

Technology reshapes the landscape of our emotional lives, but is it offering us the lives we want to lead? Many roboticists are enthusiastic about having robots tend to our children and our aging parents, for instance. Are these psychologically, socially, and ethically acceptable propositions? What are our responsibilities here? And are we comfortable with virtual environments that propose themselves not as places for recreation but as new worlds to live in? What do we have, now that we have what we say we want – now that we have what technology makes easy? This is the time to begin these conversations together. It is too late to leave the future to the futurists. (17)

Though her writing can seem extreme at times, her call raises relevant points for social scientists to promptly consider, both in fieldwork and in analysis.

Turkle shares her own experiences with the ubiquity of technology, where “distinctions blur [and] virtual places offer connection with uncertain claims to commitment” (153), when discussing how she is able to connect to her daughter while she studies abroad:

The clarity and fidelity of sound on my landline telephone seems to me a technical advance over what I can hear on my mobile. And I don’t like the feeling

of always being on call. But now, with a daughter studying abroad who expects to reach me when she wants to reach me, I am grateful to be tethered to her through the Net. In deference to a generation that sees my phone calls as constraining because they take place in real time and are not suitable for multitasking, I text. Awkwardly.

Like most people ... I like to look at the list of 'favorites' on my iPhone contact and see everyone I cherish. Each is just a tap away. If someone doesn't have time to talk to me, I can text a greeting, and they will know I am thinking of them, caring about them. Looking over recent text exchanges with my friends and family reliably puts me in a good mood. I keep all the texts my daughter sent me during her last year of high school. They always warm me: 'Forgot my green sweater, bring please.' 'Can you pick me up at boathouse, 6?' 'Please tell nurse I'm sick. Class boring. Want to come home.' And of course, there are the photos, so many photos on my phone, more photos than I would ever take with a camera, always on me.

Yet, even such simple pleasures bring compulsions that take me by surprise. I check my e-mail first thing in the morning and before going to bed at night. I have come to learn that informing myself about new professional problems and demands is not a good way to start or end my day, but my practice unhappily continues. (154)

For many, phone calls are increasingly just one of several simultaneous tasks – while tidying one's house or doing laundry while chatting is nothing new, now, people often peruse Facebook feeds whilst talking on the telephone, or reply to emails; whereas the former errands imply a sense of being able to catch up while doing housekeeping, the latter indicates that talking on the phone is not enough stimulation, that there are other things to do. Skyping allows the same option, as participants are still sitting in front of their computers. Few are immune to the temptations of checking emails or being on a chat platform whilst also participating in a conference call, even though everyone's eyes can be seen darting away from the Web camera.

Turkle adds to her wistful reflection: "Networked, we are together, but so lessened are our expectations of each other that we can feel utterly alone. And there is the risk that we come to see others as objects to be accessed – and only for the parts we find

useful, comforting, or amusing” (154). Once again, social capital – or the shift in its expression – is woven into the strands of the World Wide Web. Though many theories and research projects showcase the interconnectedness that mobile devices and social media allow, Turkle recognizes that we are experiencing a rapid-fire shift in how socializing now occurs, now that “mobile technology has made each of us ‘pauseable’” (161):

We may begin by thinking that e-mails, texts, and Facebook messaging are thin gruel but useful if the alternative is sparse communication with the people we care about. Then, we become accustomed ... we can have connection when and where we want or need it, and we can easily make it go away. In only a few more steps, you have people describing life on Facebook as better than anything they have ever known. They use the site to share their thoughts, their music, and their photos. They expand their reach in a continually growing community of acquaintance. No matter how esoteric their interests, they are surrounded by enthusiasts, potentially drawn from all over the world. No matter how parochial the culture around them, they are cosmopolitan. (160-1)

Connected to this, “when media are always there, waiting to be wanted, people lose a sense of choosing to communicate” (163); Turkle quotes a curator in her thirties who stated in an interview that ““What used to be an address book is more like a database ... Now for work, I’m expected to have a Twitter feed and a Facebook presence at the museum, and do a blog on museum happenings. This means me in all these places”” (165). In the culture that demands constant accessibility and communication, e.g., responses to emails on weekends – “the self shaped in a world of rapid response [that] measures success by calls made, emails answered, texts replied to, contacts reached” (166) – there is indeed something lost. The ever-present need to keep in touch with others also affects social capital, whether it be employees answering work emails when at a social event with friends, or the oft-seen sight of parents sitting staring at their phones

while their young children play at the playground in front of them. As “demands become depersonalized ... we treat individuals as a unit. Friends become fans ... [w]e may say less to each other because we imagine that what we say is almost already a throwaway” (166). Turkle notes that in her research, ““Sometimes you don’t have time for your friends except if they’re online’ is a common complaint” (172). Further, people may lose touch or share less information, even with close friends, if not on Facebook. On a personal note, I find myself having to share family news with my mom, who is not on Facebook. I have learned of deaths, births, and engagements via the site before hearing from friends and family directly. Making news “Facebook official” has a status of its own – as if a new job or new home did not truly occur unless posted on social media. Once again, the glorification of busy has strong social effects. If one does not have time for one’s friends, how can one be expected to participate in leisure activities that support social capital?

### *Digital Measures of Popularity ... and One’s Worth*

Various means of digital measurement and quantifying is seen in news broadcasts, with anchors stating the number of views of a particular video that has gone viral as a means of expressing its success or appreciation. Artists’ success is now measured by the numbers of Facebook fans, Twitter followers, song downloads, or YouTube video views they have. There is even a website, Klout, devoted to determining how influential a person is. Klout measures “more than 400 signals from eight different networks to update your Klout Score every day” (klout.com); the networks are mostly SNSs – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, Bing, Foursquare, and Wikipedia. Likes,

comments, shares, reposts, retweets, endorsements, tips, check-ins, and other digital interactions all count towards one's score, and the program checks to ensure that all posts are authentic and not spam or self-posted. Scores range from 1 to 100; President Barack Obama has a Klout score of 99.

While these numbers are part of the social disconnect, they carry with them an oxymoronical closeness, as fans and followers feel that the information is being provided directly to and for them. There is no demarcation between the Facebook or Instagram posts about what a friend had for lunch and what an artist wore to the GRAMMY Awards. In much the same way, comments are "liked" with a thumbs-up icon on Facebook, and a heart symbol on Instagram – what Turkle calls "the emotional shorthand of emoticons" (172) -- thus, approval is wrapped up in emotionally symbolic emoticons, and the symbol of love is freely given away. Thus, while being alone even when together is a common sentiment, simultaneously (and paradoxically), "intimacy without privacy [is] reinvent[ing] what intimacy means. Separation, too, is being reinvented" (172). Further, "now, technology makes it easy to express emotions while they are being formed. It supports an emotional style in which feelings are not fully experienced until they are communicated. Put otherwise, there is every opportunity to form a thought by sending out for comments" (175); "at the moment of beginning to have a thought or feeling, we can have it validated, almost pre-validated. Exchanges may be brief, but more is not necessarily desired. The necessity is to have someone be there" (177), or more specifically, to have someone respond. Nearly anyone can be reached in an instant with a

text or a phone call, and “a technology-enabled social contract demands continual peer presence” (174).

Thus, there is a sense of digitally-cultivated social capital, but with it comes awareness of some psychological shifts as well:

For young people ... computers and mobile devices offer communities when families are absent. In this context, it is not surprising to find troubling patterns of connection and disconnection: teenagers who will only ‘speak’ online, who rigorously avoid face-to-face encounters, who are in text contact with their parents fifteen or twenty times a day, who deem a phone call ‘too much’ exposure and say that they will ‘text, not talk.’ But are we to think of these as pathologies? For as social mores change, what once seemed ‘ill’ can come to seem normal. Twenty years ago, as a practicing clinical psychologist, if I had met a college junior who called her mother fifteen times a day, checking in about what shoes to buy and what dress to wear, extolling a new kind of decaffeinated tea, and complaining about the difficulty of a physics problem set, I would have thought her behavior problematic. I would have encouraged her to explore difficulties with separation. I would have assumed that these had to be addressed for her to proceed to successful adulthood. But these days a college student who texts home fifteen times a day is not unusual. (178)

Turkle notes that the technological tethering can be used to deal with, and to mask, loneliness. She quotes a nurse in her thirties who says,

‘I am in no state to socialize ... I don’t even have the energy to try to track people down by phone. My friends from nursing school are all over the country. I send some e-mails. I log onto Facebook and feel less alone. Even when people are not there, like, exactly when I’m there, it seems like they are there. I have their new pictures, the last thing they were doing. I feel caught up.’ (203)

Her comments and feelings are not unique: social media has now provided us with a pacifying feeling of having connected to others, engaged in their lives, even if we find our own lives have gotten in the way of us being able to truly build in-person connections on a regular basis. Though one may not be able to attend a cultural gathering, pictures and films from the region can still be experienced.



Turkle makes another reference to society's current tethering:

We have seen young people walk the halls of their schools composing messages to online acquaintances they will never meet. We have seen them feeling more alive when connected, then disoriented and alone when they leave their screens. Some live more than half their waking hours in virtual places. But they also talk wistfully about letters, face-to-face meetings, and the privacy of pay phones. Tethered selves, they try to conjure a future different from the one they see coming by building on a past they never knew. In it, they have time alone, with nature, with each other, and with their families. (265)

While the goal of time alone, time with nature, with each other, and with one's family seems quite feasible, the disconnect between people separated by social media is also real. The lifestyle now adopted by so many allows for snippets of connection to others, even while working on a project, attending a class meeting, or talking on the phone.

While "the pleasure of full attention [is] coveted and rare" (266), it may also be more than some people can handle. The more likely predicament is that sharing one's attention in multitasking scenarios becomes a habit that is hard to break (267). To some extent, one might say that for the current young generation intimacy is a shared experience; from sharing text conversations to double dates, face timing in groups, or snap chatting to multiple people in one session, the young generation is deeply involved in the communications—visual or textual—of their friend group. So are they more connected than previous generations, or just differently connected? And what are the consequences of a reliance on digital social media on in-person connections and institutional affiliations? I will address these consequences in my fieldwork chapter with regard to the Cape Breton community in the Greater Boston area.

Though "friends" can be collected online, and identity can be performed through posts on Facebook or Instagram, this digital amassing of amusement and friendship does

not always match, or make up for, in-person social capital and community-building, even when bonds and bridges can be formed online. At the same time, making a phone call may become intimidating. As I will elaborate in the fieldwork chapter, I have made several contacts who have given me their phone numbers, but who either do not have Facebook or have not connected with me online, and I feel hesitant to call them. Even though they live down the street, would help my research, and are genuinely interested in speaking with me, having the digital connection seems easier, less intrusive. It never seems like the right time to telephone someone anymore, lest you interrupt them or seem forward, but an email or Facebook post can be sent at any time without consequence.

### *Sharing and Social Capital*

Regarding musical performances, videosharing and livestreaming allow individuals to share their own songs, as well as those of others. I explore this in greater depth in the chapter on digital diaspora, but what is important to note here regarding social capital and identity performance is that social media forever preserves these images, these links, as compounded parts of one's identity: "in online life, the *site supports the self*. Each site remembers the choices you have made there, what you've said about yourself, and the history of your relationships" (Turkle 2011, 194). These posts, and thus identities, can be pruned and preened, but regularly sharing of, for example, videos of Cape Breton musicians performing, shows an affinity for, and a connection to, this genre and culture. As Turkle notes after speaking with one group of high school students, "in this group, there is near consensus that one of the pleasures of digital communication is that it does not need a message. It can be there to trigger a feeling

rather than transmit a thought” (198). Thus, just seeing posts with idyllic images of Cape Breton can trigger feelings of nostalgia and diasporic longing, even for those generations removed from the island. This digital performance of bonding social capital is significant and is under-researched.

Though referring to an informant’s interactions on Second Life, Turkle’s comment is perfectly matched with current engagement with social media: “Working without interruption, he feels both connected and pleurably isolated” (217). She later notes that “on the electronic frontier, we forge connections that bring us back to earlier times and earlier technologies ... the Internet is a place to simplify and heighten experience” (230). Further, she notes that on confessional websites such as PostSecret, where users anonymously submit postings and postcards mailed to a post office box are shared on the site, as well as on social media pages and message boards, “you can deal with feelings without dealing directly with a person ... venting feelings comes to feel like sharing them” (231). She sees this current scene as a bit of foreshadowing, paralleling the fears that Putnam expressed back in 2000:

There is a danger that we will come to see this reduction in our expectations as a new norm. There is the possibility that chatting with anonymous humans can make online bots and agents look like good company. And there is the possibility that the company of online bots makes anonymous humans look good. We ask less of people and more of technology (231) ... When we live a large part of our personal lives online, these complex empathetic transactions [e.g., posting an apology on Facebook after wronging someone in person] become elusive. We are used to getting less. (234)

Yet, at the same time, “the online setting increases the number of people to whom one applies for a caring response” (235). However, Turkle’s conclusion speaks to the role of technology within the changing social mores: “We cannot blame technology for this state

of affairs. It is people who are disappointing each other. Technology merely enables us to create a mythology in which this does not matter” (237).

Again, while Turkle does not ever explicitly mention social capital as a theory, she makes several allusions to it. She gives the title “Seeking Communities” to a brief section of the chapter “True Confessions.” In the section, she notes that people feel some relief from online confessions and do not feel as alone. She then asks,

So, if sites are symptoms, and we need our symptoms, what else do we need? We need trust between congregants and clergy. We need parents who are able to talk with their children. We need children who are given time and protection to experience childhood. *We need communities* ... those who run online confessional sites suggest that it is time to ‘broaden our definition of community’ to include these virtual places. But this strips language of its meaning. If we start to call online spaces where we are with other people ‘communities,’ it is easy to forget what that word used to mean. From its derivation, it literally means ‘to give among each other.’ It is good to have this in mind as a standard for online places. I think it would be fair to say that online confessional sites usually fall below this mark.

Perhaps community should not have a broader but a narrower definition. *We used to have a name for a group that got together because its members shared common interests: we called it a club.* But in the main, we would not think of confessing our secrets to the members of the clubs. *But we have come to a point at which it is near heresy to suggest that mySpace or Facebook or Second Life is not a community.* I have used the word myself and argued that these environments correspond to what sociologist Ray Oldenberg called ‘the great good place.’ These were the coffee shops, the parks, and the barbershops that used to be points of assembly for acquaintances and neighbors, the people who made up the landscape of life. I think I spoke too quickly. I used the word ‘community’ for worlds of weak ties.

Communities are constituted by physical proximity, shared concerns, real consequences, and common responsibilities. Its members help each other in the most practical ways. On the lower east side of Manhattan, my great-grandparents belonged to a block association rife with deep antagonisms. I grew up hearing stories about those times. There was envy, concern that one family was doing better than another; there was suspicion, fear that one family was stealing from another. And yet these families took care of each other, helping each other when money was tight, when there was illness, when someone died. If one family was evicted, it boarded with a neighboring one. They buried each other. *What do we owe to each other in simulation?* (238-9, emphasis added)

Her reflections are apt, though they do not provide a full view of the community-enhancing skills the Internet can have, such as advertising a performance event or quickly alerting a large number of people to an emergency or a life situation.

Turkle continues, “Anxiety is part of the new connectivity. Yet, it is often the missing term when we talk about the revolution in mobile communications. Our habitual narratives about technology began with respectful disparagement of what came before and move on to idealize the new” (243). However, she cautions that

[w]e have to love our technology enough to describe it accurately. And we have to love ourselves enough to confront technology’s true effects on us. These amended narratives are a kind of *realtechnik*. The *realtechnik* of connectivity of culture is about possibilities and fulfillment, but it is also about the problems and dislocations of the tethered self. Technology helps us manage life stresses but generates anxieties of its own. The two are often closely linked ... You come to enjoy the feeling of never having to be alone ... Teenagers say that they want to keep their cell phones close, and once it is with you, you can always ‘find someone’ ... Facebook feels like ‘home,’ but you know that it puts you in a public square with a surveillance camera turned on. (243)

Turkle notes that politics and recent history, stating that “the trauma of 9/11 is part of the story of connectivity culture ... in its shadow, cell phones became a symbol of physical and emotional safety” (247). She adds, “When I interview teenagers about cell phones, I often hear stories about 9/11. Remembered through *the prism of connectivity*, 9/11 was a day when they could not be in touch” (246, emphasis added). As cell phones were not in near-omnipresent circulation, as they are now, many students now feel that

[t]his is a new nonnegotiable: to feel safe, you have to be connected ... we read much about ‘helicopter parents’ ... but today our children hover as well. They avoid disconnection at all cost. ... These teenagers live in a culture preoccupied with terrorism. They all experienced 9/11. They have grown up walking through metal detectors at schools and airports. They tend not to assume safe passage. The cell phone as amulet becomes emblematic of safety. (247-8)

Though other generations faced different crises in their developing years – e.g., World War II, the Cold War (246) – contemporary society emphasizes busyness while allowing connection online: “As toddlers, these children learned how to type online” (259).

### *Tangibility and Social Capital*

I address in depth the effects from changes in communication and in-person interaction in Chapter Five, which is on fieldwork. Nonetheless, it is important to make mention here of the tangibility of receiving a paper letter. Just as “nostalgia circles around attention, commitment, and the aesthetic of doing one thing at a time” (270), so, too, do we see a wistful longing for the days of paper communication, the feeling of the weight and thought receiving a personal birthday card carries versus a quick text or Facebook post. The Canadian-American Club has transitioned from mailed to emailed monthly newsletters, and other than postage costs, something is truly lost in searching one’s email for a PDF file with a calendar of events versus referring to the letter posted on one’s bulletin board.

### *Turkle’s Conclusions*

Turkle’s final cautions mirror nicely with Song’s reflections on Internet research:

Because we grew up with the Net, we assume that the Net is grown-up. We tend to see it as a technology in its maturity. But in fact, we are in early days. There is time to make the corrections. It is, above all, the young who need to be convinced that when it comes to our networked life, we are still at the beginning of things ... The networked culture is very young. Attendants at its birth, we threw ourselves into the adventure. This is human. *But these days, our problems with the Net are becoming too distracting to ignore. At the extreme, we are so enmeshed in our connections that we neglect each other. We don’t need to reject or disparage technology. We need to put it in its place.* (294-5, emphasis added)

Turkle concludes, much like Putnam (2000), that “I believe we have reached a point of inflection, where we can see the costs and start to take action” (296). Placing the scholars from various points during the growth of the Internet in conversation shows how technology has caused our interactions to shift and change, even if social capital has not been shown to have decreased dramatically.

### **Civil Rights and Social Capital**

Putnam only briefly addresses civil rights, but does note that because

race is such a fundamental feature of American social history that nearly every other feature of our society is connected to it in some way. Thus it seems intuitively plausible that race might somehow have played a role in the erosion of social capital of the last generation. In fact, the decline in social connectedness and social trust began just after the greatest successes of the civil rights revolution of the 1960s. That coincidence suggests the possibility of a kind of civic ‘white flight,’ as legal desegregation of civic life led whites to withdraw from community associations. This racial interpretation of the destruction of social capital is controversial and can hardly be settled within the compass of ... brief remarks. (279-80)

He gives three bullet points to discuss this statement:

First, racial differences in associational membership are not large ... second, the erosion of social capital has affected all races. This fact is inconsistent with the thesis that ‘white flight’ is a significant cause of civic disengagement, since African Americans have been dropping out of religious and civic organizations and other forms of social connectedness at least as rapidly as white Americans. In fact, the sharpest drop in civic activity between the 1970s and the 1990s was among college-educated African Americans ... Third, if civic disengagement represented white flight from integrated community life after the civil rights revolution, it is hard to reconcile with ... generational differences. Why should disengagement be hardly visible at all among Americans who came of age in the first half of the century, when American society was objectively more segregated and subjectively more racist than in the 1960s and 1970s? If racial prejudice were responsible for America’s civic disengagement, disengagement ought to be especially pronounced among the most bigoted individuals and generations. But it is not.

This evidence is not conclusive, but it does shift the burden of proof onto those who believe that racism is a primary explanation for growing civic disengagement over the last quarter century, however virulent racism continues to be in American society. Equally important, this evidence also suggests that reversing the civil rights gains of the last thirty years would do nothing to reverse the social capital losses. (280)<sup>76</sup>

Putnam also notes the government's contribution to the social capital decline:

On the one hand, some government policies have almost certainly had the effect of destroying social capital. For example, the so-called slum clearance policies of the 1950s and 1960s *replaced physical capital but destroyed social capital by disrupting existing community ties ... on the other hand, it is much harder to see which government policies might be responsible for the decline in bowling leagues, family dinners, and literary clubs*. Meanwhile social capital in virtually all its forms increased a lot between 1947 and 1965 and decreased a lot between 1965 and 1998. Thus, [a chart showing changes in government spending] seems inconsistent with any theory that blames the decline of social capital or civic engagement on either big government or the relative size of the federal government, compared with state and local government. (281-2, emphasis added)

While he speaks of American society as a whole, the comments carry a particular poignancy when considering the racial history of Boston. For many, the country still holds the legacy of the scars inflicted by the school busing conflict of the 1970s. Putnam does address the busing movement in American society, while not specifically naming Boston:

The civil rights movement was, in part, aimed at destroying certain exclusive, nonbridging forms of social capital – racially, homogeneous schools, neighborhoods, and so forth ... school integration has posed much more sharply the trade-offs between bridging and bonding social capital. The busing controversy illustrates this dilemma quite clearly, for both sides in the controversy were fundamentally concerned about social capital (though, understandably, no one used that language). Proponents of busing believed that only through racially integrated schools could America ever generate sufficient social capital – familiarity, tolerance, solidarity, trust, habits of cooperation, and mutual respect – across the racial divide. Opponents of busing replied that in most parts of

---

<sup>76</sup> I do not investigate race relations in depth in this dissertation, but it is important to note that “racism” and “white flight,” while seen as connected by some, are entirely different phenomena.



America, neighborhood schools provided a unique site for building social capital – friendship, habits of cooperation, solidarity. The deepest tragedy of the busing controversy is that both sides were right. (362)

Further, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., led to months of riots in Boston.

While less documented, black and white residents faced further conflict from this, with black Bostonians and white Bostonians assaulting each other, increased distrust between both groups, etc. I investigate the effects of these political occurrences in the chapter on fieldwork.

Regarding the mid-twentieth century changes that occurred in the United States, Putnam remarks that

in small town America in the 1950s people were deeply engaged in community life, but to many this surfeit of social capital seemed to impose conformity and social division. Then in the sixties tolerance and diversity blossomed, matching almost precisely the decline in social capital. Thoughtful commentators Michael Shudson and Alan Wolfe have suggested that in the ensuing years Americans have become more tolerant while becoming less connected with one another. (352)

Though this might seem a worrisome correlation – an increase in diversity leading to a downturn in interaction – Putnam notes that “many studies have found that the correlation between social participation and tolerance is, if anything, *positive*, not negative, even holding education constant ... the more people are involved with community organizations, the more open they are to gender equality and racial integration” (355). He adds that with the exception of extremist religious groups, he has “not found a single empirical study that confirms the supposed link between community involvement and intolerance (355) ... The most tolerant communities in America are

precisely the places with the greatest civic involvement. Conversely, communities whose residents bowl alone are the least tolerant places in America (356).”

Now that social capital, and the technological advances that affect it, have been addressed, I turn to a discussion of musical capital and digital capital.

### **Musical Capital and Digital Capital**

I will now explore my conceptualization of musical capital as a subset of cultural capital. Musical capital and social capital are intertwined because the social settings for music would also gather people together for social interaction and community building. I will begin with my definition of musical capital, which is the arts currency, both tangible and intangible, which can be procured and acquired.

Kenton O’Hara and Barry Brown (2006) note the dearth of acknowledgement of technology in writing on social aspects of musical consumption, and emphasize the importance of putting social interaction and music consumption in conversation, stating that “the way we consume music is not simply about listening but involves the ways it becomes integrated into our personal and social lives” (3). Without labeling it as such, O’Hara and Brown speak to the role of music in the production and maintenance of social capital.

At the time of its introduction, [home taping] was seen as a threat to the music industry in terms of replacing actual music purchases. Social Research has shown, however, that the effect of home taping on consumption was much more complex providing a means by which friends could swap and share music. Such behavior was socially rich, providing a vehicle for conversation, identity management and tokens of affection and gift giving. (3)

They then speak to the changing musical technology tides, including “the ... miniturisation of music delivery” offered by the Sony Walkman (4), and the ways in which subsequent technological shifts have affected social interaction.

[T]echnical shifts over recent years have disrupted existing music practices and created new social phenomena around music and its consumption ... while in some respects, these new digital alternatives afford some common social and behavioural phenomena with their historical counterparts, there are also significant new behaviours and social consequences of their new digital capabilities. For example, with peer-to-peer applications such as Napster, the sheer scale of the Network over which music is shared can have a tendency to remove some of the social aspects of the music sharing seen with swapping tapes among friends. Likewise, a simple increase in storage capacity afforded by the iPod over the Walkman allows entire music collections to be carried around with a person. Not only does this change listening behavior and circumstances, it also affords the social value of the portable device as a projection of a person’s musical identity. (3-4)

They suggest that future research connecting the social sciences with technological development “can break important ground in both designing technology and understanding the social world” (5), citing the work of music sociologist Tia DeNora (2000) and the music psychology volume edited by Adam North and David Hargreaves (2008). Notably, the authors do not cite YouTube’s contribution to music consumption, a site that contributes both to digital musical capital and the experience of the digital diaspora. Members of a diasporic community now can access the music of their homeland on their computer instead of having to buy recordings or attend community events.

O’Hara and Brown, writing on the chapter in their volume by DeNora, state that

Music, DeNora argues, is a key resource in the formation of social reality; a resource from which social, cognitive and emotional structures are created through people’s everyday activities as social beings. Understanding the ways

music plays a role in the formation of our everyday social experiences is key to exploring technologically mediated musical experiences (5).

They note that

music is considered a technology of the self ... music, then, becomes a resource for the identity work that people do on a daily basis. New music technologies, and the new modes of distribution and use they bring, shift the ways in which some of these social and emotional activities and experiences can be realized. (5)

O'Hara and Brown declare that

the majority of music sharing takes place in existing social networks ... sharing among existing social networks is an important reason for the success of iTunes. ... The actual exchange of music between friends becomes rich with social meaning, ritual and reciprocity (cf. Taylor and Harper, 2002). It embodies key aspects of the relationship between the giver and the receiver and demonstrates, for example the giver's knowledge of music and awareness of the receiver's taste and circumstances (indeed much of this social element of music sharing is lost in the relatively anonymous large scale online music sharing applications). (6)

DeNora's scholarship on music in everyday life is unique – in fact, *Music in Everyday*

*Life* is the title of her 2000 text; however, she does not thoroughly analyze the

sociological interactions present in the ethnographic studies documented in her texts.

Rather, the situations described read as vignettes.

Barry Brown and Abigail Sellen (2006) remark on the lack of study undertaken in music media consumption, even in the field of cultural studies. They also call to attention the economic and legal, rather than socio-cultural, focus given to music sharing, that is, the laws broken by utilizing such music sharing sources as Napster and the financial windfall that many felt occurred from such programs. Brown and Sellen detail the connection between music collection and identity, but they only briefly touch upon its social effects in the age of the Internet. They comment that “online music applications

could better support communication with friends around their music collections (2006, 51).” This comment is in response to a key observation of a musical capital shift:

[W]hile conventional music sharing occurs with friends in social environments, with online sharing much of this sociality is stripped away ... music is an application that is particularly suited to linking with creating friendship or community bonds, since in the physical world it is strongly linked with social activities. (51)

While their study data leads them to conclude that more applications to allow Internet users to peruse and interact with friends’ musical networks has great social potential, it is clear that such statements and observations lie squarely within the domain of social and musical capital, and can be applied to help analyze the shifts in in-person music consumption.

Arianna Bassoli, Julian Moore, and Stefan Agamanolis (2006) make reference to social capital in their writing on socializing music sharing, specifically citing Putnam’s remark on cities’ increased feel of alienation and loneliness. They add, “our aim is to design new personal technologies that could support the creation of a ‘neighbourhood feeling’ and the improvement of the social capital on a local scale” (2006, 151). They also utilize a slightly different definition of social capital than that of Putnam: “while many definitions have been assigned to the concept of ‘social capital,’ it could be here summarized as the sum of relationships, norms and institutions that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions (World Bank 1999)” (151).

As with Brown and Sellen, Bassoli, Moore, and Agamanolis suggest utilizing youth friendship networks and their musical selections as a means for digitally engaging

and interacting.<sup>77</sup> While intriguing, their methodology and projects do not directly apply to the focus of this dissertation. Nonetheless, they do point out the power held by music to create conversation and unite people, though the latter note that “ubiquitous media are causing some radical changes to interpersonal communication. The fact that people are starting to get used more and more to communicating on a virtual level is affecting not only how strangers interact but also friends (Jones et al 2002, Hu 2004)” (169). Clearly, this connects to Turkle’s recognition of the increasing presence of technology in all levels of interpersonal relations.

Bassoli, Moore, and Agamanolis remark that while “sharing music may however not be enough for people to socialize with each other ... in terms of content, music has been selected as the main interest around which new social links can be established and existing ones maintained” (152-3); therefore, social capital can be increased through musical capital gains.

### *Digital Musical Capital: Concerns*

Atau Tanaka (2006) remarks that “digital personal music systems offer conveniences where listeners can enjoy their whole music collections with them at all times. However this has come at a price where the richness of musical experience is compromised, leaving only remnants of a living, vibrating, dynamic musical past” (267). Tanaka sees great potential in the handling of music technology to work with social interaction, noting that “application of social computing coupled with artistic creativity can combine to point out ways in which technological evolution can be assimilated

---

<sup>77</sup> This same approach has potential for use with diasporic communities.

directly in cultural production, ultimately leading to possible new forms of musical content” (267). While Tanaka is largely writing on music produced digitally, and digital music systems, the consideration of music “as a dynamic, living form” (285) is easily applicable to cultural preservation studies.

The concern with experiencing a culture digitally is that the full embodiment of the culture is not captured. One can view and listen to countless recordings and films, but one cannot capture the smells, the sights beyond the camera, the full ambiance, the foods served, or the interactions, both brief and lingering, with fellow attendees. While not able to speak to the Internet’s omnipresence when writing at the dawn of the new millennium, perhaps this incomplete experiencing is something to which Putnam alluded in the subtext of *Bowling Alone*. Culturing alone is not the same as culturing together, though reminiscing and learning of a new culture from one’s laptop, mobile device, or stereo can facilitate connections and engender feelings of connectedness, whether one is in the homeland or the diaspora. I use this concept to support my coined term of *e-membering*, or digitally remembering, that I develop in the following chapter on digital diaspora.

I conclude that musical capital cannot solely be accrued through digital or recorded transmissions, and that attending events solely in an armchair ethnographic fashion does not allow the culture to be nourished, either as a whole or within one’s own personal capital vault. While the glorification of busyness, increased geographic distance of sites of performance, a decrease in practicing (or even living!) tradition-bearers, and other factors prevent the Cape Breton culture from being experienced and performed at the same level in Boston that it was at its peak in the mid- twentieth century, there are

still a number of steps from an applied ethnomusicological perspective that can be pursued to ensure the preservation and continuation of the in-person musical events and social gatherings of the Cape Breton diasporic community. I detail my suggestions in both the chapter on the diasporic community and in the conclusions of this dissertation. In Chapter Three, I will examine digital diaspora: its theories, its main scholars, and the means by which digital diaspora scholarship must be integrated into discussions on community arts.

### *Cultural Capital*

Heather Sparling, in her discussion of Gaelic song genres in Cape Breton music (2005), succinctly summarizes the connection that Bourdieu's utilization of cultural capital has to musical study: "Bourdieu argues that any given social order is not based on economic capital alone, but on other kinds of capital as well, such as cultural capital.

*Cultural capital is socially recognized and accepted (also known as 'legitimate' in Bourdieu's terms) cultural knowledge"* (13, emphasis added).

Sparling then applies cultural capital to Gaelic Cape Breton:

[C]ultural capital exists in three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. It is embodied in "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body," objectified in cultural goods (such as artworks), and institutionalized, as already indicated, in educational qualifications (Bourdieu 1986:243). Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is valuable to scholars of culture because it presumes that cultural capital is "linked to the body and presupposes embodiment" thus bridging the tired mind-body split (Bourdieu 1986:244). Bourdieu calls cultural capital in its embodied form, "habitus." One's habitus is the result of one's early domestic education and involves a labour of inculcation and assimilation, often acquired unconsciously. It cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights, or nobility titles) and therefore cultural capital is best measured in terms of the length of time involved in its acquisition (Bourdieu 1986:244-5).



Because the social conditions of cultural capital's transmission and acquisition are relatively disguised (in that it is unrecognized as capital and instead viewed as a natural competence and authority), it functions as a symbolic capital. In Gaelic Cape Breton, habitus might be informed by, for example, exposure to: the Gaelic language, attitudes towards the Gaelic language, Gaelic performing arts (including song, storytelling, fiddling, piping, and step dancing), ceilidhs, Gaelic cultural festivals and competitions, Scottish Gaelic and Cape Breton settlement history, community concerts, and so on. *Significantly, cultural capital can be transmitted hereditarily through domestic education.* Therefore, children of parents with a significant volume of cultural capital (such as native Gaelic speakers in Gaelic Cape Breton) tend to be able to accumulate cultural capital quicker and easier than those children coming from families with less cultural capital.<sup>78</sup> Parents' cultural capital is transmitted to their children through habitus - children absorb cultural capital by observing their parents' cultural activities and values. In families with greater economic capital, children have the economic freedom necessary to facilitate a long cultural capital acquisition process. For example, it takes many years of lessons and practice to learn to play an instrument in many musical traditions. Lessons are facilitated in families with the money to afford them. The time to practice is made available in families where children do not have to work for discretionary spending (or other types of) money. That is to say, the more time a child is freed from economic necessity by his or her family (more likely in a family with greater economic capital), the more time s/he has to acquire cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986:246). (161-2, emphasis added)

I contest that this statement does not hold true in Cape Breton culture, either in the homeland or in the diasporic communities. Cape Breton Island is riddled with economic plight and high rates of unemployment, and while the culture of the island and its people are rich, economic capital has never ranked high in the area. This, I argue, justifies the importance of the musical capital engendered by the population: families could gather at the closest house that had a piano; fiddlers would travel to play at a home or a dance or fire hall; home recordings could be inexpensively made and distributed. Today, cultural capital can easily be accrued via digital music consumption, that is, one can acquire

---

<sup>78</sup> This accrual of cultural capital can also be ameliorated by improvements in technology; that is, sharing of family videos, Skyping with family members whilst playing instruments, etc.

strong knowledge of a culture's music via listening to and viewing Internet resources on YouTube, Pandora, iTunes, and so on. Thus, cultural capital can be enhanced digitally with a large number of recordings of a culture's music, dance, and arts available for consumption and distribution on the Internet; and second, musical capital can be digitally increased with greater access to said recordings. Notably, Sparling maintains a digital repository of over 500 Atlantic Canadian disaster songs on the site [disastersongs.ca](http://disastersongs.ca).

### **Conclusions on Social Capital**

Putnam (2000: 284) summarizes his argument with a pie chart that estimates the breakdown of reasons for social capital decline between 1965 and 2000.

He lists the percentages in descriptions rather than placing them next to the chart itself.

They are

- Pressures of time and money, including the special pressures put on two-career families – 10%
- Suburbanization, commuting, and sprawl – 10%
- The effect of electronic entertainment – above all, television – 25%
- Generational decline – the slow, steady, and ineluctable replacement of the long civic generation by their less involved children and grandchildren – 50%
- Overlap between generational change and the long-term effects of television – 10-15%
- Other – 5% (284)

One study that meets Hochheiser and Shneiderman's call is the work by Lee, Kim, and Ahn (2014). Their research references Putnam's definition of social capital in their study of how Facebook members utilize the social networking site to manage bonding and bridging social capital. They note that while social capital "traditionally ... has been built or maintained through (or via) face-to-face interactions, letters, or phone calls (Putnam 2000, Williams 2006), [r]ecently social networking sites (SNS) are emerging as one of the most important communication tools to build and maintain social capital (Steinfeld, DiMicco, Ellison, and Lampe 2009)" (440). Lee, Kim, and Ahn cite research connecting Facebook use to an increased personal accrual of social capital, noting that their specific investigation differs by examining specific use of functions within Facebook: "how do Facebook users employ the *Like*, *Comment*, *Chat*, and *Share* features for the sake of social capital?" (440) They conclude that Facebook can be used to build and maintain bridging and bonding social capital:

[B]onding social capital is positively associated with the number of Facebook features used. It indicates that Facebook users who utilize a larger number of Facebook features are more likely to hold greater bonding social capital. Interestingly, the number of Facebook features used was not associated with bridging social capital. These findings are consistent with the previous research ... Secondly, specific Facebook features are distinctively used to manage bridging versus bonding social capital. The frequent uses of *Like* and *Comment* were associated with bonding social capital ... our result shows that people who use *Like* more frequently hold greater bonding social capital than those who use *Like* less frequently. Facebook users may accommodate bonding social capital by using the *Like* feature frequently for the sake of relationship maintenance<sup>79</sup> even though the posting is not interesting ... it appears that frequently clicking *Like* and showing silent emotional support is associated with greater bonding social capital whereas writing *Comments* is associated with less bonding social capital.

