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## Navigating Gender Inequality in Musical Subgenres

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# Navigating Gender Inequality in Musical Subgenres

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Sociology

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by

Adria Ryan McLaughlin

December 2015

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Dr. Martha Copp, Chair

Dr. Joseph Baker

Dr. Melissa Schrift

Keywords: Female Musicians, Gender Inequality, Punk Rock, Heavy Metal, Riot Grrrl,

Motherhood

## ABSTRACT

### Navigating Gender Inequality in Musical Subgenres

by

Adria Ryan McLaughlin

This study looks at female musicians performing in subcultural rock genres commonly considered non-gender-conforming, such as punk rock, heavy metal, noise, and experimental. Twenty-four interviews were conducted with female musicians who reflected on their experiences as musicians. Themes emerged on women's patterns of entry into music, barriers they negotiated while playing, and forces that may push them out of the music scene. Once women gained a musician identity, their gender functioned as a master status. They negotiated sexism when people questioned their abilities, assumed men played better, expected them to fail, held them to conventional gender roles, and sexually objectified them. Normative expectations of women as primary caregivers for children, internalization of criticism, and high personal expectations are considered as factors that contribute to women's exit from musical careers. This research closes with suggestions for how more women and girls can be socialized into rock music.

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## DEDICATION

My research is dedicated to my daughter and the millions of other women, young and old, who can and should express themselves through music without barriers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a single mother there have been an especially large amount of people who made this research possible—there is no way I could have accomplished it alone and I am forever grateful to all those who assisted in multiple capacities. I would like to begin by thanking my mother as she has been my rock throughout my life. For countless hours she has listened to my panicked discussions about the research process, all the while calmly assuring me that I was not only capable but would produce something incredible. My mother's gifts of inspiration and love have taught me that I can accomplish any goal with dedication and success.

I would also like to thank the many people within the department of Sociology and Anthropology at ETSU, including the students that have spent hours of their time helping me improve my research, my research assistant Krista, my friends who listened to me constantly talk about my research, and those on my thesis committee who were always willing to answer my questions and reassure me that I was indeed 'getting there.' Specifically, Dr. Martha Copp, who has been my mentor during both my undergraduate and graduate careers and provided me the tools to make my research possible. Dr. Copp has continually made herself available to answer questions, respond to emails, or just listen to me prattle on about the many research questions that have taken root in my head for the last year. Without her, this research would have never made it to fruition.

I would like to thank the 24 women who spent hours sharing their lives, time, and stories with me. I am honored to have met so many incredible women and I will be forever grateful that they took time out of their busy lives to share their experiences with

me. They have inspired me in more ways than I can list.

And last, but definitely not least, I thank my daughter Bascha for her never-ending required patience as I spent many hours, days, weeks, and months working tirelessly on my research. There were many difficult moments along the way, but in the end it was all for you—I love you more than the stars.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

I have enjoyed going to live rock and roll music shows for more than 20 years. Women are rarely members of the bands, but whenever I see another woman take the stage, I feel a palpable excitement that hits me deep down in my belly. Part of my excitement comes from seeing women move beyond feminine support roles reserved for them in rock and roll. When women play in a rock and roll band they set an example for others and challenge the idea that rock music is by, for, and about men. After I happened across an all-female band, I realized that I could explore female musicians' career experiences and setbacks from a sociological perspective. I wanted to learn more about women working in the male-dominated social world of rock and roll.

I examine female musicians who perform in subcultural rock genres that are non-gender-conforming such as punk rock, heavy metal, noise, experimental, and varieties in between. I conducted interviews with 24 female musicians who play in bands or solo acts and asked them to reflect on their experiences as musicians. Themes emerged in the interviews that identify how women enter the music scene, how they negotiate within it, and reasons they may leave musical careers. Once women gain a musician identity, their gender is a master status that informs all their interactions. They must continually negotiate sexism when others question their abilities, expect them to be inferior to male musicians, expect them to fail, hold them to conventional gender roles, and sexualize them. Normative expectations for women to be primary caregivers of families and children, internalization of criticism, and high personal expectations may push some women to censor, or end, their musical careers.

Before I share my analysis of those themes, I provide some context by presenting relevant historical research on female musicians in subcultural genres in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I offer a detailed description of the methods I used and the demographics of my sample, and in Chapter 4 I delve into the themes that emerged in my interviews. I conclude in Chapter 5 by providing possible steps that may attract more female musicians and initiate increased gender equality in the music scene.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Although ideological beliefs about women's roles hindered their success more in the past than today, women are still severely underrepresented in the music industry (Schmutz and Faupel 2010). Historically, women's primary role in music was that of vocalist in part because it did not challenge masculinity (Bayton 1998). The gender-restricted roles available to women in music are consistent with other ways women must navigate patriarchal society, which Johnson identifies as being "male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered" (1997: 5). In some subcultural genres such as punk, alternative rock, and riot grrrl (a specific female-led genre explored below), women participate as instrumentalists, although they continue to be poorly represented.

Singing was seen as a natural physical ability that required no special talent, and was thus an acceptable way for women to participate in the male-dominated realm of music (Davies 2001). The majority of early studies of popular rock music (predominantly in the 1970s and 1980s) focused on men and their contributions, primarily because about 90 percent of people in the music industry were men (Groce and Cooper 1990). Men held key roles as gatekeepers for women in the music industry such as music journalists and music critics, and therefore men created the historical record (Davies 2001). In the 1960s a small wave of "girl bands" gained minor fame; however, many of them complied with feminine gender roles by singing while fully styled in make-up and feminine dresses (Dowd, Liddle, and Blyler 2005; Katovich and Makowski 1999).

During the 1970s more women entered the music scene via punk rock (Bayton 1998). This is due, in part, to punk's focus on amateurism (Bayton 1998) and a do-it-

yourself (DIY) ethic that women found appealing (Moran 2010; Mullaney 2007; O'Meara 2003). Following the punk scene, women made inroads as musicians in alternative rock, but they were often limited to playing electric bass, not fronting bands (Clawson 1999). Finally, the last prominent historical entrance of women into music was the riot grrrl movement where women joined third wave feminism with music and added a political voice to their DIY punk roots (Garrison 2000; Mullaney 2007; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). Researchers have identified key constraints that either exclude women from music or structure how they gain entrance. These restraints center on male gatekeepers, monetary constraints, lack of representation and role models, sexualization, familial restraints, and restrictive gender roles (Bayton 1998; Davies 2001). Despite a few surges of women into the music industry, men still outnumber women by far, especially as instrumentalists.

