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**The Sociology of Music and Social Distinctions:
P!NK's Career as an Example of Social Linkage**

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Introduction

Music is extremely social. It is one of the most expressive art forms our society holds. Due this expressive nature, the art of making music can hold many social connotations and directly involve or relate itself to social occurrences, movements and ideals. This intertwined relationship thus allows music to be a conductor of social change by existing and working within these various social constructs. In addition, those involved with the music-making business are, by association, also potential conductors of social change. The way in which this change occurs is through the linkage of various social distinctions. Social distinctions are areas in society that exist on their own and are kept from interacting with other distinctions. These distinctions can have many sub-categories as well.

An example of a singular social distinction is race. Race is a singular distinction of a certain societal demographic. It stands alone based on its own inherent composition (biological, genetic and physical makeup) and social characteristics (culture, food, clothing style, etc.) that do not, or rarely, coincide with other races. Therefore race, as a social distinction, can be thought of as a single pearl on a strand of a necklace that touches other pearls but does not go past its exterior border. In addition social distinctions can have many subcategories. To picture this visually, it would look more like a circle inside of another circle, and so on, so that none of the circles are touching but are coexisting. So if we picture race as the outermost circle, the sub-circles can be labeled as White, Black, Asian, Hispanic and so on. All of these sub-categories fit within the realm of race as a social distinction but do not converge unless another force causes them to do so. This is where the power of an outside catalyst comes into play. Due the natural order of these distinctions, an outside force must break these rings and connect them in order for them to converge. We see this happen in many forms in society. Considering the potential and

social connotations music holds, we can consider this expressive art form as only one of the few catalysts for this change.

Music and musicians hold the capacity to conduct social change. By creating means of opening these circles and allowing them to connect, those involved in the music business thus hold the potential to conduct social change by the linkage of these various social distinctions. This is due to their previous embedment into already existing social distinctions. Musicians are already a part of one or more social distinction and can use this position to their advantage by reconfiguring the inner workings of social interactions. In other words, the work to connect these distinctions comes from within the organization of society. Music and musicians conduct social change in a number of different ways and for multiple purposes. These include, but are not limited to, their capacity to conduct social change through various forms of social linkage (in this study referred to as bridging and bounding), appealing to and continuing to uphold a massive following of supporters who are engaged by their work, allowing their work to connect musicians more personally to their audiences who may also strive for social change, and through the act of collective enactment where multiple individuals are involved with the promotion and public image of these musicians – creating a platform for success.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to examine musician's potential to conduct positive social change because of their ability to connect multiple social distinctions. This study will highlight a number of social distinctions that musicians encounter throughout their career and how they either become well-placed individuals through the linkage of these distinctions, or link social distinctions due to their power status. In addition, this study is meant to stand as a testament to the power of musicians and music to conduct effective social change through active and creative means versus those of other well-placed individuals in society, for example

politicians, actors, authors or even activists. Furthermore, this study focuses on the career of a musician who has been labeled as a “trailblazer” and “music outsider” due to her unapologetic behavior and work. This artist also takes very uncustomary routes for conducting change and is still a contemporary voice involved with social activism. For these reasons, including the number of social distinctions encountered in her career, this artist was chosen to be a centerpiece of the explanation concerning musicians and social change. In this study, the artist whose career serves as an example of the linkage of social distinctions is known as Alecia Beth Moore, or P!NK to the entertainment world. Portions of the study will also explain how P!NK differs from similar artists in the music industry and their capacity to conduct social change.

Methodology

Multiple informational platforms went into the generation of content for this study. The main platform was academic and scholarly articles, journals and readings mostly surrounding the topics of sociology and music sociology. Each source was read and annotated for information that correlated most accurately with the research question for the study. This was done by extensive highlighting of information that I deemed applicable to the theoretical framework of the sociology of music as well as P!NK’s ability to conduct social change. I collected notes from each source in a singular document and used said notes to formulate the thesis. All the information gathered was measured alongside the experiences of P!NK in order to determine what insights best aligned with her career. The information gathered from these sources were used as scholarly reasoning to defend P!NK’s acts of social linkage. On their own, these examples only serve as examinations without academic content and thus required further context to fit within the world of academia.

This is also where I conducted a micro rhetorical analysis of P!NK's career. Further content for this study generated from the analysis of song lyrics, music videos, interviews and performances done by P!NK. Lyrics were chosen to support claims of social linkage in the artist's written content (for example songs with politically charged words), music videos for visual content and interviews and performances for interactive content. Each example exemplifies P!NK's capacity to conduct social change through a number of mediums. By showcasing how the artist conducts social linkage through these various avenues, we can consider how the distinction nature of a musician to conduct social change differs from other social activists. In addition this study will distinguish P!NK as an artist separate from her peers.

Theoretical Framework for the Sociology of Music and Social Distinctions

Part A: The Identities of Music

Music is a mode of interaction that expresses and constitutes the relationship of two or more individuals, known as social relations. These relations include, but are not limited to, subcultures, organizations, classes or nations. At the same time, music embodies cultural assumptions – the ideas common throughout a culture regarding those relations. It can then be said that music is a form of communication that holds communal understandings about society. There are those who form the communication (i.e. musicians, artists and authors) and those who thereafter use the communication (listeners, viewers and readers). From this standpoint, music holds two identities: one as an object, or craft, and one as an activity. In addition, each identity of music holds a certain, and more specifically intended, affect on those involved.

A moment of creation, a stability of characteristics and a potential for use are what make music an object or craft. This object includes the physical productions of music as well as the

product that follows. This can encompass anything from turntables to instruments to synthesizers that result in a compact disc or digital track. In other terms, these are the crafts that form the object of music, thus accounting for its dual identity. From the instance a musician produces a sound, that sound holds a number of defining characteristics such as tempo, genre or lyrical content. The affect of this object comes in the form of a greater purpose than transcends the physical product. The attribution of music to soundtracks at weddings, graduation ceremonies and other gatherings are an example of this purpose. Music therefore has the ability to be placed and replaced throughout time or space but continues to hold these inherent qualities – making it an adaptable product.

As an activity, music is identified as something unbounded and open. Other than music being a point of production, it is also a type of language used amongst producers and consumers. Both the artist and his or her audience thus utilize music as an activity because it is shared between them through a vernacular vocabulary. The affect of musical activity comes in the form of a greater purpose as well – one within a greater social context. The term “musicking” often applies to this concept. The term implies that people do not solely create music, but adopt it as a lifestyle. This can be seen on both ends of the spectrum ranging from musicians, producers and record label holders to music fans, listeners, scholars and critics. “Musicking” thus compares music to a more verbal context than that of a noun. Music does not solely end with the musician’s production of a song or album. It instead surpasses the musician’s realm and spreads to a wider audience of listeners, critics and other musicians who also adopt music into their everyday lives. These “outside” mechanisms therefore account for music’s unbounded nature. Music is a constantly moving force that either cycles back to its original source or is recycled into a new format. This can be explained by the creation of new genres, new generations of

musicians and fans, and the continuation of an artist's career. With this concept in mind, we can consider the power music has to attach itself to one or multiple social distinctions, as well as individuals who hold the potential to connect them.

Social change is the alteration in the social order of society. In other words, it is the reformation of the social status of certain individuals or populations. Social changes can include those in nature, institutions, behaviors or relations. An example of a social change is often results from social movements such as women's right to vote (Women's Suffrage) or racial equality (Civil Rights Movement). Social groups are usually reordered, generally placed higher, in their importance dedicated by society's standards. Due to the highly social nature of music to serve as one of the many interworking forces in our society, through which we interact with one another, the capacity of music to drive social change is incredibly strong. The power of music to drive social change is assisted by the placement of well-placed individuals who are directly or indirectly embedded into social distinctions and work to link them. We can begin to think about how the context of music as an activity and an object allows musicians to also enact these same affects through their music.

Part B: Music and Social Linkage

According to an article published by Timothy Dowd and William Roy entitled, *What is Sociological About Music*, music connects social distinctions through two means: bounding and bridging.

Bounding shapes a society's system of alignment between conceptual distinctions and social distinctions. Conceptual distinctions are the means through which music is classified into genres while social distinctions are separated areas of society such as race and class. One

example of the musical bounding of distinctions took place during the 1920s when record companies targeted racial groups apart from their largest audiences. Companies created special labels, later translated into genre titles, and catalogs for people of color and non-color in order to align both distinctions. Bounding is also a process that does not occur frequently or autonomously. The process requires a catalyst for linkage. Therefore, it is important to note that the individuals involved with this method hold a tremendous amount of power that allots them to conduct this linkage. Aside from musicians, those who are a part of music companies, critics, employers and listeners have the greatest impact on how the public forms associations between music and social distinctions. They are thus the many potential conductors of social linkage.