---

<sup>79</sup> Facebook is a quick, easy, and free, if not always sincere and heartfelt, way to maintain bonding social capital.

The frequency of the *Wall* use was the only significant and positive predictor of bridging social capital ... it is more closely related to creating and maintaining bridging social capital or weak ties than bonding social capital or strong ties such as close friends and family members. (444-5)

On the topic of groups, which I investigate in the following chapter on digital diaspora, Lee, Kim, and Anh found that

*Status* and *Group* ... appeared to be positively related to bridging, but not to bonding, social capital. According to Ryan and Xenos (2011), *Status* is used for active social contributions and *Group* is used for passive engagement. As a broadcasting feature, *Status* is directed not only to friends but also to random Facebook users.<sup>80</sup> Thus, *Status* may be more geared toward bridging than bonding social capital. The *Group* provides users with opportunities to interact with people who share similar interests. People in the same *Group* are not necessarily close. The *Group*, therefore, allows for staying in touch with group members in a low-effort manner. Perhaps that is why the preference for the *Group* appears to be related only to bridging social capital. (2014, 445)<sup>81</sup>

This finding is very significant, as it indicates that group members can in fact keep up to date with current happenings in a particular community without actively participating, much as is seen in the digital diaspora. Further, it contradicts Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe's finding that features such as Groups were underutilized (876). Lee, Kim, and Ahn note that "the Internet makes it very easy to build bridging social capital since the entry cost of virtual communities is quite low (Galston 1999, Williams 2006). By meeting people from different backgrounds *with little effort online*, the Internet users can build networks that may be weak but broad" (year? 441). They add, "similarly, Ji et al. (2010) found that individuals use SNS for both bonding and bridging social capital across

---

<sup>80</sup> This is not actually true. Any posting on Facebook can be set so that customized groups of users, e.g., close friends, all friends, everyone, can see them.

<sup>81</sup> Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe also cite studies that "found that while Facebook use overall was associated with social capital, there was a stronger association between social capital and active contributions to the site (versus passive consumption of others' information). These studies suggest that users who have the ability and inclination to engage in certain SNS activities may be more likely to reap social capital benefits" (874).

Korea, China, and the United States” (441). While their hypotheses are intriguing, and their literature review very thorough, as with Nicole Ellison, Charles Steinfeld, and Cliff Lampe (2010), Lee, Kim, and Ahn’s methodology is slanted in that both groups only collected data from college students. Further, the latter study

was conducted in South Korea, where Facebook is still relatively new. Moreover, it has been noted that South Koreans may have interaction behaviors different from the people in Western cultures. Collectivistic orientation and strong power distance, for instance, may influence Koreans’ Facebook feature use (Nadkarni and Hofmann 2012). (445)

Clearly, to do a thorough investigation and make solid conclusions, more cultures’ engagements with SNSs need to be studied. However the fact that interactions in both collectivist and individualist cultures have been analyzed is beneficial.

Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe (2010) also examine the Facebook-social capital connection, concluding that it is possible “that the identity formation in Facebook serves as a social lubricant, encouraging individuals to convert latent to weak ties and enabling them to broadcast requests for support or information” (873). They cite the power of SNS to increase social capital due to their ability to allow social networks to communicate at a low cost. This is certainly true, as I investigate in the following chapter, with transnational networks. The cost of posting a message to one’s “friends” worldwide is far cheaper than making even a single international call or sending an international text message.

As with Schrooten, Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe note the problems researchers face when doing hybrid fieldwork:

[w]hile the literature provides a basic understanding of whether Friendships on SNSs represent pre-existing offline connections or new relationships forged

online (Ellison et al., 2007), measurement difficulties hamper our ability to provide a clear picture of how online and offline modes of communication replace, complement, and facilitate one another. (874)

Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe refer to the online-offline hybrid connection as “mixed-mode relationships” (874-5).

### **In Conclusion**

Putnam begins the concluding section of *Bowling Alone* – titled “What Is to Be Done?” – with the following reflection that succinctly summarizes his argument:

Over the last three decades a variety of social, economic, and technological changes have rendered obsolete a significant stock of America’s social capital. Television, two-career families, suburban sprawl, generational changes in values – these and other changes in American society have meant that fewer and fewer of us find that the League of Women Voters, or the United Way, or the Shriners, or the monthly bridge club, or even a Sunday picnic with friends fits the way we have come to live. Our growing social-capital deficit threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our health and happiness. (367)

He then asks, “is erosion of social capital an ineluctable consequence of modernity, or can we do something about it?” (367)

Perhaps this disconnectedness caused by the glorification of busyness in American culture and the widespread tendency to pack the hours of one’s day with work and sports is why so many seek out social connection on the Internet, as Turkle (2011) describes. While on the go – even standing in line at the grocery store – one can see photographs of friends and family on their mobile phones and feel as though they have checked in and kept up with the latest. Surely, however, even though it is often what life dictates, commenting on a friend’s post (or corresponding simultaneously with multiple

friends, as all the people with which one shares connections on Facebook are called ‘friends’) does not hold the same weight as sharing this anecdote in person, or even on the telephone, with said friend.

My personal finding is that the Internet both hinders and bolsters social capital. As part of the methodology for this dissertation, I joined close to 100 Facebook groups relating to Celtic music, Cape Breton music, Boston, etc. I was able to receive the same information as any member who joined these public or closed groups<sup>82</sup>, even though I rarely participated. Users are able to passively amass information and resources, and can choose to engage at any time. In a face-to-face setting, sitting quietly in the corner of every meeting for a year and half without ever participating would likely be questioned at some point. It is the twenty-first century equivalent of armchair ethnography. I can learn vast amounts of information, sometimes personal, about the members of groups without ever leaving my computer or phone.

While Putnam surely could not envision the Internet’s ubiquity fifteen years after *Bowling Alone*’s publication, he spoke to its potential for uniting community members. I detail the effects of the Internet on diasporic communities and musical engagement in the chapters that follow.

---

<sup>82</sup> Open or public groups are open to any Facebook member. Closed groups require approval, but postings on them still appear on the ticker, a relatively new Facebook development where users can see the likes and comments that their friends make in real time. Secret groups also require approval, but the information posted on the group pages do not appear in any newsfeeds or tickers.

### CHAPTER THREE: DIGITAL DIASPORA

In this chapter, I utilize the emerging discourse on digital diaspora theory to analyze the Cape Breton diaspora's engagement with the Internet. After defining the term "digital diaspora," I discuss its development, its connection to greater diaspora studies, and the main scholars in the field. I identify key areas that interlock with social capital theory, the focus of Chapter Two. I apply Putnam's concept of bonding social capital to diasporic groups and examine the role that technology plays in the development and maintenance of diasporic cultural and musical capital. I discuss the virtual community sites on and through which diasporic culture is digitally performed, particularly SNSs such as Facebook, videostreaming sites such as YouTube, livestreaming platforms, including ConcertWindow. I also address the growth of music and language lessons available via Skype, YouTube, and Internet platforms, placing a particular focus on Cape Breton fiddle, Cape Breton piano, and the Scottish Gaelic language. I address how the Internet allows contemporary diasporans to "e-member," a term I coin to signify digitally remembering. Those away from the homeland are now able to keep up with the news in Cape Breton via reading the websites of the homeland newspapers *Inverness Oran*,<sup>83</sup> the *Cape Breton Post*, and the *Chronicle Herald*. I then consider how the Cape Breton diaspora's digital engagement with the homeland culture has shifted with developments in technology from radio to television to experiencing both media via the Internet; this lays the groundwork for the fieldwork analysis I present in Chapter Five. To conclude the

---

<sup>83</sup> "Oran" is Scottish Gaelic for "song."



chapter, I mark the holes in the current scholarship, most notably the omission of the connection between digital diaspora studies and the arts.

### **Digital Diasporas**

The introduction of Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff's 2009 text, *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*, identifies the book as "the first full-length scholarly study of the increasingly important phenomenon of digital diasporas," defined as "diasporas organized on the Internet" (2). Brinkerhoff's training and background in the fields of public administration and international affairs frame the text's focus on issues of security, development, and identity as connected to diasporic communities.

Current events show that the power of the Internet to unite and engage members of a diaspora cannot be ignored. The social networking sites (SNSs) of Facebook and, in particular, Twitter, serve as electronic recruitment zones for potential members of extremist organizations, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, more commonly known as ISIS; ISIS makes use of YouTube and extremist websites to upload and showcase propaganda and recruitment videos.<sup>84</sup> Contemporary terrorism and security scholars utilize data analysis of such material to locate and infiltrate terrorist networks, and to identify and intercept potential members before they accrue any damage to others.

More benignly, the Internet is a vault of information for those wishing to engage with their ancestral history or homeland community. This utilization of the Internet is the focus of my research, and the emphasis of this chapter. While knowledge of community

---

<sup>84</sup> Democracy movements, including the Arab Spring movement of 2011, have also been largely propelled by Internet-fueled occurrences, e.g., communication via Twitter.

resources available via the Internet is rising, there is a dearth of scholarly resources regarding how diasporas engage with said resources. One main exception to this is Paul Basu's 2007 study of on people of Scottish descent forging and maintaining connections to their ancestral heritage via Internet message boards and subsequent in-person visits to Scotland. As with Brinkerhoff, Basu's work is touted as "the first full-length ethnographic study of its kind";<sup>85</sup> it examines "the role of place, ancestry and territorial attachment in the context of a modern age characterized by mobility and rootlessness." Such declarations note the sentiment that contemporary society has created a simultaneous sense of constant connectedness and frequent feelings of detachment. Development of the field, both quantitatively, to objectively examine trends, and qualitatively, to address issues of emotion, nostalgia, and identity, will be particularly important to fully examine the impact of technology on diasporic longing, community maintenance, and the communities' transformations over time.

Brinkerhoff's definition of digital diaspora as those diasporas which organize on the Internet does not reflect the full scope of how these diasporas behave. While broader than Brinkerhoff's definition, my framing is in line with her statement that

digital diasporas use the Internet to negotiate their identity and promote solidarity; learn, explore, and enact democratic values; and mobilize to peacefully pursue policy influence, service objectives, and economic participation in the homeland.  
(2)

I define digital diaspora as the digital and virtual means by which diasporic communities engage with, perform, recognize, and connect to their homeland identity and culture. In

---

<sup>85</sup> Ryan, Erel, and D'Angelo 2015 mention digital social capital and digital diaspora in their writing on migrant capital, but only in passing and do not identify the terms.

my research, I have found that utilizing digital networks to perform one's diasporic identity, particularly Cape Bretonness, is powerful, frequently seen, and underanalyzed.

### *Methodology*

Brinkerhoff's methodological approach is basic. She chose to examine nine websites from five different diasporic communities: Afghan-Americans, Egyptian Copt-Americans, Tibetan-Americans, Somali-Americans, and the Nepali diaspora. She then interviewed the sites' creator(s), conducted a three-month-plus-long analysis of each site's discussion posts, and analyzed the websites as a whole, with a focus on discussions of democracy and "the type of communication involved (conventional, interpersonal, communal, and announcements)" (16-17). For cybergrassroots organizations (one subset of the sites studied), she elected to analyze "the nature of the benefit gained from the member's participation and the type of communication involved" (237). She also examines "cultural identity benefit" (237).

As with studies of social capital, Mieke Schrooten's 2012 declaration that online and offline ethnographic research cannot be separated due to the former's ubiquity in daily life is critical to remember when discussing any Internet-themed topic. This hybrid examination is especially appropriate for diasporas.

For diasporans, connecting to their unique identity in the privacy of one's home – or, given media's omnipresent availability, in the solitude of one's phone or Facebook page – provides an outlet for understanding when members of the hostland culture may not comprehend one's ways; an affirmation of one's culture, humor, and beliefs; and a means for expression, be it through posting diasporic-themed memes on one's Facebook

page or engaging with a group page, e.g., Cape Breton Music Media Historical Society.

Brinkerhoff affirms these ideas:

[T]he Internet fosters community, solidarity, and liberal values. It provides forums for the exchange of ideas, debate, and the mobilization of opinion, potentially culminating in strong social bonds and relationships (Rheingold 1993). While some scholars remain concerned about the Internet's potential to foster increasing parochialism, where individuals can more selectively pursue information and interaction opportunities (Barber 1995; Elkins 1997), this may only occur when the range of communication remains small (Greig 2002). (11)

Clearly, the Internet plays a large role in providing digital comfort and understanding at a time when, as

some have even claimed ... IT highlights the marginalization resulting from globalization (6) ... As a tool for communication and community building among dispersed populations, the Internet is ideally suited for connecting diasporans who are geographically scattered and removed from their homeland. (12)

Brinkerhoff adds, "the Internet is a powerful tool in keeping a homeland identity – however constructed – alive" (59). While people may become separated geographically from their homeland, they can access their culture and fellow diasporans with the click of a button. It is true that globalization has increased physical dispersion, but the Internet also provides a means for unification and community at a time when in-person community can be difficult to find and sustain.

Brinkerhoff notes that

today, information and people cross international borders at speeds and in numbers unimagined previously. Together, migration and telecommunication advancements make diasporas all the more relevant to international affairs. (3)

She concisely indicates the relevance of the study of digital diaspora: "The answer of why we should care about diasporas and the Internet revolves both around the risk factors and the great potential they hold for constructive political and socio-economic

contributions” (3-4). She notes that the development of digital diasporas is relatively new; as mentioned in the previous chapter, scholarship on the Internet itself is still in its nascent stages. Brinkerhoff’s view aligns with Schrooten’s (2012) emphasis of hybrid ethnography:

Those who live in diaspora participate in physical diaspora communities, which are largely place-based.<sup>86</sup> With the advent of IT, individuals within and across such communities can create additional, online communities, or they may simply use the Internet to pursue *purposive objectives* related to their homeland identity (e.g., philanthropy, news sources). (12, emphasis added)

websites for homeland newspapers provide a terrific point of access for real-time news for diasporans. Rather than hearing of a friend’s passing via a phone call from someone in the homeland, a diasporan can read the obituaries page of the newspaper online.

### *Digital Diasporas’ Utilization of the Internet*

Brinkerhoff declares that the Internet can be used “to establish communication, networks, explore identity” (12). While Brinkerhoff notes that her focus is a comparative analysis of “digital diasporas’ significance for international affairs” (12), her observations are relevant for any digital examination of a diaspora, as she “identif[ies] how members are creating self-regulating online communities and explor[es] issues of identity ... and ... discussions of identity as well as perceptions of the homeland and its future” (14). Further, she notes that “diasporas’ use of the Internet can relieve *identity stress*” (15, emphasis added). In the ever-changing globalized world, having an outlet to express one’s identity that is free and easily accessible is particularly potent and poignant, and “it

---

<sup>86</sup> I examine the physical community of diaspora in Chapter Five. Brinkerhoff does mention “physical diaspora organizations” (2009, 29), but her focus is largely on the Internet.

contributes to facilitating diaspora identity construction” (27). Turkle (2011) makes brief mention of anthropology theory, writing,

Anthropologist Victor Turner writes that we are most free to explore identity in places outside of our normal life routines, places that are in some way ‘betwixt and between.’ Turner then calls *liminal*, from the Latin word for threshold. They are literally on the boundaries of things. (213)

Digital diasporas can be a liminal zone, as performances of identity are allowed, and enacted, in such a way that may not always be permissible, or understood, in one’s everyday life.

Film and media studies scholar Anna Everett (2009) utilizes the lens of digital diaspora to address issues concerning the African diaspora. As with Brinkerhoff, while Everett’s broader theme is relevant to this dissertation, the particulars of her work do not provide a proper theoretical outlet for addressing the Cape Breton community. Everett’s discussion of egalitarian status achieved, or sought, through the Internet, however, does address the reality that Internet access can create a level playing field. In Cape Breton Island proper, technological developments occurred at a slower pace than in many other Western locations. The arrival of high-speed Internet brought with it a trove of resources and communication opportunities to an area physically and culturally distant from other parts of the world.

### **Benefits of Diaspora Communities**

The benefits gained by interacting with a supportive group of likeminded (or like-cultured) individuals are easy to discern. Brinkerhoff cogently states the benefits of diaspora communities:

- Purposive: “members engage in pursuing goals directed beyond the boundaries of the community or organization. These might include the provision of services to nonmembers or advocating for a particular cause”;<sup>87</sup>
- Material: “information, referrals, and the tangible outcomes of service delivery”;<sup>88</sup>
- Solidary: “associational advantages that flow from feeling connected to others and belonging to a community”; and
- Cultural identity: “opportunities for members to engage with others to explore and negotiate their individual, as well as community, cultural identities” (37); “the opportunity to negotiate cultural identity and enact it through communication and collective action” (39).

The role of the Internet for the younger members of diasporic communities is also emphasized:

IT may reinforce the self-conscious selection and assimilation of cultural identity artifacts, especially among youth. New media, such as text messaging and Internet discussions, emphasize the development of self-positions among youth (Cortini, Mininni, and Manuti 2004). Furthermore, while first generation diasporans may

---

<sup>87</sup> Brinkerhoff declares,

Specific purposive agendas vis-à-vis the homeland are shaped by the diaspora itself – its origins, generation, and religious orientation; its experience in the host society; its motivation (identity expression and/or accessing power resources) and sense of efficacy (including available skills and other resources); and accordingly, the particular homeland challenges the diaspora perceives as most relevant.

<sup>88</sup> Brinkerhoff notes,

Diaspora organizations on the Internet provide material benefits focused on information and referral related to homeland identity (e.g., historical, cultural, and current event information), as well in support of adjustment in the homeland (e.g., where to find a lawyer, how to get a driver’s license. (88)

She cites the example of a group called “‘Let’s Talk About Old Memories,’ [which] serves as a verbal postcard of old Afghanistan prior to the Soviet invasion” (98-99). The examples of Facebook groups discussed both in this chapter and Chapter Five serve either one or both of these purposes. I add that nostalgia-based groups are also both significant and prominent with the realm of digital diaspora practice, e.g., “Nova Scotia – Memories of Days Gone By,” a Facebook group devoted solely to posting images, videos, and anecdotes related to life on the province.

use the Internet to extend their offline social networks, younger diasporans are more likely to connect exclusively online in support of hyphenated identities (Ven den Bos and Nell 2006). (49)

Brinkerhoff also notes that “younger diasporans, in particular, are likely to be consciously selective in their identity components” (51). As Turkle (2011) states (and as I detail in Chapter Two), self-positioning and profile preening are large parts of online image-shaping. There are companies devoted to improving one’s digital identity, and job applicants are encouraged to keep their online persona pristine, yet engaged and up to date. By joining and consciously interacting with diasporic groups relating to one’s line of work, one projects a positive image whilst networking and potentially benefiting both one’s work and cultural success. For those identities which are privileged, e.g., Irish culture in Boston (as I discuss below), having digital markers of connections within one’s online profile(s) can successfully project a desired image, with minimal effort.

### **Identity and Diaspora**

Brinkerhoff notes that “life stories play a significant role in the formation of identity (Giddens 1991)” (39). Further, storytelling is a large part of Cape Breton culture, in line with Brinkerhoff’s declaration that

storytelling and sharing is one approach to crafting identity (and cross-categorical identities) ... storytelling is a process of sensemaking, where individuals independently and collectively link and construct a meaningful logic among seemingly random, sometimes disparate occurrences and experiences (see Griffin 1993). (39)

In addition, as Brinkerhoff aptly notes, “Interactive components of IT are an efficient, easy-access tool for diaspora storytelling and sharing” (50). Perhaps this cultural tenet of



storytelling is why the nostalgia-centered Facebook pages are so popular, even among the third generation of the diaspora.<sup>89</sup> Further, Brinkerhoff notes that identity is dynamic rather than static – shifting and changing as different levels are constructed and different stories are told:

diasporas do not construct a fixed identity. Rather, they continuously negotiate their identity, both in interaction with the host society, and among themselves, perhaps through multiple diaspora organizations each with a different perspective and/or purpose. (40)

Many members of the Cape Breton diaspora identify with a general Cape Breton Celtic identity, but are also amenable to performing and privileging the Irish and Scottish aspects of their heritage, a vague Celtic identity, or a broader Canadian identity. As discussed in Chapter One, the Boston Irish diaspora is another prime example of shifting identity. Originally a shunned population, Irish Boston identity has taken on something of a royalty status. This climb escalated with the Kennedy family's rise to political prominence, and continues the subtle – and blatant – shamrockery present throughout the city; to many, Irish identity is the prominent flavor of contemporary Boston culture (see Negra 2006 for a discussion of the privileging of Irish identity).

### **Social Capital and Diasporic Organizations**

Brinkerhoff does not cite Putnam's 2000 writing in her discussion of social capital. However, her writing speaks to Putnam's influence within social capital theory. She declares:

---

<sup>89</sup> See MacKinnon 2009 for an in-depth discussion of contemporary Cape Breton folklore, including storytelling.

By fostering both bonding and bridging social capital, diaspora organizations can support integration and may prevent latent conflict from becoming manifest. Bonding social capital emphasizes dense social networks that can engender trust (Coleman 1988, 1990). It can counter the destabilizing forces of marginalization and provide a social safety net for group members (Gittel and Vidal 1998) ... Bridging social capital emphasizes heterogeneous networks, where members have greater opportunities to access information and understanding beyond their current intragroup resources (see Burt 2000). Diaspora organizations can foster bridging among diaspora subgroups and between the diaspora and the host country society. (10-11)

Brinkerhoff notes that, in a diasporic community,

assimilation of successive generations depends on the opportunities, and *social and cultural capital* put in place by the previous generation(s) (Portes and Zhou 1993). Subsequent generations will lean toward the cultural identity that affords the greatest opportunities in terms of identity resources and quality of life. (35, emphasis added)

Further, as a general human condition, “being part of a collective identity is a primary psychological need ... social capital is rooted in identity and shared identity negotiation processes” (36-37). Brinkerhoff adds to Putnam’s categories of bridging and bonding social capital to address this phenomenon:

Diasporans, in particular, need to cultivate bonding social capital (social bonds based on similar backgrounds), bridging social capital (relationships that develop among people with dissimilar backgrounds) (see Putnam 1993), and *bridging-to-bond social capital* (overcoming physical constraints, such as time, geographic location, and disabilities, to enable bonding to occur) (Brainard and Brinkerhoff 2004). Social capital is developed and maintained in association (Anheier and Kendall 2002; Putnam 1993). (37, emphasis added)

She continues, “for diasporas, social capital is represented in development of a diaspora community, complete with various types of diaspora associations or more formal organizations” (37). Brinkerhoff associates a number of factors with bonding social capital in diasporic communities:

- “provid[ing] both a collective identity (solidary and identity benefits) and

practical resources (purposive and material benefits) for advancing socioeconomically”;

- “manifest[ing] as dense social networks that engender trust (Coleman 1998, 1990);
- “counter[ing] the destabilizing forces of marginalization and provid[ing] a social safety net for group members (Gittel and Vidal 1998)”;
- “provid[ing] access to the kinds of social networks that more proactively support social and economic integration”;
- “provid[ing] the collective identity and instrumental networks that can ward off personal disorder and psychic crisis ... important security implications” ; (37) and
- storytelling and negotiation of hybrid identities “provid[es] affirmation and correction as needed to sustain a collective bond” (52).

Brinkerhoff provides a useful visual aid to easily explain these benefits. There is clear overlap between each type of social capital; I discuss each type below.

Bonding social capital is also an important factor in digital diasporas, as SNSs, message boards, and posts can enforce “a sense of belonging ... [on which] ... for some, the expression of homeland identity is [solely] based” (41). Via the Internet, diasporan “members collectively generate bonding social capital.” This phenomenon is particularly poignant, in that it aligns with much of the criticism behind the idea of being “alone, online together.” While the Internet truly can be isolating to those physically present around a user, to those with whom the community member connects online, the rewards reaped can be vast.

Regarding bridging social capital, Brinkerhoff views the subtype as possibly occurring either between “diaspora community and associated organizations” or “between diaspora members and the host society” (38). Further, bridging social capital can be utilized by diaspora organizations both to “bridge ethnic differences within the diaspora in order to promote bonding around the shared identification with the homeland” (39) and as a means for “promot[ing] cultural exchange with the host society in order to highlight common interests and identity” (39). In addition, “diaspora organizations can be ‘a shelter, sometimes a sanctuary, where culture, religion, ethnicity, and nation are interpreted, redefined, and internalized’” (Kastoryano 1999, 193 in Brinkerhoff 2009). These examples are applicable to The Canadian-American Club, the Cape Breton diaspora’s central organization in the Boston area. The Club is host to a number of Maritime and Celtic-themed gatherings, including a weekly Irish session and a weekly open mic night that welcomes music from any Maritime province. The Club also hosted a Boston Strong fundraising event following the Boston Marathon bombings, as the club is in Watertown, where a sizable portion of the manhunt for the suspects occurred.

The Club itself is designed to be a gathering place for anyone of Canadian heritage, or connected to it via marriage, musical interest, etc. Brinkerhoff briefly addresses such community extensions as a means of bridging social capital:

The communities assemble diasporans from dispersed countries and locations of settlement and a range of generations, often representing multiple social and ethnic factions of the homeland. Further, they may include nondiasporans, who may be connected to the idea of the diaspora and its homeland through family relationships, personal experience, or shared religious faith. (86)

Though the Club indicates that all are welcome, the membership form clearly implies that

a connection to Canadian culture need be present.

Brinkerhoff spends little time discussing – or even clearly defining -- the term “bridging-to-bond social capital,” but her reflection when discussing digital diasporas’ benefits is quite apt:

Through the Internet, geographically dispersed diasporans can connect and bond, providing to each other a *quality of benefit* – a sense of shared understanding – no one else could possibly provide. Given their dispersion within and across host countries, *without the Internet such bridging-to-bond social capital would not be possible*. (47, emphasis added)<sup>90</sup>

This observation is an essential component of this dissertation: though the Internet has the stigma of separating and isolating individuals, it also provides opportunities that cannot be found elsewhere. The Internet provides instantaneous access to large groups of similar people, far larger than would likely even be found at an in-person gathering. One can go to a concert at a community club and meet dozens of people with a parallel diasporic path, but logging into Facebook gives access to thousands of diasporans who have joined different groups to keep up with the homeland, happenings in the host country, and to “e-member,” a term I have coined to connote digitally remembering. Certainly, quantity does not always equal quality, and in-person social capital is difficult to practice digitally, but ease of access plus quantity makes a strong case for the power of bridging-to-bond social capital as provided by digital diasporas. At the same time, when desired, “the anonymity the Internet provides may ease diasporans’ participation, especially when sharing painful memories or discussing potentially conflictive topics”

---

<sup>90</sup> Brinkerhoff later writes that “by connecting members across locations and time and between cyberspace and potentially the physical world, cybercommunities also create bridging-to-bond social capital” (86).

(48). The tailoring that the Internet provides when experiencing one's culture is significant, powerful, and appealing to many.

Brinkerhoff concludes her reflection on social capital with the declaration that

the bonding and bridging social capital created with diaspora communities is crucial to these processes [mobilization factors, motivation, identity creation and pride in hybrid identity], as they influence perceptions and realities of vulnerability and marginalization. They can inspire pride in collective identities and confidence in the ability to mobilize for constructive change. And they frame how identity mobilization will be directed. (42)

As seen earlier, these reflections speak largely to diasporas affected by political or religious strife. While the Highland Clearances brought a sizable population to Cape Breton, those who left the island largely departed due to economic instability. Thus, the "homeland crisis" (42) Brinkerhoff mentions as often occurring in homeland locations does not strike a particular chord within Cape Breton; rather, we see what Brinkerhoff calls "latent diasporas" (43). Though she uses the term to refer to a "diaspora identity [that] is not fully awakened until the homeland is in crisis," her mention of such groups potentially including "younger generations who have never seen the homeland and may not speak its language" (see Brinkerhoff 2004) (43) is relevant to Cape Breton. Many second- and third-generation members of the diaspora align with and perform a connection to the homelands both of Cape Breton and of Scotland, even though some members have never been to either location, and very few speak the Gaelic language.

## **The Impact of Technological Developments on Diaspora**

Putnam places emphasis on the developments of technology, enterprise, and industry over time, particularly focusing on The Gilded Age (1870-1900) and The Progressive Age (1900-1915) (367). He notes that

by the turn of the [20<sup>th</sup>] century America was rapidly becoming a nation of cities, teeming with immigrants born in villages in Europe or America but now toiling in factories operated by massive industrial combines. Technological change was one key to this transformation. (368)

Later, he states that “in merely twenty years between 1870 and 1890, Boston’s population rose by 79 percent to nearly 450,000” and that “year after year, an endless stream of hopeful emigrants from American farms and European villages poured into the anonymous teeming cities of tenements and skyscrapers” (370-1). He adds that “most of the new urban dwellers were also living in a new country,” noting that “the immigrants came from a wide variety of European countries as well as Canada and East Asia.” (371) Though he makes mention of “Germans, Irish, French Canadians, British, and Scandinavians” arriving in highest amounts prior to 1890, and quotes historian Steven Diner as noting that

‘immigrants, mostly Catholics and Jews from the unfamiliar countries of Southern and Eastern Europe, poured into America in record numbers to work in its expanding industrial economy. Often living in dense urban neighborhoods where foreign tongues predominated, they created their own churches,<sup>91</sup> synagogues, and communal institutions’ (371),

---

<sup>91</sup> There was a Scottish Gaelic-language church in the South End of Boston that later became the Presbyterian Church in Needham. The church had the only known Scottish Gaelic choir in the United States (“Leona P. Imrie Obituary,” *The Patriot Ledger*, accessed May 9, 2015, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/bostonglobe/obituary.aspx?n=leona-p-imrie&pid=126332801>).

Putnam neglects to mention the large impact French Canadians, Canadians from the Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island), and Canadians as a whole had after this time, a particular surprise given both his focus on Boston at numerous times throughout his argument, and the attention he pays to enterprise and economy, of which the New England-Maritime link is intractable and remains strong in the twenty-first century. Putnam does, however, acknowledge that following the changes in urban dwelling, even though said institutions existed, “traditional social nets of family, friends, and community institutions no longer fit the way new urban workers had come to live” (371). Thus, in-person social capital began to shift and change; we continue to see the effects of these moves today.

Putnam continues:

To those who lived through this epoch, what was most striking was simply the overwhelmingly accelerated pace of change itself. We often speak easily about the rapid pace of change in our own time. However, nothing in the experience of the average American at the end of the twentieth century matches the wrenching transformation experienced at the beginning of the century by an immigrant raised as a peasant in a Polish village little changed from the sixteenth century who within a few years was helping to construct the avant-garde skyscrapers of Louis Sullivan in the city of ‘big shoulders’ beside Lake Michigan. (372-3)

For the Canadian immigrant arriving from Cape Breton, this change would have been deeply felt. Many roads in Cape Breton remained unpaved well into the twentieth century, with mail delivered by boat or by horse. Communities and villages were largely composed of the descendants of a small group of Scottish Highlanders who had arrived during the 1800s (Morgan 2009). Further, many of these communities were largely Scottish Gaelic- and French-speaking, and Gaelic was widely viewed as a backwards



language that would prevent people from getting ahead. The Celtic renaissance and renewed emphasis on Gaelic language and culture have undone some of the damage done by the shaming of the Gaelic identity, but the social and cultural capital impact of denying use of one's language cannot be undermined. Its effects are still felt today, as very few Scottish Gaelic speakers, either native or by dint of education, remain today in North America. I investigate the current presence of Scottish Gaelic in the Cape Breton diasporic community in the Boston area in Chapter Five.

While I argue that for diasporic groups, bonding social capital is at greater stake than bridging social capital, as a sense of culturally distinct community maintenance is these groups' aim, Putnam's (2000) comments can also be applied to cultural organizations and groups such as the Canadian-American Club and the French-American Victory Club. Putnam writes that

Immigrants and ethnic associations illustrate other aspects of social capital building at the end of the last century. Generally speaking, emigration devalues one's social capital, for most of one's social connections must be left behind. Thus immigrants rationally strive to conserve social capital. So-called 'chain migration,' where immigrations from a given locale in the 'old country' settle near one another in their new homeland, was and remains one common coping strategy. (390)

He continues,

according to historian Rowland Berthoff, 'The immigrants, who had been accustomed to a more tightly knit communal life than almost any American could now recall, were quick to adopt the fraternal form of the American voluntary association in order to bind together their local ethnic communities against the unpredictable looseness of life in America.' (390)

Connected with this reflection on community shifts, Putnam remarks that

social dislocation can easily breed a reactionary form of nostalgia. On the contrary, my message is that we desperately need an era of civic inventiveness to

create a renewed set of institutions and channels for a reinvigorated civic life that will fit the way we have come to live. (401)

This declaration regarding the human response to separation is a huge statement, and we must not neglect the integral role that technology will now play in recruitment for interaction, social capital engagement, and revitalization, as Turkle (2011) and others have shown.

### **Social Capital and Diaspora Theory**

Though not explicitly titled as such, social capital's presence, effects, and affect is discussed in diaspora theory. Allegiances to the homeland are expressed culturally, financially, emotionally, symbolically (see Gal, Leoussi, and Smith 2010). This sense of cohesion and proximity to others of a similar background, particularly upon first arriving to the host country, provides an emotional support indicated by Putnam to be so valuable for one's well-being. However, as the generational separation from the homeland increases, there can be effects ranging from simple to drastic. Putnam gives the example of the Italian-American community of Roseto, Pennsylvania. A forty-year research study on the town found that the community's residents had far fewer heart attacks. Once all factors were considered and equalized – "diet, exercise, weight, smoking, genetic disposition, and so forth" (329) – examination of the "social dynamics" (329) of the community showed reasons for this high level of good health:

The town had been founded in the nineteenth century by people from the same southern Italian village. Through local leadership these immigrants had created a mutual aid society, churches, sports clubs, a labor union, a newspaper, Scout troops, and a park and athletic field. The residents had also developed a tight-knit

community whether conspicuous displays of wealth were scorned and family values and good behaviors reinforced. Rosetans learned to draw on one another for financial, emotional, and other forms of support. By day they congregated on front porches to watch the comings and goings, and by night they gravitated to local social clubs. In the 1960s the researchers began to suspect that social capital (though they didn't use the term) was the key to Rosetans' healthy hearts. And the researchers worried that as socially mobile young people began to reject the tight-knit Italian folkways, the heart attack rate would begin to rise. Sure enough, by the 1980s Roseto's new generation of adults had a heart attack rate above that of their neighbors in a nearly and demographically similar town. (329)

Sadly, making shifts away from one's community also affected one's health. This is not to say that a decline in attending events in the Cape Breton community, or any cultural community for that matter, will be the sole reason for medical incidents and illness.

Nonetheless, it must be considered. Putnam emphasizes the generational aspect of this:

[T]he generations most disconnected socially also suffer most from what some public health experts call 'Agent Blue.' ... Low levels of social support directly predict depression, even controlling for others factors, and high levels of social support lessen the severity of symptoms and speed recovery. Social support buffers us from the stresses of daily life. *Face-to-face ties seem to be more therapeutic than ties that are geographically distant.* In short, even within the single domain of depression, we pay a very high price for our slackening social connectedness. (331-2)

This medically significant need for human connection shows the hole that digital diaspora can help fill, and is important to digital capital as a whole. For those who for reasons of health, distance, etc., that are not able to attend in-person events, they can ameliorate their situation via Skype visits with others or by viewing videos or livestreams of events. Such options are not a panacea, but they do provide a partial solution to shifts in in-person social capital.

Putnam connects wellness to gatherings: "regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or church attendance is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree

or more than doubling your income. Civic connections rival marriage and affluence as predictors of life happiness.” (333) However, Putnam emphasizes that attendance does not need to be high in frequency to achieve effects:

The biggest happiness returns to volunteering, clubgoing, and entertaining at home appear to come between ‘never’ and ‘once a month.’ There is very little gain in happiness after about one meeting (or party or volunteer effort) every three weeks. After fortnightly encounters, the marginal correlation of additional social interaction with happiness is actually negative – another finding that is consistent with common experience! Churchgoing, on the other hand, is somewhat different, in that at least up through weekly attendance, the more the merrier. (333-4)<sup>92</sup>

Thus, while Putnam suggests benefits from in-person social capital building, maintaining and nurturing social capital levels does not require a daily – or even weekly -- commitment. To use a medical analogy, regular exposure to in-person events can provide ample benefit, and overdoses can be unnecessary.

Lastly, Putnam notes a high correlation in unhappiness and lower levels of life satisfaction in the American population between the ages of twenty to fifty-five – precisely the age brackets largely missing from regular attendance at community events such as the Canadian-American Club’s gatherings.<sup>93</sup> Instead, children are brought there by their parents and grandparents, and then many at retirement age, or near it, attend regularly; the exception being those who are musicians and perform at the Club. He notes that indeed, this is the population largely missing from such events:

---

<sup>92</sup> Putnam’s findings are important for Chapter Five, in which my fieldwork findings are discussed.