### Portrayals of Female Musicians

Music critics, journalists, and historians—mostly men over the years—have focused the bulk of their stories on male musicians and their exploits (O'Meara 2003). Coverage of female musicians—paltry by comparison—depicted them more for male than female audiences and readers (O'Meara 2003). Men played a central role in determining which musicians they deemed creditable and credit worthy (Davies 2001; Schmutz and Faupel 2010). Female musicians' credibility is susceptible to traditional gender dynamics; for example, as Davies (2001: 306) points out, "the association of masculinity with cerebral and femininity with the physical" leads to women being treated as credible only through their bodies. Even today, media representations tend to focus on women's appearance and relationships, defining them as "women first and

musicians second” (Davies 2001: 304). Even “using female as an adjective” for a specific musical genre delegates it as different and subsequently “specialized” from males as the standard (Katovich and Makowski 1999: 145).

### Sexuality

Some women, primarily in mainstream popular music, exploit their sexuality to gain visibility, but this detracts from their legitimacy as artists. The arrival of music television in the early 1980s heightened women’s sexuality and allowed women to achieve *some* success, but primarily as performers who sang and danced rather than as artists who actively created their own music (Dowd et al. 2005; Katovich and Makowski 1999). Many women are pressured to appeal to their sexuality on stage to gain attention, despite the fact that it may also hinder their consideration as musicians (Groce and Cooper 1990). Female pop performers often claim empowerment as an excuse for their sexual performances despite that they are ultimately “getting naked to get heard”; however, this sexualized distortion of empowerment contributes to women being devalued as artists (Levande 2008: 305).

### Conventional Gender Roles

The binary construction of gender that casts males as active and females as passive (see Lorber 2005) creates a challenge for women to take control of their musical careers. A double standard is applied to women when they are accused of being “difficult, hysterical, insecure [or a] control freak” and as sacrificing femininity (Davies 2001: 305). In rock and roll, women were expected to be the adoring fans of the *male* musicians which reinforced binary roles of males as innovators and females as appreciators (Katovich and Makowski 1990). Even when the electric bass became an

acceptable entry for women into the alternative rock music genre (discussed shortly), playing the instrument failed to challenge the gender order (see Lorber 2005) because bass players support rather than lead, and most bands preserved lead guitar roles for men (Clawson 1999). People also undermine women's talent when they assume men taught women how to play, which characterizes women as dependent on men for their success (Groce and Cooper 1990; Schmutz and Faupel 2010). Lastly, conventional sexist and heterosexist practices in other institutions, primarily the family, help shape female musicians' careers. Hence, when women comply with the expectation to be primary caregivers for families and children, they may often give up musical careers (Bayton 1998).

### Musical Subcultures

In a handful of music subgenres, women have *somewhat* gained entrance and acceptance. In these genres some women have broken free of the traditional vocalist role to finally participate as instrumentalists and challenge some of the social control mechanisms that previously limited them. These social control mechanisms include confinement (geographic boundaries), protection (regulation by parents or other people with power), and normative restriction (what is deemed appropriate behavior) (Fox 1977).

Past research identified certain genres in which women achieved some success as instrumentalists: punk rock, alternative rock, and the riot grrrl movement (Bayton 1998; Clawson 1999; Mullaney 2007; Nguyen 2013; Wald 1998). The anti-conformist ideology of these subcultures fostered a culture that conceded women a role, even if a limited one.

## Punk Rock

Punk music became one of the first, if not *the* first, arena where women “fully” participated, because it elevated amateurism (Bayton 1998) and a DIY ideology (Bayton 1998; Moran 2010; Mullaney 2007; O’Meara 2003; Triggs 2006). The “DIY ethic” spurred musicians to record, plan tours, and market *themselves* when large commercial labels ignored them (Moran 2010; Triggs 2006). Punks created their own cohesive scenes complete with an infrastructure necessary to support bands (such as lodging on tours) and supportive audiences (O’Connor 2002). This DIY ideology and alternative subculture opened music to women. Although women lacked equal representation as punk musicians, they carved out a space for themselves in a new way.

Anarchy and defying mainstream norms anchored punk rock; therefore, women’s rejection of traditional gender norms was celebrated (Bayton 1998; Clawson 1999). Female musicians in punk defied other mainstream roles: women of all body types who did not fit conventional beauty norms were accepted, and “ugliness [was] an aspect of authenticity” (Bayton 1998: 65). Women’s bodies and music could be imperfect, challenging the traditional roles of the sexy, feminine, female vocalist (Bayton 1998). Punk enthusiasts embraced loud music with room for imperfections. Punk’s anti-elitist DIY ideology also appreciated less expensive equipment, which eased the financial pressure on women, whose earnings historically fall short of men’s (Bayton 1998). Although punk never reached utopian levels of gender equality, the basic ideologies and cultural norms fostered more women’s participation and acceptance than other popular music scenes.



## Alternative Music and The Electric Bass

Women playing the electric bass surged in the alternative rock music scene of the late 1980s and 1990s; however, women playing the bass reinforced rather than challenged gender binaries in the music scene (Clawson 1999). While this specific instrument became a method of entry for women in music, it reflected a gendered division of labor by reserving lead and rhythm guitar for men. The electric bass became less valued as an instrument in part due to the many women who began to play it and because it was assumed to be easier to play (Clawson 1999). In this way, women entered the music industry to take the positions that slowly lost their allure and status for men (Clawson 1999) as sociologists have documented with other occupations (Padavic and Reskin 2002). Clawson suggests that women's bassist role allows the men in the alternative music genre to think of themselves as less sexist (Clawson 1999). Women playing the bass also ties into conventional gender ideology characterizing females as identified with nature because the bass holds the rhythm. In this way, we see a bodily comparison with women and dancing, and feeling a rhythm, which are both acceptable feminine attributes (Clawson 1999).

