

February 2016

#PopJustice: Volume 1

Social Justice and the Promise of Pop Culture Strategies

by Liz Manne, Rachel D. Godsil, Mik Moore, Meredith Osborne, Joseph Phelan
with Thelma Adams, Michael Ahn, Brian Sheppard



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Editorial Director: Liz Manne

Senior Editor: Joseph Phelan

Graphic Design: Luz Ortiz

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by Liz Manne, Rachel D. Godsil, Mik Moore, Meredith Osborne, Joseph Phelan
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#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players

Organizations and Practitioners at the Intersection of Popular Culture and Social Justice

by Liz Manne, Joseph Phelan
with Betsy Fagin, Ashley Weatherspoon

#PopJustice, Volume 3: Pop Culture, Perceptions, and Social Change (A Research Review)

by Rachel D. Godsil, Jessica MacFarlane, Brian Sheppard
in association with Perception Institute

#PopJustice, Volume 4: Understanding the Entertainment Industry

by Thelma Adams, Michael Ahn, Liz Manne
with Ranald T. Adams IV, Meredith Osborne

#PopJustice, Volume 5: Creative Voices & Professional Perspectives

featuring René Balcer, Caty Borum Chattoo, Nato Green, Daryl Hannah, David Henry Hwang, Lorene Machado, Mik Moore, Karen Narasaki, Erin Potts, Mica Sigourney, Michael Skolnik, Tracy Van Slyke, Jeff Yang

#PopJustice, Volume 6: Economic Data & Foundation Grantmaking

by Liz Manne, Michael Simkovic
with Betsy Fagin

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“What I can tell you is that works of art are the only silver bullet we have against racism and sexism and hatred. Joe Biden happened to see *Hamilton* on the same day James Burrows was here. James Burrows directed every episode of *Will & Grace*, and remember when Biden went on *Meet the Press* and essentially said, ‘Yeah, gay people should get married’? He very openly credited *Will & Grace* with changing the temperature on how we discuss gays and lesbians in this country. It was great to see Jim Burrows and Joe Biden talk about that, and Jim thanked Biden and Biden thanked Jim because that was a piece of art changing the temperature of how we talked about a divisive issue. It sounds silly. It's a sitcom, but that doesn't make it not true. Art engenders empathy in a way that politics doesn't, and in a way that nothing else really does. Art creates change in people's hearts. But it happens slowly.”

— Lin-Manuel Miranda
The Hollywood Report
August 12, 2015

Preface

#BlackLivesMatter. I Am Cait. Inside Amy Schumer. Straight Outta Compton. Hamilton. Throughout 2015, popular culture was like an injection of hi-octane fuel into the engine of public discourse about institutional racism, gender identity, immigration, pay equity, and other issues of social justice. Of course, art and culture have been forces for social and political change for centuries (millennia?). What's different about the past few years is how quickly pop culture can move an issue from the margins of public consciousness to its center. In a hyperconnected world where practically anyone, anywhere, can join in the conversation, pop culture is changing and influencing public opinion at a rate never seen before.

That velocity makes this an exciting and incredibly promising moment for all of us dreaming of a more equitable and just society. I have always had a passion for politics and social justice, thanks to my upbringing in a classically liberal, California Jewish household. (Cesar Chavez and the grape boycott, Angela Davis posters, *The Mod Squad*—this was the stuff of my childhood.) My love of film and popular culture led me to a nearly three-decade career as an entertainment executive, which was fortuitously timed to the rise of independent and arthouse cinema as genuine market forces. With companies like Fine Line Features, SundanceTV, and HBO Films, I was able to work on films that I believed in and admired as humanist, socially relevant works (*Hoop Dreams, My Own Private Idaho, Maria Full of Grace, and Elephant*).

In 2008, a galvanizing year for many, I made the switch: my avocation became my vocation, and I began a “second act” career working with nonprofits and pro-social businesses, putting my entertainment and business experience in service to issue-related organizations and campaigns. And there is no doubt in my mind that in the 21st Century media landscape, pop culture is an indispensable tool for achieving transformational social change. Now is the time to leverage pop culture through strategic investment and hitch social justice values and goals to its strength and velocity.

For a blueprint of how to seize this moment, we look to the practical theories and methods of cultural strategy, which integrates arts, culture, and advocacy to shift public sentiment and forge a new collective consensus around social issues. Here our focus is on popular culture, rather than culture more broadly, and to embrace and understand the entertainment industry. This is a relatively unexplored area of research for the field of cultural strategy, with new sets of findings and recommendations. Hence, we've given it a name: #PopJustice.

The #PopJustice series of reports are intended for funders and social justice advocates interested in the promise and potential of popular culture as an agent of change.

#PopJustice, Volume 1: Social Justice and the Promise of Pop Culture Strategies is the main volume in the series. It provides a definition of popular culture and describes how pop culture relates to culture on a broader level; it then moves on to a “theory of change” that describes the activities and potential outcomes of a prospective new grantmaking program; we follow with selected case studies narrating some real-world examples; and close with recommendations for grantmaking investments going forward. It is our hope that *Volume 1* in itself effectively makes the case for the excitement and potential of this space, and helps funders reach an understanding of where, how, and why to invest.

Subsequent volumes delve deeper into the subjects that inform this main report. *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players (Organizations and Practitioners at the Intersection of Popular Culture and Social Justice)* clusters and lists potential grantees and other relevant partners in our shared ecosystem. *#PopJustice, Volume 3: Pop Culture, Perceptions, and Social Change (A Research Review)*, published in partnership with Perception Institute, is a review of academic studies and research reports to determine the empirical support for our hypothesis that popular culture is an effective agent of change. (It won't spoil the read to say the answer, in short, is “yes.”) *#PopJustice, Volume 4: Understanding the Entertainment Industry* explains the

inner workings of the business sectors we feel are most ripe and ready for intervention: film and TV, music, social media, video games, and celebrity. *#PopJustice, Volume 5: Creative Voices & Professional Perspectives* (my personal favorite) is a collection of essays by and interviews with professionals working in the entertainment industry and at the crossroads of pop culture and social justice. Finally, *#PopJustice, Volume 6: Economic Data & Foundation Grantmaking* provides economic data for the popular culture sector and an overview of current foundation grantmaking relevant to popular culture and social justice. (If you love charts, this is your volume; if not, consider yourself forewarned.)

This is a lot of ground to cover, and encompasses many different areas of expertise: creative storytelling, business, philanthropy, social science, economics, and the perspectives of advocates, funders, and industry professionals. No one writer or researcher could possibly hope to manage it all. So to undertake this work, I channeled my inner Alinsky and organized a wonderful, informed, and inspiring community of collaborators, all credited in the Acknowledgements page. They brought their considerable experience to bear, as well as their individual voices.

Aside from our firsthand knowledge,¹ our work for this report involved countless hours of research using publicly available sources plus interviews with individuals across a range of fields, from advocacy and philanthropy to science and entertainment (again, please see the Acknowledgements for their names). Not surprisingly, these efforts yielded a considerable amount of material. But we felt it was all relevant—and interesting—and informative in building an effective investment strategy at the crossroads of popular culture and social justice. We've broken it all down into these separate volumes and encourage readers to, in the words of my late mother, "Eat what you like and leave the rest." We encourage you to skim and find the writer or voice or subject that is most interesting to you.

I want to close by extending our sincere thanks to Taryn Higashi and Adey Fisseha at Unbound Philanthropy, and Maurine Knighton and Brandi Stewart at the Nathan Cummings Foundation for their generous support of this project, and their deep engagement throughout.

Happy reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Manne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Manne
Editorial Director, *#PopJustice*

¹ Disclosure: A few of the report series co-authors, Mik Moore and myself in particular, have been actively working in this field for a number of years. Some of the case studies and other subjects of this report series involve past and current clients or partnerships. For example, I was a co-founder of The Culture Group and the editorial director for *Making Waves*; Perception Institute and RPM are among my clients. Mik's firm managed *Halal in the Family* and conceptualized and ran the Fedoras for Fairness campaign for We Belong Together. While this direct experience assisted us in navigating the material and gaining access to information and individuals, no doubt we were occasionally at risk of bias. Our hope is that our fellow co-authors, as well as the external readers, provided objectivity where we may have been lacking.

“What will ultimately bring change to TV is greater diversity in all aspects of the industry—actors, writers, executives, producers, crew, etc. So I think what justice advocates can do is pressure the industry to hire and train more diverse artists, in all areas of creation and production. What we really need are more writers, directors, and actors who understand both what it means to belong to these diverse communities and have the craft and experience to create great TV.”

— **David Henry Hwang**
Tony Award-winning playwright and screenwriter

1. Introduction

#PopJustice rests on decades of practice, investment, and thinking at the nexus of art, culture, media, and social change. In particular, this report series aims to complement and build on The Culture Group's *Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy*; and *Spoiler Alert: How Progressives Will Break Through With Pop Culture* by Tracy Van Slyke. A general introduction to the field and practice of cultural strategy, *Making Waves* includes a brief history of pop culture's role in sparking transformative change, illustrated with thumbnail examples from this century and the last. *Spoiler Alert* looks at the major strategic investments that progressives can make into popular culture and creative activism to achieve transformative societal and political change. **"Culture sets the stage for the national and international conversation around social issues. It affects people's beliefs and behaviors at a mass level,"** said Tracy Van Slyke in an interview for this report series.

Cultural strategy and its tenets are deeply indebted to the work of such pioneers as GLAAD and Norman Lear. By calling out homophobia and challenging negative depictions of gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender individuals in the media, GLAAD helped lay the groundwork for series like *Modern Family* and *Will and Grace*. Studies showed that these programs helped change Americans' attitudes towards the LGBT community. Matt Foreman, former Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force notes, **"We would not have gotten marriage equality but for popular culture."**

In the 1970s, Lear changed television forever with his frank, slice-of-life comedies including *All in the Family*, *Maude*, *The Jeffersons*, *Sanford and Son*, and *Good Times*. Lear's shows tackled everything from racism, sexism, and homophobia to abortion and menopause, and their popularity demonstrated America's willingness to look at its worst truths.

We believe in the power of popular culture to shape public attitudes and create overarching narratives that set the stage for political possibilities. These narrative shifts and drivers of attitudes only matter if they translate into political and policy shifts. According to Tim Sweeney, former CEO of the Gil Foundation, **"Changing pop culture is essential to winning. Policy won't happen unless you have that."**



We undertake our investigation starting with two hypotheses, one general, the other specific:

1. Popular culture can be an effective instrument for positive social change.
2. Popular culture can be leveraged in the effort to counter stereotypes and improve attitudes and behavior toward immigrants and people of color.

We recognized at the outset that we needed evidence to determine whether our hypotheses are accurate and we devote *#PopJustice, Volume 3: Pop Culture, Perceptions, and Social Change (A Research Review)* to reviewing the literature addressing these questions. The findings from the extant studies are very encouraging, although we need further research to understand the mechanisms more fully.

Currently the majority of philanthropic cultural funding is focused on so-called "benchmark" arts (symphony, opera, theater, ballet, and art museums); traditional arts and culture; media arts (including documentaries); arts education; and to some degree, movement arts and culture and cultural organizing.

In other words, pretty much everything other than popular culture. Yet a single episode of *Empire* will reach more people than an entire season of ballet: 16.7 million viewers tuned in to the 2015 season finale.

Pop culture is something we may talk about and enjoy in our free time, but generally it's not something we bring into the boardroom or other decision-making forums. We believe this needs to change.

“Growing up in rural South Carolina I was the only gay person I knew ... I also didn’t know of any out gay musicians in the hip-hop music I listened to or gay characters on my favorite television shows—*A Different World*, *The Cosby Show*, or *Family Matters*. In fact, it wasn’t until my freshman year at Morehouse College that I saw a proud black gay man on television and watched him marry his partner. I remember sitting in my dorm room that evening and crying profusely at the conclusion of the episode because it was the first time I realized that one day I, too, might be able to marry the man that I loved.

“That experience taught me the power of media and the importance of LGBT visibility. It’s also why, when I heard that Fox’s *Empire* would prominently feature a young black gay character, I couldn’t help but acknowledge the potential impact it would have on countless gay and lesbian youth of color and their families who, in small pockets around the world, are grappling with how to accept their son or daughter.”

— Daryl Hannah
Brooklyn-based writer

2. Definitions & Scope

To provide context for the entirety of the *#PopJustice* report series, our aims in this section are:

1. To create a simple and usable definition of “popular culture,” relevant for the purposes of social change investment.
2. To map “culture” broadly speaking, and identify the place of popular culture within that larger context.
3. To identify the specific areas of pop culture this report series will cover in depth—and why.