<sup>93</sup> Putnam notes, however, that “people over fifty-five ... are actually *happier* than were people their age a generation ago” (334). He does not expound upon this, and further expansion of this would be beneficial for the discussion. Yet, he does note that “virtually no cohort in America is more engaged *or* more tolerant than those born around 1940-45 [this population would have been 55-60 years old at the time of publication in 2000]. They are the liberal communitarians per excellence. Their parents were as engaged, but less tolerant. Their children are tolerant, but less engaged (357).”

[Y]oung and middle-aged adults are simply less likely to have friends over, attend church, or go to club meetings than were earlier generations. Psychologist Martin Seligman argues that more of us are feeling down because modern society encourages a belief in personal control and autonomy more than a commitment to duty and common enterprise ... where once we could fall back on social capital—families, churches, friends – these no longer are strong enough to cushion our fall. In our personal lives as well as in our collective life ... we are paying a significant price for a quarter century's disengagement from one another. (334-5)

This is not to say that attending a gathering at the Canadian-American Club will fix the issues that trouble young and middle-aged adults – and Putnam does deliver these results in a bit of an alarmist tone – but connecting to one's community and culture surely would not have negative effects.<sup>94</sup>

### **Internet and In-Person Social Capital**

Felicia Wu Song concludes her 2009 text with a remark that seems more in line with Putnam than her own defense of the Internet:

After the novelty of computer-mediated communication wore off, it is arguable that the appetite for online communities may not have been so much about having an experience that was completely 'other' or removed from what was known in our face-to-face, physically bound settings. Instead, the success of social networking sites may serve to crystallize the fact that we still enjoy being in relations with the people that we know and that we still grant credibility to our friends and loved ones, being prone to trust their contacts, interests, and commitments. *What this technology gives us, then, is a means of adapting our existing relationships to challenges posed by the social realities of geographic distance and the task-cluttered lives that contemporary Americans seem to have. The irony, though, is that while these technologies help us confront the challenges of modernity in these ways, they also serve to exacerbate these conditions and even radicalize them.* (136, emphasis added)

---

<sup>94</sup> Notably, The Saguaro Seminar has partnered with Social Capital Blog (<https://socialcapital.wordpress.com/>), which is described as "Wisdom on social capital, human interaction, civic engagement and community through research, news stories and life." However, the site is not consistently updated; the last post is from April 28, 2014.

This remark again serves as an example of the careful critical teasing out that must be done by scholars as well as lay people when examining technology's effect on social life and social capital. Once again, while she places a particularly strong bent of democracy's role within the growth of the Internet, her reflections are useful for framing cultural and diasporic engagement with online platforms, for as the way musical and cultural information – and capital – is available, so, too, does the presentation of the community to which it is targeted itself change. She gives a brief reflection on the cultural connection, noting that

pre-existing cultural assumptions about community and solidarity influence decisions made about the design and configuration of] online communities ... [while] taking a cultural approach to virtual communities is significant in itself, for the very effort works against the conventional notion that the Internet is primarily about the elimination of the spatial and temporal barriers to communication ... from a cultural viewpoint, because the Internet is constituted by a cultural and normative environment, the structural and discursive features of online communities can illuminate significant cultural conceptions and patterns that bring into focus what a society privileges, dismisses, or takes for granted. (8)

Further, she notes that the changes in models of community over time “reveal a cultural shift toward personalism, a mode of community engagement that locates the individual, rather than the collective entity of a community or association, as the locus point of public life” (11). This is incredibly significant for diaspora theory, for I argue that, while the individual can participate in solidarity movements, the group experiencing of posts, videos, reflections, and the ability to comment on group pages actually strengthens the community.

Mieke Schrooten's writing on online togetherness among Brazilian migrants (2012) makes several arguments important for considering in a contemporary discussion

of social capital. Schrooten states that “SNS [social networking sites] such as Orkut [a Brazilian parallel to Facebook] facilitate the maintenance of continuous personal (transnational) contacts through the blending of many interconnected activities, such as email, diaries, photo albums, video and messaging” (1800).<sup>95</sup> Further, the Orkut online communities “often provide a variety of social capital, both online and offline, which assists in the migration transition” (1801). Schrooten declares that any ethnographic study must now acknowledge the interconnection between online and offline life, as “‘online’ activities are part of how people live today and are thus strongly interrelated with ‘offline’ aspects of social life” (1805). When considering social capital’s interaction with technology, I propose considering digital social capital as a new means of assessing social capital’s role within contemporary American society. Nonetheless, as Schrooten (2012) declares, technology has become so intertwined within our everyday lives that to separate online and offline interactions is impossible and detrimental to analysis.<sup>96</sup>

### **Virtual Social Capital and Diaspora**

Brinkerhoff cites Aoki’s (1994, quoted in Foster 1996) three types of communities as a means for discussing communities connected to the Internet – categories that connect with Song’s (2009) writing. The types are

---

<sup>95</sup> Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe provide a useful definition of SNS, calling them “bundles of technological tools that incorporate features of earlier technologies (such as personal websites) but recombine them into a new context that supports users’ ability to form and maintain a wide network of social connections” (875).

<sup>96</sup> See Maurice Vergeer and Ben Pelzer (2009), “Consequences of Media and Internet Use for Offline and Online Network Capital and Well-Being: A Causal Model Approach, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15(10): 189-210 for a hybrid examination of network capital.

- 1) virtual communities that are congruent with physical communities – examples include “a grassroots organization or even a formally registered nonprofit or business that maintains modes of interaction in cyberspace such that participants develop a sense of shared membership and shared community. The organization may provide services in the physical world and also include discussion forums for community building beyond these purposive objectives. For diasporas, such organizations are likely to support integration into the host society in the particular communities in which these diasporans reside”;
- 2) virtual communities that overlap with physical communities – “may include those [communities] that connect dispersed populations and use the Internet to discuss and plan for purposive engagement in the physical world that they later execute, for example, in the homeland”; and
- 3) virtual communities that are thoroughly distinct from physical communities – e.g., “the completely virtual type of diaspora CGO, where the organization is cocreated by members and exists only online. Diasporans may individually ‘connect’ offline to mobilize for purposive objectives in the physical world but these activities take place outside of the cybercommunity. The inclusion of e-mail addresses in communications ‘provides the basis for more multiplex relationships to develop between participants’ (Wellman and Gulia 1999, 182, in Brinkerhoff 2012). (44)

In addition, naturally, there are “traditional organizations that exist primarily in the physical world, but utilize the Internet to access its identity and mobilization advantages” (45). The Canadian-American Club falls into this latter category. The Club has a webpage and Facebook page that are maintained by a volunteer, who is also an active



member of the Club. The events that the sites discuss all occur in person. However, the Facebook page on occasion shares videos and images shared by others, e.g., a photo in honor of Canada Day.

Brinkerhoff's reflection on types of communities connects with Song's discussion of virtual communities. Brinkerhoff remarks, "The overlay of virtual communities can enhance the physical communities. Research shows that virtual interaction can intensify support and relationships in physical communities (Hampton and Wellman 2002)" (45). Further, "using IT, individuals can more easily *selectively pursue* information and interaction opportunities (Elkins 1997)" (45, emphasis added). While Brinkerhoff cites Grieg's 2002 call that such selectivity is only viable to a certain point; when the availability of communication is broader, homogeneous interactions are more likely to occur. I argue that the selective pursuit of information is a main tenet of the digital community. A myriad of Facebook groups exist that are very tailored and specific in their purpose (or, to use Brinkerhoff's term, their purposive objective), e.g., "Photos of Cape Breton fiddlers who have kept this music alive!" and "Clan MacNeil in Canada." To be certain, there are broader-themed groups, e.g., "Canadians Away from Home" and "Canuck Abroad." However, the opportunity for filling a particular diasporic or community need is available, in line with Sökefeld's (2002, in Brinkerhoff 2002) declaration "that diaspora communities are sometimes '*represented* in cyberspace ... [and] not – or are only to a very limited degree – *sustained by interaction* within that space" (108). The sites can also serve as a means for emotional comfort, e.g., asking if others are homesick (Brinkerhoff 2009, 114). Some digital diaspora sites can also serve

to help “reinforc[e] and/or recreat[e] ... identity in ways that make it more relevant and sustainable across generations in diaspora” (201-202). In my research, I find that the use of images and videos, particularly of nostalgic songs or diasporic songs of longing, are used to convey this identity and to express nostalgia for one’s homeland.

Turkle acknowledges the life changes that have led to our technological tethering, as she calls it:

Research portrays Americans as increasingly insecure, isolated, and lonely. We work more hours than ever before, often at several jobs ... We have moved away, often far away, from the communities of our birth. We struggle to raise children without the support of extended families. Many have left behind the religious and civic associations that once bound us together. To those who have lost a sense of physical connection, connectivity suggests that you make your own page, you own place. When you are there, you are by definition where you belong, among officially friended friends. To those who feel they have no time, connectivity ... tempts by proposing substitutions through which you can have companionship with convenience ... On the Net, you can always find someone. (2011, 157)<sup>97</sup>

Now that I have examined the different ways in which the Internet and technology have integrated themselves into daily life, and thus presentation of digital social capital, I investigate the ways in which said opportunities can be engaged. I place particular focus on the role of diaspora-themed Facebook groups, music-focused Facebook groups, virtual platforms for learning music and language, and virtual platforms for viewing music.

## **Sharing and Social Capital**

Regarding performances themselves, videosharing and livestreaming allow individuals to share their own songs, as well as those of others. I explore this in greater

---

<sup>97</sup> The ellipses in the citation are largely to eliminate Turkle’s discussion of robot companionship. While intriguing, and relevant when considering technological attachments, the topic of robots is not directly relevant to this dissertation.

depth in the chapter on digital diaspora, but what is important here to note regarding social capital and identity performance is that social media forever preserves these images, these links, as compounded parts of one's identity: "in online life, the *site supports the self*. Each site remembers the choices you have made there, what you've said about yourself, and the history of your relationships" (Turkle 2011, 194). These posts, and thus identities, can be pruned and preened, but regularly sharing of, for example, videos of Cape Breton musicians performing, shows an affinity for, and a connection to, this genre and culture. As Turkle notes after speaking with one group of high school students, "in this group, there is near consensus that one of the pleasures of digital communication is that it does not need a message. It can be there to trigger a feeling rather than transmit a thought" (198). Thus, just seeing posts with idyllic images of Cape Breton can trigger feelings of nostalgia and diasporic longing, even for those generations removed from the island. This digital performance of bonding social capital is significant and is underresearched.

Lastly, the preservation factor must be considered. Having a digital archive allows for the memorialization of an aging community. Since I began my fieldwork, the Cape Breton musical world lost Buddy MacMaster, considered the godfather of Cape Breton fiddling; fiddling legend Willie Kennedy; Gaelic singer and step-dancing tradition-bearer Willie Frances Fraser, just two weeks after his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday; and Boston-area Gaelic singer Kyte MacKillop. The ability to access these icons in action is extremely important both for scholarship and for entertainment.

## **Social Capital and Diaspora**

One topic missing from discussions of social capital is how diasporic communities are affected. The geographic shift from one's homeland, which may rank high both in bridging and bonding social capital, to a new location, which may place different or less emphasis on such types of engagement, can have a marked effect on community interactions, happiness levels, and reminders of home. For many, the arts are also impacted by and tightly interwoven with these social changes. Assimilating into American society occurs along a gradient, but for many, the homeland experience of the arts, particularly music, is shifted. The Cape Breton community in the Boston area is an under-examined and hallmark example of such social and cultural shifts.

### *The Cape Breton Digital Diaspora*

Though many of the diasporas selected by Brinkerhoff are more strongly associated with leaving one's homeland due to political or religious strife, she acknowledges "elective migration for economic reasons" (21). The latter category is applicable to Cape Bretoners' diasporic motion, though political issues were the impetus for the Highland Clearances, which led to the arrival of a sizable number of Scottish immigrants to Cape Breton Island's shores. Arguably, this dispersal remains at the core of the Cape Breton identity, and thus causes its members to keep a further sense of loyalty to both ancestors and to current culture.

The Cape Breton diaspora meets many of the classic tenets given by diaspora theorists Robin Cohen and William Safran, as listed in Chapter One of this dissertation, as well as "the will to survive as a minority by transmitting a heritage" (Chailand and

Rageau 1997, xvi, in Brinkerhoff 2009, 30).” Further, “within the diaspora, generational differences inform motivations with respect to identity and its relative emphasis on homeland or hostland culture” (35); though generations are often thought to follow the pattern of first generation acculturating, surviving, and assimilating; second generation rejecting the homeland culture; and the third “most likely ... emerg[ing] as champion for the home country culture” (35), in digital diaspora, the “segmented assimilation” (35) is far easier to perform. One can, without repercussion, shame, or lack of loyalty to one’s hostland, join diaspora- themed and nostalgia-based digital groups, in line with Brinkerhoff’s assertion that “the young are more likely to select self-consciously and assimilate cultural identity artifacts (Vertovec 1997) (36)”. As mentioned earlier, the ability to digitally identify and perform one’s culture explains the posting by many second- and third-generation members of the Cape Breton diaspora of thematic tattoos, postings of a fierce connection to Canada, etc.

### *Cape Breton Music and the Digital Diaspora*

While Cape Breton Island’s physically isolated geographical location and the lack of affordable travel options can make visiting the island difficult, technology has served an invaluable role in promoting the island’s music, performers, and the Gaelic language. Prominent fiddlers such as Kimberley Fraser and Andrea Beaton,<sup>98</sup> from the famed Beaton line of musicians, offer Skype lessons, and the celebrated Celtic Colours festival features livestream broadcasts for several nights of performances, allowing members of the diaspora, as well as traditional music enthusiasts, virtual access to the festival.

---

<sup>98</sup> I took over a year of Skype fiddle lessons with Beaton, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Five.

Though Cape Breton is small in physical size, technology is allowing its cultural reach to span the world, and the emerging discourse on digital diaspora provides an especially useful lens for discussing musical transmissions and interactions in cyberspace. A number of Maritime-based online Scottish Gaelic programs are also available. Yet, the Gaelic language is far less prominent in the Boston area. Its presence is most seen in Irish orientalism (Lennon 2008), shamrockery (Vallely 2003), and the use of the term “Gaelic” as a Celtic, or specifically Irish, qualifier; the most extreme example of this is Gaelic Nail Spa on Broadway in South Boston. Untranslated Gaelic songs can be heard on WROL 980 AM’s weekly Irish Hit Parade program, and in-person Irish Gaelic courses are offered in a number of locations. However, Scottish Gaelic is only available for a two-semester, and irregularly offered, course of study at Harvard University, and at monthly gatherings at the Canadian-American Club.

Notably, the music of the Cape Breton diaspora also played a large role in the tradition’s maintenance and dispersal. Rounder Records, which was until recently based in Massachusetts, produced many of the first recordings of Cape Breton musicians (MacKinnon, 1989; Scully, 2008). Many of these recordings are now out of print, but now instead of copying cassette tapes and CDs of the recordings, they can be found on videosharing and SNSs, in particular, Facebook. Paired with this shift is the change from announcing events via postal mail to sending newsletters and updates via email and social media, and the distributional schism this causes across generations and among those without regular access to, or those who elect not to use, email and social media. As I discuss in Chapter Five, Facebook played a pivotal role in allowing me increased access

and insight into the goings-on of the community. In addition, as I detail in Chapter Two, within the past ten years, a variety of Internet platforms were developed that allow for direct engagement with artists, as well as viewing and distribution of songs and performances. This ease of access also creates a collapse of boundaries into the public and the private that is essential to address, as it greatly affects the contemporary fieldworker as well as the collaborators. I discuss several of these Internet platforms that relate to the arts and diaspora below.

#### Internet Platforms

Acceptance of technology's omnipresence has changed, imaginably much to Putnam's chagrin, given his 2000 call for people to interact more in person. Turkle acknowledges this shift, stating that "our habitual narratives about technology begin with respectful disparagement of what came before and move on to idealize the new" (242). She gives examples of reading online rather than using a "disconnected" book. However, she is cognizant of the paradox that occurs with technological developments: "The *realtechnik* of connectivity culture is about possibilities and fulfillment, but it [is] also about the problems and dislocations of the tethered self. Technology helps us manage life stresses but generates anxieties of its own. The two are often closely linked" (243). As technology allows us to "come to enjoy the feeling of never having to be alone" (243), permitting us to "float and experiment, follow links, and send out random feelers," as well as to "comment on the postings of people one hardly knows," bringing with it "the pleasure of continual company" (276), technology can also cause people to feel separated even while together. Perhaps this is another reason for the rise in sites that express

connectivity, e.g., ConcertWindow. Individuals can, in the comfort of one's home, virtually attend a live event and digitally chat with others about the show, make requests, etc.

Yet, for all of the excitement of viewing a favorite artist for a small fee without having to travel perhaps thousands of miles to see the performance, something ineffable is lacking when one simply views the event on a television screen. Putnam speaks of the “silent withdrawal from social intercourse” (2000, 115) that has occurred as people interact with each other less in person. Surely, by means of the gathering aspect, social capital is maintained, but the in-person socializing that comes with it – the in-person social capital – is missing. Technology allows the void of companionship to be filled to a degree, but the human need for in-person connection must not be ignored, either. This need for local and personal connections has been showcased in the food industry in the past five to ten years, with the resurgence of farmers' market, a need to buy and shop local, and eating establishments taking pride in – even boasting – that their food is sustainably harvested, locally sourced, and responsibly produced whenever possible.

#### *Examples of Music-Based Internet Platforms*

##### **Skype**

Skype is an Internet-based means of communication. Users create an account for free and can communicate via video or audio format. Various telephone plans, which allow users to either call another Skype user, or call or be called from a landline, are available for a nominal fee. A variety of artists from various genres are currently using this platform as a means for offering lessons. As a portion of my fieldwork, I spent a year



studying fiddle lessons via Skype with celebrated Cape Breton fiddler Andrea Beaton.<sup>99</sup>

Beaton is a member of the famed Beaton Family of Mabou; while her parents (also noted musicians) still live in Cape Breton, Beaton is based in Montréal, Québec. Artists receive payment via PayPal, and lessons run between \$50 and \$60 per hour.

### YouTube

Since its founding in 2006, YouTube has served as the world's main site for videosharing. Posts to the site are shared daily in news broadcasts, on topics ranging from anything to an adorable baby animal to footage of a shooting that was uploaded anonymously. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, many members of a diaspora either upload videos to YouTube or view and then share them, via SNSs, e.g., Facebook. In recent years, YouTube has served as a site for musicians, craftsmen, bakers, and other entrepreneurs to upload instructional lessons. A number of people have made a career out of posting videos that are viewed by their followers, e.g., makeup artist Michelle Phan, whose tutorials reached 1 billion views in 2014. Today, with a quick entry into YouTube's search button, one can find videos teaching anything from making cupcakes to how to fix a lamp to how to tie a tie.

Cape Breton-based and Berklee-trained musician Kimberley Fraser offers YouTube instructional lessons called Kimberley Sessions via her personal website. The prerecorded films, purchased via Fraser's site, come with mp3 files of the tunes learned,

---

<sup>99</sup> An interesting anecdote regarding deterritorialization: Beaton features a house concert giveaway as part of her yearly holiday lesson sale; the concert occurs at the winner's house whenever Beaton is in the area for a performance, and she writes a tune especially for the event. For the year 2014, the winning student was based in Hong Kong! However, the student was only in Hong Kong for a year, and resides in Ontario, so Beaton was still able to have the concert in Canada.

as well as downloadable accompaniment. The courses are cheaper than online Skype lessons, given their prepackaged presentation. Weekly courses cost \$20 per month, bi-weekly courses are \$13 a month, and monthly lessons are \$8.<sup>100</sup> Fraser also offers Skype lessons upon request.

#### Fiddle-online.com

Fiddle-online.com is a comprehensive instructional and informational site run by Boston-based Scottish and Cape Breton fiddler Ed Pearlman. Pearlman utilizes the online platform Zoom to give video lessons. The site also features guest workshops by fellow fiddlers, including Beaton and Boston-based Katie McNally.<sup>101</sup> Both group and private lessons are offered as part of a student's instruction. The site features a newsletter that addresses issues of performance practice, expectations for online lessons, etc. Tune-learning videos and pages are also available. Students pay in credits rather than with money.

#### TradLife.com

Gloucester, Massachusetts-based musician and stepdancer Emerald Rae co-created TradLife.com in August 2014 as a clearinghouse for traditional musicians and artists to teach lessons directly through the website's Music Room feature, rather than having to rely on third-party platforms, e.g., Skype, to engage with students. In exchange, tradlife.com makes a commission off of lessons for the convenience of directly connecting with the teacher via the site. The site advertises available artists by genre and

---

<sup>100</sup> Kimberley Fraser, "How Do I Join?," <http://www.kimberleyfraser.com/sessions/front-page/how-do-i-join>, accessed April 15, 2015.

<sup>101</sup> Fiddle-online.com, "Instructors and Student Comments," <http://www.fiddle-online.com/aboutinstructors.html>, accessed April 15, 2015.

instrument. The genres listed are Americana, Appalachian, bluegrass, Cajun, Cape Breton,<sup>102</sup> Celtic, French Canadian, Irish, New England, Old Time, Scandinavian, and Scottish; listed instruments are accordion, bagpipes, banjo, bass, bodhrán, bouzouki, cello, cittern, concertina, dobro, dance [not an instrument, but listed as one nonetheless], fiddle, flute, guitar, mandolin, piano, ukulele, voice, and whistle. Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic language lessons are also available. The site states that soon, “you’ll be able to find a radio station, venue, festival or house concert right here. We want to turn this site into an extensive resource.” As of the writing of this dissertation, the site is still in beta testing, though teachers continue to be added.

#### Gaelic College of Cape Breton

The Gaelic College of Cape Breton (more commonly referred to simply as the Gaelic College), in St. Ann’s, Cape Breton, is a popular destination for many cultural enthusiasts wishing to steep themselves in the Cape Breton music, dance, and language traditions. Within the traditional music community, being an alumnus of the College serves as something of a vetting of devotion to the music or as a status marker. However, the programs are mostly in the summer and can be costly for some.

The College has intermittently offered online Scottish Gaelic language lessons for a nominal fee. The program, called Beul an Tobair, features two levels of lessons that begin in both the fall and winter. There is one instructor for all of the courses. For the majority of the time of my fieldwork, the course was under construction, and thus I was not able to include it in my analysis. The site also listed that it would soon be offering

---

<sup>102</sup> Andrea Beaton is one of the Cape Breton musicians offering lessons through the site.

online instruction in Cape Breton music and arts, including stepdancing lessons by Andrea Beaton, but this option has since been removed.

#### Online Scottish Gaelic Language Lessons

The Atlantic Gaelic Academy (AGA) is another online Gaelic language school. The AGA is different than other online programs in that all courses run from September to May, in line with the academic year. Seven levels of language study, each lasting a year, are offered, and “after the completion of the Advanced Plus 2 level, if a student wishes, he/she can be tested, and if the tests are successfully completed the student will be awarded the Advanced Plus program diploma in ‘Gaelic Language Studies’” ([gaelicacademy.ca](http://gaelicacademy.ca)). Though the program is based in Canada, instructors are located across North America. Kyte MacKillop, a longtime Canadian-American Club member who died suddenly during the course of my fieldwork, was one of the instructors.

#### Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is a program that is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands in Isle of Skye, Scotland. Students can attend either via distance learning or in person. A degree program is offered that teaches Gaelic poetry, culture, etc., and fluency is attainable via the course of study.

#### Concertwindow.com

Concertwindow.com launched in 2011 as a site for artists to broadcast livestream concerts irrespective of location. Artists can give a concert completely free of charge, offer tickets, and allow for tips to be given. Viewers log in to the site and (if paying) pay at least \$1 and can give tips as desired. Each concert comes with an individual chat room,

which a ConcertWindow employee “attends” to ensure any technical issues and concerns are handled. Anyone can make comments in the chat room, including requests – if the artist is able to see them from their location – and the user names of tipgivers are shown in real time as tips are added. Artists receive 70% commission via PayPal or check the day after the show. The concerts are not recorded or archived, so, as with an in-person concert, the event must be experienced in real time. The artist does not pay any fee for participating.

The site can be searched by genre, artist, or by calendar. It is used in a variety of fashions: by individual artists or groups broadcasting from their home, by artists teaming together offering concerts as part of a themed week or a festival, or by concert venues, e.g., Club Passim in Cambridge, Massachusetts’ Harvard Square. The site is largely utilized by independent, Celtic, and folk artists, and its CEO is Dan Gurney, an award-winning Irish button accordionist in his late twenties. As I detail in Chapter Five, I viewed a number of performances on the site for my fieldwork, including a house concert in Montréal, Québec by Andrea Beaton and Troy MacGillivray.

#### Celtic Colours International Festival

Celtic Colours International Festival is a 10-day cultural festival held all across Cape Breton Island each October. The festival draws both tourists and diasporans to attend various concerts, arts workshops, lectures, dance performances, community dinners, and other events.

*Personal Facebook Pages and Facebook Group Sites*

Images and videos posted via public digital diaspora groups, e.g., “We Love Nova Scotia,” are often shared to personal pages.<sup>103</sup> A particularly popular group used in this fashion is “Cape Breton Music Media Historical Society.” The site’s description is “A collection of rare Cape Breton videos, pictures, tunes and characters of historical, entertaining and archival value to anyone who loves the music and musicians of the Island!” The site regularly adds a variety of videos, though many are music- and dance-focused. One such recent post was a YouTube video of a 1991 concert in Waltham, Massachusetts, by the famed Cape Breton musical group The Rankin Family. Part of the video features the group singing a Scottish song in both English and Gaelic.

The Beaton Institute at Cape Breton University in Sydney, Nova Scotia, recently launched its digital archives, and staff members regularly post items from the archives on the Institute’s Facebook page. The Institute is an invaluable resource for any scholar of Cape Breton Island. Notably, their collection of information related to Boston is small.

*The Canadian-American Club – Facebook page and website*

Pages for community organizations, such as the Canadian-American Club, can serve as a means for advertising sending event invitations to upcoming events at the Club. In the age of overstimulation and glorified busyness, arts organizations must heavily advertise their performances and concerts should they wish to receive attention.

---

<sup>103</sup> Some of the Facebook pages are closed, e.g., the Boston Scottish Fiddle Club. While the groups are not off limits, becoming part of them requires requesting to join the group, and having another member approve of the applicant.

The Club recently changed the distribution format of its newsletter from print and snail mail to an emailed PDF file. I contend that having the newsletter become exclusively shared via an online platform further decreases social capital. The February 2015 edition of the newsletter states that having the monthly update delivered via email cuts out volunteers needed to assemble the printed version each month. However, this also cuts out on club interactions. Members gathering in person to fold the letter, seal the envelopes, and add stamps is a means of bonding social capital. The cost of stamps and supplies have risen, and so sending the letter electronically does cut down on time and costs, as the monthly mailing would run several hundred dollars each month.

Social capital has also gone digital via the club only posting its events via Facebook. While Facebook is seen as an acceptable, and often the sole, means for sharing information and sending invitations, it again presumes that all who would wish to attend the events already “like” the Club’s Facebook page. Many who do attend do not RSVP (and, conversely, many who do RSVP as attending do not end up showing up), but rather read the news and make a note of it, or follow the schedule posted on the website. The pages can also create attention for their goings-on by posting photographs, videos, and positive reviews – “Full house tonight! Great turnout!” – even if attendance was lower than desired. As with the Brad Paisley song mentioned in Chapter Two, even community organizations can use the Internet to boast of their success and attributes without having to truly prove event attendance with numbers.

The club’s website is a new development. Younger members of the community bemoan the length of time it took to have the Club join the twenty-first century and be on

Facebook and the Web. The Club's site states that it is maintained by a volunteer who is helping out as webmaster and any omissions or mistakes are her fault.

### *Personal Websites*

Vmfaubert.com

Cape Breton music aficionado Victor Maurice Faubert maintains an exceptionally detailed website devoted to Cape Breton and Scottish music and culture. The site has a variety of links pertaining to Cape Breton, including photo essays, travel information, and concert and festival listings. Faubert also provides a detailed itinerary of each of his trips. In a section titled "Northeast Music Events," Faubert provides concert reviews of all of the concerts he has attended, noting that these events cover anything within a 10-hour driving distance of his home in New Jersey. He states that the reviews were "for the now defunct Cape Breton music mailing list," but no reason is given for the mailing list ceasing to exist. Though his schedule of events in Cape Breton proper is current and includes upcoming events in 2015, only Northeast concerts from 2006 to 2012 are reviewed. Notably, many of the reviewed concerts occurred at the Canadian-American Club. Faubert also maintains an active personal Facebook page.

### Cape Breton Music on Boston Radio

Two main resources exist for listening to Cape Breton music on Boston-area radio station. Celtic Sojourn, a weekly radio show hosted by musician Brian O'Donovan on WGBH 89.7 FM (and broadcast online), features many different styles of Celtic music,



including Cape Breton. O'Donovan also hosts "Celtic Sojourn"-themed live concerts in the Boston area, including the annual Celtic Christmas Sojourn, which is taped and broadcast on WGBH television and radio. The Boston Pops hosted a Celtic Sojourn concert curated by O'Donovan in May 2015. The show often features live in-studio performances. The program's website features a searchable set list option for listeners interested in learning, for example, the title of a particular song or tune.

Downeast Ceilidh, hosted by Marcia Palmater, broadcasts every Sunday night from 8-9 PM on WUMB 91.9 FM. According to the WUMB Web site, "*Downeast Ceilidh* consists of music of the Atlantic Provinces: New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, with a heavy emphasis on the music of Cape Breton Island, which is part of the province of Nova Scotia." The program is also able to be heard online, and broadcast times are given for Atlantic Standard Time (AST) and Newfoundland Standard Time (NST) for listeners in those areas of Canada. As with O'Donovan, Palmater is not of Cape Breton descent, but is an avid and knowledgeable fan of Celtic music. Palmater states that her reason for broadcasting the show, which originally began on MIT Radio in 1972, was as follows: "I wanted to give something back to the Canadian-American community centered around Boston, in gratitude for the wonderful music and culture they have shared with me" (*Ibid.*). The program often plays recordings that, as mentioned earlier, were made in Boston and then distributed in Cape Breton. The program's independent website, <http://www.ceilidh.org>, maintains an event calendar for happenings in both the New England and Atlantic Canada regions; notably, the Canadian-American Club is the first location listed. A set list archive is available. The

website has a Nova Scotia tartan background. The program's WUMB website updates the weekly set list in real time, a useful tool for listeners trying to learn the name of a particular tune or set.

*Mutual Admiration Society*

It is important to note that Cape Breton music had a somewhat insular identity until recent technological developments. As mentioned earlier, in addition to the albums recorded in Cape Breton proper by Rounder Records, some of the tradition's earliest recordings were made in Boston and distributed back to the homeland. Dunlay and Greenberg (1996) note that

Early folklorists working in Cape Breton recorded some Gaelic singing but virtually ignored the fiddle and bagpipe traditions. A few token recordings made in the 1940s and 1950s seem atypical of the fiddle tradition, as if the researcher were totally unfamiliar with what would provide a good sample. One can only wish that recordings had been made as soon as the technology was available ... Happily, many home recordings have been made, some even dating back to the time of the old wire-spool recorders (which were developed just prior to World War II). There are also many commercial recordings, some from the 1930s. (1)

As Cape Breton music was, and continues to be, able to be picked up by longwave radios, the diaspora and the homeland continue to mutually influence each other musically.<sup>104</sup>

Further, most homes in Atlantic Canada receive feeds from Boston-based basic television stations as part of their cable packages. Thus, Nova Scotia-themed events, such as the yearly Boston Common Christmas Tree Lighting, which is sponsored by Tourism Nova Scotia, can be viewed in real time on the island proper. The event features a Christmas tree given to the people of Boston by a family in Nova Scotia each year in thanks for the

---

<sup>104</sup> Country music, also heard on the island proper via longwave radio, had a strong influence on both the vocal and instrumental traditions that developed on Cape Breton Island.

assistance Boston provided to Nova Scotia following the Halifax explosion of 1917. In addition, a Nova Scotia music group performs each year, and a Canadian government official attends the ceremony.

Technological developments have created changes in Cape Breton musical consumption by outsiders. Dunlay and Greenberg write that

With the opening up of Cape Breton music to the world comes concern about losing the uniqueness of the style. One hears criticism about some of the younger musicians who are trying out new ideas, taking lessons, streamlining the music, playing foreign tunes, playing faster, composing new tunes with a different flavour, etcetera [*sic*]. In this age of fast and easy communication no culture can possibly remain insulated. Yet the process of sifting through new ideas and old material has always occurred; participants in the tradition and informed audience members select what they like and what seems correct. In this manner, the mainstream of the tradition is steered by consensus. A healthy tradition must have fresh ideas to grow and thrive, but ballast is necessary to maintain continuity and allow the tradition to absorb the new ideas without losing its character. In reality, each participant is, to some extent, part innovator and part conservator; the same person may play folk rock on an electric guitar one evening, but spend the next playing fiddle in the old style at a traditional house party. (5)

Notably, a July 2015 performance by Natalie MacMaster at the Boston Summer Arts Festival features MacMaster adding more of a crossover sound to her show, and someone with knowledge of the Cape Breton tradition can easily identify the new sound as not being “true” or “pure” but rather incorporating different genres, including rock, into the performance practice.

Further, Dunlay and Greenberg’s publication date (1996) preceded the wide-scale availability of the Internet. The book is out of print now and a revised edition has been touted to be released shortly. It will be telling to see how the authors address the effects of the Internet on the tradition.

## Civil Rights and Social Capital

Putnam only briefly addresses civil rights, but does note that because

race is such a fundamental feature of American social history that nearly every other feature of our society is connected to it in some way. Thus it seems intuitively plausible that race might somehow have played a role in the erosion of social capital of the last generation. In fact, the decline in social connectedness and social trust began just after the greatest successes of the civil rights revolution of the 1960s. That coincidence suggests the possibility of a kind of civic ‘white flight,’ as legal desegregation of civic life led whites to withdraw from community associations. This racial interpretation of the destruction of social capital is controversial and can hardly be settled within the compass of ... brief remarks. (279-80)

He gives three bullet points to discuss this statement:

First, racial differences in associational membership are not large ... second, the erosion of social capital has affected all races. This fact is inconsistent with the thesis that ‘white flight’ is a significant cause of civic disengagement, since African Americans have been dropping out of religious and civic organizations and other forms of social connectedness at least as rapidly as white Americans. In fact, the sharpest drop in civic activity between the 1970s and the 1990s was among college-educated African Americans ... Third, if civic disengagement represented white flight from integrated community life after the civil rights revolution, it is hard to reconcile with ... generational differences. Why should disengagement be hardly visible at all among Americans who came of age in the first half of the century, when American society was objectively more segregated and subjectively more racist than in the 1960s and 1970s? If racial prejudice were responsible for America’s civic disengagement, disengagement ought to be especially pronounced among the most bigoted individuals and generations. But it is not.

This evidence is not conclusive, but it does shift the burden of proof onto those who believe that racism is a primary explanation for growing civic disengagement over the last quarter century, however virulent racism continues to be in American society. Equally important, this evidence also suggests that reversing the civil rights gains of the last thirty years would do nothing to reverse the social capital losses. (280)<sup>105</sup>

Putnam also notes the government’s contribution to the social capital decline:

---

<sup>105</sup> I do not investigate race relations in depth in this dissertation, but it is important to note that “racism” and “white flight,” while seen as connected by some, are entirely different phenomena.

On the one hand, some government policies have almost certainly had the effect of destroying social capital. For example, the so-called slum clearance policies of the 1950s and 1960s *replaced physical capital but destroyed social capital by disrupting existing community ties ... on the other hand, it is much harder to see which government policies might be responsible for the decline in bowling leagues, family dinners, and literary clubs*. Meanwhile social capital in virtually all its forms increased a lot between 1947 and 1965 and decreased a lot between 1965 and 1998. Thus, [a chart showing changes in government spending] seems inconsistent with any theory that blames the decline of social capital or civic engagement on either big government or the relative size of the federal government, compared with state and local government. (281-2, emphasis added)

While he speaks of American society as a whole, the comments carry a particular poignancy when considering the racial history of Boston. For many, the country still holds the legacy of the scars inflicted by the school busing conflict of the 1970s. Putnam does, however, also specifically address the busing movement in American society, while not specifically naming Boston:

The civil rights movement was, in part, aimed at destroying certain exclusive, nonbridging forms of social capital – racially, homogeneous schools, neighborhoods, and so forth ... school integration has posed much more sharply the trade-offs between bridging and bonding social capital. The busing controversy illustrates this dilemma quite clearly, for both sides in the controversy were fundamentally concerned about social capital (though, understandably, no one used that language). Proponents of busing believed that only through racially integrated schools could America ever generate sufficient social capital – familiarity, tolerance, solidarity, trust, habits of cooperation, and mutual respect – across the racial divide. Opponents of busing replied that in most parts of America, neighborhood schools provided a unique site for building social capital – friendship, habits of cooperation, solidarity. The deepest tragedy of the busing controversy is that both sides were right. (362)

Further, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., led to months of riots in Boston.

