

**The Shape Of Music To Come:
Organizational, Ideational, And Creative Change In The North American Music Industry,
1990-2009**

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology

University of Toronto

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between occupational roles, and creativity, uncertainty, and change in cultural industries. Over the course of three chapters, it uses regression, discourse, and content analysis, as well as in-depth interviews with professional songwriters and music industry personnel to analyze collaborative dynamics and collective sensemaking throughout the transition to digital production in the North American music industry. The first chapter develops meaning-centric measures of creativity to analyze how collaborative strategies shifted throughout the transition to digital production. It demonstrates empirically that musical diversity and innovation operate as countervailing forces – innovative forms can be devoid of diverse content – and calls attention to how limited examinations of cultural production are if the outcomes of interest are misspecified. Failing to attend to artistic form and content renders cultural objects no different from non-cultural phenomena, and leads to impoverished interpretations of institutional dynamics. Chapter 2 identifies how discourse is used to assess new technology and make sense of one’s place within a changing organizational landscape. It demonstrates that the patterned use of analogies and metaphors inform sensemaking and sensegiving efforts based on one’s occupational role. Moreover, a focus on the constraints posed by occupational membership on discursive framing elucidates the conditions under which exploitative or exploratory searches for solutions to organizational change are pursued. While the

music industry has undergone massive change, creative labourers are accustomed to working under conditions of uncertainty since such industries experience high rates of failure. To this end, Chapter 3 examines how professional songwriters manage routinized uncertainty in post-bureaucratic work settings. It identifies two conventions that help manage ongoing uncertainties. Namely, equal authorship and professional conciliation mediate tensions between present-day conflict and desires for future success. They allow jurisdictional challenges and varying productivity to be accommodated, and rewards to be distributed in a manner deemed fair. This chapter challenges the notion that post-bureaucratic forms of work organization can be characterized wholesale as either cooperative or conflict-driven. In effect, conflict and cooperation are mutually constitutive within such organizational forms. Collectively, the dissertation chapters advance our understanding of endogenous cultural processes that occur within creative and institutional fields undergoing technological change.

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Wayne, my children Archer and Malcolm, and my mother Ruth.

This dissertation is also dedicated in loving memory of my father Adrie, who had to drop out of high school to support his family so that I might one day stay in school to support mine.

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Introduction

My dissertation examines the relationship between occupational roles, and creativity, uncertainty, and change in the North American music industry throughout the shift to digital production.

In 1999, Shawn Fanning released a beta version of Napster, an online peer-to-peer network that facilitated the sharing of MP3 files. MP3 is an audio compression format. Its name derives from the Moving Picture Experts Group, a working group of engineers dedicated to advancing the transmission of audio and video for use in film, television and music. Whereas previously music fans had to go to a store to purchase a physical copy of a single or album, either on vinyl, cassette, or compact disc, MP3 technology allowed music to be shared and listened to on a personal computer, and for free. By July 2000, almost 20 million people were using Napster to download copyrighted music illegally (Knopper, 2009).

Beginning with the earliest musical products such as sheet music and 78s, copyright ownership and distribution has been inextricably tied up with musical formats. Copyright holders receive a royalty percentage from products that are sold, whether it is singles, albums, vinyl or CDs. For this reason, much of the music industry's profit hinges on ownership, and how music is delivered (Dowd, 2005). With the emergence of the MP3, control over musical formats and distribution was challenged. Not only did the new nature of distribution facilitate higher rates of illegal music consumption – anonymous peer-to-peer networks – but the nature of the new digital MP3 format – virtual, immaterial – did as well. Music fans could effortlessly upload and download large volumes of music to and from the Internet without having to leave home and for the most part, without fear of repercussion. Because the sale of MP3s did not involve a physical

handoff, ‘bricks-and-mortar’ retailers were increasingly disintermediated while a new opportunity space (DiMaggio, 1992; Baumann, 2007) emerged to establish online distribution platforms.

New technologies alter working conditions in all industries through the introduction of machinery and equipment, and the subsequent learning curve that people must overcome to successfully adapt (Barley, 1986; Zuboff, 1988). Unlike other industries, however, change and uncertainty in cultural fields occur in a context where profit motives intersect with a capricious creative process (Godart and Mears, 2009; Leschziner, 2015). Most occupational roles in creative fields require individuals to balance their artistic instincts with the need to make a living, under conditions where the supply of artists and support personnel outweighs the demand (Frenette, 2013; Menger, 1999). This means that creative personnel, including those labouring in the music industry, are accustomed to change and uncertainty. At the same time, since 1999 music sales have experienced either a downward or flatlining trend (Recording Industry Association of America, 2016). This decline has resulted in industry-wide layoffs, the decimation of the bricks-and-mortar music retail industry, consolidation of major record labels, and the diminished capacity of songwriters to earn a living off of their songs (Sutherland and Straw, 2007; Leyshon et al., 2005; Thomson, 2013). There is no denying that digitalization has introduced significant change and uncertainty to the music industry.

This combination of factors – unprecedented change, and habitual experience with change – makes a study of the music industry throughout the shift to the digital production worthy of sociological investigation. In particular, it provides the opportunity to refine our understanding of the conditions under which occupational roles influence and are influenced by creativity, uncertainty, and change. My dissertation relies on mixed methods to explore this topic

in a series of chapters. I examine how occupational roles and newcomer status serve as resources for facilitating diversity and innovation – two important aspects of creativity -- in popular music. I also investigate how the MP3 as a digital technology is perceived and framed discursively by industry personnel to make sense of occupational roles. Lastly, I outline the conventions used by songwriters to manage conflict and rewards under conditions of routinized uncertainty.

Overview of chapters

1. Innovation and Diversity Redux: Analyzing Musical Form and Content in the American Recording Industry, 1990–2009

We care about studying innovation and diversity in music – two important facets of creativity -- because the alternative, cultural stagnancy and homogeneity, is undesirable. This belief was one of the driving forces of the Frankfurt School and it continues to inspire research today. Despite this core motivation, the meaning of diversity and innovation remains under-developed. Chapter 1 addresses this by developing meaning-centric measures of innovation and diversity that facilitates an analysis of how the music industry responded to uncertainty produced by the process of digitalization. In this analysis, diversity refers to the content of music, via chordal and melodic structures, and lyrical themes. And innovation refers to the categorical form that music takes, via the emergence of new sub-genres on the mainstream pop charts.

Chapter 1 reveals that musical content and form, when examined concurrently, can stand in tension with one another and reveal important information about how strategies and conventions are practiced intra-organizationally. Regressing measures of diversity (content) and innovation (form) and incumbency status and combinatorial role patterns reveals that diversity and innovation operate through distinct collaborative patterns. New artists are found to be

carriers of musical innovation, and while performing artists with autonomy over the roles of songwriter and producer are more likely to be progenitors of musical diversity, innovation emerges from role specialization. Artistic roles and performer attributes, moreover, come together in particular ways to influence diversity and innovation depending on the environmental context. Post 1999 when MP3s emerged as a challenger to the CD format, innovation wrought by producer specialization is predominant, but the music is devoid of diversity.

The contributions of this chapter are both methodological and theoretical. Demonstrating empirically that diversity and innovation operate as countervailing forces -- innovative forms can be devoid of diverse content -- calls attention to how limited our examinations of cultural production are if the outcomes of interest are misspecified. In other words, failing to attend to artistic content and form renders cultural objects no different from non-cultural phenomena, and leads to impoverished interpretations of institutional dynamics, and the influence of occupational roles.

2. From CDs to MP3s: Occupational roles and discursive framing of organizational change

In Chapter 2, digitalization in the music industry provides the occasion to ask, how is discursive framing used to assess new technology and make sense of one's place within a changing organizational landscape? Drawing from a discourse and content analysis of the music industry's trade publication, *Billboard*, as well as in-depth interviews with music industry personnel, I identify how analogies and metaphors as forms of discourse are used to understand the transition from CDs to MP3s. I find that incumbents such as major label executives and retailers more often used analogies that reinforce existing ways of doing business, at the expense of more innovative interpretations that would lead to long term stability. This study demonstrates that the patterned use of analogies and metaphors inform sensemaking and sensegiving efforts

based on one's occupational role. Because the discursive frames appearing in *Billboard* provide dominant interpretations to the industry as a whole, they also shape descriptive and prescriptive understandings about occupational roles under digitalization. Moreover, a focus on the constraints posed by occupational membership on discursive framing elucidates the conditions under which exploitative or exploratory searches for solutions to organizational change are pursued.

3. 'Write a word, get a third': Managing conflict and rewards in professional songwriting teams

In Chapter 3 I argue that while the music industry has undergone massive change, creative personnel are accustomed to working in uncertain environments because these industries experience such high rates of failure. So while a study of the music industry throughout the era of digitalization can teach us a great deal about how individuals adapt and make sense of change, we can also gain insight into how the routinization of uncertainty is experienced on an ongoing basis.

Through in-depth interviews with professional songwriters, two conventions are identified that help manage ongoing uncertainties: equal authorship and professional conciliation. Unlike traditional bureaucratic work environments that operate on a linear workweek schedule, temporary songwriting teams operate along two temporal dimensions: the immediate work context of the project-of-the-day, in which interpersonal challenges must be negotiated, and a long-term trajectory in which team members envision future collaborations. I argue that action is tailored in light of more immediate interpersonal challenges to facilitate future rewards.

The conventions of equal authorship and conciliation mediate tensions between present-day conflict and desires for future success and cooperation. Such conventions allow jurisdictional challenges and varying levels of productivity to be accommodated, and rewards to be distributed in a manner deemed fair. In an occupation that is otherwise marked by role variability, stability and predictability is thus enabled. This chapter challenges the notion that post-bureaucratic forms of work organization can be characterized wholesale as either cooperative or conflict-driven. In effect, conflict and cooperation are mutually constitutive within such organizational forms.

Individually, these chapters contribute to sociological literatures on creativity and innovation, music, organizations, and work and occupations. Collectively, they advance the production of culture perspective, an active subfield within the sociology of culture that examines how cultural artifacts are shaped by the systems in which they are produced, distributed, and evaluated (Peterson and Anand, 2004). In the concluding chapter, I outline how this dissertation builds on the production of culture perspective through its emphasis on the meaning of cultural artifacts, and the role of endogenous cultural processes in mediating externally-driven organizational change. I close by suggesting how the music industry can inform our understanding of technological change in other creative fields.

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Chapter 1

Innovation and Diversity Redux: Analyzing Musical Form and Content in the American Recording Industry, 1990–2009

That innovation and diversity from cultural organizations are valued outcomes is practically a truism. They are presupposed to be both aesthetically and morally preferable because they facilitate a variety of expression, empower consumers with more decision-making power, and signal that organizational processes tending towards standardized production are kept in check. Much of the scholarship concerned with innovation and diversity in culture industries thus has a normative undercurrent; we care about studying innovation and diversity because the alternative, cultural stagnancy and homogeneity, is undesirable. This belief was one of the driving motivations of the Frankfurt School (Adorno 1962, 1973, 1975 [1967]; See also Turley, 2001), and it continues to motivate research located within the production of culture perspective, albeit perhaps implicitly (Alexander, 1996; Benhamou and Peltier, 2007; Bielby and Bielby, 1994; Burnett, 1992; Christianen, 1995; Crane, 1997; Dowd, 1992, 2000, 2004; 2007; Griswold, 1987; Lee, 2004; Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975). But what do innovation and diversity look like, and what factors account for them?

In the case of popular music, production of culture scholarship has established that under certain conditions, one important industry-level characteristic no longer influences innovation and diversity. Namely, throughout particular historical eras, oligopolistic ownership bears little influence on the kinds of cultural goods brought to market if decision-making concerning musical production is dispersed among many actors (Burnett, 1992, 1996; Dowd, 2004; Lopes, 1992). The latter strategy of decentralization has been pursued consistently over the past 20

years¹. Using popular music as a case study, then, I shift attention away from oligopolistic control as a source of influence and towards two other potential influences on innovation and diversity in cultural production: the role of incumbency status, and the collaborative context of artistic creation.

Incumbency status (whether a performing artist is new or established) at the individual level, and in particular the presence of *non*-incumbents, has been used to signal that a given work is diverse or innovative (Dowd, 2004; Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975). However, few studies have sought to determine the relationship between incumbency status and musical form and content (but see Dowd, 2000, and Lena, 2006). The present analysis clarifies this relationship, rather than assuming that new artists *qua* new artists offer something diverse and innovative². Both artistic autonomy and collaboration are held to be important influences on the shape and form that cultural artifacts ultimately take (Dowd, 1992, 2000; Farrell, 2001; Svejenova, 2005; Regev, 1994; Uzzi and Spiro, 2005; Williams, 1960). And yet, few projects assess how *degrees* of autonomy (complete control, collaboration with others, or abdication of certain roles) affect diversity and innovation. Therefore, this study also questions whether and how artistic incumbency and autonomy/collaboration affect innovation and diversity in a commercially oriented setting, and provides new empirical evidence about an era of major technological change (1990-2009). More importantly, this analysis allows us to examine the

¹ In more recent years, however, record firms may be returning to a strategy of centralized decision-making. In October 2011, for example, Sony Music Entertainment shuttered three of its labels, Jive, Arista and J (Spencer, 2011). Given that organization-level strategies are contingent on the financial health of the industry (Burnett, 1990; Dowd, 2004; Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975), this is perhaps not surprising. Moving forward, the assumption that decentralized production is actively pursued in the American recording industry needs to be examined in detail.

² To be sure, the number of new artists does represent an important form of diversity, namely, *producer* diversity (Dowd, 2000), and in certain historical contexts it has been found to co-occur with innovation (Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975). The matter of their co-occurrence, however, is an empirical one.

relationship between innovation and diversity – two influential outcomes that are rarely examined concurrently.

Innovation and Diversity

In general terms, innovation refers to the invention or adoption of a new phenomenon (Goswami and Mathew, 2005), and in organizational contexts it can be thought of as the adoption of ideas that are new to a given organization, typically taking the form of a new product, service or technology (Hage, 1999: 599). In cultural industries innovation is signaled by the emergence of a new form or *genre* (Mezias and Mezias, 2000; Phillips and Owens, 2004), and within the popular recording industry in particular it is usually measured “by the wide use of a new name for a style of music and an associated group of performers” (Peterson and Berger, 1996: 176)³. Diversity refers to the extent to which ranges of different or unique aesthetic *content* is prevalent (DiMaggio, 1977; Dowd, 2000).

In their seminal study of the American recording industry from 1948-1973, Peterson and Berger (1975) find that structural forces (i.e. the extent to which firm ownership is concentrated) have a similar effect on both musical innovation and diversity, such that under conditions of market competition we see an increase in the range of lyrical content (diversity) and the emergence of new genres (innovation). But in a later work (Peterson and Berger, 1996), the authors aver that the purported positive association between levels of innovation and diversity is context-specific and may not hold under different conditions and in other time periods. The question of whether these phenomena co-occur is an important one; both innovation and diversity serve as important indicators of the vitality of our popular culture landscape, but they do so in different ways.

³ To be sure, there are other ways of measuring innovation in music including guitar techniques (Walser, 1993) and the use of novel samples in rap music (Lena and Pachucki, 2013).

Innovation, signaled by the emergence of new sub-genres on the mainstream pop charts, ensures that a variety of (musical) voices are being heard. This is all the more important given that musical genres are often produced and consumed along lines such as race, ethnicity and gender (Christenson and Peterson, 1988; see, e.g., Negus, 1999). The emergence of more rap sub-genres post 2000 may therefore indicate that performers of color are facing fewer institutional barriers to getting their music heard than they have historically (see, e.g., Dowd, 2003). At the same time, the very mission of culture industries is to generate new products, which is to say, new innovations (DiMaggio, 1977). But something that takes on a new form need not take on new content. In the case of the recording industry, a new sub-genre may be more indicative of product category generation and marketing strategies –new ways of *classifying* phenomena – than it is of truly new aesthetic content (McLeod, 2001).

In contrast, diversity, which can be present both within and across sub-genres on the mainstream pop charts, ensures that a variety of musical *themes* are being heard. Diverse chordal and melodic structures and lyrical themes, and in particular songs that deviate from conventional themes of love, may provide the shared discourse necessary to push social boundaries, be it our acceptance of sexuality or understandings of social justice. In sum, diversity measures the breadth of aesthetic content being expressed, whereas innovation carries importance due to its power to classify musical forms. Yet, we rarely see these two outcomes examined simultaneously, and we lack an understanding of the mechanisms that contribute to innovation and diversity contemporaneously.

In the following sections, I examine sources of innovation and diversity in order to find out which collaborative configurations make both outcomes more likely, and whether incumbency is a relevant predictor. Before proceeding, it is worth addressing the question, why

study innovation and diversity in the mainstream recording industry in the first place, given the social-structural constraints that mainstream recording artists must navigate? Would an examination of more avant-garde or scene-based musics (Lena, 2012; Lena and Peterson, 2008) not turn up more diverse and innovative musical fare? The likely answer is yes. However, songs comprising the *Billboard* charts represent the most widely consumed songs (as evidenced by radio airplay and album sales) and therefore constitute a significant element of our cultural landscape (Hunnicuttt and Andrews, 2009). Knowing that incumbency and artistic autonomy/collaboration affect innovation and diversity in the context of a commercially oriented industry may alleviate concerns over Adorno-inspired nightmares of mass-culture theory (DiMaggio, 1977).

Incumbency, Roles as Resources, and Artistic Autonomy

Within culture industries, incumbency status is an important determinant of innovation and diversity both at the firm- and individual levels, albeit for different reasons. Whether a given firm is incumbent serves as a proxy for experience and tenure. Research tracking cultural output at the firm-level finds that incumbent firms are less likely to be progenitors of radical innovation (Mezias and Mezias, 2000; Phillips and Owens, 2004). It is held that such established firms, which are often quite large, prioritize profit over innovation (but see Crane, 1997 for an important counter example in the fashion industry). On the other hand, when creative control is decentralized, large incumbent firms have been found to sustain diverse musical fare (Lopes, 1992), or at least not impede it (Dowd, 2004) by allying with smaller competitors.

At the individual level, research on the influence of individual actors finds that established incumbents (e.g. performing artists) are more likely to be progenitors of diversity (Dowd, 2000). It is held that individuals with established tenure or ‘staying power’ have

sufficiently proven themselves (Faulkner and Anderson, 1987), and thus are granted more creative liberties than are new performers.

In addition to incumbency status, evidence suggests that *whom* one collaborates with is an important determinant of success (Faulkner and Anderson, 1987; Giuffre, 1999; Rossman, Bonacich and Esparza, 2010) and creativity (Becker, 1982; Farrell, 2001; Kealy, 1979; Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). And yet, despite recognition of the constraints they face, historically much value has been placed on the ‘autonomous creative genius’ (Giuffre, 2009), both in terms of the artist’s role in the shaping of cultural products (Bandelj, 2001; Blackstone, 2009; Dowd, 1992, 2000; Gardner, 1993; Gilmore, 1993; Negus, 1999; Svejenova, 2005), and the relationship between autonomy, creativity and artistic success more generally (Regev, 1994; Williams, 1960). Past research (Negus, 1999) has also established that in the case of the popular music industry, record companies are not all-powerful, and they frequently concede to the creative demands of performing artists. Record companies, moreover, have less creative involvement than is commonly held; they are more active creatively in their ability to understand how to market, promote and distribute music to consumers than they are in artistic production (Negus, 1999). In brief, there is evidence that attributes of the performing artist affect cultural content over and above other production-level dynamics. For those interested in innovation and diversity, this poses an interesting puzzle, namely, how incumbency and autonomy/collaboration at the individual-level influence the aesthetic shape and content of cultural artifacts.

One fruitful approach to better understanding the role of incumbency, artistic autonomy and collaborative dynamics has been to conceptualize artistic and organizational roles as resources (Baker and Faulkner, 1991). In their study of the Hollywood film industry, Baker and Faulkner (1991) argue that one’s occupational role (e.g. whether one is a producer, director,

screenwriter, or some combination of these positions) is an important resource, in that it grants role holders access to membership in a community as well as access to the social, cultural and material capital necessary to further one's artistic, occupational, and financial goals. In certain industries, the combinatorial patterns of roles are not fixed, and this has implications for the shape that cultural products take, and how well they are received. Baker and Faulkner find that after the onset of blockbuster production (1973-1980), film projects were more likely to be successful if the artistic realms of director/screenwriter were consolidated and performed by the same individual, but the role of producer was kept separate and specialized. Moreover, successful films were more likely to be produced, written or directed by incumbent professionals. That these subsequent film projects also enjoyed success suggests that combinatorial patterns (the consolidation of certain roles) can effectively mitigate uncertainty in high-risk industries, and the shape they take is therefore of consequence.

Baker and Faulkner's study further demonstrates that the combinatorial patterns of roles were found to change depending on the industry context; during the pre-blockbuster era, the role patterns of producer specialization and the consolidation of director/screenwriter roles were less common, as they did not beget success. Thus, the patterns of professional roles are an *adaptation* to the wider industry context, and importantly, they are an *influence on* industry context since film projects are in turn more likely to emulate role patterns that prove to be successful.

We can similarly anticipate role combinations to be influential in the American recording industry. Artistic autonomy - having one person responsible for the roles of songwriter/performing artist or producer/performing artist - may increase the likelihood of diversity and innovation in popular music. As with the film industry studied by Baker and Faulkner, such role consolidation may likewise vary depending on environmental context, or the

degree to which uncertainty is predominant, as firm personnel attempt varying role strategies to maintain control over a shifting consumer market. Additionally, we can anticipate the degree of collaboration to influence diversity and innovation (Kealy, 1979). A performing artist who shares responsibility for production or songwriting alongside dedicated professionals may be more likely to contribute to diversity and innovation than one who abdicates responsibility for these roles to others.

There are three essential roles behind the production of a hit song: the producer, the songwriter, and the performing artist. Record producers facilitate the recording, engineering and mixing of songs. The producer plays a crucial role in drawing out the right kinds of emotion from the performing artist in order to create a work that is widely relatable (Hennion, 1983; Long Lingo and O'Mahoney, 2010). Songwriters are responsible for supplying both the words and music of a song. Within the popular recording industry, when the performing artist is not responsible for songwriting, firm personnel often solicit professional songwriters for material, or they are requested by the performing artist to collaborate on lyrics and music (Ryan and Peterson, 1982). The performing artist or group sings the final product, and provides an aesthetic persona to accompany the song (Donze, 2011). Given that the roles of producer, songwriter and performing artist develop under certain environmental contexts, we can expect patterns of role consolidation, as well as incumbency, to be influential in the recording industry throughout the shift to increasing uncertainty post 1999. The following section presents hypotheses in order to assess how incumbency and role consolidation - or a lack thereof, which is to say, artistic autonomy - influences innovation and diversity.

