JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Entrepreneurial Leadership as Creative Brokering: The Process and Practice of Co-creating and Advancing Opportunity

Elizabeth Long Lingo

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

ABSTRACT   How does entrepreneurial leadership drive the process of forming and advancing opportunity? Drawing from an ethnographic field study of Nashville music producers, I develop a model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering – the practices and process by which entrepreneurs lead and mobilize a complex network of actors in co-creating and advancing opportunity. I find that entrepreneurial leaders encounter three tensions as they advance this process: 1) generating novel ideas and fitting them within the competitive landscape; 2) incubating opportunity and seizing the moment in the market; and 3) fostering experimentation and navigating hyper-competition. I show when these tensions arise and identify six creative brokering practices through which leaders leverage their brokerage role to navigate these tensions in order to move opportunity forward. The paper offers a model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering, extends extant creative brokering scholarship to consider more distal market actors, and shows how creative brokering and leadership towards creative outcomes involve iteratively stepping forward to infuse market perspective and exert control, and stepping back to let others shine and co-create ideas.

Keywords: brokerage and brokering, creativity, entrepreneurial leadership, ethnography, process

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship involves a fundamental process of forming, developing, and exploiting opportunities to create value (Alvarez and Barney, 2005, 2007; Alvarez et al., 2013, 2017). As entrepreneurs advance opportunities through this process, they are faced with a complex environment comprising any number of actors, including team members, specialized experts, funders, customers, and other competitors (Gupta et al., 2004;

Pollack et al., 2017). Navigating these relationships may be especially challenging as entrepreneurs often lack formal authority over those involved and the path to entrepreneurial success is highly uncertain and non-linear (Alvarez and Barney, 2005; Ensley et al., 2006b). Tensions may arise as entrepreneurs wrestle with subjective differences between their own specific ideas for the emergent opportunity and those of others whose resources, insights, and commitment are needed to develop a competitively viable product (Grimes, 2018; Shane, 2012).

The study of entrepreneurial leadership has emerged to understand the factors, behaviours, and contexts that enable or constrain entrepreneurs' ability to lead and mobilize others toward the co-creation and exploitation of opportunities (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Gupta et al., 2004; Leitch and Volery, 2017; Reid et al., 2018). Scholars have developed an increasingly nuanced understanding of leadership qualities and behaviours within different phases of the entrepreneurial process and with different focal actors – for example, showing how leaders' orientation towards internal or external actors might differ across phases or how differing behaviours might be used with external stakeholders or internal team members (Antonakis and Autio, 2006; Mueller et al., 2012; Reid et al., 2018; Vecchio, 2003; Volery et al., 2015). However, extant research has yet to illuminate the interdependence among behaviours across phases, or how behaviours might be used to navigate relationships between and among internal and external actors over time. While scholars have begun to conceive of entrepreneurial leadership as a process of co-action and co-creation – from an initial kernel of an idea through its further development and elaboration – this work remains in its infancy (Hjorth et al., 2015; Leitch and Volery, 2017; Sklaveniti, 2017). Research that can inform a more dynamic and situated understanding of entrepreneurial leadership is needed. In this paper I address this gap by informing the fundamental question: how does entrepreneurial leadership drive the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity?

To inform my study, I engage research on creative brokering (Halevy et al., 2018), the behavioural practice and process by which individuals strategically leverage their unique role of spanning relationships between other actors and organizations to create novel outcomes. Creative brokering scholarship can provide useful analytical and theoretical traction to our study of entrepreneurial leadership as it situates action within a complex network of actors whose expertise, resources and commitment are needed to develop and advance novel ideas (Obstfeld, 2017; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). While early brokerage research focused on the structure of the broker's network (Burt, 2000), and brokers' ability to exploit their position to develop good ideas and extract personal benefit (Burt, 1992, 2004), more recent studies of creative brokering focus on how individuals strategically leverage their role – bringing actors together or keeping them apart – to develop creative outcomes and solutions (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld et al., 2014). For example, Obstfeld (2005, 2017) found that actors adopting an orientation toward bringing others together developed solutions that were both creative and implementable. Lingo and O'Mahony (2010) illuminated how brokers of creative projects leveraged their role to manage ambiguity and negotiate the generation and synthesis of ideas – including their own. Yet studies of creative brokering are agnostic regarding the dynamics among leaders and followers and have primarily

focused on those most immediately involved in creative projects, rather than more distal actors, such as consumers, competitors and other market influencers, who might shape and constrain brokerage action. Examining creative brokering in an entrepreneurial context can bring these dynamics to the fore.

In this paper, I present findings from a multi-year ethnographic study of Nashville country music producers, whose work involves co-creating and advancing opportunity – in this case, performing artists. My paper offers three primary contributions to scholarship on entrepreneurial leadership and creative brokering. First, I provide an inductively derived model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering – the practices and process by which entrepreneurs leverage their brokerage role to lead and mobilize a complex network of actors in co-creating and advancing opportunity. I find that entrepreneurial leaders encounter three tensions as they advance this process: 1) generating novel ideas and fitting them within competitive landscape; 2) incubating opportunity and seizing the moment in the market; and 3) fostering experimentation and navigating hyper-competition. I show when these tensions arise and identify six creative brokering practices through which leaders leverage their brokerage role to navigate these tensions and move opportunity forward: 1) shaping possibilities; 2) cultivating the concept; 3) curating introductions; 4) orchestrating individual success; 5) counterpointing contributions; and 6) crafting narratives. Second, I extend extant research on creative brokering by examining how more distal actors – including competitors and other market influences – inform brokerage action. Third, I contribute to our understanding of creative brokering and leadership towards creative outcomes by showing how they involve not only bringing actors together and keeping them apart, but also stepping forward to exert creative control and infuse market perspective, and stepping back to foster creativity and commitment among those involved.

In the following pages, I motivate my study by reviewing relevant research on entrepreneurial leadership and creative brokering, describe my empirical context, and detail my data collection and analytical approach. I then present my findings, including a rich description of the tensions and brokering practices observed, and an overall theoretical model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering. I conclude by discussing my contributions to scholarship on entrepreneurial leadership and creative brokering, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP

As summarized by Reid et al. (2018), research on entrepreneurial leadership has centred around five primary areas: the ability of leaders to effectively articulate, communicate, and guide behaviour toward a specific emerging vision or goal; the factors, especially emotion, that contribute to entrepreneurs' ability to influence followers and external stakeholders; the factors that enable entrepreneurs to foster creativity and innovation among team members; entrepreneurs' capacity to plan for how they will advance their ventures; and links between personality traits, personal characteristics, and outcomes of interest. For example, scholars find that successful entrepreneurs craft compelling visions and stories (Baum and Locke, 2004), possess high emotional intelligence (Ahmetoglu

et al., 2011), and express the right balance of optimism and pragmatism to be perceived as credible and authentic (Hmieleski and Baron, 2009).

However, extant scholarship has typically remained bound to a particular entrepreneurial phase or subset of focal actors, and thus cannot shed light on the interdependent nature of leadership behaviours over time or how they might be used to navigate relationships among the array of actors involved. For example, one major research stream examines the leadership qualities and interpersonal dynamics that enable and constrain entrepreneurs' ability to identify or initially forge opportunities (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Reid et al., 2018). These studies illuminate the socially constructed and reflexive nature of making sense of and forming the emerging idea for oneself and others (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Alvarez et al., 2013, 2017). Entrepreneurs must establish the ongoing legitimacy and viability of their opportunity vis-à-vis competitors and market demand (Snihur et al., 2017; Suddaby et al., 2015), while building trust, mobilizing resources, and managing the expectations and perceptions of resource providers and other external contributors (Gupta et al., 2004; Leitch and Volery, 2017; Pollack et al., 2017). Given their ventures' perceived uncertainty and newness (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002), effective signalling (Shane, 2003), making good impressions (Nagy et al., 2012), and being able to persuade and influence potential funders are critical social and entrepreneurial leadership skills (Baron and Jintong, 2008; Baron and Markman, 2003).

A second major stream focuses on entrepreneurial leadership in relation to team members most immediately involved in entrepreneurial ventures (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Reid et al., 2018). Within this stream, scholars have been particularly interested in how entrepreneurial leaders motivate their followers and foster their commitment despite the risks and uncertainty inherent to entrepreneurial contexts (Ensley et al., 2006b; Zaech and Baldegger, 2017). For example, these studies highlight the importance of entrepreneurs' passion and positive emotion (Ahmetoglu et al., 2011; Baron et al., 2011; Breugst et al., 2012; Brundin et al., 2008; Cardon et al., 2009), charisma (Alvarez and Barney, 2005), and ability to articulate a compelling vision (Reid et al., 2018). Despite the focus on co-creating opportunity within the entrepreneurship field, only a handful of studies examine entrepreneurial leadership and creativity. These find that risk-taking and innovative leadership behaviours (Chen, 2007), transformational leadership styles (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009), organizational innovation climates (Kang et al., 2015), and creative efficacy beliefs (Cai et al., 2019) can foster team members and followers' creativity. Moving beyond conceptions of leaders as heroic charismatic geniuses, others studies examine the shared (Ensley et al., 2006a; Hmieleski et al., 2012), distributed (Cope et al., 2011), or collective nature of entrepreneurial leadership (Foo et al., 2006; Reid et al., 2018) that harnesses a plurality of voices and perspectives on the emerging venture (Leitch and Volery, 2017). While moving toward a theory of entrepreneurial leadership as co-creation, these studies focus primarily on interactions among entrepreneurial leadership team members and not the broader array of internal and external actors whose resources, creativity, and expertise are needed to develop and advance entrepreneurial opportunities over time.