While less documented, black and white residents faced further conflict from this, with increased distrust between both groups, etc. I investigate the effects of these political occurrences in the chapter on fieldwork.

*“White Flight,” Social Capital, and Demographic Dispersion*

Though the concepts of upward mobility and “lace-curtain Irish” – a somewhat derogatory term used to describe Irish-Americans who chose to rise up in social class -- are given as reasons for “white flight,” they do not paint the complete picture. Many Caucasian families felt unsafe in their homes due to increased crime and violence in greater Boston in the 1960s; these families included a sizable number of 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation Cape Bretoners who had settled in the neighborhoods of Boston, particularly Dorchester, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain; the abutting cities and towns of Cambridge, Brookline, Somerville, Arlington, Watertown; and the nearby city of Waltham. For those within the Boston city limits, living in a low-crime region did not mean that one’s children would go to school in their home district. For example, children living in West Roxbury could have been bussed to schools in Mattapan, a markedly less safe region of the city. In addition, a number of families had the insurance policies cancelled on their houses by their insurance companies, a practice that would be seriously questioned today. Families then were forced to sell their houses for pennies on the dollar, facing no choice but to leave their homes. For these reasons, many families chose to move to the suburbs of Boston. Thus, the motivations were not rooted in racism; rather, the issue of safety led many to leave Boston proper. Surely, a portion of the population did stay, and a number of neighborhoods within Dorchester, particularly Adams Village, are still seen as Irish enclaves.<sup>106</sup> Nonetheless, a great shift occurred during the 1960s and 1970s that drastically impacted the demographics of the city of Boston. Cape Breton families began

---

<sup>106</sup> The Facebook group “OFD (Originally from Dorchester)” has an Irish undercurrent to a percent of the page’s postings.

to set up residence in towns on the South Shore, such as Abington, Scituate, Rockland, and Whitman; and the North Shore, including Chelmsford and Tewksbury.

Many still remained (and remain) connected to the city for their work, but the shift led to a change in house parties, visiting with family and friends, and the frequency of live performances.

In the new neighborhoods, communities can still experience the presence of social capital, but diasporic cultural capital begins to thin. Putnam notes that

many students of urban life have commented on the flight of jobs and middle-class families from American cities. Their departure represents a drain of both human and financial capital, and, by extension, social capital. The nation's leading urban sociologist, William Julius Wilson, described the downward spiral in his 1987 classic *The Truly Disadvantaged*: 'The basic thesis is not that ghetto culture went unchecked following the removal of higher-income families in the inner city, but that the removal of these families made it more difficult to sustain the basic institutions of the inner city (including churches, stores, schools, recreational facilities, etc.) in the face of prolonged joblessness. And as the basic institutions declined, the social organization of inner-city neighborhoods (defined here to include a sense of community, positive neighborhood identification, and explicit norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior) likewise declined.' (312-3)

Putnam mentions "second-generation northerners" (316), but this is the only mention of how northern migration affected cities, and Boston is not particularly mentioned. Putnam places great emphasis on urban development and shifts, but mostly considers lower-income communities and issues of diversity. As with much of the scholarship on urban shifts, addressing where communities go following their departure from the city remains underexamined and underanalyzed.

Putnam discusses "immigrant networks" (320) and "ethnic immigrant communities" (320), but mostly within the context of economic ties, noting that social

capital is a key factor in some industries: “the practice of using ethnic networks as employment networks goes a long way to explain why certain ethnic groups perennially dominate certain services and industries, the Chinese ‘rag trade’ in New York being a good example” (320).<sup>107</sup> He continues, “social capital does help individuals to prosper. The only real debate is over how big a role social capital plays relative to human or financial capital” (322). It is clear that geographic diffusion can drastically affect human capital. If a population disperses over a larger swath of a region, then in turn, the human capital density decreases as well.

Putnam notes the importance of more research on the social capital – economic development ties, and states that research done so far shows that “social capital of the right sort boosts economic efficiency, so that if our networks of reciprocity deepen, we all benefit, and if they atrophy, we all pay dearly” (325). In the following chapter, “Health and Happiness,” he points to the effect of social capital on one’s health:

Dozens of painstaking studies from Alameda (California) to Tecumseh (Michigan), have established beyond reasonable doubt that social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of our well-being ... if the trends in social disconnection are as pervasive as I argued [earlier in the text], then ‘bowling alone’ represents one of the nation’s most serious public health challenges. (326-7)

He continues, “social capital might actually serve as a physiological triggering mechanism, stimulating people’s immune systems to fight disease and buffer stress. Research now under way suggests that social isolation has measurable biochemical

---

<sup>107</sup> See Halter (1995) for a discussion of ethnic immigrant communities in Boston; while theoretically valuable, and useful for its review of other Boston-based communities, including the Cape Verdean population, Canadian immigrants are not discussed in depth.



effects on the body” (327). Clearly, these statements can be applied to how social capital shifts affect cultural and musical capital in diasporic community groups.

### *Social Capital on Cape Breton Island*

Putnam addresses the large demographic shifts that occurred to create some of the changes in social capital in the late 1800s:

In the three or four decades after the Civil War the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and massive waves of immigration transformed American communities. Millions of Americans left family and friends behind on the farm when they moved to Chicago or Milwaukee or Pittsburgh, and millions more left community institutions behind in a Polish shtetl or an Italian village when they moved to the Lower East Side or the North End (368).

Though not used by Putnam as an example, the Cape Breton community, and the larger Maritime region, truly falls into this category. Many arrived in New England, particularly in greater Boston, in search of gainful employment, often with housing provided to them in return for their role as domestic servants (see Beattie 1982, Burrill 1992).

On Cape Breton Island, social capital is very high. The population of the entire island is near 100,000, and many on Cape Breton Island live near their families and visit with them regularly. A high proportion of the island’s population is related to each other as well, due in part due the geographic isolation and the maintenance of communities that began with the arrival of families during the Highland Clearances. MacKinnon’s 2009 writing on Cape Breton nicknames reflects a whimsical, yet deeply ingrained, form of social capital: many people receive nicknames as a result of an action, a family characteristic, their location, age, size, or other traits.

### Arts, Civic Engagement, and Social Capital

As with the digital in-roads that I experienced as a fieldworker, bonding digital social capital forms on Facebook via distant relatives, be they separated by geography or otherwise, is renewed and strengthened.<sup>108</sup> Many who would not regularly correspond via telephone, letters, or even in person, yet friend each other for the sake of staying connected to family, find themselves seeing photographs, videos, statuses, and shared posts from each other's lives, and thus feel digitally closer. Many of these shared videos are of Cape Breton music, and several pages, including Cape Breton Music Media Historical Society, are solely devoted to showcasing and preserving Cape Breton music. Liking, following, and viewing the content of these pages and sites connects with Turino's (2004) remark that "for people to identify strongly with a diaspora, perhaps equally or more than with the 'host' society, they have to subjectively distinguish themselves" (6). With YouTube, one can be thousands of miles away, yet still listen to dueling fiddles playing at a kitchen party in Baddeck.<sup>109</sup> Nonetheless, people may regularly enjoy these videos, but rarely attend in-person concerts, save marquis artists such as Natalie MacMaster, a rather perplexing occurrence, even after much research.

---

<sup>108</sup> Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe also speak to the shifts in communication and in-person engagement that have occurred. They note that current research

suggests that Facebook is used more for communication among acquaintances and offline contacts than it is for connecting with strangers (Ellison et al., 2007; Lampe et al., 2006) and that most Facebook 'Friend' connections represent 'in person' relationships (Mayer and Puller 2008, Subrahmanyam et al 2008). This represents a fundamental difference between SNSs [social networking sites] and earlier 'online communities,' which utilized the Internet as a way to bring together people based on shared interests as opposed to shared geography (Rheingold 1993).

Notably, their sources are from the early days of Facebook, and many changes to the site, both large and nuanced, have occurred in recent years, including an increased use of Facebook as a location for inviting guests to events.

<sup>109</sup> Baddeck is a town in Cape Breton.

While two prominent books addressing changing community shifts have been published in the last two years, neither calls upon arts' role in civic engagement. Marc J. Dunkelman tips his hat to Putnam in *The Vanishing Neighbor: The Transformation of American Community* (2014), yet turns his focus to the altered interactions between members of a community at different class levels and occupational fields. As with Putnam, Dunkelman approaches the idea of community from a public policy perspective. In her 2014 text *The Village Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make Us Healthier, Happier, and Smarter*, developmental psychologist Susan Pinker addresses the psychological need for face-to-face interaction in human and animal societies, a key concern of those who worry about the consequences of technology. The neuroscientific frame she uses is significant and provides an additional angle for examining the topic of community and social interaction. Combining psychological and public policy paradigms with an arts-based analysis provides, as bridging social capital does, a richer means for approaching the issue of on and offline shifts and their effects on the arts. Further, as Pinker discusses a number of societies, this multidisciplinary frame can be integrated into the community changes that occur in diasporic moves.

### **Conclusion**

Digital diaspora research is in its nascent stages. Given the quintessentially important role on the arts in cultural maintenance, digital diaspora theory can benefit

from integrating tenets from diaspora theory and ethnomusicology.<sup>110</sup> Social and demographic shifts affect musical and cultural shifts, and digital developments allow these geographic gaps to be bridged and filled. E-membering and enjoying and posting the music of the diaspora as well as the homeland is one way to connect with one's culture. Nonetheless, the differences between music as commodity digitally distributed versus an experience shared in-person with other members of the community are potent, and telling of the changes that have occurred in contemporary American society and in-person social capital. I now turn in Chapter Four to an in-depth exploration of diasporic longing in the Cape Breton community, both in the homeland and the diaspora, as expressed through contemporary English language song.

---

<sup>110</sup> Turino and Lea (2004) write about arts and identity in diaspora communities, and briefly mention the Internet, but the text predates Facebook and YouTube.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DIASPORIC LONGING IN CONTEMPORARY CAPE BRETON SONG**

Chapter Four is devoted to diasporic longing as expressed through contemporary Cape Breton popular song. A textual analysis identifies core themes, key words, and geographic identifiers within the lyrics, as well as how the lyrics inform a diasporic mindset that shapes cultural memory. The connections of the songwriters and performers to Cape Breton Island are considered. The songs' consumption, associations, and their place within the present-day diaspora, including their presence on YouTube and Facebook, are noteworthy. This chapter will add to the scarcity of writing on contemporary English-language Cape Breton songs, Helen Creighton (1972) and Edith Fowke (1972) being two of the lone exceptions. Though the community is largely English-speaking, the strong role of Scottish Gaelic in the culture is reflected in the agency given to songs written in the language.

Music stands at the core of contemporary Cape Breton culture. Adrian Ivakhiv notes that "song and dance have become the new cod and coal for many Gaelic Cape Bretoners" (2005, 124). The fiddle music of Cape Breton and its diaspora are well documented. However, English-language songs are less discussed and analyzed, though they remain an important part of the culture. Fowke (1972) and Creighton (1972) documented Gaelic and English Nova Scotia folk songs in the early and mid-twentieth century. Chris McDonald, in his 2011 examination of contemporary Cape Breton singer-songwriters, writes of artists seeking a balance between staying true to tradition whilst also making oneself marketable (1). Beyond the well-known fiddling tradition, singing is

also an important facet of Cape Breton music, both at home and away. With changes in immigration laws, increasing unemployment levels in the US, and the lure of work on the Alberta pipeline, the songs of contemporary Cape Breton culture also reflect the mourning of a shrinking population size. Many of the lyrics of twentieth and twenty-first-century songs provide a textual context to examine, analyze, and look into the cultural soul of the community.

Diaspora, while it sounds theoretically trite, is ever important because of globalization, immigration, and the continued ease of exposure to other cultures as facilitated by technology and improvements in transit. Kay Kaufman Shelemay, in her 2010 discussion of musical communities, declares that, much as with culture-in-motion, “community is a term that needs to be approached ‘in action’” (364). I use the tenets of diaspora theory presented by William Safran (1991; 2005) later in this chapter to explain how the English-language songs of Cape Breton reflect diasporic longing.

### **E-membering: Digitally Remembering the Homeland**

While for years one had to go to live events, purchase recordings in Cape Breton proper or at a specialty shop outside of the island, or perform music themselves to hear songs of the Cape Breton tradition, today, the culture is digitally available through YouTube, music streaming sources, and other electronic resources. One is now able to “e-member,” a term I have coined to describe the process of digitally remembering one’s culture. Through technology, diasporic longing is not only in one’s mind, but also ever

present online. Mark Slobin's 1994 article on diaspora, written at the dawn of the widespread use of the Internet, foreshadows future events:

Music is both highly portable and multilayered ... even before the microchip, music has always been wired into the mobile body ... Every musical item is a complex bundle of sonic and kinetic forces that *simultaneously* order a unique set of independent variables, brought together for purposes of entertainment, socialization, and memory. Each individual makes a distinctive selection of such items to form a personal storehouse that both partakes of and separates from the collective pool of resources; music lives at the margin of the person and the people, so it forms a particularly crucial point of articulation in viewing diasporic life. (244)

I will use the diasporic songs as a window into this “point of articulation” of the diasporic life of Cape Bretoners in the Boston area from 1975-present, with a particular focus on the verbal articulations of this community.

While the question of authenticity versus created sentimentality and longing is an important issue (I discuss Larry Haiven's [2008] critical perspective on the tradition later in the chapter), with some of the songs coming off as forced balladry, many in both the homeland and diaspora do connect with these songs. The trading of media and recordings is nothing new, but the instantaneous means of transferring media evolved greatly in the past 10 years – which parallels the decline in attendance at Canadian-American diasporic events in the Boston area. One can hear the music now on demand from the comfort of one's home, and therefore one no longer needs to attend a local community event, such as the dances and concerts at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, to hear this music. There are even livestreams from the homeland itself of the annual Celtic Colours International Festival and other performance events.

### **Diaspora and Ethnomusicology: A Recent Connection**

As Slobin (2012) notes, diaspora only came into conversation with ethnomusicology in the 1990s (285). He, as with Rogers Brubaker (2005), notes that the word can become strained, and that people can overextend to use the term in their scholarship. I acknowledge Slobin's concern that the term "diaspora" can be overused, however, given the lack of writing on Cape Breton as a community outside of the home site of the island, I feel its consideration as a diaspora, or a community facing the actions of a diaspora, is important for examination within the scholarly realm of musical study of the island. Further investigation will also place into context critical analysis of Cape Breton's hegemonized Celtic identity.<sup>111</sup>

Nuala O'Connor (1991) describes Irish dance tunes collected in the 1913 text *Irish Minstrels and Musicians* by Captain Francis O'Neill as "musical photographs" (66). This term rings true for music connected to a diaspora, and particularly to the diasporic community of Cape Breton, as the majority of contemporary English-language songs written about the island reference its majestic appearance, its people, and the economic strife that so often leads to residents departing the island. These songs paint verbal and musical pictures of the island.

Place and identity are frequently discussed in the studies of Irish music (O'Connor 1991; Sommers Smith 1998). Sally Sommers Smith notes that

the union of landscape, common memory, and traditional music clearly has a lengthy and honored history in Ireland ... As Simon Schama (1995) suggests, the

---

<sup>111</sup> See Chapter One for my detailed rationale for considering the Cape Breton community in Boston as a diasporic community.



pulse of a culture is drawn from the elements of geography, common memory, and the creative expressions of its people. (136, 144)

Most of the songs written about Cape Breton speak to the island's natural beauty, its picturesque shores, and its hilly terrain. Many videos depict Cape Breton scenery – scenes of the ocean, the island's famed Bras d'or Lakes, and the landmark Kelly's Mountain, juxtaposed with wistful fiddling and the lyrics of some of the songs I will discuss below. The musical accompaniment for the English-language songs are often melancholy in sound and contain classic Cape Breton instrumentations, including piano, drone, guitar, and fiddle.

### **Critical Perspectives on Cape Breton Culture and Song**

Much of the literature on diaspora-themed songs describes a manufactured, crafted approach to an artist's persona via their lyrics that reference Cape Breton culture. Adrian Ivakhiv takes a critical stance of the projected and marketed Celtic identity of Cape Breton Island in his 2005 analysis, noting that the labelling of the island's music as "Celtic"

provides a means by which middle-class Euro-Americans can hyphenate their identities by grafting on 'roots' from a part of the Old World that has become fashionably exotic. ... Cape Breton can thus serve as a midway point between their mythicized North Atlantic origins and the communities of the Western Diaspora. Cape Breton becomes a place where ethnicity *almost* becomes 'aboriginality,' or at least where the line between the two can become provocatively blurred (120).

Ivakhiv remarks on the desire to exoticize the island's ethnic roots, creating a mythic past in line with a broader Celtic phenomenon. At the same time, he recognizes the history of ethnic diversity, which Celtic Colours seems to increasingly indicate each year, and he

notes that song and dance are at the core of the island's culture. Beaton and Muise 2008 discuss the fact that former premier Angus L. Macdonald "seem[ed] to develop a great sense of nostalgia for the island (40)," and that, in large part through his efforts, tourism that marketed "Cape Breton as a traditional but accessible Scottish community" (39) supplanted the waning natural resource industries of Cape Breton.

The twist of irony here is that though many come to enjoy the beauty of the island, the kind spirits of its people, and its concentrated music community, and its beauty is internationally recognized by such publications as Condé Nast and National Geographic, many who made the island what it is today have long since had to leave to find work elsewhere in order to make a living. Without a sustainable livelihood, many Cape Bretoners cannot afford to live on the island full-time. In contrast to industries such as mining and forestry, which have decreased in scope, the field of music and tourism, and homeland tourism (Powers 2011) are burgeoning, and do allow some musicians to stay in Cape Breton. However, an active career as a musician remains a difficult, often frugal, choice, even if an artist has received worldwide acclaim.

Larry Haiven (2008) uses the music and culture of Cape Breton to frame an examination of social capital, cultural capital, and social cohesion. Haiven acknowledges that "Cape Breton Island ... has produced more than anyone's share of musical, literary, and other types of art and culture ... Cape Breton has long punched above its weight, culturally speaking" (106). He remarks that the island's striking trifecta of

the struggles of the past, the constrained geography, and the shared cultural heritage and activity have produced a remarkable social cohesiveness in islanders ... moreover, the tightness and strength of its communities are legendary. (106)

He considers “the ‘tri-concepts’ ... of social capital, cultural capital, and social cohesion” (109) and devotes considerable energy both to discussing these tri-concepts and to applying the theoretical ideas to Cape Breton as case study. Yet, his tone and his viewpoint read as caustic rather than analytic – to the point that as a “halfie,” I found myself wondering his background and not being surprised when finding, upon further research, that he is based in “the mainland” of Halifax and does not appear to be of Cape Breton descent.<sup>112</sup> To someone of Cape Breton heritage reading his discussion, the analysis comes across as cold and scorning rather than thorough and objective.

To begin, Haiven details the 1999 performance by then-eight-year-old Cape Bretoner Aselin Debison of the Kenzie MacNeil song “The Island” (full lyrics listed below) at a protest again the closing of the coal mine industry in Cape Breton. The mining industry was the lifeblood for many island residents for over 100 years, and mining holds a central place within the island’s culture. Haiven snidely states that “her emotion and the sentiments in the song were ‘genuine’” (107).<sup>113</sup> The use of the term “genuine” in quotes implies disbelief as to the veracity of the feelings expressed in the piece.

Further, Haiven takes umbrage with what he calls “coal mining mystique” (108), stating,

---

<sup>112</sup> Haiven is a professor of Management at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His main research areas include labor movements, “business-government relations in Canada,” and public policy. Larry Haiven, “Personal Webpages of Larry Haiven,” accessed June 25, 2015, [http://husky1.stmarys.ca/~lhaiven/curriculum\\_vitae.htm](http://husky1.stmarys.ca/~lhaiven/curriculum_vitae.htm)

<sup>113</sup> He critically juxtaposes MacNeil’s lyrics with his history as a political candidate for “the rightist Conservative Party” (108).

To be sure, coal mining is a dangerous and frightening occupation, its workers stolid, hard-working, and militant, its communities cohesive. But why so many songs, movies, books, and museums? Are other working-class occupations and their operatives not equally dangerous, noble, cohesive, and combative? Why are there no museums to slaughterhouse workers? Why no songs about stationery engineers? The only other occupation that even comes close is fishing. Could it be that coal mining culture is an example of where the simulation is more real than the simulated (Baudrillard 1998)? How closely do the songs, stories, and museums relate to the real lives of coal miners, especially in Cape Breton, where the mines have closed? Has the ‘symbol’ of the coal miners taken over from whatever was real? (108)

Yet, in his quest to criticize the authenticity of coal mining culture, he neglects to discuss the history of the Men of the Deeps choir; rather, he only notes their extensive touring. The glaring omission here is a lack of acknowledgement of the choir’s history.<sup>114</sup> Men of the Deeps is the only choir in North America composed entirely of coal miners. It may be argued by some that the choir members wearing miner apparel and mining hats during their concerts is a performance of coal mining culture. However, former coal miners singing such songs from the canon as “Coal Town Road” (1979) and “Working Man” (1988), both of which explicitly speak to the hardships endured in the mining industry, can only be seen as authentic and filled with genuine emotion.<sup>115, 116</sup> The ensemble turns on their head lamps during their singing of “Working Man” and the concert hall lights are

---

<sup>114</sup> Haiven writes that

Island celebrities Rita MacNeil and Men of the Deeps choir have regularly toured Canada together for the past fifteen years; expatriate islanders form the core audiences. One such tour was sponsored by an economic development agency specifically to encourage native sons and daughters to return to the island upon retirement. (112-3)

This statement is important, as it acknowledges the use of the island’s music to call former residents home.

<sup>115</sup> Famed Cape Breton singer and songwriter Rita MacNeil wrote “Working Man” as an homage to the miners of Cape Breton (MacNeil and Simpson 1998). The song has gained worldwide fame, and is a mainstay of the Men of the Deeps’ repertoire.

<sup>116</sup> I am a distant cousin of Nipper MacLeod, the lead vocalist on the song “Working Man,” and acquaintances with another member. In addition, my grandfather, cousins, and uncles were all coal miners, so I have been raised on tales of the experiences of the coal mining life and the truly widespread effects the mine closures had on the island.

dimmed. While this effect may be viewed as ‘performative’ or even touristic, this visual creates a powerful image and serves as a poignant reminder of the realities and dangers of the coal mining occupation.

Critical scholarship does remind society that issues treated with a rose-colored gloss are often those topics in most need of examination. Nonetheless, Haiven’s urgent need to debunk several of the core markers of Cape Breton musical identity comes across as overarching and unnecessary rather than constructive and productive. Perhaps Haiven’s perspective as a social policy scholar frames his frustration in what he sees as political complacency, as he writes of “the relative lack of social upheaval compared with the island’s tumultuous labour history” (108). Haiven also cites the liner notes of a 2001 CD by Cape Breton singer-songwriter J.P. Cormier, which states that “‘they [the miners] have been strangely silent since their living has been recently taken away. I hope they don’t stay that way’” (113). The last mine in Cape Breton closed in 2001.

I argue that this projected image critically addressed by many is not always a purposeful choice. While it is true that a number of the most well-known songs in the Cape Breton songbook, such as “Sail On, Nova Scotia” were explicitly written for a particular cause, image, or advertising campaign,<sup>117</sup> many times the songs are an organic creation, a narrative for those who long for their beloved homeland. The sense of yearning is so deeply embedded in Cape Breton culture that the songs that speak of

---

<sup>117</sup> “Sail On, Nova Scotia” was written by Canadian composer and musician Bob Quinn. “Quinn is well-known for the many tourism themes and jingles he penned in the 1980s and 1990s including ‘Sail On, Nova Scotia,’ ‘Nature’s Song,’ and ‘Welcome to the Ceilidh.’” Quinn also wrote the beloved song “My Love, Cape Breton, and Me.” “Sydney Mines Song to Take the Spotlight in Saturday Concert,” *Cape Breton Post*, December 25, 2013, accessed June 27, 2015, <http://www.capebretonpost.com/section/2013-12-25/article-3556326/Sydney-Mines-song-to-take-the-spotlight-in-Saturday-concert/1>

missing the homeland are frequently heard at both house parties and concerts in Cape Breton proper, and the songs trigger the same emotions that they discuss, even when one is, indeed, home again, leading one to wonder whether this is yearning for the homeland, the past, or the community that has dispersed.

### **Discussion of English-Language Cape Breton Songs**

Songwriter Ken Chisholm, speaking about the eponymous album produced from The Rise and Follies of Cape Breton, a comedic and musical performance event that occurred for a number of years on the island, writes,

copies of the album flew out to wherever Cape Bretoners had wandered to find a job that would earn them enough money to return home someday. Everybody has a tale of some late night phone call from a brother or cousin or high school buddy in Halifax or Toronto or Ghana who had no real reason for calling except that they had a couple of beers and put on the Follies record and, jeez bye, they just had to call somebody from home while in the background, the stereo could be heard blasting out ‘We are an island, a rock in the stream.’ (2011)

The song to which he refers, “The Island,” speaks to a united sense of community felt by islanders. As discussed earlier, the song is “an anthem of pride and resistance and a tribute to the caustic history of labour struggles in this embattled corner of North America” (Haiven 2008, 107).

#### *“The Island” – Kenzie MacNeil*

1. Over an ocean and over a sea,  
Beyond these great waters, oh, what do I see?  
I see the great mountains, which climb from the coastline,  
The hills of Cape Breton, this new home of mine.  
Oh, we come from the countries all over the world  
To hack at the forests, to plow the lands down.

Fishermen, farmers and sailors all come  
To clear for the future this pioneer ground.

Chorus:

*We are an island, a rock in a stream;  
We are a people as proud as there's been.  
In soft summer breeze or in wild winter wind,  
The home of our hearts, Cape Breton.*

2. Over the rooftops and over the trees,  
Within these new townships, oh, what do I see?  
I see the black pitheads; the coal wheels are turning.  
The smoke stacks are belching and the blast furnace burning.  
And the sweat on the back is no joy to behold  
In the heat of the steel plant or mining the coal,  
And the foreign-owned companies force us to fight  
For our survival and for our rights. (*chorus*)

3. Over the highways and 'over the roads,  
Over the Causeway stories are told.  
They tell of the coming and the going away;  
The cities of America draw me away.  
And though companies come and though companies go  
And the ways of the world we may never know,  
We'll follow the footsteps of those on their way  
And still ask for the right to leave or to stay. (*double chorus*)<sup>118</sup>

With the ever-increasing experience of migration felt by Cape Bretoners, lyrics such as those in “The Island” hold strong meaning for many members of the community both in the homeland and in the diaspora. In particular, lines such as those in verse three, which states, “They tell of the coming and the going away / The cities of America draw me away” provide a touching summary of the economic-fueled departure of many Cape Bretoners from their homeland.

---

<sup>118</sup> Society of Cape Breton County, “The Island,” last modified 2009,  
[http://www.workthroughtime.ca/Industrial/Related/The\\_Island.php](http://www.workthroughtime.ca/Industrial/Related/The_Island.php)

The songs convey the reality that leaving the island has become expected. It is understood that, for many, in order to succeed as a Cape Bretoner, you have to leave it, often for Alberta to work on the bustling pipelines of Fort McMurray. The song “Farewell to Nova Scotia,” collected by Helen Creighton in the 1950s, shows that this trend of departure is nothing new. Research has shown that the song’s lyrics, which include such lines as “Farewell to Nova Scotia, the seabound coast! Let your mountains dark and dreary be” are likely adapted from a Scottish sailor song – once again, evidence of diasporic longing.<sup>119</sup> The lyrics of many folk and popular songs convey this economic necessity and its aftermath, as well as the melancholy and wistful longing leaving one’s home creates.

Recognition of the central role of these longing-themed songs is evidenced by the placement of several of the songs on the album *Cape Breton’s Greatest Hits* (1982). At the time of the album’s release, “Song for the Mira” (1975) was relatively new. However, the titles and lyrics of other songs, and instrumental tunes, indicate the hard life had by many, and the need to leave, including the aforementioned “Heading for Halifax” by Alastair MacDonald (1985), and “The Island” by Kenzie MacNeil. The lyrics of “Heading for Halifax” even mention the sound of the fiddle being a voice of home.

*"Headin' For Halifax" by Alastair MacDonald*

1. Late spring, the trees have turned green.  
 There's sheep on the hills and birds on the wing.  
 Over my shoulder the last time I'm seein'  
 The Old Home all Weathered and grey.

---

<sup>119</sup> “Farewell to Nova Scotia,” Education Scotland, accessed June 27, 2015, [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandssongs/secondary/genericcontent\\_tcm4572840.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandssongs/secondary/genericcontent_tcm4572840.asp)



2. We talked til three, my father and me,  
And the Fiddle tunes flowed like the clear Margaree.  
“Never forget who you are, Son,” said he,  
As I followed my brothers away.

Chorus:

Now I'm Headin' for Halifax to see what's to spare,  
In the way of some work and, if there's nothin' there,  
It's Toronto or west to God-only-knows-where,  
But there's bound to be friends from back home.

3. One thing I know, wherever I go  
My heart's in Cape Breton; it will always be so.  
Whenever the fiddle rosins the bow,  
My first and last thoughts are for home.<sup>120,121</sup>

Allister MacGillivray, famed songwriter, musician, and father to several of the members of the Cape Breton group The Cottars, notes that he originally wrote “Song for the Mira” (1975), an ode to Cape Breton’s famous Mira River, and Nova Scotia’s unofficial anthem, with only Cape Bretoners in mind. However,

I’ve since discovered that that’s a universal message involved – even for people who have no idea where the Mira or Marion Bridge are ... at *your* river, you’ll find the beauty and the music and the people to ease your mind. And, when you go far away, your river will stay with you in your heart till you can go home again. That’s the real message in ‘Song for the Mira’ – the feeling of home, the feeling of peace. (1989, 152)

“Song for the Mira” – Allister MacGillivray

1. Out on the Mira on warm afternoons  
Old men go fishing with black line and spoons  
And if they catch nothing they'll never complain  
I wish I was with them again.

---

<sup>120</sup> Allister MacGillivray, *The Cape Breton Song Collection*, Sydney, Nova Scotia: Seacape Music, 1986.

<sup>121</sup> “Bound to Alberta” is a similarly-themed song featured on the album *The Rise and Follies of Cape Breton Island* (1985).

2. As boys in the boats call to girls on the shore  
Teasing the ones that they dearly adore  
And into the evening the courting begins  
I wish I was with them again.

Chorus:

3. Can you imagine a piece of the universe  
More fit for princes and kings?  
I'll trade you ten of your cities  
For Marion Bridge and the pleasure it brings
4. Out on the Mira on soft summer nights  
Bonfires blaze to the children's delight  
They dance 'round the flames singing songs with their friends  
I wish I was with them again
5. And over the ashes the stories are told  
Of witches and werewolves and Oak Island gold  
The stars on the river they sparkle and spin  
I wish I was with them again

*Chorus*

6. Out on the Mira the people are kind  
They'll treat you to home-brew and help you unwind  
And if you come broken you'll see that you mend  
I wish I was with them again
7. Now I'll conclude with a wish you go well  
Sweet be your dreams, and your happiness swell  
I'll leave you here, for my journey begins  
I'm going to be with them again.  
I'm going to be with them again.

The last line of the song speaks to a return either in spirit or in person – “I’m going to be with them again.” This line has several levels of interpretation – it can be read as a person returning to Cape Breton to live and be amongst the old men; yet, the tone and the slight change of wording from “I wish I was” to “I’m going to be” can be interpreted as the

subject returning to the Mira at the end of his life – an almost ethereal play on words, especially as the subject does not indicate why he is returning.

Cape Breton singer-songwriter Aaron C. Lewis spent time away from Cape Breton as a performer, but now resides there once more, and has said that he will never again leave (personal communication, October 12, 2014). Lewis regularly performs at Simeon's, a restaurant in Sydney, Cape Breton's capital, and a number of his self-written tunes of longing are regularly performed. One of the songs is titled "Maria." Lewis explains in the liner notes to his 2013 CD, *You'll Be Home Again: The Spirit and Sounds of Cape Breton, Volume I*, the story behind the song:

'Maria' was originally written with the title 'Don't Go Katrina' but I decided to change it to Maria after Hurricane Katrina had hit New Orleans. I started writing this song for a musical play in which a Cape Breton girl decides to leave her true love for the big city as her boyfriend pleads with her to stay (a story too familiar in a small place like Cape Breton). At first because of time restrictions of the play I had only written a verse, chorus, and bridge, but decided during the project that I needed a second verse to finish it off, a verse that would in detail explain the feelings he would have losing his true love to the city.

*"Maria" – Aaron C. Lewis*

1. Where are you goin', Maria?  
Did the big city lights call you away?  
Was our love not enough to make you happy?  
Or was the island just too small to make you stay?
  2. What will I do without Maria?  
Love set me free in every way  
Now I wonder if I'll ever get through this  
Knowing that her memory's here to stay.
- Chorus:  
Don't go, Maria  
We worked too hard for all the love we've had.  
Don't go, Maria

‘Cause I don’t know what to do  
 And I don’t know what to say  
 I feel like part of me is gone away  
 Still I hope that you’ll be back  
 There’s no reason to roam  
 When the island calls you home.

3. Living here alone would surely kill me  
 These endless nights will drift into the day  
 For every mile that takes you far away from me  
 A piece of my heart gets stripped away.

Chorus

4. I understand why you must go  
 It’s not that I don’t care  
 I just believe that you’ll be back  
 When the love you need is here

Chorus

In “Maria,” the voice of the person longing is switched – now, the person left in the homeland is discussing the loss of a loved one who has gone away.

We see a similar theme in Cape Breton singer-songwriter Buddy MacDonald’s (2010) “Nobody Home.” MacDonald has traveled extensively as a performer but resides in Cape Breton and musically documents the changes that occur on the island. In a 2014 piece on Wyoming Public Radio, MacDonald describes the background of “Nobody Home”: “It’s a song about migration from Cape Breton to the West. People going to find work on the big oil fields ... Alberta.”<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Micah Schweizer, Ben Slater, and Anna Rader, “Buddy MacDonald: Nobody Home,” April 7, 2014, <http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/buddy-macdonald-nobody-home>

*“Nobody Home” – Buddy MacDonald*

1. No tracks in the dust by the old front door  
No voices ringin’ like they did before  
They’re fleein’ the nest, like eagles they soar  
Nobody home no more.
2. Leavin’ for a life of travel and toil  
Drillin’ for the dream in the Western soil  
Survival they say is findin’ more oil  
Nobody home no more.

Chorus:

There ain’t nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home  
There’ll be no rest ‘til they hit the West  
Nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home  
There’ll be no rest ‘til they hit the West  
Nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home

3. Well another day over they’re slow to fly  
And the sun goes down and the dreams go by  
That sun would be brighter in my Eastern sky  
I wish I was going home, but

Chorus

(Verse 1 repeats)

No tracks in the dust by the old front door  
No voices ringin’ like they did before  
They’re fleein’ the nest, like eagles they soar  
There’s nobody home no more, no

Chorus:

There ain’t nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home  
There’ll be no rest ‘til they hit the West  
Nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home no more  
There ain’t nobody home  
There ain’t nobody home

### There ain't nobody home

Clearly, changes in the employment opportunities available in Cape Breton continue to shape the musical storytelling of the diasporic experience, as many Cape Bretoners have settled in the Fort McMurray area. In contrast to the well-known Bonnie Raitt song “Ain’t Nobody Home” from her 1974 album *Streetlights* that references a personal experience, indicating that one person is no longer home to the other who walked out on their relationship and now wants to return, this Cape Breton song distinctively represents a more communal message, referencing the island of Cape Breton and the loss of community they have suffered in recent years.

It is significant that the instrumentation of contemporary Cape Breton English-language songs largely mirror the instruments found in both kitchen parties and traditional Celtic music. Piano and guitar are commonly used, and fiddle interludes are at times featured, including in “My Love, Cape Breton, and Me” (year unknown) and “If I Can’t Take the Island with Me” (1996). An accordion drone serves as the sole accompaniment for the song “Cape Breton Breeze” (2007), discussed below. “My Heart’s in the Highlands” (1789), also mentioned in the following section, features a harp. The sense of “having the Gaelic” that is so prized in instrumental music shines through in these contemporary songs as well, though in these instances, the Gaelic sound is expressed through lamenting and wailing vocals as well as Gaelic language-inflected musical rhythms. The lyrics of “My Heart’s in the Highlands” are taken from a Robert Burns poem; Burns is Scotland’s most celebrated poet. His words reflect a Scots language rhythm.