Similar individuals facilitate the second form of musical alignment as well. Musical bridging blurs the linkage between social distinctions. This occurs when one social group embraces a musical genre that initially belonged to another. An example of musical bridging is that of large record labels shifting their production focus from more mainstream genres to less popular genres and performers. Recent analysis shows that the genre labels critics employ often overlap and therefore bridge the definitions of distinctive genres – including the boundaries of Pop and Rock music with those of R&B and Hip-Hop. Listeners, particularly high-status individuals, are heavily engaged in musical bridging of distinctions by aligning an array of music with their own daily experience. Music critics are more often referred to as these high-status individuals.

These individuals can be categorized as well-placed individuals in the music industry. Often times, a well-placed individual holds a powerful position and purpose. In a similar fashion these individuals hold a “self-fulfilling prophecy.” Matthew Salganik and Duncan Watts explain this concept in their article entitled, *Leading the Herd Astray: An Experimental Study of Self-*

fulfilling Prophecies in an Artificial Cultural Market. A “self-fulfilling prophecy” is a phrase coined by American sociologist, Robert Merton. It describes a “false definition of a situation evoking a new behavior which makes the original false conception come true.” In other words, an individual will define a situation as “real” if the consequences of the situation are also real. A common example of this phenomenon that most sociologists refer to is present in the cultural market. Customers use the popularity of products as a sign of quality – an example of social or observational learning – and may benefit from coordinating their choices with others such as listening to similar types of music, reading the same types of books and watching the same types of television programs. Incredibly, the influence individuals have over each other’s behavior can have important consequences for the cultural market’s behavior. As a result, the popularity of a product or project grows once customers realize their shared preferences and previous decisions to stay with said product (i.e. a music lover continuously purchasing an artist’s work).

A well-placed individual’s power and placement has a massive influence over their audience. The term “cumulative advantage” describes the process of early success that can lead to future success. If a well-placed individual is part of this equation, he or she can garner much success throughout the duration of his or her career.

Part C: Music Genres and Scenes

In an article written by Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson entitled, *Classification as Culture: Types and Trajectories of Music Genres*, the concept of music genre places cultural meaning at the forefront of any analysis of category construction. Genre is considered a conceptual tool that is used to classify cultural products in artistic fields, including music. The

concept describes a manner of expression that governs artists' work, their peer groups and the audiences for which their work is intended (Lena, Peterson).

Genre is seen as a way of defining music in its market, and sometimes, the market in its music. This codependent relationship is powered by a genre's ability to simultaneously categorize cultural objects and people – the object being the music and the people being the audience. The artist is placed in this scenario to act as a facilitator of this process. However, genre classifications are not static and neither is the individual. The viability of a particular genre field is often shaped by its connection to other organizational fields (Dowd). Lena and Peterson define music genres as systems of orientation, expectations and conventions that bind industries, performers, critics and fans in making what they identify as a distinctive form of music. Therefore, the influence of these forces outside the artists' creative work also shape to concept of the given genre.

Further exemplifying the formation of genres, the concept of a music scene describes clusters of musicians, promoters and fans that grow up around one or more genres of music. Examples of notable music scenes include country music in Nashville, Tennessee; jazz music in New Orleans, Louisiana; and blues music in Chicago, Illinois. A sense of community evolves within these local settings. In *Consolidating the Music Scenes Perspective*, Andy Bennett states that locally produced music accounts for the creation of this community. This music becomes a means through which individuals are able to situate themselves within a particular city, town or region while sharing their similar interests – creating an identity. Communities are then able to identify themselves and present this identity to others. For these individuals, the music that makes up the scene becomes a “way of life” in which they can express their everyday occurrences (Bennett).

When an artist creates work that is relatable and personable, specifically inside these music scenes, audience members are drawn in. They are able to more easily attach themselves to the singer's context by identifying with shared personal experiences. Lena and Peterson say there are two dominant approaches to the study of genre: text (the context in which the music is made or consumed) and social context (the general marketing categories of music such as pop). Through these common practices, music creates communities. Once this occurs, an artist can embody the values of this so-called "subculture" into their music and conduct social change by the linkage of different social distinctions that may exist in one community. This can also occur with the connection of multiple communities with even more variant distinctions. The scene serves as a playing field for the artist to utilize the many kinds of equipment and devise a game plan for victory (i.e. social change). Once this change is completed, the act gives the music scene a certain level of accreditation and recognition when the artist is able to facilitate this change.

Part D: Intraindividual Creation vs. Collective Enactment

Dowd and Roy state that music creation is also deeply social. Efforts in creating music are likely to be intraindividual, in which the artist takes complete control over his or her career, or explicitly collective, where individuals and organizations come together with their own interests to deliver music. In most cases, a team of individuals with similar ideas and capacities surrounding a specific genre will come together to market a specific artist. Dowd and Roy state that businesses collectively enact genres through a tactic known as collective enactment – where record producers, entrepreneurs and marketers work towards internally changing genres. Typically, these genres work in favor of popular music artists and thus achieve higher levels of notoriety. Rather than the cutting-edge developments of unheralded musicians, music forms have

historically taken mainstream approaches that emphasize well-known conventions and establish successful musicians. The musicians thus fit a more popular mold of society and outdo their “less famous” counterparts.

On the contrary, Lena and Peterson claim that musicians do not want to be confined by genre boundaries. The artist’s freedom of expression is supposedly bounded by the expectations of other performers, audience members, critics and the diverse others whose work is necessary to making, distributing and consuming symbolic goods. Therefore, some musicians break away from this explicitly collective enactment and will rely on intraindividual tactics. Sometimes artists are fortunate enough to have success through these means but it is difficult to completely fashion success for oneself without any support from other experienced music industry junkies. Whenever an artist is able to accomplish such a feat, and conduct social change on top of that, it is worthy of noting.

Part E: Identity and Meaning Construction

Dowd and Roy say music and its meanings inform people about who they are. Music both signals and helps constitute the identity of individuals and collectivities. This idea can be applied to the artist, who can create an identity for him or herself through music creation, as well as the audience. In other words, both parties on either the giving or receiving end of music construct self-identities from its context. Sometimes a party can also exist on both ends of this spectrum: creating and receiving the music product at hand. In addition, individuals construct an identity by using music to mark and document important aspects of their lives and to guide how they negotiate such activities. Such examples of these occurrences are often found in music documentaries where a story of a music group or singular artist is traced and how their work

helped them overcome struggles in their personal life. An example of this is the 2015 autobiographical film “Straight Outta Compton.” The film showcases how the exodus of Hip-Hop group N.W.A from Compton, California was driven by their music production and creation of self-identities from exposure to the music industry. N.W.A also crafted strong lyrical meaning into the content of their music based on their past experiences. This serves as a strong example of musicians’ self-expression.

Meaning does not simply reside in the content of media goods, but instead, in the interplay between audience and content. In other words, even if the artist has an intended meaning for their audience, music listeners are given minimal components for constructing interpretation from lyrical meaning. In other words, musical interpretation is extremely open to the public. For example, an artist may write a song about specific police brutality encounters they, or people they know, experienced. The song is a laundry list of injustices the musician faced and he or she is simply airing these injustices out to the public. As a result, music listeners will construct a meaning from these lyrics and formulate a common theme threaded through the song. In this case the potential meaning could be a call for activism. Furthermore, this could motivate individuals to conduct social change – incorporating civil rights activism into their identity. This explains the two entities that exist within music: meaning and identity. The first allows musicians to craft an impactful repertoire of work that is left to audience’s interpretation – similar to visual artists. The second allows music listeners, and musicians, to incorporate the meaningful and social content into their personality. The linkage between meaning and music thus making plays a crucial role in identity construction. The result benefits both parties involved in this linkage as well.