What is Culture?

Before we can define pop culture we need to consider culture as a whole. According to *Making Waves*, it has two primary meanings:

1. The prevailing beliefs, values, and customs of a group; a group’s way of life.
2. A set of practices that contain, transmit, or express ideas, values, habits, and behaviors between individuals and groups.

The first definition is culture as a “... shared space. This is culture as a group identity, based on prevalent values, pastimes, mores, etc.” This definition can be thought of as the **being** of culture.

The second definition addresses the practices and activities that make up our shared space. This is the **doing** of culture. When we think of the doing of culture we usually think of the **makers**, the artists and producers who create the entertaining, challenging, awe-inspiring, and even commercially mundane yet enticing cultural products that we as consumers of culture so enjoy. While the makers are critical to the production of culture, they are also dependent on the ever-important **cultural consumers**. Engaged fans, commentators, sports enthusiasts, nightlife personalities, and church band members all shape culture through their participation. The line between the makers and the users—the producers and the consumers—is not a sharp one. This line is further blurred when we look at a changing technological landscape that democratizes and individualizes the curation of cultural experiences.

So culture is the sum total of our prevailing beliefs, values, customs, and way of life as well as the practices that transmit culture. Culture is always in the process of influencing and being influenced, shifting, and changing.

And why are we—as social justice advocates—concerned with culture? Because it is the thing we want to change and the way in which we change it, all at once.

As The Culture Group stated, “Culture is both the *object* of change, and the *agent* of change.”

“We can’t deny the reach of TV. On a bad night, a crappy show will get half a million viewers. TV is powerful because people still believe what they see on screen ... Why not tell them something positive or something useful?”

**— Lorene Machado
film and TV producer/director**

What is Mainstream Culture?

When searching to define pop culture, the top result on Google is a definition from *Wikipedia*:

“Popular culture (or pop culture) is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture, especially mainstream Western culture.”

This definition narrows us down from the large ocean of culture and brings us into the idea of mainstream culture. “Mainstream,” as defined by the *Oxford Dictionary*, is “the ideas, attitudes, or activities that are regarded as normal or conventional; the dominant trend in opinion, fashion, or the arts.”

But mainstream itself is a loaded concept. Some social justice allies are suspicious of mainstream culture, believing it is corporatized in ways that necessarily strip away critical political content or shut out minority viewpoints. Mainstreaming or normalization or assimilation to a convention or status quo, some argue, only goes so far in providing a reprieve from injustices faced by individuals and groups. Underneath this belief is the idea that entrenched in conventional culture and politics are systems of oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, and wealth.

Our challenge, then, is to engage culture to shift and change what is mainstream, what is considered normal and conventional. We are looking to create opportunities not to assimilate to a conventional norm, but rather to reconceive of what is normal and imbue the new normal with power. As an example, Alexis Frasz, a cultural anthropologist with Helicon, points to the Emmy Award-winning Amazon series *Transparent*, about a family adjusting to the patriarch’s transgender identity and transition to life as a woman. **“Often there are things that come up [through pop culture] that can’t come up in a regular context. For example, a conservative family watching *Transparent* and it creating safe spaces for people to talk about something they would never bring to the dinner table.”**

So what is Pop Culture?

This report series is specifically focused on Popular Culture (Pop Culture). By definition, pop culture is dependent on consensus—otherwise, it wouldn’t be popular.

So here’s our definition:

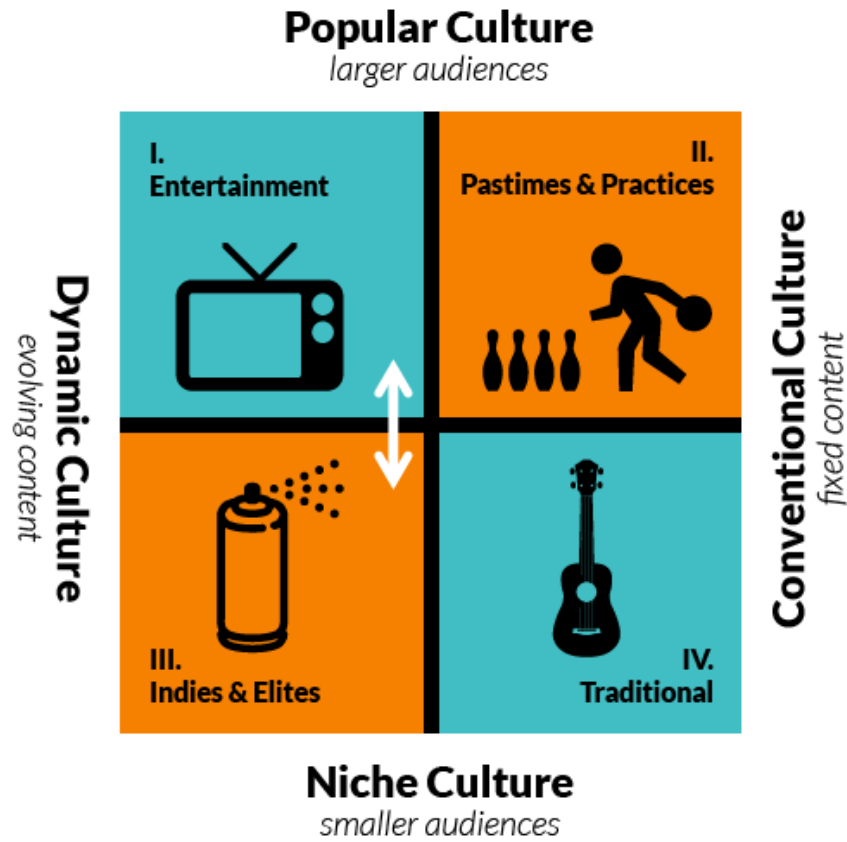
Pop Culture is those elements of culture capable of sustaining and perpetuating themselves based on endorsement and participation by large groups of people through their own agency.

This definition of pop culture recognizes that “audiences” are active participants in defining what is, and what is not pop culture. It is not just through the purchasing of the thing, but rather through the willing and often passionate endorsement and participation by large groups of people that elements of culture become pop. Pop culture can be amplified, even manipulated, by marketing—and indeed it is often conflated with the robust commercial industries that capitalize on it—but it cannot be forced upon unwilling participants.

Mapping Culture

In order to help us determine the precise scope of coverage for this report series, we developed a matrix that maps culture broadly, clustering arts and culture into quadrants divided by two main axes.

Culture Matrix



Using our definition above, everything above the middle line qualifies as **Popular Culture**. These activities enjoy large audiences and willing participants, and are often associated with massive commercial industries. Popular Culture is split between two main clusters: (I) Entertainment, and (II) Pastimes & Practices.

The clusters below the middle line are arenas with smaller audiences. They function within a variety of economic constructs—from nonprofits to gift economies but none mass market. We classify them together as **Niche Culture**, as opposed to popular culture, and they, too, are divided into two main clusters: (III) Indies & Elites, and (IV) Traditional.

A Detailed Look

I. Entertainment Hollywood movies, commercial TV (including popular Spanish-language programming), hit music, video games, celebrity culture, social media and meme culture, advertising, fashion, popular publishing (blockbuster books, magazines, and comics), and Broadway.	II. Pastimes & Practices Hobbies and recreation like bowling, hunting, fishing, gambling, and spectator sports; churchgoing and other faith-related practices; and traditional “Americana” fare like car culture, fast food, amusement parks, and state fairs.
III. Indies & Elites Contemporary nonprofit theater and performing arts; independent music, film, literature, art, and design; creative counterculture (like Burning Man); grassroots and movement culture as well as cultural organizing; and luxury art like the commercial visual art market and marquee architecture.	IV. Traditional Indigenous and historic forms of culturally-specific (whether Western or non-Western) arts and cultural expression, including performing arts (music, dance, theater) as well as food, clothing, ritual, and crafts.

News and journalism—which are not being addressed in this report series due to ample coverage elsewhere—could easily be mapped into the culture matrix as well: *The Tonight Show* and *People* in box I; talk radio and *ESPN SportsCenter* in box II; and “social impact” documentaries, National Public Radio, *The Journal of Black Studies*, and *The New York Times* in box III. (Since box IV is primarily historic forms, we couldn’t think of an apt journalism example that would fit. Maybe Mayan codices?)

The borders between these boxes are porous, with plenty of mobility between them: for example, from “Indie” to “Entertainment” as audiences grow in size (such as *Hamilton*, which began in nonprofit theater and became a Broadway juggernaut), or from “Pastimes” to “Entertainment” like when an athlete enters celebrity territory (say, Caitlyn Jenner or LeBron James).

Key Questions

Continuing to home in on our areas of coverage for these reports, we asked ourselves the following key questions:

Does the area in question have a very large audience, or the potential for a large audience?

We felt that a large audience was essential to our emerging theory of change, that culture change would not be possible without mass exposure—or at least the serious potential to cross over to reach a large audience. Nowhere in the report series do we provide specific metrics for when something qualifies as having a “large” audience. We all know that when a YouTube video has millions of views, that’s a large audience, and therefore “popular;” whereas thousands of views is small and therefore “niche.” A movie that grosses over \$100 million in US box office is popular; one that grosses under \$10 million is niche. Beyoncé is popular; the mime on the subway platform is not (though hope springs eternal). We don’t name the specific tipping point where something moves from one to the other: the markets are so varied and the metrics so different amongst them, that identifying the precise crossover points is too complex an undertaking for the scope of this report series.

“[Beyoncé’s] appropriation and assemblage are based on the understanding that a mass audience is a mass of niche audiences. Each has its own history, with its own desires, and she empowers them all.”

—Margo Jefferson, *Vogue*

Is there a market component (one that can be understood and influenced)?

A market component can be a good indicator for mass audience potential. Also, the commercial entertainment industry is a relatively undeveloped area of exploration, understanding, and investment by philanthropy. It's not that it's entirely nascent—opposing D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was one of the NAACP's earliest campaigns; GLAAD has had considerable success over its 20+ years of “naming and shaming” in Hollywood—it's just that there is plenty of opportunity for sharpening strategy and building scale when it comes to leveraging the entertainment industry for social justice aims.

Is it evolving (or changeable) in form and content?

Fixed forms of content and distribution are hard to influence or evolve; changeability is an essential factor.

Does a single individual have the potential to be a game-changer?

Given limited budgets, philanthropy's ability to change an entire industry, institution, or system is minimal; its ability to nurture the talent, capacity, imagination, and reach of individuals is far more doable. Also, we have seen the power of the charismatic, talented, impassioned, sometimes just plain lucky person—celebrity or otherwise—to shift culture over and over again: Muhammed Ali, Ellen DeGeneres, Marian Anderson, Jackie Robinson, Shepard Fairey, the Adbusters designer behind the first Occupy Wall Street poster, Taylor Swift (taking on the monolith that is Apple). A single TV showrunner, like Shonda Rhimes, can absolutely be a game-changer.

Can we imagine a philanthropically funded social justice intervention? Can a board of directors of a high profile foundation tolerate being associated with it?

There would be no point in spending too much time studying or making recommendations that are a total non-starter for foundations, for either legal, ethical, practical, fiduciary, or optics reasons.

Can we think of a way to evaluate a potential philanthropic investment?

Philanthropy, whether private or public, is accountable to its funders. Funders, reasonably, require a way to evaluate the effectiveness or “success” of their investment. Evaluating art and aesthetics is a subtle and complex business, as is evaluating long-term social change such as attitude shifts toward immigrants and people of color. Neither undertaking is as simple as tallying votes or a box office gross, nor as time-tested as researching the efficacy of a new drug protocol. Nonetheless, we must build on the very encouraging body of research to date, and be able to imagine a practical and useful approach to evaluation in order to encourage ongoing philanthropic investments.

Opportunities for Intervention

Keeping in mind these questions, of the four quadrants described in the Culture Matrix, we believe box I, Entertainment, contains the greatest promise for achieving social change, and therefore is the focus of our study's coverage and recommendations for philanthropic investment and intervention. We believe that III (Indies & Elites) holds the next most promise, and that II (Pastimes & Practices) and IV (Traditional) have less potential.