Role Incumbency

We know from past research that incumbency status influences aesthetic content. Examining diversity by an index of twenty-nine measures of musical structure grouped in terms of melodic, rhythmic, chordal, key and verse structures, Dowd (2000) finds that new artists are not any more likely than incumbents to be progenitors of diverse musical content. This is not surprising; new artists face more pressure to succeed, as the possibility of having their recording contract renewed often depends on initial success (Knopper, 2009). It is probable they would rely on well-established musical conventions that have proven successful in the past. In contrast, incumbents already have a proven track record and are more likely to take creative liberties (Dowd, 2000).

Yet, changes in the American recording industry over the past ten years have once again brought this issue into question. Since CD sales began declining in 2000 (Recording Industry of America, 2008), record labels have shifted strategies. Rather than directly sign new artists to a contract through which they would be expected to provide the artist with large sums of money for the recording process, labels are licensing artists to short term agreements, thereby avoiding the large upfront investment that could only be recouped over a span of many years (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 2004). Moreover, production technologies are now less expensive and more accessible, which expands both the range of personnel that artists can choose to work with and may encourage experimentation. New artists thus have more creative freedom than they have had historically, and this may signal a turn towards more diverse chordal structures and lyrical themes. At the aggregate level it may no longer matter whether or not one is an incumbent:

Hypothesis 1a. Incumbents are no more likely to be progenitors of lyrical diversity than are new performing artist entrants.

Hypothesis 2a. Incumbents are no more likely to be progenitors of musical diversity than are new performing artist entrants.

Historically new performing artists have been associated with musical innovation (Peterson and Berger, 1975), and new entrants more generally have been found to introduce innovation (Ruef, 2002). While not impossible, few incumbent performing artists have successfully switched musical genres or sub-genres, and they prove to be the exception to the rule. Therefore:

Hypothesis 3a. New performing artists are more likely to be progenitors of innovative music than are incumbents.

Artistic Autonomy and Combinatorial Roles

As noted above, Baker and Faulkner (1991) find that the consolidation of artistic roles (e.g. director/screenwriter) positively influences a film's success. The present study is not concerned with explaining successful outcomes; by analyzing songs that have charted on *Billboard*, the sample is limited to successful songs only. Instead, the research question at hand asks to what extent artistic role autonomy and/or collaboration versus role abdication to specialists influences innovation and diversity in a large-scale culture industry. Each role type under investigation – producer, songwriter and performing artist – involves a creative process. In some cases performing artists have very little creative autonomy; teen pop acts such as those that were popular in the late 1990s often originate out of casting calls (Lena and Peterson, 2008). The members may not know each other prior to forming as a group, all of the production and songwriting is outsourced, and the act's sound and image are heavily controlled by management and record firm personnel (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). In other contexts performer autonomy is much more common, and artists will often take on sole songwriting and production

responsibilities as well. Previous research has demonstrated that performing artist/songwriter and performing artist/producer consolidation results in more diverse music (Dowd, 1992, 2000), and so we may anticipate the same role combinations to affect lyrical diversity and innovation as well. A counter argument to this would be that beginning in the 1980s the decentralized nature of music production within major recording firms (Burnett, 1992, 1996; Dowd, 2004; Lopes, 1992) has meant that record label personnel are less risk averse and more apt to facilitate diversity. I suggest, however, it is more plausible that those who perform songs produced and written by a cadre of specialized professionals (who are in turn often given a mandate by record firm personnel to produce conventional music that has proven successful in the past) are more likely to uphold conventional aesthetic content than those who insist on controlling the various facets of musical production and songwriting. Therefore:

Hypotheses 1b-c. Artists who have sole autonomy over production (H1b) and songwriting (H1c), or who collaborate with others, are more likely to create lyrically diverse music than those who abdicate responsibility to producers and songwriters that specialize in their respective crafts.

Hypothesis 2b-c. Artists who have sole autonomy over production (H2b) and songwriting (H2c), or who collaborate with others, are more likely to create musically diverse music than those who abdicate responsibility to producers and songwriters that specialize in their respective crafts.

Hypothesis 3b-c. Artists who have sole autonomy over production (H3b) and songwriting (H3c), or who collaborate with others, are more likely to create innovative music than those who abdicate responsibility to producers and songwriters that specialize in their respective crafts.

To summarize, the hypotheses suggest that incumbency status is no longer an influential source of diversity. New performing artists, however, are predicted to be associated with innovative music. Lastly, performing artists who achieve some degree of autonomy either by consolidating the roles of producer or songwriter, or by collaborating with producers and songwriters in those roles, will generate more diverse and innovative music.

Data and Methods

Data

Songs in the sample are taken from the *Billboard* music charts. The *Billboard* charts are held to be the fairest and most accurate representation of music sales and radio airplay, and have been widely used to study musical innovation and diversity (Anand, 2006; Burnett, 1992, 1996; Dowd, 1992, 2000, 2004; Lena, 2006; Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975). The top twenty songs from the year-end *Billboard* Hot 100 charts (1990 through 2009) are employed in the present study (see also Lopes, 1992). They represent a cumulative measure of a song's overall success throughout a given year. Songs are measured through a combination of album sales and radio airplay. Analyzing the year-end charts limits the scope of the sample to a manageable size while still facilitating the analysis of songs that are considered to be the most popular.

Time Frame and Sample Size

The twenty-year period constituting this study – 1990 to 2009 - is divided by decade both to facilitate analysis and because the two decades under investigation reflect significant changes within the music industry. Using 1990 as a start date allows for an adequate comparison of the pre- and post- digital file-sharing eras. In addition, several important studies of musical diversity end in 1990 (Dowd, 2000, 2004; Lopes, 1992). This paper therefore provides empirical data on an under-explored era in which the emergence of digital technology has had wide-ranging repercussions for the recording industry. Two songs made the year-end chart two years in a row, “Candle in the Wind 1997” by Elton John and “How Do I Live” by LeAnn Rimes, both of which were analyzed only once. I also included five additional songs to account for changes to *Billboard* ranking calculations, bringing the sample size to 203 songs. More information is available upon request.

Dependent variables

To address part of the question asked at the outset – what do innovation and diversity look like? - the present study examines innovation via the emergence of new sub-genres, and diversity by focusing on three aspects of aesthetic content: chordal and melodic structure, which together comprise the musical diversity addressed in the hypotheses, and lyrical themes.

Lyrical, Chordal and Melodic Diversity

Lyrics were obtained from a number of websites, such as lyrics.com, lyricsmania.com, and were cross-referenced and verified individually to ensure accuracy. Lyrics are examined to ascertain the extent to which production-level collaborative dynamics predict the likelihood that they will be thematically diverse. Diversity in this context is indicated by the extent to which a song's thematic content differs from other songs. Themes emerge from the overall narrative of the song, and can often be derived from the chorus alone.

Coding was both open-ended and structured. I allowed for the emergence of new themes but also coded for what has been found in the past. I relied on the studies of Anderson et al. (1980), Burns (1982), Carey (1969), Horton (1957), and Lena (2006) to inform the structured coding. In all, twenty unique themes were uncovered throughout 1990 to 2009 (a complete list of themes and more details on methodology is available on request). In order to evaluate lyrical diversity statistically, any theme occurring in less than 6 percent of songs was deemed to be diverse and was coded as '1', whereas all themes occurring more frequently were deemed standard or common, and coded '0'. In this context, diversity is commensurate with rarity, since a high number of unique themes appearing simultaneously signifies that more variety is present.

Chords are a combination of three or more notes played simultaneously, and they form the underlying harmonic structure of Western music. Melody refers to the succession of notes on

a musical staff, comprising the pitch and timing of a song. Melodic structure was obtained via sheet music (and cross-referenced with the actual songs for accuracy) or transcribed when otherwise not available or inaccurate. Chord structure was obtained from a number of websites such as chordie.com and azchords.com, and was likewise cross-referenced and verified individually to ensure accuracy. The analysis is based on measures proposed by Cerulo (1988, 1989, 1995) and adapted for popular music by Dowd (1992, 2000). A complete listing of the measures employed is available on request.

I follow Dowd (2000) who conceptualizes diversity by the extent to which songs' musical structures are dissimilar from the average chordal and melodic structure within the time frame under investigation. Songs with similar chordal or melodic structures are less diverse, whereas songs departing from the norm are more dissimilar and therefore, more diverse. This is established by converting the individual chord and melody measures into z-scores: for each chordal and melodic measure, the mean value is subtracted from each raw score, and then divided by the standard deviation of the chordal or melodic measure population in question. Next, the individual z-scores for each song were used to create an index ($\alpha=0.67$). The final value represents the extent to which a given song deviates from the period average. That is to say, the outcome variable tells us how melodically and chordally dissimilar a given song is: the greater the deviation, the greater the dissimilarity. Because lyrics represent a different dimension of diversity, they cannot be collapsed into the chord/melody index. As reflected by the hypotheses, these outcomes are analyzed separately.

Innovation

As noted above, innovation refers to the emergence of a new musical style, genre or sub-genre. I code songs at the sub-genre level rather than the stream level (Ennis, 1992), because post

1990, we are more likely to see the proliferation of relatively smaller innovations *within* major streams of music (Lena, 2012), and these are more accurately perceived at the sub-genre level. Moreover, record labels increasingly engage in targeted marketing aimed at specific musical tastes (Negus, 1999) which are also more likely to be reflected at the sub-genre level. Sub-genres, as a form of innovation in a commercially-oriented setting, thus provide a clearer indication of how music is promoted and consumed.

I obtained a given song's sub-genre by referencing the artist or group's allmusic.com page. Allmusic.com is a comprehensive online music reference source. Each artist/group has a page hosting biographical information, discography, as well as a list of songs, credits and awards. Additionally, each artist is categorized in terms of sub-genre. I coded songs belonging to a newly emerging sub-genre as innovative ('1'), and songs belonging to an established sub-genre as non-innovative ('0'). New sub-genres are those musical styles whose common parlance in popular media spans less than five years. If a new sub-genre charted five years after its first appearance on *Billboard*, it was thereafter coded as non-innovative.

Independent Variables

Incumbency status

I coded the top ten year-end Hot 100 songs as being sung by an incumbent ('0'), rising ('1') or new artist ('2'). An artist is considered an incumbent if he or she has enjoyed hits in three of the previous four years, or enjoyed more than eight hits throughout his or her career, whether as a solo artist or with a group⁴. A rising star refers to anyone who has enjoyed one or two hits in the previous two years. Most prior studies exclude rising stars from analysis (Dowd, 2004; Lopes,

⁴ The latter is not specified in prior studies, however, I found it necessary to add this criterion due to a small number of well established artists that re-emerged on the charts after a considerable absence. For example, Carlos Santana enjoyed a hit song in 1999, "Smooth", but had otherwise not reached the top of the *Billboard* charts since the early 1980s. Despite this long absence, he is an established artist (See, e.g., Kremp, 2010).

1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975), but I include them in mine for the sake of providing new information on these liminal artists. Lastly, an artist is considered new if it is the first time he or she has a song charting within the top fifty on the Hot 100 chart.

Producer and Songwriter Role Consolidation

Production and songwriting autonomy were coded separately, but the coding scheme is the same for both in that ‘0’ indicates that the performing artist was not involved in production or songwriting, ‘1’ indicates that the artist collaborated with other specialists in the production or songwriting process, and ‘2’ indicates that the artist had sole autonomy over production or songwriting. In the case of a song performed by a musical group, if one member contributed to songwriting or producing, they are coded as fitting into one of the latter two categories.

Control Variables

Decade, sex, race, firm age, and industry concentration are controlled for in the analyses. Many technological advances separate the 1990s from the 2000s (i.e., the transition from CD to digital MP3s) and they have had considerable influence on how we consume music. I therefore account for whether the song charted in the 2000s (‘0’) versus the 1990s (‘1’). Given the enduring pervasiveness of gender beliefs, it is possible that lyrics and sub-genres vary along the lines of sex. Consequently, the variable sex is composed of men (‘0’), women (‘1’) and male/female combination acts (‘2’). Similarly, given that black performers are more likely to perform music of certain genres (rap and R n’ B), and that these genres may contain lyrically distinct themes, race may therefore be an influence on innovation and diversity, and race is coded as follows: white (‘0’), black (‘1’), and other (‘2’), which includes Latino performers, bi-racial performers and multi-racial groups. Collapsing these racial and ethnic identities into the same category was necessitated by the small sample size. Since firm incumbency has historically been found to

influence innovation (Phillips and Owens, 2004), I also code for whether the record label responsible for the hit song in question is established ('0') or new ('1'). Information for the latter variable was determined by consulting historical sources such as Dannen (1990), Southall (2000) and Wilentz (2012), as well as by consulting histories on record label websites. Similarly, owing to the historical importance of industry concentration on innovation and diversity, I control for it using the Herfindahl index, which is the sum of squares of the market shares of all music industry firms⁵. A higher index score signifies greater industry concentration. Index scores, which can range from 0 to 10,000, were divided by 10 in order to constrain the range of numbers (Dowd, 2004). Lastly, in order to discern the relationship between innovation and diversity, when innovation is the outcome of interest diversity is included in the model. To ensure that artistic autonomy and role consolidation cannot be explained away by sub-genre, when diversity is the outcome of interest, innovation is included. Descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables are available upon request.

Results

Lyrical Diversity

Who are the progenitors of diversity and innovation? Table 1 presents a logistic regression of the likelihood of lyrical diversity progenitorship, presented in odds ratios. In order to ensure that the key focal variables – incumbency status and producer/songwriter role consolidation - are a significant improvement in fit over the control variables – that is, in order to claim that the latter measures matter over and above considerations of sub-genre, decade, sex, race and label

⁵ Because the strategy of decentralization - whereby major record firms distribute and disperse music production among many sub-labels - was consistently pursued by record firms throughout 1990-2009, I do not include a control variable for it in the present analysis.

incumbency status - nested regression models are employed throughout⁶. As regards the role of incumbency status – whether the performing artist is new or established -- the latter measure was not an improvement in fit over the control variables ($\Delta\chi^2= 0.07, 2 df, p<0.96$). While the odds ratios suggest that incumbents are more likely to contribute to lyrical diversity (13 and 5 percent more than rising and new artists respectively) this finding does not achieve significance. Incumbency status has no significant effect on lyrical diversity and Hypothesis 1a is tentatively supported. This suggests that the presence of innovation, the decade in which the song was created, and the presence of a combined male/female group are more powerful determinants of diversity than whether the performing artist is new or an incumbent.

Hypothesis 1b suggested that there would be a positive relationship between the consolidation of performing artist/producer roles and lyrical diversity. While the addition of this variable represents a significant improvement in fit ($\Delta\chi^2= 5.58, 2 df, p<0.06$), this hypothesis receives partial support. Under the period of investigation when the performing artist is solely responsible for production (e.g., facilitating the recording, engineering and mixing of the song in question), he or she is 1.4 times as likely to release songs that are lyrically diverse, however, this finding is not significant. When the performing artist collaborates with others in the production process, however, the song in question is 2.8 times more likely to be lyrically diverse. The fact that the degree of artistic autonomy (sole autonomy versus a collaborative effort) varies in statistical significance highlights the importance of examining role combinations. It is not the case that a performing artist's involvement always signals a more diverse cultural product;

⁶ When the focal variables for each outcome of interest are included in the same model, the net effect is the same as when they are analyzed separately. For ease of interpretation I therefore keep them separate. Two diagnostics - a tolerance measure (an indicator of how much collinearity a regression analysis can tolerate) and a variance inflation factor measure (an indicator of how much of the inflation of the standard error could be caused by collinearity) - indicate that the variables in this study are uncorrelated to one another.

collaborative configurations can matter more, and in the context of producer autonomy and lyrical diversity, do matter more.

The addition of the songwriting autonomy variables offers a significant improvement ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10.66, 2 df, p < 0.01$), and is accepted as the best-fitting model. Hypothesis 1c predicted that performing artists involved in the songwriting process would be more likely to create lyrically diverse music. Since role consolidation increases the likelihood of lyrical diversity, support for the latter is found. Artists who collaborate with those specializing in the songwriting role are more than ten times more likely to create lyrically diverse music, and artists with sole control over songwriting are over eight times as likely to contribute to lyrical diversity. Songs written in the 1990s, as well as songs associated with a new sub-genre and the presence of a combined male/female group also increase the presence of lyrical diversity.

Table 1. Logistic regression of the likelihood of lyrical diversity progenitorship

<i>Control Variables</i>	H 1a	H 1b	H 1c
1990s ^a	2.10* (.810)	5.76* (4.61)	8.62** (7.17)
Innovation Subgenre Novelty ^b	3.44** (1.50)	4.38** (2.07)	3.93** (1.820)
Musical Diversity	1.00 (.045)	1.01 (.047)	1.00 (.046)
Female solo/group ^c	0.75 (.310)	0.67 (.293)	0.91 (.401)
Mixed sex group ^c	3.62^ (2.65)	3.11 (2.48)	4.44* (3.48)
Black solo/group ^d	0.73 (.293)	0.66 (.277)	0.84 (.392)
Other (Latino, bi-racial, multiracial,etc.) ^d	0.54 (.299)	0.46 (.262)	0.45 (.275)
New recording firm ^e	1.07 (.495)	1.06 (.515)	1.11 (.527)
Concentration	1.01 (.005)	1.01 (.006)	1.01 (.006)
<i>Focal Variables</i>			
Performer Status			
Rising ^f	0.87 (.450)		
New ^f	0.95 (.410)		
Producer Status			
Artist as one of two or more producers ^g		2.84* (1.26)	
Artist as sole producer ^g		1.44 (.935)	
Songwriter Status			
Artist as one of two or more songwriters ^h			10.01*** (7.08)
Artist as sole songwriter ^h			8.42** (6.39)
X ²	17.39*	24.99**	35.37***
Pseudo R ²	0.08	0.12	0.16

^p.10 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001, two-tailed test

Presented in Odds Ratios; Standard errors in parentheses; N = 203

^a Compared to the 2000s (2000-2009); ^b Compared to established musical subgenres;

^c Compared to male solo/group; ^d Compared to white solo/group;

^e Compared to established recording firms; ^f Compared to established performers;

^g Compared to non-artist producer(s); ^h Compared to non-artist songwriter(s)

Across all three types of role configurations examined, the decade of the 1990s is found to have a significant bearing on the likelihood of lyrical diversity compared to the 2000s. Similarly, songs representing a new sub-genre also increase the likelihood of lyrical diversity. The other control variables – musical diversity, sex, race, whether the record label was new or established and firm concentration – were either not significant or produced inconsistent results across role types.

Musical (Chord/Melody) Diversity

Our second outcome of interest, the chord and melody diversity index, is normally distributed and the Durbin's alternative test statistic confirms no autocorrelation is present (available upon request). Table 2 therefore presents the results of an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. As a whole, results concerning musical diversity are not as strong⁷. The addition of performer status is a significant improvement in fit over the baseline model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.024$, 2 *df*, $p < 0.10$). Hypothesis 2a, which stated that incumbents would be no more likely than new performers to introduce musical diversity, is not supported; instead, new artists less often contribute to musical diversity compared to established artists. This suggests that owing to their staying power, established performing artists have the autonomy to pursue more unique musical structures. And this demonstrates that performer 'newness' in and of itself is not commensurate to musical *content* diversity.

Neither producer autonomy ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$, 2 *df*, $p < 0.76$) nor songwriter autonomy ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$, 2 *df*, $p < 0.97$) achieves significance over the baseline models. Hypothesis 2b, which predicted that performing artists' involvement in production processes would increase the likelihood of musical diversity, and Hypothesis 2c, which stated that performing artists holding

⁷ I include chordal and melody structure findings nevertheless, as I agree with Benhamou and Peltier (2007) about the importance of providing a multi-dimensional measure of cultural diversity.

autonomy over the songwriting process would write more musically diverse songs, fail to receive support. As regards predictors of musical diversity, then, autonomy matters less than incumbency status.

Both the presence of a combined male/female group, and record label status achieve significance. Male/female groups are more often behind songs that are chordally or melodically dissimilar, and thus, songs that are more diverse. Given that performing artist identities are highly circumscribed by gender (Donze, 2011) it may be the case that groups that are able to deviate from gender norms by including both men and women are also able to deviate from standardized musical structure. And new record labels are less often the progenitors of chordal and melody diversity. This supports Dowd (2000) who also finds that established major labels were more often responsible for releasing songs that are musically diverse.

Table 2. OLS regression of musical (chord/melody) diversity progenitorship

<i>Control Variables</i>	H 2a	H 2b	H 2c
1990s ^a	0.13 (1.08)	0.19 (.562)	0.19 (.562)
Innovation Subgenre Novelty ^b	-0.77 (.763)	-1.13 (.731)	-1.13 (.731)
Lyrical Diversity ^c	0.09 (.684)	0.09 (.684)	0.09 (.684)
Female solo/group ^d	0.42 (.603)	0.51 (.600)	0.51 (.600)
Mixed sex group ^d	1.92 (1.28)	2.12 [^] (1.28)	2.12 [^] (1.28)
Black solo/group ^e	-0.68 (.628)	-0.46 (.619)	-0.46 (.619)
Other (Latino, bi-racial, multiracial,etc.) ^e	0.46 (.787)	0.45 (.788)	0.45 (.788)
New recording firm ^f	-1.04 (.703)	-1.20 [^] (.700)	-1.20 [^] (.700)
Concentration	-0.002 (.008)	-0.001 (.008)	-0.001 (.008)
<i>Focal Variables</i>			
Performer Status			
Rising ^g	0.09 (.775)		
New ^g	-1.34* (.658)		
Producer Status			
Artist as one of two or more producers ^h		0.03 (.708)	
Artist as sole producer ^h		-0.68 (.954)	
Songwriter Status			
Artist as one of two or more songwriters ⁱ			0.14 (.725)
Artist as sole songwriter ⁱ			-0.01 (.842)
Constant	1.13 (2.39)	0.142 (.662)	0.142 (.661)
R ²	0.09 [^]	0.07 [^]	0.07 [^]

[^]p.10 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p<.001, two-tailed test

Standard errors in parentheses; N = 203

^a Compared to the 2000s (2000-2009); ^b Compared to established musical subgenres;

^c Compared to standard lyrical themes; ^d Compared to male solo/group;

^e Compared to white solo/group; ^f Compared to established recording firms;

^g Compared to established performers; ^h Compared to non-artist producer(s);

ⁱ Compared to non-artist songwriter(s)

Innovation

Table 3 presents the results of the hypotheses concerning innovation. In line with reigning ideas about innovation progenitorship, Hypothesis 3a is supported. Rising and new artists are more likely to introduce new sub-genres when compared to incumbent performing artists, and this model provides a significant improvement in fit over the control variables ($\Delta\chi^2=11.14, 2 df, p<0.01$). Hypothesis 3b predicted that performing artists who also act as producers are likely to contribute to musical innovation. In fact, producer role *specialization* facilitates innovation, and when the performing artist is involved in the production process music is less likely to be innovative. Hypothesis 3b is thus not supported; when the performing artist role is consolidated with the producer role, odds are that the song in question is 85% *less* likely to be innovative. This finding offers a significant improvement in fit over the baseline model, ($\Delta\chi^2=8.18, 2 df, p<0.05$), and is accepted as the best fitting model. Lastly, Hypothesis 3c suggested that combining the performing artist role with that of the songwriter would increase the likelihood of musical innovation. The full model does not provide a significant improvement in fit over and above the control variables ($\Delta\chi^2=0.24, 2 df, p<0.89$), and Hypothesis 3c is rejected. Songwriting consolidation has no influence over the emergence of new sub-genres.