A smaller set of studies seek to advance a more holistic view of entrepreneurial leadership across phases and a 'constellation of different motivational systems' (Gartner et al., 1992, p. 23). Vecchio's (2003) synthesis of extant entrepreneurial leadership scholarship

provides an initial first effort – characterizing entrepreneurial leadership orientations, psychological states, behaviours, and contextual factors across different entrepreneurial phases. Building on this work, Antonakis and Antonio (2006) propose that entrepreneurial leadership behaviours change over phases – from a focus on external constituents in early 'procreation' phases to leading internal venture members as the opportunity develops, to more distal leadership involving environmental monitoring and strategy implementation as the opportunity matures. Importantly, their model portrays entrepreneurial leadership as constructing and managing competing visions, interests, and perspectives regarding the emergent venture. Further building on this work, Volery, Mueller, and Von Siemens find that leadership orientations and communication patterns shift between external and internal stakeholders over time (2012, 2015). However, while providing important insight, these studies neither illuminate how behaviours might be used to navigate relationships between and among internal and external actors, nor examine the interdependence among leadership behaviours over time. Sklaveniti's (2017) theory of entrepreneurial leadership as co-action among venture participants provides an invaluable process perspective – conceiving entrepreneurial leadership as four intertwined relational processes of changing direction and creativity as the new venture emerges: creativity genesis, creativity enactment, direction genesis, and direction enactment. However, her work is conceptual, and concludes with a call for 'immersed' empirical studies that capture the everyday lived experience of participants and the actual behaviours involved in leading an emergent co-creation process (p. 208).

As this summary suggests, research is needed that examines the everyday, situated, and dynamic nature of entrepreneurial leadership behaviors that drive the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity and navigate interactions among the network of actors involved (Gartner et al., 1992; Hjorth et al., 2015; Leitch and Volery, 2017; Sklaveniti, 2017). To gain greater traction, I turn to literature on creative brokering.

CREATIVE BROKERING

Research on creative brokering situates individuals' actions within a complex network of actors, including specialized experts, resource gatekeepers, and other contributors to the process of co-creating and advancing novel outcomes (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, 2017). Within networks, brokers play an especially important role since they are the unique link – or 'span structural holes' – between disconnected actors (Burt, 1992, 2000). While considerable research examines the structural nature of creative brokerage – the actors' position in a network – and resulting consequences and opportunities, more recent conceptions of creative *brokering* (Halevy et al., 2018) focus attention on the behavioural practices and processes by which actors leverage their role to develop and advance novel ideas and solutions (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld et al., 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016).

Traditionally, scholars have conceived of brokers as the *tertius gaudens*, or the 'third who benefits' (Simmel, 1950). From this perspective, the creative broker is one who extracts strategic information and a 'vision advantage' for what constitutes 'good ideas' from their brokerage role (Burt, 2004). While *tertius gaudens* can seize opportunities and enjoy career advancement and control by exploiting their position in this way, they often fail to

develop the commitment and trust needed to advance and implement those novel ideas over time (Fleming and Waguespack, 2007; Fleming et al., 2007; Ibarra et al., 2005; Obstfeld, 2005). An alternative conception portrays creative brokers as the *tertius iungens*, or the 'third who joins' (Obstfeld, 2005), who develops and advances novel ideas by combining and recombining technology (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997), or connecting people and ideas to create new and implementable possibilities (Kauppila et al., 2018; Obstfeld, 2005, 2017). The *tertius iungens* need not garner distrust as they are open to sharing ideas and opportunities with people, and invite a larger number of people to combine their ideas to forge novel solutions (Obstfeld, 2005). However, by focusing solely on bringing people together, the *tertius iungens* approach fails to address the often-negotiated nature of creating new ideas, especially across organizational, occupational, or disciplinary boundaries (Kaplan et al., 2017).

Further, neither the *tertius gaudens* nor the *tertius iungens* approach resolves a fundamental interdependence faced by creative brokers and entrepreneurial leaders. Even as they seek to exercise control and influence over their emerging ideas, creative brokers must harness others' commitment, resources, and expertise. Individual advantage and the collective creative outcome are inextricably intertwined, then, as described by Ibarra et al. (2005, p. 367): 'the individual pursuit of network advantage detracts from or contributes to the emergence of public [collective] goods'. Lingo and O'Mahony (2010) show how individuals might strategically leverage their brokerage role to advance a collective creative outcome. They find that brokers of creative projects weave together both *tertius gaudens* and *tertius iungens* practices in order to advance the generation and synthesis of ideas and manage three forms of ambiguity arising in their collective creative process: 1) ambiguity around quality, or what constitutes success; 2) ambiguity around who should have control over decisions; and 3) ambiguity regarding how the collective creative work should proceed.

Yet Lingo and O'Mahony's study only focused on dynamics among those immediately involved in creative production, rather than distal network actors and relationships. Building on their work, Quintane and Carnabuci's (2016) longitudinal study of a digital advertising firm's email communications showed that brokering strategies depend on whether brokers are engaging in interactions beyond (unembedded) or within (embedded) their long-term network of relationships. While providing invaluable relational context, their work focuses solely on information exchange, rather than the brokering practices involved in eliciting and synthesizing creative contributions (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). Research is needed that explores both – the practices needed to foster creativity and manage competing interests, perspectives and contributions among contributors while also considering more distal actors such as consumers, competitors, and other market influences that can inform creative brokering in practice.

EMPIRICAL CONTEXT: NASHVILLE COUNTRY MUSIC INDUSTRY

To explore these questions, I studied music producers working within the Nashville country music industry. The global, billion-dollar country music production industry comprises a network of 'interconnections and interdependencies' among songwriters and song publishers, expert musical talent, record labels and their personnel, engineers,

producers, aspiring artists, and audiences who consume the music (Hirsch, 2000, p. 356; Menger, 1999). Within this system, music producers have been described as fulfilling the key entrepreneurial role since they create 'a novel combination of the available means of production' (Peterson and Berger, 1971, p. 98). While labels previously discovered and developed artists 'in-house', since the late 1990s labels have shifted the role and risk of discovering and developing new acts to independent music producers (Daley, 1998). As such, the everyday work of music producers involves co-creating and advancing opportunity – in this case, the performing artist persona or concept – within a highly competitive and volatile industry. Producers can be considered entrepreneurial leaders as they 'assemble and mobilize a "supporting cast" of participants' toward the co-creation and advancement of opportunities (Gupta et al., 2004, p. 242).

Similar to entrepreneurial leaders, music producers must secure, elicit, and integrate an array of technical, creative, and financial expertise and resources from across a network while also advancing their own creative vision (Daley, 1998). More specifically, producers are at the centre of the process of bringing an artist to market, engaging a diverse array of parties as shown in Figure 1. A first set of actors comprises those who could be considered the core team who are immediately involved throughout the entire process of co-creating and advancing opportunity: the artist, their family members, and the manager. A second set comprises those who are key resource gatekeepers whose resources and commitment must be mobilized to advance and exploit the opportunity: songwriters and song publishers who provide coveted songs (the songwriting community); major and independent record labels who provide funding, marketing and distribution; and other marketing and distribution gatekeepers. A third set comprises networks of experts: vocal
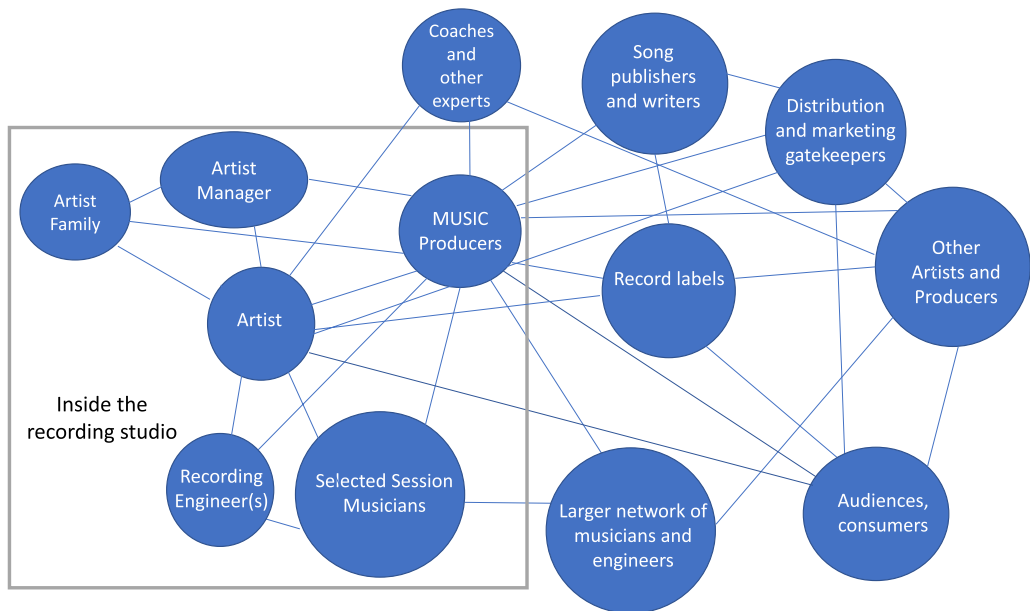

Figure 1. Actors involved in Nashville country music production [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

and performance coaches; audio recording engineers; and recording 'session' musicians competing for contract gigs, including those selected to be more immediately involved in further developing the artist opportunity in the recording studio. Finally, a fourth set of actors includes audiences and competitors, including the network of other music producers and performing artists who both compete for scarce resources and can be a source of inspiration. Taken together, these parties often have competing interests and differing opinions regarding what will constitute success within the highly competitive commercial music market (Lampel et al., 2006). The artist persona must be perceived as sufficiently 'authentic' by audiences and country music industry gatekeepers, yet sufficiently novel to stand out among the rosters of existing artists (Jones et al., 2005; Peterson, 1997).