Dowd and Roy also state that groups of people take ownership of music once they identify themselves alongside the music. This concept explains the formation of artists' fan bases. Once the artist makes this linkage easy and clear for his or her audience, their fan base can grow in devotion to the musician as well as continue with his or her own identity construction. This benefits both parties because the musician is given more freedom and space to further their self-expression and touch more individuals. The audience will, in turn, continue to construct their relationship to the musician while furthering their identity construction as well. Dowd and Roy state that individuals find meaning by linking text and context. This is where the artist acts as a storyteller and theme-giver and audience members act as interpreters. Dowd and Roy also state that music enters individuals' subconscious through a deliberate meaning-making process. Often referred to as a "technology of the self," music gets into the body with little forethought and is something by which one finds reasoning to stand out as a unique individual. By listening to the soundtrack of a professional musician, the listener can develop meaning for his or her own soundtrack. Therefore the influence an artist holds on the creation of personal song listings is impeccable as well as the creation of certain attachments to songs.

Part F: Music and Gender

Gender has a significant impact on a musician's success. In *The Sociology of Music*, Dowd explains how nonmusical factors impact the success of females in a heavily male-dominated field. Nonmusical factors include assumptions about gender and race that may be associated with a specific genre and inhibit women from garnering the same success as their male counterparts. Let us take the example of rock music, since for a long time, the genre was

completely occupied by men and women faced many historical barriers in becoming rock instrumentalists.

A source entitled, *Gender and Cultural Consecration in Popular Music*, states that gender significantly shapes a performer's likelihood of musical consecration, or success. Female artists have long been at a disadvantage in this process for a number of reasons. The source states that female musicians have garnered fewer industry resources, less radio airplay and limited mainstream success in male-dominated genres like rock music. In addition, females receive less media coverage and critical attention in popular music. Most often times, men have occupied more central locations in the music industry including production roles and decision-making positions. Male writers also are said to edge out female writers in the industry. Therefore the presence of male songwriters has long been higher, and more noted, in the pop music industry. Female writers have not been given nearly as much credit even if their numbers closely mirrors that of male songwriters.

A further component of success that mostly correlates with male performers is originality. Critics often write more favorable of albums that are considered more original, serious and intellectual. "Good" music is defined by its intensity, rawness and seriousness – characteristics usually tied with male musicians. Softness and sentimentalism are often tied with female musicians (Faupel, Schmutz). Therefore, female musicians are dubbed less original because of their stereotypical music backgrounds, which are emplaced by society. This stereotype makes it even more difficult for women to break into the rock music industry because they will not be labeled as original as male performers who previously worked within this genre. This is also an ironic situation since one would think that musicians who break the stereotypical

mold are more original than those who have been creating the same music for extended periods of time.

In addition these artists will not contain a certain level of authenticity, which is another component of success for musicians. Authenticity is widely used in popular music, including the rock genres. Claims on authenticity give to claims of legitimacy. An artist will not be considered legit unless they are considered authentic in their work. Again, we see women in rock music at a disadvantage. Their music will not be perceived as original as that of male performers because of the systematic contrasts between male and female musicians that continuously place them in a bubble. This bubble enables women to push their levels of creativity and potential to be more original. In addition, society will not believe, or have a difficult time believing, that women can make a name for themselves in rock music.

Authenticity also gives way to a form of self-expression and identity. Authenticity is conceived as a form of self-expression whereby popular music is seen as “fundamentally a release of feelings” (Faupel, Schmutz). That is why rock music is considered more authentic and raw and more fitting of men. Male performers are more likely to portray deeper meanings of expression through their music than women. Therefore men dominate the more authentic forms of music. This authenticity helps establish these performers in the music time continuum by achieving a certain level of historical importance and label of a true artist. Again by society’s standards, women fall short of this continuum because they are deemed less emotional and sentimental in their music. Without this deeper context, a musician will not achieve historical importance.

Musical works endure longer because of their historical importance. Albums that are deemed “crucial to the history” of popular music are determined by the impact they have on their

field, other artists or society as a whole. Some argue that critics have fashioned a field that systematically excludes female musicians from achieving such high praise. Achieving historical importance gives way to the “ideology of the autonomous artist” as described by Faupel and Schmutz. This ideology was employed to cast certain rock musicians as deserving of the title of “artist.” The artist produces art for his or her own sake as a pure, creative expression and, at the same time, maintains artistic integrity by shutting out external influences. Therefore, it is more difficult for women to earn this title of “artist” when they are involved in the rock music genre because society perceives them as more susceptible to outside influences. Women are considered to have their work jeopardized by others and thus create music less intrinsic to their identity. Rock musicians have also historically been seen as the “artists” behind their form of cultural expression. In other words, they are the direct influencers of their cultural impact. Again, we as a society traditionally connect these ideals to male performers and masculine stereotypes. We do not often praise women for being able to create a cultural impact on their own and independent accord. Therefore when a woman is able to portray herself as an autonomous artist, the critical world takes much notice.

Often times, however, women may not be completely autonomous but use their “semi-autonomous” to create social networks with other individuals in the music industry. Sociological research shows that social networks carry many benefits. For musicians, it assists them in gaining legitimacy through their connections to other artists and important figures in the industry. Music critics also legitimize an artist by highlighting actual networks with renowned artists in the field. The role of social networks in enhancing the legitimacy of an artist is mediated by critics who choose whether or not to highlight the connections an artist has to others. This creates, what Faupel and Schmutz describe as, an “imagined network” in which

artists are compared to one another. An example of this legitimization, specific to female performers, is shown through the formation of all-female bands, girl groups or collaborations.

Female artists are said to have fewer connections to recognized and distinguished individuals in the music industry. They are therefore hypothesized to lose their reputations over time. This is because the dominance of male reputations in popular music hampers the reputation of female performers. Therefore, women in male dominant genres rely heavily on these connections to assist them in staying relevant in popular music. This is one way through which female musicians can overcome nonmusical factors that inhibit them from entering the male-dominated music domains.

Part G: Music and Social Movements

Music has the potential to integrate individuals into social movements. At the same time, music expresses and reinforces social values and ideas. It is pro-socially believed that all forms of cultural and leisure activities, including music, are positive manifestations of the quality of life. In other words, the production of music is an indicator of proactive social change because it actively demonstrates that a movement is taking place and positively impacting people's lives by helping them spread their message or messages (Blau).

Judith R. Blau states in her article, *Music as Social Circumstance*, that music is the expression of shared community experiences. Social cohesion for musical events involves many people who are integrated into groups and promote cooperation through rules and convention. In turn, these various musical conventions such as lullabies, national anthems and social protest songs, create social bonds. Blau even references French poet, Charles Baudelaire, on the universal appeal of music and its effectiveness to integrate large numbers of individuals by

saying “music arouses similar ideas in different brains” (Blau). Individuals come together collectively for a similar cause, thought or ideal despite having different personalities or backgrounds. With that said, artists either intentionally or unintentionally embed themselves into a social group with differing points of view and unite them. They can use this group in order to promote a certain social movement.

Social movements therefore come together in the music industry through this collective process of individuals sharing similar ideas. At the same time, the group will appoint a figurehead to lead this process. This group could choose to target a specific musician, or musicians, who stand for and promote the group’s ideas in their work. This promotion can come from the artist’s song lyrics directly, concert performances, official and unofficial spoken and written statements, sense of style or music video productions.

Blau’s article presents three different theories about the correlation between popular music and social organization. These theories are (1) that culture simultaneously expresses and promotes social well-being and suggests that the greater the supply of cultural opportunities of all kinds there are in place, the lower will be the levels of social disorganization and discontent; (2) the prediction of a link between popular culture and forms of social disorganization, and most especially of violence; and (3) posits that alienation and class inequalities explain the prevalence of popular music and also of urban discontent (Blau). The article even explains how popular music theoretically creates more social disorganization and isolation but the results found after the case study are very complex and do not prove one theory over another.

Part H: Music and Politics

Blau states that the main contention of social circumstance is that popular culture is the expression of the social brutality, mindless acquiescence or decadence of the masses. According to a study done on national anthems, as explained by Dowd and Roy in *What is Sociological About Music*, musical texts and sounds can be linked to a certain political meaning. The study suggests nations that have less political views tend to have more monotone anthems while nations with more political differences have more dynamic anthems. These political connotations can also be applied to the politically charged anthems of the popular music world.

Musicians may often use this conception in their work. In order to promote songs charged with political content, artists will select an often times vibrant, catchy or lively backdrop to highlight the issues plaguing a nation. The goal is to gather the audience's attention enough to make them realize what is going on in their country and hopefully drive political change. We see this occur in a number of areas in the music industry, specifically in certain genres. The realms of Hip-Hop and Rock and Roll generally take the reigns when it comes to politically charged anthems. Witnessing a musician in the pop music domain conduct such a linkage occurs less frequently, but is not uncommon.