Table 3. Logistic regression of the likelihood of innovation progenitorship

<i>Control Variables</i>	H 3a	H 3b	H 3c
1990s ^a	0.05*** (.042)	0.06*** (.051)	0.06** (.053)
Lyrical Diversity ^b	4.71** (2.33)	5.83*** (2.94)	4.84*** (2.27)
Musical Diversity	0.96 (.054)	0.91 (.053)	0.93 (.050)
Female solo/group ^c	0.13*** (.073)	0.09*** (.053)	0.11*** (.062)
Mixed sex group ^c	1.41 (1.09)	1.57 (1.27)	1.22 (.920)
Black solo/group ^d	2.24 (1.14)	1.85 (.890)	1.56 (.720)
Other (Latino, bi-racial, multiracial,etc.) ^d	0.98 (.636)	0.82 (.555)	0.74 (.463)
New recording firm ^e	1.66 (.867)	2.65* (1.37)	2.38^ (1.19)
Concentration	0.98* (.006)	0.98* (.006)	0.98* (.006)
 <i>Focal Variables</i>			
Performer Status			
Rising ^f	3.12* (1.82)		
New ^f	5.88*** (3.13)		
Producer Status			
Artist as one of two or more producers ^g		0.31^ (.195)	
Artist as sole producer ^g		0.15** (.118)	
Songwriter Status			
Artist as one of two or more songwriters ^h			0.78 (.463)
Artist as sole songwriter ^h			0.94 (.615)
X ²	68.16***	65.62***	55.55***
Pseudo R ²	0.32	0.31	0.26

^p.10 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p<.001, two-tailed test

Presented in Odds Ratios; Standard errors in parentheses; N = 203

^a Compared to the 2000s (2000-2009); ^b Compared to standard lyrical themes;

^c Compared to male solo/group; ^d Compared to white solo/group;

^e Compared to established recording firms; ^f Compared to established performers;

^g Compared to non-artist producer(s); ^h Compared to non-artist songwriter(s)

Across the models, the decade in which the music was produced, the presence of innovation, gender, record label incumbency status, and industry concentration exert influence on musical diversity and/or innovation. Whereas we were more likely to witness lyrical diversity in the 1990s, we are more likely to witness innovation in the 2000s. In the 1990s there was a 94% chance that songs would be representative of an established or common sub-genre. Controlling for innovation and lyrical diversity across the respective models reveals that the two phenomena are positively related. The odds ratios for diversity are all positive and significant when innovation is the outcome variable in consideration, and when songs are lyrically diverse, they are about four times more likely to be innovative. Conversely, innovation is negatively related to chordal and melody diversity, however this relationship fails to achieve significance.

Across the incumbency and role autonomy configurations, female solo artists or groups are significantly less likely to contribute innovative music. While speculative, gender stereotypes operating at the cultural level may constrain female performers more than they do for men, and have a hand in influencing their (or record firm personnel's) decision to play it safe. Additionally, many of the new sub-genres to emerge are rap-related, which remains a male-dominated genre. At the level of production, this suggests that female artists are not allotted the freedom to experiment the same way that male artists are (see, e.g. Bielby and Bielby, 1996). Alternatively, it is possible that women self-select out of pursuing certain genres of music knowing the barriers they would confront. Moving forward, it is worth examining in detail the classificatory barriers (Donze, 2011) and organizational hurdles that may prevent women from accessing and creating innovative sub-genres⁸.

⁸ A more detailed discussion of whether and how certain genres invoke occupational crowding and gender queues is beyond the scope of this study (but see Clawson, 1999, Dowd, Liddle and Blyler, 2002, and Reskin and Roos, 1990 regarding the latter, as well as Schmutz and Faupel, 2010 for an analysis of the gendered nature of consecration in popular music).

In two out of the three performer attribute contexts, new recording firms are about twice as likely to contribute to innovation. This study thus provides new empirical evidence corroborating the original thesis of Peterson and Berger (1975) and subsequent studies (Phillips and Owens, 2004) that firm incumbency, like performing artist incumbency at the individual level, does not enhance the likelihood of musical innovation.

Lastly, whereas industry concentration has no discernible relationship to lyrical and musical diversity throughout the period under study, it is negatively related to musical innovation, albeit to a very small degree. Instances of high industry concentration reduce the likelihood of musical innovation by 2 percent. While a strategy of decentralized production was pursued throughout the time period under investigation, this finding indicates that decentralization alone may not be sufficient in offsetting the negative effects of industry concentration.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that throughout 1990 to 2009, new *Billboard* performing artists are not more likely to produce music that is diverse in content. Indeed, in the case of chord and melody structure, new artists less often contribute to diversity than established performing artists. Having new performers succeed in the popular music recording industry is a positive outcome in itself (as is racial and gender representativeness). However, the use of newness as a proxy for musical diversity writ large is called into question if we consider diversity to refer not only to objective characteristics of the performer him or herself, but also to elements of aesthetic content such as chord and melody structure, and lyrical themes. Conversely, new and rising

performing artists continue to be progenitors of new musical sub-genres. This finding supports Lopes' (1992) characterization of new artists as carriers of innovation.

Artistic roles, and the extent to which they can be pursued autonomously or through collaboration with others, matter in the context of a commercially oriented culture industry. Performing artist autonomy increases the likelihood of diverse musical output. Those performing artists who take on the role of songwriter, or who collaborate with others in that role, are more likely to produce lyrically diverse music compared to those artists who have no control over the domain of songwriting. In one role combination – production/performing artist – it was the presence of a collaborative team effort that positively increased the likelihood of lyrical diversity. While speculative, it could be that partial performing artist autonomy over production results in more lyrical diversity because the collaborative context facilitates delegation (Farrell, 2001). Sharing the producer role allows the performing artist to be involved in production while also attending to other roles, and in this instance, songwriting. In general, these findings suggest that those performing artists who maintain some degree of autonomy over key creative roles are more likely to be the progenitors of lyrical diversity than those with no autonomy.

While performing artist autonomy is an important source of diversity, the same cannot be said for musical innovation. Instead those who specialize in the role of production increase the likelihood that new sub-genres will become popular. This underscores the need to analyze how creative roles operate as resources at the level of production. Producers often work within the same genre of music. While this may limit their range of musical knowledge, it enables them to develop an expert reputation in a given sub-genre, thereby increasing their status, and perhaps, claims to authority over their chosen specialization. Songwriters within the popular recording

industry, on the other hand, often work across genres and may not have the same claims to genre-based expertise.

At the same time that artistic autonomy and combinatorial role patterns are important, environmental context also matters. This is exemplified by the significant role played by the decade in which music was produced. The 1990s represents an era of relative stability for recording firms. Firms had effectively mastered an organizational strategy – decentralized production – that facilitated the creation of diverse music and at the same time mitigated competition. In the early part of the 1990s, technology was also relatively stable. The CD format proved to be immensely lucrative for the record industry, and firms enjoyed record profits. Throughout the 1990s, then, major labels had the luxury of inertia. With the onset of MP3 technology in 2000, physical album sales began falling while online digital single sales increased (Knopper, 2009). Because most consumers were inexpensively purchasing songs online or downloading music illegally for free, growing digital sales did not outpace losses in CD sales. Relative to the stable and prosperous previous decade, in the 2000s record labels needed to considerably re-orient their strategies.

That songs were over 90% more likely to be innovative throughout the 2000s compared to the 1990s indicates that one such strategy has been to introduce more innovation - or product generation (DiMaggio, 1977) - into the market via new musical sub-genres. Accompanying the increasing levels of innovation is the ascendance of producer role specialization. Whereas in the 1990s those producers who worked independently from the performing artist did not account for a significantly larger portion of innovation introduced to the market (53%, versus 47% introduced by performing artists who either collaborate or are solely responsible for production); in the 2000s, they introduced 93% of all the musical innovation. It appears then, that the

increasing uncertainty post 1999 prompted label personnel to rely on specialized producers to generate new forms of music.

While the regression analyses indicate a significant relationship between innovation and lyrical diversity, parsing this relationship by decade reveals that much of the positive association occurs in the 1990s⁹. Table 4 reveals that within all the new sub-genres introduced in the 1990s, the ratio of lyrically diverse to standardized content is 60% to 40%, while in the 2000s, the ratio is inverted to 30% to 70% respectively. Post 1999, then, there was more innovation but comparatively less diverse thematic content therein. The innovation that emerged in the 2000s occurred primarily through sub-genres of rock, via post grunge, and rap, via crunk, Southern, East Coast and pop-rap. Such sub-genres, however, consist of conventional lyrical themes about the ‘dissolution of love’ or ‘hoping for love’ in the case of post grunge, and ‘sexual courting’ in the case of crunk, Southern, East Coast, and pop-rap. Consequently, throughout this decade of heightened uncertainty, we see increasing divergence between form (classification of music) and diverse lyrical content.

Table 4. Bivariate relationship between lyrical diversity and innovation by decade

Sub-genre:	1990s			2000s		
	Standard Theme	Diverse Theme	Total	Standard Theme	Diverse Theme	Total
Old	71	17	88	60	10	70
<i>Row percentage:</i>	81	19	100	86	14	100
<i>Column percentage:</i>	92	65	85.44	74	53	70
New	6	9	15	21	9	30
<i>Row percentage:</i>	40	60	100	70	30	100
<i>Column percentage:</i>	8	35	14.56	26	47	30
Total	77	26	103	81	19	100
	75	25	100	81	19	100
	100	100	100	100	100	100

$\chi^2=11.2395, p< 0.001$

$\chi^2= 3.3695, p<0.10$

⁹ I focus here on the amount of diversity found within innovative songs rather than the inverse, as the surge in innovation post 1999, as well as the role of specialized producers in introducing such innovation, is a compelling finding.

In sum, innovation and (lyrical) diversity are not always congruent, and when promoted by distinct collaborative relationships they may result in a trade-off in aesthetic content if newly emerging sub-genres rely on the same thematic tropes about love and sex.

Conclusion

This article contributes to our understanding of cultural industries in two ways. First, it demonstrates empirically that innovation and diversity, which are rarely examined concurrently in studies of music, represent two distinct and unique facets of artistic creativity. The relationship between innovation, or form, and diversity, or content, is not fixed and the manner in which they interact has implications both for cultural production and reception. In their study of the erosion of classificatory boundaries in French cuisine, Rao, Monin and Durand (2005) find that high status actors can successfully borrow content associated with a rival categorical form, thereby prompting others to emulate them. Throughout 1970-1997, adherents to classical French cuisine slowly began to borrow techniques associated with a rival form of cooking, nouvelle cuisine. As others increasingly emulated the strategy of borrowing techniques associated with a rival form, boundaries between the two weakened, such that those chefs that did not combine techniques associated with both forms of cuisine were penalized by critics. The authors thus demonstrate that endogenous change resulting in boundary erosion cannot be assessed without attention to content, in this instance, techniques and ingredients associated with particular forms of cuisine. Over time, only those actors who used content from both forms of cuisine were well received.

By contrast, in their study of the microbrewery movement, Carroll and Swaminathan (2000) find that beer aficionados were reluctant to embrace higher quality products offered by mass beer producers (e.g. Anheuser Busch). Despite the objectively better tasting quality of such products, these avid consumers were dedicated to the micro-brewery form of production, and

thus only a particular combination of form *and* content (micro-brewery production and quality tasting beer) would elicit positive consumer response from beer aficionados and critics. While content came to matter more than form in the former example, in the latter instance, form held prominence in addition to content.

In brief, our understanding of any cultural industry is contingent on *which* dimensions of creativity we choose to consider (Benhamou and Peltier, 2007). Whereas the above cited examples analyze form and content in relation to reception, this study analyzes form and content in relation to production-level strategies. Diversity and innovation do not consistently overlap on the *Billboard* charts throughout 1990 to 2009. The possibility of incongruence between dimensions of aesthetic form (innovation) and content (diversity) holds implications for production of culture scholars. The emergence of cultural innovation is held to be indicative of the creative health of an industry. As regards the American recording industry from 1990 to 2009, this is definitively not the case. Throughout the 2000s, new artists are progenitors of innovation (sub-genres), but what is interesting in terms of diverse thematic and musical content occurs outside of new sub-genres. That more sub-genres were likely to emerge post 1999 in an environment of uncertainty and change suggests that, moving forward it may be worth investigating whether the *nature* of innovation varies in other industries and at other times, depending on the extent to which organizational uncertainty is present.

Production of culture scholarship generally emphasizes the role of field- and organization-level mechanisms rather than the form and content of the elements being produced (Peterson and Anand, 2004). Nevertheless, most studies posit a causal relationship wherein the outcome of productive forces is presumed to be of consequence. And indeed, this analysis confirms that artistic autonomy and collaboration is instrumental for creating diverse artistic

content, but *not* innovation. That the differing combinations of production-level roles – music producer specialization and performing artist autonomy - affect facets of innovation and diversity differently echoes the above cited studies that it is prudent to examine the form and content of cultural artifacts concurrently and in-depth. Concern with innovation (form) or diversity (content), moreover, pervades many culture industry analyses, as the latter elements have been the subject of inquiry not only within the music industry (Dowd, 2004; Lena, 2004; Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975; Phillips and Owens, 2004), but also in publishing (Benhamou and Peltier, 2007), fashion (Crane, 1997, 2000), food/beverage (Carroll and Swaminathan, 2000; Leschziner, 2007; Rao, Monin and Durant, 2005) and film (Baker and Faulkner, 1991; Baumann, 2007; Hsu, 2006; Svejenova, 2005).

This study finds that industry concentration is not a significant predictor of lyrical and musical diversity, and has only a modest effect on innovation, thereby corroborating that the concentration figures that featured prominently in past studies do not necessarily indicate much about influences on musical innovation and diversity when decentralization is present. While the inclusion of market share ratios is a good indication of product ownership, they are no longer indicative of creative control (Peterson and Berger, 1996). Consequently, the second contribution of this article is to extend the roles as resource perspective to the music industry, and demonstrate how other facets of creative control – incumbency, role autonomy and/or collaboration - influence innovation and diversity.

New artists *qua* new artists do not contribute more diverse musical fare. Performing artist ‘newness’ in and of itself, then, is not a resource for musical diversity. Furthermore, role autonomy exerts more influence on certain forms of creativity than others. When performing artists have some degree of autonomy over the roles of songwriting and producing, we are more

likely to witness lyrical diversity. Conversely, innovation is more likely when creative control is specialized and vested solely in producers. However, from 2000-2009, this comes at the expense of lyrical diversity. Organizational strategies continue to exert influence on our popular music landscape, and attention to the ways in which creative roles serve as resources (or hindrances) for facilitating innovation and diversity improve the explanatory scope of the production of culture perspective.

One limitation of the present study is the way that innovation is modeled. In reality innovation is a matter of degree; the emergence of some sub-genres may represent a dramatic, germinal departure, while other sub-genres are more alike stylistically (Lena and Peterson, 2008; See also Dowd and Roy, 2010). This is especially the case since the 1980s, when we began witnessing the hybridization of already established musical genres and sub-genres (van Venrooij, 2009), such as rap-metal and ska-punk. Or, two sub-genres may be alike stylistically but core audiences may interpret them as very different; the subcultures surrounding sub-genres also matter for how innovations are interpreted. Given that the *content* of new subgenres varies apart from the form they take, future research would be well served by examinations of intra-genre differences at both the stream- and subgenre level, either through case studies or by analyses of the Billboard year-end genre charts.

The modeling of innovation notwithstanding, analyzing genres or sub-genres within mainstream culture industries provides insight into how genre classification gets taken up by industry personnel for marketing purposes (Hsu, 2006), given that the very mission of culture-producing industries is to generate new products (DiMaggio, 1977). The way innovation is modeled in the present context is informative, then, since it reveals the kinds of collaborative relationships that make innovation in the form of product generation more or less likely. In

addition, the questionable value of sub-genre innovation further highlights the importance of providing multidimensional analyses, and thus, examinations of diversity as well.

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Chapter 2

From CDs to MP3s: Occupational roles and discursive framing of organizational change¹⁰

A 2004 *Billboard* magazine opinion editorial includes the following:

Humpty Dumpty was way ahead of his time when he scolded Alice in Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass."

"When I use a word," he said, "it means just what I choose it to mean--neither more nor less."

In effect, the irascible egghead was illustrating an eternal conundrum posed by the question: "What did he mean by that?"

More often than not, especially in highly contested disputes, both sides attempt to use the Humpty Dumpty rule to their advantage.

Here, the author of the editorial invokes the 'Humpty Dumpty' rule to argue that the U.S. Court of Appeals had appropriately (i.e., narrowly) interpreted the Digital Millennium Copyright Act in a ruling about illegal downloading.¹¹ Conflict over how to control the production and distribution of a new music technology, the MP3, characterized much of the early 2000s. In this particular case, a judge dismissed the recording industry's request to subpoena illegal MP3 file-sharers' identities.

Unlike the judge in this particular ruling, Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty was audacious in his use of language, presuming he could bend meaning to his will and provoke his desired interpretation. In times of uncertainty, organizational actors attempt much the same (Kaplan,

¹⁰ The title of this article riffs on Dowd (2005): "From 78s to MP3s: The Embeddedness of Technology and the U.S. Market for Pre-recorded Music."

¹¹ The author of the op-ed goes on to write, "the court merely stated that the writers of the law did not anticipate the current state of affairs involving illegal file sharing. No matter how much sympathy one might have for copyright holders [i.e., record labels and songwriters] -- and the court appeared to express a great deal of sympathy for them -- laws should not be stretched to fit circumstances they do not address."

2008; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). This article documents such a process to elucidate how discourse is used as a sensemaking tool for understanding organizational change, and the potential disruptions to one's occupational role. The sociologies of work and organizations provide a rich understanding of how occupational roles serve as a beneficial resource. They signal a person's identity as a worker and grant access to cultural, social and economic capital (Baker and Faulkner, 1991). Roles enable stability in contemporary labor markets by providing actors with a set of expectations about how to act (Bechky, 2006). And they serve as a means by which status is arrayed across the organizational field (Podolny, 1993). But what happens when the value and authority of occupational roles is contested? This is particularly likely during organizational change, when incumbent role-holders contend with technological interventions that are not of their making (Barley, 1986). During such moments, incumbents confront new business models and areas of expertise. Unless they can incorporate exogenous technological change, they risk role devaluation, or being displaced by a series of new occupational roles (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006).

Using the case of the music industry's transition to digital production, this article examines how organizational actors use discursive framing, and in particular, analogies and metaphors, to assess the state of the industry and make sense of their place within the changing landscape. This research focus is important for two reasons. First, we know little about what happens to occupational role-holders when they are at risk of being devalued (Adams, 2003; Chreim, Williams and Hinings, 2007; Floyd and Lane, 2000). The jurisdictional challenges confronted by professions such as accounting, medicine, and law are well known (Abbott, 1988; Friedson, 1986; Larson, 1977; Lawrence, 2004), however less focus has been accorded to non-professional occupations, where the absence of formal credentials leaves contests over

occupational roles more accessible to challengers. Second, while much scholarship has been devoted to understanding ecological and market influences on organizational change, less attention has been paid to the cultural work (i.e., discursive framing) that goes into negotiating change (McDonnell and Tepper, 2014; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006).

Through interviews with record label personnel, as well as discourse and content analysis of *Billboard* magazine, I find that the use of discursive framing is patterned; those occupational roles classified as incumbent pursue analogies and metaphors that reinforce the exploitation of institutionalized business models, at the expense of pursuing more innovative interpretations of change that are in their long-term interest. By contrast, new entrants more often use analogies and metaphors that promote exploratory organizational change (March, 1991). As such, the discursive frames reflect the occupational roles of their users, and the very roles that incumbents seek to protect act as a liability by constraining interpretations that would lead to more innovative solutions to technological change.

In what follows, I discuss the importance of occupational roles and discursive frames for our understanding of organizational change. I then outline the threats posed by MP3 technology to occupational roles in the music industry. The next section describes my methodological approach to analyzing analogical and metaphorical frames in *Billboard*, and provides information on my interviews with music industry personnel. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the most common analogical frames uncovered, ‘past formats,’ ‘other industries,’ and ‘food service.’ I conclude by arguing that a focus on occupational roles, and in particular, the constraints they pose, explains why exploitative or exploratory searches for solutions to organizational change are pursued.

Occupational roles and discursive framing

Occupational roles are social abstractions used to define and classify domains of work and all they entail, such as tasks and behavioural expectations (Floyd and Lane, 2000). A number of studies demonstrate how occupational roles can be used to positively affect organizational change. Occupational roles carry status, which grants access to membership in a desired community (Barley & Kunda, 2004; Goodrick and Reay, 2010; Jones, 2002; Kanter, 1977). Such status can be converted into the social, cultural and financial capital necessary to further artistic and financial goals (Bourdieu 1993; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987). In their work on the Hollywood film industry, Baker and Faulkner (1991) find that with the success of blockbuster films such as *The Godfather* and *Jaws*, the role of producer became increasingly specialized while those of director and screenwriter were consolidated. Because these occupational roles were associated with the success of early blockbusters, they became increasingly valued and prestigious, and served as engines for future change.

Baker and Faulkner's research underscores a key tension involving occupational roles: they can change, and the patterns they take have implications for one's status and domain of jurisdictional control (Zuckerman & Kim, 2003; Zuckerman et al., 2003). While their study focuses on the conditions under which roles can be acted upon to influence organizational change, the music industry's shift to digital production is a case where the occupational roles of incumbents -- major and indie record label executives, retailers, and association personnel -- confronted a technological change that was not of their volition. Although incumbents have a vested interest in maintaining their occupational roles, this is difficult during times of change because the very configuration of the organizational field, including institutionalized roles and practices, is called into question (Stark, 2009).