From an initial kernel of potential – gleaned through word-of-mouth, hearing the talent at a live performance, listening to promotional or what are called 'demo CDs,' talking with artists at industry gatherings, or imagining a new type of act over a beer – producers are at the centre of forming and advancing artist opportunities. Artists may be global or regional 'stars' or relatively unknown singer songwriters with gifted yet undeveloped talent. Artists often have strong opinions regarding their persona that may or may not align with the artistic persona that producers think will differentiate them in the market. Deciding to come to Nashville is often a momentous life decision for most aspiring artists, who spend their life savings (and perhaps that of their families) to pursue their musical dreams (Patchett, 2007). Artists often have strongly protective and opinionated family members and managers who seek to optimize their artist's career potential, and who can complicate decisions over what will help make the artist successful. Even though they may not be musically trained or be familiar with the Nashville music industry, managers and family members often believe they should have a say regarding their artists' look, sound, and choice of songs that will showcase the artists to resource gatekeepers and audiences.

To advance their opportunities, producers must secure resources from the songwriting community and record labels. Within country music, most performing artists do not write their own songs – instead music producers secure songs from the songwriting community that will set the artist apart and capture the unique persona of the artist vis-à-vis others in the marketplace. While talent is key, a powerful or 'catchy' song with a powerful hook or sensational guitar intro can springboard success. In addition, songs can help crystallize the artist's persona. For example, the song 'No shoes, No shirt, No service', fully captured Kenney Chesney's emerging laid back 'Margaritaville' persona. Instead of a felt black hat and cowboy boots, Kenny Chesney's persona involved flip flops, a straw hat, and a life of 'chilling' at the beach. In Nashville, a community of songwriters and song publishers develop songs to be recorded by artists (de Laat, 2015). Songwriters, who make their living on song publishing royalties, reserve their best songs for artists deemed to offer the greatest promise for success. As a result, producers and artists face intense competition in securing what might be seen as 'great' songs.

Producers also need to secure development (studio production funding), marketing, and distribution resources from record labels and their 'artist and repertoire' (A&R) personnel who make decisions regarding studio recording budgets, artist marketing, and song distribution. While some record label people have musical backgrounds, many are characterized as 'beancounters' who have no musical training. As trained accountants or

MBAs, record label personnel are often viewed as making decisions based on market and sales/streaming data rather than being willing to take creative risks or seeing possibility beyond what already is successful in the market (Negus, 1999a, 1999b). Nevertheless, their input is needed, and they may seek to be heavily involved in bringing an artist to market.

Once they have secured necessary resources, producers attempt to further develop their opportunity in the recording studio. In these interpersonally intense recording sessions, producers bring together the artist, and selected recording engineers and session musicians to create the magic that will further embody the emerging artist persona and potentially create the hook or musical treatment that will differentiate the artist in the market. Producers lead by offering a vision to artists and musicians that will guide the emergent musical recording while also eliciting the expertise and improvisational power of those involved. Producers may work with certain musicians repeatedly, however, musician combinations typically differ across recording sessions depending on the creative vision for each song to be recorded. Session musicians, who are in turn competing for their own place in the hierarchy of session musicians, may be reluctant to take risks in their performances. The performances they accomplish during recording has immediate impact on their ability to secure future gigs (Jones, 1996) – session musicians are thus co-creators and audience to others' in-the-moment performances. Further, there is no formula for achieving success – the co-created music depends on who is involved and the improvisational magic that can develop in the moment based on contributors' talent and expertise. While established roles help coordinate action in cultural industries (Bechky, 2006), there still remains significant ambiguity over whose expertise should prevail and who should control creative decisions (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). Producers are also keenly aware of those who may be external to the immediate creation process – audiences, gatekeepers, and especially record labels – whose commitment and passion are needed to successfully exploit the artist opportunity. The producer's goal is to develop an opportunity – the artist persona – that they can hand off to labels to sell and for which audiences will pay for.

As this overview shows, the everyday work of Nashville music producers holds many similarities to the challenge facing entrepreneurial leaders. Their everyday work involves leading and mobilizing an array of actors towards opportunity co-creation and development; building and maintaining the commitment of internal and external stakeholders over time; eliciting and synthesizing others' creative contributions and perspectives, while also exerting their own creative vision; and navigating a constellation of differing interests and subjective definitions of what will constitute success. Unlike many entrepreneurs, however, they are often not involved with opportunity exploitation – marketing and distribution – which is typically undertaken by record labels. Nonetheless, the long shadow of the exploitation phase looms large over producers' work – their goal is to develop an artist opportunity that the labels will embrace and successfully market amidst steep competition. Taken together, the Nashville country music industry is a particularly opportune context to examine the research question motivating this paper: How does entrepreneurial leadership drive the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity?

METHODS

Heeding the call for 'immersed' empirical studies of entrepreneurial leadership (Sklaveniti, 2017), I engaged in an ethnographic field study (Creswell and Poth, 2016; Maxwell, 2013) of music producers working in Music City USA – Nashville, Tennessee. Ethnographic studies are invaluable for understanding the situated nature of work, and how work is experienced over time from the perspective of those involved (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Maxwell, 2013; Van Maanen, 1998). Ethnographies are also invaluable for illuminating actual work activity (Orr, 1996) and for teasing out work practices or the repertoire of actions that reflect people's understandings of 'how to get things done' in complex settings (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 249). An ethnographic exploration is also uniquely suited to examining the messiness and emergent nature of entrepreneurial leadership as it emphasizes 'the way a task, as it unfolds over time, looks to someone at work on it, while many of the options and dilemmas remain unresolved' (Brown and Duguid, 1991, p. 41). Nashville is a particularly opportune setting to explore the questions posed in this paper as producers regularly identify and advance artists, offering a context to study the process of multiple producers within a short time frame. Further, because Nashville and its surrounding areas serve as a major hub for music production, parties are co-located thus enabling ethnographic study.

Data Collection

I was immersed in the Nashville music production industry for 7 years, testing and refining my understanding of industry dynamics as I engaged with music industry and record label executives, producers, songwriters, musicians, and engineers as part of my work; participated in Leadership Music educational sessions; attended industry celebrations, festivals, showcases, and conventions; attended songwriter nights and workshops; attended and facilitated industry summits; and helped launch a recording studio. Within this time, I conducted a formal ethnographic field study focused on how music producers form and advance opportunity. I engaged in triangulated data collection and analysis (Creswell and Miller, 2000), including interviews, observations, participant observation, and archival data.

  As part of my ethnography, and as summarized in Table I, I conducted forty semi-structured, open-ended interviews, of which 27 were with producers. Additional formal interviews were conducted with other key contributors to the process, including performers/artists (2), label personnel (2), songwriters (2), musicians (3), engineers (2), and production assistants (2). I identified producers to interview in several ways: by sending introductory letters to 'star' producers who were associated with Billboard top country chart songs; by cold-calling or sending letters to producers listed in the yellow pages or online databases of Nashville-producers; and contacting individuals recommended by other producers and participants.