## Riot Grrrl and Feminism

In the 1990s one of the most productive moments arose for women resisting the sexism of the previous punk and straight edge movements – riot grrrl (Mullaney 2007). According to Rosenberg and Garofalo (1998: 809) “the name riot grrrl was chosen to reclaim the vitality and power of youth with an added growl to replace the perceived passivity of ‘girl.’” The term was also “a means of signposting their snarling defiance of punk's long-standing traditions of misogyny and homophobia, as well as racism and

sexism within the corporate music industry” (Wald 1998:594). Riot grrrls effectively created a female space in music by founding all-female bands that they marketed through DIY zines<sup>1</sup> which gave women the opportunity to fully participate on a small scale (Mullaney 2007; Nguyen 2013; Wald 1998). The riot grrrl movement also “refuses to separate political consciousness from subcultural formations” (Garrison 2000; 142). Women took the essence of the punk and straight edge hardcore genres and repudiated women’s exclusion from those scenes (Mullaney 2007). The riot grrrl movement gained attention from some mainstream media outlets which helped it grow beyond its punk roots (Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). It was also considered to be angrier than “second wave feminism” in that these women were outspoken and addressed many difficult and controversial topics such as “rape and abuse” (Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998: 810). Subcultural theorists have noted that it is difficult for any subculture to sustain an anti-conformist, political edge over time (Haenfler 2010). Thus, while the riot grrrl movement marked a highly empowering time for women in music, and a handful of the bands associated with it still exist, it did not inspire a sustained increase in the number of women participating in music today.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “zine” refers to small, often handmade, magazines or pamphlets.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

My research explores women's experiences as musicians in subcultural musical genres such as: punk, metal, rock and roll, experimental, noise, to varieties in between. I interviewed female musicians who are carving a non-traditional path and steering clear of conventional feminine expectations, and I also observed live music shows with female musicians. I conducted 24 in-depth personal interviews with women who are either currently—or recently—performing with a band or solo act. I first contacted women I knew personally, who helped me create a snowball sample for subsequent interviews. I also emailed female musicians on Facebook as potential participants. I carried out semi-structured interviews at local coffee houses, bars, music venues, homes, or over Skype that ranged in length from 20 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes. I asked open ended questions designed to evoke respondents' personal reflections about their experiences as musicians, including any barriers that prevented them from participating at the same level as their male counterparts.

I audio recorded, transcribed, and coded all of my interviews. I conducted open coding on approximately ten interviews (see Charmaz 2006), and then I carried out focused coding on both interviews and observational field notes as my analytical themes emerged (Lofland et al. 2006; Strauss and Corbin 1990). The emergent themes included developing a musician identity; women's entrée into music; underestimation, which encompassed other sub-themes such as expectation of failure, expectation of incompetency, or disregard for female musicians; and themes such as parental support, or lack of thereof. I reviewed my data multiple times and re-coded when certain themes

grew stronger or shifted into different categories.

The musicians' ages range from 22-45 years with a mean age of 32. Participants' education levels included one with a master's degree, 11 with college degrees, 10 who completed some college, and three with trade certificates (two are cosmetologists and one is a dental hygienist). One interviewee who completed a trade certificate currently attends college. All the women in my sample were Caucasian except for one African American musician. One third (n=9) had a romantic partner in their band (three of whom were husbands). The composition of bands included 16 women in co-ed bands, six in fully female bands, and four women in solo acts (two women had both a band project and a solo project; therefore this adds up to 26). I assigned a pseudonym to each respondent in order to maintain confidentiality. Throughout this research, I avoid providing individualized descriptors of the women in my sample because they could easily be identified.

My respondents play a variety of instruments including electric guitar, electric bass, standup bass, drums, keyboard, piano, theremin, violin, cello, experimental handmade instruments, and voice. Of the four vocalists in my sample, three have played other instruments in the past, two emphasize vocals in their current projects, and the fourth also plays the piano.

When I began this research I planned to focus on women in punk rock or heavy metal bands, but I quickly learned that band genres are ambiguous and fluid. When I asked interviewees to describe their musical niche, they all gave me multiple, overlapping genre descriptions. For example, Madison described her band as "kinda contemporary riot grrrl stuff...but tribal...with blues, garage, you know, girl punk" and

Melissa explained, “[Our music has] a traditional punk structure with a little bit of rockabilly, a little bit of surf rock...[and some songs are] sludgy, heavy, like doomy metal...post metal, kind of shoegaze.”<sup>2</sup> These mélanges convinced me to abandon applying cut and dry genres, such as “punk rock”; however, the only genres I excluded from my sample were those where “women’s roles are celebrated as songbirds,” as Emma so eloquently put it (e.g., bluegrass and country music, folk, and mainstream pop).

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<sup>2</sup> The term “shoegaze” refers to a highly distorted sound where instrumentalists are using use multiple effects pedals—giving the impression that they are staring at their shoes.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

During countless hours of observations, the first thing I noticed was that it was often difficult to even find female performers to observe. On one occasion I looked at five different music venues within 100 miles of my home to see if any women were performing; out of approximately 20 bands playing at these venues—not a single woman was included. Considering most bands have approximately three to five musicians, this demonstrates how poorly represented female musicians are, despite women accounting for about half of those in the audience during my observations. Male musicians are the norm, leaving women to fill subordinate roles such as that of the appreciative fan. As Sarah put it, “Our culture doesn’t really push girls...into music...girls are supposed to have crushes on rock stars, and the rock stars are all boys.” The ideal *male* rock star and the women who support him create a gender binary that pervades rock’s many subgenres. This dynamic reinforces both sexism and heterosexism by reserving musician roles for men and limiting women to roles as girlfriends, groupies, adoring fans, merch girls<sup>3</sup>, or wives (see Chapter 2). The supportive wife’s role is often at home with children allowing her husband to fulfill *his* career as a musician; and a female musician role may be invisible to others because of the male star/female fan binary.

Given the preponderance of men in rock and roll, women rarely encounter female role models. This lack of role models creates a self-fulfilling prophecy that inhibits women from becoming musicians. Women may not even realize they could play an

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<sup>3</sup> “Merch” is the term used for a band’s merchandise. Selling merchandise is a role predominantly filled by women and thus it has developed the commonly used title of “merch girl.”

instrument in a band—because almost no one else is doing it. For example, several respondents reported that after their shows women come up and say, as Mel related, “We have quite a few girls that come out...and you get the ‘oh, I wish I could do what you do’...I think a lot of little girls look up to us, but big girls too. It’s pretty cool.”

Respondents are often self-aware that they are role models for other women, as Jennifer demonstrated when she said: “It’s always girls that come up...and are like ‘that was kick ass’ and that makes me feel really good, and I’m like “I hope other girls see it” and are like ‘that was awesome’...and would like to do it too.” Jennifer’s response is common in my interviews and demonstrates how female musicians hope to inspire other women who rarely encounter them on stage.