In order to make sense of organizational fields that are in flux, individuals must “tame their world cognitively” (Fine and Christoforides, 1991: 387); discursive framing is a key mechanism through which cognitive understanding is accomplished (Kaplan, 2008; Oakes et al., 1998; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). As a form of discursive framing, analogies and metaphors enable sensemaking, the process by which individuals confer meaning on their social environment¹². And they enable sensegiving, whereby interpretations of change are articulated verbally, and used as a tactic to assert self-interest and induce cooperation in others (Fligstein, 2001; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld, 2005). Analogical and metaphorical framing is especially advantageous during times of organizational upheaval because it alleviates uncertainty (Cornelissen, Holt and Zundel, 2011; Gioia, 1986; Hirsch, 1986; Leblebici et al., 1991). By referring to familiar domains, analogies and metaphors minimize the ambiguity introduced by change and “provide a bridge between the familiar and the strange” (Gioia et al., 1994: 365). In other words, if perceived as logical, analogies and metaphors legitimate courses of action (Douglas, 1986). They therefore serve as a powerful way for organizational actors to reinforce their vision of the changing organizational field and by extension, their role within it.

Two noteworthy studies analyze how occupational members use metaphorical and analogical framing to defend or justify their roles. Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) examine efforts to legitimate a multidisciplinary partnership that merged accounting and legal duties, and along with it, a new series of occupational role competencies. Proponents of the new

¹² Both analogies and metaphors are statements of similarities between two domains (Cornelissen, Holt and Zundel, 2011). In the context of organizational change, analogies typically refer to past events, technologies, or other industries. For example, music industry personnel often relied on analogies linked to past musical format transitions, such as the cassette tape, or other industries, such as the supermarket industry, to make sense of change. Metaphors, more figurative in nature, refer to other domains in a broad sense in order to characterize the nature of change. Examples include referring to issues surrounding the new MP3 technology as warfare, or a marathon.

organizational form relied on metaphors to downplay the uncertainty associated with shifts on occupational competencies. And in his ethnography of restaurant kitchens, Fine (1996) argues that analogical framing is vital in helping workers define and justify their professional role. He outlines four different kinds of analogizing: professional, artistic, business, and labor. Each served as a rhetorical strategy that was deployed depending on the situational context (e.g., artistic rhetoric was most often used in situations that demanded a degree of creativity). Referring to analogous domains allowed cooks to convey their competency, justify their legitimacy, and assert their authority.

The latter studies emphasize the way that discourse is pursued advantageously by organizational actors. But importantly, discursive framing, and the use of analogies and metaphors by extension, is constrained by individuals' ability to interpret the change they are experiencing. Frames are encoded with career histories, project experience, and the prevailing technological paradigm more broadly (Kaplan, 2008: 738). Even when an organization's capabilities are poised to enable innovation, shared discursive logics can interrupt change by narrowing the search for solutions (Tripsas and Gavetti, 2000). I offset recent work on the beneficial use of discourse by focussing on the role of occupational membership. My analysis demonstrates that occupational roles filter the use of analogies and metaphors by reinforcing pre-existing competencies and the business models they comprise. In particular, the roles of 'incumbent' and 'new entrant' act as a master status that influences sensemaking and sensegiving of MP3 technology and its place in the music industry. A focus on the discursive constraints posed by occupational membership, in turn, elucidates the conditions under which actors pursue exploitative versus exploratory solutions to organizational change.

Data and Methods

I study the North American recording industry, from the late 1990s to the late 2000s. Throughout this time, CDs were being displaced by digital MP3s as the primary product released to market. This necessitated new strategies for production, distribution, promotion, and marketing. Such disruption of the status quo in times of change calls taken for granted assumptions into question, as organizational role-holders seek new ways of making sense of change, and new ways of asserting control (Kaplan, 2008).

I examine the content of *Billboard* magazine, the North American music industry's trade publication, from 1995 to 2009. As an authoritative source of information, *Billboard* provides industry personnel with a popular reading of the music industry that they can interpret, and in turn reflect back into industry-wide discourse (see White, 2000). In addition to news reports on events relevant to the music industry, *Billboard* features interviews with industry executives and opinion editorials from industry personnel, making it an important source for insight into how strategies are framed by key industry personnel to other key industry personnel (e.g. Anand, 2006; Dowd, 2004, 2005). I also undertook in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 21 individuals who occupied influential roles in the North American music industry throughout the transition to digitalization.

The first phase of data analysis involved using data aggregator Factiva to isolate all *Billboard* articles relevant to the transition from CDs to MP3s¹³. Once duplicate articles were removed, the combined set of search terms yielded approximately 3200 articles. The research project was guided by the general question of how organizational role-holders in the music

¹³ The following Boolean search terms were used: MP3/digital/Napster/Peer/File sharing/Download/iTunes. In order to ensure that all pertinent opinion editorials and interviews were included in the dataset, the latter search terms were cross referenced with articles derived from the following search terms: 'Q&A'/'Six Questions' (two regular columns that featured interviews with industry personnel)/Commentary/Opinion/Editorial.

industry adapted and made sense of technological change wrought by the introduction of the MP3. As there were no preconceived theoretical suppositions guiding the analysis, a grounded theoretical approach was employed (Charmaz, 2006; Martin & Turner, 1986). Each article included in the dataset was closely read multiple times in order to inductively identify all interpretive mechanisms relevant to the emergence of MP3 technology. This inductive reading revealed that analogies and metaphors were influential in actors' attempt to assert their role and defend their jurisdiction in the changing landscape.

Upon completing the discourse analysis, I interviewed individuals who work or previously worked in the music industry in the early- to mid-2000s both to highlight multiple perspectives on the shift to digitalization, and to corroborate what I had found in the pages of *Billboard*. The primary selection criterion was that each interviewee occupied a position of decision-making power in the early 2000s to ensure they were present at meetings in which strategies of how to handle MP3 technology were discussed. Interviewees were solicited in several ways. First, I reached out to several executives at major and independent record labels that I knew personally from my time employed in the music industry in the mid-2000s (N=11). Second, these respondents were asked to forward my contact information to others who might be willing to speak with me (N=5). Third, I contacted individuals whose names appeared frequently in the *Billboard* article dataset, either as they were reported on in news stories, or featured in interviews and op-eds (N=5). Interviewees include current and former presidents of major and independent record labels, marketing and legal executives, A&R directors, individuals who worked in digital media upstarts, as well as two music journalists.¹⁴ All interviewees work or

¹⁴ The interviewees stemming from my search for names in *Billboard* had opinions on the emergence of MP3 technology sufficiently strong to merit coverage and/or the desire to write an op-ed. At the same time, interviewees solicited as a result of my personal connections (and the connections of my connections) were not necessarily passionate about MP3 emergence. Some respondents were ambivalent about the topic. As such, my sample consists

worked in Canada or the United States. In order to ensure anonymity, gender, name of employer, and other identifying information is not reported. Interviews were conducted in person or via telephone. They lasted from 20 to 90 minutes, and on average took one hour. Interviews were open-ended and semi-structured, and included questions about when respondents were first introduced to the idea of digital downloading, what their initial response was, how digital downloading was talked about in meetings, and initial strategies for dealing with digital downloading. Because the discourse analysis revealed the prevalence of analogies and metaphors as a sensemaking mechanism used by industry personnel, I also asked respondents about their use of and familiarity with analogies and metaphors throughout the transition to digital. More often than not, the topic came up unsolicited. The interviews thus provided valuable first-person perspectives on how digitalization was perceived and experienced, and contextualized the use of analogies and metaphors in the pages of *Billboard*.

The next phase of research consisted of a content analysis to formally document the prevalence of analogies and metaphors in *Billboard*. Procedure for identification is based on Kimmel (2012). Because the use of analogy and metaphor is ubiquitous (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) -- both in our everyday lives and in the pages of *Billboard* -- I delimit my target domain of interest to analogies and metaphors that assess the MP3 format, the format's distribution, and the changing organizational landscape. This includes analogies and metaphors that define what the new MP3 format is, how it should be disseminated, as well as the format's effect on jurisdictional control. I documented 122 analogies and metaphors in total. For each instance, I noted the year in which it occurred, as well as the occupational role of the author/speaker

of industry personnel who were passionate as well as those who were less passionate, and reflects a range of perspectives.

(sometimes the analogy or metaphor is attributed to someone being interviewed in an article, and other times it is attributed to the author of an op-ed).

Organizational role-holders represented in the study include journalists and editors (N=40), new media technologists (N=28), major labels executives (N=24), musicians (N=5), analysts (N=5), retailers (N=4), lawyers (N=4), professional association personnel (N=4), managers (N=2), independent label personnel (N=2), television executives (N=2) as well as one politician, and one consultant. The diversity of role-holders captures a range of interpretations of the change being experienced, and hence a wide range of analogies and metaphors through which they are asserted. To contextualize the use of discursive frames, I coded for whether the analogy or metaphor was being used to argue in favour of maintaining the status quo through pursuing no change, or only exploitative (incremental) change, or whether the analogy or metaphor was being used to argue in favour of pursuing exploratory (substitutive) change.

Analogies and metaphors were next grouped based on conceptual similarity (e.g., metaphors relating the changing landscape to war or disaster were grouped together, as were metaphors relating the changing landscape to death or illness). This was an iterative process that resulted in 19 parsimonious themes. The analysis is limited to analogies and metaphors occurring between 1995 and 2009.

From CDs to MP3s

The music industry is a “hot,” in-demand labor market characterized by uncertainty, where the supply of industry aspirants outweighs the demand (Frenette, 2013; Menger, 1999; Neff, Wissinger, and Zukin, 2005). Job security hinges on the ability to produce, market, and distribute musical hits. Unlike professions where the credentials needed to gain entry are explicit (Abbott,

1988), hit-making is an abstract job qualification that is a combination of personal taste, network embeddedness, and luck (Bielby and Bielby, 1994; Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). For this reason, occupational identity among music industry incumbents – those who have successfully forged a career -- is particularly strong. The music industry is replete with stories about “cults of personalities” that dominate record label culture (Dannen, 1991; Rossman, 2012). A vibrant organizational culture adds to the status and allure of being in the music business.

In 1999, Napster heralded the arrival of the MP3. At this time, the very interpretation of the MP3 as a new technology and by extension, ownership and distribution, was up for grabs (Dowd, 2005). Two interpretations of the new musical form dominated industry discourse. On the one hand, music was conceptualized as a product to be *owned*, where the MP3 represented a minor transition in a long line of format changes that the industry had always endured. The only difference was that distribution would move to online music service providers (i.e., iTunes). On the other hand, music was conceptualized as something to be *accessed*. This interpretation was a radical departure from how music had been perceived historically. The MP3 was envisioned as a utility with a monthly fee or something to be rented, but not owned outright (i.e., what eventually became known as streaming services, such as Spotify, Pandora, Tidal, etc.).

Interpreting music as a product to be owned corresponds to exploitative organizational change, where individuals understand new phenomena with pre-existing cognitive frames that reinforce extant competencies. The offshoot of such an exploitative search for solutions is that the core activities of the music business remain intact. Interpreting music as something to be accessed corresponds to exploratory organizational change, where new entrants (and forward-thinking incumbents) explore new solutions to change, and core stakeholders and activities risk being supplanted (Cornelissen, Holt and Zundel, 2011; March, 1991). While the ownership

model introduced new players such as iTunes, they operated in much the same way as traditional retailers. The model of MP3 ownership thus harmed incumbents the least, insofar as their role as owners and distributors of music would continue in much the same way it always had. By contrast, the access model challenged institutionalized understandings of ownership and control, and by extension, the occupational role of incumbents. The access model would require new royalty rates to be negotiated, and it would also help to legitimate a new occupational role within the music industry, that of streaming service provider.

Occupational role change occurs both quantitatively, by the addition or subtraction of duties and rights, or by a gain or loss in status, and it occurs qualitatively, through a change in the salience of jurisdictional tasks, or a reinterpretation of the meaning and value of certain tasks (Turner, 1990: 88). The change introduced by the access model in particular resulted in both quantitative and qualitative threats to industry personnel. They were faced with a quantitative decline in financial wellbeing; the sale of MP3s would net less profit, and streaming music via the access model, lesser still. Additionally, the smaller profit margins of the access model would result in qualitative shifts in jurisdictional control and occupational tasks (Abbott, 1988; Adams, 2004). Sales representatives and executives could no longer measure the value of their role in terms of units of music sold to bricks and mortar retailers. With less money to invest in marketing and A&R, such role-holders could not as easily justify the value they added to the production, marketing, and distribution of music. Streaming services could conduct business directly with artists and bands, setting their own royalty payment rates, and disintermediating major label distributors. Lastly, because the access business model is premised on the volume of subscription rates rather than the sale of a particular artist, streaming services are less concerned with promoting individual artists, rendering the job of public relations personnel much more

difficult. In sum, through a range of both qualitative and quantitative changes, incumbent industry roles were confronted with devaluation.

The strong affiliation with one's occupational role has made reconciling the nature of technological change both crucial and more difficult for incumbents. Reflecting on initial reactions to the emergence of the MP3 and what it would mean for one's professional identity, one former executive relates the following:

It [the music industry] has [a] very deep, broad, ancient culture. And people consider themselves to be "record men" or "record women" -- record in the generic sense of the term, not the disc sense. Like, we're different. It's our own world and we are the only ones who speak this language.

The thought of technologists entering the field and challenging their occupational domain was both baffling and unimaginable. Equally baffling was coming to terms with the intangibility of the new music format and what it would mean for one's role in the industry. A major label president reflected:

For master owners [i.e., record labels] it's always been about a nice set royalty; we understood exactly what we were selling -- it was a physical piece. Now you have to get your head around, 'what is the consumer actually buying?' and 'what's the role of iTunes?' Are they extending their licence to a consumer? You know, what are they actually selling? And what are we selling? Are we selling access to music? Are we selling a file? That was the starting place we're trying to figure out.

While incumbent role-holders would be least threatened by the MP3-as-ownership model of business, there was an imperative to move beyond past ways of defining institutionalized roles of 'retailer' and 'label executive'. The very possibility of the access model meant that new ways of conceptualizing music were on the horizon. Major labels recognized this; in the early 2000s several firms launched subscription services. However, these services were widely criticized for their lack of usability and musical content (Taylor, 2002). A 2006 lawsuit aimed at major record companies even argued that the subscription services were meant to be intentionally "frustrating

and ineffectual services to head off viable online music competitors from forming and gaining popularity” (Butler, 2006). The labels invested comparatively little effort in launching streaming models, and their subscription services were shuttered within several years (Harvey, 2014). This disinterest in engaging with the access model interpretation of digital music is reflected in incumbents’ discursive framing in the pages of *Billboard*.

Occupational role as motivation and liability

In charting how occupational role-holders perceive the emergence of the MP3, the data reveal a tension in the way that discursive framing, through the use of analogies and metaphors, was deployed. Figure 1 presents the frequency of analogies and metaphors by theme.

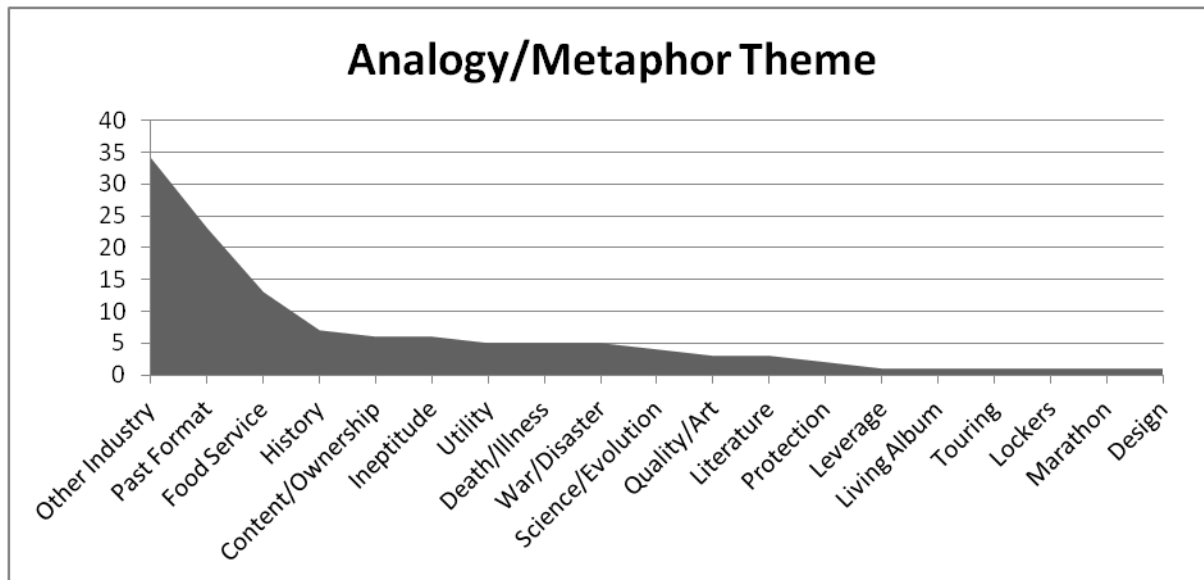


Figure 1. Frequency of metaphors and analogies by theme

The long tail demonstrates considerable variation, where many different metaphors and analogies were deployed infrequently, while few analogies gained popularity. Only three themes had a frequency greater than 10%: ‘past formats,’ (19%) ‘other industries,’ (28%) and ‘food service.’ (11%). Beyond these three themes, less popular metaphors and analogies include references to scientific and evolutionary change, and conceptualizations of the MP3 as a utility such as water or electricity. The wide array of themes suggests that analogical and metaphorical framing was an effective way to interpret the MP3, and by extension, one’s role in administering the new technology. In this way, discursive framing is a sensemaking and sensegiving resource that aids in justifying occupational roles in a changing organizational landscape (Cornelissen et al., 2011; Fine, 1996; Hirsch, 1986; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005).

At the same time, the same analogies and metaphors were used to reinforce opposing conceptualizations. Table 1 presents a list of the authors/speakers of analogies and metaphors by occupational role, and whether role-holders’ discourse reinforced exploitative or exploratory change. The table omits participant observer role-holders such as journalists and analysts who

had no obvious stake in the outcome of MP3-use, and who primarily used analogies and metaphors in a neutral manner¹⁵.

Table 1. Type of Analogical/Metaphorical Framing by Occupational Role

	Framing in favor of exploitative change	Framing in favor of exploratory change	Neutral	Total
INCUMBENT				
Major Label Executive	11	8	6	25
	48%	21%	67%	36%
Manager	2	0	0	2
	9%	0	0	3%
Association personnel	3	1	0	4
	13%	3%	0	6%
Musician-Producer	1	4	0	5
	4%	11%	0	7%
Indie label personnel	1	0	1	2
	4%	0	11%	3%
Retailer	3	0	1	4
	13%	0	11%	6%
Total	91%	34%	89%	
NEW ENTRANT				
Technologists	2	25	1	28
Total	9%	66%	11%	
Overall Total	23	38	9	70

Fisher's exact = 0.00

Among those analogies and metaphors that allude to no organizational change, or exploitative change (i.e., suggesting that majors revamp the pre-existing CD format, or proposing

¹⁵ Role-holders who can be unambiguously classified as incumbents (individuals who have worked in the music industry for many years) are: major label personnel, managers, association personnel (e.g. representative from the Recording Industry Association of America), musicians/producers, indie label personnel, and retailers. Role-holders classified as new entrants include technologists associated with new media and digital ventures, such as iTunes, Rhapsody, and MP3.com. The analysis in Table 1 omits the following speakers, since it could not clearly be ascertained whether they were new or incumbent: journalists, analysts, lawyers, television executives, as well as one politician, and one consultant. Thus, of the 122 analogies and metaphors uncovered in the analysis, 70 are included in Table 1.

online distribution), 91% were attributed to incumbent role-holders such as major label executives, association personnel, and retailers. By contrast, among those analogies and metaphors alluding to exploratory change (i.e., by promoting streaming services), 68% were spoken by technologists seeking entry to the music industry. Not all analogies were deployed in order to stake a claim on a new or established way of distributing music; some analogies provided neutral commentary, and were coded as such.

The patterned use of analogies and metaphors suggests that “incumbent” and “new entrant” act as master occupational role statuses that guide interpretations. Incumbents more often deployed analogies that reinforce existing ways of doing business instead of innovative interpretations that would lead to long term stability. As a tool of sensemaking and sensegiving, discursive framing is contingent on one’s experiences and position in the organizational field, which is to say, one’s occupational role (Floyd and Lane, 2000). In this case, the very role that incumbents sought to defend acted as a liability by circumscribing the ability to make sense of change. This can be best unpacked through an examination of the most common analogical themes: ‘past formats,’ ‘other industries,’ and ‘food service.’

Past format analogue

Early efforts to grasp the nature of change introduced by the MP3 refer to past musical formats. Here, analogies rendered the new technology as similar in kind to what the music industry confronted in the past. The MP3 was conceptualized as an additive change rather than a transformative one by incumbents. The solution for incorporating the new format was to be found in how the music industry had previously adapted. Recalling their initial thoughts on MP3s, one former major label VP mentioned that,

I used to say as a mantra to my president who I reported directly to, I used to say, “these are just like CDs. I wasn’t here when cassettes came along. Then you switched from an LP record to an analogue cassette to CD. But CD is digital. It’s digital, it’s just a new format and you guys understand new formats. Well, this [the MP3] is just a new format and there’s a business model around it, and there’s a new format and who better to know how to do everything with it than the people who understand the music industry and that are in this building?”

Likewise, in a *Billboard* interview Val Azzoli, co-chairman and CEO for Atlantic stated that he sees “the digital download simply as a new format that will reside alongside CD, cassette, and vinyl.” (*Billboard*, 21 August 1999).

In using analogies that draw on past formats, incumbent role-holders imply that the MP3 is just one new product conception in a series of changes that the music industry has handled since its inception (Dowd, 2005). Interpreting the MP3 as an additive progression in format means that the underlying business of the music industry remains the same. Record labels would still be in the business of producing and distributing music to consumers. Under such a conceptualization, the only difference is that distribution would now take place online in addition to the traditional method via bricks-and-mortar retail stores. The boundaries implied in such analogies are clear: business remains the same and incumbents maintain their institutionalized roles.

The past format analogue was also used by those in favour of new distribution methods. In a 2009 op-ed, startup entrepreneur Bill Nguyen made the case that,

Many online entrepreneurs say that information wants to be free. But we can give music fans something better than free—the convenience that will let them discover new music and hear it the way they want to. Just as tapes were more portable than vinyl and CDs sounded better than tapes, the Web can fuel a new cycle of innovation with greater variety, portability and social enjoyment (*Billboard*, 10 January 2009).

New entrants analogizing to past formats in this manner are not suggesting that ownership over the distribution process should remain as it has historically. Instead, references to past formats

signal the natural evolution of the industry toward increasing portability and convenience for consumers -- something to be provided by new business models. In another op-ed, the authors refer to past formats in order to argue that the new value proposition offered by the music industry should be providing access to music, rather than ownership. This implies a radically different distribution mechanism and consequently, a relinquishing of entrenched organizational routines:

Through the years, people have purchased music in myriad physical formats, from LPs to 8-tracks to cassettes to CDs—a never-ending musical upgrade cycle. Is this a good thing for the consumer? Is it the best path for the industry to pursue in the digital era? (Gerd Leonhard and Dave Kusek, *Billboard* 16 April 2005)

Not surprisingly, the editorial makes the argument that previous cycles of format transitions were indeed not in the best interest of consumers.