  By interviewing participants from an array of perspectives, I was able to better understand and triangulate my emerging findings of the unfolding process and tensions involved. I used a semi-structured interview approach that employed both grand tour questions (Spradley, 1979) and more specific questions that probed for how participants interpreted and approached the myriad of decisions and interactions involved in their

Table I. Summary of data collected

Data type	Quantity	Further details
Interviews		
Billboard-artist producers	11	• Producers of major country artists featured in Billboard chart lists. • All male • Range: Produced 2 to 35 charting artists
Aspiring-artist producer	16	• Producers actively seeking to break into Billboard chart lists. • 3 female; 13 male • Range: Produced 3 to 15 artists
Artists	2	• Aspiring artists
Resource gatekeepers	4	• Record Label executive • A&R representative • Songwriters (2)
Creative and technical experts	7	• Musicians (3) • Engineers (2) • Production Assistants (2)
Observations		
Billboard-artist producers	64 hours	• All aspects of co-creating and advancing opportunity
Aspiring-artist producers	38 hours	• Recording studio sessions
Recording own song	10	• Pre-production and recording session
Archival Data		
Zen and the Art of Producing (Mixerman, 2012), The Art of Music Production (Burgess, 2001), The Music Producers Handbook (Owsinski, 2016), Music Producers: Conversations with Today's Top Hitmakers (Schwartz and Stone, 1992); Music Row Magazine and Billboard; Online blogs and interviews focused on music producers		• 36 music charting-artist producers, working in rock, alt-rock, heavy metal, and pop.

work, and the consequences of those interactions. I asked informants to describe their everyday work interactions; the steps involved in developing and advancing an artist; and the meanings they ascribed to events and interactions in their own language. Interviews ranged from an hour in length to many multiple-hour long interviews over the course of my data collection.

Observations enabled me to observe the taken-for-granted and unintended aspects of interaction that producers might not be able or willing to articulate in interviews. I conducted over a hundred hours of formal observation, observing the myriad of participants involved. During my observations, I was able to take prolific notes, using shorthand to write down near-verbatim everything that was said, and conduct spontaneous, informal interviews with participants. Over lunch, breaks, and during late night sessions I listened to participants gossip about other actors, artists, producers and the industry. After observations, I debriefed with producers to ask them to clarify the meaning of statements and

interactions and compiled my field notes – noting themes and concepts that I wanted to explore further in subsequent interviews. I also engaged in *participant observation*, acting as co-producer of a single song. I co-wrote the song with the other producer and co-led the three-hour recording session involving an engineer, drummer, lead guitarist, pianist, and bass guitar player. In addition, we had an audience of five other musicians waiting to record their demos. Co-producing helped me get a better feel for the emotions and tensions faced by producers, in the moment, as the co-creation process unfolded.

Finally, I collected *archival material* that provided interviews or detailed the work of producers working within other musical genres. These included the books, *Zen and the Art of Producing* (Mixerman, 2012), *The Art of Music Production* (Burgess, 2001), *The Music Producers Handbook* (Owsinski, 2016), and *Music Producers: Conversations with Today's Top Hitmakers* (Schwartz and Stone, 1992); industry publications such as *Music Row Magazine* and *Billboard*; and online blogs and interviews focused on music producers. These provided insights into the work of an additional 36 music producers, working in rock, alt-rock, heavy metal, and pop.

Data Analysis

I utilized a twofold analytical strategy that allowed me to remain sensitive to themes that emerged from the data and develop new theoretical insights (Gioia et al., 2013; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). First, I embraced a process perspective (Hjorth et al., 2015; Langley, 2009; Sklaveniti, 2017) to capture the emergent nature of entrepreneurial leadership behaviours over time. A process perspective considers 'phenomena dynamically – in terms of movement, activity, events, change and temporal evolution' (Langley, 2007, p. 271), and illuminates how actions earlier in the venture shape those unfolding later. Second, given the lack of extant theory informing how entrepreneurs lead and navigate a complex network of actors in co-creating opportunity, an inductive analytical approach to theory development was warranted (Edmondson and McManus, 2007; Maxwell, 2013). More specifically, I utilized the constant comparative technique to analyse and interpret my data (Anderson and Jack, 2015; Gioia et al., 2013; Smith and McKeever, 2015; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). At a high level, this involved an iterative process of moving back and forth between my different sources of data, emerging codes and themes, and theories within the extant literature. Figure 2 summarizes the structure of my data analysis, details of which are further provided below.

To first orient myself to the data, and capture producers' accounts for what they did in the course of their work, I wrote up 'vignettes' of the producers' stories, their interpretations of what happened, and their accounts of why they acted the way they did (Miles and Huberman, 1994). From these vignettes, I developed a process mapping – a list of activities involved in identifying and working with artists, what was at stake, and who was involved. As part of this step, I identified three general phases characterizing the producers' process of co-creating and advancing the artist opportunity: 1) eliciting opportunity; 2) securing resources (from record labels and the songwriting community); and 3) developing opportunity. These phases were identified given the clear 'continuity in the activities within each period and… certain discontinuities at [their] frontiers' (Langley and Truax, 1994, p. 703) and the differences in actors involved. Figure 3 summarizes the actors involved in each phase
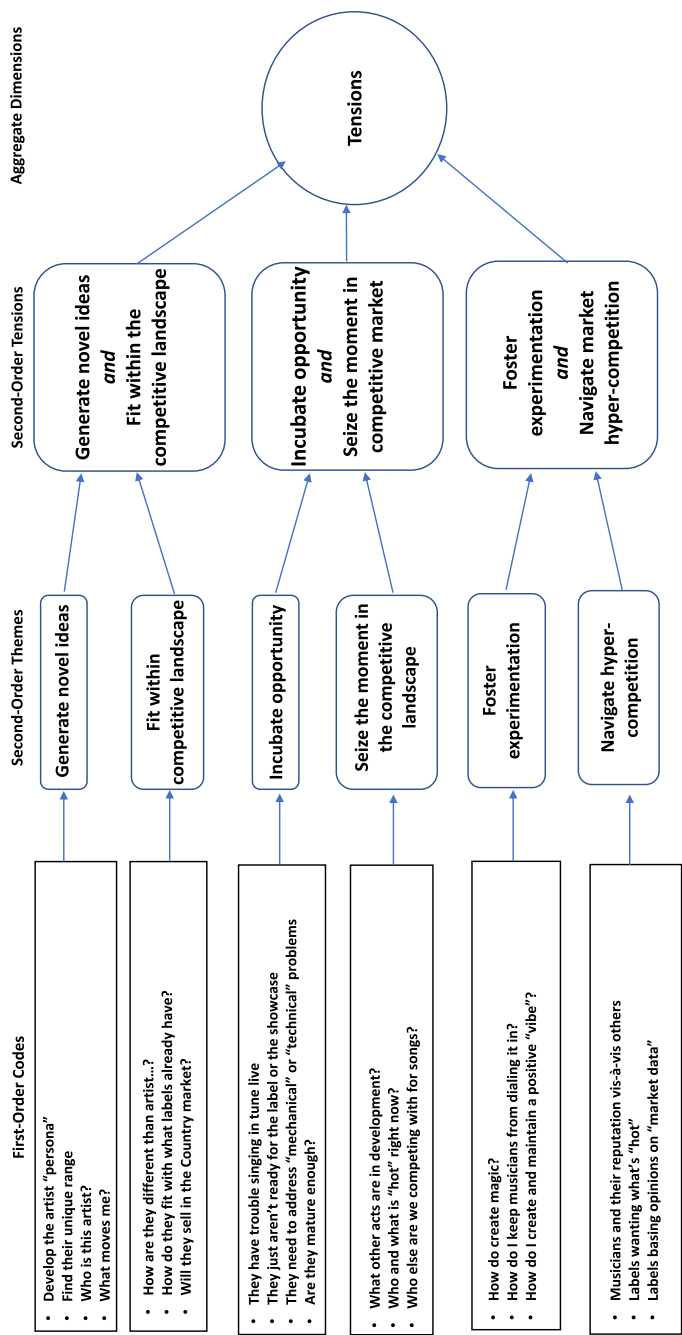
First-Order Codes

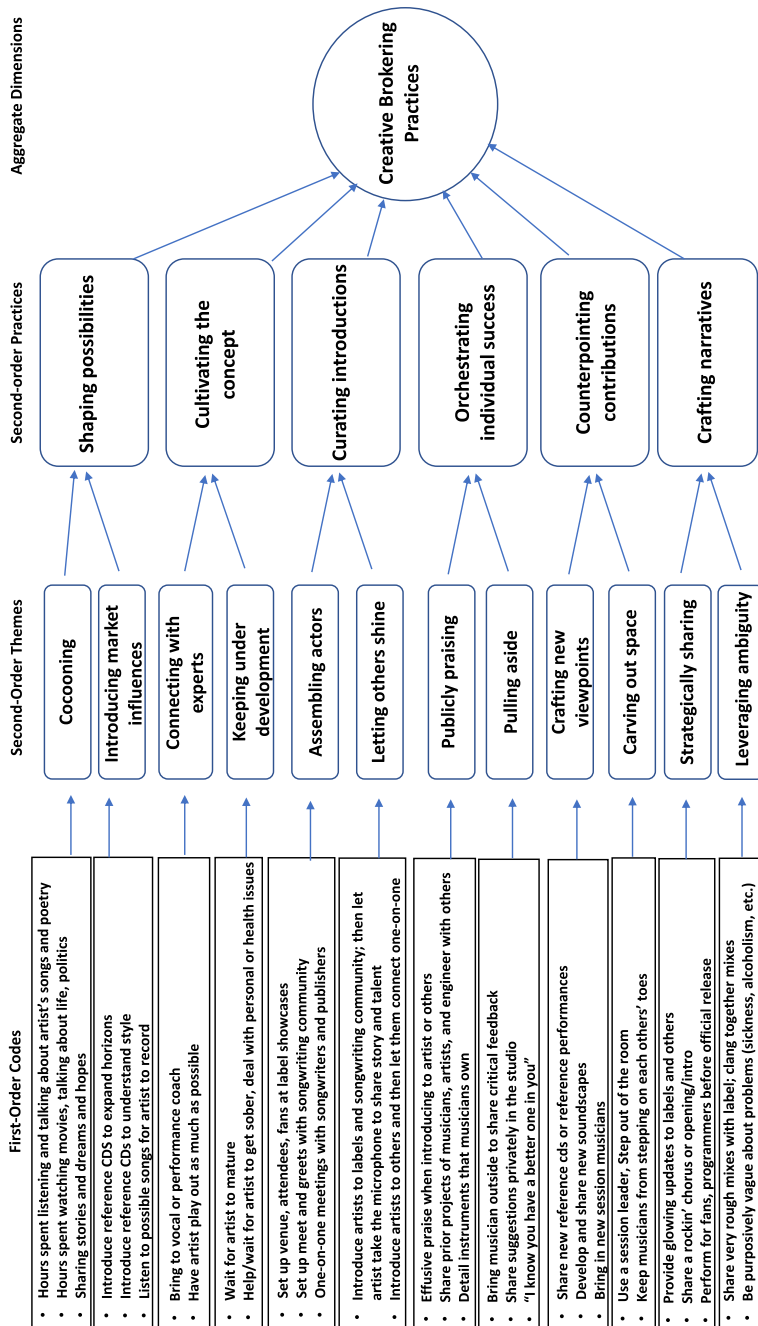- Develop the artist "persona"
- Find their unique range
- Who is this artist?
- What moves me?