Artists may also not limit their political power to song lyrics. They may also use their artistic abilities to captivate audiences through live performances, album artwork, music videos and more. The goal is to promote and spread these messages to as many individuals, and through as many mediums, as possible. Typically, musicians may decide to dedicate themselves to one political movement or issue and continuously promote it throughout his or her career. However it is not uncommon for musicians to highlight a laundry list of political concerns through their music. We have seen musicians take charge in many political avenues such as political party differences, views on presidents and political acts. It is the freedom of the artist that allows

musicians to capitalize on as many issues as they would like to promote. Their creativity also makes them ideal activists. Differently to that of politicians, activists, actors or authors, musicians often hone in on their creative efforts to promote political campaigns that they support. They also have used similar tactics in the past, so they can continue to utilize their craft. For example, the singer Halsey utilized her power as both a creative writer and public speaker when she shared a poem at a women's march in protest of sexual assault awareness and lack of laws. Halsey was able to hone in on her craft as a songwriter and a performer by combining both traits into one act that promoted an ongoing political phenomenon that the United States has struggled to resolve. Therefore we see the creative impact artists can have on the political world as well as those already involved. In a way, this creates a more human element to these causes – connecting the honesty and reality of these issues to political legislation and regulations. This allows civilians to gain an even better, and clearer, understanding of such issues. In turn, they too can conduct positive social change after witnessing their favorite celebrities do so.

P!NK's Career as an Example of Social Linkage

Part A: Music Genres and Scenes

Since the beginning of her career, P!NK was embedded alongside the cumulative advantage of achieving success through musical bounding and bridging of social distinctions. Being that P!NK was a young artist about to break into the music industry, she was susceptible to a “cookie cutter” format of the modern-day pop star. P!NK was to be marketed alongside other already popular young, female artists (Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears) while embodying the musical styling of her label mates at LaFace Records (TLC, Usher and Toni Braxton). In other words, P!NK was a white artist being marketed to a black audience. In this scenario, P!NK

serves as an interesting case study of how a white musician connects the social distinctions of race and music through genre.

P!NK's genre was originally a crossbreed between R&B/Soul music and Pop – a non-static genre that did not fit the mold of one, typical genre. The R&B component resulted from her association with LaFace records, a predominantly black artist label, and the Pop component resulted from her own cultural background, as well as marketing tactics to be promoted alongside other white artists. The result was a fluid genre that appealed to multiple music scenes as well as P!NK becoming a versatile artist appealing to multiple audiences. P!NK was therefore marketed to the local R&B/Soul music scene of Los Angeles, California where she began her career.

This was an imperative component for solidifying P!NK's career early on. At the age of thirteen, P!NK began her career in a rock band but transitioned to an R&B/Pop genre career path by age fifteen. Once offered a solo record deal, P!NK moved from her hometown in Doylestown, Pennsylvania to Los Angeles. Being that the artist transferred from her home state of Pennsylvania all the way to California, P!NK came without attachments to the area. She therefore had to build her own connections in order to develop her music career. This began with embedding herself into the community. P!NK's production team thus worked to create a sound and image that fit within this realm.

Most of P!NK's early work surrounded the concepts of love and heartbreak – a common theme among the R&B community. However, the first track off the singer's debut album took a slightly different direction. "Split Personality" is an identity crisis single that explains the ongoing and conflicting thoughts, emotions and desires running through the artist's head that lead her to believe that she is mentally unstable. The song is presented as an inner dialogue P!NK is having with her subconscious and thus does not fit the typical mold of an R&B love ballad.

“You don't know me well enough to label me, sick, or even disturbed

When you break it down I'm just two girls

Trying to blend, trying to vibe

(Trying)

Trying to live just one life

(So hard)

Everybody's got insanities I got a split personality”

It can be assumed that P!NK was trying to present more of her authentic self into her music. This exemplifies P!NK's strong and personable nature as a young artist against highly imperious powers. Despite having a slightly left-hand approach to “Split Personality,” the singer adopted shared traits of a music scene community and her own personal desires into her work. The text of P!NK's work appeals to a different audience that most R&B artists may not strive to acclaim. It is possible that her intended audience circles around individuals who are also dealing with identity crises. At the same time, P!NK is still an interworking factor within the R&B community. In other words, she is both within and without the community that is spurring her initial success.

P!NK's singing style, sound and appearance were all cohorts that bleed into the personalities of the people living in this community. As a result, P!NK was able to successfully market herself to the already existing R&B/Pop community of Los Angeles. She also brought this recognition to a whole new audience and, even more so, another race. From this example, one can determine that the social linkage of these two races (Black and White) was conducted tastefully and respectfully. P!NK and her team did not experience any backlash from her promotion and production of music but instead appealed to a whole new audience that other

white artists had not previously done before in the same fashion. The black, R&B/Pop community of Los Angeles accepted P!NK for her efforts to embed herself in another culture. Although not an ideal form of expression seen in popular music at the time, P!NK was still able to exhibit the social context approach through her embedment into a specific music scene community.

With the knowledge that the understandings of a given genre serve as powerful tools for socialization, P!NK's marketing team launched her into the limelight that encompassed many, already well-placed musicians. LaFace presented P!NK to the mainstream music scene in 2000 with the release of *Can't Take Me Home*. The album was certified double platinum and produced two, top ten singles on the Billboard Hot 100 chart: "Most Girls" and "There You Go." The success of her debut not only saw P!NK successfully link the social distinctions of race and music, it also set up the framework for the artist to break many more barriers and link social distinctions in her career.

Part B: Collective Enactment

P!NK's initial success was not fueled by her own artistic visions. Instead, a collective team of individuals within the music industry mostly manufactured the work surrounding *Can't Take Me Home*. This concept is known as collective enactment. Collective enactment sustains and changes genres by mostly working within an already present genre. In P!NK's case, she was introduced to a pre-existing genre that her production team worked within to accommodate her as a new artist and, in other words, find a place for her that was both similar and different. Multiple efforts went into creating the artist's initial success, including her own efforts alongside her production team, but at times P!NK's creative visions were altered or taken from her.

In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, P!NK stated that when she first began her career, she “felt like a puppet.” The artist wanted to overrule the record company standards and take control of her own career. “Everything in this business is designed to encourage you to play along,” P!NK was quoted saying, “they know people are so hungry for stardom that they’ll just follow the record industry game. I know because I was ready to do anything when I started out. But I found that selling records wasn’t enough. I told myself after the first that I’d rather go back home and start over again than be trapped in a one-dimensional world any longer.” The interviewer credited P!NK with being bold enough to make a difference in the conservative pop business climate. Everything from record companies, to record company timidity, to radio format rigidity discourages risk-taking, for artists, the source concludes. P!NK therefore felt trapped by her genre boundaries and lacked a certain level of expression. However the artist was able to break free of these inhibitions in the next portion of her career and conduct further social linkages of social distinctions. In a way, the platform of her initial success and deeper understandings of the inner workings of the music industry allowed P!NK to rewire these workings to her advantage, and to the advantage of the public.

Part C: Identity Construction and Redirection

By the time P!NK was working on her second album, the singer took the intraindividual path by taking control of her material and, more importantly, her identity. On her sophomore effort, *Missundaztood*, released in 2001, P!NK crafted songs ringing with personal truth. These songs contained subject matter ranging from family struggles to the pressures and heavy influence P!NK experienced during the first portion of her career as a young musician. A strong example from the album is the song entitled, “Don’t Let Me Get Me,” in which she writes:

“LA told me, ‘You'll be a pop star,
All you have to change is everything you are.’
Tired of being compared to damn Britney Spears
She's so pretty, that just ain't me”

The singer even takes this concept one step further by exposing the detrimental, psychological effects these pressures have on young artists in the music industry.

“Doctor, doctor, won't you please prescribe me something
A day in the life of someone else?
Cause I'm a hazard to myself
Don't let me get me
I'm my own worst enemy
It's bad when you annoy yourself
So irritating
Don't wanna be my friend no more
I wanna be somebody else”

P!NK strayed from the customary means of songwriting during the early 2000s by offering these harsh realities of pain and how they impact one's self-awareness and confidence. It was not customary for popular artists to sing about issues concerning derogatory self-judgment and societal expectations. It was even more uncustomary to sing of both concepts on one album. It was even more unheard of to have that album sell over twelve million copies and produce three top ten singles, “Don't Let Me Get Me” included. At the time, society was used to more clean cut and reserved musicians who did not dig as far below surface as P!NK.