In sum, the past format analogue reflected two oppositional perspectives on how the MP3 should be handled. On one hand, it reflected a routine search for a solution, wherein MP3 technology represented a continuation of institutionalized business models. On the other hand, it suggested that the “endless cycle” of format transition has no place in the digital era. Such dissensus represents two conflicting viewpoints on the nature of change being confronted in the digital era, and consequently, over the envisioned roles of incumbents versus new entrants.

Other industries analogue

In the second source of analogical framing, the scope of interpretation encompassed learning from entire industries. As with the past format analogue, invoking learning from other industries often implied a routine approach to change that required little intervention on the part of incumbents. Analogous market contexts discussed by label personnel in the pages of *Billboard*

included, among others, professional basketball (investing in a “player,” in this case a new product technology, provides long term payoff at the cost of short term pain), and the supermarket industry:

“I like analogies,” says Strauss Zelnick, president/CEO of BMG Entertainment. “So let's look at a supermarket analogy: There are times when people can get a jar of peanut butter for 10 cents for a short time as part of a special promotion. Now, when that price goes back up, will people say, ‘Well, I only paid 10 cents before so now I won't pay this price. Therefore, I won't ever eat peanut butter again?’ Of course not. And I think the same thing will hold true when we create a legitimate music market.” – (*Billboard*, 18 November 2000)

This analogy suggests a laissez-faire approach to confronting change. According to the latter incumbent, the problems associated with MP3 technology will naturally wane once online distribution becomes commonplace.

Incumbent role-holders such as major label personnel, and new entrants such as digital service providers both rendered the MP3 format as analogous to other industries, but they did so in different ways. When invoked by incumbents, the comparisons to other fields minimized the potential introduction of new occupational tasks. A journalist summarizes the sentiments of one major label executive in the following passage:

The labels essentially do not want to be in the rental business. “The closer the subscription [rental] models get to the downloading model without moving in terms of value, the more problem I have with it,” one high-ranking major-label executive says. (*Billboard*, 1 May 2004)

In another example, the CEO of Tommy Boy Records makes an argument about the need to introduce a new high quality *physical* format to cater to audiophiles:

Is all wine priced at \$20? Someone might order a \$20 bottle of wine while someone else prefers the \$100 bottle. Some people buy hardcovers; some buy paperbacks. There is Dunkin' Donuts and Starbucks, the Gap and Gucci. We need a product for the high-end consumer that will be aspirational for the low-end, price/convenience consumers who are the majority of shoppers. (*Billboard*, 28 July 2007)

By his reckoning, such a format would also serve as an aspirational product for the masses. In such narratives, references to other industries reinforce traditional ways of doing business. In the former example, the executive is expressing his reticence to alter distribution models (from ownership to renting/accessing) to accommodate the new format. In the latter example, another industry is invoked to illustrate how the incumbent players should double back and introduce a new physical product to remain competitive.

On the other hand, when spoken by new entrants, the other industries analogue signaled how different the MP3 format was, as well as the need to reconceptualize how business is conducted. This is exemplified by the following comparison by a new media firm CEO when he analogizes to the computer software industry:

Many in the MP3 community compare the current state of music downloading with what occurred in the computer software industry in the late '80s and early '90s. "Seven years ago if you wanted a piece of software you had to go to a software store," says Robertson. "Now you can get it over the Internet for free. These companies still want your business; they show you advertisements or whatever. The same model can work for the music industry. You give users the CD, and maybe they'll buy a concert ticket, merchandise, etc." (*Billboard*, 18 July 1998)

When referring to the infrastructure needed to support the MP3, one executive at an online company argued, "It's as different as cable television was from movie theaters." (*Billboard*, 13 October 2001). The new entrant is suggesting that, as with the emergence of cable television, a new set of organizational competencies is necessary to usher in the new digital format. In both examples, new entrants imply that established ways of defining occupational roles, in terms of the expertise that is required, should be upended.

As with the past format analogue, comparisons to other industries represent two conflicting perspectives on how the transition to digital should be navigated, and by whom. Many incumbents employed discourse that affirmed entrenched occupational roles by downplaying the scale of change, and how it would interfere with their business. By contrast, the

discourse of new entrants implied that the change wrought by the MP3 was substantial, and required new business competencies best provided by new players.

MP3 as food service analogue

Another way that industry personnel interpreted the MP3 format was by using food as an analogy. More precisely, the service mechanisms associated with eating out were carried into the digital domain: à la carte versus an ‘all you can eat’ buffet.¹⁶ Food is a particularly powerful metaphor as it is something that is tangible, yet laden with meaning and affectation (Gusfield, 1992; Johnston and Baumann, 2015). Here, the delivery of the MP3 comes inextricably tied into the format itself. Consuming MP3s à la carte invokes the idea of ordering a song or group of songs at one sitting and paying for each item ordered on an individual, use-by-use basis. On the other hand, consuming an all you can eat buffet means paying a set rate and having unlimited access to songs for a predetermined amount of time. Within that time frame, consumers are free to binge on as much music as they want. But once the allotted time is up, access to consumption is cut off (or, the hope was, consumers would subscribe and re-pay on an ongoing basis).

The à la carte method of delivery, whereby MP3s would be purchased on an individual basis, reflected the ownership model of the MP3 and was employed most often by incumbents. One major label executive in the pages of *Billboard* promoted the à la carte method in the following way:

I'm actually very bullish on the evolution of the à la carte singles market. It appeals to a different segment of buyers. Some people are going to want an all-you-can-eat subscription model, but radio and pop music are very singles-driven, and people are going to want to buy it that way (*Billboard*, 19 April 2003)

¹⁶ While technically food service is referencing another industry and fits within the ‘other industries analogue,’ the food service theme merits its own category. The use of this analogy did not include analysis of the food service industry as a whole (i.e., by analyzing its historical ability to adapt to change). Instead, the competing methods of serving food -- a la carte vs. buffet -- were referenced in narrow terms.

The majority of new entrants favoured the ‘all you can eat’ method of musical consumption, whereby consumers would subscribe to a digital music provider service and pay monthly fees. Whereas songwriters and record labels receive royalties from the sale of each album with the ownership model of delivery, under the buffet style of consuming music, new royalty rates more favorable to streaming services would be negotiated. The fear was that key stakeholders would earn significantly less from monthly subscription fees than individual purchases. When asked in an interview about how different delivery methods were perceived, one former executive asks:

How do you wrap a financial model around ‘all you can eat’ [model] with unconditional access? One thing we have right now -- like Spotify and Rdio and the new Beats that is coming out and Rhapsody -- those are all conditional ‘all you can eat’ access. You can have it on your device as long as you pay your bill. If you don’t pay your bill you can’t access it. They’re trying to come up with a model which says to people, “you can download everything you want but it’s a monthly cost.” But how do you share that revenue with the publishers, the artists, the labels, everybody in the food chain? So it was hard for everybody to wrap their arms around [the all you can eat model]

At issue, then, was conflict over whether music would continue to be something that could be owned, or whether the industry would move towards providing access to music and forfeiting control over royalties.

Some new entrants promoted à la carte purchasing as a transitional format mechanism for music delivery; something to help consumers transition towards the new way of paying for access. As stated by one new entrant working at Rhapsody, a music streaming service:

A: Subscription and a la carte are different metaphors, and what we've found is that the best products have really simple metaphors. When you try to blur the two metaphors, it's confusing. You don't have 100% of the catalog available for both rights. Rhapsody is closing in on 600,000 tracks available; the music store has 500,000 tracks. If you don't have consistent rights, you have to explain to the user what they can do with the content.

Q: What is the relationship between downloads and subscription offerings?

A: Using our store as an on-ramp to subscriptions is working even better than we expected. You go in a context that you're buying tracks for a dollar, then you're giving people the opportunity to try Rhapsody from seven to 14 days depending on the promotion, and the conversion rate on that is terrific. These are active music users, and of course, with Rhapsody, if you like songs you can still buy them and we give you a club discount. So the formula is working, the mix is working.” (*Billboard*, 17 April 2004)

Here, the speaker is acknowledging the work that analogical framing does to clarify different interpretations of change, and consequently, different ways of mapping control over digital music. He acknowledges the use of the à la carte business model as a way to entice consumers to a new way of consuming music (i.e., to the subscription/buffet business model). Other new entrants took a more assertive stance in projecting what it was that consumers want out of the new digital product conception (and incidentally, how they would benefit):

“Robertson [head of the MP3.com upstart] used the address to hammer home his argument that the old methods of making money from music--selling individual items--will not work in the new environment, and that companies must think about services, not products. “People are not buying things for \$2 each on the Internet,” he said in reference to plans by labels to sell singles as downloads. “”What they will [pay for] is ‘all-you-can-eat’ buffets for \$5, for \$10, for \$20.”” (*Billboard*, 24 June 2000)

Framing consumption as a buffet was a provocative way to entice consumers over to a new way of delivering music, especially in the context of the United States where buffets and the idea of getting ‘value for money’ are widespread. As with the latter two themes, past formats and other industries, analogizing MP3s as akin to food service represents two conflicting approaches to change and control over the MP3. On the one hand, proponents of continued ownership of music (incumbents and a minority of new entrants such as Steve Jobs) more often framed MP3 consumption as ‘à la carte,’ whereby consumers choose what they want to purchase from a list of offerings. On the other hand, those in favour of models providing access to music (“streaming” entrepreneur new entrants) framed delivery service as an ‘all you can eat buffet,’ whereby a

rental fee provides unlimited right of entry to gorge on as much music as one wishes to consume. Once again we see the same analogy used to affirm different interpretations of the change being confronted depending on one's occupational role. While the defense of occupational roles was not always intentionally pursued, it was nevertheless often the outcome when analogical and metaphorical frames were used by incumbents to assess the nature of technological change more broadly.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides an in depth analysis of how music industry personnel interpreted the introduction of MP3 technology. It improves our understanding of discourse and organizational change through its attention to occupational roles, an underserved research focus in organizational theorizing (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Bechky, 2011). More specifically, it highlights the patterned use of analogies and metaphors in sensemaking and sensegiving efforts on the basis of occupational membership, and how this relationship informs the searches for solutions to change that are pursued.

In the case of the music industry, analogies and metaphors reflect the positions of their users, such that incumbents' analogical and metaphorical frames reinforce institutionalized roles and practices from which they already benefit. And the analogies and metaphors used by new entrants reflect their interest in overhauling reigning business models in order to gain entry into the world of "record men" and "record women." In addition, the relationship between occupational roles and discourse is iterative; because the discursive frames used in *Billboard* provide dominant interpretations to the industry as a whole, they also inform descriptive and prescriptive understandings about occupational roles under digitalization more broadly. Competitors may disagree with a chosen analogical frame, however once analogies are circulated

through public discourse they must nevertheless be acknowledged, if only to be refuted. For example, many disagreed with the conceptualization of MP3 music delivery as an ‘all you can eat’ buffet. But once popularized this analogy became something that had to be disputed. At the same time, the marked differences between à la carte and buffet analogies made it easier to stake claims in the changing organizational landscape by providing a baseline against which competing perspectives could be debated. Dissensus regarding the use of analogies and metaphors thus serves as a way to symbolically assert one’s occupational primacy.

Recent scholarship on organizational change emphasizes the beneficial use of discourse. In moments of change, discourse has been found to benefit the reconstruction (Chreim et al., 2007; Greenwood et al., 2002) and legitimation (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Goodrick and Reay, 2010; Reay et al., 2006) of professional role identities, the defense of old (Desai, 2011) and new (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2006) occupational practices following disruptions, and organizational restructuring (Hardy et al., 2000) and policy change (Kemp et al., 2010).

Along with literature on institutional entrepreneurship (e.g., Garud et al, 2007; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence and Phillips, 2004; Maguire et al., 2004), such studies highlight the strategic use of discourse as a corrective to the wealth of research on how institutions shape the behaviour of organizations and the people within them (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

While it is important to theorize both the strategic and habitual properties at play in organizations, one need not take place to the exclusion of the other. Organizational actors are limited by their past experiences, their role within the field, and the way that these factors shape interpretations of change (Fligstein, 2001; Kaplan, 2008; Levinthal and March, 1993). The present analysis makes no claims with regard to whether the use of discourse by incumbents and

new entrants is more strategic or habitual. In line with previous research, it assumes the use of analogical and metaphorical frames is both; even when analogies and metaphors are pursued strategically, such framing is affected by one's ability to interpret organizational change (Gavetti, Levinthal & Rivkin, 2005; Weick and Quinn, 1999).

More to the point, focussing solely on the beneficial outcomes of discourse does little to improve our understanding of how discursive framing impedes organizational learning (Tourish and Hargie, 2012). Nor does it offer a comprehensive account of how the use of discourse more generally works to delegitimize certain groups and courses of action (Bechky, 2003; McDonnell and Tepper, 2014). By contrast, examining the discursive constraints posed by occupational membership, irrespective of whether such discourse arises strategically or habitually, elucidates the conditions under which plans for exploitative or exploratory solutions to change are pursued.

Investing more effort in exploitative searches for solutions rather than in exploratory searches may be beneficial in the short term, but it can harm organizations in the long term (March, 1991). This is precisely what occurred in the music industry. While major labels engaged in exploratory searches for solutions by launching access models early on, they invested comparatively fewer resources in this pursuit and deserted it quickly. By contrast, more effort was dedicated to pursuing ownership models, or revamping the pre-existing CD format. By abandoning the pursuit of access models early on, incumbents have left themselves in an unfavorable position in the long term; the popularity of the streaming model continues and is predicted to supplant the ownership of music. But streaming services are controlled by new entrants to the music industry, with incumbents having largely disintermediated themselves from the process.

The trade-off between exploitative and exploratory searches for solutions is reflected in industry personnel's framing of the transition to digital production and distribution.

Analogies put forth by incumbent role-holders are rooted in the familiar, reflecting a search for organizational change in which actors rely on existing business models, and entrenched ways of thinking about such business models. This is apparent when incumbents pursued analogies that likened current change to that experienced with past shifts in product formats, or by making comparisons to other industries that have also successfully confronted technological change.

The analogies themselves are ones that are made routinely in organizational settings and the analogies refer to solutions that are routine (Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010). New entrants use analogies that refer to novel contexts, suggesting an exploratory search for change. For example, those who stood to profit through new modes of distribution acknowledged the need for deep-seated change by equating the changes confronting the music industry with those of the computer software industry a decade earlier. The analogies refer to innovative business models that would upend the status quo in the music industry. The nexus of analogical and metaphorical framing, and occupational roles thus indicates how receptive to change organizational actors are, and whether they prioritize exploratory or exploitative searches for change. It is only by charting the ecology of discursive framing and its use on the basis of occupational membership that we can develop a comprehensive understanding of how moments of organizational change can be harnessed to benefit some and disadvantage others.

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Chapter 3

‘Write a word, get a third’: Managing conflict and rewards in professional songwriting teams

“Everybody loves music and hot dogs but you never want to see how they are made.”
- Tim¹⁷, Nashville

Uncertainty is a constant feature of working environments in cultural industries (Bielby & Bielby, 1994; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Long Lingo & Tepper, 2013). This has especially been the case in the music industry throughout the transition to digitization, which is rendering the profitable CD format technologically obsolete (Dowd, 2006; Leyshon et al., 2005).

Technological obsolescence is not the only change confronting music industry personnel. In addition to declining profits, the onset of illegal downloading and streaming programs that enable consumers to listen to music for free has led to a devaluation of music, at least in financial terms. Of course, music fans still enjoy going to see live performances, but the way that music fans cognize industry output (the creation and production of songs and albums), and what they are willing to pay for songs, has fundamentally changed (Katz, 2010; Sterne, 2012). With digital technologies in the hands of consumers, consumption patterns are changing and the usual business models are breaking down. Although there have been many studies of the music industry (Anand, 2006; de Laat, 2014; Dowd, 2004, 2006; Lena, 2006; Leyshon et al., 2005; Peterson & Anand, 2002), scant research has been done to establish how the industry has changed in recent years, and how these changes have been experienced by workers (Frenette, 2013; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, 2011; Thomson, 2013). In this article I first identify recent changes in the music industry and elucidate how they have affected people making music behind the scenes.

¹⁷ Pseudonyms are used throughout this article to maintain the songwriters’ anonymity.

I focus on a subset of music industry personnel, professional songwriters, to understand how they navigate uncertainty. This research context is an important one since professional songwriters, like many people laboring in cultural industries, work in post-bureaucratic or temporary organizations¹⁸. Because they are less permanent and hierarchical than traditional firms, temporary forms of organizing present a more efficient, flexible, and cost-effective method of production (Barley & Kunda, 2004; Menger, 2006; Parker, 2002; Smith, 2001; Storey, Salaman & Platman, 2005)¹⁹. At the same time, because temporary organizations as systems of production are not institutionalized, they rely heavily on teamwork and clearly defined task allocations to ensure stability over time (Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Bechky, 2006; Cohen & Bailey, 1997)

In the case of songwriters, however, the distribution of tasks varies from one temporary project to the next (See, e.g., Damarin, 2006). As will be further discussed, sometimes the songwriter's task is separated from that of her collaborators (such as when she is tasked with supplying only the lyrics and melody of a song), while other times songwriters collaborate on all aspects of a song. In the case of the former, the isolation of certain tasks prompts jurisdictional conflict. In the case of the latter, songwriters contend with differing levels of team member productivity. Task variability complicates the process by which individual contributions can be tethered to rewards in team settings, and invites conflict.

¹⁸ Given that temporary organizations are an important iteration of post bureaucratic organizing, I use the two terms interchangeably.

¹⁹ While the working conditions of songwriters, like most non-standard working conditions, are temporary and discontinuous they differ from the kind of precarious work that one typically associates with temporary workers (see, e.g., Vosko, 2000; Kalleberg, 2000, 2003, 2009; Kalleberg et al., 2000; Smith, 2001; Williams, 2009). The songwriters I interviewed are relatively successful, and while they may not know when their next payday is coming, they do not live paycheck to paycheck. By contrast, their working conditions are characteristic of those laboring in temporary organizations and project-based teams where the work itself is high status and one's reputation is disproportionately important (Barley & Kunda, 2004; Bechky 2006; Bielby & Bielby, 1999; Kunda, 1992; Kunda et al., 2002; Neff, Wissinger & Zukin, 2005; Zafirau, 2008)

Consequently, I next examine the strategies that songwriters maintain to manage conflict and rewards. On the one hand, songwriters as creative personnel might be relatively ambivalent toward the distribution of rewards owing to their aesthetic disposition and orientation towards the end product of music creation (Bourdieu 1993, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Gilmore, 1993; Regev, 1994). On the other hand, songwriters as a semi-professional occupational group with its own professional association, system of awards distribution, and legal and lobbying representation might be oriented towards defending their professional interests, economic rewards, and jurisdictional monopoly (Abbott, 1988; Adams, 2004; Freidson, 1988; Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981; Wilensky, 1964). I find that songwriters are oriented towards maximizing their professional and economic interests, but they do so in a surprising way. Rather than exacerbate conflict by engaging in defensive tactics, songwriters pursue professional and economic interests by enhancing cooperation. I identify two conventions that songwriters maintain: 1) equal authorship and 2) professional conciliation. Such cooperative conventions not only extend our understanding of how rewards are managed in temporary team settings. They also underscore the mutually constitutive relationship between conflict and cooperation within post-bureaucratic forms of organizing.

In the remainder of the article, I discuss the challenge of task variation and rewards in songwriter team settings, and situate it vis-à-vis the tensions between conflict and cooperation within post-bureaucratic forms of organizing. This is followed by a description of the methods and sample selection process used to solicit respondents. I then describe the state of professional songwriting according to the men and women I interviewed, their experiences of the recent changes to their profession, as well as the conventions relied upon to navigate conflict and the

distribution of rewards in team settings. I conclude with a discussion of the significance of my findings for research on post-bureaucratic work settings more broadly.

Team setting tasks and rewards, and post-bureaucratic forms of organizing

While teamwork is important in all working environments, it is especially significant in post-bureaucratic forms of organizing. Unlike traditional forms of product manufacturing, post-bureaucratic organizations – and culture-producing temporary organizations in particular – can involve a creative process that is inherently unpredictable. The final output is often the result of capricious decision-making that is negotiated on the fly (for example, Robert De Niro’s improvisation of the line, “You talkin’ to me?” in *Taxi Driver* or the Beatles’ inclusion of some accidental feedback at the beginning of “I Feel Fine”). It is all the more important to maintain cooperation in order to facilitate an often unruly creative process (Bechky, 2006; Damarin, 2006; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Stewart, 2006).

Research indicates that cooperative teamwork in temporary organizations hinges on a clearly defined task distribution, or role allocation whereby team members have a firm understanding of their individual contribution to the project outcome (Bechky, 2006; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Stewart, 2006). Such invisible forms of infrastructure provide stability in contexts that otherwise lack institutionalized hierarchies and power relations (van Fenema and Räisänen, 2005; Weick, 1993). Clearly defined task allocations also facilitate the distribution of rewards or compensation. Prior scholarship finds that teams are most effective when rewards are allocated based on the distribution of tasks; the more team members perform tasks independently, the more rewards should be allocated individually. Conversely, the more tasks are

interdependent of one another, the more rewards should be allocated collectively (Wageman, 1995; Wageman & Baker, 1997)

The task distribution of songwriting teams, however, varies from one project to the next. Sometimes songwriters are asked to provide lyrics and melody to a pre-established track, and work independently. Other times they write in groups and collaborate on a song from start to finish, and negotiate *in situ* what each member contributes. While the end goal – the creation of a song – remains the same, the tasks allocated to team members to achieve this goal differ. This makes the distribution of rewards (i.e., royalties) tricky; as will be further discussed, it is too difficult to negotiate the distribution of rewards on a per project basis based on levels of individual contribution. The nature of artistic contribution is ineffable and difficult to quantify. Moreover, scrutinizing the performance of individual members detracts from the creative process and team collegiality. The allocation of rewards is further complicated when certain writing tasks are redistributed to producers, or imposed upon by performing artists. The latter often results in discrepant levels of team member productivity, while the former results in shifts in jurisdictional control (Abbott, 1988; Adams, 2004).

The challenges accompanying task variability among songwriting teams highlight a tension concerning the nature of work in post-bureaucratic organizations (Damarin, 2006). As the name suggests, post-bureaucratic organizations stand in contrast to traditional bureaucratic work organizations that are marked by rigid job hierarchies, inflexible working conditions, fixed occupational boundaries, and decision-making processes marked by acquiescence to authority (Heydebrand, 1989). They are flexible, temporally bound, and characterized less by explicit power disparities than by consensus-building processes (Damarin, 2006; Heckscher, 1994; Kalleberg, 2000; Maravelias, 2003). Types of contemporary work environments classified as

post-bureaucratic include independent contracting (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Kalleberg, 2000; Osnowitz, 2006; Parker, 2002), project management (Hodgson, 2004; White & Fortune, 2002), website production (Damarin, 2006), and most pertinent to the present study, temporary forms of organizing (Bakker, 2010; Bechky 2006; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987).