Greatest Potential:

I. Entertainment—While every aspect of the Culture Matrix is of significant interest as well as potential relevance to social justice advocates, this report series—including our recommendations—is focused primarily on box I (Entertainment): the segment of culture that we feel holds the most potent and scalable, not to mention untapped, points of leverage in the path toward equality, fairness, and justice for all people. **Entertainment stands out because (1) it enjoys huge audiences, (2) its forms and content are dynamic and ever-changing, and (3) relatively small numbers of people can have enormous influence. For these reasons, we believe that Entertainment provides considerable opportunities for intervention aimed at creating a “new normal.”**

Also Interesting:

III. Indies & Elites—While some aspects of this very expressive and creative quadrant are open to all comers and are of urgent, intentional interest to social justice actors, some are firmly in the realm of the billionaire’s club with huge price tags that engender righteous, activist ire. Either way, everything here has relatively small audiences—or at least starts that way. We have secondary interest in those works that have the potential to “cross over” from a niche to a mass audience, depending on larger cultural winds, smart marketing, and/or the fervor of fans and participants. Think, for example, of *Fun Home*, a musical with a lesbian protagonist that was based on a graphic novel and ended up as a Tony Award-winning Broadway smash; or a movement-borne hashtag like #BlackLivesMatter that changes the conversation about race in America.

Lesser Potential:

II. Pastimes & Practices—While definitively popular culture, according to our definition of the term, enjoying huge and enthusiastic audiences, this area is less ripe for disruption than Entertainment given the largely unchanging (and unchangeable), convention-bound nature of the content and activities. The exceptions are when athletes transform into public figures, thus entering celebrity culture that is the realm of Entertainment (box I).

IV. Traditional—These orthodox forms function as standard bearers that preserve heritage and transmit culture. They may have high barriers to participation for both producers and consumers—whether it’s a matter of geography, ethnic identity, training, language, or class—creating an exclusivity and group identity for those who have access. This exclusivity depends on—and reinforces—a smaller, self-selecting audience, and the goal for this area is often conservation and celebration rather than broad popularity.

Scope of Coverage

Our scope of coverage for this report series, then, is culture that is:

- accessible to, and enjoyed by, a large audience, and
- dynamic in form and content.

Our focus is on the specific sectors that meet those criteria. In the case studies, recommendations, and industry analysis, our interest is firmly on entertainment: film and television, music, social media, video games, and celebrity.

P.S. How Large is “Large”?

Understanding the scale of the pop culture industries is critical to grasping the potential of the opportunity for influence. The final volume of the *#PopJustice* report series—*#PopJustice, Volume 6: Economic Data and Foundation Grantmaking*—provides detailed economic data for the relevant industries and foundation grantmaking. Here are some key takeaways:

- **Consumer Spending**—US consumers spend about the same on entertainment as they do on out-of-pocket health insurance (about \$2600 per year) and much more than they do on education (\$1200), fruits and vegetables (\$731), or alcoholic beverages (\$451).
- **Industry Size**—Revenue for the commercial popular culture industries is more than a thousand times larger than federal funding for media (through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting) and the same relative to all information and communications-related foundation grantmaking: \$868 billion for industry revenue compared to \$444 million for government funding and \$518 million for foundation grantmaking.
- **Sizes of Specific Popular Culture Sectors**—Broadcasting is the largest of the popular culture sectors at \$124 billion, followed by Sports at \$114 billion and Publishing at \$104 billion. Video Games are a \$15 billion business but growing fast.

“What would be most useful is for social justice advocates to help me solve my problems as a showrunner/head writer, by giving me story areas, ideas, and useful information. For example, if I’m doing a show set in the military, it might be worthwhile for me to know that there are presently an estimated 15,000 transgender service personnel serving our country. That fact alone might give me an idea for a story...

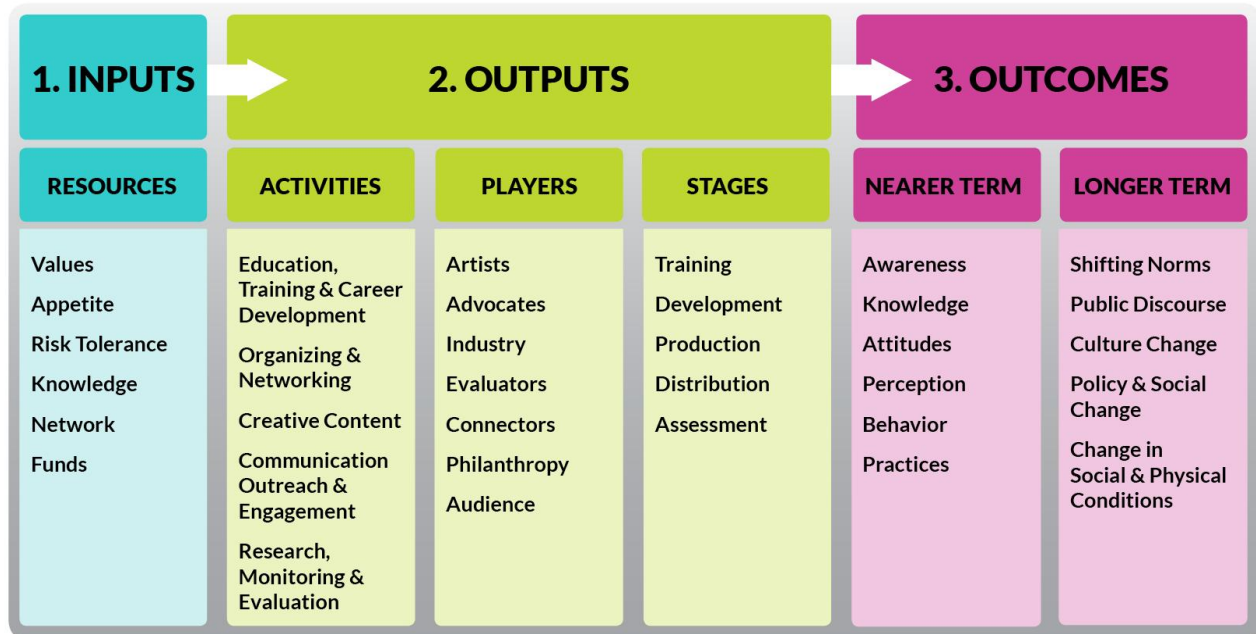
“In television, who is in the writer’s room has a lot to do with what ends up on the screen. A powerful showrunner can force sea changes. As more diversity writers become showrunners, the whole variety of human experience will be better and more accurately reflected on TV shows.”

— René Balcer
Emmy Award-winning TV Writer and Showrunner

3. Theory of Change

Our theory of change, or logic model, for the field of #PopJustice—a practice at the intersection of pop culture and social justice—involves three major components:

1. Inputs—resources, ingredients, and preconditions required
2. Outputs—comprised of activities involving key players during particular stages
3. Outcomes—goals for both the nearer and longer term



Let's step out each of these components.

1. Inputs

There are certain preconditions to building a body of promising #PopJustice work:

- We must have shared (and clear) **values**, inclusive of traditional social justice imperatives like justice, equality, and fairness; values around empiricism in our assessments and fiduciary responsibility to funders; values of pragmatism, simplicity, and respect with regards to the daily challenges of life as a grantee; and also values that don't fundamentally exclude our siblings who labor in the creative industries (an inclusive spirit, including for unrepentant capitalists, is fundamental to the success of this journey).
- We must have an **appetite for experimentation**, for the blue-sky opportunities of this relatively undeveloped field; and ample **tolerance for failure**. Remember that for every blockbuster movie, there are tens of thousands of unproduced screenplays. For every NBA superstar, millions of high school Hoop Dreamers.

*"You'll always miss
100% of the shots
you don't take."
—Wayne Gretzky*

- We need a **base of knowledge** to start with—and **connections** with the various types of people and players who have expertise in the “neighborhood” of our intersection. We hope this report series is a meaningful contribution to both of those needs.
- And, of course, add **money** and stir.

2. Outputs

The “Outputs” listed in the #PopJustice logic model above are comprised of three main elements: the actions we take (**Activities**), involving particular groups of people (**Players**), during specific phases in the pop culture lifecycle (**Stages**) that are ripe for different kinds of interventions.

Activities

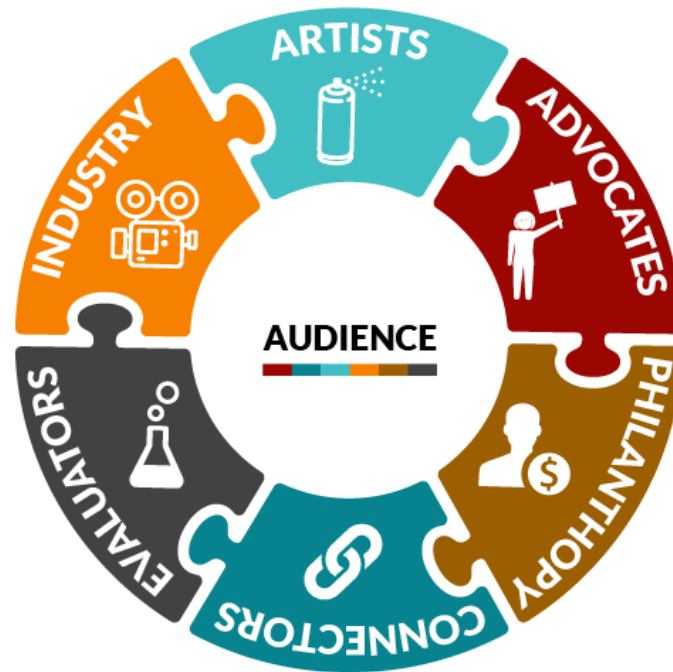
Our recommended **Activities** fall into five lanes, which are described in detail in the proposed investment guidelines described in section 5 (“Recommendations”):

1. Education, training, and career development;
2. Organizing and networking various individuals and institutions toward common ends;
3. Supporting the development and production of creative content;
4. Complementing commercial distribution with communication, outreach, and engagement strategies; and, critically;
5. Monitoring and evaluation, including the development of baselines against which to measure future endeavors.

Players

The logic model contemplates seven basic types of Players that interact and fill important roles in the #PopJustice ecosystem: **Artists, Advocates, Evaluators, Connectors, Industry, Philanthropy,** and **Audience.**

THE PLAYERS



Artists, Advocates, Evaluators, and Connectors comprise the likely candidates for grantees in a #PopJustice practice. And Industry, while not necessarily viable grantees, are important program partners. *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players (Organizations and Practitioners at the Intersection of Popular Culture and Social Justice)* provides deeper descriptions and extensive listings of organizations and entities that fit into these key categories:

- **Artists**—This group includes entertainment-related nonprofit organizations (and some pro-social for-profit firms) that seek positive social change in a number of ways, including empowering and creating pathways for excluded professionals in their respective fields, supporting networks of artists engaged with activism and philanthropy, and more. (Please note that individual artists are part of this group, though we do not list them in the Mapping.)
- **Advocates**—This cluster includes advocacy organizations, watchdogs, and other organizing entities. They fit squarely in the social justice category, with primary missions related to social change at societal, institutional, and individual levels.
- **Connectors**—These individuals and organizations are cultural strategists and organizers who develop strategy, serve as interpreters, build bridges, and foster collaborations of diverse Players.
- **Evaluators**—This category includes academic institutions and independent research groups who study the impact of pop culture on society at large and evaluate programs and initiatives within nonprofits and industry.
- **Industry**—This group includes the large media companies and major networks, labor organizations and academies, and all manner of Hollywood industry support players.

Philanthropy is not covered in *Volume 2: Mapping the Players*, but rather is addressed separately in *#PopJustice, Volume 5: Economic Data and Foundation Grantmaking*. Though often conflated with Advocates—in this report series and elsewhere—funders have a unique role.

The Audience is also not expressly or separately included, but rather looms throughout. They are the public whose interest advocates seek to organize and empower, the consumers that industry sells to, the fans that applaud (and replicate) an artist’s creativity, the users that generate content and drive social media, the voters and activists—the North Star guiding all our efforts.

Stages

The basic cycle of the commercial pop culture industries runs as follows:



Those indeed are the core functions of TV and movie studios, record companies, advertising agencies, Broadway producers, fashion designers, and social media mavens—all aimed at generating profit. We shape an idea (maybe we try out a bunch of concepts), then we pour money and resources into bringing that idea to fruition, then we connect it with its ultimate audience (sometimes through multiple channels over long timelines). If we leave out one of those key stages in the process, unless we are damn lucky or off-the-charts talented, we are probably in trouble.

There’s some training involved beforehand to ensure those involved know what they’re doing and are up to the task—and there is some tallying afterward to ensure we didn’t lose our shirts. And if we do fail, we fire whomever we can blame. (The entertainment industry loves to fire people.)

Adding those extra steps, the cycle (or “Stages”) looks more like this:



In the world of philanthropy and social justice advocacy, it’s not much different (minus the culture of firing). We graduate from our schools (Harvard, hard knocks), we plan what we’re going to do and why, we produce our policy or our campaign or our PSA, our communications department gets the word out, activists organize constituents, and someone somewhere along the line asks us to write up a report.