#### Developing a Musician Identity

With such a strong gender binary in rock and roll music—how do some women manage to enter the scene? Many of my interviewees recalled parents’ encouragement to get lessons in gender-conforming areas such as piano, violin, clarinet, flute, or vocals (especially church choirs); however, few young women learned rock and roll instruments such as the electric guitar, bass, or drums. As young girls they were not socialized toward rock and roll as boys may be. Similarly, my respondents had experience participating in other gender-conforming performance roles such as theater, dance, or cheerleading. These performance roles and musical training could have facilitated their later entry into music in subcultural genres because performance was normalized for them.

The women I interviewed thus reflected mainstream norms. Three of my respondents were formally trained on female-coded instruments including the violin,

cello, voice, and piano. These women took their classical training and now play their instruments in unconventional ways. They were also some of the most financially successful in their craft. Two of them had diversified how they could pursue their musical careers using both classical and non-traditional avenues of income. It is also possible that formal training in classical music reflects a type of career training because of the expectation of consistent dedication and is socially accepted as “work” and not “play.” The women with classical training also offer unique insight as to how formal training may provide women more opportunity later, even if they leave the classical music genre.

Association with male musicians was the most common avenue for my respondents to enter the music scene and learn an instrument, which is not surprising since men have historically held an almost esoteric knowledge of all things musical. Friends, boyfriends, husbands, and even brothers served as gateways into music for many of the women I interviewed. Sarah recalled that she learned to play her instrument when some of her male friends were looking for a new addition for their band: “I learned to play...to play with them, because they were my friends... [I] was just thinking this will be fun, I’ll learn to play music and mess around with my buddies.” Similarly, Jennifer reported, “I kind of just wanted to jam with [my boyfriend] because all his friends would and I would just sit there... [so] I just picked up a guitar and learned some chords...and started practicing with him.” Both of these women learned to play instruments and became musicians in order to fraternize with male friends. Maria said “My brother got a guitar and he never played it...it was always just sitting around, and I was like ‘I’m going to start playing that’.” In this way we can see how Maria’s brother had been given a



conventionally male-coded instrument as a child, but she was able to use it since it was available in their home.

Musician husbands were also instrumental in inspiring women to become musicians and sharing their knowledge. Bea recalled, “[My husband and his friends] were trying to put a band together and...I learned how to play then...in just a few months... [We] started from scratch...he taught me all of it.” Similarly, Mel said, “my husband is a musician...and there was [an instrument] hanging on the wall and I was like ‘teach me how to play this.’” Both Bea and Mel’s husbands were integral to their musical careers because they spent time teaching them to play.

Contact with a male musician was shown by half of the women in my sample (n=12) to be their method of entry entered into the music industry. Other women managed to begin bands with other female friends or begin solo acts of their own accord. These women all had previous performance roles as children and actively sought a musician identity later in their lives. Therefore, male allies and mentors were important for women in the music scene, but not the only method of entry. As Emma demonstrated: “I’m not trained on anything...I took a lesson here or there but my main inspiration was jamming with other people and that’s where I learned most of it...I started an [all-girl] band in college.”

While respondents’ parents did not actively encourage them to play rock and roll instruments, many parents supported their daughters when they showed an interest. Louise reported, “By the time I was 13...I had been asking and mentioning an instrument or guitar for a few years, and they were finally like, ‘we’ll go ahead and get you one.’” Similarly, Madison said, “When I was 15 I expressed an interest in the drums

and my mom...bought me a drum set.” Both Louise and Madison played a small amount during their teen years, but neither developed bands until years later. Their stories demonstrate that parents can be supportive when their children show an interest, but none of my respondents had parents who actively pushed them toward rock and roll instruments unless they asked for them.

### Rocking Out—Maintaining a Musical Career

Once the women I interviewed ventured into the music scene, they had to negotiate obstacles. Gender served as a master status for the women I interviewed, and it seemed to continually define the situations and interactions they had with both men and women in the music scene. These women were treated as women first and foremost and musicians second. In response, many respondents felt they must work harder to prove themselves as musicians. As Louise eloquently said when asked what advice she might give to another female musician, “Keep trying, and keep pushing and working because you are going to have to work twice as hard to get stuff because of the nature of systematic oppression.”

### “Whose girlfriend are you?”

Most of my respondents described how other male musicians and audience members (both male *and* female) questioned their presence and ability, acting surprised that they were musicians and expecting them to play poorly or worse than average male musicians. As Madison explained, “We go in and are automatically underestimated...like ‘oh cute, that’s cute, the *girls* are setting up.” Madison’s experience echoed that of nearly all the women I interviewed. The assumption that rock musicians are male was so strong that people seemed unable to envision a woman as a

band member. Katie recounted an interaction with someone working the door at a venue: “They’re like, ‘are you with the band?’ and I’m like ‘I’m in the band, I *am* the band.” Similarly, Sarah told me “[A man at a venue will say] ‘whose girlfriend are you?’ and I’m like—I’m the fucking bass player.” Both Katie’s and Sarah’s experiences show how women, by default, are not associated with the role of rock musician. Even if a woman is known to be in a band, people may guess her role to be a gender-conforming one, as Melissa explained when she told me “They sometimes guess the guys’ roles...but they’ll never guess mine...they’ll say singer...or tambourine...or keyboard...so they have roles they find acceptable.” Simple questions when a woman walks in to a venue such as ‘are you with the band’ instantly demote her to a support role and maintain the binary between male rock star and female supporter.

Female musicians in co-ed bands reported feeling dismissed and treated as if they were invisible by male audience members. Quinn told me, “A few times after gigs...people would come up and compliment the other members of my band individually, but not me.” This dismissal of women in music moves beyond playing as Ash experienced while trying to help book a band: “It’s kind of like a boy’s club...I had a friend [from out of town] wanting to book shows [locally]...and I went through my [male] friends [to see if they’d] be interested in booking a show, and absolutely no help, whatsoever. I feel like that had a lot to do with that I was a girl, cause I don’t have the credibility.” Both Quinn’s and Ash’s experiences are examples of female musicians getting shut out while the men bonded. By men bonding with men and closing ranks, Quinn and Ash got the message that men are the norm in music and that women are deviant.