Accompanying the flexibility and flattening of power hierarchies is the reality that the temporary nature of many post-bureaucratic forms of organizing creates uncertainty (Bielby & Bielby, 1999; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987). One's next paycheck is never guaranteed, and so there is a constant need to pursue work opportunities. Moreover, the uncertainty is confronted on an individual basis (Maravelias, 2003). Workers laboring in temporary forms of organizing rarely benefit from the security of long-term contracts or union protections (although there are exceptions to this – unions in the film and music industries stabilize pay rates for those who are fortunate enough to secure membership). This individualization of risk has meant that social capital is especially important in post-bureaucratic work projects, as it falls on the individual to maintain relationships and ties that can lead to future job opportunities (Barley and Kunda, 2004; Bielby & Bielby, 1999; Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013; Kunda, 1992; Menger, 2006; Osnowitz, 2006). Such features have led many to question whether post-bureaucratic forms of organizing are an improvement over other iterations of work organization owing to their capacity to facilitate cooperation, or whether they represent more of the same, owing to the new forms of conflict they invite (Bakker 2010; Crowley et al., 2010; Maravelias 2003; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991).

On the one hand, analyses of post-bureaucratic forms of organizing find that such work is characterized by cooperation and reciprocity (Barley & Kunda, 2004; Becker, 1982; Bechky, 2006; Heckscher & Donnellon, 1994; Osnowitz, 2006). Lacking the kind of upward career trajectory found in traditional bureaucracies, careers in post-bureaucratic organizations are often

horizontal (Dahlander & O'Mahony, 2011) which facilitates the perception that working conditions are more open and democratic (Neff, Wissinger & Zukin, 2005). In addition, the importance of social capital and reputation in temporary organizations augments reliance on referrals and reciprocity to advance one's career, further contributing to a cooperative ethos (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Bielby & Bielby, 1999; Giuffre, 1999; Osnowitz, 2006).

On the other hand, it is argued that temporary forms of organizing enhance conflict (Crowley et al., 2010; Hinds & Bailey, 2003; Hodgson, 2004). Those laboring in post bureaucratic organizations lack the job security that accompanies employment in traditional bureaucratic organizations (Kalleberg 2000, 2003). The pursuit of employment is off-loaded to the individual, which may increase competition and act as a disincentive to cooperate. Additionally, the same horizontal career ladders that are said to promote a democratic ethos are found to exacerbate conflict, as the lack of a leadership hierarchy can enhance chaos and disorganization (Crowley et al., 2010).

The centrality of conflict and power struggles notwithstanding, interviews with professional songwriters reveal the importance of cooperative conventions in their everyday work environment. Conflict and cooperation are not mutually exclusive, and their co-constitution is an empirical question to be explored. Such an agenda provides a point of departure for examining how songwriters navigate conflict and rewards in their doubly uncertain work environment; they are affected by wider events in the music industry, and their immediate work context is a team setting where the distribution of tasks varies from one project to the next.

Methods and sample

This study focuses on songwriters because while as an occupational group they represent a small percentage of the working population, they are disproportionately influential. Songwriters make an indelible mark on our cultural landscape through their lyrics, helping to popularize contemporary idioms and new forms of slang. Furthermore, songs have the capacity to influence popular discourse either by reproducing existing norms, or pushing the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable (consider, for example, the hit songs *Eight Miles High* by the Byrds, which was eventually banned from radio because of its references to drugs, and *Let's Talk about Sex* by Salt n' Pepa, which addressed the topic of safe sex in a very frank manner).

The findings of this study emerged through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Songwriter selection criteria are that the interviewees pursue songwriting full time, and that it is their primary source of income. Most of the songwriters interviewed have publishing deals (N=24) or are in pursuit of one (N=2), whereby music publishing firms such as EMI and Universal provide monetary advances against writers' future earnings in exchange for partial ownership (copyright) of their work. In such arrangements, songwriters are contractually obligated to give a certain percentage of royalties earned from their musical recordings to publishers, who in turn promote the writers' work and attempt to get songs placed with popular recording artists. Four of the songwriters interviewed stated that they preferred not having a publishing contract. While working outside the machinery of a major firm means they have to work harder to publicize their work and get songs placed, it also means that when they do write a song that becomes a hit (i.e., gets recorded by a popular artist and receives widespread radio airplay and sales), they get to keep more of the profits²⁰.

²⁰ It is difficult to provide accurate information on songwriters' earnings. There is wide variation between songwriters, with the successful, small minority of songwriters earning six figures per year. The Bureau of Labor

I did not attempt to interview performing artists who are also songwriters (e.g., Alicia Keys or John Mayer), both because it is unlikely that they would be willing to participate, and because fame of that level introduces a unique dynamic that is outside the purview of the study. These conditions help limit the scope of my sample and ensure that I am using a baseline metric with which I can reasonably compare interviewee responses to one another. Songwriters working in any mainstream genre (i.e., the genres that appear on the *Billboard Hot 100* charts), such as pop, rock, R&B, rap, and country were interviewed. Rather than engaging in genre specialization, almost all songwriters (N=27) work across multiple genres, such as pop, rock, dance, and R&B, or pop and country²¹.

I used two methods of recruiting respondents. First, I researched the contact information of fifteen professional women songwriters who had written hit songs that charted on *Billboard* throughout the period of 1990-2009²². I sent formal requests for interviews by email to either their managers or publishers. This yielded four interview responses. Secondly, I reached out to several professional songwriters for interviews that I knew personally from my time working at a

statistics does not provide detailed earnings on songwriters alone. Songwriters are grouped with writers and authors, where their median yearly salary is estimated to be 56 thousand dollars. Those with publishing deals may receive advances monthly, annually, or on a one-time basis. Advances can range from 10 to 100 thousand dollars (Passman, 2012). Earnings also vary widely from year to year. On the years when songwriters do not have a hit song they survive primarily off of publishing advances and residual profits from previous hits. The songwriters I interviewed indicated that they earn anywhere from 30 to 200 thousand dollars off of a hit song, depending on how many ways the royalties are divided, and depending on how big of a percentage their publisher takes.

²¹ Because almost all of the songwriters interviewed regularly work in several different genres, it is difficult to assess the degree to which the cooperative conventions vary by genre. In general, however, the songwriters indicated that equal authorship as a convention is especially prevalent in country music, but it is also a convention that they pursue when writing songs in the genres of rock, pop, R&B and dance music. Several songwriters signaled that cooperative conventions are absent in the genre of rap music, where it is more common to nitpick over how many words one contributed to a song when determining royalty percentages. Only five of the songwriters interviewed regularly work in the rap genre, however, so it is not possible to offer any generalizable conclusions about the extent to which cooperation is present or absent in rap music. It suffices to say that cooperation does vary by genre, however it is a matter of degree rather than kind, and it is perceived to be less common in rap music.

²² Because this article is part of a larger project that also focuses on the experiences of women songwriters in particular, I oversampled women respondents. The present analysis, however, focuses on both men and women since the conventions uncovered through interviews are shared by all songwriters regardless of gender.

major record label. From this point, snowball sampling was introduced, as these songwriters graciously forwarded my contact information on to their colleagues, who in turn forwarded my contact information on to their colleagues. Interviews were conducted with twelve men and eighteen women, some of whom have been nominated for or won Grammys as well as other songwriting awards, and most of whom have enjoyed success on various *Billboard* music charts. Respondents reside in London, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New York and Toronto, and because of this interviews were primarily conducted either over the phone (N=20) or via Skype (N=8). One interview was conducted in person, and one interview was conducted over email.

Interviews included general questions about the creative process, what respondents most liked and disliked about their line of work, their favorite songwriting experience, and how they enjoy interacting with other songwriters, artists, publishers, and label personnel. They lasted anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes, and on average took one hour. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Following this, I used the software program Dedoose to inductively code the interviews. In addition to interview data, I analyzed popular media coverage of the state of contemporary professional songwriting in order to discern whether respondents' perspectives were widely representative of the industry as a whole.

Findings

State of the art: The new school

Throughout the course of interviewing songwriters, respondents described several changes to the songwriting profession that were causing frustration. First, they remarked upon an ongoing shift within their craft, the culmination of a changing opportunity space (Baumann, 2001, 2007; DiMaggio, 1992) introduced by advances in technology, as well as changing consumer tastes:

the transition to track-based songs and the subsequent rise of the producer/writer hybrid²³. The past 10 to 15 years has witnessed the ascendancy of R&B, dance, and rap music on the popular music charts. Such genres are characterized as being rhythmic and beat-driven, and rely heavily on computerized sounds from musical production software such as Pro Tools, Logic and Cubase²⁴. In much of R&B, dance, and rap music, expertise with musical software has superseded in importance formal mastery over such instruments as piano and guitar. When describing the writing process, Los Angeles-based Michael made reference to a ‘new school’ of writing. Asked what he meant by that, he responds:

Back in the day, people would write with a piano and come up with different ideas. But with technology nowadays and auto-tune, the invention of Pro Tools and stuff like that, you can easily get in the booth and write a whole song, just standing behind the mic. A lot of people don’t use a pen and pad. They go in there, they record an idea, say, ‘That sounds like a good first part of a verse, let me tweak it out and re-record it,’ and end up not writing the whole thing down on paper or their computer at all. So that’s what I mean by new school, it’s like you can write a whole song on your phone and just record it in there and go translate it in the studio later.

Because of this transition, the producer has come to play a more prominent role not only in facilitating album production, but in soliciting and writing songs (see, e.g., Kealy, 1979). It is

²³ To be sure, the consolidation of producer/writer roles is not new. I nevertheless characterize this as a shift because the producer/writer hybrid is now apportioned more songwriting duties (e.g. establishing the “beds” or chord progression of a song) and is earning higher percentages of songwriting royalties in addition to producer royalties (See, e.g., Beall 2009) than they have historically. More importantly for the purposes at hand, this trend is *perceived* by respondents to be new and of consequence.

²⁴ John Seabrook of *The New Yorker* puts it thusly: “today’s Top Forty is almost always machine-made: lush sonic landscapes of beats, loops, and synths in which all the sounds have square edges and shiny surfaces, the voices are Auto-Tuned for pitch, and there are no mistakes. The music sounds sort of like this: *thump thooka whompa whomp pish pish pish thumpaty wompah pah pah pah*” (2012: para.14; original emphasis)

common for producers to use computer-based programming to establish the musical tracks or beds of a song which historically has been the purview of songwriters, and then either team up with a songwriter to write the lyrics and melody (referred to as the top line), or solicit several other songwriters for top lines. When the latter practice is relied upon, the producer chooses whichever top line she likes best, and discards the others.

Producers are now entitled to a share of song ownership, or copyright, that was previously divided only among those writers responsible for supplying lyrics and melody (Beall, 2009). Consequently, after publishers receive their share of royalties there is less money to be distributed among songwriters. This is perceived as an unwelcome jurisdictional encroachment, as when Travis (Nashville) mentions that producers “are getting half the copyright, so they are getting the songwriting portion of income, and they are also getting a production fee on top of that. So it is double dipping almost.” Similarly, when asked what the current climate of songwriting is like, Michael complains that “some producers are unfair and get amnesia, and want to keep everything to themselves.”

While the production side is increasingly profitable, songwriters must often compete with more writers over the same track, however they do not get compensated for their time or expenses. One songwriter laments that:

When I started out in the business it was like musical chairs, there were maybe a hundred songwriters and thirty seats. Now there are two hundred songwriters and one chair, to try and get that single to make any money. Also, it used to be that my only competition was other songwriters. Now it's the DJs, the beat makers, the track guys, who are asking for and getting 50% of the copyrights they collaborate on. It's not just the songwriters you are competing with, it's everybody. (Lauren, Los Angeles)

Lauren is alluding to a climate in which there are fewer seats because declining industry sales has prompted major record labels to invest in fewer artists (Leyshon et al., 2005). Instead, labels invest larger sums of money in only a handful of artists with the hopes of achieving a blockbuster hit (Elberse, 2013; McCourt and Burkart, 2003). For songwriters, this means fewer opportunities for song placements. Moreover, as Lauren notes, the changing nature of the cultural field is such that songwriters must now contend with another occupational group that had not previously been perceived as a major threat to their livelihood. Technological innovation in the form of new production software has blurred the boundaries of the songwriting role (See, e.g., Zetka, 2001). Leanne, who works out of Los Angeles, concurs when she states in an email that “It’s definitely more challenging, these days, as there are so many people writing songs for fewer opportunities out there. Being a top liner (lyrics/melody writer), it’s harder to get invited into production teams, as they usually have their own people.”

The devaluation of the songwriting profession is viewed by many as symptomatic of the devaluation of music (in financial terms) on a larger scale. Respondents characterize the corrupt behaviour (i.e., usurpation of or failure to pay out royalties) of industry personnel as a reaction to widespread declining record sales in the MP3 era. Lauren, a seasoned songwriter who achieved success both before and after the transition to digitization frames the issue as follows:

I don’t think that the label people are making any records, making as many records anymore; I think that they are gatekeepers. There are some who are listening for songs but generally speaking they hire a couple of producers and they say, ‘Just write the stuff with the artist and let me hear it when it’s done.’ I think they are throwing up their hands because things are unpredictable and nothing’s selling.

In Lauren's experience, echoed by others as well, one way that record labels are navigating uncertainty wrought by declining sales is by outsourcing the micro managing of recording projects to producer/writers. The sanctioning of the producer/writer role by other segments within the industry serves to further increase producers' control and heightens their occupational standing (Halpern, 1992). The increasing power of the producer/writer hybrid, then, is perceived as an unavoidable component of the wider industry climate (Begun and Lippincott, 1987).

Producer/writers are not the only ones imposing on writers' splits; performing artists are also demanding a share of royalties regardless of their actual contribution to the writing process.

When asked how it is to interact with performing artists, London-based Emma responds:

A lot of artists want some of the publishing dollars and with their name on the track.

How common is that - the artist not actually being in the room but still getting a credit?

It's quite common. Songwriters rarely say it because they want the artist to take the song ... There was another artist, I'm not going to give you a name, but she was quite big. On her second album she wanted seventy percent of the publishing. So what that means is if I've written a song with two other people, we all get ten percent each and she would get seventy percent.

Would you say this has been happening more and more, or has this always kind of happened?

It's been happening a lot, particularly in the past ten years. Artists also think that people won't take them seriously if their names aren't on there. And a lot of media etc., that's what they say 'Oh, she didn't write her music.' Some of the best singers in the world didn't write their music but they were really good at interpreting, like Frank Sinatra or Whitney Houston. People like that.

Finally, songwriters are losing financial and symbolic capital due to the way that music is now being consumed. Rather than purchase albums – even digitally – many music fans are choosing instead to stream music online from websites such as Youtube, Pandora, and Spotify. Such websites were able to negotiate different royalty rates than has historically been the industry standard for physical album and singles sales. Because royalties are negotiated on a label-by-label basis, there is no set rate. However, in general, songwriters earn less than \$0.01 per stream²⁵. This marks a dramatic departure for professional songwriters, who must acclimatize to the reality that the outcome of their labour – songs – is no longer firmly rooted within a market economy (Sterne, 2012). Consequently, their claims to a livelihood from music-making are slowly diminishing.

When asked how it is interacting with record label personnel, one songwriter responds that,

I think A&R and publishing personnel are way out of their depth to deal with Google, YouTube, Spotify and Facebook having the power to just go right over their heads and go to Washington [to negotiate and lobby for royalty rates]. I know the record companies, they are like the big bad guy, they did totally screw up and their greed helped create this perfect storm. Their greed gave the other side fodder like, ‘Look what they’re doing.’ We used to be kind of controlled by the record labels and the big publishers and they kind of called the shots. They would be unfair sometimes and sneaky and all that but at least you got paid *something*. There were laws and something you could do if you didn’t feel like you had been paid enough. And now they are all struggling to survive, and our new boss is Google, basically. There’s not even a phone

²⁵ Several musicians have revealed publicly what their profits are from digital radio websites: Damon Krukowski (2012) has stated that he earns \$0.005 each time one of his songs is played on Spotify. And Ellen Shipley (2012) has revealed that her quarterly earnings for a song that was streamed over 3 million times was \$39.61.

number for Google, so good luck trying to get somebody on the phone. (Lorna, Nashville)

Tim, who works in Nashville, surmises that,

Technically, mathematically the business is worse off now than in the old days when they would take some records from the South and go, ‘Hey you know that blues classic that you wrote? I’m going to give you a brand new Cadillac for it.’ And the songwriter would sign over the song - and their name didn’t even appear on it anymore - hop in the car, and find out it’s a rental. So you didn’t even get the car. In my opinion, technically and mathematically, it’s *worse now*.

Tim’s comment suggests that songwriters have always experienced mistreatment at the hands of others. However, like Tim, the other songwriters I spoke to also share the opinion that their working conditions have worsened since the transition to digitization.

In other occupational contexts, often when a series of exogenous changes negatively impact a given occupational group, such groups have responded in kind (Abbott, 1988; Barley, 1986; Hafferty & Light, 1995; Hartley, 2002). For example, Adams (2004) finds that dental hygienists responded to a competitive market and changing regulations of health professions by asserting their claims for greater professional status and autonomy. One might similarly expect songwriters to mobilize in opposition to the many ways that their craft is being imposed upon by others. Or, given that they must now vie for royalties with producers, artists, and online music streaming services, it is not unreasonable to expect that songwriters may become more protective of their royalty shares among one another.

Nonetheless, music industry personnel are seasoned at working in environments of uncertainty (Hirsch, 1972). While the above mentioned challenges are new and important to

document, the working conditions of professional songwriters demonstrate how stability is maintained in post-bureaucratic team settings amidst *ongoing* uncertainty: both in an immediate context of task variability, and an overarching context of industry-wide technological adaptation. Interviews with songwriters reveal that they maintain cooperative and egalitarian conventions. In particular, songwriters pursue equal authorship by splitting royalties equally among team members regardless of individual contribution, and they maintain conciliatory relations with those parties responsible for challenging their occupational jurisdiction²⁶.

‘Write a word, get a third’: Maintaining equal authorship

Professional songwriters’ temporary form of organizing is characterized by the arrangement of sessions, often with two other songwriters in attendance, with the goal of completing a song and getting it to the ‘demo’ stage. A demo song (short for demonstration) is a recording that may lack full production value, but is deemed sufficient for the purposes of soliciting to artists, publishers, managers, and A&R personnel. Such temporary projects can refer to arrangements involving writers who are creating a song from scratch, or it can refer to one or more writers who have been invited to supply a topline for a pre-existing track. Sometimes writers are solicited to write for a particular artist, but other times they co-write without a specific artist in mind.

This temporary form of organizing has varying degrees of formality. Some songwriters schedule co-writing sessions every day of the week through the help of their publishing firm.

²⁶ The conventions outlined in the present article are not exhaustive of all strategies pursued by cultural workers to negotiate an uncertain work environment (See, e.g. Bielby and Bielby, 1994). Another strategy involves diversifying one’s stable of occupational roles in order to mitigate a decline in economic rewards associated with any one particular role (Long Lingo & Tepper, 2013; O’Mahony & Bechky, 2006; Thomson, 2013). Several respondents acknowledged that they also pursue work in cognate occupational roles such as producing and engineering. This trend is gendered, with men being more likely than women to work as producers, and is being explored in a related project. I focus here instead on the conventions of equal authorship and professional conciliation in order to elucidate the social responses to uncertainty in team settings.

Songwriters may also attend ‘camps’, congregations of upwards of 20 to 30 songwriters organized by record labels and publishing firms that meet for an extended period of time, often in an isolated location. The goal of such camps is to amass a body of songs for a particular performing artist. The performing artist or record label is then given first right of refusal on any song created at the camp.

While the frequency and form of co-writing may vary, certain practices enable a sense of consistency across short-term projects in cultural industries (Bechky, 2006; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987). In songwriting projects, upon completing a song, it is up to the writers to decide how song royalties should be allotted. This process is of consequence since song royalties are writers’ primary source of revenue²⁷. When asked about how royalty percentages - referred to as ‘splits’ - are decided, every songwriter responded that they should be divided equally. The common adage is that if there are three songwriters in the room, each one receives one third of the royalties: ‘write a word, get a third.’ Sharing royalties evenly, regardless of one’s actual contribution, fosters a collegial environment for what can otherwise be an awkward experience. When asked about how she negotiates splits, Maya, a London-based topliner responds that: “Actually, as a rule of thumb, divide it by whoever’s creating the input ... I’m a genuine believer that if you put in an amount of work you should be rewarded for that.”

On the contrary, having to discuss splits in a writing session can dampen the mood. New York-based songwriter Joanna remarks that “I have experienced times, only a couple, where [other writers] are very specific about the percentages, which I think have not been good sessions. I think you should not bring that into a creative room. You can deal with all that stuff

²⁷ Many songwriters sign a contract to work with one publishing firm, where instead of receiving royalties they often receive larger advances of money from their publishers. Advances are a form of salary, however the money doled out by publishers is recouped from future royalty profits. Thus it remains accurate to say that royalties are songwriters’ primary form of income.

later. I don't think bringing business into a creative environment works." One songwriter recalls the following story:

I did have a session recently where this guy was super organized and he had splits sheets that we all had to sign there and then. And I kinda admired the organization, but it was a total buzz-kill because we were having an amazing session and the song was so amazing and everyone was buzzing. And then it was like, 'Um, can you all sign here.' And we had to have the conversation there and then in front of each other, and it was like, ugh god. I wasn't mad at it, because I know that some people have had real problems after a session if they haven't discussed it, and they feel like they are getting screwed over. So sometimes it can be better to just get it all out there. But I personally don't carry around split sheets in my pocket. (James, London)

Often times, writers may not know one another too well, and yet they are expected to engage in an artistic endeavor together that can come from an intimate and emotional place. Knowing that financial issues need not factor in to the meeting makes for a more pleasant working environment, and a potentially more rewarding songwriting session. Speaking about the experience of writing with someone new, Toronto-based Hannah explains:

[It's] a really unique connection to have with somebody you don't know. To get together and be like, 'Wow, we just made this!' And now I'm getting to see this version of you that is reserved for Christmas morning and birthdays, and you're excited and animated. And usually you only get to see a person in that stage when you're in a real friendship or have a romantic connection with somebody. And I really value that - getting to see people at their most sort of vulnerable, open and candid and I sort of love that.