Now of course this cycle is actually circular, not linear—or it should be, anyway. Thoughtful assessment and evaluation leads to further strategy development and experimentation design, and off we go again through the stages of training, development, production, and distribution. And that is true regardless of who is doing the assessment and what it is that they value: a studio accountant (profit!), a foundation program officer (impact), a creative artist (originality), a research scientist (evidence), a policy advocate (change), or a young person organizing their community for greater opportunity and justice (empowerment).



Both the Case Studies and the Recommendations discuss interventions aimed at different, sometimes sequential, stages.

3. Outcomes

Our recommendations for future investments are directed toward achieving certain Outcomes, fully cognizant that results may be challenging to measure, the pathways forward uncharted, and sometimes the destination is distant.

As laid out in the report “Deepening Engagement for Lasting Impact: A Framework for Measuring Media Performance & Results” by Learning for Action, social justice work involves three intertwined strands of change:

- **Individual:** Shifting individual attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and practices.
- **Institutions, Systems, and Structures:** Moving institutions to become inclusive by recognizing and valuing all identity groups and allocating resources more fairly across the board.
- **Social and Physical Conditions:** The cumulative effects are outcome changes for individuals and communities such as decreased poverty, improved healthcare and environmental conditions, and equal access to government services.

While longer-term transformative social change is the ultimate goal of cultural strategy in general and #PopJustice in particular, we embrace the pursuit of nearer-term, project-specific objectives as well. A particular project may seek to raise awareness about a particular issue, change attitudes toward a stigmatized group, or engage people in a campaign to address an unjust law.

“The old way of doing things when it comes to racist systems is being challenged by a growing group of young people. In this climate, much like musicians and artists during the civil rights and Black Power movements, hip-hop artists are in a unique position to help shape a new culture. Will they challenge the inner workings of the music industry? Will they change the content of their music? In this environment more than ever before, they have a chance to impact an entire generation.”

– Talib Kweli
musician

4. Case Studies

What happens when the theories behind pop culture strategy are tested in the field? The following case studies provide some answers to that question. We chose these five examples because, collectively, they test many of the variables in #PopJustice. These variables include subject matter, medium, funding source, scope, and scale. All are recent or ongoing; the earliest case study goes back only to 2010.

For example, the National Domestic Workers Alliance case study looks at multiple campaigns within a single, mid-size nonprofit, utilizing film, web video, photography, and storytelling. The common thread among the campaigns is support for immigrant communities, but the subject matter touches on issues from elder care to child care and citizenship to gender equality. By contrast, *16 and Pregnant* is a television show produced by a major cable network owned by one of the world's largest media corporations. Its case study looks at a single medium, television, and focuses on a single issue, teen pregnancy. Because of MTV's reach, *16 and Pregnant* had the ability to connect with millions of teen girls on a weekly basis for years, and to have a direct impact on viewer behavior on a mass scale.

Since one goal of this report is to help funders better understand how they can support #PopJustice efforts, we did our best to demonstrate the ways in which outside intervention by foundation-supported nonprofits helped make possible even the two for-profit television show examples: *16 and Pregnant* and *Fresh off the Boat*. We draw out some of these approaches more explicitly in the Recommendations section at the end of this volume.

National Domestic Workers Alliance



Genesis

In 2011, Disney released *The Help*, a feature film based on *The New York Times* bestselling novel by Kathryn Stockett. This drama told the story of two African-American domestic workers, Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson, living in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1963 at the height of the Civil Rights Movement. A young nonprofit organization called the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) saw an opportunity. Working with a culture change strategy designer, Bridgit Antoinette Evans of Fuel | We Power Change, it decided to use the attention generated by this film to shine a light on NDWA's members, the often-invisible women who care for our families yet are excluded from minimum wage laws and denied basic legal protections. The film's co-star, Octavia Spencer, won an Oscar for her portrayal of Minny Jackson. NDWA helped find domestic workers for *Entertainment Tonight* to interview for a television segment about today's "help" and was able to engage Spencer and other Hollywood stars as advocates for domestic workers. Ultimately this work supported a successful campaign to pass a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in California and began to shift the way people think about these (largely) immigrant women workers.

Its experience with *The Help* led NDWA to consider cultural strategies for its other national campaigns. Caring Across Generations, which advocates for caregivers—both professional and family caregivers—and We Belong Together, which advocates for undocumented immigrant women and their families, looked for ways to bring the stories from these communities to the studios, networks, and media responsible for much of American popular culture.

Goals

Ultimately, NDWA sees its cultural strategy work as a way to shift people's norms, beliefs, behaviors, and deeply held values. Its top policy priorities include supporting dignity and workplace protections for domestic workers; a pathway to citizenship for undocumented families and workers; and meeting the rapidly growing domestic care needs of American seniors, children, and people with disabilities. NDWA seeks to contend for people's hearts and emotional lives in a way that goes beyond policy victories to shape the story of who Americans are becoming as a nation. It believes the cultural landscape will shift as the public begins to connect emotionally with the human experience of what needs to change. This culture change will help create the context for meaningful change in policy and behavior.

Tactics

Since 2011, NDWA and its campaigns have utilized four tactics to meet their goals:

First, they have trained NDWA and allied organizations' members in the art of storytelling to more effectively speak the language of pop culture. This began during NDWA's initial campaign around *The Help*, when members were given media training to maximize the impact of interviews by entertainment outlets. It has continued through an NDWA/Caring Across Generations partnership with The Moth, an organization that specializes in the art of popular storytelling and hosts live performances and a radio show. The Moth was able to help NDWA and allied organizations' members tell engaging stories to inspire pop culture creatives.

Second, they have begun to influence entertainment industry insiders, to increase the chances that the domestic worker narratives are featured in pop culture vehicles. Having a presence in Hollywood since 2011, NDWA has been building the necessary relationships to help the networks and studios better address NDWA's issues from the perspective of immigrant and other caregivers. This has included building relationships with women of color and people with personal connections to their issues. NDWA sees a connection between the industry's lack of diversity and the invisibility of the lives of so many lower-income women and people of color in popular media.

Third, they have created and distributed original content using a pop culture sensibility. For *We Belong Together*, this included a celebrity photo shoot with legendary fashion photographer Albert Watson. The photos were intended to reach a new audience of women who were not already engaged in immigration advocacy, through fashion, media, and Instagram. They told the subjects' immigration stories and called for comprehensive immigration reform to keep families together. To build on the attention to *The Help*, NDWA collaborated with Bridgit Antoinette Evans to create #BeTheHelp, a campaign that included awards season events, press stories, Twitter watch parties, celebrity partnerships, and a series of web videos produced by the film's distributor, Participant Media, featuring domestic workers telling their stories in support of legislation to expand worker protections. Ai-jen Poo, Executive Director of NDWA, has received numerous prestigious awards (named to the *Time* 100 list; MacArthur Genius Award recipient) and wrote and toured with her book about care work, *The Age Of Dignity*.

Finally, NDWA has taken advantage of existing pop culture content to promote their work to larger audiences. As noted earlier, *The Help* provided a powerful vehicle for reintroducing Americans to domestic workers and the challenges they face, along with some of the history of how domestic work was excluded from basic legal protections. Another film, *Still Alice*, starring Julianne Moore as an academic coping with early onset Alzheimer's, provided Caring Across Generations with an opportunity to highlight the experiences of family caregivers and to push the public to better understand the care needs of America's aging population.

Assessment

NDWA has experimented with a range of tactics that have met with various levels of success. Since 2011, working with the culture change studio Fuel, it has had many meetings and built strong relationships with industry insiders, including directors, producers, writers, journalists, agents, and actors. Supported by Participant Media, NDWA encouraged viewers of *The Help* to support the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights.

In 2012 actress and comedian Amy Poehler appeared in a video supporting the Bill of Rights; it received coverage in local and national press and was viewed almost 40,000 times on YouTube. The bill passed in 2013.

Caring Across Generations has created a lot of web video content, mostly first person testimonials. The most popular of these is a compilation of YouTube clips featuring grandparents, to celebrate Grandparents Day, and a video called #WeAllCare, which tells the stories of Caring Across Generations and NDWA members. During the theatrical run of *Still Alice*, Caring brought together the film's directors for a small luncheon with industry leaders to talk about caregiving. The relationships forged through this and other gatherings with groups like the Motion Picture Television Foundation and Hilarity for Charity, are intended to help Caring inspire and influence future projects and to open the door for collaborations with Caring around its initiatives. A CNN.com op-ed by Ai-jen Poo leveraged the film's release to bring Caring's work to new audiences.

The training has provided dozens of Caring Across Generations and NDWA members with the skills and confidence to tell their stories in interviews with the media and for original NDWA content. Many of these stories will be incorporated in a book it anticipates publishing in 2017. The NDWA members who participated in The Moth's Community and Education Program, live storytelling training, told their stories on stage at the Ford Foundation launch of Ai-jen Poo's book; they were also recorded for web video. The stories are powerful, but have not yet reached a large audience.

We Belong Together has played an important role in shifting the public conversation to focus more on the stories of Latina and other immigrant women and children. Its Fedoras for Fairness campaign featured photos of popular actors and models, including Rosie Perez, Ellen Barkin, Wyatt Cenac, and Christy Turlington Burns, telling and sharing family immigration stories on social media with their millions of followers. Popular fashion media, including *T Magazine* and *Refinery 29*, covered the campaign. This helped energize and broaden a campaign that relied primarily on direct action and lobbying to generate media attention, while putting the stories of its immigrant activists front and center.

Funders

Unbound Philanthropy has provided the only direct grant for NDWA's culture change work. NoVo Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Atlantic Philanthropies have funded the Caring Across Generations culture change work. The remainder is from general operating funds, which NDWA receives from Open Society Foundations, Marguerite Casey Foundation, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, Foundation for a Just Society, and others.

Harry Potter Alliance: Not In Harry's Name campaign



Genesis

In 2005, fans of the immensely popular *Harry Potter* series of young adult books created the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA), a nonprofit organization. HPA, which has 250 chapters around the world, provides a way for hundreds of thousands of fans to live the values of the series. What began as a place to engage in acts of service and charity shifted, in 2010, to more direct advocacy. The Deathly Hallow's Campaign was designed to mobilize fans to take on seven "real-life horcruxes," inspired by Harry and his friends' effort in the final two books to find and destroy seven horcruxes that are physical manifestations of evil. One of the first real-life horcruxes Harry's fans would take on was starvation wages.

Two years earlier, in 2008, HPA member Lisa Valdez had suggested initiating an effort to convince Warner Brothers, the corporate distributors of the Harry Potter brand, to manufacture its popular chocolate frogs with fair trade chocolate. Chocolate that is not fair trade runs a strong risk of being made by child slaves. By 2010, HPA had learned enough to know that the chocolate frogs being sold by Warner Brothers were unethically sourced. They launched the campaign "Not In Harry's Name" on Halloween.

Goals

Not In Harry's Name sought to compel a corporation to live the values of the fictional heroes in the *Harry Potter* series by selling ethically sourced chocolate frogs. It tested the proposition that *Harry Potter* fans (and HPA members), many of whom are teens, would lend their voices to more confrontational advocacy and stick with it for an extended period of time. It attempted to use the popular interest in the *Harry Potter* franchise to generate public attention to the campaign and leverage that attention to increase the pressure on Warner Brothers to change how it sourced chocolate for its frogs.

Tactics

Over the course of this four-year campaign, Not In Harry's Name utilized four tactics.

First, it used the release of the two *Deathly Hallows* films to galvanize fans and draw attention to modern day horcruxes like child slavery and starvation wages. The first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, was released as a film in 2001. It earned almost \$1 billion at the box office. The seventh book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was made into two films. The release of the final chapters in the *Harry Potter* saga was much anticipated by fans and media alike. For the studios, the *Harry Potter* franchise was a goldmine, generating an estimated \$25 billion in revenue from the books, films, merchandise, and theme park. Not In Harry's Name held its first in-person event on the night of the *Deathly Hallows* premiere, when "superfans" lined up at theaters to be the first to experience a *Harry Potter* event. This allowed the campaign to maximize media attention while motivating fans at a moment of peak engagement.

Second, it partnered with other nonprofits working on similar issues, including Free2Work, which checked to see if the chocolate was ethically sourced, and Walk Free, an anti-slavery group with a million members. HPA is a relatively small organization with limited capacity and expertise. By reaching out and partnering with other organizations in the field, HPA gained the resources necessary to take on a major corporation over an extended period of time. The organizations, in turn, used HPA's position in the cultural conversation to elevate issues they work on which are often ignored.