- How are they different than artist....?
- How do they fit with what labels already have?
- Will they sell in the Country market?

- They have trouble singing in tune live
- They just aren't ready for the label or the showcase
- They need to address "mechanical" or "technical" problems
- Are they mature enough?

- What other acts are in development?
- Who and what is "hot" right now?
- Who else are we competing with for songs?

- How do create magic?
- How do I keep musicians from dialing it in?
- How do I create and maintain a positive "vibe"?

- Musicians and their reputation vis-à-vis others
- Labels wanting what's "hot"
- Labels basing opinions on "market data"

Second-Order Themes

- Generate novel ideas
- Fit within competitive landscape
- Incubate opportunity
- Seize the moment in the competitive landscape
- Foster experimentation
- Navigate hyper-competition

Second-Order Tensions

- Generate novel ideas *and* Fit within the competitive landscape
- Incubate opportunity *and* Seize the moment in competitive market
- Foster experimentation *and* Navigate market hyper-competition

Aggregate Dimensions

- Tensions

Figure 2. Data structure

Figure 2. (Continued) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]
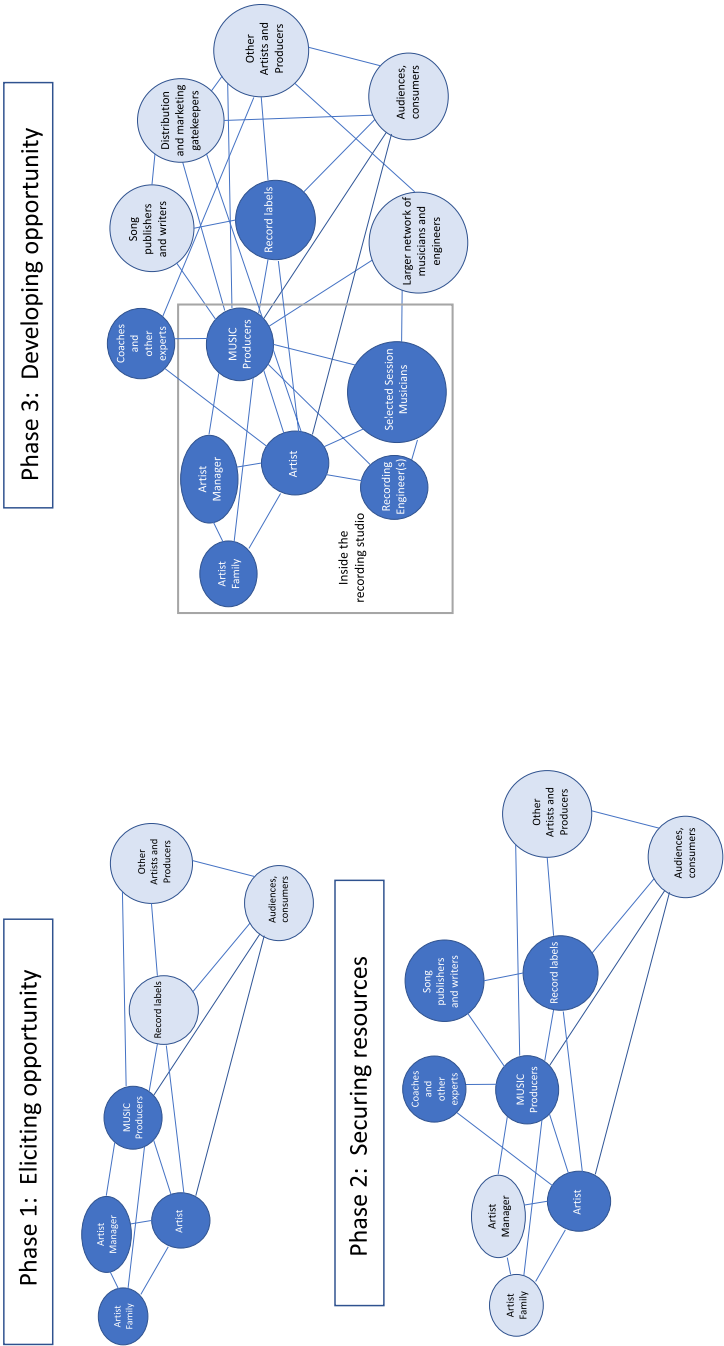
Figure 3. Actors involved in each phase

Note: Parties immediately involved in the co-creation process in each phase are shaded dark; those external to the process are shaded in light grey [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

This process and activity mapping, which I reviewed with my industry informants, helped me understand who was involved in the process at various points in time, how earlier actions affected subsequent actions and interactions, and the meaning for those involved. Second, using a combination of coding software, ATLAS.ti, and handwritten notes and memos, I developed an expansive list of first-order codes from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). As part of this process, I coded not only for the producers' behaviours, but also, if possible, the meaning and purpose producers ascribed to their activity. I also kept as close to my data as possible, coding my data with phrases used by producers, and continued until no further new codes were apparent in the data. I then engaged in a third step – an iterative process of triangulating across data sources, identifying patterns in the codes, considering their theoretical traction, and clustering, reducing and refining codes into second-order themes. Through this process of axial coding, I collapsed my first-order codes into second-order themes, including six challenges that producers faced in forming and advancing opportunity and twelve entrepreneurial leadership behaviours. As part of this process, I identified that behaviours were often used to either keep actors apart or bring them together, which inspired the engagement with the brokering literature.

Finally, as a fourth step, I teased out relationships among the second-order themes. I returned to my process mapping to understand when challenges arose and why, and to analyse leadership behaviours with regard to whom producers used them with and when, under what conditions, for what purpose, and how the context informed the behaviours employed (Charmaz, 2003). From this process-focused analysis, I discovered three tensions that producers encountered: 1) generating novel ideas and fitting within the competitive landscape; 2) incubating opportunity and seizing the moment; and 3) fostering experimentation and navigating hyper-competition, and identified when they arose. In parallel I also analysed how and when behaviours were used, with whom and why. In doing so, I found that producers used behaviours in combination with each other to navigate the different tensions arising as they co-created and advanced opportunity. For example, in Phase 2, as producers attempted to secure resources, they strategically kept the artist under development – delaying the introduction between artist and record labels or songwriters until the artist was deemed sufficiently ready. In combination, producers connected the artist with vocal coaches or friendly experts in order to prepare and refine the artist concept and pitch they would ultimately make. Instead of conceptualizing these as two separate behaviours, I combined them into the creative brokering practice of *cultivating the concept*. In total, I identified six creative brokering practices that producers utilized to navigate the identified tensions and advance opportunity: 1) shaping possibility; 2) cultivating the concept; 3) curating introductions; 4) orchestrating individual success; 5) counterpointing contributions; and 6) crafting narratives. Table II provides definitions and supplementary evidence of the creative brokering practices.