The convention of sharing royalties evenly is motivated by a ‘pay it forward’ mentality. Many respondents commented that it is difficult to be consistently ‘on’ in writing sessions. One day a writer may contribute more than her share, while on another day she may not be as productive. Maintaining even splits regardless of one’s contribution helps alleviate the guilt experienced on those days when one does not contribute her fair share to the writing process. According to Amanda (Los Angeles), “You know, my policy is everyone gets a fair share. Yeah, and especially in those writing camp situations, because sometimes people won’t shine in one writing session and then they will shine in another and it’s like, you know, equal opportunity.” Similarly, Renee (Los Angeles) mentions that:

I am extremely ‘whatever’ about splits. I never feel like they are worth fighting over. So if three people around start a song, it’s thirds no matter who does what. One person could be sitting comatose for all I care. When there are three people in the room writing the song, it’s thirds and that’s mainly because the dynamics of each day is totally different, and I could be the one comatose that day. Some days I am really inspired and I am driving the bus, and other days I am sort of taking a back seat ... I always tend to be overly generous, I always want everybody to feel good about it. So I never squabble, never squabble.

Another reason given for the practice of even splits is that it results in the best song idea winning, regardless of its authorship:

[If] there are two people in the room it’s 50/50, and if there are three people it’s a third each. Because otherwise if you started splitting it into other percentages it makes people feel really protective about their ideas, you know, because they think they had better fight for their ideas so then they’ll get a bigger part of the split. In reality a lot of the

time the input that people have might not be the lines they came up with. It could be a vibe thing at the same time, so if you're all in the room I think you should just split it.

(Emma, London)

Songwriting can be an ineffable process, and one's contribution may not be easily quantifiable. Even splits prevent people from getting territorial about how much they contribute. This strategy is pragmatic; if even splits allow for the best song idea to win, presumably the best song idea will have a greater chance of garnering interest from record labels and publishers, and songwriters thereby increase their chances of having success. The ineffable nature of contribution in the songwriting room was also pointed out by respondents:

I don't believe that you can quantify the value of an idea. So generally speaking unless the circumstances are exceptional, if everyone was in the room when the song started and all the way through to when the song was finished then the split is even, no matter how much you said or didn't say. Someone gave me the example of 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction.' If all you wrote is [sings the opening guitar riff] then you deserve 50%.

(Samantha, Los Angeles)

An egalitarian ethos is thus further augmented by the often incommensurable nature of creative contribution (Espeland and Stevens, 1998; Karpik, 2010). Malcolm (Nashville) concurs when he asks, "Why would you want to sit down with somebody in a room that you don't respect? I don't get that. If a person you sit down with in a room only contributes one line, but it's a great line, he's worth 50% of the song. I think that is fair." And while it may be pragmatic to let the best idea win, this convention is also founded on the assumption that songwriters are capable of putting their egos aside and acknowledging, as Dustin (Nashville) implies, when one's ideas

have been bested: “if somebody is contributing more than somebody else because they are on a roll, then you let them go on that roll, and you just be a part of that energy.”

Another sentiment shared by many respondents was that those who fight over royalties or demand more than their fair share typically do not get invited to future collaborations. Writers remarked that, on those rare occasions when disputes over splits arose, they chose not to work again with the offending party. James mentions that

I know people who have just had great careers based on the fact that they just have good reputations. If there are three of us in the room, [they say], ‘Let’s all split the publishing three ways and keep it straight and fair down the middle.’ Other people will be like, ‘I wrote six words in this line and you wrote two so I am taking 55%’, and I don’t think, say, a year down the line when there is a project to be worked on that those people are the first in line because no one wants to deal with them.

Jenny puts it thusly: “The minute three of us are in the room and the song starts to get written then that’s a third. We don’t ever sit there and go ‘well, you only contributed ten percent of this song.’ We just leave it wide open and that way everybody is okay. There’s no pressure, no need to be greedy.” Similarly, when asked about how he negotiates splits, one songwriter responds that,

Well for me I have found the simplest easiest way is whoever is in the room just split the song evenly. I have found that I feel like most days that I write I more than contribute to my share of the split but I have also had days where, you know, when I really look back I wasn’t sure that I contributed anymore than anyone else. I think it’s the most egalitarian way to go about it. Some people get really caught up in the idea of

splits and they want more or less and I just find it kind of silly to try and say whose idea was better or whatever.

So in general your experience has been positive with this arrangement?

Yeah, I just kind of think it's the fair way to do it. Everyone doesn't agree with that, but most writers are pretty cool with it. I think writers sometimes get annoyed when someone is in the room on a consistent basis, like an artist or a writing partner of someone else, and they are just not contributing. Then everyone starts to get the idea that they are just sort of sitting in the room to get publishing money, and I feel that this is the situation that, rather than make a big deal about the split every time I just kind of say, 'Look, you know if we are going to write, this person doesn't need to be involved or whatever.' (Xavier, Los Angeles)

One could make the argument that given the current climate for songwriters, there is a need to be more protective of one's contributions. However, by adhering to the convention of even splits, songwriters signal to team members that they are a desirable partner for future collaborations.

Songwriters' commentary demonstrates that despite the short-term nature of songwriting projects, the convention of 'write a word, get a third' facilitates a sense of teamwork across projects. First, it fosters an environment that is more agreeable for creative work among potential strangers. Secondly, it encourages a 'pay it forward' ethos that extends beyond the project at hand, thereby further contributing a sense of consistency to an otherwise unpredictable temporary work environment (Bechky, 2006; Faulkner and Baker, 1987). Third, enabling equal ownership allows the best song idea to win regardless of who contributes it. Lastly, through excluding (or choosing not to work with again) those who dispute the convention of even splits,

songwriters enable a sense of in-group unity despite the presence of external uncertainty that cannot be readily controlled.

While elements of this strategy are oriented toward maximizing one's financial and social capital, the convention of even splits is also rooted in an appreciation for collegiality and friendship. For Toronto-based Derek, personality matters above all else, a sentiment reflected by other songwriters as well. When asked what qualities he looks for in a songwriting partner, he states,

You need a great personality, to me that's the most important thing. You think to yourself, 'How am I going to enjoy being with this person for 8 to 10 hours in a room with no windows?' It's got to be a really pleasant experience; it's got to be a lot of fun. My dad used to always say you have to have some really good hardy laughs through the day or it's not a good day. So I look for that first and foremost.

This is echoed by Rick (Nashville), who, when asked why he prefers co-writing replies that, "I have more fun writing with others simply because when you have a number one record, there is someone else to go have lunch with who's as happy as you are." The pursuit of success, then, is not mutually exclusive from the pursuit of intrinsic job rewards that are better observed and understood through cooperative practices (Loscocco, 1989).

Uncertainty begets professional conciliation

As the previous sections suggest, the presence of ongoing uncertainty plays a prominent role for songwriters in terms of how they make sense of industry climate, and how it affects their position and claims to rewards vis-à-vis other industry personnel. But uncertainty not only influences writers' sense-making of industry-wide power dynamics; it influences inter-personal

dynamics as well (Long Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). To put it succinctly, uncertainty begets conciliation in teamwork settings. Because songwriters never know in advance *which* of their work projects will be successful, it is inefficient to engage in antagonistic behaviour even when warranted. Uncertainty concerning which particular project may come to matter sustains an air of cooperation among team members, idleness and jurisdictional challenges notwithstanding. Kerry, a relative newcomer from Los Angeles, in describing the potential of receiving less than one's fair share, says, "Sometimes it is unfortunate because you could end up doing the majority of the work, it could be your baby and you get less credit. I have seen it. But in a lot of ways it is good if you're working with other people who have more resources. It gives your baby more of a chance to fly."

In describing one of her experiences, Emma concurs with the latter sentiment:

I worked with somebody where that was an issue and my publisher, when I sent over the splits that this producer came up with, they were 'What on earth is this!? You have to talk to him and say you just do a regular, straight split' and then I say 'Well actually, *you* talk to him!' I don't want to destroy our working relationship sitting there discussing, 'Well I did this or I did that.' It's not going to be conducive to future collaborations I think.

So in the end were you happy with the outcome of your publisher's chat?

No, they were wusses. They never did it and in the end it turned out to be quite a successful record. So it probably would have meant quite a bit if it had been a different split, but at least I'm still working with that person.

For Emma, receiving an unfair share of royalties was a short-term setback offset by the ability to continue on in a working relationship with the producer in question.

Several songwriters acknowledged the need to let go of one's ego. Describing a scenario where she was asked to leave a writing session by a rock group, Samantha says:

I have had people basically throw me out of the session. But I mean in that particular case, I ended up writing the hit single. So sometimes, it's weird. Ego is so boring. Just let it go.

Could you tell me a bit about that experience?

Sure, I think that the band had had some bad experiences with people before, feeling like they had been told what to do. It was a rock band. So it was hard for them to work with me and they had great ideas and maybe they felt like, I don't know. They had great raw ideas and I could see how to finish those ideas into something that would be a great song, and the finishing process was maybe uncomfortable for them. We finished two songs and then on the third song they basically told me to get out. And then one of those two songs ended up being their single and they have asked me back now. So!

So it is not irreversible?

No of course not. Success makes people forget everything. And you don't go around holding a grudge. You just got to like, 'Yeah, you're young, you're cool. No problem. Let's get back to the drawing board.'

Because writing a hit song can be elusive, Samantha suggests that grudges are not worth maintaining if they inhibit future collaborative relationships. According to James, accepting less than one's fair share requires striking a "balance between not selling yourself short but, sometimes just taking some stuff on the chin to get to the next step and not get a bad reputation." When asked how she navigates writing sessions that are not going smoothly, Amanda has the following to say on the topic of ego:

Um, you kinda have to let your ego go. It's like that in a lot of songwriting situations. I once had a writing session with Holly McMillan, and this was one of the first times I had written with her. And I suggested something and she said, "Ah, I think you can do better." And the other person in the room was like, "Oh my god that was harsh." And I was like, "No she's right. I *can* do better." So it was funny because the other writer thought it was really harsh. But you know, you have to let go of your ego. You can't take things too personally, because everyone is just looking for the best result right.

In other words, a conciliatory approach to less-than-desirable situations facilitates cooperation, even in the face of conflict.

Responding to the trend of performing artists being in the room but not contributing to the writing process, Allison frames the need for conciliatory behavior in more pragmatic terms:

There are a ton of artists who don't write. I have been in the room with some of them and I write the song. If they're in the room maybe they tell you the story, but I have written every single line. But it's co-writing and to a certain degree it *is* co-writing because if they weren't in the room telling you their story, the song wouldn't be written ... I heard a story about an artist in particular who is huge and just sits in the corner, drinks coffee and is on her Blackberry and doesn't write a thing - does not contribute but gets a cut. If she is in the room she gets a cut, but then at the same time those songwriters probably think of it as knowing what side their bread is buttered on. They are going to get a cut on that record. They have to give away 25% or 30% but it is a guaranteed cut.

Uncertainty over the outcome of a given co-writing project means the costs associated with challenging a lack of artistic recognition or a given split arrangement may outweigh any

perceived benefits. What is more, even when success is a sure thing, as in the latter example, writers are unwilling to risk losing the opportunity for future collaborations by contesting uneven workloads and the distribution of financial capital. Unequal relations are better than no relations at all. In this regard, potential sites of conflict are attenuated by songwriters' convention of appeasement. The uncertainty introduced through task variability (and its attendant fluctuating levels of productivity and jurisdictional challenges) not only begets conciliation; it also facilitates stability across temporary work organizations.

Conclusion

This article examines how occupational uncertainty in the popular music industry is experienced from the perspective of workers themselves. It extends and refines our understanding of teamwork in post-bureaucratic forms of organizing in three important ways.

First, we learn how rewards are allocated in temporary songwriting teams, where members are confronted with task variation from project to project. Splitting royalties evenly -- regardless of whether one writes one word or every verse and chorus, the chord progression, or the topline -- mitigates the uncertainty that accompanies task variation. Equal authorship and its attendant shared rewards act as a normative framework, which is pivotal for ensuring teamwork success (Vallas, 2003).

Second, this study challenges the notion that post-bureaucratic or temporary forms of organizing can be characterized wholesale as either cooperative or conflict-driven. In effect, conflict and cooperation are mutually constitutive within such organizational forms. The convention of 'write a word, get a third' helps to maintain an ethos of collegiality in team settings. Songwriters manage the uncertainty of writing in team settings by choosing to work

with those whom they enjoy good relationships and who subscribe to the same convention of even splits, while distancing themselves from those who do not uphold the same conventions. While being combative about royalty shares among team members would be a valid response to social loafing, writers choose instead to maintain an egalitarian ethos, regardless of one's actual contribution to the project. The maintenance of cooperative conventions facilitates a sense of consistency and in-group norms for professional songwriters when confronted with different levels of team member productivity.

In addition, uncertainty begets a convention of conciliation. There is no way to know whether the outcome of any particular work project may result in a hit, and it is therefore inefficient to engage in legal action or verbal battle during each songwriting project. Songwriters are willing to accommodate a decrease in immediate rewards if it means maintaining positive working relationships which may generate further payoff in the future. In the face of jurisdictional conflict with producers and performing artists, uncertainty is mitigated by cooperating and acquiescing in order to bank on future collaborations.

Third, when trying to make sense of strategies pursued by people working in contexts of ongoing uncertainty, it is helpful to develop a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes rational, utility-maximizing behaviour. The rational course of action might seem to be competitive and self-interested given the conflict that songwriters confront and the short-term nature of working relationships and team projects. But in actuality working arrangements recur and long-term relationships are sought, which motivates conciliatory practices (Bechky, 2006; Menger, 2006). While it is often assumed that post-bureaucratic work organizations mark a departure from the rationalistic working conditions that characterize traditional bureaucratic settings (Heckscher, 1994), this study supports more recent findings that post-bureaucratic work

organizations can also be typified by rational, utility maximizing behaviour (Crowley et al., 2010).

We can interpret the convention of ‘write a word, get a third,’ and in particular, allowing the best idea to win, as a strategy for increasing one’s chances of incurring rewards. Likewise, accepting equal splits and tolerating unequal relationships signals one’s desirability as a songwriting partner and thus further enhances one’s status and social network, which is fundamental in temporary organizations (Blair, 2001; Faulkner, 1983; Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Menger, 2006; O’Mahony & Bechky, 2006; Randle & Culkin, 2009; Zafirau, 2008). Such conventions, in brief, emphasize improving one’s position vis-à-vis others in order to gain more leverage within the wider organizational environment.

In some respects, then, temporary forms of organizing are similar to traditional bureaucratic forms of organizing. They differ, however, in that all risks assumed are individualized (Maravelias, 2003). Despite having publishing deals it is still up to songwriters themselves to nurture relationships and determine whether they can afford, both in terms of finances and reputation, to be undersold when they confront conflict and uncertainty. And unlike traditional bureaucratic work environments that operate on a relatively linear, five-day, 40-hour workweek schedule, temporary teams operate along two temporal dimensions: the immediate work context of the project-of-the-day, in which interpersonal challenges must be negotiated, and a long-term trajectory in which team members envision future collaborations. Action is thus tailored in light of more immediate interpersonal challenges to facilitate future rewards. Equal authorship and conciliation mediate tensions between present-day conflict and desires for future success. In a work setting where the distribution of tasks varies from project to

project, such conventions allow jurisdictional challenges and varying levels of productivity to be accommodated, and rewards to be distributed in a manner deemed fair.

This study offers a refinement of our understanding of the nature of rewards, conflict and cooperation within post-bureaucratic forms of organizing, and the conditions under which uncertainty is attenuated; seemingly irrational conventions are in fact rational. The desire to pursue cooperative conventions in the face of uncertainty is motivated by a long-term perspective that extends beyond individual temporary projects.

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Conclusion

This dissertation examines the relationship between occupational roles, and creativity, uncertainty, and change in the North American music industry throughout the shift to digital production in three empirically distinct papers. Chapter 1 interrogates the nature of diversity and innovation – two integral components of creativity -- in music on the *Billboard* charts, and how this is affected by collaborative dynamics and occupational roles. Chapter 2 examines the use of discursive framing to assess new technology and make sense of one's place within a changing organizational landscape. And Chapter 3 examines how professional songwriters manage conflict and rewards in a context of ongoing, routinized uncertainty.

Extending the production of culture perspective

Collectively, these chapters enhance the analytical purchase gained from engaging with a production of culture perspective. The production of culture perspective examines the organizational and industrial structures within which creative work takes place. It “focuses on how the symbolic elements of culture are shaped by the systems within which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved.” (Peterson and Anand, 2004: 311).

While the production of culture subfield is active, there remains a need to engage with aspects of creative work that it continues to under serve. My dissertation chapters integrate two important yet overlooked components of what makes creative work “creative” into the production of culture perspective: the meaning of cultural artifacts, and the role of endogenous cultural processes.

While lauded for its clarification of how social-structural dynamics at the meso- or macro-level influence cultural products, a longstanding critique of the production of culture

perspective is its neglect of the meaning of cultural artifacts (Mohr, 1998; Peterson and Anand, 2004). As Griswold (1987: 3) contends, “an approach to culture that is uninterested in meaning, or in how cultural objects differ from porkbellies, seems destined to continue to play a marginal role in cultural, though perhaps not social, analysis.” Not only is this oversight regrettable for its absence of “thick description” of meaning – the very stuff that makes analyses of cultural goods interesting and compelling – but it is widely acknowledged that social structures and cultural meaning are mutually constitutive (Mohr, 1998; Sewell, 1992). Failing to account for meaning thus leads to impoverished interpretations of organizational dynamics. Chapter 1 offers redress by examining the textual meaning of popular music in relation to collaborative dynamics at the organizational level. Textual analysis focuses on the structural or linguistic properties inherent in musical objects. Building on the pioneering works of Cerulo (1989, 1995) and Dowd (1992, 2000), Chapter 1 interrogates textual meaning through its analysis of chord and melody structure, and lyrical content. A focus on textual meaning broadens the production of culture perspective from an explanation of how organizational dynamics affect cultural artifacts to include consideration of *what* particular artifactual properties they influence.

To be sure, focussing solely on textual meaning risks minimizing the ways that musical meaning and its reception is influenced by the cultural context of creation (DeNora, 2000; Roy and Dowd, 2010). A focus on endogenous cultural processes, the second contribution of my dissertation to the production of culture perspective, endeavours just this. Endogenous explanations of culture focus on processes such as meaning making and semiotic manipulation that originate inside a given cultural environment (Kaufman, 2004:336). Organizations and actors therein respond not to their “real” environment, but their perception of that environment (Mukerji and Schudson, 1991; White 1981) which is circumscribed by institutionalized schemas

and conventions (DiMaggio 1997; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). While the production of culture perspective elaborates how industrial and organizational structure, and law and regulation affect cultural products, only a focus on endogenous cultural processes can clarify how schemas and conventions are likewise implicated in the production of creative goods.

Chapter 2 is concerned with an exogenous intervention in the form of MP3 technology. However, it also highlights an endogenous mechanism that distills external change and influences it in the process. In particular, I find that occupational membership filters discursive interpretations of change, and in turn influences the kinds of solutions that are proposed. It is thus by examining occupational roles -- the ways they are encoded with career histories and project experience -- and their influence on meaning making, that we can develop a comprehensive understanding of how externally-wrought change is negotiated in situ.

Chapter 3 finds that cultural conventions predating digitalization offer some degree of stability and predictability in what has become an increasingly competitive environment. The conventions of equal authorship and conciliation, though born out of exogenous influences such as the development of copyright law, have developed an internal life of their own and persist even as the industry undergoes massive change. It is my hope that Chapters 2 and 3 have expanded the production of culture perspective from an emphasis on structural influences on creative goods to one where exogenous interventions in the form of new technology are reconciled with the cultural mechanics of organizational life.

What's special about music, and the shape of music to come?

You hear other industries, particularly other media industries talking about how, “Well, the music industry got it wrong.” We were the canaries in the coal mine and around the time of Napster. ~ *Excerpt from interview with the president of a major record label*

In closing, we can use the case of the music industry to reflect on the relationship between occupational roles, creativity, uncertainty, and change under digitalization in creative sectors more broadly. This is imperative for four reasons.

The first and most obvious reason is that we need to improve our understanding of the relationship between digital technologies, and the production of culture and creativity (Dowd, 2004a; Lena, 2015). Creative work is an ineffable, mercurial process. Sociology of culture literature suggests that the social structure of creative fields has an indelible impact on creative products (Bourdieu, 1993; Dowd, 2004b; Giuffre, 2009; Peterson and Berger, 1975). At the same time, research demonstrates that the creative process is influenced by individual and interpersonal dynamics more so than large scale factors (Bandelj, 2001; Gardner, 1993; Gilmore, 1993; Negus, 1999; Svejenova, 2005). In order to develop accurate theories about how digital technologies intervene into creative processes (and vice versa), we need empirical investigations of this relationship. Chapter 1 contributes to this by analyzing diversity and innovation pre- and post the emergence of Napster and MP3 technology.

Spanning 1990 to 2009, the chapter takes the era of digitalization as its backdrop to examine the influence of occupational roles and incumbency status. It finds that musical creativity appearing in the *Billboard* charts is different in the 1990s versus the 2000s, driven in large part by differing occupational role combinations. Music in the 1990s was more likely to be diverse in terms of lyrical content, and this diversity was cultivated by performing artists that also took on the role of songwriting, or collaborated with others in the songwriting and

production process. By contrast, after the emergence of MP3 technology in 2000, innovation in the form of new musical sub-genres was more likely to make its way to the top of the Billboard charts. This innovation was led by stand-alone individuals specializing in the role of producer.

The empirical findings of Chapter 1 offer lessons for studying the impact of digitalization, and may be of interest to those investigating dynamic fields of cultural production more broadly. Technological interventions that upend business models inspire new production strategies, including the redistribution of creative responsibilities to different personnel in order to minimize the risk of failure. In the case of the music industry, increasing reliance on producers post 2000 means fewer opportunities for songwriters and performing artists, thus shifting the balance of power among collaborators and altering the hierarchy of occupational role prestige. In addition, the redistribution of creative responsibilities has consequences for the form that creative goods take. In the 2000s, music made by stand-alone producers that made its way to the top of the charts represented a variety of new sub-genres. But these sub-genres consisted of standard lyrical themes about love and sex that did little to extend the range of topics deemed talk-worthy in pop culture discourse. Technological interventions that disrupt traditional ways of doing business may motivate the production of creative goods that are novel in form, but not in content.

The second justification for examining the relationship between occupational roles, creativity, uncertainty, and change under digitalization is that we lack knowledge on how occupational cultures influence the incorporation of new technologies into organizational contexts (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Bechky, 2011). Digital technologies have undeniably influenced the organization of work in the 21st century (Castells, 2011). It is nevertheless also true that workplace cultures have confronted radical technological change before (Spar, 2001).

The ways technology impacts work may be overstated, and it behooves us to develop a more nuanced conceptualization of the interplay between technological change and organizational culture (Orlikowski, 1992; Zuboff 1988).