Third, *Harry Potter* fans made a public case for fair trade chocolate frogs. These included "howler" videos that mimicked the angry anthropomorphic telegrams from the *Harry Potter* stories and a satirical commercial accusing Warner Brothers of improper use of magic. Diehard fans are proud of their deep

knowledge of the series, and fan fiction and commentary is very popular. The web videos provided HPA members with an opportunity to petition Warner Brothers in a medium and language other fans would appreciate. In 2011, HPA even began to manufacture its own ethically sourced chocolate frogs, to demonstrate its feasibility. Walk Free designed compelling shareable images to share with its 6 million supporters on Facebook, many of whom pulled quotes from *Harry Potter* books to make the moral case to Warner Brothers while inspiring people to take action.

Finally, and critically, HPA leveraged the support of two high profile writers and cultural influencers: John Green and J. K. Rowling. Green is a very popular author of young adult fiction with a huge following on YouTube and social media. His fan base (shared with his brother Hank), known as Nerdfighters, often engage in cause-related campaigns. He partnered with HPA to launch the Deadly Hallows Campaign, instantly raising the campaign's profile and recruiting his fan base to participate. Rowling is the author of the *Harry Potter* series and one of the most successful (and wealthiest) creatives in the entertainment world. She expressed her support directly to Warner Brothers. At her request its senior executives met with HPA Executive Director Andrew Slack.

Assessment

The campaign was a success. It took four years, but ultimately Warner Brothers agreed to the demand that its chocolate frogs be ethically sourced. This set a precedent for other popular brands with merchandise of dubious origins and gave activists a template to follow. Tens of thousands of HPA members, and hundreds of thousands of Walk Free activists, took action to pressure Warner Brothers while articulating values they sourced to the corporation's most profitable franchise.

Getting both Green and Rowling, two of the world's most important, popular, and powerful young adult authors with strong ties to Hollywood, to support the campaign was a coup. Green gave the campaign instant credibility and profile. Rowling's request led to an HPA meeting with senior Warner Brothers executives, who soon after announced their decision to honor the fans' demand.

Funders

All of the expenses for Not In Harry's Name came out of general operating funds. HPA is largely a member-supported organization, aggregating small donations from 15-25 year old *Harry Potter* fans.

Fresh Off The Boat

Genesis

The first American network television show to star an Asian family was *All American Girl*, designed as a vehicle for Korean-American comedian Margaret Cho. It aired for one season in 1994-95. The second American network television show to feature an Asian family didn't air for another 20 years.

On February 4, 2015, *Fresh Off the Boat* premiered in two episodes on ABC to an audience of 7.94 million viewers. The sitcom was a hit. Based on the popular memoir by restaurateur, chef, and food personality Eddie Huang, *Fresh Off the Boat* is set in suburban Orlando in the mid-1990s. It tells the story of the Huang family, three generations of Chinese Americans living under one roof. The grandmother speaks only Mandarin. The main character, son Eddie, speaks the language of hip-hop. The parents are somewhere in between; integrated but still wary, with one foot in the old, one in the new.



The show got its start when Huang's book helped to attract the attention of TV executives. Jacob Kasdan, a successful producer and director as well as the son of producer/director Lawrence Kasdan, signed on to the project. This brought the project inside established entertainment industry circles. At the same time, ABC was developing a slate of shows produced by and starring people of color, including *How To Get Away with Murder*, *Black-ish*, and *Cristela*. Paul Lee, the president of ABC Entertainment Group, has been partly responsible for this trend and feels a kinship to *Fresh Off The Boat*. As he told reporters during the July 2015 Television Critic Association press tour: "I watch *Fresh Off The Boat*, and I am that family."

Fresh off the Boat is influenced by previous successful shows. In the 70s and 80s, black family sitcoms like *Good Times* and *The Jeffersons* brought American viewers into the living rooms of neighbors they never knew. *The Cosby Show* did the same, but was based on its namesake's comedy routines about his family. More recently, Chris Rock's highly regarded show, *Everyone Hates Chris*, was a similar retelling of his own childhood.

Before *Fresh Off the Boat* premiered, Huang caused a stir by distancing himself from the project, saying that the show had strayed too far from the spirit of his memoir and didn't do enough to challenge racism and xenophobia. He subsequently toned down his criticism, in response to changes that had been made and his sense that the show was still good: "It's the shortest double you can hit in the major leagues," he told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Goals

ABC had one overarching goal when it greenlighted *Fresh Off the Boat*. It was the same as for any new show: to create a hit series. But based on their public comments, it is clear that Paul Lee and others at ABC had a secondary goal: to demonstrate that a show built around an Asian-American family would be appealing to America's most diverse generation, millennials. As Lee told *Variety* when discussing ABC's diverse lineup: "It is a mission statement to reflect America." Just as the failure of *All American Girl* helped to close the door to similar shows for two decades, a successful show could pave the way for greater diversity in television.

Advocacy organizations interested in diversity shared Lee's desire to open the door for programming that better reflected America. They also shared Eddie Huang's desire that *Fresh Off the Boat* provide a platform for its characters to speak out on issues of racism and xenophobia.

Tactics

How did the various parties go about achieving these goals?

First, by getting more diversity among senior executives with influence over programming. The ascension of Paul Lee from ABC Family to president of ABC Entertainment Group was exactly the kind of hiring decision diversity-focused advocacy groups have been calling for. It is worth noting that Chinese-American Melvin Mar was the primary engine behind the optioning of Huang's book and the hiring of Nahnatchka Khan as showrunner. The head of comedy development at ABC, Korean-American Samie Kim Falvey, was also a champion of the show. Korean-American Keli Lee, then head of global casting at ABC, was critical in pushing the current cast into place, especially in finding relative unknowns to play the pivotal roles of Jessica and Eddie. This evolution toward more representative programming is also sought by industry executives who work as allies from the inside. Shonda Rhimes was able to get her own show, *Grey's Anatomy*, in part because of a white ally at ABC who supported her.

Second, to create a pipeline for talented writers and actors. Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC), and the NAACP formed a coalition that met twice a year with the networks. The coalition holds them accountable to increase diversity, particularly among writers who hold significant influence in television. GLAAD, the heavyweight of the diversity watchdog groups, produces an annual report that tracks diversity in television; this data is used by other advocates. While Huang was

not a beneficiary of one of the writers program established through these efforts, Indian-American Mindy Kaling was; she moved from writing to a spot on *The Office* and from there to her show *The Mindy Project* on Fox and then Hulu.

Finally, once a show is on the air, civil rights groups can share clips from the episodes that address important issues—like immigration reform, or affirmative action—to engage the broader public. This is a tactic that has been used successfully in other areas. For example, advocates for ending the rape kit backlog used a clip from an episode of *Law and Order: SVU* to raise awareness and enough advocacy in support of legislation and funding.

Assessment

For decades, television programming portrayed only white families. Sitcoms and dramas ignored non-white characters and women had limited opportunities. Later, diversity arrived but brought with it stereotyping. Complex characters who were neither white nor male only began to appear on television in a significant way in the 1970s.

The 90s and 00s were decades of drought for people of color on the small screen, behind or in front of the camera. Yet as audience share continued to drop, and competition from cable and streaming services increased the number of quality shows, networks have begun to reconsider ideas that were dismissed for having only niche appeal. The success of Shonda Rhimes, the African-American showrunner behind *Grey's Anatomy*, *Private Practice*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, and *Scandal*, helped open minds among network executives.

Fresh off the Boat has built on this progress with its own ratings success. As of December 2015, the show's second season is the 10th most popular show on ABC among viewers 18-49 and the network's fifth most popular family sitcom. It was the second most popular comedy premiere in the winter of 2015, drawing almost 8 million viewers. Critics have overwhelmingly praised the show, with Season One garnering a "91% Fresh" rating on the review-aggregating website Rotten Tomatoes.

It is clear that many of the people behind *Fresh Off the Boat* hope that it will open more doors for shows that reflect the experience of people of color, immigrant communities, and other groups rarely portrayed realistically on television. Groups like the Asian Pacific American Media Coalition (APAMC) meet annually with Fox, NBC, CBS, and ABC to push for greater and better representation of Asian Americans in network programming. Before *Fresh Off the Boat*, APAMC founding member Guy Aoki described progress as "really slow."

With *Fresh Off the Boat* and a few other series, things seem to be shifting. As *Wall Street Journal* cultural critic Jeff Yang (and father of *Fresh off the Boat* star Hudson Yang) noted in March 2015, "the success of these 'ethnic' shows wasn't the disruptive change; merely its prelude. The real seismic shock came last month when the carnival known as TV pilot season began, and it became clear that studios were intent on building on 2014, by greenlighting more shows with multicultural leads, and seeking to cast roles that historically would have gone to white actors with black, Hispanic, and Asian performers."

Funders

The production, distribution, and promotion of *Fresh Off the Boat* is funded by the network (ABC) and studio (20th Century Fox Television) entirely in a commercial, for-profit context.

Halal in the Family²



Genesis

On the morning of April 8, 2015, comedy fans began their daily scan of *Funny or Die*'s popular website homepage. Instead of Will Ferrell or Zach Galifianakis, two different faces greeted visitors. Aasif Mandvi, a seven-year correspondent on *The Daily Show*, and Sakina Jaffrey, from Netflix's hit *House of Cards*, had a new web series. It was called *Halal in the Family*, a name clearly borrowed from the popular and groundbreaking 1970s sitcom, *All in the Family*. Like Norman Lear's explosive and hilarious exploration of a complicated and outspoken American family, this series also broke new ground and courted controversy. It was the first American sitcom about a Muslim family.

Thousands of visitors were curious enough to check out this unusual new web series. Then tens of thousands, and eventually hundreds of thousands. Over the course of six minutes, viewers met the Qu'osby family. The father, Aasif Qu'osby, bumbled his way in and out of trouble, usually in his exuberant effort to embrace American rituals and prejudices. His family, led by his wife Fatima, provided the voice of reason. If visitors watched all four episodes, they'd learn about some of the challenges facing American Muslims: government surveillance, suspicious neighbors, bullying classmates, and demagogic politicians. And they would meet a family that was Muslim but not devout, not Arab, not insular, and not so different from other Americans.

Halal began as a fake sitcom called *The Qu'osby Show*, produced in 2011 as part of a segment on *The Daily Show* that sought to answer the burning question: "Do Muslims need their own *Cosby Show*" to combat bigotry and Islamophobia? The idea was revived when Moore + Associates (M+A), a creative agency specializing in developing culture-shifting campaigns, was approached by manager and producer Lillian LaSalle following a mixer co-hosted by the nonprofit Revolutions Per Minute. She was attracted to a model of talent-driven campaigns M+A principal Mik Moore had innovated during 2008's *The Great Schlep*, in which comedian Sarah Silverman supported candidate Barack Obama by urging young Jews to have conversations with their grandparents.

LaSalle asked M+A to help her client Aasif Mandvi realize his vision of turning *The Qu'osby Show* into a web series that would support advocates' efforts to combat anti-Muslim bias. Miles Kahn, the producer of the original *Daily Show* segment, joined Lillian and Aasif to form the initial creative team. An Advisory Council of nonprofit groups was formed to help ground the episodes on frontline advocacy work, including Muslim Advocates, Center for New Community (CNC) and ACCESS / NNAAC. Seed funding from Unbound Philanthropy and the Ford Foundation was secured. Production for the series was greenlighted in April 2014. It launched one year later.

Goals

Early in the process, the *Halal in the Family* team embraced three overarching goals for the series: raise awareness, shift behavior and bias, and support advocates and allies.

Most Americans know very little about Islam and have few if any Muslims friends. The real lives of Muslim Americans, including the challenges they face, are obscured by the media's narrow focus on acts of terrorism. *Halal in the Family* would be successful if it raised their awareness about Muslim lives.

Because of the misinformation about Muslims and incitement by public figures, too many Americans support or engage in anti-Muslim behavior. This includes communities refusing to allow mosques to be built in their neighborhoods, acts of violence and intimidation, and calls to refuse Muslims the basic civil protections afforded to other Americans. *Halal in the Family* sought to reduce this kind of behavior and bias.

² Language for this case study borrowed from *Halal in the Family* project evaluations by Moore + Associates and Perception Institute.

Finally, to address many of these issues, civil rights organizations have initiated ambitious campaigns. Some seek to end profiling of American Muslims. Others challenge discrimination in employment and housing. Several call out elected officials inciting non-Muslims against their Muslim neighbors. Getting more people engaged in the work of these organizations was the final overarching goal of *Halal in the Family*.