I used several procedures for ensuring the internal validity of my findings (Creswell and Miller, 2000). First, I triangulated between my different types of data throughout my data analysis. All practices and tensions were evident in interviews, and either observation field notes or archival data sources. Second, my prolonged immersion in the Nashville music industry enabled me to check and confirm my interpretations (Maxwell,

Table II. Definitions and supplementary evidence of creative brokering practices

Definitions	*Examples*
Phase 1: Eliciting opportunity	
Creative brokering practice: Shaping possibility	
Cocooning Working closely to elicit and foster creative ideas while explicitly buffering from competitive landscape or others' influence	• 'I stayed with the lead singer songwriter with him at his house, and I listened to lots of cassettes of his song ideas' • 'So we spend months and months … to kind of get at what inspires her, what sounds she likes and what she wants to sound like, and the things she wants to do'
Introducing market influences Strategically introducing knowledge of the market or market comparisons to help refine the artists' sense of possibility	• 'And we use reference CDs of other artists they like, listen to current songs on the radio …' • 'I consider it part of my job to present all the criteria and knowledge of the industry'
Phase 2: Securing resources	
Creative brokering practice: Cultivating the concept	
Connecting with experts Bringing in outside experts who can further refine and enhance the opportunity in preparation for pitching	• 'They might not sound their d's and t's at the end of words, they might put an h on a soft ballad to give them power… Sometimes it requires them going to a professional vocal coach' • 'So I brought in another person whose expertise is mentoring vocalists through record projects'
Keeping under development Strategically limiting exposure to key resource gatekeepers	• 'It's like managing a baseball team, the coach. Bringing [the artist] along and making sure you don't break them. If you have a pitcher in baseball, if you bring him up to early and if he gets killed too quick, he might never have the head for it again. The same thing can happen to an artist. If they are not ready, but there's something there, you have to develop that over time. You have to be careful what situations you put them in. And that can go for meetings you have with the label…'
Creative brokering practice: Curating introductions	
Assembling actors Strategically curating how, when, where, and with whom to pitch opportunities to their advantage	• 'So they'll get the players together, they'll book a venue, and then they'll invite different people from different labels to come see them. Showcases happen all the time' • 'Producers will put together four or five sides on an artist and because of their contacts they'll make some appointments and they'll play it for a few people to see if there is interest at labels. If there's a little bit of interest, we'll put together a showcase. And I found in this town, nobody gets a deal until somebody like Curb or Sony, think another label is going to sign you and then at that point they get very interested – that's when they want you'

Table II.   *Continued*

Definitions	Examples
Letting others shine Allowing internal team members to make connection and shine directly with key resource providers	• 'That's why the sit-down meetings are important – to discuss why we're choosing the songs that we are, to know the artist as a person, and get them [song publishers] to come around' • 'The other great thing about working with [this band] is they could pull it off live like you heard it on the record. All five of them could sing, and it was, all modesty aside, it was very good and very different. We did a showcase and the [label personnel] came in and saw them in addition to hearing the project'

Phase 3: Developing opportunity

Creative brokering practice: Counterpointing contributions

Crafting new viewpoints Introduce external people and ideas into the development process to spur new thinking	• 'I brought in two guys who played in a blues band together and were also accomplished studio musicians. They played on major records. The bass player plays on all the Alan Jackson records. So I'm thinking, I'm getting ringers in' • 'So I changed up the musicians… it made all the difference'
Carving out space Creating space for others' creative contributions and leadership	• 'He headed up the session for us, he's what you call a session leader, so I talked to him beforehand what it was going to be so he really hammered home to the players what the style was going to be [on my behalf]' • 'The guitar player was struggling with something, I just remember walking out of the studio and going out and playing a video game. I was doing something deliberately to separate myself and I just told him I'll be back in an hour'

Creative brokering practice: Orchestrating individual success

Publicly praising Publicly highlighting excellent qualities and performances to burnish actors' reputations	• The producer introduced the guitarist to the artists, 'He's a melody guy. He'll come up with something you'll love' • 'It's fun when you finish cutting a track and the band comes in [the control room] – you do the playback and say, "That sounds like a big 'ol hit to me". Whether it is or not, it makes 'em feel good'
Pulling aside Privately dealing with task, relational, or process issues to protect actors' reputations	• 'If it was a non-experienced player, I might pull them aside later. If someone asks you to do something, you better have a better reason than "I don't want to do that"' • 'The drummer finishes his take and then he comes out [of the recording room] and sits on the couch while the other players work on their overdubs. I asked him to do something over. And he said, "Well I did it". And I said to him, "No. I want to do it over"'

Creative brokering practice: Crafting narratives

Strategically sharing Provide just enough information to keep external actors committed and enthusiastic	• 'And just report to the A&R person. These are the musicians we've got. These are the songs, you've heard them and are on board. Studio. And they're excited and they're supportive and they're going back to their sales and marketing and A&R meeting and saying the session is happening' • 'I think they're wanting reassurance along the way that you guys are doing what we're supposed to be doing, that the songs are great, that the musicians were the right ones, that there are no problems'

Table II.   *Continued*

Definitions	Examples
Leveraging ambiguity Being purposively vague when sharing progress reports with external actors	• 'I'll play them a rough demo, just to give them a feel' • 'Being very proactive in including them in the process. At least to the point of giving them information if not involving them in the actual creative process itself'

2013). Finally, I shared my emergent findings with four informants, including three producers, who in turn confirmed my interpretation of their work.

To culminate this process, I brought all of the pieces together (tensions and practices, by phase) to develop a model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering – the practices and process by which entrepreneurs leverage their brokerage role to lead and navigate a complex network of actors in co-creating and advancing opportunity.

FINDINGS

Within the Nashville country music industry, co-creating and advancing an artist opportunity unfolds across three phases: 1) eliciting opportunity; 2) securing resources; and 3) developing opportunity. While I present these phases in sequential order, in actuality the process was often messy and recursive. For example, if producers did not successfully achieve results for a particular phase (e.g., funding), they would cycle back through that phase or prior phase until they achieved the outcome needed to move to the next phase (e.g., refining the artist concept to be more novel or to better fit within the competitive landscape).

Music producers encounter three tensions that build over time: 1) generating novel ideas and fitting them within competitive landscapes; 2) incubating opportunity and seizing the moment in the market; and 3) fostering experimentation and navigating hyper-competition. Below I detail when these tensions arise and how producers engage in six creative brokering practices to navigate these tensions and move opportunity forward through the process. Figure 4 provides an overview by phase of when tensions arise and the creative brokering practices used to navigate these tensions and advance opportunity through the co-creation process.

Phase 1: Eliciting Opportunity

The producer's main goal in this first phase was to co-create the unique artist persona – their voice and artistic identity – that could then be pitched to record labels and the songwriting community, and then ultimately, sold to fickle audiences. As shown in Figure 3, the first phase involved the producer and artist working closely together, the artist's manager and family members, and an array of salient external parties, including potential audiences; current, past, and in-development artists; and record labels.

In this first phase of eliciting opportunity, producers faced the core tension of generating novel ideas and fitting them within the existing competitive landscape. In response
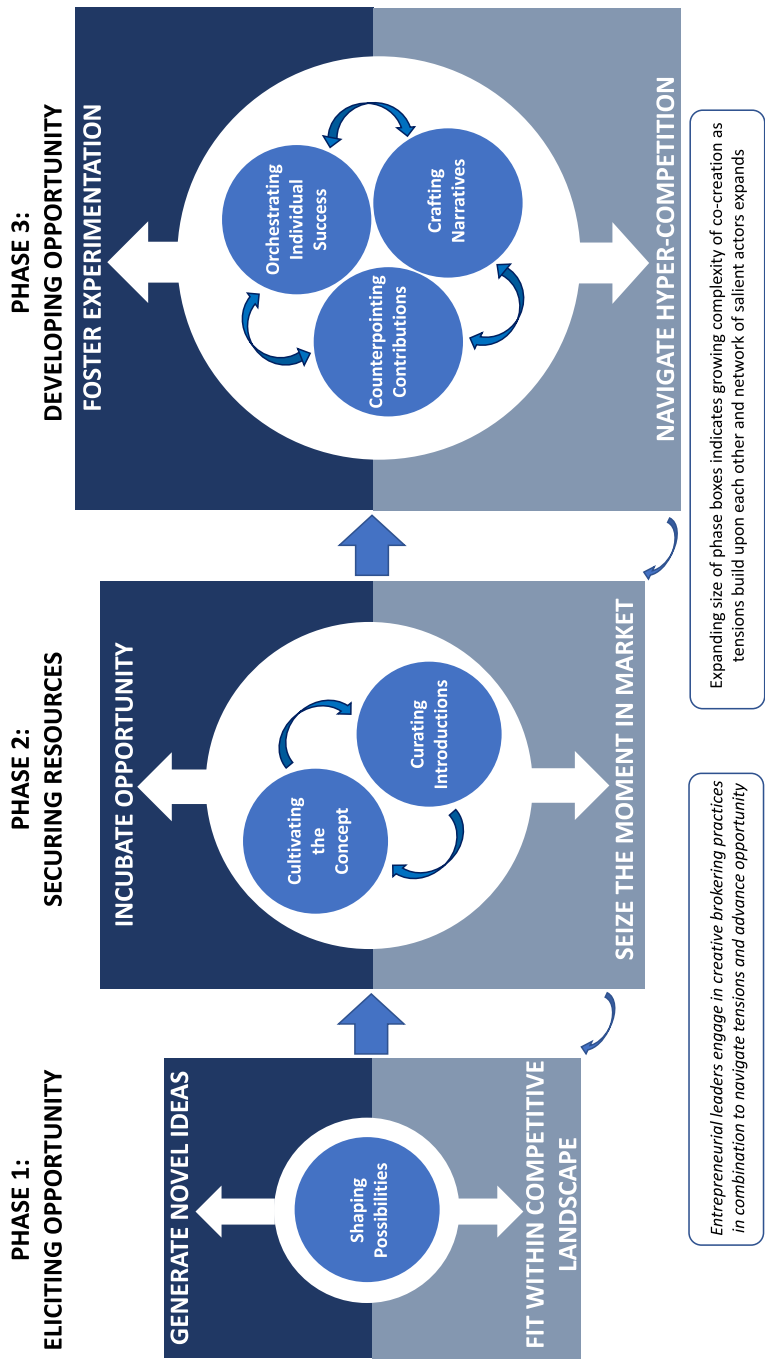
Figure 4. Model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering: Co-creating and advancing opportunity [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary. com]

to this tension and to move the artist opportunity to the next phase, producers engaged in the creative brokering practice of *shaping possibilities*.