“[They are] probably here to see if we just suck or not”

When women described playing on stage, they felt audiences eyed them more critically, as Jennifer expressed in her advice for other female musicians: “Practice... you are being watched because they want to know what the *girl* can do.” Some women think fans expected them to fail, as Courtney explained: “They want to see you mess up so they can confirm their own bias.” Both Courtney and Jennifer, along with other women, perceived a greater level of criticism coming their way than for male musicians. Considering most of the women began their musical careers later in life than many male musicians they knew, they perhaps had less experience, which could also trigger heightened concerns about criticism.

Other factors fed into women’s perceptions of undue scrutiny, though. Respondents expressed irritation with patronizing, sexist, and dismissive reactions they often received. When women performed simple music-related tasks, such as going to the music store, they reported blatant sexism from predominantly male workers. Joyce related a story from one of her friends (another female musician) about visiting a local music store: “[The] guy there said [to the man with her] ‘let me show your husband the guitars—I wish we had some purses or shoes here for you to look at.’” Three other interviewees in the same music network as Joyce related this story and one reported following up with a manager at that store. However, similar stories were also common from respondents when they needed to purchase musical gear, as Sarah reported: “[A] time you get shit is when you go to the music store and some...failed musician [who] hates his life wants to talk down to you and you’re [just] trying to buy strings.” This

disrespect from men connected to the music community reinforced how music was actively preserved as a male domain (see Sargent 2009).

As another sign of low expectations, many of the women described audience members acting shocked, yet pleased, with their playing. Although somewhat gratifying, the women felt frustrated and patronized to be congratulated for exceeding people's low expectations. Joyce exhibited this when she said people come up and say things like "I can't believe she played the [instrument] like that...I can't believe she did that all by herself." Raven said she hears people say "You guys are really good for girls!"

Other men patronized women by offering unsolicited advice. Katie recalled a man telling her "Here's a pedal, did you know about these? Maybe you would like to learn how to play that?" Raven expressed similar frustration: "Dudes [will be] like 'hey it's a chick band!' and then they'll try to help us out [loading in<sup>4</sup>] and we're like—'we got this.'" Wendy reported a festival appearance in which a man from a different band said: "Come with me, I'm gonna show you how to hold [your instrument]." Unwanted advice and assistance signaled to women that they inhabited a lower status. Another interpretation is that by subordinating women, men in the music industry could shore up their exclusive hold on the rock musician role and elevate themselves.

"Man, that bassist was hot!"

The women I interviewed described in a number of ways that being a woman, or, more pointedly, a "girl," was their master status and thus a source of frustration. The common classification of "girl band" or "female-fronted band" grated on them. They reported that getting club bookings was fairly easy, but often because club personnel viewed them as novelties. Getting classified as the "girl band" marked them as deviant

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<sup>4</sup> "Loading in" is the term used when a band is bringing their music equipment into a venue.

and emphasized their secondary status in both society and music. They fought to be taken seriously and found that the novelty label 'girl band' took away their credibility. For example, Mel reported:

Of course you get the 'you girls are awesome' and I hate that...the last thing I want people to take from it is that we're girls...everybody knows we're girls, which is a huge draw for us, but...I want people to be like 'holy shit, what an awesome band, and by the way they were girls.'

Another strand of women's musical careers dealt with sexual objectification. Sexism is highly normalized in American culture, especially in music entertainment, and women are expected to spend a great deal of time and money on their appearance in order to be attractive to men (see Bartky 1990). Female musicians reported having to manage being hit on and sexualized. Katie described an evening on tour in an unfamiliar city:

I couldn't avoid the creeper dudes, they were just everywhere...None of the dudes [in my band] had to feel like they were dodging people, cause most people think that if you're [a woman] in a band then you're going to be having sex with all the other members of the band as well.

Katie's example not only demonstrates how women must manage male audience members, but it also reinforces that because sexual activity is considered normative for male musicians on tour, a woman in the band is assumed to be sexually available to her band mates. Male musicians may confuse female musicians in other bands with groupies, the customary role for women in the scene. Alex demonstrated this when she

related an experience in which she had booked a show and attempted to say hello to a band from out of town:

I walked up to him and they were setting up their merch, and I was like 'hey dude, I'm super stoked about the show...I've been listening to your stuff on-line and you guys are really talented' and he looked at me and backed up and he was like 'cool' and made sure to wave his ring finger in front of my face, and I'm like 'cool man'...and turned around and walked away. I looked at him for a second and was like 'oh my god [he] thinks I'm a groupie'...Then after we performed ...he came right up to me and was like 'oh, that was great, you were so awesome, thanks for booking the show'...[and I thought] 'I've been here half an hour before the show...when you didn't know who I was'...It's stupid, it's like being punished and praised...for something that has nothing to do with anything.

Both Alex's and Katie's experiences demonstrate binary role expectations for men and women in the music scene and how female musicians' sexuality is salient.

Women's bodies are constantly objectified and policed in American culture, and this is especially true in music. Louise described this when she said:

Looking at the mainstream thing, which is what most people see unless they dig to find other alternatives, women have to...do things that make them appear as feminine as humanly possible, [such as] a woman singing, and not playing an instrument, or learning to dance...learns to move a certain way. That's something that's a pervasive thing, women being in the industry, it has to be under certain pretenses...men have a lot of freedom as far as how they want to present themselves...with women, in order to be successful has to be this, this, this, and this. You have to look this way, you have to have this hair, you have to sing a certain way...I think the thing with women being in the industry, I think they have to be there under certain conditions.

While Louise was focusing on mainstream popular music, her observation pervades subcultural music scenes as well. For example, as Raven reported, “As far as being successful, you gotta be marketable, and for a woman—you gotta be hot. That makes it even harder, you have to look a certain way that they’re looking for...I mean women can’t just be like men and be whatever they want to be in a band.” Not only do both Louise and Raven show frustration with expectations for women to look a certain way, but they were both aware that men have the freedom to be or look however they want. For example, on more than one occasion I witnessed bands playing with overweight, sweaty, hairy men playing with no shirts on. Audience members did not react to this as strange and did not police their bodies as may have happened if women were scantily clad with less than perfect bodies. This observation, along with Louise’s and Raven’s experiences signal that men can be musicians first and men second, while the women in my sample were women first and musicians second.

My respondents all expressed awareness of the expectation for women, particularly female musicians, to be sexy; however, they were also aware that this might cost women their credibility. Heather reported:

If you dress the way that the industry and society wants you to dress, if you ‘slut it up’...no one is going to respect you for your sound, but if you dress like I do and try to get people to respect you for your sound, they tell you ‘you need to dress more revealing’...It’s a double-bind... if you don’t dress that way, that’s bad, if you do dress that way, you’ll be considered another gimmicky girl in a gimmicky band.