## Application of Safran's Characteristics of Diaspora to Cape Breton English-Language Songs

I have chosen several different songs, each of which features lyrics that exemplify a tenet of a diaspora as outlined by Safran (1991). The songs are a narrative for the island's changing, shifting, aging, and decreasing population. I investigate some lyrical excerpts and relate them to the characteristics of diaspora below.

### *Characteristics of Diaspora – Taken from Safran (1991: 83-84)*

- 1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign regions;

The popularity of the song "My Heart's in the Highlands," written by Robert Burns as a poem in 1789, adds a second layer of diasporic attachment for Cape Bretoners, referring back to the (for many) "original" homeland of Scotland. The Highlands mentioned in this poem refer to the Scottish Highlands, from where many people traveled to Cape Breton in the 1700s and 1800s.

### *"My Heart's in the Highlands" – Robert Burns*

1. My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,  
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;  
Chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,  
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.
2. Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,  
The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth;  
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,  
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.
3. Farewell to the mountains, high-cover'd with snow,  
Farewell to the straths and green vallies below;

Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods,  
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

4. My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,  
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;  
Chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,  
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.<sup>123</sup>

This song has been recorded by the celebrated Cape Breton group The Barra MacNeils, and is thus part of the Cape Breton repertoire. The natural references and heart's longing indicated in these lyrics show a close connection to the Cape Breton songs I have investigated, possibly suggesting a connection between the content of diasporic longing songs in Cape Breton and the Scottish tradition. Further research on Scottish songs would be needed to confirm the extent of this connection, but clearly the emphasis on place and yearning for that place are emphasized in the example cited above.

- 2) They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements;

As mentioned earlier, “Song for the Mira” by Allister MacGillivray<sup>124</sup> features the lines “Can you imagine a piece of the universe more fit for princes and kings? / I’ll trade you ten of your cities for Marion Bridge and the pleasure it brings.” In addition, while not directly a song with diasporic leanings, “The Island” features a line in the chorus that says “The home of our hearts / Cape Breton,” which speaks to the second characteristic of diaspora. The concept of the heart being tied to the island is even reflected in Cape Breton Island’s advertising slogan: “Your heart will never leave.”

---

<sup>123</sup> “My Heart’s in the Highlands,” BBC, 2014, accessed June 27, 2015, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/my\\_hearts\\_in\\_the\\_highlands/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/my_hearts_in_the_highlands/)

<sup>124</sup> Marion Bridge is a town in Cape Breton. “Mira” refers to the Mira River, the longest river in Cape Breton. The Mira is a scenic location on the island.



- 3) They believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;

Allister MacGillivray's song "You'll Be Home Again" exemplifies this characteristic.

*"You'll Be Home Again" – Allister MacGillivray*

1. What are smoke filled city streets compared with decks on trawlers  
Life at home just can't be beat, but who can make a dollar!  
Someday you might save enough to buy that hard-earned freedom  
To leave those city streets behind, but for now you need them.

Chorus:

Close your eyes, dream a dream and maybe  
'Till you wake tomorrow morn, you'll be home again.

2. So the streets weren't paved with gold - guess that's just a rumour;  
So your new-found friends don't have your Gaelic sense of humour.<sup>125</sup>  
If you had the chance again, would you rearrange things?  
If you had the chance again, would you really change things?
3. Oh, but life was easy once -- young folk have few worries,  
Playin' ball 'till after dark, pickin' sides and berries;  
Now old friends are all behind, gone with darts and checkers,  
So you spend your evenings playin' Winston Scotty records.<sup>126</sup>

MacGillivray explains the story behind the song:

---

<sup>125</sup> Cape Breton singer-songwriter Buddy MacDonald's song "Getting' Dark Again" (ca. 1995) features the lines "And there's Gaelic in the fiddle / Like the Gaelic in the glen." Though the Gaelic language is endangered both in the diaspora and Cape Breton proper, the concept of "Gaelic" still holds great prominence within the culture. Further, as the fiddle music is said to reflect the lilts of the Gaelic language, "having the Gaelic" in one's playing is a high compliment. Dunlay and Greenberg note that

The Scottish Gaelic language itself played an important role in both the vocal and instrumental music of Cape Breton. Singers, pipers, and fiddlers all exchanged tunes, and there were words (known as *puirt a beul* or mouth music) for many of the fiddle tunes ([see Sparling 1999b for a discussion of *puirt a beul*]. During the twentieth century, Gaelic gave way to English in most Cape Breton homes, and with its demise came an irretrievable loss of music of the Scottish identity of the island. Some authorities believe that, without the Gaelic language, the old fiddle style with its characteristic Gaelic-inspired rhythms and inflections will disappear in time. (3)

<sup>126</sup> Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald (1914-1987) is recognized as one of the great, if not the greatest, Cape Breton fiddler. Fitzgerald is still discussed in reverent tones at the Canadian-American Club gatherings in Greater Boston. His appearances at the Club serve as a marker of the Club's musical significance within the community, as well as its longevity.

One afternoon in the 1970s, I was hanging out in the Côte-Sainte-Catherine Metro Station in Montréal. Out of nowhere, a ragged-looking teenage boy came up to me, asking directions to the Toronto-bound train platform. It turned out that he was from Antigonish County, Nova Scotia, and was a runaway, off to points west in search of his fortune. Never having been alone in a big city before, this wide-eyed lad was completely overwhelmed by the echoing Metro, the scurrying crowds, the French language, and the whole mysterious and terrifying adventure that lay ahead of him.

A few days later, I was thinking not only of that desperate and confused kid, but of the many others like him whom I had met at The Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto, a well-known watering hole on Queen Street where I used to perform with John Allan Cameron.<sup>127</sup> It was there that they'd assemble, these displaced Maritimers—hundreds of them, trying to find a familiar face, seeking news from the old world and crying in their beers over those hometown hangouts that now seemed so far away. Moreover, the distinct possibility existed that they, like so many others before, had left the East Coast behind forever.

From the amber-lit stage of The Horseshoe, we brought them the songs and stories of Mabou, St. John's, New Waterford, and played them the uplifting fiddle tunes.<sup>128</sup> For a few hours in the dim, smoky rowdiness of that old-style bar, both time and space became distorted, and this company of strangers was somehow transported back by the sounds and laughter that helped to soothe the longing.

With all these thoughts spinning around in my head, I reached for a scrap of paper and a pencil and quickly composed 'You'll Be Home Again,' dedicating it to those wandering, sentimental souls who could now find comfort only in their dreams.<sup>129</sup>

Clearly, MacGillivray's heartfelt lyrics capture the sense of loneliness felt by many who leave their homeland, in this case, Cape Breton Island.

- 4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate;

One of Rita MacNeil's most beloved songs is 1990's "Home I'll Be" (1990). Cape Breton Island serves as a sentient being in the song.

---

<sup>127</sup> Singer-songwriter John Allan Cameron (1938-2006) remains one of the most revered artists in Cape Breton.

<sup>128</sup> Mabou and New Waterford are towns in Cape Breton. St. John's is the capital of Newfoundland.

<sup>129</sup> Allister MacGillivray, Liner Notes, *You'll Be Home Again*, Aaron C. Lewis, HOF Records, 2013, compact disc.

*"Home I'll Be" – Rita MacNeil*

1. I see the mountains, feel the salt air  
I have reasons to behold  
All the wonders that never cease to be
2. You're as timeless as the water  
You're as gentle as the fields  
I caress you, oh, Cape Breton in my dreams
3. And you never let the hard times  
Take away your soul  
And you stopped the tears from falling  
As you watched the young ones go
4. You're as peaceful as a clear day  
You're as rugged as the seas  
I caress you, oh, Cape Breton in my dreams

Chorus:  
And home I'll be  
Home I'll be  
Banish thoughts of leaving  
Home I'll be

5. I see the blue lakes, feel the passion  
I have reasons to believe  
There are places that will bring you to your knees
6. I hear voices they are calling  
I have reason to pay heed  
I caress you, oh, Cape Breton in my dreams
7. And you kept your arms wide open  
To let your children know  
Wherever there is distance  
The heart is always home
8. You're as soulful as a choir  
You're as ancient as the hills  
I caress you, oh, Cape Breton in my dreams

Chorus (2x)

Banish thoughts of leaving  
Home I'll be<sup>130</sup>

MacNeil's lyrics acknowledge the pull that the homeland has to those who have left.

MacNeil envisions the island as actively witnessing migration, and recognizes that people who move away from Cape Breton are always welcome back home.<sup>131,132</sup>

- 5) They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity;

The recently-launched website [gocapebreton.com](http://gocapebreton.com) encourages residents of Cape Breton to become involved in the community and provides Twitterlike updates of the goings-on within the island communities. The site, as with the Facebook and comment pages of the island's newspapers, provides an outlet for both residents of the island and members of the diaspora to express their concerns and opinions about the current state of Cape Breton. Frustration over the Canadian government's lack of assistance to support the island's economy and encourage its residents to stay is a common theme. While negative comments are frequently posted, there is also a fierce sense of pride and connection to the island expressed by Cape Bretoners both at home and "away." Many who have moved comment on how much they miss their true home.

Song lyrics such as "we are an island" in "The Island" are relevant to this tenet of diaspora, as the first-person plural usage of "we" throughout the song marks a collective

---

<sup>130</sup> Google Play, "Rita MacNeil – 'Home I'll Be,'" accessed June 27, 2015, [https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tpch37rgclulkrx54pqlfvhm5ra?lyrics=1&utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=search&utm\\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics](https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tpch37rgclulkrx54pqlfvhm5ra?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics)

<sup>131</sup> "Home I'll Be" has also been performed by the vocal group The Canadian Tenors.

<sup>132</sup> MacNeil's song "She's Called Nova Scotia" holds similar sentiments to "Home I'll Be." MacNeil wrote the song during a time of homesickness while living away from the island. She eventually moved back to Cape Breton and established Rita's Tea Room in Big Pond, a wildly successful tourist site and eating establishment.

cultural identity. In addition, Aaron C. Lewis and Shauna Lee MacKillop's "If I Can't Take the Island with Me" (1996) discusses the connection Cape Bretoners have to their homeland. Lewis states in the liner notes of *You'll Be Home Again*,

'If I Can't Take the Island with Me' was an idea I had while sitting at a friend's house thinking about having to leave Cape Breton eventually and how heart breaking [*sic*] it would be. I sat at the piano and immediately wrote the intro, soon the words fell into place with the help of Shauna MacKillop. The song explains our industry, our pride, and our willingness to come back to the place and people who are dear to our hearts.

*"If I Can't Take the Island with Me" – Aaron C. Lewis and Shauna Lee MacKillop*

Chorus:

If I can't take the island with me  
I'd rather be bound than be lost  
Here's to those who have journeyed  
And longed to return  
To the people so close to their hearts.

1. To the people of Cape Breton Island  
Their story has yet to be told  
They labored in fear  
Through sweat and through tears  
The ocean, the fumes, steel, and coal
2. From the work of the fathers before us  
Stands the hard-working man you now see  
They stand oh so tall  
So proud, one and all  
Of the future they've handed to me

Chorus

3. Now I know of the magic that held me  
In her warm loving arms all the while  
And now I am bound  
For now I have found  
My home here on Cape Breton Isle.

Chorus

Here's to those who have journeyed  
And longed to return  
To the people so close to their ....  
Hearts.

The song's lyrics convey a wish that both the island and its people are held safe. Further, the piece emphasize the importance of acknowledging the labor history of the island.

- 6) They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. They wish to survive as a distinct community—in most instances as a minority—by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from the ancestral home and the symbols based on it. In so doing, they adapt to hostland conditions and experiences to become themselves centers of cultural creation and elaboration.

As a community organization, The Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the performances they produce, is an example of this solidarity and cultural creation within the diasporic community.

Rod Fraser, a member of the New York Celtic group The Fraser Family, composed the song “Cape Breton Breeze” (2007) as a tribute to his grandfather, Angus Fraser. The liner notes to the recording, *Home of our Hearts: Fraser Family and Friends* (2010), which contains the song, state,

As a young man, Angus worked his way down through the lumber camps from Cape Breton Island to Northern New York with nothing more than the clothes on his back, an axe, and a fiddle. That is, until he fell in love with the camp cook and her ‘lumberjack lady’s cooking,’ and married our grandmother. We have inherited her love of the island and its music.

*“Cape Breton Breeze” – The Fraser Family*

1. He stood on the banks of the Bay St. Lawrence  
His wild black hair a-flowin’  
Stood all alone, chilled to the bone  
And the Cape Breton breeze was blowin’.

2. Well, he'd lived there for nineteen years  
Time for him to be goin'  
So he took the train down to Bangor, Maine  
Could he see where he was goin'?

3. Well, he drifted around from town to town  
Wherever the loggin' took him  
And he worked in the woods from five to five  
On the lumberjack lady's cookin'.

4. With a farmer's clothes and a fisherman's gait  
His children tagged behind him  
When the still ran high with backwoods rye  
Now you knew where you would find him.

5. Well, now and again I go and stand  
Where sailor brook is flowin'  
Ah, he never knew me but it's him I see  
When the Cape Breton breeze is blowin'

No, he never knew me but it's him I see ...<sup>133</sup>

Fraser's lyrics clearly indicate the connection felt to both his ancestor and the homeland, the latter of which is a key part of his heritage. This cultural and ancestral nostalgia is a frequent theme in Celtic cultures.<sup>134</sup>

- 7) Their cultural, religious, economic, and/or political relationships with the homeland are reflected in a significant way in their communal institutions.

The original declared purposes of the Canadian-American League (now the Canadian-American Club), as discussed in detail in Chapter Five, include maintenance of positive trade and social relations between the United States and other countries, presumably including Canada.

---

<sup>133</sup> Transcribed by the author, June 2015.

<sup>134</sup> Moloney (2002) discusses the nostalgia consistently present in Irish-American songs across decades. Nostalgia as a cultural tenet is also expressed in Portuguese culture through the concept of *saudade* (longing).

My mother, Carol Daly, wrote a song about Cape Breton called “Cape Breton’s Calling to Me” (2014) while I was preparing this dissertation. The lyrics perfectly blend with the connection to the island felt by many, even decades after moving away.

*“Cape Breton’s Calling to Me” – Carol Daly*

1. I just close my eyes and what do I see  
Roots that run deep like a solid oak tree  
The wild blue Atlantic where the salmon swim free  
Cape Breton is waiting for me.

Come back, come back, come back by air, land, or sea  
Cape Breton is calling to me.

2. Some left the island ‘cause they wanted to roam  
Others wandered to work far from their home  
Whatever your reason, and plenty there’ll be  
Come visit Cape Breton with me.

3. Take a drive o’er the trail on a clear sunny day  
Go visit the fortress and your friends in Glace Bay  
Share old family tales and a fresh pot of tea  
Oh, there’s no place that I’d rather be.

4. Sing songs ‘round a fire every night in Ben Eoin  
With fiddle tunes playing right into the dawn  
Wrap up in your tartan ‘cause there’s a breeze from the sea  
It’s summer in good ol’ C.B.

5. So store up the memories before we must go  
To our homes far from here and the lives that we know  
But we’ll always be welcome o’er the Causeway, you see  
The pipes will play us back to C.B.

Though my mother moved from New Waterford, Cape Breton, to Boston in 1962, she still feels a strong connection with the homeland. The mention of the tartan, which has become a readily-used symbol of Cape Breton culture, and mention of the trail (meaning



the Cabot Trail, a road world-renowned for its views), and the mentions of pipes (bagpipes) and fiddles all signify cultural institutions within Cape Breton identity.

### **Diaspora: A New Fixture within Ethnomusicology**

Slobin notes that “‘diaspora’ is here to stay in ethnomusicology even as it threatens to spiral out of control. It arrived somewhat reluctantly, but has now moved from alien to permanent resident status in our scholarly homeland” (2003, 295). In addition, scholars such as Tina Ramnarine emphasize that “away in the homeland” is a newly emerging topic of study.<sup>135</sup> Lastly, the rise in homeland tourism (Basu 2007; Powers 2011) seems to signal the next theoretical direction – cultures are now not only studied in their new homeland, but also are discussed in regards to how they can be drawn back to their original location, however many generations removed that may be.<sup>136</sup> I feel that further examination of the changing approaches to “diasporic consciousness,” as Slobin describes, and the increasing scholarship in homeland tourism, music and tourism, and transnationalism, as well as how these fields fit into scholarship on music and memory, will provide further theoretical views for analyzing and discussing diasporic longing in music.

Thus, I argue that Cape Breton is a diaspora and that it maintains a diasporic sensibility even at home. This attitude is clearly reflected in the music, which is heard and sung not only in diasporic settings within the Cape Breton community, but also in the digital diaspora, and even by Cape Bretoners in the homeland itself.

---

<sup>135</sup> I explore this concept in Chapter Five.

<sup>136</sup> The Celtic Colours International Festival is an example of homeland tourism.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CAPE BRETON MUSIC IN THE “BOSTON STATES”: IN-PERSON AND DIGITAL FIELDWORK AND ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, I focus on the changing state of the Cape Breton diaspora in the Boston area. The chapter utilizes in-person and online fieldwork, archives, interviews, and recordings, in conjunction with the previously presented theories on diaspora, to paint a picture of the central role music and dance play within this community. A detailed timeline of the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Massachusetts, and its functions within the community are also presented, as is a discussion of the history of kitchen parties, sessions, concerts, and the Scottish Gaelic language in the Boston area.

Heeding Mieke Schrooten’s 2012 exhortation that in-person and online fieldwork can no longer be separated, my fieldwork methodologies included in-person events and interviews and online interactions that ultimately informed my investigations and the outcomes of this case study. I also enrolled in a year and a half of Skype fiddle lessons with noted Cape Breton fiddler, stepdancer, composer, and pianist Andrea Beaton.

Factors that led to a downward shift in the community’s production and practice are analyzed, namely, an aging population; demographic dispersion from urban to suburban areas; a decrease in the number of musicians performing – and students taking up Cape Breton music; and travel, work, and immigration changes in the wake of the events of September 11th, 2001.

In order to document the demographic and cultural changes that have occurred in

this community, I investigated the following questions: How is Cape Breton culture practiced today? By whom? What ages or generations? Are parents bringing their children to these events, and are diasporic members studying Cape Breton dance in the same way that Irish-Americans study Irish stepdancing? I draw upon the weekly and monthly events at the Canadian-American Club over 18 months of fieldwork in 2014-2015, as well as interviews with scholars in the field, members of the diaspora, and members of the greater Cape Breton and Celtic musical community to answer these questions.

### **The Boston Irish and Cape Breton Community Connections**

There is extensive overlapping between the Irish and Cape Breton communities, both in the Boston area and at home. This is seen today, much as it was in previous decades. Susan Gedutis' *See You at the Hall: The Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance* (2005) mentions frequent overlap between Cape Breton and Irish communities and musicians; in the mid-twentieth century, Irish and Cape Bretoners would attend each other's dances, and Cape Breton and Irish fiddlers could be found playing alongside each other. The Rose Croix Hall had a particularly sizeable Canadian population at its gatherings, and attendees would engage in Cape Breton set dancing (49). The music was not only popular with the Scottish Cape Breton community, either. Boston-area pianist Janine Randall recalls seeing members of the Mi'kmaq community at one dance in 1960. She went to the dances for the first time when she was 7, and remembers seeing two Mi'kmaq Indians sitting there with feather headdresses and a blanket wrapped around each of them. Randall said, "Even they went to the dances." I asked if they were really Mi'kmaq, and not from here, and she said yes (personal communication, August 5, 2014).

Gedutis notes that during the 1950s and 1960s, the timeframe in which her book is based, many immigrants to Boston, including Irish, Scottish, and Canadians, lived in Roxbury, Dorchester, and South Boston, as well as the nearby city of Somerville. A sizable majority of the Cape Breton population arrived in Boston beginning in the early twentieth century, with many arriving between the 1940s and 1960s. Gedutis refers to the community as part of "the Downeasters, the Canadian Maritime community of Cape

Bretoners and Newfoundlanders who had settled in Boston – ‘two-boaters,’ ‘scadán (Irish Gaelic for ‘herring’), or ‘herring chokers,’ as they were called – many of whom had Irish heritage” (45). Gedutis writes that

by ... the middle of the twentieth century, the Irish in Roxbury were mostly second- and third-generation American. There were few Irish-born people living in Dudley Square, other than those who had come out to live with distant relatives. But even third-generation immigrants still considered themselves Irish, though most of their houses had only an Irish-born grandparent living in [them].<sup>137</sup>

The significance here is that Irish-Americans whose families had been living in the Boston area for generations still identified as Irish, and this fierce loyalty to the Irish identity is still seen across the greater Boston area, particularly in the South Shore, the coastal area to the south of Boston. The town of Scituate, located about 25 miles southeast of Boston, has been identified by the 2010 US Census as the most Irish town in the United States, that is, the town with the greatest percentage of residents who identify themselves as being of Irish descent. In order to understand the Cape Breton community in the Boston area, we need to begin with its more prominent Irish faction.

Irish-American Bostonians came to public prominence with the election of John “Honey Fitz” Fitzgerald as mayor of Boston in 1906. In 1960, Honey Fitz’s grandson, John F. Kennedy, became the first Irish Catholic elected President of the United States, cementing Irish Boston’s prominence within politics. Other famous figures, such as former Speaker of the House of United States Representatives Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, have maintained this image and identity. The city’s current mayor, Marty Walsh, prides himself on his Irish heritage.

---

<sup>137</sup> Dudley Square is a central area of Roxbury, and five dance halls were located on Dudley Street in this neighborhood.

In a 2009 review of Diane Negra's edited text, *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture* (2006), Chris Morash succinctly summarizes the privileging of Irish identity, noting,

Irish culture is now inextricably – for better or for worse – embedded in global networks of information and mass media, images and sounds. As such, it will not revert back to the more insular culture of earlier decades, which made it possible to sustain an essentialist understanding of identity. What lies ahead, *The Irish in Us* suggests, will be something more multi-faceted [*sic*], more fluid, more complex – and probably more interesting. (413)

Irishness has indeed pervaded popular culture, and Irish Boston has its own niche within this blossoming effect. Michael Quinlin (2004) notes that

Irish music is currently very popular in many parts of North America and Europe, and this transnational Celtic revival has merged with the older New England scene, bringing new audiences, not necessarily Irish, to the music. (1181)

Boston, a city nicknamed “The Hub of the Universe,” is now recognized as a hub for Irish music and culture, and the culture of drinking is celebrated with a positive owning of the stereotype, and furthered by the prominence of Irish-themed bars. However, having an Irish name does not imply Irish authenticity, as I learned during a trip to Sonny McLean's, the famed Irish bar in Santa Monica, California, in 2012. I sat next to pictures of shamrocks and a miniature replica of the Boston Celtics parquet and asked the bartender if they ever played Irish music, and was told that they do not, but the guy Jimmy down the street does some Irish music. In fact, Sonny McLean's only has Irish music on St. Patrick's Day, a holiday far more Irishified in the United States than in Ireland proper, where tourists are catered to, but the holiday still holds significance as a holy day in the Catholic Church.

The Dropkick Murphys, a Quincy-based Irish punk rock band, have arguably replaced Aerosmith as the representative band of Boston. They are the band of choice for political events, such as the 2015 inauguration party of Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, for local events, including TV advertisements for boston.com, and for Boston sports teams. The group's 2005 hit "I'm Shipping Up to Boston" is played at most Boston-area sporting events; in a sign of Celtic conflation, the song is occasionally connected to Scottish events as well, such as the trailer for the 2012 animated film *Brave*, which is set in the Scottish Highlands. The song came to prominence when it was featured in the film *The Departed* (2006), a crime story loosely based on Mafia leader James "Whitey" Bulger's decades-long iron grip on the city of Boston. *The Departed* paints Boston and its people as gritty and hard-edged, with Irish undertones weaving throughout the film's images and plot. This image and identity are perpetuated in the Boston-based films *Mystic River* (2003) and *The Town* (2010).

In addition, many people today lump together all musics and cultures associated with Celtic music as Irish music. In my experience, several times I told people I studied Cape Breton music, and then had to explain that it was Celtic music – similar to Irish music -- before they understood what I meant. I trace the emphasis on Irish music and culture to show that it can be a parameter for examining how Celtic musical diasporas, particularly in Boston, are understood and performed. In addition, many of the performers of Cape Breton music are invited to perform at Irish music events, and many Cape Bretoners are of Irish and Scottish heritage. A.A. MacKenzie (2000) notes that Cape Breton Island's population is 60% Scottish and 30% Irish, particularly the eastern side of the island,

which is closer to the heavily Irish province of Newfoundland. Clearly the Cape Breton community is more Scottish than Irish in general, but the Boston area tends to further the Irish side of their background.

Paradoxically, at the same time that Irishness is celebrating unprecedented support within the Boston area, Cape Breton culture, thriving only 50 years ago, has hit a state of rapid decline. Cape Breton music in the United States has not seen the same type of commercialization that one sees with Irish music. The community size has rapidly diminished in the Boston area, due to changes in immigration after 9/11 which require travelling with a passport, rather than solely with one's birth certificate; the difficulty of finding work as a foreign national; and the aging population. While the Boston Cape Breton community's size was close to 100,000 people at its peak in the mid- twentieth century, today the population's presence and cultural identity is less visible, with just over 250 members currently enrolled in the community's central organization, The Canadian-American Club in Watertown.<sup>138</sup> Though not all the community's members engage in the musical/community activities, they are nonetheless proud to be Canadian, and specifically Cape Bretoners. In the New England area, there are many Canadian-American couples, thus a sizable number of people in this community are half-American, and half-Canadian. Though many of these citizens have lived in the United States their whole lives, or were born in Canada but came to the United States as small children, there remains a fierce loyalty among them to the distinct Canadian identity, if only in iconic representation. For example, many Cape Bretoners will wear sweatshirts that say "Cape

---

<sup>138</sup> Exact individual membership numbers are not available for all years of the Club.



Bretoner in Exile,” get tattoos that intertwine the Canadian and American flags, or will loudly cheer for Team Canada in hockey during the winter Olympics. As I detailed in Chapter Three, diasporans also digitally express identity, heritage, and culture, via sharing of videos, symbols, photographs, and so forth.

### **Citizenship**

Interestingly, though many Canadians are permanent residents of the United States, have lived in the U.S. for decades, and have no plans to return to Canada, even to visit, they have not become American citizens, even though they are eligible. Why is this occurring? Perhaps it is the one last marker of identity. Further, there is an exam and paperwork involved, and many express anger that illegal immigrants are afforded a number of legal privileges, including driver’s licenses, in-state tuition rates, and amnesty leading to eventual citizenship, yet Canadians who went through an arduous immigration process many years ago must pay full passport application rates and are not afforded any guidance or assistance in the citizenship process. Those first-generation Americans eligible for dual citizenship status may not even be aware of it, or many do not bother going through with the paperwork, as they know they are considered Canadian and it is merely a formality. Citizenship, however, particularly of two relatively peaceful, partnered, bordered, non-warring nations, carries with it many benefits that must be considered. At the same time, many Canadians have assimilated into the culture. There are a large number of Canadians who hold dual citizenship, and Canadian citizenship is allowed to be passed to children, even those who have never lived in Canada. This used

to be allowed over two generations, but the law has recently limited it to one. Thus, as my mother was born in Canada, I am able to claim citizenship through her, but any future generations would not be able to.

### **The Cultures of Cape Breton Island**

Today, there is a great movement in Cape Breton to recognize, and rightly so, the various communities present on the island. While the enactment and reception of Canada's famed policy of multiculturalism is outside the scope of this paper, it certainly must be acknowledged that it plays a role in the recent recognition of the presence and culture of additional groups on the island, most notably the Acadian, Mi'kmaq, Croatian, and Ukrainian communities. This is also reflected in the increasingly cosmopolitan feel of the Celtic Colours International Festival hosted by Cape Breton Island.

It is also important to differentiate between Scottish Cape Breton culture and Cape Breton culture as a whole. The former is largely focused on kitchen parties, musical gatherings, and Gaelic song. The latter still partakes of this style of gathering and community, but also connects to country music and hockey events (Janine Randall, personal communication, August 5, 2014). The gathering aspect is still very important to members of both the homeland and the diaspora, but the demands of American culture create a different sense of prideful busyness that keeps many from attending. To frame the Cape Breton community in the greater Boston area, it is essential to begin with a discussion of the Canadian-American Club.

## **The Canadian-American Club, Watertown, Massachusetts**

### *Founding Years: 1937-1960*

The Canadian-American Club, originally called the Canadian-American League, Incorporated, met for the first time on May 18, 1937, at 735 Tremont Building, Boston. The Club is today known as a site for celebrating Canadian heritage and the traditional music of Canada. However, the inaugural meeting notes state that

The purposes for which the corporation is formed are as follows:

To further, maintain, and perpetuate trade relations between the United States of America and other countries; to carry on an educational campaign for the success of such trade relations and for the betterment of commerce between the United States of America and other countries; to encourage social justice within the United State of America; to spread, propagate, and promote an interest in the science of government and governmental economics; to further the good-neighbor policy between the United States of America and other countries and the good-neighbor policy between citizens of the United States of America; to take part in any political activity; to further a better standard of living of the citizens of the United States of America; to work for the promotion of social intercourse and educational and charitable enterprises among the members of the League and with other organizations of similar character; to own, control, purchase, sell, lease, or otherwise turn to account real estate necessary for or incident to the objects of the League; to borrow and loan money with or without security; to purchase, take on lease or by exchange or otherwise acquire and dispose of personal property and any rights and privileges and to carry on such other activities as the said corporation may think necessary or convenient or in any way incident to its said purposes hereintofore mentioned.<sup>139</sup>

Notably, there is no mention of Canada in the original mission statement of the League.

The Club also “encourage[d] the complete adoption of American citizenship amongst their members” (undated). Article II, Section 1 was later updated to state, “to encourage

---

<sup>139</sup> Minutes of First Meeting of Board of Directors of Canadian-American League, Incorporated, Canadian-American Club, Watertown, Massachusetts.

and promote American Citizenship among Canadians in the United States” (April 16, 1940 minutes).

However, a requisite Canadian connection is indicated in Article III (Membership), Section 1 of the League’s by-laws.

Applicants for membership must be born in Canada or Newfoundland;<sup>140</sup> descendants of Canadians or Newfoundlanders; persons married to Canadians or Newfoundlanders or their descendants; and persons who are in sympathy with the principles and purposes of the League, and who are willing to co-operate with the duly elected officers of the League.

The by-laws also indicate (Section 2) that “applicants for membership shall be over eighteen years of age and of good moral character” and (Section 3) that “every applicant must be recommended in writing by two members of the League, both of whom must have known the applicant for at least three months.”<sup>141</sup>

The League provided a host of services for its members, including assistance with finding employment and “a centralized establishment containing a classified personnel of all the members of Canadian organizations” (undated). The League for years maintained a credit union that was housed at the Intercolonial Club on Dudley Street in Roxbury. The credit union was open to other Canadian groups in greater Boston.<sup>142</sup> Undated minutes discuss “the Confederation of Presidents of the various Canadian organizations,” though no other group names are given. A health insurance plan was also proposed for League members in 1944, but no further mention of said plan is found.

---

<sup>140</sup> At the time of the Club’s incorporation, Newfoundland was still a British dominion. Newfoundland became a province of Canada in 1949.

<sup>141</sup> The minimum age for membership was later changed to twenty-one years of age on December 11, 1949 (Minutes).

<sup>142</sup> The May 18, 1938 minutes of the Meeting of Directors notes that the League’s funds were to be held at the Bank of Nova Scotia in Boston. The bank is today known as Scotiabank and, according to its website, is currently only used for institutional equity.

Though many people within the Canadian-American community knew each other, the League also utilized media to advertise its mission and to recruit new members. An undated page of the minutes from 1940 notes that “the Membership Maintenance Committee us[ed] Radio Station WHDH for a Radio Appeal for new members.”<sup>143</sup> A similar appeal was also made on radio station WGBH that same year. Advertisements and information about the happenings of the Canadian community were published in *The Canadian News*, and undated minutes suggest that “a Canadian News column and news of Canadians in Massachusetts should be made a part of our current Boston papers.” The minutes do not give any documentation of the specific information published in the papers.

The League held its first general membership meeting on September 22, 1941 and approximately 200 members attended. The second general meeting, on January 18, 1942, had only around 100 members in attendance, and the third general meeting, on March 23, 1942, had only approximately 75 members attend. By the January 15, 1959, meeting, there was discussion of encouraging young men and women to join the Club, and one member “spoke of the need of a strong Canadian Club” (Minutes).

The League held annual dances as early as February, 1940. At this dance, “held at Crystal Ballroom, 214 Dudley Street, Boston ... music was provided by the Inverness Serenaders” (meeting minutes) and “approximately 457 persons were present.” On April 9, 1940, the Crystal Ballroom was home to a Miss Canadian-American Dance and “Miss Beaton, formerly of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, was chosen Miss Canadian-American.”

---

<sup>143</sup> WHDH now only exists as a television station.

Once again, the Inverness Serenaders provided the musical entertainment. The Inverness Serenaders was a well-known Cape Breton musical group that included Angus Chisholm, Alick Gillis, Alcide Aucoin, and Charlie MacKinnon (Burrill 1982, 47); pianist Betty Maillett often played with the group.<sup>144</sup> Charity Dances were also held over the years, as well as Halloween Dances, Turkey Dinners, Valentine's and New Year's parties, and other banquets and fundraising events. Minutes from April 1, 1947 reference that "Joe Martin advertised said dance at his weekly dance on Saturday nights, he also secured his orchestra to furnish the music for both modern and old time dancing." Club minutes indicate that meetings often concluded with dancing and entertainment. The League also sanctioned a bowling league and bridge and whist parties – a very significant occurrence, given Putnam's discussion of bowling league decline in later years paralleling shifts in social capital.

On May 6, 1940, the League decided to investigate a new location for its organization, though no specific location is given. The minutes of May 20, 1949 mention securing a location at 288 Green Street, Cambridge, which is to be rented for the new League location. The location is again discussed on September 27, 1949, as well as October 14 of the same year. The application for a license from the Alcohol and Beverage Commission to serve alcohol at the site was turned down, as noted in the December 11, 1949 minutes. On February 19, 1950, "several members spoke of the reasons why the League should have a license and it was pointed out that the Canadians are the only Foreign Group deprived of such a privilege" (Minutes). The minutes mention

---

<sup>144</sup> Roger Lane Reid, "Cape Breton Piano: Betty Maillet," accessed June 29, 2015, [http://www.rreid.net/CapeBretonPiano/players/Betty\\_Mallet.html](http://www.rreid.net/CapeBretonPiano/players/Betty_Mallet.html)

that “a meeting of the Canadian American Club, Inc. was held at the new headquarters in the Hunnewell Club, Newton, on September 18, 1958.” No records exist between 1954 – when the Club is still referred to as the Canadian-American League, Inc. – and 1958, so it is unclear when the name change occurred. There are no currently available records for the Club’s activities after 1959.

The Club’s website states that the organization was originally located in West Roxbury, and then Jamaica Plain, before moving to Allston. The Club found a permanent home in 1969 at 202 Arlington Street in Watertown, Massachusetts. Prior to the Club’s obtaining the Watertown site, the building was home to two different ethnic organizations, including the Taxiarchae/Archangels Greek Orthodox Church. The names of the former tenant organizations are listed on a small bronze plaque at one of the club’s front doors. Interestingly, the Greek diaspora is one of the three originally-recognized diasporas, along with Jewish and Armenian, and the town records for Watertown show that when 202 Arlington Street was constructed, “earth from Greece and a stone from the Acropolis were placed in the cornerstone of the new Taxiarchae/Archangels Greek Orthodox Church to bring together the homeland of the early immigrants with the land of their children.”<sup>145</sup>

While the Canadian-American Club is today an apolitical organization,<sup>146</sup> its roots are in fact in politics. In recognition of the large influx of Canadians to the Boston area following the Great Depression, a group of Boston-based Canadian-American men

---

<sup>145</sup> Watertown Town Council, “Proclamation,” November 10, 2012, <http://www.ci.watertown.ma.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/5173>, accessed September 17, 2014.

<sup>146</sup> The League voted to move to non-political status in 1945 (Minutes, May 3, 1945).

formed the Canadian-American League in May 1937 as a means of recognizing and supporting future political action amongst the community's members. Eventually, the political aspirations faded, and the club's focus became more social, charitable, and community-oriented; "Hundreds of Canadians from all over the metropolitan area became members, making it one of the most prominent and active clubs in New England" ("About Us"). The club served as a gathering place for new arrivals to the area, many of whom spoke the Gaelic language, or had familiarity with it because of hearing their parents, neighbors, and relatives speak it. Today, the club advertises that it serves and welcomes all people of Canadian heritage or anyone interested in the culture.