Shaping possibility could unfold over weeks or months, and involved producers iteratively leveraging their brokerage role to cocoon or buffer the artist from other actors and influences who might prematurely curtail experimentation, and then to strategically introduce the artist to selected market influences to spur co-creation forward and refine the emergent opportunity.

In shaping possibility, producers sought to create the space to experiment with the artist and elicit the artist's individual voice and unique qualities, without the expectations, judgments or categorizations that other actors or market influences might bring. In particular, producers were aware that managers and family may have pre-conceptions of what the artist should be to be successful. Shaping possibility involved hours spent in one-on-one empathic inquiry with artists – cocooning – to get a sense of the unique combination of vocal talent and sound, artistic identity, and emotional resonance they aspired to manifest in their work. As one veteran Nashville producer described:

> The producer's role is 90 per cent relational. 10 per cent technical. Sometimes the best producing days are not recording anything, but sitting listening to music and talking, or going to see a movie and talking about how the movie made us feel. We start breaking down walls between the heart and the paper or the heart and the tape or whatever. The fewer walls there are, or barriers, the better.

Shaping possibility thus involved intense interpersonal interaction as producers engaged in focused empathic inquiry and co-created with artists to tease out their unique talent, qualities, and aspirations. While this interaction may be musically driven, it also involved non-musical interaction to elicit artists' hopes, fears, and potentially complicated backstories that brought them to Nashville. While engaging in this practice, producers stepped forward, providing fodder for discussion or asking questions, and then stepped back to listen deeply to tease out qualities, values and goals that often lay below the artist's veneer. Producers also invested time and energy in these one-on-one interactions to foster the mutual trust and understanding needed to co-weather the inevitable stress and challenges that would arise in later phases – especially when pitching to labels and when delivering exceptional raw performances in the recording studio. Cocooning also helped producers proactively establish that they understood both the market and the individual artist with the artist's manager and family. This confidence and trust would ideally translate into support for producers' recommendations later on in the process.

In shaping possibility, producers also strategically connected the artist with more distant market actors and influences – introducing knowledge of the market or market comparisons to help spur co-creation or refine the artists' sense of possibility. Producers introduced 'reference CDs' to help the artist understand and engage more deeply regarding how they were similar or different to other musical acts – such as current or prior successful mainstream artists, alternative or fringe acts, different genres, or different musical treatments and sonic landscapes. As a Christian rock producer detailed:

> I ask them what they want musically, what style they're going for. Whether they are going for country, or pop, or rock, or Americana, and we use reference CDs of other artists they like, and I always ask them what's your musical history, what's your background? Everything from what they listened to as a kid to what their favourite song is now. And I try to use all that as a palette for how to form their style.

Even as producers introduced these references CDs, they stepped back to carefully watch and listen to how artists responded. Producers listened deeply to artists' feedback on all of the different elements and invited their artists to co-create unique combinations from the portfolio of options presented. Reference CDs also spurred unexpected conversations and experimentation that fed the co-creation process while also helping all parties better understand what they could uniquely sell within the competitive market.

While producers shared songs designed to expand artists' conception of their own potential, they also introduced songs to exert their sense of what would differentiate artists in the market. While a common saying in Nashville is, 'It all begins with the song', producers knew that they needed to find songs that demonstrated their artists' unique voice when pitching to labels. For example, producers talked through songs with their artists to give a sense of what types of songs could help differentiate the artist, or not. As one producer shared:

> I'll tell the artist. That song, do that one as a Christmas gift for your family, but I promise you if I was sitting behind a desk at a label I'd say, 'I love this song. Take it over and let's get Faith [Hill] or other star to cut it. Cause it don't matter who sings it, it's a catchy ditty that I can sell. It doesn't matter who's on it'. It has to matter as an artist. You have to bring in a song and a performance where they say, wow, I don't have anyone who can do this.

As this quote demonstrates, producers also introduced market influences to proactively and subtly guide future decisions over what songs would best showcase the artist to label personnel in the subsequent phase. Artists were often neither aware of their unique capabilities that could differentiate them in the market, nor their weaknesses, which might constrain producers' ability to secure resources and move the opportunity forward. Through introducing and listening to an array of possible songs and other artists, producers and artists came to a shared understanding of what aspects of the artist's voice were most unique and how they compared with other artists who might perform the same song. In doing so, producers also laid the groundwork for honest information exchange in future phases.

In summary, as they advanced the process of co-creating the artist concept to pitch to labels and songwriters, producers encountered the tension of generating novel ideas and fitting them within the existing competitive landscape. Producers did not want other actors' expectations or external influences to prematurely limit the options generated in this phase, but also needed to situate the emerging idea within the market. To navigate this tension and advance the co-creation process, producers utilized the creative brokering practice of shaping possibilities, iteratively buffering their emergent artist concept from pressure from other actors and external influences, and then selectively introducing

market influences and other actors to spur co-creation and subtly exert control over future decisions. Through these practices, producers proactively and subtly delimited future decisions over which songs would be used to showcase the artist to record labels in the subsequent phase. Shaping possibilities also involved producers strategically stepping forward as they connected the artist with the market – introducing specifically selected reference CDs and songs–and then stepping back to hear how the artist responded. Stepping back was critical for ensuring that artists, managers, and family members felt that their ideas were heard and for building a relational foundation in anticipation of potential challenges and difficult decisions in later phases. Once a unique artist concept had been formed, the producers moved the opportunity onto Phase 2, securing resources.

Phase 2: Securing Resources

In this phase, producers attempted to secure two primary resources for their artists: songs that would capture the artist's unique persona and differentiate them in the market and record label production funding and support for marketing and distribution. As shown in Figure 3, in this second phase, producers navigated a more complex network of parties as they more directly engaged coaches and other industry experts, the songwriting community and label personnel in addition to the artist, manager, and family members. Other parties in the network – other artists, competing producers, and audiences – remained important yet latent parties as producers encountered an additional tension of incubating their emergent opportunity and seizing the right moment to pitch it within the competitive market. Producers often had a single shot to present artists to particular labels, so artists needed to be able to perform consistently at their best, even under intense performance pressure. Timing was also incredibly important in this phase – producers must be aware of what gaps existed within labels' rosters of artists, a sense of what was 'hot' in the market, and whether similar artists were being pitched at the same time. If the timing was mismatched, or artists were not fully ready for the market, the producers would not be able to secure resources needed to advance their opportunity to the next phase.

To navigate this tension and move their artist opportunity forward, producers engaged in two additional creative brokering practices – *cultivating the concept* and *curating introductions*.

Cultivating the concept. Cultivating comprised both connecting artists with external experts and keeping artists under development. Producers introduced their artists to a range of experts – including vocal or performance coaches, managers, and other trusted actors – to enhance and refine their artists' ability to effectively showcase their talent – especially under stress. As one producer described:

> Since [this artist] didn't have a lot of performance experience, I took her to a performance coach… I said these are the five songs we're considering. She listened to the artist sing them through and worked with her to help her deliver them live. Because the label will have her come into the corporate board room at lunch time [so they] get to know her through a performance. If you can't pass that hurdle, you can't get a deal. So it's real important to have songs you can deliver live as well. I think that's a good investment. Spend a couple $100 bucks up front before you… blow it in a live showcase.

As this quote details, producers connected artists with experts and then stepped back to let them privately work through the process of preparing for high-pressure label showcases. Making this connection served another important function – it enabled the producer to elicit external market feedback regarding the artist's readiness for pitching. This practice proved especially useful when artists' family or managers balked at spending money for performance coaching or sought to have the artist pitch, even when the producer did not feel the artist was ready. The vocal coach could provide specific details on what improvements were needed and how the artist could achieve these improvements, while also providing external expert validation of the producers' guidance.

In cultivating the concept, producers also kept artists under development – strategically limiting artists' contact with the market for months (or even years) until the artist sufficiently matured physically or artistically or had dealt with personal issues. For example, one country artist shared how he had worked with his producer since he was 18 years old. At that age, however, the artist looked so young that he did not match the type of songs and vocal range that would set him apart in the market. As a result, his producer kept him under development until age 22 when his face and voice further matured. In that time, he had matured from a shy boyish face to a country crooner romantic hunk – his first album cover showed him staring adoringly into the camera, with his shirt unbuttoned to reveal a chest of hair. The artist expressed how reluctant he was to have to wait all this time. However, through the creative brokering practice of shaping possibilities in the prior phase, the producer had built up sufficient credibility and trust with the artist to enable him to trust the producer's decision to delay pitching. Proactively establishing this trust was especially important when working with artists who were stars in their respective small towns who tended toward overconfidence, and who often did not appreciate the importance of cultivating work.