Wendy reported pressure from her band to use her femininity as a selling point, as she recalled: “The band was like ‘let’s put you in mini skirts and get you in leather’ and I was like ‘hell no.’”

As a consequence, because the women in my sample believed that acting and appearing overtly sexy would detract from their credibility, nearly all of them made a point to avoid being overtly sexy on stage. Alex reported: “When I was in [my last band] I would wear high heels and wear make up...and do my hair in vintage styles, dresses, bracelets...[but now] I want to get away from the costume aspect of being on stage...cause I just want to be myself.” And Sarah related: “I don’t wear dresses [on stage], I love wearing dresses, but it’s awkward on stage, and...I wanna keep it a little more rock n roll.” Sarah’s comment demonstrates a conscious effort on her part to not participate in the expectation of women to use their sexuality as a selling point, but it simultaneously reinforces that rock and roll is a male-dominated arena. Respondents thus carefully tailored their presentation of self (see Goffman 1959) to avoid a sexually objectified second class status.

Yet, when women perform, audience members tend to fuse musical ability with sexual desirability when they appraise women’s skills. Alex told me about a man coming up after a show and saying ““Oh my god you’re amazing, oh my god you’re so beautiful”” which she questioned with “Why do those two have to go together? They were never separated.” Alex’s observation underscores how women are always ‘hot *and* talented’ but never simply talented. This sentiment was also perpetuated by female audience members, as Alex reported when a woman came up after a show: “She was like ‘it’s really nice to see a pretty girl representing’...and I was like ‘what the fuck does pretty

have to do with it? Why would you say that to me?’ It’s like ‘oh thank god she’s pretty too, now we can really get behind her.’”

My interviewees were constantly reminded of their gender, which seemed to inform most of their interactions with others. When women stepped away from the gender-conforming support roles for men and into an active musician role, they were continually reminded that they were deviant. Being constantly reminded they were not good enough, didn’t belong, or should be ‘eye candy’ may cause some women to question their abilities or wonder if they were cut out for career’s in music.

Numerous respondents told me that female musicians needed to be “tough.” This sentiment does two things: it separates them from other women, and it also identifies them with the dominant group (see Ezzell 2009). When respondents told me female musicians needed to be “tough,” they were not actively trying to demote other women who do not participate in music, but they were simultaneously aware of the barriers I analyzed and the strain of constantly being questioned and expected to fail. Their insistence on toughness reinforced that the music scene is not for *all* women.

“We’re fucking intelligent strong ass women”

Although all of the women I interviewed expressed frustration with the ways they were treated as musicians, they did not passively accept it. Their participation alone did not change the structure of the music scene, but they employed a few methods of resistance. These women navigated a complex environment, and were often playing in small venues with minimal staff; therefore, they were sometimes in a position where they had to manage the crowd while performing. Most often they enjoyed and appreciated high energy—but there is a line.

Many respondents alluded to a necessary energetic interaction with the audience. As Melissa demonstrated, “I love the rowdy audience members and that helps a lot to loosen me up on stage.” Similarly Emma reported, “We encourage [rowdiness] to a degree, cause we kind of incite that wild party energy.” The genres that these women perform in are known for a level of wild, rowdy energy that they feed off of and don’t want to hinder, as Katie explained: “If they’re gonna have a crazy time, they’re gonna have a crazy time, it’s not my role to police the area.” And Melissa echoed: “I don’t want to be remembered as the asshole band that told people to stop having fun.”

While respondents did not want to “police the area” or “stop people from having fun” they also occasionally managed problematic audience behavior. During an observation, I witnessed an incident where a performer intervened during a mosh pit where two men breached the unwritten rules of participation and threatened to create a dangerous situation for others. She initially called them out over the microphone, and then, in-between songs, kicked them out of the club by yelling “get those fuckers out of here!” over the microphone. By rowdy standards, this was a fairly benign situation, but occasionally the women I spoke to had to handle more unpleasant events, as Raven discussed:

This guy grabbed me and put his face in my crotch, [and I] pushed him back and kicked him hard, in the face, as hard as I possibly could, broke his glasses, fucked up his mouth—no—you don’t put your face in my pussy unless I tell you to. And that’s what I said [to him].

Mel also reported using physical force in order to handle an audience member: “[This guy] was coming straight at me, and so I kicked him right in the chest and back into the

audience, that was pretty fun.” Both Mel and Raven reported taking control of situations where men threatened their vibe or tried to sexually harass them. Their behavior was in direct opposition to conventional gender roles for women.

My interviewees also related instances where they reported managing blatant sexist slurs being hurled at them while on stage. Raven mentioned: “Once in a while there’ll be a dude that’s like ‘show us your tits!’ and I’m like ‘show me yours—fuck off, we’re not gonna do that and you’re not gonna do that here’ and then it stops.”

Furthermore Emma said: “we do not tolerate any chauvinism, and sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, we do not tolerate anything like that. So if any banter starts going in that direction—[we call it out].” Raven’s and Emma’s responses demonstrate how they sought to use their stage presence to resist instances of sexist behavior rather than take a passive approach.

Finally, a few respondents interpreted their musician identity as an active form of resistance, as Emma described:

Being a woman in music, being in heavier music, just being in something that breaks through a lot of those stereotypes is a form of activism...bringing true creative expression to the table is a nail in the coffin of oppression...I feel drawn to play metal now because of all the bullshit misogynistic themes and rape culture in metal...I feel like there is an awakening in metal right now.

Thus, Emma demonstrated that her music was important for both her and other women as a means of activism.

Women’s resistance to sexism thus included rejecting being treated as sex objects, confidently showing that they liked, and fed off of a rowdy crowd’s energy, and

reporting aggressively rebuffing men who either threatened their vibe or tried to sexually harass them. Emma transformed the meaning of her musician role into an act of political resistance to oppression. These acts of resistance can be understood as individual efforts to engage in “oppositional identity work” (see Shwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996), in which female musicians aimed to define themselves positively and reject a subordinate role in the male-dominated rock music scene.

### Exit Stage Left—Leaving a Musical Career

I have shown how women enter the music scene and how they navigate difficult situations while they are in it. It would seem that if the higher numbers of women entering music in the 1970s and 1980s had been sustained, they would have reached a saturation point by now, but women are still poorly represented. So where do they go? My interviews suggest the possibility that some women may feel pushed out of the music scene due to self-doubt, self-sabotage, and the decision to be a mother.