Another song on *Missundaztood* transformed P!NK's career even more by offering a window into the singer's childhood. "Family Portrait" is an R&B/Pop ballad that explains the harsh reality of the singer's parent's marriage. The couple ultimately divorced before the singer reached the age of ten. On the song, P!NK chronicles her parents' constant fighting along with her own take on the experience:

"You fight about money, 'bout me and my brother
 And this I come home to, this is my shelter
 It ain't easy growing up in World War three
 Never knowing what love could be, you'll see
 I don't want love to destroy me like it has done my family"

In addition P!NK expresses her plea to fix her family's situation and have a better future.

"Can we work it out, can we be a family?
 I promise I'll be better, Mommy I'll do anything
 Can we work it out, can we be a family?
 I promise I'll be better, daddy please don't leave"

This serves as another case in which P!NK was able to successfully capitalize on her personal experiences to build a better relationship with her audience.

Without P!NK's dedication to raw concepts of expression as well as her incorporation of personal experiences, her audience would struggle to construct a meaning from her lyrics while also continuing to add to their personal identities. When music follows a superficial mold, so while the audience receiving the final product. P!NK's work allowed a large number of individuals to relate to her own personal struggles and find comfort in knowing that they are not alone, while diving deeper into their own experiences. This in turn inspires more people to be

open about their turbulent pasts and seek closure, possibly through creative means which mirror musicians efforts.

Another component of identity structure through music is the creation, or relation to, personal soundtracks of, or with, pre-existing songs. P!NK's work on *Missundaztood* exhibits an autobiographical style that her and other individuals can add to their own biographies and biographical soundtracks. Songs like "Don't Let Me Get Me" and "Family Portrait" show this effort. By constructing an autobiography, P!NK embodies more personal stories and life accounts than on her first album and, in turn, is able to reach a wider audience and capitalize on her fame. P!NK's listeners can adopt traits of the same stories and contribute them to their own identities and personal stories.

In addition to the audience she was able to reach on her last work, P!NK developed an entirely new fan base with the release of *Missundaztood*. P!NK reached a larger mass of support through her identity transformation which came at the time music listeners were used to various, organized groups that fit into the pop mold (NSYNC and Backstreet Boys) as well as pop divas with pristine acts and images. In a way, the singer was able to represent a minor demographic of society that had not previously received a lot of fame. By breaking the traditional mold, P!NK transformed the music industry by applying an edgier, realer sound and image that differed from most of her contemporaries and represented members of society.

By highlighting P!NK's dramatic transformation, we can begin to consider how her track towards conducting positive social change differs from that of other artists who have experiences similar occurrences and encounter similar social distinctions in their career. P!NK's follow-up success differed from that of other white artists who were embedding themselves into predominantly black music markets. Artists in the past, before P!NK's time, who were famous

for this endeavor include Elvis Presley, Eminem and the Beastie Boys. All of these musicians successfully blurred the racial divide by crafting music that appealed to all audiences while not offending either audience, at least to a continuous and notable degree, throughout the duration of their career. Therefore, a positive social change was conducted on all platforms. However, P!NK's success differed from these other musicians because she decided to leave the scene that garnered her original success. By redirecting her career path, P!NK chose to cater to her own musical needs and desires by breaking the mold of a malleable and consistent artist. This also exemplified P!NK's strong autonomous nature as a young artist which is often left unseen and uncommon in one's career.

While most artists tend to stay within their genre realm, P!NK identified herself as a trailblazer and pop-outsider early on. She did not necessarily abandon the foundation of support she received from *Can't Take Me Home*, but instead used it to her advantage on *Missundaztood*. P!NK pulled out her inner workings that directly correlated with the inner workings of her fan base. As they began to grow in devotion to her music and style, their admiration for P!NK spread across all barriers, thus conducting positive social change on their own accord after being sparked by the artist. P!NK was then able to obtain an even larger following, which is also not seen in many artist's career by their sophomore album. Typically this second effort determines the longevity of an artist's career in the music industry, so artists try to continue the success of their first album by staying similar to their previous work. However P!NK chose a completely different direction by pushing the limits of her creative capacity. This unique art of inconsistency allowed P!NK to separate herself from her contemporaries by linking the social distinctions of race through genre and identity. It is this same consistency and rawness that has allowed P!NK to uphold her large fan base throughout her career.

Part D: Breaking the Male Mold

P!NK overcame a number of nonmusical factors in order to gain success while working on her sophomore album. The first was gender stereotypes in the music industry. P!NK embodied both male and female gender stereotypes into the work on *Missundaztood* because the work entered the rock music genre that differed from P!NK's prior music background. In order to overcome the gender barrier, she crafted a work that was raw and intense, but also soft and emotional. The result gave P!NK one of the most critically acclaimed albums the singer would experience during the first half of her career. P!NK proved that female performers could uphold traits usually associated with male artists that accounts their own success. P!NK was also able to place her work among the same level of historical importance that male performers often reach.

This effort also came through P!NK's social networking tactics on *Missundaztood*. P!NK hired a female producer, Linda Perry of the famous 1980s alternative rock band Four Non Blondes. The formerly, well-know artist, who assisted P!NK during her identity transformation, garnered much success on her own as part of an all-female group. By recruiting a successful artist with previously achieved historical importance and authenticity, Perry's effort helped legitimize P!NK as a serious and credible artist who was expanding her musical repertoire and production apart from her debut. *Missundaztood* was able to accomplish this feat and earn a spot as one of the most historical, career shifts for an artist in the 21st century.

In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, P!NK's transformation from *Can't Take Me Home* to *Missundaztood* was called the "most radical R&B-to-rock transformation since Prince abandoned disco for 'Dirty Mind'" (2003). In another interview, the singer's "trademark" was

labeled as “a mix of rock’s bright rebelliousness and emotional rawness with dance music’s infection beats” (2010). It can be said that P!NK was able to outwork this sociological system that favored male musicians by having her name reach the same historical status of one of the greatest musicians of all time, while still being a young singer and newcomer to the music industry. The result was a positive impact on the female artist community. P!NK, at this point in her career, with her high praise and received notoriety was beginning to inspire the next generation of female musicians.

To further her success in the early 2000s, P!NK continued to expand her social network. In 2002, she partnered with other notable, female musicians for a remake of the classic hit single, “Lady Marmalade.” R&B/Soul group LaBelle, featuring famous Soul singer Patti LaBelle, first made the song popular in 1974. Rapper Missy “Miss Demeanor” Elliott, a well-established female Hip-Hop artist in the early 2000s, enlisted the talents of P!NK, Christina Aguilera, Mýa and Lil Kim for the remake of the song. The song and video accompaniment launched all four singers into the limelight when the single remained number one on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart for five weeks. Each performer also earned a Grammy Award. This was P!NK’s first Grammy.

P!NK earned her autonomous nature through two means. First, P!NK was writing the majority of her lyrical content for *Missundaztood*. At this time of the singer’s career, little to no women were writing and producing all their work. Even more so, women in rock music were almost never seen doing such a feat and with the assistance of former rockers, such as Perry. Therefore P!NK put herself at more of a disadvantage by placing herself in a lesser percentage of existing female songwriters; so the fact that she was able to garner so much success as this autonomous artist is highly incredible and noteworthy. P!NK also garnered this autonomy with

the help of other female artists. By sharing the stage and success with other female artists, P!NK contradicted the systematic belief that men often dominate the charts. P!NK and her group were able to challenge this sociological theory. She also was compared to other artists in her wheelhouse, including Aguilera, but managed to hold her own identity that separated her enough from these artists. Therefore, P!NK was legitimated through connections to others rather but also earned artistic autonomy by contrasting expected, gender stereotypes of female musicians. The singer earned a positive view from her audience for being bold, unique and off the cusp without straying too far away from the pop culture world. P!NK stayed both within and outside her societal limits and was able to showcase how artists can encompass both worlds: an example that had not been seen in the music world for a long time.

The next stage of P!NK's career exhibited another monumental change to her style and sound. After personally embellishing the *Missundaztood* track list, P!NK ran dry with deeper material. The singer decided to produce a less meaningful work called *Try This*, released in 2003. The album exhibited more of a rock genre and P!NK therefore embedded herself within another music scene. At this point, however, in her career, P!NK was embedding herself alongside other, well-established female artists. There were a growing number of women involved with the alternative rock genre including Alanis Morissette, Fiona Apple, Tori Amos and Gwen Stefani of the band No Doubt. Therefore P!NK embodied a strong social trend into her career while uniquely catering this trend to her own style and sound. The combination of this entry on top of the artist's previous autonomous and original nature, combined with the past work of other female rock musicians, allowed P!NK to enter a whole new realm of success. *Try This* did not compete with the past sales of P!NK's work but she did receive her first Grammy award as a solo artist. Her song, "Trouble," received a Grammy for Best Female Rock Vocal Performance.