Though the Club was very popular, with a number of charitable and gala events occurring over the following decade, the organization shrank in size and funding following World War II; record-keeping also fell by the wayside,<sup>147</sup> and, according to the website, "but for a bowling league, the original organization practically ceased to exist." The discovery of original club materials and contacts by David and Georgina MacDonald led to a rebirth. Updated membership rules stated that members had to have a direct connection to Canada by means of birth, marriage, or descent; "Any adult with Canadian affiliations of a social or business nature and sympathetic with the objectives and policies of the Club could also apply for an associate membership." Today's brief membership applications still have check-boxes to indicate one's connection to Canadian culture. Membership is very reasonable: \$20.00 for a single membership, and \$30.00 for married

---

<sup>147</sup> The book of minutes from 1937-1960 confirms this statement on the website.



couples. There is no family rate at this time, but presumably, minors are covered under the purchase of membership by a parent.

*The Present State of the Canadian-American Club*

The Canadian-American Club in its present location is home to a large number of musical events and gatherings for the Canadian, and specifically, the Cape Breton community in the Boston area. The Club's website states,

We want to make available to people in New England our Distinctive Culture and Traditional Music. We have weekly Dances/Pub-Jam Session Nights/Dinner-Dances/ Concerts/ and many events throughout the year. We encourage young people to keep the Canadian tradition and music alive and growing.

The Club is a relatively small, windowless, two-story building between Mount Auburn Street in Watertown and Trapelo Road in Belmont, two main thoroughfares in the MetroWest area. The bottom floor serves as a pub area, with a bar, a back room with a television and some seating, a small stage in one corner of the room that holds an upright piano and a couple of chairs. The hardwood floor provides a good sound when dancing, a hallmark of the Cape Breton tradition.

The walls of the club feature a row of photographs that make a visual border of who's who in the Canadian-American community. The photographs are of local musicians and club stalwarts, and their names and towns are listed underneath the pictures on small pieces of paper. These are not portraits; rather, they are pictures of people in action – bowing the fiddle, chording on the piano, or strumming a guitar. Instruments, including the front of a violin, hang on the top half of the wall behind the

corner stage; a shadow portrait of a musician is also displayed. The essential role of music within the club is clearly emphasized.

Posters for ongoing events, including Open Mic nights and Irish sessions, hang on the lower half of the walls, below the framed photos. Though the club emphasizes Canadian heritage, the flags of Ireland, Canada, and the United States stand in the corners of the room. Noticeably, no Scottish flag is featured.<sup>148</sup> Canadian iconography can be found throughout the room, including Canadian flag stickers on items on the bar. Whereas the pub section has wooden chairs and small bar tables, the back room has more of a recreation room feel, with fabric-covered lounge chairs, a television, and several dining tables. There is a small play area with games and toys for children.

The walls of the hallway leading to the bathroom have slots for picture frames, and are filled with photos of different bowling league team pictures, as well as black-and-white photos from dances in years gone by. The bowling league pictures show smaller groups around the 1980s, and stop by the early 1990s, and there are no dance pictures that are in color. The black-and-white photos capture the gleam of yesteryear, of days gone by at the club's peak.

The upstairs of the club looks much closer to a typical function hall. There is a large wooden floor that can be used for a dance floor; round tables are set up around the perimeter for events. There is a large kitchen, and a bulletin board with notices that are different from those posted downstairs, such as a call for volunteers. The upstairs hall, with its own separate external entrance, once filled up nearly every weekend for dances.

---

<sup>148</sup> While Scotland has a semiautonomous connection to the United Kingdom, Scottish flags are displayed on cars as bumper stickers, hung in halls, etc.

Today, the upstairs hall is mostly home to larger concerts, suppers, and the annual fundraiser. The downstairs pub houses the weekly open mic nights, the now-defunct Pub in the Club sessions, the monthly gatherings of the Cape Breton Gaelic Club and the Ceilidh,<sup>149</sup> as well as the monthly Irish dances and the occasional country-western and honky-tonk events.

Unfortunately, the club has seen a sharp decline in attendance at events. Members are aging and no longer attending events due to distance from the club, ill health, or a number of other reasons. Younger members are few and far between. The youth that are seen at the Club are the grandchildren of older members; there is also a small contingent of children who study Cape Breton fiddle and stepdancing and attend sessions, dances, and the Gaelic Club gatherings. Interestingly, these children are all home schooled. No doubt home schooling has enabled a more tailored approach to their music and dance studies to enable in-depth training in the Cape Breton traditions.

The Club maintained a strong sense of community throughout the 1990s. Members and photographs both speak to the packed dance halls, the regular performances by such Cape Breton fiddle icons as Joe Cormier and Jerry Holland, and frequent attendance by members at events. Many Cape Bretoners reminisce about dancing at the Club and the Rose Croix Hall, as well as other Boston-area locations that hosted dances. For many, social dancing, be it square or two-step, served as a means of entertainment, even with the advent of television and at-home video equipment, such as the video-cassette recorder

---

<sup>149</sup> “Ceilidh,” or “ceílí,” is an Irish term that is broadly used to describe a gathering, often featuring music.

(VCR), and even though members moved further away from the metropolitan area of Boston, of which Watertown is on the immediate outskirts.

The past ten years have brought numerous changes to the club. Once again, the club is seeing a downturn in attendance. Though new members continue to join, the number of active members has sharply decreased. On an average night during a club function, for example, the monthly gathering of the Cape Breton Gaelic Club, held on the third Sunday afternoon from October to June, there are only about 25-30 people present. Many of these people are musicians who are actively performing during the *ceilidh* portion, with only a minority of attendees there solely to hear music and converse. With the advent of the internet, seeing performances of Cape Breton music no longer depends upon acquiring a DVD, taking a home video while in Cape Breton or at the club, or coming across a special on PBS.<sup>150</sup> Today, members of a diaspora can pick and choose when they would like to experience their culture, and the Cape Breton community is no exception. Many Cape Bretoners to whom I spoke over the course of my research spoke fondly of the (not-so) olden days, yet few expressed a wish to attend events on a regular basis now. Nonetheless, many people in this community do stay in touch with each other via telephone and in-person visiting, and they enjoy recordings of Cape Breton and Celtic artists.

During a February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 “Pub in the Club” session, a casual music session held in the small downstairs pub of the Club, rather than the larger upstairs dance hall, I was

---

<sup>150</sup> Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) often screens Celtic- and Cape Breton-themed programs, including concerts by famed Cape Breton fiddler Natalie MacMaster. WGBH, the Boston station, produces a large number of these shows, including the Christmas Celtic Sojourn, which occurs annually at Boston’s Cutler Majestic Theatre, as well as at other locations in the greater Boston area.

talking to a longtime club member about my research and she said, “You know who you need to talk to is Jim MacLeod. He runs this place and knows a lot.” I sat down next to him at the bar, was introduced to him, and said I was studying Cape Breton in Boston and trying to figure out why people are not coming here anymore. He said “I’ll tell you why people aren’t coming here,” and I knew I had a good new solid informant. We spent the next hour talking.

MacLeod said that “there used to be two bowling leagues but now people don’t go ... and they stopped a few years ago.” He told me that the crowd was so small today and that it was embarrassing, that on Saturday nights it used to be packed upstairs for dances, and there also used to be the dances at Dudley Street (as described in Gedutis 2005). I mentioned the issue of people not coming to the club, but rather watching the music online. He said again that it was embarrassing and upsetting how few people were there that day. He motioned over to the stage – local Cape Breton fiddler Gordon Au Coin was playing – he was excellent. There were several people playing in a session, and the gathering had a very informal feel. MacLeod said,

Now there seems to be a prejudice that the musicians have to be from Inverness County, that oh if they’re not from (certain towns in the county) ... There’ll be all sorts of terrific musicians (pointed at the stage). Matt Petrie will be here, great musician, but if you tell people, they say who’s that? And that unless they’re Andrea Beaton or Troy MacGillivray

and then he mentioned the money needed to pay to bring in these artists. I then brought up the concert planned for December 2013 featuring a number of artists, including Beaton and MacGillivray, that had to be cancelled because of a snowstorm, to which he said, “Oh that was terrible; people had traveled down to see them.” Beaton is my fiddle

teacher and is well known and respected within the greater Celtic music scene; she and MacGillivray often play together.

Notably, it is hard to find non-musicians at the club. At the club's outset, many who came attended to dance or to listen to the music, but did not play. Today, the musicians seem mostly to be playing for each other. Even if not actively participating, the majority of the crowd plays an instrument, dances at a professional or high level, or sings. With regard to the youth that attend, the parents already play, or were introduced to the music by their child, and thus become involved.

### *Cape Breton Music in Boston*

In both Cape Breton and Boston, homes served as the performance venue for many musicians, for reasons of money, accessibility, and comfort. While a number of Cape Breton artists perform internationally (fiddler Natalie MacMaster being the performer most recognized outside of the island), a main locus of musicking remains the home. Even though some Cape Breton artists find success in concert halls and on radio stations around the world, the idea of playing a kitchen party, literally, a gathering in someone's kitchen or house, remains strong on the island. As a result of the diasporic dispersion that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, kitchen parties, named for the location of musical gatherings in the kitchen of people's homes, do not spontaneously happen in the same regular manner as in the mid-twentieth century. House concerts, however, do still occur, but the audience seems to in large part be made up of musicians

performing for each other, rather than for the community as a whole.<sup>151</sup> Sessions, workshops, and performances by lauded Cape Breton musicians are often underattended; 20 to 30 people may attend a concert or dance, whereas dance halls sold out events as recently as 20 years ago.<sup>152</sup>

In contrast, live music at Irish pubs and halls occurs year round at numerous sites in the Boston area. The music heard at these sites can vary from, among other arrangements, a strict instrumental session featuring various arrangements and numbers of fiddles, accordions, whistles, concertinas, guitars, bodhráns, and pipes; a band with guitar, bass, drums, and vocals; or a duo featuring vocals and guitar. The same arrangements can be seen at Cape Breton gatherings, but the difference is that the Irish music scene has a large number of locations devoted to Irish music, food, and culture, if only in name. Nonetheless, authentic Irish music can easily be found any night of the week, and those interested in hearing the music need not travel far to hear it. Event sites include twice-weekly sessions at The Druid Pub in Inman Square in Cambridge, Monday night sessions at The Snug in Hingham, and nightly live Irish music at The Burren Pub in Davis Square in Somerville. It is significant that Irish music is available year round, whereas Cape Breton music largely dissipates over the summer months, presumably when many diasporans who remain in Massachusetts over the summer – or at least for part of it – would be more amenable to attending local events due to better traveling weather and summer vacation at schools.

---

<sup>151</sup> Jeff Boudreau, moderator of the Facebook group New England House Concerts, started a group on November 24, 2014 entitled “Are NE House Concerts Extinct?,” noting that the group has over 400 members but is largely quiet, to the point that Boudreau questioned whether he should shut down the forum. Members quickly responded with notices of events and comments on their support of the group.

<sup>152</sup> At the dances I attended, the age range of dancers varied widely. There appeared to be a core group of

The Boston Scottish Fiddle Club (BSFC) meets the first Sunday of the month at the Plymouth Congregational Church in Belmont, Massachusetts, from October to June of each year. The club's website says that the group's purpose is "to provide a platform for all those interested in hearing or playing Celtic music from Scotland, Shetland, or Cape Breton, through meetings, workshops, musical publications, performances, and other activities." A noted performer in these genres teaches both a beginning and an intermediate/advanced lesson, followed by a session. The BSFC also holds a monthly mid-week session at the Canadian-American Club, but the late start time, as well as the meeting being during the week (Wednesday nights from 7:30-10:00 PM) makes it difficult for many who may be interested to attend.

The Boston Celtic Music Festival (BCMfest), hosted by Club Passim in Cambridge, Massachusetts each January, features Cape Breton musicians in its lineup of Celtic artists. The organization's website lists its mission:

- To produce locally-based Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton music and dance in an upbeat and friendly environment.
- To bolster appreciation for traditional Celtic music and dance among youth and the Greater Boston community.
- To support a living, changing tradition by encouraging cross-genre collaborations and innovations among dancers and musicians of all generations.
- To produce a variety of collaborative projects and performances for the Greater Boston community.



BCMfest sponsors Celtic Music Cruises in the greater Boston area, lunchtime concerts, and other Celtic-related events. The organization also hosted sessions on the first Monday night of the month at Club Passim, though these have ended as of December 2014.<sup>153</sup>

Despite the above concerns about low attendance at ongoing events, when the Canadian-American Club holds a daylong fundraising gala each November, the Club's upper hall is filled to capacity, and performers also appear in the downstairs pub. Many of the club's members perform, and a famous Cape Breton artist comes in, often as a volunteer, to serve as the main act for the gala. In 2013, award-winning fiddler Andrea Beaton appeared; in 2014, young fiddler Chrissy Crowley performed. Both artists were accompanied by club member and noted Boston-area Cape Breton pianist Janine Randall. The Royal Scottish Dance Society of Boston and members of the Reynolds-Hanafin-Cooley branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (an organization dedicated to preserving the study and performance of Irish traditional music), both of whom regularly meet at the Canadian-American Club, perform. Dance sets fill the floor, and the performers can barely be heard over the din. There is a jovial sense of conviviality, and a first-time visitor would never know that attendance at other events is so low.

It is only in recent years that Cape Breton musicians began pursuing their serious hobby as a full-time career, and even today, many of the most successful artists must work extra jobs to make a living. The late Jerry Holland is but one example of this. Holland is revered as one of the tradition's greatest fiddlers and composers. In an interview with folklorist Burt Feintuch (2010), he notes that he still needs to teach lessons

---

<sup>153</sup> There is discussion about reviving these sessions in the near future.

and work on odd jobs in order to make ends meet, adding:

It's just a tough go when you have to be a carpenter, work on everything else to pay the bills ... I'd love to have the time, to not have the worries—are my bills going to be paid this month or next month or that kind of thing. ... It's a damn hard struggle. I wish there was somebody out there that had all kinds of money, far more than they knew what to do with, that would look to invest in the tradition and give a fellow a little bit of stress-free time to develop stuff and to preserve what we have here for how good it really is. (108-109)

Holland's comments speak to the high unemployment levels that are a constant presence in Cape Breton, leaving many of its residents forced to, as mentioned earlier, “go away” to find a livelihood. For those who came to Boston, music is often a serious hobby, and a majority of musicians also hold full-time jobs.

Lastly, when Natalie MacMaster comes to town— Cape Breton's most famous musical export—she sells out midsize theaters, and then often plays after the show at someone's home.<sup>154</sup> Thus, the paradox of bringing the music that often existed in one's home or community to accompany dancing to the performance hall is still seen today.

### **The Cape Breton Diaspora: It's Personal**

The increasing presence of the native ethnographer within anthropological discourse (Bruner 1991) and ethnomusicological discourse (Wong 2006; Pierce 2008) show that many scholars have turned inward; and Svetlana Boym's (2001) popular theories on collective nostalgia and diasporic intimacy also connect to the longing and the need for cultural connection and validation felt by many first- and second-generation

---

<sup>154</sup> MacMaster and her husband, Donnell Leahy, played a set at the Boston Summer Arts Weekend on Copley Square on July 25, 2015. Other artists featured include Emmylou Harris, Aaron Neville, and Rodney Crowell.

members of the Cape Breton community. It must be noted that I come to this topic as what Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) calls a “halfie,” that is, one who is half part of a culture. Though I was born and raised in New England, thanks to my upbringing, I say a few words with a Maritime Canadian accent, leading people to ask me, “Amanda, are you ... Canadian?” I then have to explain my heritage.

My mother left Cape Breton at the age of 10, in 1962, and, as with many in her family, still refers to visiting the island as going “down home.”<sup>155</sup> Also, similar to many Canadians who came to Boston, she married a Bostonian of partial Irish heritage, thus solidifying the emphasis on Celtic music, culture, and folklore within my personal heritage. My grandfather spoke some Gaelic, and kitchen parties were the norm in the family’s home prior to coming to the “Boston states.” Upon arriving to the United States, many Cape Breton and Irish families lived in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, and weekend dances were the norm for many of those looking to meet up with other new arrivals to the city. Members of my family lived in the Boston city limits and used to go to Canadian-American Club and other dance sites in the 1960s to hear live music and to dance. Families and friends lived nearby and used to visit with each other regularly. Now, these same family members still love the Cape Breton music on which they were raised, and listen to it, but there are not kitchen parties ... even though a sizable number of first-generation members of the diaspora are still alive and present in the region. Why did that happen? Why were Cape Breton fiddle, piano, and dance not taken up in the same way

---

<sup>155</sup> In a synchronistic move, my mom happened to write a song about Cape Breton while I was preparing this dissertation, the lyrics of which are featured in Chapter Four.

that many partake in cultural school, e.g., Greek school, or attend cultural lessons, e.g., Irish step dance?

While diaspora theory classically states that the first generation of a diaspora focuses on assimilating (see Safran 1991; Cohen 2008), the second forgets about or elects not to pay attention to the culture, and the third generation seeks to reclaim it, instead what we have is digital and distance reclamation in the diaspora. The first-generation members are eager to recognize their Cape Breton, Scottish, and Irish roots, in part semiotically via the prominence of tartans and clan crests, the shared concrete emblems described by Turino. Digitally, this is seen via postings about heritage and cultural pride on social media, frequently shared links about happenings in and connections with the homeland, and circulated videos of songs that sing of the beauty of and longing for Cape Breton Island. Basu (2007) writes of those of Scottish descent searching for information about their heritage online and posting via message boards. In an ethnographic move, he even accompanies a group of visitors to Scotland to see the birthplace of many of their ancestors, and conveys the pregnant poignancy.

Turino (2004) speaks of the children in a diaspora, stating that they

are raised in families that *emphasize* lifeways associated with foreign places – diasporas depend on a subjective allegiance to the ‘homeland’ heritage. But these children also grow up with neighbors and schoolmates in the ‘host country’ with a different set of habits for being, doing, and thinking. ... The problem of locating, recognizing, oneself is often realized through the creation of artistic forms that, in their very makeup, serve as a model for the new composite identities by including icons and indices of the various diasporic sites. (13-14)

In Cape Breton-American culture, this can be seen through symbols ranging from the Canadian and American flags intertwined on the Canadian-American Club’s sign, and the

conscious choice to identify both the homeland and host country in the title, rather than solely being called the Canadian Club, as well as the iconic geographic references in the diasporic songs discussed earlier in Chapter Four.

Notably, while the Canadian-American Club is open to all of Canadian descent, as well as those with a connection to the country, or an affinity for Canadian culture, the focus of the club's events is solidly based in the Maritime provinces, specifically Cape Breton. Interestingly, many both in the homeland and in the diaspora think of themselves as Cape Bretoners first and Canadians second, in line with Turino's argument that diasporic identification is subjective (2004).

### **In-Person Fieldwork**

My proximity to my fieldwork in the diasporic community meant that the work did not need to be confined to a specific number of weeks or months. However, the Canadian-American Club's events calendar largely parallels that of the academic year, so I did research mostly during the months of September to May, beginning in November 2013, and ending for the purposes of this dissertation in June of 2015. The Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Massachusetts served as my main in-person fieldwork site.<sup>156</sup> I was a participant-observer at a variety of gatherings at the Club. Pub at the Club was a short-lived Sunday afternoon concert series in 2014 run in the downstairs pub of

---

<sup>156</sup> I took a semester of group Irish fiddle lessons at Boston College with Seamus Connolly and Tina Lech in Spring 2012, prior to beginning my dissertation fieldwork in earnest. I also studied Cape Breton fiddle for several months with Doug Lamey, grandson of Bill Lamey, a famous member of the Boston Cape Breton musical diaspora, in 2005-6 (though Doug has since moved back to Cape Breton). In addition, I wrote a paper in 2012 on the Irish pubs of the South Shore, which was an excellent primer in field methods within the session community.

the Club by Janine Randall that featured prominent local Cape Breton musicians, including Katie McNally and Emerald Rae. The monthly Gaelic Club gatherings occurred on the third Sunday of the month from October to June. I participated in workshops in Cape Breton dance held by Mary MacGillivray, Jennifer Schoonover, and Wendy MacIsaac; in Cape Breton piano held by Janine Randall; and a session led by Gordon “Gordie” AuCoin, all in 2014. I also attended a concert by Panache, a quartet featuring four female fiddlers, including Andrea Beaton in June 2014, and went to the 2013 and 2014 Annual Club Galas. I was asked to sing at a number of these events, and formally performed a set with my bandmate Tyler Matteson, who plays cittern, at the 2014 Gala. We were the only act that featured vocals; the other performances were entirely instrumental.

I attended several of the monthly meetings of the Boston Scottish Fiddle Club, which features Cape Breton fiddling and artists on occasion. When feasible, I attended and participated in house sessions and kitchen parties in the Boston area. I was invited in November 2014 to participate in the weekly sessions at Joe Cormier’s home, and continue to participate in them at the time of this writing. I had planned to attend events at the French Club in Waltham, Massachusetts, which sometimes features Cape Breton music, but very few relevant events occurred during the time of my fieldwork, save the concert by Betty Lou and Kinnon Beaton in April 2014, which I was unable to attend due to a death in the family. Nonetheless, I spoke with several people associated with the French Club, and followed the club’s happenings closely. I also attended, and sang at, several weeknight sessions led by Janine Randall at P.J.’s Country House Restaurant and

Pub in Scituate, Massachusetts; the sessions gave me a better perspective on the present state of Celtic music sessions on the South Shore. To understand how Cape Breton music is presented on a broader, more commercial scale, I attended a performance by the Barra MacNeils at the Chevalier Theater in Medford, Massachusetts in March 2015, which was co-sponsored by the Canadian-American Club. I was then able to compare and contrast the sessions in the clubs and houses with the public face, to many, of contemporary Cape Breton music.

I conducted formal and informal interviews with both performers and those who are consumers of Cape Breton diasporic music. As many members of the diaspora are active supporters of the music, remain virtually connected to the homeland, and visit the island, yet do not attend the club's gatherings, I also conducted interviews with them to discuss the role the music and community play in their lives. Further, I gathered stories of the dances in the Boston area, and how the diaspora connects with Cape Breton. I spoke to younger members of the diaspora as well to gather their experiences with the music and the community, and to test the oft-held theory that first generation members of a diaspora have a deep sense of memory coupled with a desire to assimilate, while subsequent generations actively seek out and internalize the culture. I have had conversations with most of the major Cape Breton studies scholars, including George Ruckert (MIT), Burt Feintuch (UNH), and Sally Sommers Smith (BU).

I had in-person interviews with Bill Nowlin (Cambridge, MA, June 16, 2014) and Mark Wilson (Pittsburgh, PA, November 13, 2014), two of the founders of Rounder Records, who produced many of the original recordings of traditional Cape Breton artists,

including Joe Cormier, Natalie MacMaster, and Willie Kennedy. Nowlin gave me a tour of the Rounder catalog that he keeps at his Cambridge, Massachusetts home, and, following an interview in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Wilson provided me with PDFs of the liner notes of several of the out-of-print Rounder recordings.

I made use of local archives to gather demographic and statistical data on the size of the community, program booklets, and so forth. In particular, I viewed program booklets and brochures from the Gaelic Roots program, a now-defunct summer session in Gaelic language and Celtic performing arts at Boston College that now lives on as a monthly concert series sponsored by the university. In addition, I viewed and listened to films and CD recordings of Gaelic Roots concerts and performances by Janine Randall's father, famed Boston-area fiddler Johnny Muise. When appropriate, I gathered quantitative data at in-person events, and gained access to archival materials from the Canadian-American Club.

I attended a day of Nova Scotia-themed events at Faneuil Hall in Boston as part of the weekend to celebrate the launch of the NovaStar ferry, which travels between Portland, Maine, and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, between the months of May and October. During this celebratory weekend, I sang "God Bless America" at Fenway Park during a Boston Red Sox game for Nova Scotia Day. I was lent a Nova Scotia jacket by Tourism Nova Scotia; was honored on the field before the game by The Honourable Zack Churchill, Nova Scotia Minister of Natural Resources, for my contributions to Nova Scotia and for raising awareness of the province; and was given a round-trip pass on the NovaStar.



Lastly, I spent a week in Cape Breton in October 2014. I presented my paper “‘I Wish I was with Them Again’: Diasporic Longing and Contemporary Cape Breton Song,” at the McConnell Library in Sydney, Cape Breton, as part of the Singing Storytellers Symposium. The multi-day symposium overlapped with Celtic Colours, and several performers at the festival also served as presenters at the symposium. Both family and scholars attended my presentation, and provided terrifically helpful feedback and insight that helped shape the development of my analysis. As part of the symposium, I attended a concert entitled “Bards of the World,” which featured a variety of singing storytellers, including famed Cape Breton singer/songwriter Buddy MacDonald, who sang a number of diaspora-themed songs, including “Nobody’s Home.”

I traveled to Cape Breton via the NovaStar ferry, driving from Yarmouth to Cape Breton. As the ferry stopped running a day before I would be returning home, the trip back to Massachusetts was entirely by car. This gave perspective both on the new, and the old, ways of travelling to and from Cape Breton Island. I spent time visiting and singing with family and played fiddle with noted New Waterford fiddler Tommie Ling, who is also my uncle’s brother-in-law (which is as close as family in Cape Breton). I also attended a performance by my second cousin, notable Cape Breton pianist and singer Aaron C. Lewis. The liner notes included in Lewis’s 2013 CD, *You’ll Be Home Again*, discussed at length in Chapter Four, served as an invaluable source for this dissertation. I spoke with a number of people regarding music, community, the Internet, and diaspora, and received helpful insight into my work. Lastly, I visited The Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University’s noted archives, and made a trip to the Gaelic College in St. Ann’s.

## Digital Fieldwork

In order to learn more of the intricacies of Cape Breton fiddling, and to learn more about the digital connections forged by distance learning, I took a year of Skype lessons with well-known Cape Breton fiddler Andrea Beaton. I was able to leverage my skills to participate in live sessions and to gain a stronger understanding of the music and the repertoire. I also reviewed the online prerecorded and live course offerings of Kimberley Fraser, including her YouTube-hosted Kimberley Sessions, which are mini lessons. I researched other Cape Breton artists currently offering lessons in an online format, which led me to Troy MacGillivray and Ed Pearlman. I discovered the online lesson site [tradlife.com](http://tradlife.com), which launched in 2014, where lessons are available directly on the website, rather than requiring students and instructors to log in to Skype or other video hosts. The Gaelic College advertises that it will soon have lessons available in Cape Breton dance and other performance arts, but the lessons had not gone live at the time of this project.

To analyze the digital diaspora, I joined a number of Facebook groups pertaining to the Celtic and Cape Breton communities in the greater Boston area (note: all titles are written as they appear on the group pages): Boston Scottish Fiddle Club; OFD (Originally from Dorchester); Irish Session at the Canadian-American Club; Traditional Irish Fiddle; The Canadian-American & Gaelic club; Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCMFest); Gàidhlig na h-Alba (Scottish Gaelic); Boston Canucks; Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ) Boston Music School; Seacoast Irish Cultural Association; Celtic Music in New England; The Irish Association of Nova Scotia – An Cumann; Irish Social Club of Boston; Facebook Fiddlers’ Association; Traditional Irish Music; Strathspey & Reel

Society of New Hampshire; Scottish Country Dancing in Watertown!; Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association Members; Fiddle Hell Massachusetts;<sup>157</sup> Boston's South Shore Rock n' Roll, Blues, Jazz and Folk Musicians; I Support Local Music in Massachusetts; New England Folk and Folklore; Photos of Cape Breton fiddlers who have kept this music alive!; Capebreton.com; Nova Scotia Roots; Clan MacNeil of Barra; New England House Concert Network; We Love Nova Scotia; and Clan MacNeil in Canada. I also "liked" a number of pages (as with groups, pages' titles are listed as they appear on Facebook): The Barra MacNeils: A Celtic Celebration at Chevalier; French Club Waltham; Irish Network Boston; Scottish Fish; Hibernian Hall; New England Irish Culture; A Christmas Celtic Sojourn; J.P. Cormier; Mac Morin; Watertown's Cape Breton Gaelic Club; Annalivia; Emerald Rae; Transatlantic Sessions; Mary Jane Lamond; Irish Music Nation; iFest; Cape Breton University; Celtic Colours International Festival; Canadians Away from Home; The Barra MacNeils; tradlife; Cape Breton Island; The Chronicle Herald; NovaStar Cruises; Canuck Abroad; Glendale Ceilidh Days; Nova Scotia Webcams; Nova Scotia; Donnell Leahy; Our Cape Breton; The Drone News; Inverness County Expo; Iona; The Celtic Music Interpretive Centre; Cynthia MacLeod; East Coast Music Association (ECMA); Skellig Irish Music Pub and Restaurant; Cape Breton Post; Jimmy Rankin; Natalie MacMaster; Kimberley Fraser; Panache Quartet; Andrea Beaton; Caper Pride Nation; The Jamaica Plain Céilis; Canadian American Club of Massachusetts; New Hampshire Highland Games; The Pub Boys; 'In My Blood', a

---

<sup>157</sup> Fiddle Hell is an annual weekend-long event that is held at a hotel in Massachusetts each November. The gathering features sessions, lessons in a myriad of fiddle genre styles, concert performances, and other events. Cape Breton lessons are usually given by artists such as Neil and Ed Pearlman.

coal mining documentary.; Coro Cantabile; Cape Breton Music Media Historical Society; Jesse Ferguson (The Bard of Cornwall); New Waterford Centennial 1913-2013; Dropkick Murphys; Boston Police Gaelic Column of Pipes and Drums; Gaelic Storm; Aaron C Lewis; Ashley MacIsaac (both the fan page and the artist-managed page); THE COLLEGE OF CELTIC PIPING AND PERFORMING ARTS OF COSTA RICA; Gaelic Roots; Wolfe Tones Official Music Page; Doug Lamey; South Shore Massachusetts; The Cottars; Trì; and The City of Boston.

Following these pages and groups became a twenty-first century version of armchair ethnography. I was able to privately observe the public goings-on of interlocking vectors of the digital greater Boston Cape Breton community, noting the videos and comments posted, the digital nostalgia, the memorializing of both today and yesteryear. I observed which groups repeatedly received postings from the same people, e.g., when an event was posted on the Canadian-American Club page as well as the Boston Scottish Fiddle Club and Celtic Music in New England pages. Patterns developed over time; these online interactions were discussed and analyzed in Chapter Three on the digital diaspora.

As part of my digital fieldwork, I friended, and was friended by, a large portion of the Cape Breton community; a good number of these people were family, as well as friends and contacts before my dissertation research began in earnest. All of those with whom I connected were fully aware of my research, but as happens with long-range fieldwork, friendships and collaborations formed and developed. I was able to observe the video clips that personal contacts shared on their personal pages, as well as to public

sites. I also posted videos of my own performances of Cape Breton songs, which were commented upon and shared by a number of my collaborators.

I viewed several concerts via the website [concertwindow.com](http://concertwindow.com), participating in the discussion boards provided in conjunction with the concert. The concerts by Troy MacGillivray and Andrea Beaton, and Emerald Rae and friends, especially connected to the Cape Breton digital diaspora. I also viewed livestreams of concerts during the 2013 and 2014 Celtic Colours International Festival. In a space-melding twist, I viewed the opening concert of the 2014 festival at my cousins' house in Marion Bridge, Cape Breton. Thus, I was able to be both home and away at the same time!

Regarding language, I attended a semester of Scottish Gaelic courses at Harvard University in the fall of 2013. The continuation of the course, in which I was enrolled, was cancelled less than a week before the start of classes, and additional language courses were not scheduled for the 2014-15 academic year, though upper-level literature classes were offered. I had intended to sit in on the advertised monthly Gaelic language sessions at the Canadian-American Club and communicate with Gaelic speakers in the community. I learned, though, once I got to the Club, that the language had far less of a presence than I had initially anticipated, and there were only two speakers who showcased their language ability during a brief song session within the Gaelic Club Ceilidh. I had originally planned to take coursework in Scottish Gaelic language via the Gaelic College's Beul an Tobair program. However, after many delays, the revamped version of the course was not available until January 2015; thus, I was not able to fully incorporate the experience of online language learning into the dissertation.

### **Musical Capital in the Cape Breton Diaspora**

In Chapter One, I define musical capital, a term I coin, as arts currency, both tangible and intangible, which can be procured, acquired, or shared. After spending time with the Boston-area Cape Breton diaspora, I have found that, as with social capital, so, too, has the musical capital of the community changed. In fact, there has been a paradigm shift in the way in which music, and with it culture, are consumed; the means by which we as a society socialize and interact has also shifted.

I remind the reader of Sherry Turkle's discussion in Chapter Two, in which Turkle's daughter says it is a great effort to have brought an actual Galápagos turtle to the American Museum of Natural History, and a fellow museumgoer tells his daughter, who is also skeptical about the need for a real turtle to be at the museum, that the entire point is that they are seeing the actual turtle, not a facsimile. For the aficionado of Cape Breton music and culture, attending kitchen parties, dances, and otherwise hearing and experiencing live music is the equivalent of seeing the real turtle. When music is digitally experienced, performed, or taught, the main concepts of the music remain, but the ineffable can be missing. In other words, the three-dimensional experience, the smells of the room, and the peripheral picture outside of the computer or camera lens's screens are not captured. When my fiddle's bridge shifted during a Skype fiddle lesson, it took Andrea and me close to ten minutes to interpret each other's descriptions and pictures of how the bridge should look. Had we been together in person, moving the bridge back into place would have taken a fraction of that time. Nonetheless, I was able to have an informed, productive, meaningful lesson – and she was able to teach such a lesson – in

the comfort of our own homes, and we have both been able to maintain musical capital in our respective cultural experiences.

This same type of technological difficulty affected some of the ConcertWindow performances I viewed. While the act of viewing the concert in one's home – or anywhere with Internet access – was exciting, convenient, and affordable, as participants only had to pay several dollars to “attend” the shows, this ease of engagement also came at a price. The internet connection would cut out of performances, shows would not always have a clear start and end time, and the website's interface would stop working at times. Nonetheless, viewers were able to chat with one another and could send requests to the artists. Attendees often posted their location, and it was fascinating to see the variety of locations represented in the online audience.

In one instance, the microphone level was low and no one watching was able to hear the sound. The issue was resolved after about ten minutes, when viewers mentioned within the chat that they would send the performers a text – itself a significant change in contemporary performance practice! Many members of the electronic audience had the contact information of both the performers and the in-person audience members. Once again, a sense of community existed, in that the viewers had a direct connection to the artists, but if the audience had been there in person, the sound issue would have been resolved much faster. Notably, some of the concerts do have a small in-person audience as well, so there is a digital divide in participation between those watching online and those who have access to the full, three-dimensional concert experience.

Digital media and social networking sites have great virtue and value, but they cannot serve as a total replacement for the in-person experience. Returning to Schrooten, contemporary society cannot be considered solely in the virtual dimension or solely in person, but rather only in combination. Today's in-person events are announced, planned, discussed, and displayed online, and are able to digitally live on in perpetuity for all to view, even as the number of in-person attendees has diminished. While the Golden Age of concerts and events had large crowds and featured some of the Cape Breton genre's all-time greatest artists (which decade was the Golden Age?), few records—either written or recorded on audio or video devices—of these gatherings exist. The musical capital of Cape Breton culture exists in the memory of the members of the diaspora, in the annals of the Internet, and in the performances which continue in concert halls and homes throughout the area. There is not one single or acceptable way to experience Cape Breton culture, and the options in 2015 are broader than even ten years earlier, but the community must be cautious to ensure that the in-person gathering and music-making does not disappear altogether.

### **Analysis**

As a member of the Cape Breton diasporic community, there lies a challenge in stepping back from the culture and analyzing my ethnographic findings in as objective a manner as possible. While objectivity is never truly possible in any ethnographic study, being a lifelong member of the community adds an additional layer of subjectivity that can be hard to separate. Nonetheless, I am able to use my lenses of insider and



ethnomusicologist to discuss my findings, and to suggest the reasons that certain changes may be occurring.

The Cape Breton community is fiercely loyal to its identity, even if this identity is not always expressed with the same bravado as we see with Greek-American, Italian-American, Irish-American, or other dual nationality communities in the region. The language of Scottish Gaelic is still revered and increasingly promoted in the homeland of Cape Breton Island proper, even as the number of native speakers declines rapidly. Yet, the language is nearly extinct in the Boston area, with neither native speakers nor scholars of Scottish Gaelic having a strong presence. As mentioned in the discussion of fieldwork experiences, Gaelic singing occurs rarely at the Club. The *idea* or “imagined community” (Anderson 1982) of “Gaelic” is in fact what remains within the diaspora. This embodiment is seen in a number of ways. First, there is the official title of the monthly Sunday gatherings at the Canadian-American Club: these meetings are referred to as Gaelic Club, or the Gaelic Club Ceilidh. This title indicates the need to continue an association with a Gaelic identity and focus, even though the language’s presence is minimal. Further, the inclusion of the term “club” portrays the social gathering aspect so strongly emphasized by Putnam (2000). Just as “bowling alone” loses its significance as a social event when practiced in a solitary manner, the language of Gaelic also loses importance if not practiced with others.