First, as I have shown, women feel they must work harder than men to prove themselves, their abilities are constantly questioned, and they feel like they must represent women as a group. If women have less musical experience, they may struggle with their inexperience and self-sabotage because they feel like they are not good enough—especially to represent women as a whole. Heather demonstrated this when she reported:

It's a self-fulfilling prophecy, when you get discouraged from the time you pick up the instrument...eventually you are going to quit, or you're not going to practice enough. You're gonna say 'what's the point?'...Most of the females I know that play an instrument quit, they get discouraged and quit, and then they'll jump back on an instrument at a party or something and they'll be rusty because they got discouraged and quit...Biologically

there's nothing stopping us from being great musicians, but if you're told...all your life [you can't do it] then its going to fulfill itself and you actually believe it.

One way women self-sabotage short of quitting is when they avoid playing an instrument in their bands. As minorities in a male-dominated scene, they feel they represent women as a whole and don't want to give *women* a bad name if they doubt their ability to play well. Heather highlights this when she told me "I used to play the guitar, I would like to see more women playing the guitar...I think it needs to be a good woman who can prove to the world that she is good at what she does. I am a crappy guitar player [so] I would make all women guitarists look horrible." Similarly Sam demonstrated this: "I used to play guitar...and I just kind of got tired of it and I wanted to sing instead, because I've always sang and I wanted to devote more of my time to doing that better, and [improving my] stage performance. I'm just not that good at [guitar]...and I know I can sing really well." Heather's and Sam's self-doubt as capable guitarists led them to make concessions and stunt their growth as instrumental musicians. This self-censorship pushed them into the gender-conforming roles such as that of vocalist or stage performer, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Finally, possibly the largest barrier for female musicians that also pushes women out of music is motherhood and the expectation that women will be the primary caregivers. Out of my 24 interviewees, only two were mothers, despite all being within normal childbearing and motherhood ages of 22-45. Katie said "that has a lot to do with why I'm not a parent...I feel like I would just get sidelined." Katie's sentiment was echoed in multiple interviews, including when Alex told me "that's *the* reason I don't

have kids...I want to devote myself to my music and if I have a baby I'm just not going to be able to do that."

Touring especially poses a problem for mothers in bands and female musicians *considering* motherhood; travelling is a necessary process for bands to gain exposure. While respondents often alluded to a (theoretical) ability to take children on tour, it would cost money that most mid-level bands do not make. Louise brought this up when she told me "That's *the* reason I don't have any kids, because of the fact that I want to travel the world." Emma responded in a similar way:

It just seems like most of the people that I know that are willing to travel full-time and leave everything behind are men... I wear many hats as a woman, I think a lot of women do, as far as being caretakers, and being mothers, and being job holders...and it seems to me, the people that are able to say 'fuck it I'm gonna be on the road and work as a full-time musician don't have a lot of attachments.'

The expectation for mothers to be primary caregivers is internalized by many women. Alex said, "What happens to a woman's body biologically [is] to attach her to her child when she gives birth to it...women are eternally going to be much more willing to sacrifice for their kids." By essentializing motherhood as "sacrifice," women like Alex endorse the ideology of "intensive mothering" (see Hays 1996) that sets an almost impossible standard of motherhood. In addition, women individualize the problem of how to integrate motherhood with a music career instead of seeing it as a collective problem that includes fathers. Thus these women pit their participation in the music industry against conventional expectations of motherhood.

Overwhelmingly, respondents said that motherhood could potentially be balanced along with a musical career if they had a strong support system in place. The two mothers in my sample both had strong family support that allowed them to devote time to their band practicing, playing shows, and doing modest amounts of travel. Yet multiple respondents made conscious decisions *not* to have children in order to focus on their musical careers; their avoidance of motherhood shows how many women assume that motherhood demands an all-or-nothing commitment to children and childcare.

In contrast, the two mothers in my sample, along with one who is currently engaged to a man with a child, discussed how playing in a band was one of the *best* things they could do for their children. The respondents who had daughters felt they were in a position to be role models who could show that they were capable of anything. Amy, engaged to a man with a young daughter, said “Personally I really want to be a role model for [her]...I want to show her that she can do whatever she wants.” And Bea said in relation to her young daughter, “I want to show her, I want her to see...I can do anything I want to do, I want her to know that. I feel like I’m setting an example.”

Yet balancing a musical career along with motherhood subjected these women to policing from others who endorsed the ideology of intensive mothering (Hays 1996). Bea mentioned an interaction with a woman from the audience: “She felt like I should pick something else to do as a young mother, and that really stuck with me, and then I had the realization that this is the best thing I could do for [my daughter] as a young mother... and people don’t get that sometimes because I’m not at home cooking and having more babies.” Riley echoed Bea’s statement when she said “It could be the



social stigma that a girl is supposed to get married and have a family...I feel a lot of social stigma...Because I'm a parent...a lot of people look down on [me being in a band] like 'oh, you're in a band too? What about your kids?'...It's kind of disheartening at times." The women who combined motherhood with their music careers felt judged by others, as if they should feel guilty for being in bands because they were away from their homes.

Once I realized that choosing or avoiding motherhood was an important topic, I attempted to seek out additional interviewees who were mothers but met with no success. Respondents often alluded to the existence of many female musicians who might not be performing in public. The lack of mothers in my sample, along with the conscious decisions by many women with active careers to forgo having children gave me the sense that motherhood is a factor in pushing women out of music. Like many of the patterns that emerged, women's experiences contrasted sharply with men's. For example, once when I observed an all-male band whose members I knew personally, I realized that these men had wives and children at home while they had been on a short two-week tour. This made me question the likelihood that female musicians would get the same level of support from their male partners. My interviews suggest that women who expect to be the primary caregivers for children thus must choose between motherhood or a musical career. A lack of role models creates a self-fulfilling cycle for women in music; if women sacrifice music for motherhood then we can expect that cycle to continue.

Normative gender expectations affect women in numerous ways and my research has identified how they infiltrate the music scene in particular. Katie summed up many of the issues women negotiate:

Women don't see themselves in [the musical field]; they are often not encouraged to be loud, they're not encouraged to speak up, [they don't feel] able to speak up. [They don't feel] like their opinions are valid or their feelings are valid. There is... this very cerebral male culture where if you don't know everything there is to know about music, males will test you sometimes...[Women] don't know how to deal with that...they don't want to deal with the slander, they don't want to deal with the objectification, they don't want to deal with getting up there and not being comfortable with their bodies or their voices, and being on stage makes them uncomfortable.