To this end, Chapter 2 outlines how individuals perceive new technologies and make sense of their place within a shifting organizational landscape. Its insights are of value to scholarship concerned with institutional fields undergoing technological change. It finds that occupational roles constrain the way discourse is used to make sense of change. The analogical and metaphorical frames used by music industry newcomers and incumbents were found to be filtered on the basis of occupational membership. Newcomers were more likely to employ discourse that promoted innovative and exploratory searches for solutions to incorporating MP3 technology into the music industry. On the other hand, incumbent personnel more often used analogies and metaphors that reinforced entrenched ways of doing business, and exploited pre-existing competencies over which they could claim jurisdiction. When examining the ways that digital technology is negotiated in other creative industries, Chapter 2 thus suggests that occupational roles act as a lens through which sensemaking unfolds, interpretations are influenced, and solutions to contending with change are proposed.

At the same time that digital technologies introduce change and uncertainty into the contemporary workplace, workers in creative fields are accustomed to change and uncertainty because they experience such high rates of failure (Caves, 2000; Menger 1999). Change and uncertainty are particularly common in creative industries because producers cannot readily predict what makes a creative good successful (Bielby and Bielby, 1994; Leschziner 2015). In making products that entertain, creative workers aim to satisfy the public's taste, but these tastes are difficult to specify and they change frequently (Karpik, 2010).

A third reason for examining technological change in creative sectors, then, is to better understand how the routinization of uncertainty is experienced and contended with on an ongoing basis. Chapter 3 examines this through a case study of professional songwriters. For songwriters, the distribution of tasks varies from one project to the next. Sometimes their job is separated from that of their collaborators, while other times they collaborate on all aspects of a song. In addition to constantly chasing the next opportunity for collaboration, from project to project, working arrangements change and songwriters must remain adaptable.

As detailed in Chapter 3, the interviews with songwriters revealed two conventions used to manage conflict and rewards amidst ongoing uncertainty: (1) equal authorship and (2) professional conciliation. These conventions were found to mediate tensions between present-day conflict and desires for future success. In a work setting where uncertainty is ongoing, they allow jurisdictional challenges and social loafing to be accommodated, and rewards to be distributed in a manner deemed fair. Chapter 3 highlights the importance of cultural conventions that develop within postbureaucratic organizations. Its findings are of relevance to production of culture situations more broadly; when applied to other creative sectors, an examination of the underlying mechanisms through which cooperation is maintained can enhance our understanding of how and whether career stability and satisfaction is achieved under conditions of routinized uncertainty.

Finally, the music industry has, and with the onset of music streaming, continues to serve as a canary in the coalmine. The music industry was affected earlier and more harshly than other creative fields by digital technology. This allowed other creative fields to use the onset of Napster as a heuristic for how digitalization would affect their world of work. In addition, the organization of work in the music industry, via occupational roles and cultural conventions, may

help foreshadow larger trends in employment (McRobbie, 2004). Project-based work and self-employment are on the rise in North America (Long Lingo and Tepper, 2013). Examining how music industry personnel navigate change and uncertainty may thus offer valuable lessons for a growing proportion of workers in the North American labour market.

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Appendices for Chapter 1

Appendix A: General information about the *Billboard* sample

The unit of analysis in this study is the song. Analyzing the year-end charts limits the scope of the sample to a manageable size while still facilitating the analysis of songs that are considered to be the most popular. The top ten songs from year-end Hot 100 charts from 1990-2009 were each coded for performer status (whether or not the artist is new, rising or incumbent), sex (male, female, male/female duet or group, male group, female group, and other) and race (White, Black, Latino, Asian, biracial, multiracial and ‘other’).

One change to the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart methodology deserves mention. In December 1998, the Hot 100 chart began to incorporate hit songs that had also received radio airplay or been sold in album format, and not solely released as physical singles, thus switching from a ‘singles’ chart to a ‘song’ chart. This change in methodology was preceded by mid 1990s record industry strategies whereby firms stopped releasing singles as frequently as in the past. Instead, they would promote a song through radio airplay and MTV, and then release it on an album with the hopes of maximizing profits (singles generally cost consumers 1 to 2 dollars, whereas albums cost between 12 and 18 dollars). Consequently, prior to 1998 many popular songs that were radio hits or only included on full-length albums never charted on the Hot 100 (See also Anand and Peterson 2000). I address this methodological snag by including the five songs that were Number 1 radio hits in the mid to late 1990s but failed to chart on the Hot 100: “Don’t Speak” by No Doubt, “Men in Black” by Will Smith, “Fly” by Sugar Ray, “Torn” by Natalie Imbruglia and “Iris” by the Goo Goo Dolls (Whitburn 2003: 997-998). To the chagrin of major labels, the onset of digital downloading has made the purchasing of singles once more in vogue, and starting in 2005 *Billboard* began to capture this trend by accounting for digital album and single sales.

With the addition of these five songs, and excluding duplicate songs, this generated a list of 99 incumbent artists, 69 new artists and 35 rising artists (N=203). The complete list of the songs included in the sample is available upon request.

The operationalization of innovation and diversity used in the present study differs from that found in previous studies (Dowd, 2004; Lopes, 1992; Peterson and Berger, 1975), where diversity refers to a measure across observations rather than a characteristic of a single observation, for example, through an analysis of the number songs to reach a number 1 or top ten-position on the charts. Nevertheless, analysis of chords and lyrics is not unprecedented (See Dowd, 1992, 2000, Lena, 2006, and Peterson and Berger, 1975), and in this regard, a song is considered diverse or innovative *relative* to other songs that are commercially successful. Thus, environmental diversity and innovation are accounted for. Furthermore, in analyses not included here, the number of songs to reach a number one and a top ten-position per year were introduced both as control and outcome variables, and were not found to have a significant effect.

Appendix B: Descriptive statistics for independent and dependent variables

Descriptive statistics	%
Decade	
Songs from 1990s	50.74%
Songs from 2000s	49.26%
Performer Gender	
Male solo/group	51.23%
Female solo/group	43.35%
Mixed sex group	5.42%
Performer Race	
White solo/group	35.96%
Black solo/group	43.84%
Latino, bi-racial, multiracial, etc.	20.20%
Record Label Status	
Established	80.79%
New	19.21%
Industry Concentration (Herfindahl Index)	
Range	132-358
Mean rate	241
Performer Status	
Established	48.77%
Rising	17.24%
New	33.99%
Producer Status	
Artist is <i>not</i> involved in production	67.98%
Artist is one of two or more producers	20.69%
Artist is sole producer	11.33%
Songwriter Status	
Artist is <i>not</i> involved in songwriting	26.11%
Artist is one of two or more songwriters	43.84%
Artist is sole songwriter	30.05%
Lyrical Diversity	
Common theme	77.83%
Diverse theme	22.17%
Chordal/Lyrical Diversity	
Dissimilarity Score Range	-13.74 to 20.15
Mean Score	2.3
Sub-genre Innovation	
Sub-genre is established	77.83%
Sub-genre is new	22.17%
<i>N</i>	203

Appendix C: Lyrical content analysis

To ensure that the new themes that emerged were generalizable to other *Billboard* Hot 100 hits, at an early stage of the research I conducted an open-ended exploratory coding of a random sample of 30 pop songs that were not included in my sample, but had reached a position in the Top 20 on the *Billboard* year-end charts throughout 1999-2008. I then cross-referenced this thematic coding scheme to my sample to ensure there was nothing anomalous with the latter (there was not), but I also allowed for the possibility that new themes may emerge in the wider sample. Later on in the research phase, I decided to change my sample structure (from an analysis of a random sample of 100 songs appearing in positions #1-20 of the year-end chart from 1999 to 2008, to an analysis of the top ten songs appearing on the year-end chart exclusively from 1990 to 2009). Subsequently, some of the songs that had been used in the exploratory coding came to be included in the actual sample

In an effort to ensure that coding was reliable, 25% of the songs were recoded after a duration of two years, as per Lena (2006). Intercoder reliability was calculated using Stata according to Cohen's kappa statistic, and agreement for lyrical themes was 0.93 or 94%. The new themes that were not used in past studies were identified by closely reading the lyrics of each song. Themes could often be derived from the chorus alone. I did not employ a word count, as more crucial to identifying a particular theme is the underlying idea being conveyed, not necessarily the presence of certain words. For example, the following lyrics belong to songs with a theme of "tale of caution", but there is little overlap in terms of individual words:

A lonely mother gazing out of the window
Staring at a son that she just can't touch
If at any time he's in a jam she'll be by his side
But he doesn't realize he hurts her so much
But all the praying just ain't helping at all
Cause he can't seem to keep himself out of trouble
So he goes out and he makes his money the best way he knows how
Another body laying cold in the gutter
Listen to me
Don't go chasing waterfalls
Please stick to the rivers and the lakes that you're used to
I know that you're gonna have it your way or nothing at all
But I think you're moving too fast
-"Waterfalls" by TLC

She calls out to the man on the street
"Sir, can you help me?
It's cold and I've nowhere to sleep,
Is there somewhere you can tell me?" He walks on, doesn't look back
He pretends he can't hear her
Starts to whistle as he crosses the street
Seems embarrassed to be there

Oh think twice, it's another day for
You and me in paradise
Oh think twice, it's just another day for you, You and me in paradise
- "Another Day in Paradise" by Phil Collins

Once all songs had been analyzed, similar themes were collapsed together to allow for parsimonious categorization. For example, 'dissolution of love' and 'conflicted love' speak towards different issues, the latter often referring to a relationship in trouble but not yet over. Yet at a more general level, both deal with the messy aspects of love, and in that respect could be collapsed into 'dissolution of love'; while conflicted love may not be over, it is in a state of undoing.

While it is possible that a song could have had more than one theme, I did not find one instance of this throughout the exploratory coding, nor throughout the coding of my sample. This is not surprising since most pop songs are repetitive and seek to convey a somewhat simple message. While all the songs were monothematic, some had themes that deviated from the more common themes surrounding love. To make coding and statistical analyses more manageable, these were collapsed together under a category of 'other', and along with the themes of 'dance/party', 'providing reassurance', 'tale of caution' and 'grieving', were counted as diverse in the dummy variable coding owing to their rarity.

A downside to relying on binary measures is that some variance in the outcome variables is minimized. Nevertheless, to measure *degrees* of lyrical diversity and innovation via an ordinal or continuous dependent variable necessitates an even greater amount of subjectivity. For example, it is more subjective to state that a song about craziness is more diverse than a song about boasting, given that they both occur at the same rate in the sample. In thoroughly examining the distribution of themes and sub-genres, I believe it is most logical to construct the outcome measures as they appear, rather than create multiple thresholds.

The final list of themes used is as follows:

1. Hoping for Love

- Refers to songs in which the singer is trying to court or date a love interest, and uses romantic language for the purposes of wooing, or songs in which the singer is pining over someone who is unattainable for some reason, either because they were previously in a relationship and the other person has moved on, he or she is involved with someone else, or he or she is a complete stranger.

2. Happy in love

- Refers to any songs that discuss the joys of being love, and often include professions of romantic love

3. Dissolution of love

- Refers to a situation in which there is turmoil in a relationship (fighting, mistrust), or mention of a break-up.

4. Sexual Courting

- Refers to songs in which the singer is pursuing a love interest for the purposes of a casual sexual encounter. Romantic language and allusions to a long-term relationship are absent.

5. Dance/Party

- Refers to any song whose central theme surrounds dancing or partying. Such songs typically discuss what happens at a nightclub or involve invocations to the DJ to play music.

6. Providing Reassurance

- Refers to songs in which the singer is providing reassurance or encouragement to a listener who is presumably down on his/her luck. No allusions to romantic love are made.

7. Tale of Caution

- Refers to songs in which the singer either implicitly or explicitly encourages the audience to learn from the tale of caution being narrated, as in “Another Day in Paradise” by Phil Collins and “Waterfalls” by TLC.

8. Grieving

- Refers to songs in which the singer grieves the loss of a friend or lover, as in “Tears in Heaven” by Eric Clapton.

9. Other

- Refers to group of songs with very unique themes that occurred infrequently (argument between two women about a man, being carefree, boasting, craziness, desire to be understood, deviance, empowerment, loneliness, novelty rap/film promotion, standing up for oneself; racial profiling, Spanish song). These songs are:

“Blaze of Glory” by Jon Bon Jovi – Deviance

“Boom Boom Pow” by Black Eyed Peas - Boasting

“Boulevard of Broken Dreams” by Green Day - Loneliness

“Can’t Nobody Hold Me Down” by Puff Daddy - Boasting

“Crazy” by Gnarls Barkley – Craziness

“Fly” by Sugar Ray – Being Carefree

“He Wasn’t Man Enough” by Toni Braxton – Argument between two women about a man

“Hollaback Girl” by Gwen Stefani – Standing up for oneself

“I Believe I Can Fly” by R. Kelly - Empowerment

“Informer” by Snow – Deviance

“Iris” by Goo Goo Dolls – Desire to be understood

“Let Me Blow Ya Mind” by Eve - Boasting

“Macarena” by Los Del Rio – Spanish Song

“Men in Black” by Will Smith – Novelty rap/film promotion

“Ridin’” by Chamillionaire – Racial profiling

“The Boy is Mine” by Brandy and Monica - Argument between two women about a man

“Under the Bridge” by Red Hot Chili Peppers – Loneliness

“Unwell” by Matchbox Twenty – Craziness

Diverse/Common Theme Frequencies are:

Common Themes:	Frequency
Dissolution of Love	32%
Happy in Love	19%
Hoping for Love	10%
Sexual Courting	17%
Diverse Themes:	
Argument btw. 2 Women over a Man	1%
Being Carefree	0.49%
Boasting	1%
Craziness	1%
Dance/Party	5%
Desire to be Understood	0.49%
Deviance	1%
Empowerment	0.49%
Grieving	3%
Loneliness	1%
Novelty rap/film promotion	0.49%
Providing Reassurance	2%
Racial Profiling	0.49%
Spanish Song	0.49%
Standing Up for Oneself	0.49%
Tale of Caution	3%

Appendix D: Chord and melody analysis

Chordal analysis is based on measures proposed by Dowd (1992, 2000). For each song, I measure:

- (1) The total number of chords employed in the song.
- (2) The number of chord changes occurring per musical beat.
- (3) The proportion of all employed chords that are major.
- (4) The proportion of all employed chords that are minor.
- (5) The proportion of all chords that are tonic.
- (6) The proportion of all chords that are subdominant.
- (7) The proportion of all chords that are dominant.

	Mean no. of unique chords	Mean proportion of major chords	Mean proportion of chords that are tonic, subdominant and dominant
1990-2009	4.73	0.60	0.68
	(2.24)	(0.28)	(0.23)

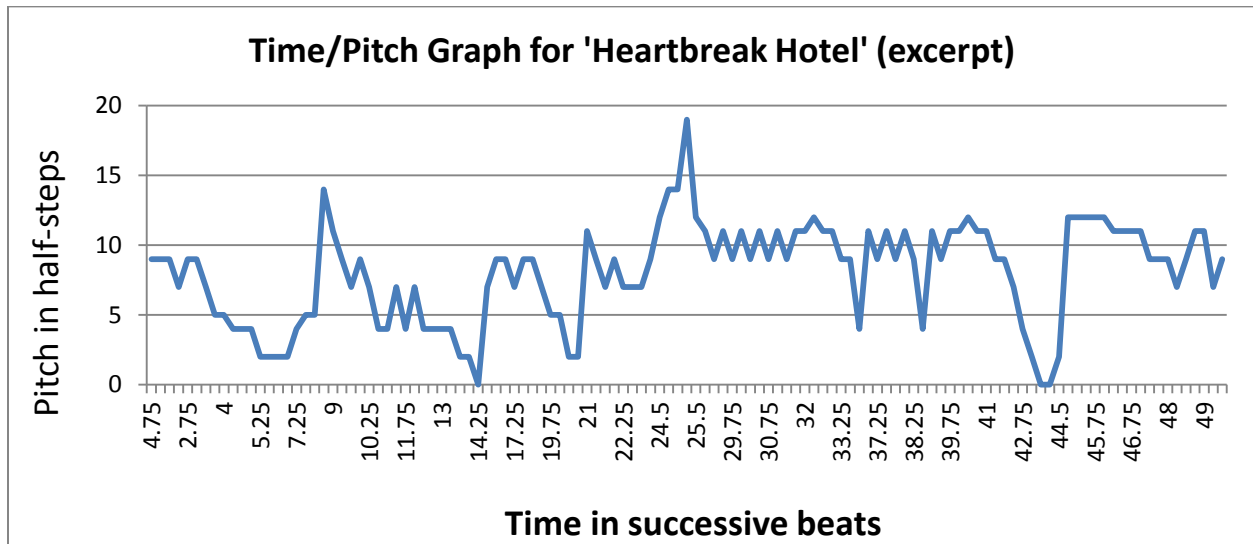
Standard deviations in parentheses

Melody analysis is based on measures outlined by Cerulo (1988, 1995) and adapted for popular music by Dowd (2000). I use the song 'Heartbreak Hotel' to demonstrate how for each song, I measure:

- (1) The frequency of melodic motion, which indicates the number of times a melody changes direction per musical measure. A higher frequency denotes more movement in the melody. The frequency score for 'Heartbreak Hotel' is 3.46, indicating that it changes direction almost 3½ times per bar.
- (2) The magnitude of melodic change, which indicates how drastic the average size of directional change is. The average size of directional change for 'Heartbreak Hotel' is 5 half-steps.
- (3) Melodic disjunctness, which indicates the number of directional changes that are more than 4 half-steps. Thirty-eight percent of intervals are greater than 4 half-steps in 'Heartbreak Hotel.'

(4) Melodic ornamentation, which indicates the amount of musical decoration by the degree to which multiple musical notes occur per lyric syllable. ‘Heartbreak Hotel’ has an ornamentation score of 1.34.

(5) Range, which indicates the number of unique half-steps used in the melody. The number of unique half-steps in ‘Heartbreak Hotel’ is 19.



Per Dowd (2000) and Cerulo (1995), I then converted the chordal and melodic measures into z-scores: for each chordal and melodic measure, the mean value is subtracted from each raw score, and then divided by the standard deviation of the chordal or melodic measure population in question.

Next, the individual z-scores for each song were used to create an index ($\alpha=0.67$). The final value represents the extent to which a given song deviates from the period average. That is to say, the outcome variable tells us how dissimilar a given song is: the higher the deviation, the greater the dissimilarity.

Appendix E: Innovation analysis

In order to achieve a sufficient level of specificity, I took the first sub-genre listed for a given artist on allmusic.com and cross-referenced it with the genres listed on the Wikipedia page of the particular song in question. The sub-genre most commonly shared between the two sources was taken as the appropriate classification. Genre coding was an iterative process. The unit of analysis is the song and not the artist, and on a few occasions this led to some unintuitive coding. The band Extreme, for example, is typically classified as a funk metal band, however, their first *Billboard* hit, "More than Words," was in fact a ballad, and was coded as such. Once all songs

were coded, I traced the origins of each sub-genre listed to ascertain when they first appeared on the *Billboard* music charts. The origins and history of a sub-genre were listed on the aforementioned websites, and I cross-referenced these for accuracy using a number of sources, such as Lena (2006) and Szatmary (2004). Next, I coded songs belonging to a newly emerging sub-genre as innovative ('1'), and songs belonging to an established sub-genre as non-innovative ('0'). New sub-genres are those musical styles whose common parlance in popular media spans less than five years. If a new sub-genre charted five years after its first appearance on *Billboard*, it was thereafter coded as non-innovative. As I extended my search for the origins of sub-genres prior to the time period of interest (1990 to 2009), left censoring is not an issue.

One might argue that performing artists who enjoy market success within the five years following the emergence of a new sub-genre are not necessarily innovators, but are instead copycats. However, contrary to romanticist perspectives on art, innovation is not just one person creating something new, but is a movement of a group of artists and personnel who collectively help to establish new genres (Becker 1982). Even those artists who follow in the wake of a new sub-genre contribute to innovation, insofar as their involvement precedes consideration of a given sub-genre such as crunk, for example, as common.

One possible issue with using subgenre classification is that a given subgenre may have been applied to a song years after its release, and it is therefore not representative of how industry personnel and critics conceptualized the song when it was first released. To ensure that this did not affect the coding process, I searched for reviews of a given song or album to discern whether the language used to describe the music is consistent with the subgenre labels applied to the song on allmusic.com and Wikipedia.

I searched for press coverage on each artist represented by a new subgenre in my sample in Factiva to verify how critics and journalists classified their music during the time of its release. Reviews were found from a variety of sources such as *Billboard*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*. Even though my unit of analysis is the song, and not the album, I searched for press coverage for both songs and albums, in order to ensure that I was taking the most representative press coverage into consideration. Additionally, occasionally an artist had hit songs from the same album, and so it was reasonable to expect that the subgenre style would be similar across the album (e.g. Color Me Badd had two songs from the same album chart on *Billboard*, but they can both be classified as New Jack Swing). Nevertheless, special attention was paid to cases that may have deviated from this trend (e.g. Usher, an R&B artist, released a song called "Yeah!" that was classified as crunk in reviews). In general, press coverage used the same or similar genre classifications. In one instance, a more representative subgenre label was applied. Tag Team's "Whoomp! (There it is)" was initially coded as pop rap, however, in press coverage it was more commonly referred to as Miami Bass. Nevertheless, Miami Bass was also new to the *Billboard* charts, and so in all cases, press coverage supported the application of a *new* subgenre label to the songs in the sample.

The genres in the sample are listed below. Because of the five-year stipulation, some genres appear as new (innovative) as well as old (conventional):

Subgenre	Old	New	Total
Adult contemporary	13	0	13
Alternative pop rock	23	0	23
Ballad	8	0	8
Contemporary R&B	55	0	55
Country pop	6	0	6
Crunk	0	2	2
Dance pop	27	0	27
East coast rap	0	7	7
Electro pop/hop	0	4	4
Gothic metal	0	1	1
Hard rock	1	0	1
Latin pop	5	0	5
Miami Bass	0	1	1
Mid-west rap	0	1	1
New jack swing	0	6	6
Pop rap	7	4	11
Pop rock	7	0	7
Post grunge	0	10	10
Rap rock	0	1	1
Reggae	4	0	4
Ska punk	0	1	1
Southern rap	0	4	4
Teen pop	2	0	2
West coast rap	0	3	3
Total	158	45	203

Appendix F. Producer role within innovation progenitorship

	1990s Innovation*	2000s Innovation**
Specialized producer		
<i>Raw number</i>		
	8	28
<i>Percentage</i>	53%	93%
Performing artist is collaborator or sole producer		
<i>Raw number</i>		
	7	2
<i>Percentage</i>	47%	7%

*Not significant difference; $p=0.41$, Fisher's exact test

** $P<0.01$, Fisher's exact test

The total number of innovative sub-genres to emerge between 1990 and 2009 is 45 or 22% of all songs

The total number of specialized producers in the 1990s is 67 or 33% of all producers,

and in the 2000s it is 71 or 35% of all producers