Tactics

From those goals the team developed seven key strategies. First, to create high-quality content that can attract an audience that is not tuning in for the show's message. Second, to make sure the episodes and other content are substantive by integrating real challenges and authentic scenarios from the lives of American Muslims. Third, to reach Muslims, progressives, and "persuadable" viewers, so that the series both inspires those who share its concerns and reaches those who may not. Fourth, to measure the impact the episodes have on shifting the anti-Muslim biases of viewers and the particular impact of comedic vs. non-comedic content. Fifth, to support the existing campaigns of advocates and organizers to combat anti-Muslim bias. Sixth, to leverage media interest in the series to bring the message of *Halal* to a much wider audience. And lastly, to demonstrate that artist-driven social-good campaigns can make a difference in the world and expose the artists to new audiences.

Assessment

Any assessment of *Halal* begins with an exploration of the most common data sets: how many people were reached by *Halal*. The key numbers include more than 600,000 video views, almost 600 million media impressions, and 100 separate pieces of media coverage. *Halal's* organic reach was 2.5 million people on Facebook, with 129 posts generating 30,000 interactions. The quality of the content is assessed by looking at user ratings. For example, on *Funny or Die*, three out of four viewers thought the episodes were funny; on YouTube, the number was even higher: nine out of ten viewers "liked" them. The demographic data was limited, but appeared to show that more men than women watched the episodes and that ideologically moderate audiences were as much as four times more resistant to watching an episode than their Muslim or liberal counterparts.

The Perception Institute attempted to determine just how effective the videos are at shifting bias and motivating people to take action on these issues. Ultimately, its findings are encouraging. As the authors wrote in the report's Executive Summary, the evaluation "revealed that efforts to combat anti-Muslim discrimination, both the *Halal in the Family* clips and *Truth over Fear* (a non-comedic video about Islamophobia), had positive effects as compared to the control. The difference in positive effects between *Halal in the Family* and *Truth Over Fear* did not reveal significantly different levels of effect." When looking at unconscious bias, which is considered the more reliable measurement, all of the episodes reduced bias. Although marginally less effective at reducing bias than a non-comedic video about Islamophobia, the evaluators noted that given the much wider reach of *Halal* and the cumulative effect of multiple episodes, comedy may be the better option. The episodes also led to reduction in explicit bias, but they were less pronounced than the shifts in implicit bias and were limited to people who identified as moderate or conservative.

The Perception Institute study found that viewers of *Halal* were more likely to want to learn more about anti-Muslim bias and were more likely to support pro-Muslim legislation after they watched an episode. But did they? In short, the campaign didn't provide them with enough opportunities to test the proposition. Through multiple conversations between Moore + Associates and the Advisory Council leading up to the launch, it became clear that few of the organizations had active campaigns or straightforward calls to action that could be supported by the web series. All of the organizations shared the episodes and infographics with their networks via social media, email, and/or screenings. However the majority of the messaging focused on asking viewers to watch and share the episodes and visit the *Halal* website, instead of driving viewers to their campaigns or educational resources.

Funders

Halal in the Family received funding from Unbound Philanthropy, Ford Foundation, Pillars Foundation, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art Building Bridges Program, and hundreds of individual donors via Indiegogo.

16 and Pregnant



Genesis

In 2007, sixteen year-old Jamie Lynn Spears, younger sister of the infamous pop star Britney Spears and popular teen actress on Nickelodeon, became pregnant. Due to her position as a role model to young kids all across America (as the lead actress on the show *Zoey 101*), her pregnancy was covered in tabloids all over the US and other countries. That same year the movie *Juno* premiered on the big screen. Young audiences everywhere turned out to watch the carefully crafted pregnancy story of a precocious teen (played by Ellen Page) and her child's teen father (played by Michael Cera). *Juno* was a smash indie film hit, nominated for four Academy Awards and winning one for Best Original Screenplay, and grossing \$144 million at the box office against a production budget estimated at a mere \$7.5 million.

Shortly after Spears' announcement, *People* magazine did a story about teen pregnancy and parenthood. The article quoted the deputy director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, who noted that Jamie Lynn Spears is just one of the approximately 750,000 American teens who get pregnant every year, highlighting that this was a conversation we should be having nationally.

Lauren Dolgen, currently head of reality programming and executive vice president of series development at MTV, read the *People* article and saw an opportunity: This was a problem. This was MTV's audience. MTV should be telling these girls' stories. "I felt like we had to address it. I wanted to help give these teenagers a voice and to share their stories, without passing judgment, in a way that could start a real dialogue about the issue," Dolgen told CNN in 2011. "MTV has a long history of taking sexual health issues head-on through campaigns such as *It's Your Sex Life* and documentary series such as *True Life*. So, after many meetings with internal groups and consulting experts on the topic, *16 and Pregnant* was born."

Stephen Friedman, former president of MTV, also played a critical role in the shaping of *16 and Pregnant*. In an *Entertainment Weekly* article in September 2015 about his greatest accomplishments at MTV he remembered how the hit show came to fruition. "I remember being in the room when Lauren Dolgen pitched the show *16 and Pregnant*," he said. "I was like, 'Oh God that sounds like a train wreck.' And yet Lauren really made a great case. I said, 'You're right, it's going to be compelling television. The only two things I ask for: One, it really is a cautionary tale. And two, you need to partner with the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.'"

Thus, before the show first aired in June of 2009, MTV brought on the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (the NC), a nonprofit organization, as the issue expert. The NC had existing ties with MTV from past collaborations, as well as a relationship with Judy McGrath, former CEO of MTV networks as well as a founding board member of the NC. Since its establishment in 1996, the NC has often worked across entertainment media platforms, helping content creators tell the stories about teen pregnancy in an authentic and meaningful way. The NC continued to be MTV's sounding board through the series' five seasons. In 2010, *16 and Pregnant* was the highest rated cable show among female viewers 12-34 years old.

16 and Pregnant is an hour-long reality series focusing on teen pregnancy. Each episode follows a five to seven month period in the life of a teenager as she navigates the adversities of adolescence, rebellion, and coming of age, all while dealing with being pregnant.

Goals

Audiences were not told that *16 and Pregnant* was created with any particular social goals at its core. However, given Lauren Dolgen's influence and MTV's commitment to pro-social campaigns through its Public Affairs division, the show's potential to create social change was quickly realized. MTV would capitalize on the show's ability to reach a mass audience.

The primary social impact sought by the show was to be a cautionary tale to young people about the realities of teen pregnancy. MTV was also committed to telling the stories of these young girls in a way that was genuine. The idea behind *16 and Pregnant* was that by telling these stories in the raw, viewers would see the extraordinary challenges and sacrifices that come from having a baby as a teenager.

Tactics

Over the course of the show's five seasons, it utilized four tactics:

First, it relied on the NC as an issue and language expert to uphold its commitment to showing the real challenges that pregnant teens face. At the time of the show's conception, teen pregnancy and teen motherhood were very new topics to MTV. The NC provided information that allowed MTV to contextualize the girls' stories and the turmoil they experienced with their families, boyfriends, and peers. It also advised MTV on what language to use to shift the way the issues are understood culturally. Without the NC, MTV would have either missed out on critical context and done damage where it sought to do good, or would have had to hire a team of in-house experts, which would have made the show more expensive and difficult to sustain.

Second, MTV and the NC believed it was important to give the girls on the show the license to talk about their experiences as openly and honestly as possible. Rather than entertaining viewers with a manipulated image of life as a pregnant teen, they wanted viewers to be able to understand and relate to the characters on the show. To work, it had to be real. For example, many teen moms say that while they love their kid more than anything, they wish they had waited ten years. MTV believed giving the girls the license to talk about what they wish they'd done differently would lead the show's teen viewers to revise their belief that teen motherhood is glamorous and easy. The NC helped the producers talk about this in a way that made it easier for the girls to talk about themselves.

Third, the show would provide additional content and context for one of MTV's major pro-social campaigns, It's Your Sex Life (IYSL). The IYSL website provides information about sex, relationships, STDs, and contraception. While IYSL has been around since long before *16 and Pregnant* was born, it played a critical role in the educational component about related issues on the show. In many of the episodes, MTV uses an on-air toss encouraging viewers to go to the IYSL website for more information about contraception and other questions they might have.

Finally, the NC decided to distribute the first three seasons of *16 and Pregnant* on DVD at no cost to the public and MTV gave the NC the rights to the shows to do so. These DVD packages included discussion guides written by the NC along with additional information for teachers and parents. They were made available through the NC's online store. The packages were shown in health clinic waiting rooms, used by teachers in classrooms, by juvenile justice workers with teen offenders, and by parents as a way to get young people talking about these issues.

Assessment

Before *16 and Pregnant* aired in 2009, teen birth rates had been declining by 2-3% each year since the early 1990s. From 2009 to 2014, teen birth rates declined by almost 10% each year. So while the show didn't start the decline in teen birth rates, it is believed that its five seasons did accelerate it. Since 2009, the rates have declined a total of 38%, totaling a 61.8% decline since 1990. While some may assume that more teens are having abortions, statistics show that's not the case—in fact, the rates of abortions for teens have not increased at all in the past fifteen years.

Research studies have been published about the impact of *16 and Pregnant* on teen birth rates. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), found that the show had a positive impact on the reduction in teen pregnancy and teen birth rates. A subsequent report in the *Journal of Health and Communication* claimed the opposite; that the show glamorized teen pregnancy and made young viewers more interested in the experience of teen motherhood. However, given that *The New York Times* did an exclusive story on the NBER study, and mega-news outlets such as *Time*, the *Washington Post*, and CBS also covered the study, we can gather that the NBER study is far more accepted as accurate than the subsequent report that followed. Also, there are many other surveys and polls that support the findings of the NBER study. For example, a Public Religion Research Institute survey in 2011 found that millennials who had seen MTV's reality shows about pregnant teens were more supportive of legal abortion. A 2010 *Science Says* study from the NC found that of the 6 in 10 teens who had watched the show, 82% agreed that the show helps teens to better understand the challenges of teen pregnancy and parenthood, while only 15% believed it glamorizes teen parenthood.

Both MTV and the NC have dismissed the study in the *Journal of Health and Communications*, in part because of the small sample size involved. The NBER study integrated Nielsen ratings data with Google and Twitter analytics, providing the most scientific, comprehensive, and rigorous study of the impact of *16 and Pregnant* on teen birth rates.

The NBER study concludes that the show led to a 5.7% reduction in teen births between June 2009, when the show began, and the end of 2010. This accounts for approximately one-third of the total decline in teen births over that period. Melissa S. Kearney, a co-author of the study and professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland, is one of the leading researchers in teen childbearing and teen sexual activity.

Broader research has demonstrated that young people feel a strong connection to the characters on TV that they care about and can relate to, especially when it's a real person and not a scripted character. It is easier for parents to talk to teens about sexuality and contraception when they're talking about something they have seen on TV rather than their child's own personal life. Shows like *16 and Pregnant* serve as conversation starters for parents and kids.

16 and Pregnant got people talking and thinking about teen pregnancy in a new way. MTV, with guidance from the NC, made the subject accessible to its target audience and delivered the stories in a way that was meaningful to teens. The show met its audience where they were, which is critical in shifting public perception, shaping public narrative, and affecting social change. MTV believes their audience is smart enough to view *16 and Pregnant* as the show was intended—as cautionary tales about the consequences of unprotected sex, and the reality of becoming a parent too early.

Funders

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy did not receive foundation support specifically for this effort with MTV. However, it does receive regular foundation support for its work and much of its general operations budget funds its entertainment media initiatives.

“As a reality contest, *RuPaul’s Drag Race* allows for clowning, freak show, AND humanity, an ingredient that has often been erased when queer and gender variant people are presented in pop culture. Seven years after the start of *RPDR* I can’t seem to swing a wig without hitting a new trans/gender variant person in pop culture. While many factors contribute to Laverne Cox’s television success (gorgeousness, passability, and talent cannot be discounted), where would she be without *RPDR*? *Drag Race* has greatly shifted entertainment frames, expectations, and norms, creating femme-sized holes for all sorts of genders to sashay through. Would the Hollywood machine allow for the humanity of Caitlyn Jenner’s trans-experience to flourish if not for *RPDR*?”

— Mica Sigourney/VivvyAnne ForeverMORE!
drag queen and performance maker

5. Recommendations

There's an old joke about European versions of heaven and hell.

Heaven is where:

- the French are the chefs,
- the Italians are the lovers,
- the British are the police,
- the Germans are the mechanics, and
- the Swiss make everything run on time.

Hell is where:

- the British are the chefs,
- the Swiss are the lovers,
- the French are the mechanics,
- the Italians make everything run on time, and
- the Germans are the police.

Yeah, yeah—we know the joke is Eurocentric and riddled with stereotypes. And it may or may not even be funny. (Some of us think it's hilarious, but we may have had a Swiss lover.)