### *Distinguishing Cape Breton Music*

The idea of Gaelic is represented musically when a diasporic performer is recognized as “having the Gaelic” in their fiddle playing, which is considered a high

compliment. During my Skype music lessons with Andrea Beaton, this idea of the Cape Breton sound in my playing was emphasized. To truly acquire the “dirt” and lilting required to achieve this sound takes discipline, practice, and time. Listening to live and recorded performances of artists helps internalize this undertone within one’s playing, as does utilizing one’s ear rather than solely relying on sheet music. The true sound of Cape Breton fiddle and piano music cannot be entirely captured on a piece of staff paper. Rather, an artist has achieved the sound once it becomes intuitive, instinctual.<sup>158</sup>

The repertoire found at the Canadian-American Club’s Gaelic Club gatherings reflects the sound performed in the homeland. The majority of Boston-area Cape Breton musicians fall into several categories: 1) they themselves are first-generation members of the diaspora, for example, Joe Cormier; 2) they have studied with a current Cape Breton musician— my lessons with Andrea Beaton – or with a first-generation member of the diaspora – as seen with Gordon AuCoin’s apprenticeship with John Campbell; 3) they study with a respected member of the Celtic community who is well-schooled in the Cape Breton tradition, such as Boston-area fiddler Barbara McOwen; or 4) they have attended numerous workshops at the Gaelic College in Cape Breton or other recognized locations. Combinations of these educational experiences can also occur; that is, students of McOwen may also participate at the Gaelic College.

The distinguishing aspects of the music in both the homeland and diaspora are succinctly summarized in the well-respected 1996 publication *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton: The DunGreen Collection Containing Strathspeys, Reels, Jigs,*

---

<sup>158</sup> See Rice in Barz and Cooley 2008 for a discussion of the intuitive aspects of mastering the musical style of Bulgarian music.

*etc., Transcribed from the Playing of Some Outstanding Exponents of the Traditional Style of Highland Scottish Fiddling as Cultivated in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.* Written by Cape Breton scholars Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg, the book is more commonly known as “The DunGreen Collection.” The text contains a primer of what specifically composes the tenets of Cape Breton fiddling and utilizes created symbols, such as warbles, to describe the nuanced sounds—including several pages devoted to bowed ornaments—that sheet music alone cannot provide. The authors give especial attention to the variations of scales used in the tradition, providing a guide entitled “Chart of Cape Breton Modes” (7). They address in detail the use of major, mixolydian, dorian, and minor scales within the tradition. Arguably, many Cape Bretoners raised listening to the tradition may not be aware of these technical distinctions; rather, the tunes are known by ear and such dissection is more important to the analysts than the tradition bearers.

Dunlay and Greenberg acknowledge that the “strongly rhythmic fiddle music” of the island cannot be detached from fiddling’s connection to dancing. Dunlay and Greenberg declare that “whereas Cape Breton fiddlers have borrowed some tunes from other traditions, they are played in a style derived from Highland Scottish fiddling. This is true, with a few exceptions, of all Cape Breton fiddlers, regardless of ethnic background” (1). As many Cape Bretoners are of Scottish and Irish descent (as well as Acadian and many other heritages), this Celtic musical style is consistently expressed in the hegemonic Cape Breton performance of culture.

An important distinction made by Dunlay and Greenberg is that

the Cape Breton approach to Scottish music differs greatly from that generally found in present-day Scotland, although both cultures draw upon a common stock of tunes and are musically literate (some Cape Breton fiddlers play entirely by ear, but many learn to read music to expand their repertoire). Many Old-World-style Scottish fiddlers today are trained violinists with values and standards derived from classical music, whereas Cape Breton fiddlers are mostly ‘folk’ or ‘traditional’ musicians.’ (3)

An example of the difference between the two genres is the variations allowed in bow holds – and even fiddle positions – in Cape Breton music. A number of the culture’s most prominent musicians, including Kinnon Beaton, Ashley MacIsaac, and Kimberley Fraser, all bow their fiddles left-handed, a practice that would not be allowed in any classical arena. Members of the diaspora also vary in their bow holds. I found my bow grip changing with the type of tune being played, following some encouragement from Andrea Beaton during my lessons. For example, a fiddler can have better control during slower tunes, such as a waltz, by using a more traditional classical bow grip, that is, holding on to the frog of the bow. However, during fast jigs or strathspeys, the artist may find it more useful to move their grip up to the wooden part of the bow. Dunlay and Greenberg state that “each fiddler finds a comfortable hold which is conducive to digging the bow into the string while allowing the wrist and thumb to remain flexible and the fingers bent in their natural curve” (11). Thus, the goal is not about appearance and form, but rather working to best achieve the “dirt” (driven bowing of the fiddle) sound for which Cape Breton music is known.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Further, the bowing style of Cape Breton fiddling, which features mostly a single bowstroke for each note, utilizes far less slurring than Scottish and (most) Irish styles (Dunlay and Greenberg 1996, 12); “In Cape Breton fiddling, the bowstroke itself—slurring aside—is less legato than in modern classical music; it

Another hallmark of Cape Breton music is the use of the foot to drive or keep time. Dunlay and Greenberg note that “the practice is integral to the music, and the taps are often quite audible” (12). Thick-soled shoes are a prerequisite for a Cape Breton musician, as considerable force is put into the foot tapping. Different motions may be seen depending on the style of tune being played, for example,

While playing strathspeys the fiddler taps uniform beats for each measure of music using the same part of the foot (usually the heel) for all the taps. Jigs and marches are played with two beats per measure. Reel time is often beat with a rocking motion of the foot, alternating between the heel and ball of the foot to produce four taps per measure. The heel marks the strong beats (first and third) and is usually more forceful than the toe tap. However, a few fiddlers slap the toe more forcefully than the heel, adding an element of syncopation. (12)

To internalize the foot-tapping process so that it becomes second nature takes years of practice.

In addition, while Irish music emphasizes group performance, for example, at sessions, Dunlay and Greenberg emphasize the solo aspect of Cape Breton fiddle performance:

Cape Breton fiddling is essentially a solo tradition, possibly because of the emphasis placed on personal expression through the use of ornamentation. It is fairly unusual for large numbers of fiddlers to play together as a group except in concert finales (and in group lessons, a modern tradition). Rather, the typical arrangement is for one fiddler to play, accompanied by piano and/or guitar. Occasionally two fiddlers will play together, sometimes with one player doubling the melody in another octave when possible. This format holds true for dances, concerts, and informal music sessions. At a gathering where there are several fiddlers, each one will usually take a turn playing with the pianist; this practice differs from most Irish and Old-Time music sessions in which fiddlers often play together in large groups. (9)

---

is usually shorter in length and has a bite to it. This produces a strong, precise rhythm suitable for dancing” (Ibid., 13).

I found the solo versus group difference to be true in the Cape Breton and Irish diaspora communities as well. Dances at the Canadian-American Club usually featured a solo fiddler accompanied by a pianist. However, Boston College's music ensembles consist of a group of fiddle students as well as a group of tin whistle students playing together in unison.

### *Family Connections and Musical Capital*

Many fiddlers acquired their musical knowledge from family members who were versed in the tradition, and non-musicians learned of the tradition from recordings provided by and live performances attended with family members. Dunlay and Greenberg note that "many Cape Breton fiddlers trace their musical heritage back to the first generation of Cape Breton settlers. In large families it was not unusual to have several fiddlers, as well as pipers, singers, and stepdancers" (3). Haiven (2008) remarks that some of the island's most recognized artists

learned to play the fiddle, piano, and other instruments amid strong family networks. They developed their techniques in home parties and small venues among family and friends. They honed their playing in church halls and ceilidhs all across the island. (112)<sup>160</sup>

Thus, musical capital often originated within families, and continues to be maintained within the family unit, as family lineage is still advertised as part of a performer's musical blueprint. For example, Andrea Beaton's identity as the daughter of Kinnon and Betty Lou Beaton, respected fiddler and pianist respectively, and as a member of the Beaton family of Mabou, a town in Cape Breton, is regularly noted. Further, the Cape

---

<sup>160</sup> Haiven also speaks of "the nurturing of generations of fiddlers in the Gaelic cocoon in its [the island's] southwest" (106).

Breton diasporic and homeland audiences are well educated in the repertoire of the tradition. Dunlay and Greenberg declare that “the culture is a highly musical one and the degree of musicality, even of many non-musicians, is remarkable” (3). Haiven (2008) also speaks to this strong musical presence, noting that “one of the legendary qualities of the island is the way it acts as an incubator (some would say a veritable manufactory) of musical talent” (112). The artists are recognized in the diaspora as well, but the venues

Ironically, both listeners and performers do not always know the names of the tunes performed. At the end of one set on his recording *Live at the Savoy* (2005), MacIsaac can be heard asking his pianist, Maybelle Chisholm McQueen, “Maybelle, what’s the name of that last tune?” The same kind of conversation is heard on a recording of Kimberley Fraser and Troy MacGillivray at a March 2010 Gaelic Roots concert, in which the artists say at the conclusion of a set that they only know the name of the first tune performed. Thus, even without names being known, it is clear which types of tunes “fit” within the canon. The same tunes are often also known by a variety of names, as is often seen in oral traditions.

As with the homeland, tunes composed within the past decade are as welcome in the diaspora as those taken from the Skinner collection, a set of tunes collected by Scot J. Scott Skinner in the 1700s. The key element is the sound: a tune written by Jerry Holland, such as the waltz “Boo Baby Lullaby” (1999), works within the tradition because it contains the distinctive lilts and rhythms that are found in the traditional “Glencoe March,” written centuries earlier. Though the loss of the old-time style has been

bemoaned by some, who argue that today's musicians play much faster, the basic core of the bowing, chording, and timbre remains.

In both the homeland and the diaspora, the big names within the tradition, such as Angus Chisholm and Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald are still placed on a pedestal. Their recordings continue to serve as benchmarks for "true" Cape Breton music on account of their precision, diverse repertoire, and exceptional inherent skill. Nonetheless, contemporary artists are still lauded, and their playlists combine both recently-composed and older tunes. The May 2015 dance by Andrea and Betty Lou Beaton at the Canadian-American Club featured both tunes written by Andrea as well as classic, well-loved tunes within the tradition. While Irish tunes can be heard at a Cape Breton concert both in Boston and in Cape Breton, the majority of the repertoire consists of Scottish and Cape Breton-composed pieces.

### *Marketing and Maintaining Cape Breton Culture*

One factor that separates the Cape Breton community from other cultural—and even other Celtic cultural—groups in the Boston area is the lack of public advertising for the Canadian-American Club's events. In what can be seen as a reflection of the culture's island – and thus insular – identity, concerts and regular meetings at the Club are not promoted to the public in the same way that other diasporic communities' events in the Boston area often are, yet concern is expressed when attendance at said events is low. As with a number of other community organizations, events and occurrences are now mainly advertised via Facebook. In order to see the information about these events, or to receive an invitation to them, one must have "liked" the Club's Facebook page. It is not hard to



imagine that there are local residents who would be interested in the goings-on at the Club but have no idea that such music is indeed being played behind its doors.

I found myself numerous times during Club events asking if the concerts and gatherings had been advertised. I also was thanked by some of the Club's board members for spreading the word about events, and I was encouraged to do so. I had to walk a fine line between clubgoer and cultural consultant. My Master's studies in Coexistence and Conflict included studies in design, monitoring, and evaluation work (DM&E), and I saw numerous opportunities for interventions or changes that could be very helpful for the Club. However, it was not entirely my place to do so, nor was this move always particularly welcomed.<sup>161</sup> Members bemoaned the decline in attendance, and on times that I brought my mother with me, we found ourselves saying how wonderful it would be to have a Club-sponsored event on the South Shore (the area south of Boston, where many Cape Breton and Irish diasporans reside). A number of people with whom I spoke agreed that yes, if a concert or event was held in their region, rather than closer to Boston, they would be more likely to attend. When I brought this up to one longtime Club member, she responded with, "They are just going to have to come to the Club."

Cape Breton culture is known for its subdued means of expression – the Scottish belief of not showing off or being boastful continues to inform both the homeland and the diaspora. Contests – seen both across the United States and internationally in the Scottish

---

<sup>161</sup> If the Cape Breton community wishes to address some of the concerns raised in this dissertation, it is conceivable that future work on this topic might entail a public and applied approach as a consultant with the community.

and Irish music circuits<sup>162</sup> – are not as often seen for Cape Breton musicians, though many who are competent or trained in Cape Breton music participate in Scottish competitions. Perhaps this is part of the issue with attracting attention to the Club. I had been told by people with knowledge of the community's dynamic that I should be cautious with any information I write, in line with the insular identity. Thus there is a paradox – a play on Doherty's paradox of the periphery (1996) -- people will travel to Cape Breton to experience the music and culture they so love, yet will not go out of their way to experience it here. The opportunity to experience Cape Breton culture live is much lower than in other Celtic circles—or even other diasporic communities in general—in the area. This phenomenon of decreased live engagement with the music and culture connects with the discussion in diaspora theory of deterritorialization and placelessness in third and fourth generations of a diaspora. However, current scholarship does not discuss the effects this detachment from physical location has on social or musical capital. In future research, I wish to examine these connections further.

One conclusion I cannot help but draw from my fieldwork in this community is that the Club – and the community as a whole – would benefit if they were to once again offer Gaelic language conversation groups and lessons, as the Club had done until recently. This topic did not arise during my fieldwork, and perhaps the extremely small number of Gaelic speakers in the region affects this calculation.

With the Christmas tree ceremony at the Boston Common, marketing of Nova Scotia tourism is a central aspect. The Nova Scotia tartan is also prominently featured on

---

<sup>162</sup> The Scottish music community is less recently connected to the homeland in terms of time, and is not always connected to the community by means of heritage, but rather, musical interest.

the Red Sox towels handed out during Nova Scotia Day, an annual Red Sox event that began in 2011 upon the urging of a trio of representatives from the Nova Scotia-based fan club Bluenose BoSox Brotherhood.<sup>163</sup> Maritime residents often choose to support the Toronto Blue Jays, the sole Canadian Major League Baseball team, following the move of the Montréal Expos in 2004 to Washington, D.C. (they are now the Nationals), or the Boston Red Sox; Toronto and Boston are geographically the two closest teams to Nova Scotia. The Red Sox's mascot, Wally the Green Monster, wore a Nova Scotia tartan kilt at events related to the launch of NovaStar, as well as at Nova Scotia Day. Clearly, even at events tangential to the diasporic community, tartanism is emphasized.

**Figure 2. The author with Wally the Green Monster at Nova Scotia Weekend, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston, Massachusetts, May 17, 2014**



<sup>163</sup> CTV Atlantic, "Maritimers Convince Red Sox to host Nova Scotia Day," June 16, 2011, <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/maritimers-convince-red-sox-to-host-nova-scotia-day-1.658138> (accessed July 31, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

The current state of the Cape Breton diaspora in the greater Boston area has shifted substantially from the scene described at the opening of this dissertation. Enthusiasm for Cape Breton music is still present, but interactions with the culture are largely in one's home rather than in a public or institutional setting. Community members listen to audio recordings or watch and share YouTube music and dance clips online. Stories are shared about the good old days and events that occurred at the dances and kitchen parties that lasted until the early hours of the morning. Diasporans are easily able to reminisce in person and to e-member (remember electronically). For the non-musician members of the community—who for years partook in the social scene at Club dances—geographic distance, the passage of time, and an aging population have all contributed to a decline in Club participation, and many of the faces at the Club may no longer be familiar. As with any social event, attending a gathering by oneself or rejoining a community after a hiatus—whether brief or prolonged—can be difficult and awkward. For many, the combination of memories, at-home music consumption, and smaller local gatherings with one's friends and family now fills the need for community. While music and dancing once served as the locus of community connection, many members of the diaspora have elected to experience the culture digitally. Trips to Cape Breton proper also provide cultural, social, and musical nourishment, and diasporans often comment that life in Cape Breton does operate at a slower, more interactive pace than in the United States.

While weekly Cape Breton dances no longer occur in the Boston area, the broader Celtic music scene is thriving among its community of musicians. In particular, Irish

music sessions are still easily found throughout the greater Boston area, and music instruction camps can be found at the Boston Harbor Scottish Fiddle School on Boston Harbor's Thompson Island and the newly-formed Fiddlin' on the Hill at Powers Music School in Belmont. House sessions are quietly maintained, for instance, there are still regular sessions at Joe Cormier's home in Waltham. However, it is important to note that these sessions are not exclusively Cape Breton in theme. Many are Scottish, Irish, or generally "Celtic," and the musicians are conversant in several traditions.

A number of these Celtic musicians are able to make a living by performing and teaching music lessons. As mentioned in Chapter Five, many of the specialists in Cape Breton music, and Celtic music as a whole, who offer in-person lessons, also utilize the Internet to teach. These artists also maintain Web pages and YouTube pages, as well as Facebook artist pages (and sometimes Twitter pages) to self-promote – the pages are used to advertise upcoming events, post images and videos from performances, and to network with others. As use of the platforms is free, utilizing the Internet as a means of marketing saves an artist a great deal of money that previously would have been used on posters, etc. Artists' websites, particularly in the Cape Breton tradition, provide free downloads of the sheet music for the tunes they play. Liking and following the pages of artists within one's own diasporic community serves as a means of bonding social capital, and also raises digital levels of musical capital; transferring the information obtained from these sites, for example, using the sheet music from an artist Web site at a local session, increases both in-person social and musical capital.

Putnam (2000) suggests that community groups can experience ebbs and flows over the course of their existence. While it is clear that attendance at the Canadian-American Club is not as voluminous as at the Club's peak of popularity, there remains a core group of loyal participants. As the idea of revival is at the core of the Cape Breton community, and the people are noted for their resilience, it is hard to imagine that the culture will dissipate altogether. Further, the June 2015 Club membership newsletter indicates that the number of members has risen; there were 256 members in 2014-5, and "With 26 new members, we're on a course to have well over 300 total members<sup>164</sup> this year. Consider inviting a friend to join!" This increase in enrollment, along with the large crowd of close to 100 people present at Andrea and Betty Lou Beaton's May 2015 concert and dance, are indicators that the Club may be seeing growing crowds again in the coming years and months.

Cape Breton-themed events at the Club usually do not happen between the months of July and September; however, Scottish country dance lessons; Maritime-themed open mic nights, which are open to the public; and Irish sessions run year round. Yet, in August 2015, sixty members of the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association (CBFA)—a multinational membership organization based in Dominion, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia—are making a trip to Boston and having a brief residency at the Club. They will be hosting a fiddle, dance, and piano workshop as well as a ceilidh (music-centered gathering); and the proceeds of the latter will benefit the Club.

---

<sup>164</sup> Memberships are offered at two levels: individual or couples' membership. The number indicates the total number of members actively enrolled at the Club.

Further, there has been a recent effort to beautify the Club, with members planting donated greenery in the Club's front yard to create, according to the June 2015 newsletter, "a greatly improved, visually appealing front landscape." Lastly, the up-and-coming Cape Breton-based trio The Goins On, which includes fiddler Anita MacDonald, will be appearing at the Club in October, with Club member Terry Traub accompanying on piano. The younger generation is still performing the music of Cape Breton in New England, and it will be telling to see the attendance for the evening. While the demographics of Club concerts skew towards an older adult population, the attendance of the CBFA at the August Irish session, which is run by a musician in his twenties and draws a younger crowd, may introduce the Cape Breton aspects of the Club to a younger population. Surely, the size of the Irish community makes a difference in its visibility – but this dissertation is not intended to serve a comparative Celtic purpose.

To be certain, the Internet will form a significant part of human interactions for decades to come. The social media platforms available allow users to document and accrue a searchable archive of personal social capital. Hashtags placed in posts are publicly searchable, and anyone wishing to do a quick study in data analysis can search for a topic to see which hashtags are trending within the social networking sphere. Facebook prompts users to mark milestones in their life, for example, getting married or graduating from college, using the site's Timeline feature. Many users post pictures from previous years using the Timehop application, which marks a picture as being posted a certain number of years ago. Transformation Tuesday, Throwback Thursday, and Flashback Friday are widely accepted post themes; the abbreviated hashtags #TBT and

#FBF are frequently seen for the latter two themes. For each of these days, users select a photograph or video that signifies a previous event in one's past, such as a class photo from elementary school, and fellow Facebook subscribers pictured in the image or video are tagged. Online, one is nearly forced to regularly see reminders of their past and re-experience occurrences in their lives. Sharing such images digitally reinforces bonding social capital.

Today, we see a heavy reliance upon visual imagery to convey thoughts and emotions. Instagram is a social networking platform that exclusively features images and videos. Fellow users show their approval of a post by clicking on a heart icon, the equivalent of the thumbs-up "liking" feature of Facebook. Web site imgur.com states on its home page that it features "the most viral features on the Internet, sorted by popularity" and describes itself as "the Internet visual storytelling community." Smartphones feature hundreds of emoji (visual symbols) that users can utilize to convey an emotion or add to a text; these images are also used in Facebook and Twitter posts. Kevin Loria (2014) calls emoji "a language that's theoretically now the argot of the people" and describes a group of academics describing their work on Twitter with emoji and the hashtag #emojiresearch. As today's youth, who are digital natives, grow up, they will continue to see such visual expressions of emotion reinforced in everyday life. This focus on digitally-experienced audio and visual expressions strongly suggests continued emphasis on utilizing the Internet to spread both audio and video clips.

In this dissertation, I have developed a framework for theories of in-person and digital social capital and introduced the concept of musical capital in reference to the



Cape Breton diaspora experience, including in-depth analysis of diasporic longing through song. I have worked to bridge the gap between ethnomusicology and digital diaspora studies. This study serves as a template for further examinations of digital performance studies and the rapid social capital shifts in diasporic communities, even though the benefits of in-person interactions are irreplaceable in some regards, thus reflecting the call in the field for additional consideration of a combined online and in-person music-diaspora approach.

In addition, within future research on social capital, there is a need to pay close attention to the broader aspects of the demographic shifts that have affected both diasporic communities and American society as a whole. It is worth considering whether as a society we have moved away from a mentality that emphasizes club gathering towards impromptu or civically-organized meetings. For example, in the Boston area, the recent development of open spaces, such as The Lawn at D in the Seaport District, feature outdoor activities, concerts, and special events, but do not require a commitment to attend. The City of Boston also opened a Front Lawn in the front region of City Hall Plaza. The lawn, made of Astroturf provides a location for anyone interested to sit, play games, and enjoy outdoor activities. Food trucks are also parked in the area, which allows for a pleasant outdoor dining experience that is more open to various influences and less insular to one community.

Gathering sites and activities are a key part of urban planning and community engagement. It behooves diasporic organizations and arts groups to work together to investigate a means for utilizing new means of social interaction to maintain social

capital. For example, Maritime communities could come together to host a festival in the Waltham city common, which currently hosts Latin and Italian festivals, as well as free concerts. The numerous Canadian organizations that were so vibrant in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century have disappeared, and the distinct communities, including Canadian-Americans from the province of Newfoundland Labrador, have largely assimilated into their hostland communities and culture. Nonetheless, lower-pressure, lower-commitment events may be a welcome presence within the greater Boston area. Gatherings in the suburbs, where many Maritimers now live, would also allow diasporans a site for gatherings without the necessity of travelling long distances. Such gatherings could even be hosted at Irish-themed locations, such as the plethora of pubs that exist in the greater Boston area, for many Maritimers recognize, even privilege, their Irish heritage, and are willing to attend local pub sessions.

It is my hope that my research provides an opportunity— through oral history and data collection— for preservation of Cape Breton music and culture in the Boston area, and a valuable consideration of the declining social capital of certain community events and cultural gatherings in the context of twenty-first century American society.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Ray, and Lois Wilcken, eds. 1998. *Island Sounds in the Global City: Caribbean Popular Music and Identity in New York*. New York: New York Folklore Society and The Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College.
- Akenson, Donald Harman. 2010. "Diaspora, the Irish, and Irish Nationalism." In *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony David Smith, 169-217. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Alonso, Andoni, and Pedro Oiarzabal, eds. 2010. *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics, and Community*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Verso.
- Anderson, Wanni W. 2005. "Between Necessity and Choice: Rhode Island Lao American Women." In *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians and the Americas*, edited by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, 194-226. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Antoci, Angelo, Fabio Sabatini, and Mauro Sodini. 2014. "Bowling Alone but Tweeting Together: The Evolution of Human Interaction in the Social Networking Era." *Quality & Quantity* 48(4): 1911-1927.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Averill, Gage. 1994. "[Anraje to Angaje: Carnival Politics and Music in Haiti](#)." *Ethnomusicology* (4)1: 217-247.
- Baghiantz McCabe, Ina, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, eds. 2005. *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History*. Oxford; New York: Berg.
- Bakan, Michael B. *Music of Death and New Creation: Experiences in the World of Balinese Gamelan Beleganjur*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Bassoli, Arianna, Julian Moore, and Stefan Agamanolis. "tunA: Socialising Music Sharing on the Move." In *Consuming Music Together: Social and Collaborative Aspects of Music Consumption Technologies*, edited by Kenton O'Hara and Barry Brown, 151-172. New York: Springer.

- Basu, Paul. 2007. *Highland Homecomings: Genealogy and Heritage Tourism in the Scottish Diaspora*. New York: Routledge.
- Bauböck, Rainer, and Thomas Faist, eds. 2010. *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories, and Methods*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Bauernschuster, Stefan, Oliver Falck, and Ludger Wößmann, "Surfing Alone? The Internet and Social Capital: Evidence from an Unforeseen Technological Mistake," SOEP WP.392.
- Beaton, Elizabeth, ed. 2009. *Connecting the Dots: Social and Scientific Perspectives on Agriculture and Rural Life in Atlantic Canada*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- Beaton, Meaghan, and Del Muise. 2008. "The Canso Causeway: Tartan Tourism, Industrial Development, and the Promise of Progress for Cape Breton." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic* 37, no. 2 (Summer): 39-69.
- Beattie, Betty. 1992. "'Going up to Lynn': Single, Maritime-Born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 22(1): 65-86.
- Bennett, Andy, Barry Shank, and Jason Toynbee. 2006. *The Popular Music Studies Reader*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Bennett, Andy. 2000. *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Berger, Harris M., and Giovanna P. DelNegro. 2004. *Identity and Everyday Life: Essays in the Study of Folklore, Music, and Popular Culture*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press.
- Berger, Harris. 2013. "Theory and Practice 8: Contemporary Ethnomusicology in Theory and Practice." SEM Newsletter 47(4): 3, 5, 8-10.  
<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ethnomusicology.org/resource/resmgr/newsletters/semnl47-4.pdf> (accessed October 20, 2013).
- Berman, Marshall. 1988. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bhatia, Sunil, and Anjali Ram. 2009. "Theorizing Identity in Transnational and Diaspora Cultures: A Critical Approach to Acculturation." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 33, no. 2 (March): 140-149.

- Biddle, Ian D., and Vanessa Knights. 2007. "Introduction: National Popular Musics: Betwixt and Beyond the Local and Global." In *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location between the Global and the Local*, edited by Ian D. Biddle and Vanessa Knights, 1-15. Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Bobrowskas, Joe. 2012. "Facebook's Impact on Collective Social Capital: Revolutionary Social Movement – or Narcissistic Playground?" Master's thesis: Dartmouth College.
- Bohlman, Philip V. 2007. "Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities (review)." *Music and Letters* 88(1): 186-188.
- . 1998. "Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics in the Twentieth Century." In *The Cambridge History of American Music*, edited by David Nicholls, 276-308. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boutilier, Ted, ed. 1983. *New Waterford Three Score and Ten: Seventy Years of Civic History*. Sydney, N.S.: Aim Print and Design, Ltd.
- Boym, Svetlana. 2001. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bradby, Barbara, Jan Fairley, and Patria Roman-Velazquez. 2011. "Introduction: Crossing Borders." *Popular Music* 30, vol. 2: 171-174.
- Brazier, Jana Evans, and Anita Mannur, eds. 2003. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Brinkerhoff, Jennifer. 2009. *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Barry, and Abigail Sellen. 2006. "Exploring Users' Experience of the Web." *First Monday* 6(9). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v6i9.882>
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2005. "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(1):1-19.
- Bruner, Jerome. "Self-Making and World-Making." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 67-78.
- Burrell, Sidney Alexander. 1982. *The Scottish Dimension in Irish History*. Boston: Boston University.
- Burrill, Gary. 1992. *Away: Maritimers in Massachusetts, Ontario, and Alberta: An Oral History of Leaving Home*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

- Calder, J. William. 1974. *All Aboard!* Antigonish, N.S.: Formac.
- Campbell, Douglas F. 1997. *Banking on Coal: Perspectives on a Cape Breton Community*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- Campbell, Katherine. 2009. *The Fiddle in Scottish Culture: Aspects of the Tradition*. Bloomington, IN: John Donald.
- Campey, Lucille H. 2007. *After the Hector: The Scottish Pioneers of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, 1773-1852*. Toronto: National Heritage Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. *An Unstoppable Force: The Scottish Exodus to Canada*. Toronto: National Heritage Books.
- Canadian-American Club of Massachusetts. "Dance Workshops." <http://www.canadianamericanclub.com/Dance-Workshops.html> (accessed October 16, 2013).
- Cannon, Roderick D. 2002. *The Highland Bagpipe*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Limited.
- Cape Breton Partnership. 2011. <http://www.capebretonpartnership.com> (accessed March 19, 2012).
- Cape Breton University. "Degrees and Options." <http://www.cbu.ca/academics/folklore-ethnomusicology/degrees> (accessed April 23, 2013).
- Caplan, Ron. 1988. *Cape Breton Lives*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Breakwater Books Ltd.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996. *Cape Breton Works: More Lives from Cape Breton's Magazine*. Wreck Cove, Nova Scotia, Canada: Breton Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. *Talking Cape Breton Music: Conversations with People who Love and Make the Music*. Wreck Cove, Nova Scotia, Canada: Breton Books.
- Carson, Ciaran. 1997. *Last Night's Fun: In and Out of Time with Irish Music*. New York: North Point Press.
- CBC Staff. 2013. "Canadian Music Icon Rita MacNeil Remembered." *Cape Breton Post*. April 17. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/story/2013/04/17/rita-macneil-obit.html> (retrieved April 23, 2013).

- “Celtic Colours International Festival. ” *Irish Music Magazine*.  
<http://www.irishmusicmagazine.com/2013/05/29/celtic-colours-international-festival-11/> (last modified May 29, 2013).
- Chaliand, Gérard, and Jean-Pierre Rageau, eds. 1995. *The Penguin Atlas of the Diasporas*. New York: Viking.
- Chapman, Malcolm. 1978. *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture*. Kent, U.K.: Croom Helm.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. “Thoughts on Celtic Music.” In *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, edited by Martin Stokes, 29-44. Oxford and Providence: Berg.
- Cheng, Vincent J. 2004. *Inauthentic: The Anxiety over Culture and Identity*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Chisholm, Ken. 2011. “An Incomplete, Subjective Revue of the Cape Breton Summertime Follies.” *What’s Goin On*. [http://www.whatsgoinon.ca/an-incomplete-subjective-history-of-the-cape-breton-summertime-revue/#.Vdjxl\\_IViko](http://www.whatsgoinon.ca/an-incomplete-subjective-history-of-the-cape-breton-summertime-revue/#.Vdjxl_IViko) (accessed June 27, 2014)
- Cleary, Joseph N., and Claire Connolly. 2005. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Clifford, James. 1994. “Diasporas.” *Cultural Anthropology* 3(3): 302-338.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, Robin. 2008. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Routledge.
- Collinson, Francis. 1970. *The Traditional and National Music of Scotland*. London: Routledge.
- “Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.” <http://www.cceboston.org/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

- Connell, John, and Chris Gibson. 2002. *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity, and Place*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Connell, John. 2004. "World music: Deterritorializing Place and Identity." *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 3 (June): 342-361.
- Cooke, Peter. 1985. "The Fiddle Music of Scotland; The Caledonian Companion ; Scottish Fiddle Music of the 18th Century; Scottish Fiddlers and Their Music." *Popular Music* 5: 273-275.
- Corbin, Carol, and Judith A. Rolls, eds. 1996. *The Centre of the World at the Edge of a Continent: Cultural Studies of Cape Breton Island*. Sydney: UCCB Press.
- Cowell, Sidney Robertson. 1962. "The Connection between the Precenting of Psalms on Cape Breton Island and in Colonial New England Churches." *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 14: 155-156.
- Crane, Diana. 2007. "Globalization and Cultural Flows/Networks." In *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, edited by Tony Bennett and John Frow, 358-381. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.
- Cranford, Paul Stewart, ed. 1997. *Winston Fitzgerald: A Collection of Fiddle Tunes. Melodies Arranged from Performances by the Legendary Cape Breton Fiddler*. Englishtown, N.S.: Cape Breton Publications.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. *Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes: A Compilation of Traditional and Original Melodies from the Repertoire of Jerry Holland, 282 Tunes*. Englishtown, N.S.: Cape Breton Publications.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *The Cape Breton Fiddlers Collection: A Compilation of 267 Melodies. Music Arranged from the Repertoires of Past and Present Members and Friends of the Cape Breton Fiddlers Association*. Englishtown, N.S.: Cape Breton Publications.
- Cranford Publications. "Paul Cranford Bio." Last updated November 28, 1999. [http://www.cranfordpub.com/cranford\\_bio.htm](http://www.cranfordpub.com/cranford_bio.htm)
- Craven, Jeremy, and Jeremy C. Fox. 2013. "Time Capsule Found in Hibernian Hall." *Boston Globe*. 11 October. <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/10/10/time-capsule-found-wall-hibernian-hall-just-time-for-centennial-celebration/ojdKLzksAvtfouDBgHtlaO/story.html> (accessed October 11, 2013).
- Creighton, Helen. 1972. "Canada's Maritime Provinces – An Ethnomusicological Survey (Personal Observations and Recollections)." *Ethnomusicology* 16(3) (Canadian Issue): 404-414.



- CTV Atlantic. 2011. "Maritimers Convince Red Sox to host Nova Scotia Day," June 16. <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/maritimers-convince-red-sox-to-host-nova-scotia-day-1.658138> (accessed July 31, 2015).
- Dabback, William M. 2010. "Music and Identity Formation in Older Adults." *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 9, no. 2 (Sept): 60-69.
- Dembling, Jonathan. 2005. "Gaelic in Canada: New Evidence from an Old Census." *Cànan & Cultar / Language & Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig* 3, Dunedin Academic Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Instrumental Music and Gaelic Revitalization in Scotland and Nova Scotia." *International Journal of Society and Language* 206: 245-254.
- DeMont, John. 2009. *Coal Black Heart: The Story of Coal and the Lives it Ruined*. New York: Random House.
- DeNora, Tia. 2000. *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "Culture and Music." In *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, edited by Tony Bennett and John Frow, 145-162. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. *Music-in-Action: Selected Essays in Sonic Ecology*. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- Dhar, Ruby. 2010. "Women and International Migration: A Cross-Cultural Analysis." *Diaspora Studies* 3, no. 2 (Jul.-Dec.): 143-160.
- Diamond, Beverley, and Robert Witmer, eds. 1994. *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity*. Canadian Scholars' Press: Toronto.
- Dickson, Joshua. 2009. *The Highland Bagpipe: Music, History, Tradition*. Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- DiGiovine, Michael. 2009. *The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Dlamini, S. Nombuso, and Uzo Anucha. 2009. "Trans-nationalism, Social Identities and African Youth in the Canadian Diaspora." *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 15(2): 227-242.

- Doherty, Elizabeth. 1996. "The Paradox of the Periphery: Evolution of the Cape Breton Fiddle Tradition c1928-1995." PhD dissertation, University of Limerick.
- Donovan, Kenneth, ed. 1985. *Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays in Honor of the Island's Bicentennial 1785-1985*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- Dorais, Louis-Jacques. 2005. "From Refugees to Transmigrants: The Vietnamese in Canada." In *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians and the Americas*, edited by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, 170-193. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Dunkelman, Mark J. 2014. *The Vanishing Neighbor: The Transformation of American Community*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
- Dunlay, Kate, and David Greenberg. 1996. *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton: The DunGreen Collection Containing Strathspeys, Reels, Jigs, etc., Transcribed from the Playing of Some Outstanding Exponents of the Traditional Style of Highland Scottish Fiddling as Cultivated in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia*. Mississauga, Ontario, and Toronto: DunGreen Music.
- Dunlay, Kate, and Mark Willis. 2008. Liner notes to *Traditional Fiddle Music of Cape Breton, Volume 4: MacKinnon's Brook*. Stan Chapman, Joe Cormier, Jerry Holland, Willie Kennedy, John L. Macdonald, Donald MacLellan, Theresa MacLellan, Buddy MacMaster, Doug MacPhee, Morgan MacQuarrie, and Mary Maggie Varnier. Rounder 7040. CD.
- Dunn, Charles. 2003. *The Highland Settler: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Cape Breton and Eastern Nova Scotia*. Wreck Cove, N.S.: Breton Books.
- Ellison, Nicole B., Charles Steinfeld, and Cliff Lampe. 2011. "Connection Strategies: Social Capital Implications of Facebook-enabled Communication Practices." *New Media and Society* XX(X): 1-20.
- Esman, Milton J. 2009. *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Everett, Anna. 2009. *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- "Farewell to Nova Scotia." Education Scotland.  
[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandssongs/secondary/genericcontent\\_tm4572840.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandssongs/secondary/genericcontent_tm4572840.asp) (accessed June 27, 2015).
- Feintuch, Burt, and R. Raymond Allen. 1982. "The Fiddle in North America: Recent Recordings." *The Journal of American Folklore* 95, no. 378 (Oct.-Dec.): 493-500.