Katie's words are poignant because they encompass many levels of both internal struggle and societal pressure that women in music face.

#### For the Love of Music

The foregoing analysis demonstrates interviewees' difficulties with navigating a musical career. So the question remains—why do some women continue their musical careers despite many unpleasant experiences? The women I interviewed shared a passion for their music, and all of them mentioned it being “fun” numerous times. Yet their musical careers offered them much more. Melissa responded, “It's really...liberating [and] deeply personal...I love creating something that I think is beautiful and then sharing it with other people...it's fun...and I'm pushing my own boundaries.” And Emma said, “[I love] expressing something...I love being in a crowd...[and] when we play a show and everybody feels uplifted...it helps me to feel good that I helped somebody else to feel good.” Similarly Katie replied, “I like that I don't

have to talk about [emotions] with words, I can just express whatever it is, it's important for me to share with people...I think it's meaningful to others." In contrast, Riley felt her music was necessary for her mental health: "For me it took a really low depression and some self discovery to figure out what was missing. I think I was born to be a musician. It's something in me that I have to do. If I don't I'm not gonna be in a good place." Each of these women demonstrated that sharing their music with others offered personal and emotional rewards.

The women I interviewed were in various stages of their musical careers. Some were just beginning, while others were veterans in the business. Yet all had persevered to maintain a musical identity at the time of our interview. Music provided them a creative outlet that was also highly emotional and important to them. These factors allowed them to maintain their musical identities despite the barriers they faced on a regular basis. Conversely, those women who may have attenuated their musician identities or ceased to perform publicly may have also sacrificed what others found to be a deeply rewarding form of self-expression.

Not all of my respondents expressed an open awareness of gender inequality. Some were acutely aware that their presence functioned as a form of activism, while others simply received an emotional payoff that made it feel worthwhile. Regardless of what drew them in to music or kept them there, these women were all managing a level of success in an occasionally difficult environment—and they deserve recognition for their willingness to continue to create and maintain a female space for future female performers.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

My research identified women's entries into music, barriers they negotiated while playing, ways others treated them as invisible or deviant, and ways they made career concessions, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Taken together, the themes I identified underscore how, despite the anti-conformist origins of many rock subcultures, normative gender expectations and practices limit opportunities for women in musical careers. These patterns appear in many other careers, not just for women in male-dominated music genres. Motherhood is a key expectation for women; some female musicians feel they must choose between the role of musician or mother which negatively impacts their opportunities to lead full lives.

My interviews with 24 female musicians in unconventional music careers exposed several barriers. Some women challenged trends of the past by playing non-gender-conforming instruments, but other women complied with expectations for women as vocalists or bass players. Patriarchal beliefs and practices covertly, and overtly, infiltrated every aspect of their careers. Yet most of the women I interviewed normalized sexism to such an extent that it seemed unremarkable to them.

Female musicians contended with being devalued and dismissed; in part this occurs because they threaten the male-identified role of musician. Many of the women I interviewed reported men as allies who facilitated their career entry; however, other men and women simultaneously reinforced a variety of barriers that emphasized women's lower status. Music has traditionally been an area reserved for men, so naturally women must regularly gain knowledge from those men who are willing to

share that with them. Conversely, women threaten the male-centered arena of music and are met with many covert methods that undermine their ability to participate as freely as men do.

Women's outsider status sets up a circular problem: as long as their participation rates stay small, then future generations of girls and women lack role models. Young women rarely see women playing music in public and therefore do not see rock music as a career that is open to them. Having role models is vital to seeing more women participate in music; however, despite increases in female role models in the 1970s and 1980s, the numbers of women today are not significantly higher. If the women performing in music today were to actively invite more women and girls to join them, they would make an important step toward disrupting the pattern.

The women in my sample were constantly doing "identity work" which Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock define as "anything people do, individually or collectively, to give meaning to themselves or others" (1996: 115). Interviewees found that sexual objectification stigmatized their musician identity—they were aware that being perceived as too sexy could decrease their credibility as musicians and enable sexual harassment. Defying feminine expectations thus protected their credibility and offered some liberation from their subordinate status as women in rock and roll, but constantly monitoring and keeping femininity in check came at a cost; it could reinforce rock and roll music as a male domain—the root problem the women faced.

In some respects it comes as no surprise that the women in my sample encountered gender inequality, given its systemic nature (Frye 1983). This is especially apparent in musical careers and other creative arts where legislation and regulations to

challenge gender inequality are non-existent. In other areas of American life, such as schools, universities, and workplaces, where people are subject to equal employment and anti-discrimination policies, women's participation rates show some signs of improvement over the past (Harper and Reskin 2005).

The women I interviewed are groundbreaking in many ways, but they are not changing the structure of the music scene or the sexist nature of it. Instead they work within existing structures and manage to make a place for themselves in the consistently male-dominated sphere. Stepping away from conventional gender roles may make these women and others uncomfortable, yet that is the only way to break down the gender binary in rock music. Women playing in bands offer more role models, but they also have a unique opportunity to effect change in a larger capacity by actively reaching out and mentoring other women. In fact, this is this happening in some capacity through organizations such as Girls Rock Camps which are springing up in cities around the world. According to their website, "Girls Rock Camps help girls build self-esteem and find their voices through unique programming that combines music education and performance; empowerment and social justice workshops; positive role models, and collaboration and leadership skill building" (Girls Rock Camp Alliance 2015; see also Giffort 2011).

Along with women reaching out and actively mentoring the next generation of musicians, male allies also matter. Male allies are imperative in effecting change for women since they are the group in power. Men's awareness is the first step for them becoming allies for women both in music and in other areas of their lives. Secondly, encouraging more men to make appropriate, genuine efforts to both mentor women and

avoid the many intentional and unintentional ways they hinder them as musicians is vital for women to gain respect in music and obtain the knowledge denied them for ages.

My research adds to a body of knowledge investigating both gender inequality and sociological processes in various music scenes. Future researchers should investigate female musicians who perform at a higher level of commercial and artistic success, locate more women combining music and motherhood, and obtain a larger sample to enable comparisons between co-ed bands, fully female, and solo bands. Investigating in these directions would allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how women negotiate the music industry as well as what factors may continue to hinder their participation.

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