But the joke has a point: some groups, generally speaking and relying upon identifiers other than ethnicity, are better suited for certain tasks.

Our adventure at the junction of pop culture and social justice interweaves the often-competing priorities of art, advocacy, commerce, and science. Our recommendations in this final section relate to the key groups of “Players” (described earlier in the Theory of Change): the Artists, the Advocates, the Industry, the Connectors, and the Evaluators who keep us all honest.

So, in the world of #PopJustice, heaven is where:

- Artists make the art,
- Advocates fight for the public interest,
- Industry runs sales and marketing,
- Connectors network and translate, and
- Evaluators conduct the research studies.

Hell, of course, is where:

- Artists run sales and marketing,
- Connectors conduct the research studies,
- Advocates make the art,
- Evaluators network and translate, and
- Industry fights for the public interest.

While there are nuances, overlaps, and exceptions, the idea of an appropriate “fit” between roles and responsibilities is emphasized again and again throughout the *#PopJustice* report series from professionals in the field. Mike Angst, CEO of E-Line Media, a video game publisher, states, **“Games, like any other medium, aren't made institutionally: they're made by creatives. The way to encourage or stimulate more meaningful entertainment in the games space is to empower those inclined to be successful.”**

In other words, let the artists make the art.

Recommendations

As noted earlier, the current allocation for pop culture-related strategies in philanthropic institutions is minimal, and as discussed in *#PopJustice, Volume 6: Economic Data & Foundation Grantmaking*, where it does exist, it is nearly impossible to track. While both investment and practice in the field is relatively nascent, there are several organizations and individuals who have been pushing on pop culture as a lever for change.

As Tim Sweeney said in an interview for this report,

“You have to throw stuff against the wall.”

#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players clusters and lists many of the organizations and practitioners who comprise the *#PopJustice* ecosystem as it looks today. Some are leading and mature pioneers of best practices—including some of those involved with projects described in the case studies—some are in earlier stages of development and experimentation. All of their work has inspired and informed our recommendations, and any can and should be considered potential grantees and important prospective partners.

The recommendations described below set up a path to deeper understanding and improved development of pop culture strategies through investment in measurable, or in any case evaluable, experiments. We believe investing in experiments in the emerging field of pop culture strategy is the smart and right thing to do, with full acknowledgement that with trial comes error.

Investment Lanes (in a *#PopJustice* Pool)

We recommend a “portfolio” approach to investments. This can be in the context of a collaborative fund, as informally aligned grantmaking among peers, or as a strand within an individual foundation. There should be enough depth among selected grantees to maximize their opportunity to achieve desired impacts and outcomes, and enough diversification to reduce overall risk and provide ample opportunity for experimentation and learning.



We recommend supporting work in five main lanes:

1. Education, Training & Career Development
2. Organizing & Networking
3. Creative Content Development & Production
4. Dissemination: Communication, Outreach & Engagement
5. Research, Monitoring & Evaluation (including baselines)

These lanes roughly map to the Stages listed in the theory of change model.

Please note that in the recommendations below, we have not suggested any specific grantees (other than occasionally referring to one of the case studies from earlier in this report to illustrate a point). We have not wanted to be prejudicial or directive; the world of potential grantees is wide. *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players* provides a starting point, but no grantmaking from this new funding pool should be considered without a broadly disseminated RFP.

Lane 1: Education, Training & Career Development

Training is essential in both social justice and pop culture industries. By supporting artists, writers, handlers, and even executives to develop social justice values, we create an organic interest and desire to produce content that represents, reinforces, and reflects those values. This investment lane will provide support, training, information, and development to a variety of individuals and entities within pop culture industries (at various stages of their careers) to foster the growth of social justice values and knowledge within institutions and networks. Such investments could look like:

- A collaboration with studio and guild diversity officers to provide information to members and employees on cutting-edge thinking about diversity and inclusion, including trainings on unconscious phenomena like implicit bias and racial anxiety—providing information to increase awareness and tools to improve behavior and outcomes.³
- A fellowship program that offers professional development and mentorship to up-and-coming (early-to-mid-career) migrant artists and artists of color working in commercial pop culture mediums (comic books, film, TV, music, video games, advertising).
- Retreats, salons, and convenings for industry professionals at all career stages—artists and non-artists—to forge community, build collective learning, and support momentum around the establishment of social justice values within the industry.
- A program focused on supporting and educating the support teams that surround celebrities by providing behind-the-scenes resources and education to publicists, managers, social media consultants, agents, assistants, and those in the official business of “talent integration” (a newish term, meaning partnerships between high profile personalities and nonprofit causes and campaigns).

³ Every studio and guild has diversity and inclusion programs. Many of these were brought about as a result of equal opportunity legislation and enforced by long-term efforts of Hollywood watchdog programs like those of GLAAD and NAACP. The history of these programs is outside of the scope of this report series; but see Lane 5 for recommendations relating to evaluating their efficacy and forging opportunities for improvement.

Lane 2: Organizing & Networking

Pop culture strategy is a developing idea within philanthropy, social justice advocacy, and Hollywood. This report series is a part of a larger, yet still small, effort to flesh out theories, practices, and common language for understanding the terrain, establishing learning principles, refining and building a shared theory of change, and synthesizing some innovative work by cultural strategists. Lane 2 (Organizing & Networking) creates opportunities for cultural strategists, philanthropy, social justice advocates, and socially-minded creative professionals in all relevant sectors (film and TV, music, video games, and more) to come together and build and explore this emerging field. Such investments could include:

- Fund well-networked cultural strategists and organizers to work with nonprofit organizations, campaigns, and movements to build effective partnerships with pop culture artists and the entertainment industry. Several of the case studies described above depended on such expert collaborations: NDWA, Harry Potter Alliance, and *Halal in the Family*.
- Resource networks of pop culture artists and others in the creative community committed to social justice. Again, *Halal in the Family* is an example; Aasif Mandvi received production and dissemination funding to realize his vision of creative activism.
- Advocate amongst industry trade associations and other groups for effective diversity and representation practices. Organize to counter and cure some of the worst offenders and offenses, whether due to omission (such as lack of authentic, representative content and behind-the-camera staffing) or commission (production, distribution, and hiring practices marred by explicit and implicit bias). Years of these efforts paved the way for ABC to greenlight *Fresh off the Boat* and other diverse shows.
- Fund a “think tank” of cultural organizers and strategists to build and promote the #PopJustice field; provide trainings for philanthropy and social justice advocates; develop convenings and conversations for philanthropy and advocates; and continue interpreting and studying the emerging pop culture strategy practice and theory.
- Support the organization of musicians and other touring artists with program partnerships like micro-donation ticket add-ons, which brings together artists, touring agencies, concert promoters, ticket agencies, and nonprofit organizations.
- Conduct surveys with writers and studio executives, both as a learning opportunity and to engage them more effectively. Find out what makes them tick, what their challenges are, what they need, and translate this information for philanthropy and social justice advocates.
- Host regular salons, mixers, and open talks in Hollywood and New York for cultural strategists, philanthropy, social justice advocates, and creatives to develop relationships. A mixer where Aasif Mandvi’s manager met the team from Moore + Associates was critical to the development of *Halal in the Family*.

Lane 3: Creative Content Development & Production

“Working with Hollywood, you establish yourself as valuable and creative. You can help people understand audiences and markets better because they don’t know,”

Tim Sweeney told us
in an interview

Hollywood and other centers of pop culture production spend immense amounts of money on research and development for content production. For every series we see on television there are thousands of pitches and scripts that didn’t make it. These shows aren’t just erased on the whiteboard; some of them make it to production, but not past their pilot episode. This process leads to the creation of hits that rest on the shoulders of many, many experiments—and failures. Social justice philanthropy simply does not have the creative and market expertise and cannot afford to invest or compete at a level that would make a dent in this process, no matter how great the idea is, or how relevant it is to our movements. On the other end of the content budget spectrum, we do

not recommend supporting documentary film production. Despite their relative affordability, it is the rare documentary that earns sufficient popularity to cross over to a broad audience and we would rather boost those with genuine pop culture potential through other means than production funding (see Lane 4 below).

But there is still an important role for philanthropy and social justice advocates relating to content production:

- Invest in web series and digital content. Web content is far cheaper and quicker to produce than traditional content. It can cheaply test out an idea for creative content that could be leveraged towards investment and pick up from pop culture industries. It can be used for various purposes—from entertainment, to educational, to generating earned media attention for a particular cause or issue. It can easily be paired directly with a call to action. *Halal and the Family* is a recent example of this strategy.
- Invest in a pool of social justice resource people and institutions who can play an “expert” role in advising writers, showrunners, producers, and actors, on various issues relevant to their productions. TV shows and movie productions regularly hire expert advisors—doctors on medical shows, detectives for police procedurals, fight choreographers and ordnance experts for action pictures. Why not issue and social justice experts? The partnership between National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and the MTV reality series *16 and Pregnant* described above is just such an example.

Lane 4: Dissemination—Communication, Outreach & Engagement

As opposed to Lane 3, the distribution and dissemination stage is a great opportunity for investment from philanthropy and social justice advocates. This lane primarily focuses on the use of pop culture trends and content to expand social justice audiences and engagement. NDWA’s work around *The Help* is one such example; there is so much potential and great need for investment. As Matt Foreman, longtime LGBT activist and former executive director of The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, noted, **“We have the pop culture zeitgeist churning out stuff. How do we hook that into stuff on the ground? That is still the big gap.”**

Investments in this lane could:

- Support the development of learning materials, virtual and real world discussion forums, and events tied to the release of content relevant to social justice.
- Support cultural strategists and “impact producers” to work directly with social justice organizations to conceive of and implement campaigns tied to pop culture content. This kind of practice builds on an experienced field of documentary outreach and engagement specialists; support them in plying their tools and expertise on popular culture.
- Support innovation in distribution and audience engagement platforms that strategically scale the connection of causes with content.
- Support services that track, analyze, and provide insights around pop culture news and trends that may be relevant to movement organizers and communities.
- Support organizations that mobilize fans of content to take action through expressing the values of the content they love. The Harry Potter Alliance case study above is an example.
- Provide bundles of small, one-off support grants for films by filmmakers of color or immigrant filmmakers that are accepted to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival—for example, provide four \$25,000 grants per year to cover travel, publicity, poster, trailer, website, sales agent, etc. Grants like this could be awarded in partnership with the Sundance Institute who could offer mentorship on how to maximize the marketing and launch opportunity and provide networking opportunities.
- Support media watchdog reporters in entertainment trade publications with a social justice focus, like a beat reporter focused on race and entertainment. This is the earned media scaffolding that “blame and shame” strategies can rest on.

Lane 5: Research, Monitoring & Evaluation

Funders invest with the intention of supporting organizations to change conditions in the world. Without some form of evaluation, it is impossible to determine whether a particular investment in a project or a pool of investments have had any impact—positive or negative. However, it is equally crucial to recognize that not all effects can be measured with numeric metrics, or within short timeframes; and to attempt such a task can be counterproductive, providing unintended incentives for near-term wins at the expense of crucial systemic change. For this lane, we recommend a set of steps to maximize the utility and efficiency of evaluations, by providing incentives for knowledge building and information sharing, and establishing baselines from which future impacts can be measured. These evaluation-related recommendations are deeply informed by the findings in *#PopJustice, Volume 3: Pop Culture, Perceptions, and Social Change (A Research Review)*.

- In order to maximize the reach of the work being done in the field, including the findings of this report series, we recommend the creation and maintenance of a central database of relevant information, including reports monitoring the industry, case studies, and discussions of evaluation methodologies. Pooling the knowledge in this way would contribute to greater rigor with less cost—for example, extant research results can be used as baselines for future projects. We can seed this database with the research studies and reports reviewed in *#PopJustice, Volume 3: Pop Culture, Perceptions, and Social Change (A Research Review)*.