From this point in her career, P!NK was able to successfully combat stereotypes against female rock musicians and continue to incorporate this genre into her own music style. The singer released her *Greatest Hits...So Far!!!* album in 2010. Here we see P!NK continue to capitalize on the creation of authentic and impactful work. A promotional single for the album, “Fuckin Perfect” was released the same year and reached the number two spot on the Billboard 100 chart. The song showcases P!NK’s long career of personal, authentic and powerful songwriting and performing skills. “Fuckin Perfect” is written, in a way, to a younger P!NK, or even her own daughter, addressing any insecurities, troubles and issues she is experiencing in her life. The overarching message of the song is that everyone is perfect just the way they are, despite any aspects they may deem “imperfect.”

“Mistreated, misplaced, misunderstood
 Miss "No way, it's all good", it didn't slow me down
 Mistaken, always second guessing, underestimated
 Look, I'm still around
 Pretty, pretty please, don't you ever ever feel
 Like you're less than fuckin' perfect”

The music video for the song is also a raw and emotional presentation of the toll these imperfections, and society’s views of these imperfections, has on one’s physiological development. Similar to her previous work on *Missundaztood*, P!NK turns these negative attitudes into positive actions and in the end of the video. We see the main character rise from her struggles and find peace in her success. This is the direct example of positive social change through visuals. P!NK is inspiring her audiences to embrace their insecurities and differences in

a beautiful manner. This in turn will inspire more individuals to develop a strong sense of confidence in a similar fashion as the artist.

An emotionally-charring piece, P!NK again ties in her own experiences to make her audience feel more connected to her work and adds a greater purpose to her placement as a high individual in the music industry. Women are often tied to jobs that require more emotional labor because it is generally assumed that women feel and manage their emotions better than men. We therefore expect female musicians to be portrayed as more emotionally authentic than male performers (Faupel, Schmutz). P!NK capitalizes on this concept by incorporating her experience as a mother and caregiver to enhance her authenticity. She even exhibited this concept fairly recently in her career.

The artist was recently awarded the Video Music Association's Video Vanguard Award. As part of this high honor, P!NK honed in on her experience as a mother and expanded her authenticity as a musician. The singer spoke about acceptance with a direct message towards her daughter accepting herself. P!NK even incorporated past examples of successful artists who also embraced their own uniqueness and earned much success in doing so (Michael Jackson, David Bowie, Freddie Mercury, etc.) "We don't change. We take the gravel and the shell and we make a pearl," was the famous line of her speech P!NK was quoted saying – a strong example of the authentic nature she promotes through her persona.

P!NK's versatility as an artist also proves a strong case of the artist's ability to gain success in a male-dominated field. This came despite an increased number of press coverage on rock music. The coverage often focused more on male musicians and music critics were notorious for being more judgmental of female artists. We see P!NK embody this trend throughout her career as she chooses to stay true to herself as a musician and put out

continuously authentic work. As a result the artist has a credible name for herself as someone who is authentic and not overproduced by the expectations of popular music culture. Her impact in the realm of rock music has been a positive one for fellow female musicians, and even carries down to the personal level. Not only has P!NK sought to inspire fellow females in the music industry, but also her daughter. While the increasing number of young women in rock music continues to grow in the contemporary music age, young girls will also learn values of self-worth from observing P!NK's work both inside and outside the studio.

Part E: Equity for Sexuality Labels

One social movement that P!NK specifically embeds herself is the social and political equality for the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) community. This community is a historically suppressed and condemned minority of American civilization, and P!NK first identified as an LGBTQ advocate at the start of her career. The singer began her musical journey in the latter half of the 1990s – a time where growing social efforts had been rising for the LGBTQ community, but had not garnered large effective or political status. In P!NK's case, she came across a number of individuals, who would eventually become her friends, whom were part of the LGBTQ community.

In an interview with *The Advocate*, the singer was quoted saying, “When I first moved to Los Angeles, I was an honorary lesbian...I wasn't gay, but all my girlfriends were” (2012). In a separate interview with the *Huffington Post*, P!NK commented on the support these friends brought her throughout her career. “They've been the most loyal part of what I do. They've been my most loyal friends, to be honest. I've had a lot of gay boys around, but my gay girls are my rootstalk...I should be gay by the way I look and the way that I am. I just happen to not be. But it

just makes perfect and complete sense” (2016). P!NK’s open and encompassing nature, as well as close interaction with the LGBTQ community, despite being a heterosexual woman, aligns with the singer’s comment on her diverse following. “I just feel like it’s bringing people together and it’s rad” (2016), she stated later in the interview. This ultimately can be considered P!NK’s mission as a musician.

P!NK’s presentation of this social cohesiveness is expressed through her music, specifically through a number song lyrics and music videos. The singer’s third studio album, *Try This*, album contained the hit song, “God is a DJ” – a suggestive self-love and empowerment anthem combined with the freedom of expression. The essence of the song is captured in its chorus:

“If God is a DJ
 Life is a dance floor
 Love is the rhythm
 You are the music
 If God is DJ
 You are the music
 You get what you’re given
 It’s all how you use it.”

The words serve as a metaphor for individuals accepting the traits and qualities they have been given and using them to their fullest ability. This idea ties into those individuals in the LGBTQ community who feel ashamed or oppressed by the strong; heterosexual pressures society places on its people. P!NK therefore advises, not only her fans who are in this position, but also the rest of society to accept the differences of the LGBTQ community. P!NK also presents this message

of acceptance in her music video for the song. The video depicts a number of cross-dressed individuals being prideful and confident in their attire.

Not only did P!NK present this issue during the early stages of her career when the social movement of LGBTQ equality was lifting off, she also reinforced her ideologies within recent years. The singer's latest album release, *Beautiful Trauma*, hit the market in 2017. The album features two lead singles that continue to tackle the issue of LGBTQ acceptance and awareness. The lead single, "What About Us," was dubbed an anthem for the "misfits" of society, otherwise known as various minority groups. The song puts those who are often left out and forgotten at the forefront of attention and recognition. P!NK presented an important issue alongside LGBTQ acceptance in the music video for the song. The video portrays a male, assumingly homosexual, couple aggressively dancing and grappling one another. The motions and image are to depict domestic violence among the LGBTQ community. Again, we see P!NK promoting the acceptance of such individuals but by adding another layer of social change. She presents the issue of domestic violence to project that a common phenomenon among the heterosexual community also exists in the homosexual, therefore leveling the playing field of importance and severity with which the issue should be handled.

The second single from *Beautiful Trauma* that serves as a strong case of LGBTQ activism is entitled "Secrets." The song suggests one hiding their homosexuality from another individual. This is present in the lines,

"Put is in the closet, lock the doors

Wondering which on is worse

Is it mine or is it yours

Put it in the closet, lock the doors

Wondering which on is worse

I'll show mine if you who yours.”

These lyrics follow the social cliché of one “coming out of the closet,” which means one admitting their homosexuality. P!NK plays on this common ideal by incorporating it into her song lyrics as a playful secret. In addition, the singer also promotes a strong message of acceptance in her music video for “Secrets.” The video showcases men and women dancing provocatively with the same sex, involving close touching, grabbing of the groin area and kissing. The singer is even seen dancing sexually with a woman. This is a strong case of acceptance for P!NK to be making considering her marriage to former freestyle, motocross competitor Carey Hart and the two children the couple have together.

Overall P!NK’s message of acceptance of the LGBTQ community plays a strong hand in the movement of these individuals’ social and political equality. The singer’s end goal through her work is to bring about positive equality and for society to disregard sexuality labels as derogatory. In an interview with *Gay Star News*, P!NK stated, “I think that the best day will be when we no longer talk about being gay or straight – it’s not a ‘gay wedding’ it’s just a ‘wedding,’ it’s not a ‘gay marriage’ it’s just ‘a marriage.’” “It’s not a ‘black man’ or ‘white woman,’ it’s just ‘a man’ and ‘a woman’ or ‘a human’ and ‘a human.’ I’d just like to get to that” (2012).