- Feintuch, Burt. 2002. "Cape Breton Music in Boston, Massachusetts." In *American Musical Traditions*, vol. 3, edited by Jeff Todd Titon and Bob Carlin, 39-43. New York: Schirmer.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Conditions for Cape Breton Fiddle Music: The Social and Economic Setting of a Regional Soundscape." *Ethnomusicology* 48(1): 73-104.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. *In the Blood: Cape Breton Conversations on Culture*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- Ferguson, Dave. 2010. "A Year's Mind, and a Letter from My Dad." Dave's Whiteboard. Posted October 22. <http://www.daveswhiteboard.com/archives/3823> (accessed March 19, 2012).
- Ferraiuolo, Augusto. 2006. "Ephemeral Identities: The Religious Festive Practices in Boston's North End." PhD dissertation: Boston University.
- Fischer, Claude. 2001. "Bowling Alone: What's the Score?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, California, August 2001. <http://ucdata.berkeley.edu/rsfcensus/papers/BowlingAlone.pdf>.
- Fleming, Rachel. 2004. "Resisting Cultural Standardization: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the Revitalization of Traditional Music in Ireland." *Journal of Folklore Research* 41(2/3): 227-257.
- Flett, J.F., and T.M. Flett. 1964. *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*. Guernsey, Channel Islands: The Guernsey Press Co. Ltd.
- Fowke, Edith. 1972. "Anglo-Canadian Folksong: A Survey." *Ethnomusicology* 16, no. 3 (Canadian Issue) (Sep.): 335-350.
- Fuller Village Residents Association. 2010. *We Remember When: A Collection of Memoirs Written by Residents of Fuller Village in Milton, Massachusetts*.
- Gal, Allon. 2010. "Diaspora's Liberal Nationalism and the Call of the Homeland: The American Jewish Case." In *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony David Smith, 61-79. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Gedutis, Susan. 2005. *See You at the Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Gelbart, Matthew. 2012. "Allan Ramsay, the Idea of 'Scottish Music' and the Beginnings of 'National Music' in Europe." *Eighteenth Century Music* 9(1): 81-108.

- Gibson, Chris, and John Connell. 2005. *Music and Tourism: On the Road Again*. ebrary, Inc.; Clevedon : Channel View Publications.
- Gibson, John G. 1998. *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping: 1745-1945*. Edinburgh: NMS Publishing Limited.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1991. "Sounds Authentic: Black Music, Ethnicity, and the Challenge of a 'Changing' Same." *Black Music Research Journal* 11(2): 111-136.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Gittell, Ross, and Avis Vidal. 1998. *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*. New York: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Glick Schiller, Nina. 2005. "Lived Simultaneity and Discourses of Diasporic Difference." In *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians and the Americas*, edited by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, 159-169. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Goodman, Mark J. 2009. "Diaspora, Ethnicity, and Problems of Identity." In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture, and Identity*, edited by Haideh Moghissi, 54-67. London and New York: Routledge.
- Goździak, Elżbieta M. 2005. "New Immigrant Communities and Integration." In *Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America*, edited by Elżbieta M. Goździak and Susan F. Martin, 3-17. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Goździak, Elżbieta M., and Susan F. Martin. 2005. "Challenges for the Future." In *Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America*, edited by Elżbieta M. Goździak and Susan F. Martin, 277-283. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Graham, Glenn. 2006. *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition*. Sydney, N.S.: Cape Breton University Press.
- Grant, Laura Jean. 2011. "Nathan Bishop releases first solo album." *Cape Breton Post*. June 29. <http://www.capebretonpost.com/Arts/2011-06-29/article-2622321/Nathan-Bishop-releases-first-solo-album/1> (accessed March 19, 2012).

- Gribben, Arthur, ed. 1999. *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Haiven, Larry. "Personal Webpages of Larry Haiven." [http://husky1.stmarys.ca/~lhaiven/curriculum\\_vitae.htm](http://husky1.stmarys.ca/~lhaiven/curriculum_vitae.htm) (accessed June 25, 2015).
- Hall, Stuart, and Paul du Gay, eds. 1996. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hall, Stuart. 1997. "Introduction." In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Conclusion: The Multi-cultural Question." In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 209-241. London: Zed Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, edited by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, 233-246. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Halpern, David. 2005. *Social Capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Halstead, Narmala. 2001. "Ethnographic Encounters: Positionings within and Outside the Insider Frame." *Social Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (October):307-321.
- Halter, Marilyn. 1995. "Introduction – Boston's Immigrants Revisited: The Economic Culture of Ethnic Enterprise." In *New Migrants in the Marketplace: Boston's Ethnic Entrepreneurs*, edited by Marilyn Halter, 1-22. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Hammond, Nicol Claire. 2007. "Singing the Nation: Negotiating South African Identity through Choral Music." In *Music and Identity: Transformation and Negotiation*, edited by Eric Ayisi Akrofi, Maria Smit, and Stig-Magnus Thorsén, 21-35. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
- Hanna, Stephen P., and Vincent J. Del Casino, Jr. 2003. "Introduction: Tourism Spaces, Mapped Representations, and the Practices of Identity." In *Mapping Tourism*, edited by Stephen P. Hanna and Vincent J. Del Casino, Jr., ix-xxvii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Happygirl22. "Somewhat Topical." Someecards.  
<http://www.someecards.com/usercards/viewcard/MjAxMi00MjVjNDY3MmYzMzY4YzE4> (accessed May 15, 2015).
- Harris Interactive. 2014. "ITDMs' Enthusiasm for Technology Comes with a Cost." 29 January.  
<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/NewsRoom/HarrisPolls/tabid/447/ctl/ReadCustom%20Default/mid/1508/ArticleId/1373/Default.aspx> (accessed April 13, 2015).
- Harrison, Rodney, ed. 2010. *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hassanpour, Amir. 2001. "Diaspora, Homeland, and Communication Technologies." In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 76-88. London: Zed Books.
- Heimarck, Brita Renée. 2015. *Gender Wayang Music of Bapak I Wayan Loceng from Sukawati, Bali: A Musical Biography, Musical Ethnography, and Critical Edition*. Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc.
- Hellier Tinoco, Ruth. 2011. *Embodying Mexico: Tourism, Nationalism, and Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Helly, Denise. 2006. "Diaspora: History of an Idea." In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture, and Identity*, edited by Haideh Moghissi, 3-22. London and New York: Routledge.
- Henessy, Jeffrey James. 2008. "Fiddle Grooves: Identity, Representation, and the Sound of Cape Breton Fiddle Music in Popular Culture." Ph.D. diss.: University of Toronto.
- Herdman, Jessica. 2008. "The Cape Breton Fiddling Narrative: Innovation, Preservation, Dancing." Master's thesis: Cape Breton University.
- Hesse, Barnor. 2001. "Introduction: Un/settled Multiculturalisms." In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 1-30. London: Zed Books.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger, eds. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hochheiser, Harry. and Ben Shneiderman. 2010. "From Bowling Alone to Tweeting Together: Technology-Mediated Social Participation." *Interactions* (March + April): 64-67.  
<http://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/ICWSM/ICWSM13/paper/viewFile/6061/6384>

- Holland, Jerry. "Tunes." <http://jerryholland.com/tunes.htm> (accessed August 19, 2015).
- Hornsby, Stephen J., and John G. Reid, eds. 2006. *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.  
[http://cjtm.icaap.org/content/27/27\\_sparling.html](http://cjtm.icaap.org/content/27/27_sparling.html) (accessed April 17, 2012).
- Hudson, Ray. 2006. "Regions and Place: Music, Identity, and Place." *Progress in Human Geography* 30(5): 626-634.
- Hufford, Mary, ed. 1994. *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Huk, John. 2011. *Strangers in the Land: The Ukrainian Presence in Cape Breton*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- Hunter, James. 2005. *Scottish Exodus: Travels Among A Worldwide Clan*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing.
- Hutchinson, Sydney. 2011. "Tipico, Folklórico, or Popular? Musical Categories, Place, and Identity in a Transnational Listening Community." *Popular Music* 30, no. 2: 245-262.
- Isajiw, Wsevolod W. 2010. "The Ukrainian Diaspora." In *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony David Smith, 289-319. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Ivakhiv, Adrian. 2005. "Colouring Cape Breton 'Celtic': Topographies of Culture and Identity in Cape Breton Island." *Ethnologies* 27(2): 107-136.
- James, Simon. 1999. *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Jameson, Frederic. 2009. "Foreword." In *Canadian Cultural Studies: A Reader*, edited by Sourayan Mookerjee, Imre Szeman, and Gail Faurschou, xi-xii. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Karim, Karim H. 2003. "Introduction." In *The Media of Diaspora*, edited by Karim H. Karim, 1-17. London: Routledge.
- Kenny, Ailbhe. 2013. "'The Next Level': Investigating Teaching and Learning within an Irish Traditional Music Online Community." *Research Studies in Music Education* 35 (2): 234-248.

- Knapp, Tom. "Review of Men of the Deepes," *Coal Fire in Winter* (Atlantica, 1996). *Rambles*. [http://www.rambles.net/mendeeps\\_coal.html](http://www.rambles.net/mendeeps_coal.html) (accessed October 31, 2013).
- Knowles, Ric. 2009. "Performing Intercultural Memory in the Diasporic Present: The Case of Toronto." In *Performance, Embodiment and Cultural Memory*, edited by Colin Counsell and Roberta Mock, 16-40. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kockel, Ullrich, and Nic Craith, Máiréad, eds. 2007. *Cultural Heritages as Reflexive Traditions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Koskoff, Ellen. 2010. "Response to Rice." *Ethnomusicology* 54(2): 329-331.
- Kozinets, Robert V. 2010. *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*. New York: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Krauss, Clifford. 2002. "Nova Scotians Breathe Life Into a Dying Language." *The New York Times*, July 15.
- Kruse, Holly. 2010. "Local Identity and Independent Music Scenes, Online and Off." *Popular Music and Society* 33, no. 5 (Dec.): 625-639.
- Kusow, Abdi, and Stephanie R. Bjork, eds. 2007. *From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Lachenicht, Susanne, and Kirsten Heinsohn, eds. 2009. *Diaspora Identities: Exile, Nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism in Past and Present*. Frankfurt; New York: Campus Verlag.
- Lamey, Bill. 2000. *Full Circle: From Cape Breton to Boston and Back: Classic House Sessions of Traditional Cape Breton Music 1956-1977*. Rounder 7032. CD.
- Lavengood, Kathleen Elizabeth. 2008. "Transnational Communities through Global Tourism: Experiencing Celtic Culture through Music Practice on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia." PhD. dissertation: Indiana University.
- Lee, Eunsun, Yeo Jung Kim, and Jungsun Ahn. 2014. "How Do People Use Facebook Features to Manage Social Capital?" *Computers in Human Behavior* 36: 440-445.
- Lengel, Laura B. 2005. *Intercultural Communication and Creative Practice: Music, Dance, and Women's Cultural Identity*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Lennon, Joseph. 2008. *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.



- Leyshon, Andrew, David Matless, and George Revill. 1998. "Introduction: Music, Space, and the Production of Place." In *The Place of Music*, edited by Andrew Leyshon, David Matless, and George Revill, 1-30. New York: Guilford Press.
- Loria, Kevin. 2014. "Scientists Describe Their Work in Emoji and the Results are Hilarious." *Business Insider*. 21 October. <http://www.businessinsider.com/science-research-written-in-emoji-2014-10>.
- Lucas, Susan, and Bandana Purkayastha. 2007. "'Where is Home?' Here and There: Transnational Experiences of Home among Canadian Migrants in the United States." *GeoJournal* 68(2/3): 243-251.
- Lucia, Christine. 2007. "Introduction." In *Music and Identity: Transformation and Negotiation*, edited by Eric Ayisi Akrofi, Maria Smit, and Stig-Magnus Thorsén, iii-x. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
- Lukas, J. Anthony. 1985. *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lynch, Mary-Frances, Peter N. Duinker, Lorn R. Sheehan, and Janet E. Chute. 2011. "The Demand for Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism: Tourist Perspectives." *Tourism Management* 32: 977-986.
- MacDonald, Sharon. 1997. *Reimagining Culture: Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance*. London: Berg Publishers.
- MacGillivray, Allister. 1981. *The Cape Breton Fiddler*. Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1986. *The Cape Breton Song Collection*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Seacape Music.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Liner Notes. *You'll Be Home Again*, Aaron C. Lewis. HOF Records, 2013, compact disc.
- MacInnes, Sheldon. 1997. *A Journey in Celtic Music: Cape Breton Style*. Sydney, N.S.: UCCB Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Buddy MacMaster: The Judique Fiddler*. Lawrencetown Beach, Nova Scotia: Pottersfield Press.
- MacIsaac, Ashley, with Frances Condron. 2003. *Fiddling with Disaster: Clearing the Past*. Toronto: Warwick Publishing.
- MacIsaac, Teresa. 2006. *A Better Life: A Portrait of Highland Women in Nova Scotia*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.

- MacKenzie, A.A., and Paul M. MacDonald. 2000. *The Irish in Cape Breton: With an Essay on Cape Breton's Irish Music*. Wreck Cove, Nova Scotia, Canada: Breton Books.
- MacKinnon, Ian Francis. 1989. "Fiddling to Fortune: The Role of Commercial Recordings Made by Cape Breton Fiddlers in the Fiddle Music Tradition of Cape Breton Island." MA thesis, Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
- MacKinnon, Richard. 2009. *Discovering Cape Breton Folklore*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- MacLeod, Mary K., and James St. Clair. 1994. *Pride of Place: The Life and Times of Cape Breton Heritage Houses*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press.
- MacNeil, Joe Neil. 1987. *Tales until Dawn: The World of a Cape Breton Gaelic Story-Teller*. Translated and edited by John Shaw. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- MacNeil, Neil. 1948. *The Highland Heart in Nova Scotia*. New York: Scribner's Sons.
- MacNeil, Rita, and Anne Simpson. 1998. *On a Personal Note*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.
- Maira, Sunaina. 2005. "Mixed Desires: Second-Generation Indian Americans and the Politics of Youth Culture." In *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians and the Americas*, edited by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, 227-247. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Manning, Susan, and Andrew Taylor. 2007. *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Mans, Minette. 2007. "Tourism and Cultural Identity: Conservation or Commodification." In *Music and Identity: Transformation and Negotiation*, edited by Eric Ayisi Akrofi, Maria Smit, and Stig-Magnus Thorsén, 235-255. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
- McCabe, Ina Baghdiantz, Gelina Harlaftis, Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, eds. 2005. *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History*. Oxford: Berg.
- McCrone, David. 2007. "Culture and Nation." In *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, edited by Tony Bennett and John Frow, 317-337. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.

- McDonald, Chris. 2011. "Singer-Songwriters in Cape Breton: Marking Ground Between Traditional and Popular." Paper presented at Celts in the Americas Conference, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada, June 2011.
- McDonald, Chris, and Heather Sparling. 2010. "Interpretations of Tradition: From Gaelic Song to Celtic Pop." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22(3):309-328.
- McGee, Timothy. 1985. *The Music of Canada*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- McKay, Ian. 1992. "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic* 21, no. 2 (Spring): 5-47.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- McKercher, Bob, and Hilary du Cros. 2002. *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*. New York: Haworth Hospitality Press.
- McMorran, Jasmine. 2013. "Cape Breton Piano: The Progression and Passing On of Innovation and Tradition." MA thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
- McNeil, Bryce. 2009. "Building Subcultural Community Online and Off: An Ethnographic Analysis of the CBLocals Music Scene." PhD. dissertation: Georgia State University.
- Meagher, Timothy. 2005. *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Middleton, Richard. 2007. "Afterword." In *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location: Between the Global and the Local*, edited by Ian D. Biddle and Vanessa Knights, 191-203. Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT : Ashgate.
- Miller, Kerby A. 1985. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Minutes of First Meeting of Board of Directors of Canadian-American League, Incorporated, Canadian-American Club, Watertown, Massachusetts.
- Mitchell, Gillian. 2007. *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945-1980*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

- Mitchell, Tony. 1996. *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop, and Rap in Europe and Oceania*. London and New York: Leicester University Press.
- Mitra, Royona. 2009. Akram Chan Company's *Bahok*." In *Performance, Embodiment and Cultural Memory*, edited by Colin Counsell and Roberta Mock, 41-58. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Moghissi, Haideh. 2006. "Introduction." In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture, and Identity*, edited by Haideh Moghissi, xiv- xxv. London and New York: Routledge.
- Moloney, Michael "Mick." 2002. *Far from the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish-American Immigration through Song*. New York: Crown.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. "Irish Music in America: Continuity and Change." PhD diss.: University of Pennsylvania.
- Monson, Ingrid, ed. 2000. *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective*. New York: Garland.
- Mookerjea, Sourayan, Imre Szeman, and Gail Faurschou, eds. 2007. *Canadian Cultural Studies: A Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Moore, Paul. 2003. "Sectarian Sound and Cultural Identity in Northern Ireland." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 265-279. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Morash, Chris. 2009. Review of *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture* (2006), Diane Negra, editor. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 29 (3): 411-413.
- Morey, Carl. 1997. *Music in Canada: A Research and Information Guide*. New York; London: Garland.
- Morgan, Robert. 2008. *Rise Again!: The Story of Cape Breton Island*. Book 1. Wreck Cove, N.S.: Breton Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009. *Rise Again!: The Story of Cape Breton Island*. Book 2. Wreck Cove, N.S.: Breton Books.
- Muise, D.A. 1998. "Who Owns History Anyway? Reinventing Atlantic Canada for Pleasure and Profit." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic* 27, no. 2 (Spring): 124-134.

- Mullen, Jethro. "Virtual Protest: Demonstrators Challenge New Law with Holograms." CNN. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/12/europe/spain-hologram-protest/> (accessed April 13, 2015).
- Nashville Nor'East. <http://www.nashvillenoreast.com> (accessed October 18, 2013).
- Negra, Diane, ed. 2006. *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Newton, David, and Pamela Newton. 2010. *They Came from Away: Yanks, Brits, and Cape Breton*. New York: iUniverse, Inc.
- Newton, Michael. 2005. "'This Could Have Been Mine': Scottish Gaelic Learners in North America." *e-Keltoi: Journal of Interdisciplinary Celtic Studies* 1:1-37. [http://www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol1/vol1\\_1/newton\\_1\\_1.html](http://www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol1/vol1_1/newton_1_1.html) (accessed January 10, 2013).
- NextGen. 2010. "NextGen – Results from Conference." [http://www.capebretonpartnership.com/documents/10\\_Next%20Gen%20-%20Results-1.pdf](http://www.capebretonpartnership.com/documents/10_Next%20Gen%20-%20Results-1.pdf) (accessed March 19, 2012).
- Nguyen, Thin, Bo Dao, Dinh Phung, Svetha Venkatesh and Michael Berk. 2013. "Online Social Capital: Mood, Topical and Psycholinguistic Analysis." In *Proceedings of the Seventh International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 449-456. Cambridge: AAAI Press.
- Noble, Denise. 2001. "Ragga Music: Dis/respecting Black Women and Dis/reputable Sexualities." In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 148-169. London: Zed Books.
- Nooshin, Laudan. 2008. "Ethnomusicology, Alterity, and Disciplinary Identity; or 'Do We Still Need an *Ethno*?' 'Do We Still need an *-ology*?' " In *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, edited by Henry Stobart, 71-75. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- North, Adrian, and David Hargreaves. *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Ó Súilleabháin, Mícheál. 1981. "Irish Music Defined." *The Crane Bag*, 5, no. 2: 83-87.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1984. *The Bodhran: A Practical Introduction*. Dublin: Walton's Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. *A River of Sound: The Changing Course of Irish Traditional Music*. Television series. Dublin: Hummingbird Productions in association with BBC Northern Ireland and Radio Telefís Éireann.
- O'Connor, Nuala. 1991. *Bringing it All Back Home: The Influence of Irish Music*.

London: BBC Books.

O'Connor, Thomas. 1994. *South Boston, My Hometown: The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1997. *The Boston Irish: A Political History*. Boston: Back Bay Books.

O'Dowd, Niall. 2013. "Trina Vargo Says the Irish Laugh at Irish American 'Shamrockery.'" *IrishCentral*. 31 December.  
<http://www.irishcentral.com/news/irishhorried-by-irish-americans-on-stpats-claims-trina-vargo-of-us-ireland-alliance-irish-laugh-at-the-yanks-she-says-as-she-seeks-funds-143786006-238125461.html> (accessed April 15, 2015).

O'Flynn, John. 2007. "National Identity and Music in Transition: Issues of Authenticity in a Global Setting." In *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location between the Global and the Local*, edited by Ian D. Biddle and Vanessa Knights, 19-38. Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT : Ashgate.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2009. *The Irishness of Irish Music*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.

O'Hara, Kenton, and Barry Brown, eds. 2006. *Consuming Music Together: Social and Collaborative Aspects of Music Consumption Technologies*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. 1984. "'Native' Anthropologist." *American Ethnologist* 11(3): 584-586.

O'Neill, Peter, and David Lloyd, eds. 2009. *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ooi, Can-Seng. 2002. *Cultural Tourism and Tourism Cultures: The Business of Mediating Experiences in Copenhagen and Singapore*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

O'Shea, Helen. 2008. *The Making of Irish Traditional Music*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Otero-Pailos, Jason Gaiger, and Susie West. 2010. "Heritage values." In *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, edited by Susie West, 47-87. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Paisley, Brad. "Online." Bradpaisley.com.  
<https://www.bradpaisley.com/music/songs/online> (accessed May 15, 2015).

- Parham, Angel Adams. 2005. "Internet, Place, and Public Sphere in Diaspora Communities." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 14(2/3): 349-380.
- Parker, David. 2001. "The Chinese Takeaway and the Diasporic Habitus: Space, Time, and Power Geometries." In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 73-95. London: Zed Books.
- Payaslian, Simon. 2010. "Imagining Armenia." In *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony David Smith, 105-138. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Pease, Thomas. 2006. "Gaelic Music of Cape Breton Island: The Last Fifteen Years." *Notes* Vol. 63(2): 401-417..
- Pierce, Jennifer Ewing. 2008. "Toward a Poetics of Transubstantiation: The Performance of Cape Breton Music and Dance." *TDR: The Drama Review* 52, no. 3 (T 199): 44-60.
- Pinker, Susan. 2014. *The Village Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make Us Healthier, Happier, and Smarter*. New York: Penguin.
- Powers, Jillian L. 2011. "Reimagining the Imagined Community: Homeland Tourism and the Role of Place." *American Behavioral Scientist* (55): 1362-1378.
- Pryke, Kenneth G. 1992. "Cape Breton: Identity and Nostalgia." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic* 22, no. 1 (Autumn): 169-184.
- Puleo, Stephen. 2007. *The Boston Italians: A Story of Pride, Perseverance, and Paesani, from the Years of the Great Immigration to the Present Day*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. *A City So Grand: The Rise of an American Metropolis, Boston 1850-1900*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Putnam, Robert, Lewis Feldstein, and Donald J. Cohen. 2004. *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015. *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- Qiu, Hong. 2003. "Communication among Knowledge Diasporas: Online Magazines of Expatriate Chinese Students." In *The Media of Diaspora*, edited by Karim H. Karim, 148-161. London: Routledge.
- Quinlin, Michael. 2004. *Irish Boston: A Lively Look at Boston's Colorful Irish Past*. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press.
- Radano, Ronald, and Philip V. Bohlman, eds. 2000. *Music and the Racial Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ramnarine, Tina K. 2007. "Musical Performance in the Diaspora: Introduction." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 16(1): 1-17.
- Ray, R. Celeste, ed. 2005. *Transatlantic Scots*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Reid, Roger Lane. "Cape Breton Piano: Betty Maillet," accessed June 29, 2015, [http://www.rreid.net/CapeBretonPiano/players/Betty\\_Mallet.html](http://www.rreid.net/CapeBretonPiano/players/Betty_Mallet.html)
- Reiss, Scott. 2003. "Tradition and Imaginary: Irish Traditional Music and the Celtic Phenomenon." In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 145-170. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- Reyes, Adelaida. 2009. "What Do Ethnomusicologists Do? An Old Question for a New Century." *Ethnomusicology* 53(1): 1-17.
- Rice, Timothy. 2010. "Disciplining *Ethnomusicology*: A Call for a New Approach." *Ethnomusicology* 54(2) (Spring/Summer 2010): 318-325.
- . 2008. "Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology." In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 42-61. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Risk, Laura. 2013. "The Chop: The Diffusion of an Instrumental Technique across North Atlantic Fiddling Traditions." *Ethnomusicology* 57, no. 3 (Fall): 428-454.
- Roberts, Krista L. 2012. "Song for the Mira." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/emc/song-for-the-mira> (accessed March 24, 2013).
- Robertson, Roland. 2012. "Globalisation or Glocalisation?" *Journal of International Communication* 18 (2): 191-208.
- Rushdie, Salman. 1991. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta.



- Russell, Ian, and Anna Kearney Guigné, eds. 2010. *Crossing Over: Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic 3*. Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen.
- Russell, Ian, and Goertzl, Chris. 2012. *Routes and Roots: Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic 4*. Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen.
- Russell, Ian, and Mary Anne Alburger, eds. 2006. *Play It Like It Is: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic*. Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen.
- . 2008. *Driving the Bow: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 2*. Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen.
- Ryan, Louise, Umut Erel, and Alessio D'Angelo. 2015. *Migrant Capital: Networks, Identities, and Strategies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Safran, William. 1991. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1(1): 83-99.
- . 2005. "The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective." *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring): 1-35.
- San Juan, Jr., E. 2005. "The Ordeal of Ethnic Studies in the Age of Globalization." In *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians and the Americas*, edited by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, 270-290. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Savaglio, Paula. 2004. *Negotiating Ethnic Boundaries: Polish American Music in Detroit*. Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press.
- Sayyid, S. 2001. "Beyond Westphalia: Nations and Diasporas – the Case of the Muslim Umma." In *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, edited by Barnor Hesse, 33-50. London: Zed Books.
- Schrooten, Mieke. 2012. "Virtual Migrant Communities: 'Orkut' and the Brazilian Case." Bielefeld (COMCAD Working Papers 80).
- Schultz, David. "The Phenomenology of Democracy: Putnam, Pluralism, and Voluntary Associations." In *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives on Community and 'Bowling Alone'* (2002), edited by Scott L. McLean, David Andrew Schultz, Manfred B. Steger, 74-98. New York: NYU Press.

- Scruggs, T.M. 2010. "Response to Rice." *Ethnomusicology* 54(2): 333-336.
- Scully, Michael F. 2008. *The Never-Ending Revival: Rounder Records and the Folk Alliance*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Seidler, Vic. 2003. "Diasporic Sounds: Dis/located Sounds." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 397-407. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Shears, Barry. 2008. *Dance to the Piper: The Highland Bagpipe in Nova Scotia*. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press.
- Sheffer, Gabriel. 2005. "Is the Jewish Diaspora Unique? Reflections on the Diaspora's Current Situation." *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring): 1-35.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 2010. "Towards a History of Ethnomusicology's North Americanist Agenda." In *Music Traditions: Cultures and Contexts*, edited by Beverley Diamond, Robin Elliott, and Gordon Ernest Smith, 113-127. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. "Musical Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64(2): 349-390.
- Skinner Sawyers, June. 2000. *Celtic Music: A Complete Guide*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Slobin, Mark. 1994. "Music in Diaspora: The View from Euro-America." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 3, no. 3: 243-251.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Rice's 'Crisis.'" *Ethnomusicology* 54(2): 337-338.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. "The Destiny of Diaspora in Ethnomusicology." In *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, 284-295. New York: Routledge.
- Small, Christopher. 1998. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Smith, Melanie K. 2003. *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge.

- Smith, Sean. 2010. "It's Transition Time for Cape Bretoners." *Boston Irish Reporter*. 3 June. <http://www.bostonirish.com/arts/it%E2%80%99s-transition-time-cape-bretoners> (accessed October 27, 2013).
- Smith, Stephen Samuel, and Jessica Kulynych. 2002. "Liberty, Equality, and ... Social Capital?" In *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives on Community and 'Bowling Alone'* (2002), edited by Scott L. McLean, David Andrew Schultz, Manfred B. Steger, 127-146. New York: NYU Press.
- Smith-Piovesan, Eileen P. "The Cape Breton Summertime Revue: Textural Power, Culture, and Identity." Master's thesis. University of Maine: 1999.
- Sommers Smith, Sally. 2001. "Irish Traditional Music in a Modern World." *New Hibernia Review* 5, no. 2 (Winter): 111-125.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. "Landscape and Memory in Traditional Irish Music." *New Hibernia Review* 2(1): 132-44.
- Song, Felicia Wu. 2009. *Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone, Online Together*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Sparling, Heather. 1999a. "Mitigating and Marketing Culture?: Promoting Mouth Music in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia." *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music/Revue de musique folklorique canadienne* 27: 1-9.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999b. *Puirt-a-beul: An Ethnographic Study of Mouth Music in Cape Breton*. Toronto: York University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. "Song Genres, Cultural Capital, and Social Distinctions in Gaelic Cape Breton." PhD dissertation: York University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2008. "Categorically Speaking: Towards a Theory of (Musical) Genre in Cape Breton Gaelic Culture." *Ethnomusicology* 52, no. 3 (Fall): 401-425.
- Spielman, Earl V. 1972. "The Fiddling Traditions of Cape Breton and Texas: A Study in Parallels and Contrasts." *Anuario Interamericano de Investigacion Musical*, Vol. 8: 39-48.
- Staff (no one writer). 2009. "It's Easy to Spot the Caper." *Cape Breton Post*. May 19. <http://www.capebretonpost.com/section/2009-05-19/article-784172/Its-easy-to-play-Spot-the-Caper/1> (accessed March 19, 2012)/.

- Statistics Canada. "Census Agglomeration of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia." Last modified January 8, 2015. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=225>
- Stewart, Ann, 2009. "Tradition and Modernity in Scottish Gaelic Language Media." *Final Reports of EFS student participants*. Paper 3. [http://scholarworks.umass.edu/efsp\\_field\\_rpts/3](http://scholarworks.umass.edu/efsp_field_rpts/3) (accessed July 9, 2012).
- Stokes, Martin, and Philip V. Bohlman. 2003. "Introduction." In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 1-26. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- Stokes, Martin. 1994. "Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity, and Music." In *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, edited by Martin Stokes, 1-27. Oxford and Providence: Berg.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. "Music and the Global Order." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (April):
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Response to Rice." *Ethnomusicology* 54(2): 339-341.
- Symoni, Peter. 2003. "'You Cannae Take Your Music Stand into a Pub:' A Conversation with Stan Reeves about Traditional Music Education in Scotland." In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 257-274. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- Tacchi, Jo. 2003. "Nostalgia and Radio Sound." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 281-295. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Tanaka, Atau. 2006. "Interaction, Agency, Experience, and the Future of Music." In *Consuming Music Together: Social and Collaborative Aspects of Music Consumption Technologies*, edited by Kenton O'Hara and Barry Brown, 267-288. New York: Springer.
- Targett, Mike. 2010. "NextGen 2010: Designing Cape Breton." Targett Design. (Blog entry). Posted June 14. <http://miketargett.com/2010/06/blog/nextgen-2010-designing-cape-breton/> (accessed March 19, 2012).
- Taylor, Timothy D. 2003. "Afterword: Gaelicer than Thou." In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 275-284. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- Taylor, Timothy. 2007. *Beyond Exoticism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Thompson, Marie. 2006. "The Myth of the Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler: The Role of a CBC Film in the Cape Breton Fiddle Revival." *Acadiensis: Journal of the History*

*of the Atlantic* 35, no. 2 (Spring): 5-26.

Tölölyan, Khachig. 1994. "A Note from the Editor." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 3(3): 241.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1996. "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5(1): 3-36.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2000. "Exiles and Institutions in the Armenian Transation." *Diaspora* 9(1): 107-136.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Beyond the Homeland: From Exilic Nationalism to Diasporic Transnationalism." In *The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony David Smith, 27-58. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers.

Trew, Johanne Devlin. 2003. "Diasporic Legacies: Place, Politics, and Music among the Ottawa Valley Irish." In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 93-118. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

Trigo, Abril. "Shifting Paradigms: From Transculturation to Hybridity: A Theoretical Critique." In *Unforeseeable Americas: Questioning Cultural Hybridity in the Americas*, edited by Rita De Grandis and Zilà Bernd, 85-111.  
<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/trigo1/pdf/ShiftinParadigms.pdf>  
(accessed January 28, 2013).

Turino, Thomas. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. Thomas, and James Lea, eds. 2004. *Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities*. Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press.

Turkle, Sherry. 2011. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books.

Vallely, Fintan. 2003. "The Apollos of Shamrockery: Traditional Musics in the Modern Age." In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 201-217. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2008. *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Varsava, Nina. 2008. "Displaced Majority: Roberston Davies and the Euro-Canadian Diaspora." *Orbis Litterarium* 63(1):1-21.

- Vergeer, Maurice, and Ben Pelzer. 2009. "Consequences of Media and Internet Use for Offline and Online Network Capital and Well-Being: A Causal Model Approach." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15(10): 189-210.
- Vokwana, Thembele. 2007. "Iph'indlela? Where is the Way? Resurrecting an African Identity through Popular Music in the Post-Apartheid South Africa." In *Music and Identity: Transformation and Negotiation*, edited by Eric Ayisi Akrofi, Maria Smit, and Stig-Magnus Thorsén, 3-19. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
- Waldron, Janice. 2012. "[YouTube, Fanvids, Forums, Vlogs and Blogs: Informal Music Learning in a Convergent On-and offline Music Community](http://www.cj.watertown.ma.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/5173)." *International Journal of Music Education*: April 12. doi:10.1177/0255761411434861
- Walter, Bronwen. 2004. "Irish Women in the Diaspora: Exclusions and Inclusions." *Women's Studies International Forum* 27, no. 4 (Oct.-Nov.): 369-384.
- Walvin, James. 2000. *Making the Black Atlantic: Britain and the African Diaspora*. London; New York: Cassell.
- Watertown Town Council. 2012. "Proclamation." November 10. <http://www.ci.watertown.ma.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/5173> (accessed September 17, 2014).
- Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Wells, Paul F. 1978. "Canadian and Canadian-American Music." *The Journal of American Folklore* 91, no. 361 (Jul.-Sep.): 879-884.
- Wells, Paul F., and Sally Sommers Smith. 2010. "Irish Music and Musicians in the United States: An Introduction." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 4(4): 395-399.
- West, Susie, and Marion Bowman. "Heritage as Performance." In *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, edited by Susie West, 277-312. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- West, Susie. 2010. "Introduction." In *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, edited by Susie West, 1-6. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Whitfield, Harvey Amani. 2008. "Reviewing Blackness in Atlantic Canada and the African American Canadian Diaspora." *Acadiensis* 37(2):130-139.

- Whitaker, Jennifer A., Evelyn K. Orman, and Cornelia Yarborough. 2014. "Characteristics of 'Music Education' Videos Posted on YouTube." *Applications of Research in Music Education*: July 11. doi: 10.1177/8755123314540662
- Witzleben, J. Lawrence. 2013a. "Front Matter." *Ethnomusicology* 57, no. 3 (Fall): i-iv.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2013b. "Review Essay: Music and Diaspora." *Ethnomusicology* 57, no. 3 (Fall): 525-532.
- Wobst, H. Martin. 2010. "Diaspora and Heritage: A Perennial Source of Conflict." *Museum International* 62 (1/2): 100-103.
- Wong, Deborah. 2004. *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Wong, Ketty. 2012. *Whose National Music? Identity, Mestizaje, and Migration in Ecuador*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Woods, Bret D. 2011. "Bakhtin and Genre: Musical-Social Interaction at the Cape Breton Milling Frolic." PhD. dissertation, The Florida State University.
- Wray, David. 2012. "'Daddy Lives at the Airport': The Consequences of Economically Driven Separation on Family Life in the Post-Industrial Mining Communities of Cape Breton." *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 24(2):147-158.
- Wyile, Herb. 2008. "Going Out of Their Way: Tourism, Authenticity, and Resistance in Contemporary Atlantic-Canadian Literature." *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 34, 2-3 (June/Sept.): 159-180.
- Young, Richard A., ed. 2002. *Music, Popular Culture, Identities*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Young, Robert J.C. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. Cambridge: Routledge.
- Zheng, Su. 2010. *Claiming Diaspora: Music, Transnationalism, and Cultural Politics in Asian/Chinese America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zumkhawala-Cook, Richard. 2005. "The Mark of Scottish America: Heritage Identity and the Tartan Monster." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 14 (Spring): 109-113.

CURRICULUM VITAE