- In order to build knowledge and foster connections amongst fellow researchers, we recommend the creation and maintenance of a central database of researchers who are engaged in this work. The Evaluators section in *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players* provides a good starting point.
- The research we studied supports the critical importance of identity diversity in content creation if we ever hope to ensure the authentic representation of “non-dominant” identity groups in popular culture. An ongoing challenge is obtaining accurate information about diversity within different companies and forms of reporting that allow comparisons and further accountability. An annual report that includes identity characteristics—race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, LGBT identification, disability—of boards and decision-making executives, along with those in critical creative positions on mainstream Hollywood movies and TV series (including directors, writers, and actors), would be a valuable resource. To some extent, this kind of reporting and tracking exists already, but it is quite fragmented.
- In *#PopJustice, Volume 4: Understanding the Entertainment Industry*, we detail the existing diversity programs within the large media companies and television networks, as well as those at the major creative industry guilds and unions. Impartial evaluation of the efficacy of these programs, individually and collectively, is a crucial contribution to our knowledge base. When we know what’s actually working, we can codify and champion best practices.
- We cannot overstate the importance of further research and evaluations. In order to understand how popular culture can best be harnessed to shift perceptions and stereotypes of marginalized groups, we need to develop more sophisticated technologies and methodologies for identifying how change occurs. We hope that this *#PopJustice series* will serve to inspire innovative original research, such as longitudinal studies, that will be a boon to the entire field.
- Future research efforts will be most effective if they involve iterative collaborations between advocates, artists, industry, and evaluators on specific projects, as well as convenings to bring the different players into direct conversation. The convenings would provide opportunities for identifying the different markers of success from each player’s vantage point and the metrics best suited to measuring those markers.
- Develop best practices for project level evaluation. Advocates, content creators, and funders would benefit from the development of a shared and accessible language for understanding the varied methodological approaches for measuring change currently in use by evaluators and the establishment of a set of best practices for project-level evaluations.
- Develop a popular culture content baseline. Because we are (rightly) relying upon industry and artists to develop content, advocates will need to have a clear understanding of the current portrayals of various identity groups, as well as measures to assess the effect on perceptions and attitudes of the different portrayals. We propose a study to code content within each relevant entertainment industry to identify the associations and images of various identity groups being propagated, to develop measures for understanding the effects of these portrayals, which combined will provide a baseline from which subsequent change can be measured.
- Once a baseline has been established, regular coding and tracking of popular culture content will be valuable to identify changes as they occur and to study the effects of altered portrayals. This content tracking should take advantage of innovations that allow for richer and more nuanced understandings of representation, including the interaction between characters, and the complexity of language used by characters of different races, ethnicities, and other forms of identity.

- Develop evaluation processes for pools of investments. Individual projects can be evaluated using project-specific evaluation methodologies, but funders are supporting a wide variety of projects and the combination of these projects may have cumulative or synergistic effects that will not be identified by the evaluation of individual projects. Accordingly, for funders to be able to assess the full impacts of their investments, evaluation plans and methodologies must be developed that broadly consider the portfolio of investments, the goals of each project, and the overarching goals of the portfolio.
- Foundation investment focusing on the role of pop culture in furthering social justice and changing the stereotypes and attitudes about immigrants and people of color will be critical going forward. However, assessing whether these investments are sound will be exceedingly difficult because the current taxonomy of foundation investments do not include a clear language for documenting when investments are devoted to the crossroads of pop culture and social justice. A taxonomy that can be used across foundations is crucial to first determine a current baseline and going forward to measure the outcomes that result from future pop culture-related foundation investments.

Funding Model

We believe the best model to pursue this work is to establish a #PopJustice collaborative fund. No single grant, grantee, or grantmaker can make a significant, systemic, or enduring difference on its own; there is strength in numbers. With a pool model, funders can join forces to build a #PopJustice ecosystem that fosters shared learning and shared capacity building.

At the end of this section, we lay out a prospective budget for such a fund. We recommend that it be led—or at a minimum advised and informed—by experts with collective and “multilingual” knowledge in the varying, sometimes competing, practices and priorities of art, commerce, advocacy, and science. Because of the unusual knowledge base required, we recommend the fund have its own dedicated grantmaking staff, but administered and operated as efficiently as possible, either by a “home” foundation, or as an independent grantmaking program or entity on behalf of the pool’s funding partners.⁴

We understand that a collaborative pool may be impractical, at least in the near term. Whether such a shared fund is established, or whether grantmakers continue to invest independently, our recommended guidelines for investment still stand.

General Guidelines

We recommend funders use the general guidelines below for grantmaking:

- Fund nontraditional grantees, like individuals, for-profits, and unions, as well as nonprofits. For example, grants to a writers union to develop training and education program/exchanges with social justice advocates. (Understanding there are tax and legal implications to making grants to for-profit entities; these details would need to be fully buttoned up.)
- Grants to nonprofit entities should be unrestricted whenever possible. Grant deliverables often hamper creativity in organizations, undercutting their ability to expertly adjust and adapt to changing circumstances, challenges, and opportunities.

⁴ ArtPlace is a model of the latter structure. It describes itself as “a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that works to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.”

- No grants under \$100,000, no grants over \$350,000 per year. (Like all rules, there are exceptions, and the \$25,000 Sundance Film Festival grants proposed above are just such an exception.) Creatives, advocates, and connectors should spend their time doing what they do, not cobbling together small grants to create anemic budgets for their work. Evaluators, specifically, need larger grants for longitudinal studies.
- Three-year grants when possible. In line with the above recommendation, giving time and space for experiments to mature.
- All grants to come with a separate evaluation grant attached to it; grantees to choose from pre-approved professional evaluators. Evaluators conduct the research studies, not Artists, nor Advocates.
- Research grants should not be limited to specific grant evaluation alone. There is much to do in order to bolster field-level learning.
- Make grants that support the whole artist to do what they do, over and over. This is in contradiction to past grantmaking patterns of supporting specific products and projects, such as one song, or one film.
- Do not make grants that support misalignment of expertise to task/project. For example, with this pool of funds, no content creation grants for advocacy groups.
- Make grants in clusters to support development of an ecosystem, and foster multiplier effects.
- No grants for purely educational, messaging, or advocacy projects. This grantmaking pool is for pop culture-specific efforts, which should provide opportunity for the transformational not just the transactional.

Current Foundation Grantmaking

Before we get to the proposed budget for a #PopJustice investment pool, it's worth taking a quick look at current foundation grantmaking.

As mentioned above in the evaluation recommendations, there is no coding in the Foundation Center taxonomy for "pop culture and social justice," so we don't know the numbers for sure, but our best scientific guess is not bloody much. *#PopJustice, Volume 6: Economic Data & Foundation Grantmaking* explores this topic in detail.

For grant recipients based in the US only, of a total of \$27 billion in foundation grantmaking, we looked at the closest corollary categories for which there was coding and found 9% is allocated to arts and culture, 2.3% for human rights, 1.9% for information and communications, and 1.7% sports and recreation.

Current US Foundation Grantmaking

	Percentage of Total Grantmaking	Total Value of Grants (\$ millions)
Total Grantmaking	100.0%	\$27,409
Arts and Culture	9.1%	\$2,494
Human Rights	2.3%	\$641
Information and Communications	1.9%	\$518
> subcategory: Communications Media	0.8%	\$217
Sports and Recreation	1.7%	\$468
> subcategory: Sports	0.7%	\$184

Source: Foundation Center

Proposed Budget

We recommend a collaborative pool—or collective, allied funding—of \$30 million over three years (\$10 million per year). Given the need for iterative trial, error, and evaluation (pairing every single grant with an external evaluation, and a separate budget for pool-level learning), we think anything less than \$30 million, on a field level, will be insufficient. Our aim in this report series is to make the case for the effectiveness and potential for this work and to inspire serious investment to build a serious body of knowledge and practice.

This is what serious looks like.

	Cost / Unit (\$)	# Units / Year	# of Years	Total Cost (\$)
Grantmaking				
1. Education	150,000	10	3	4,500,000
2. Organizing	200,000	10	3	6,000,000
3. Content	150,000	10	3	4,500,000
4. Dissemination	200,000	10	3	6,000,000
5. Evaluation (Projects)	44,000	40	3	5,280,000
Grantmaking subtotal				26,280,000
Operations				
Staffing	500,000	1	3	1,500,000
Pool Research & Learning	250,000	1	3	750,000
Admin Fee (5% of total)				1,500,000
Overhead subtotal				3,750,000
Total Budget				\$ 30,030,000

Think of the role pop culture has played in the past few decades alone in shifting public opinion on such plaguing societal issues as race, interracial marriage, women’s rights, and acceptance of LGBT communities. Now imagine the galvanizing and next-level transformative effect that a well-funded investment pool, guided by a powerfully inventive and strategically creative approach, could have in harnessing pop culture to advance social justice goals: we could possibly leap forward as a society through currently menacing issues such as racial profiling and mass incarceration, islamophobia and illogical anti-immigrant sentiment, and senseless gun violence.

“Everyone in Hollywood will tell us, ‘We don’t want to get involved in politics.’ That’s why having people with the personal relationships, who can interpret and build trust, is so important.”

— **Ai-jen Poo**
National Domestic Workers Alliance

6. Next Steps

Let's assume you're convinced, or at the very least intrigued. The question is: Where do we start?

It probably isn't helpful to say, "Come on in. The water is fine." Though we really do believe that taking the plunge into the #PopJustice pool is the right way to go. Here are some practical suggestions:

Do some further reading.

If you're ready to write a check, look at *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players*. There are dozens of really great prospective grantees and partners already doing important, relevant work. Go ahead, spread a little love.

If you are a born skeptic, or simply want to ensure an evidence-based practice, read *#PopJustice, Volume 3: Pop Culture, Perceptions, and Social Change (A Research Review)*, published in partnership with our preternaturally smart friends at Perception Institute. It provides an overview of the science explaining why pop culture is important in determining stereotypes and attitudes toward immigrants and people of color, and the evidence to date supporting its potential to be harnessed for social change and bias reduction.

For deep comprehension of the nuts and bolts of the motion picture and television, music, video game, social media, and celebrity businesses, *#PopJustice, Volume 4: Understanding the Entertainment Industry* is for you. For most of us, our point of entry is simply as a consumer; this report is intended to demystify the systems and structures of these multi-billion dollar industries.

If you like a good story, and a variety of points of view from professionals on the front lines, read the personal essays and Q&As in *#PopJustice, Volume 5: Creative Voices & Professional Perspectives*.

Finally, we know there are data geeks out there. Read *#PopJustice, Volume 6: Economic Data & Foundation Grantmaking*. Some of the economic data will blow your mind when you start grasping the scale of these industries.

Collect and centralize resources.

A number of our recommendations concerned the need for centralized collections and databases of information and resources. Truly the best place to start is by building a comprehensive library of reports and research. And let's launch it with a master diversity and representation report that collects and compares all of the separate and siloed Hollywood watchdog reports.

Let's get our baselines underway.

We know there are legions of undergrads and underemployed freelancers itching to be paid to watch Netflix and Hulu. Let's get that baseline coding going right away.

Go watch some TV.

We hear *Master of None* is really good. We're planning to binge-watch it the minute this report is done.

Appendix: About the Team

Editorial Team for the #PopJustice report series

Thelma Adams (thelmadams.com) is a writer and leading New York based film critic whose forthcoming historical novel will be published by Amazon Publishing in 2016.

Michael Ahn (ahnnyc.com) produces story-based video games and oversees productions for game, film/TV, and advertising companies.

Betsy Fagin (betsyfagin.com) is a writer and librarian whose research and editorial services focus on serving arts communities and movements for social justice.

Rachel D. Godsil (perception.org) is the Director of Research at Perception Institute and the Eleanor Bontecou Professor of Law at Seton Hall University School of Law.

Jessica MacFarlane (perception.org) is the Research Associate at Perception Institute and has a background in research, psychology, and public health.

Liz Manne (lizmanne.com) is a management consultant and cultural strategist providing customized advisory services to companies, nonprofits, and media makers.

Mik Moore (mooreandassociates.co) is a cultural change campaign strategist who combines a deep understanding of public policy with years of experience as a writer, editor, and public speaker.

Meredith Osborne is a writer, editor, and researcher specializing in film and television publicity.

Joseph Phelan (@JTPspeaks) is a creative communications strategist working with social justice organizations and movements to #winbetter.

Brian Sheppard (<http://bit.ly/1POuCwj>) is an associate professor at Seton Hall University School of Law specializing in legal theory and decision-making.

Luz Ortiz (www.behance.net/luzo) is a graphic designer specializing in social and environmental justice.

Project Funders

Unbound Philanthropy works in the field of migration to transform long-standing but solvable barriers to the human rights of migrants and refugees and their integration into host societies. They seek to strengthen social, civic, and economic opportunities and relationships of mutual responsibility and respect across communities. (unboundphilanthropy.org)

The Nathan Cummings Foundation is rooted in the Jewish tradition and committed to democratic values and social justice, including fairness, diversity, and community. They seek to build a socially and economically just society that values nature and protects the ecological balance for future generations, promotes humane health care, and fosters arts and culture that enriches communities. (nathancummings.org)

Fiscal Sponsor

Revolutions Per Minute (RPM) is a nonprofit agency that provides artists with strategy and support for their activism and philanthropy. (revolutionsperminute.net)

Liz Manne
STRATEGY

lizmanne.com