Therefore we can assume that P!NK’s work as a well-placed individual in society went against a well-researched theory of social disorganization and popular music. Instead of creating a stronger divide between society and the LGBTQ community, P!NK used her own experiences, song lyrics and music videos to present a hopeful message of acceptance. The singer presented and continues to present this message to her diverse group of followers who will be exposed to

creative form of social linkage through popular culture. As a result, her fan's dedication to P!NK's work and career will ultimately support her efforts with the social movement and cause more social change across ground level of society.

Part F: "Dear Mr. President"

Deemed by her standards, P!NK brought attention to examples of social brutality and mindless acquiescence during the administration of George W. Bush in the mid-2000s. P!NK released her fourth album, *I'm Not Dead* in 2006. The album saw the artist continue to break the mold of a "typical" pop star by singing about real life issues, including politics and one's own political beliefs.

One of the songs from *I'm Not Dead*, called "Dear Mr. President," is a strong political anthem set to a soft ballad undertone. Through the course of the song, P!NK addresses a number of political issues that were plaguing the United States at the time of Bush's presidency. The issues range from homelessness and poverty, to the No Child Left Behind campaign, to abortion and the LGBTQ community. Lines from "Dear Mr. President" present these messages of discontent clearly and effectively. The first section of the song is meant to elicit guilt from president Bush for not efficiently helping Americans. For example, done with the question:

"What do you feel when you see
All the homeless on the street?"

The second section of the song is a direct commentary on certain initiatives the Bush administration passed and either put into effect or were about to put into effect. Instead of praising these initiatives, P!NK finds a strong critique of their ineffectiveness.

How can you say, no child is left behind?

We're not dumb and we're not blind

They're all sitting in your Selves

When you pave the road to hell

What kind of father would take his own daughter's rights away?

What kind of father might hate his own daughter if she were gay?"

P!NK even incorporated these messages into a live performance. The singer performed the song in 2007 live from Wembley Arena located in London, England. The performance consisted of multiple, large prompters with videos of impactful events that took place during the Bush presidency. Each portion of the song was supported by a video of the cause that which P!NK was singing about. For example, the portion of the song where P!NK discusses abortion law is backed by an image of a protest with a banner reading, "You Can't Ban Us." Another video, which garnered much praise from the audience, showed a statistic of 255,000 jobs lost in the state of Ohio since 2001 but zero gay marriages allotted. The singer even included videos of the president making an address and going about daily actions.

P!NK's utilization of political meaning in her lyrics is specialized to her career because it was uncustomary for a female, pop artist to sing about such matters. This uncustomary nature distinguishes P!NK from most of her peers for being more vocal on political matters while presenting them in live performances. In a way she used past examples from her own musical inspirations (such as Madonna and Janis Joplin), as well as her provocative nature dabbling in multiple genres, to make a more direct statement towards political acts and figures. As a result she made her audience more aware of certain undertakings plaguing society. P!NK also motivated the next generation of artists and change makers to take a stand against indecencies.

P!NK not only commented on political occurrences at this point in her career, she also has completed some recent work towards political causes. An article published on *looktothestars.org* contained an interview with the singer about a contemporary political cause for which she was joining efforts to support. The cause is known as the One Billion Rising for Justice. It is, what the article called it, a global call to women survivors of violence and those who love them to gather safely in community settings outside places where they are entitled (courthouses, police stations, government offices, school administration buildings, work places, sites of environmental injustice, military courts, embassies, places of worship, homes and other public gathering locations). The effort is designed for women to feel safe in locations that they normally may not. The One Billion Rising for Justice cause is a call to survivors to break the silence and release their stories (either politically, spiritually or outrageously) through art, dance, marches, ritual, song, spoken words, testimonies and other creative forms of expression.

In the interview, P!NK explained her motivation for joining the cause. “When I read about this organization, how people get together of their own free will and dance, use their bodies, to express their rage – outrage – around the injustice that women feel all over the world, every day – I was inspired.” The singer even tied her inspiration back to her childhood experiences with bullying. “I have never liked bullies of any kind,” said P!NK, “Whether it’s someone picking on the ‘fat’ kid, the ‘retarded’ kid, the ‘short’ kid, the ‘black’ kid, the ‘Asian’ kid, the ‘gay’ kid, the ‘girl,’ cause she ‘hits like a girl’ or is the ‘weaker sex’... You name it. Different ‘reasons,’ same ‘bully.’ The bully is the problem” (2014). This can be considered another mission the singer has incorporated into her career. From this standpoint, we can consider P!NK as a multi-faceted activist.

P!NK hoped that her own experiences would help the message of the One Billion Rising for Justice gain more traction. “I am a woman. I know women. I have sisters, strong and less strong, small and less small, Asian and black, gay and straight, Indian and Native American... We are all equally deserving of respect and personal space. I will fight for that right for all of us. And we come together to do so on our stage, with our brothers and menfolk – where we express our freedom every night. And that freedom inspires others to be free.” The singer even recorded a video containing this message to help spread awareness about the cause. The end goal, she hopes, was to help all women and girls express themselves in whatever form they feel is right for them and tear down the ranks of bullying, not by degrading, but understanding. “The bully needs a hug, a lesson, enlightenment. The bully is the one that really feels inferior, so he/she picks on someone else to make that person feel inferior too,” the singer was quoted saying (2014).

P!NK brought about another social distinction through her unique presentation of political issues in her music as well as her activism. The artist not only presented political issues in her work, but also attached herself to specific causes she personally felt drawn to. Capitalizing on her own experiences and using her star power, P!NK was able to conduct further social change and visually represent how politics and music align, not only through her songwriting but her actions as a well-placed individual in the music industry.

Conclusion

Timothy Dowd states in his source entitled, *The Sociology of Music* that the production of music ultimately depends on individuals who enact conventions and populate various collectivities. Various scholars show that potential musicians must master various skills and knowledge in order to conduct the socialization of music. This fact undermines the belief that

music making is simply an intuitive activity – it instead is highly deliberate and organized in a manner to conduct social change. This, again, can be seen through the presentation of the artist by their marketing team, the artist's presentation of themselves, their lyrical content, video productions, connections to other artists or notable individuals in the music industry and actions outside the studio. Music is not simply a production or activity, it is a socially charged force that holds more inherent meaning than most listeners may realize at first listen.

That being said, the amount of social distinctions music and musicians are able to link is incredible and not just limited to this study. There are thousands of differentiations in society that exist with harsh walls between them. Just as equally existent are social change advocates who work towards linking these distinctions with the goal of greater global unification. P!NK served as a proper example of one of these social facilitators for a number of reasons. Going back to before her career even began, P!NK capitalized on former social phenomena that occurred through and by past artists, some of which she admired. Social change is not limited to one era; it transcends multiple eras and is able to hold those facilitating qualities because of the direction of a new generation of artists who understand the world in which they live and are educated on important social matters, crises and figures. P!NK used what she knew as a young person, but also what she learned as a young artist, to conduct social change from the start of her career. What makes the artist so unique is her deterrent nature from the original music community that fostered her success. There has been a long-placed conception that sociologists expect musicians to stay within their respected genre. This allows the artist to have continued success because they hone in on and perfect their sound while appealing to the same audience that grows in devotion to them as time goes on. This is inherently true for male performers in Rock music. P!NK however broke this longstanding tradition and trail blazed her own path to success. She did not

stay comfortable as most artists typically do, she instead pushed her own desires over the ones of her record company and, as uncommonly expected, garnered much success because of it.

This plays in hand with the multiple distinctions P!NK was able to link over the course of her career. As mentioned earlier, music is not a stagnant object – it is an activity that holds a heavy dose of social enactment. This, however, can only be done through the power and acts of a well-placed individual in the music industry. Therefore P!NK's power and radical action imitates those of other famous, social advocates (Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Ghandi, Mother Teresa). Every well-placed individual finds his or her own means through which to promote a virtue. Whether it is music, literature, religion or protest social change is dependent on the actions taken by individuals who dare enough to challenge the status quo. P!nk embodies this trailblazing nature of social conduct and laid the groundwork for the next generation of musicians to break even more distinctions including the LGBTQ community (Lady Gaga), women stereotypes in music (Meghan Trainor) and personal, lyrical content in popular music (Alessia Cara). This ties into the aspect of social change being inevitable and carried out through a stream of conscious musicians generation after generation.

P!NK showed that it is possible for popular music to contain politically charged lyrics that promote referendum and make people want to take a stand. She showed that musicians can gain initial success when given the right opportunity and platform and musicians can take control of their careers and continue to drive social change. Still an active voice in the community today, P!NK strives to maintain her credibility as a challenging artist who works with no barriers to her creativity or material. One can see this in the continuation of her provoking lyrics, opinionated twitter posts and memorable concert performances. She differs from other artists in her similar position because she was able to link countless distinctions while challenging the expectations of

the music industry. In addition, she broke longstanding conceptions of women in music as well as musicians in popular music, thus placing the artist at a high, historical status before even reaching her third album release.

This study has shown how musicians insert themselves as the linking factor of social distinctions. Without their efforts, social distinctions would remain in a parallel structure and never interconnect in the same manner we see them do currently. As a result, society would be more isolated and differentiated and the diversity of the world would cease to come to forefront of society's attention. This study also showed how music and musicians conduct social change. Politicians and advocates are not the only members of society capable of such a feat. Musicians can garner social change in the strengths and numbers of their fan bases that idolize and identify with these artists as role models. As a result more awareness is brought to political, cultural or social issues in need of corrections. The linkage of these social distinctions by musicians also constitutes for a more efficient communal interaction. Individuals associated with certain social distinctions are able to come out of their definitive boundaries and share in productive dialogue after having the initial breakage of barriers by similar music tastes. These individuals are able to find that they have more in common than originally perceived and make connections across distinctive societal areas. This study shows a strong case of how society interacts in a more creative fashion than proper speech or education. It shows how the creative interaction of music and musicians accounts for as much potential for social interaction as any other social organization.

Overall, the power of musicians the conduct social change should not be undermined. From the examination of the sociology of music and specific interests with artists' careers, music is this extremely social force that does in fact conduct change. Through the linkage of multiple

social distinctions by well-placed individuals in society, the world has become a more integrated setting since the dawn of the human era. We as a society have blurred more lines than any of our predecessors not only through our normal forms of communication, but also our expressive forms of art. Music and these other art forms, as well as those who create these forms, hold some of the highest capacity for social change. We must also consider how the inherent nature of these traits into each generation transcends into the next. P!NK would not have been able to conduct as much change without the impact of former musicians. Therefore this study presents an ongoing research opportunity to indicate how the cycle of social change continues to evolve and exist.

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Annotated Bibliography

Bennett, Andy. (2004). Consolidating the music scenes perspective. Elsevier B.V. *Poetics* 32, pp. 223-234.

The concept of the music scene has been used for decades to describe the culminations of musical genres, musicians, producers, geographical locations and fan bases. The concept during the latter half of the twentieth century and solidified during the 1990s, adopting the terminology of “scene.” The journal breaks up the scene into three categories: local, trans-local and virtual.

The local scene focuses primarily on a specific, geographical location with a prominent genre and following. The trans-local scene sees more of a cross bleeding of local scenes over barriers. In other words, trans-local scenes are parallel music scenes, following the same lifestyles but in different locations. They are often aware of their fellow scenes. Virtual scenes remove the face-to-face contact of the local and trans-local. This scene relies more on the importance and use of the media to formulate relationships between fans and establish communities. Virtual scenes are able to reach a larger audience and bridge connections over longer distances.

Blau, Judith R. (June 1988). Music as Social Circumstance. Oxford University Press. *Social Forces*, Vol. 66, No. 4.

This source presented and addressed two different questions regarding popular music and social dislocation. One, is music a circumstance of underlying social discontent of malaise, or is it a circumstance of social harmony? Two, is there a link between music and forms of social disorganization, or a link between music and deep-seated economic problems? The questions were tested by the institutional supply of different types of music in large American cities.

The study found no direct correlations between the matters of popular music and social dislocation. There was however a number of findings in specific social settings that helped answer the projected questions.

Dowd, Timothy J. (2006). The Sociology of Music. *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*. SAGE Publications, Vol. 2, pp. 249-260.

The sociology of music has picked up credibility and recognition during the final decade of the twentieth century. In this section of *21st Century Sociology*, Dowd gives an overview of the three domains of music production, content and consumption as well as how they are distinguishable. In addition Dowd’s article surveys substantive themes and variations sociologists encounter when they study music.

Among the three domains, the source addresses a number of topics that sociologists have conducted research in. These topics included musicians, music organizations, musical fields, the form of music, musical hierarchy and valorization and individuals and populations and music. Each topic was presented with at least two theories explored within and specific sociologists’ works were referenced in each of these explanations.

Classical music was the centerpiece of Dowd's research in this source. He explains that the examination of the genre holds bountiful information about the sociology of music and traces how the history of classical music exhibits the sociological studies mentioned in the article. Dowd does also include a number of sociologists work that reference more contemporary and popular music.

Dowd, Timothy J; Roy, William G. (2010). What is Sociological about Music? Annual Review of Sociology. *Annual Reviews, Vol. 36, pp. 183-203.*

Dowd and Roy's article about the sociology about music explores a number of areas in which music impacts society. The source begins by identifying music as an object and what that definition means for the research of music's sociology. The source goes on to explain music as more of an activity with a life-changing quality that is always mobile.

Dowd and Roy dedicate a large portion of the journal to music as an identifier for groups and individuals. This section explains how individuals form identities based on their musical taste as well as artists, who are the ones creating the music, create identities for themselves to pair with their sound. In addition this section explains how communities often form due to individuals having similar music tastes and styles. Individuals will collect based off their similarities in musical preferences and formulate a name for them that constitutes their overall identity.

The source covers a span of reasons as to how music becomes sociological. These reasons include the role of the media as well as producing companies. The explored topic is referred to as "Music Bounding." The journal closes with the explanation of how music bounds social distinctions. This is also done in a number of ways including the creation of new genres as well as the establishment of "well-placed" individuals in society that bridge together people of separate distinctions.

Faupel, Alison; Schmutz, Vaughn. (December 2010). Gender and Cultural Consecration in Popular Music. Oxford University Press. *Social Forces, Vol. 89, No. 2, pp 685-707.*

Gender is a large facilitator of artists' success in the music industry. Fraupel and Schmutz's article explores the many ways in which female performers are at a disadvantage of success. They explore the factors in which the likelihood that female performers achieve consecrated status and how those decisions are legitimated.

The source focuses on the 2003 publication by Rolling Stone of the greatest albums of all time. The first album to appear by a female artists, Joni Mitchell, came in at number 30. Used as the spark for discussion, this source focuses on how contemporary critics draw on existing cultural framework about art to legitimate the works of male and female musicians. By doing so, the authors highlight the ways in which processes of cultural consecration remain tactically gendered even as canons expand to include female performers.

Lena, Jennifer C; Peterson, Richard A. (2008). Classification as Culture: Types and Trajectories of Music Genres. *American Sociological Review, Vol. 73, No. 5, pp. 697-718.*

Questions of social classification have been central to sociological studies for centuries. Genre serves as one of these reoccurring classifications in the realm of music sociology. Genres organize people and songs within a system of classification through a number of means. This source explored four different genres types – Avant-garde, Scene-based, Industry-based and Traditionalist – to see how they combine to form social trajectories.

This source also took into account the multiple factors in which these different genre types have on artists' success. It is through the classification and organization of these genres that artists are able to achieve certain milestones in their career. The source concludes with a discussion on the symbolic findings and implications for understandings genre classification.

Salganik, Matthew J; Watts, Duncan J. (2008). Leading the Herd Astray: An Experimental Study of Self-fulfilling prophecies in an Artificial Cultural Market. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. Vol. 71, No. 4, pp. 338-355.

This source represents the findings of an experimental study conducted on the idea of a “self-fulfilling prophecy.” A “self-fulfilling prophecy,” as described in the article, is a false definition of a situation evoking a new behavior that makes the original false conception of that behavior come true. The study acknowledges that individuals influence each others' decisions regarding cultural products such as songs, book and movies, but it takes this acknowledgement further by addressing the question as to what extent the perception of success becomes a “self-fulfilling prophecy.”

The study was conducted by artificially inverting the popularity of songs in an online music market. In this market, over 12,000 participants listened to and downloaded songs by unknown bands. A common conception of this scenario would be participants not downloading songs by unknown artists because they hold minimal recognition. However, the study found that most of the songs experienced a self-fulfilling prophecy, by having participants download them without the influence of others and the songs gained popularity over time.

The results of the study suggested a new approach to the study of cultural markets as influencers. The results also indicated the potential of web-based experiments to explore the social psychological origin of other macro sociological phenomena.