Curating introductions. In getting ready to pitch, producers strategically thought through how, when, where, and with whom to pitch their artists to their advantage. When the time was right, producers engaged in the creative brokering practice of curating introductions, which involved assembling actors and then letting others shine. As one music producer described, he purposefully assembled record label personnel, the songwriting community, and other market gatekeepers to get the word out about an artist who had taken several years off from recording and had fallen off the radar of the industry. His goal was to create a sense of competition and buzz, especially among the songwriting community, so that the artist would be more likely to attract the best possible songs. As he described:

> It was time for her [the artist] to get back on page. To remind everyone that we're in this process – people forget and you want to be at the top of people's minds when new songs are brought in, deals are made, the best songs they've been holding in their catalogue, whatever. Timing is everything… We were going to take some [individual] meetings, but we think the quickest way to get the word out is to put out for tomorrow afternoon at 4pm, and whoever can be there, great. And we'll play a few things we like, and [artist] will be there to meet with people, and we'll do a cattle call, if you will… I had the guys set up about 20 chairs out in the studio. Set up a playback system to play a few things…a 100 people came, and it was standing room only!

Rather than meeting individually with songwriters, the producer assembled songwriters and publishers to his advantage, carefully selecting the listening room and only offering twenty chairs so that the room would seem more packed to enhance the sense of excitement around the artist.

In combination with assembling actors, producers offered formal glowing introductions between parties, and then explicitly stepped back to let others shine and connect directly. The producer continued:

> I talked for a few minutes and told people what we were doing, our timeline for getting back in. And then she [the artist] spoke for a few minutes and thanked everyone for coming. She looked fabulous. Everyone got to see that. And she was very personable and just an amazing person …

After introducing the artist, the producer explicitly stepped back to allow her to take centre stage and share her perspective and talent directly with songwriters and publishers. He engaged in the groundwork earlier to sell the artist, and to bring people together for the showcase. However, it was not enough for him to make the connection; artists needed to demonstrate their ability to deliver what was teased to the community. The producer continued this creative brokering practice by later working the room with the artist – selectively singling out key individuals for engagement with the artist while letting other actors await their own introductions. In these conversations he elaborated on the artist's unique potential and then stepped back to let her forge connection and exchange ideas about her emerging vision, while he monitored and nurtured the overall buzz in the room among the other actors. After the event, the producer debriefed with the artist and the other actors about these conversations to elicit feedback that could inform co-creation in the subsequent phase and to shape and reinforce with resource gatekeepers the urgency to commit to and participate in the artist venture.

In sum, during Phase 2, producers sought to secure resources within a highly competitive market. In order to do so, they needed to navigate an additional tension of incubating the opportunity and seizing the market moment. Waiting too long or pitching too early could undermine their artists' ability to demonstrate their unique or full potential within the competitive landscape. In response, producers iteratively kept actors apart and strategically brought them together as they engaged in the creative brokering practices of cultivating the concept and curating introductions. In cultivating the concept, producers both drew upon and reinforced the credibility and trust developed in the prior phase as they strategically readied artists for engagement with resource gatekeepers. As they curated introductions, producers carefully laid the groundwork for future engagement with the market – building buzz and momentum for artists that would in turn be carefully maintained and nurtured in the subsequent developing opportunity phase. Through these practices, producers elicited others' input to inform future co-creation, while also employing others to reinforce the producers' own efforts to guide the project's direction. While producers were at the centre of these activities, they recognized the need to step back to let others shine and co-create without their involvement. However, even as they stepped back, producers remained engaged – monitoring and nurturing the overall buzz in the market or checking with experts to ascertain market readiness.

If they were not successful in securing the resources needed to move their opportunity to the next phase, producers would further iterate, taking a break to further mature the artist, or return to Phase 1 to re-explore what might differentiate the artist. If successful, the producer advanced the artist to the third phase, developing opportunity.

Phase 3: Developing Opportunity

In Phase 3, producers further developed their opportunity in the recording studio. Under time pressure and financial constraints, within this phase producers guided a process of generating ideas, providing critical feedback, and stretching experts to take creative risks in the hopes of creating the magic that would engage labels, and differentiate the artist in the market. In addition to the tensions described previously, producers encountered a third tension – fostering experimentation and navigating the hyper-competition of the market.

As shown in Figure 3, producers brought together an expanded set of actors – the artist, recording engineers and selected session musicians (e.g., guitarists, fiddle players, drummers, pianists, vocal singers) – in the studio to create the musical product. Producers guided the emergent outcome to reflect their own vision and agenda while eliciting the expertise and improvisational potential of creative experts, family members, managers, and record labels, who also sought control over creative and financial decisions. Other artists and producers, other distribution and marketing gatekeepers, the songwriting community, and audiences were not immediately involved, but were an invisible presence throughout the process. For example, Canadian producer Bruce Fairburn, who has worked with Loverboy, Bon Jovi, Aerosmith, and Honeymoon Suite shared how the needs of the audience were ever-present:

> Let's face it: The fans are who we're doing this for…It was driven home to me when I worked with Jon Bon Jovi. He always would question whether particular things would serve his fans. 'We're making these records for kids, not for us' (Schwartz and Stone, 1992, p. 50).

In addition to being keenly aware of audiences, producers were also cognizant of how the competitive market for session musicians' future gigs informed dynamics within the studio. Even as producers attempted to foster experimentation, they were well aware of musicians' potential reluctance to take risks in their performances.

To navigate the additional third tension of fostering experimentation while navigating the hyper-competition of the market, producers utilized three additional creative brokering practices: 1) *orchestrating individual success*, which focused on the relationship between artists, musicians, and the competitive market for future work; 2) *counterpointing contributions*, through which producers exerted creative control while allowing room for others to improvise and co-create; and 3) *crafting narratives*, which focused on the perceptions and involvement of those external to the recording sessions.

Orchestrating individual success. The creative brokering practice of orchestrating individual success focused on musicians and artists who were immediately involved in the creative process and whose emotional energy was intimately intertwined with the recording itself.

In order to ensure that each party viewed each other in the best possible light even as they experimented, took risks, and improvised off each other, producers orchestrated individual success – leveraging their brokerage role to iteratively engage in publicly praising and pulling aside.

At the start of every session, producers publicly praised each person as they made introductions among musicians, engineers, label personnel and artists. For example, when country music producers introduced musicians to their artists, they always did so with praise: 'He's a great drummer, you'll like him a lot'. Producers highlighted other notable sessions or projects the musicians had worked on, or the special instruments they brought to the session. A producer may note, for example, that the lead guitarist had over 200 guitars – including the one on which Jimi Hendrix played a certain song at a certain performance. After their initial praising, producers stepped back to allow participants to share stories and build connection before they started co-creating. Even though producers would guide the session, they recognized the need to step back to foster trust and positive energy among the group to encourage experimentation and individual risk taking. Producers also publicly praised when they were giving feedback to artists and session musicians. For example, I observed a producer say to a musician who was not quite getting what the producer wanted, 'Play it like the guitarist on The Police', as if they were equating their session musician with that star performer even while redirecting them. I observed another producer offer the feedback, 'That part is awesome, can we tweak this part so that it has this effect [producer hums desired sound]?'. After offering this feedback, producers then stepped back to let musicians try again and shine with a newly refined musical performance.

Musicians were often more receptive to producers' suggestions when the producer had worked to build enthusiasm around the project and refine the artist's musicality in prior phases. There were times, however, when players either could not or did not want to play what producers or artists requested. In these situations, producers carefully pulled players aside to deal with issues directly and privately. As legendary Nashville-based producer Tony Brown described:

> I've seen one person completely start shutting down a tracking session. It's the producer's responsibility, and how he does it is as important as deciding to do it. You can pull the person out of the room, or have him sit in the control room, but you have to give him a reason. If things start getting weird, then I take him outside to talk. Nine times out of ten, depending on his ego control, he will usually say, 'Have I got time to run an errand?' That means, 'I'm embarrassed. I'm out of here' (Schultz, 2000, p. 130).

As this quote suggests, producers actively pulled musicians and artists aside to help them save face during difficult moments in the creative process. Producers were keenly aware of how their feedback could affect musicians' future gigs and the mutual respect among musicians and artists, and so pulled experts aside to give critical feedback. At the same time, by providing feedback in a private sphere, producers appeared to step back from micromanaging the creative process. Through orchestrating individual success, producers exerted control while fostering the creative confidence and trust among others to support experimentation and elaboration.

Counterpointing contributions. Within the recording studio, producers sought to exert control over the emergent ideas and push their creative experts to excel, without micromanaging or losing the enthusiasm of those involved. When counterpointing contributions, producers strategically introduced people and ideas into the development process to spur new thinking. As Daniel Lanois, who has worked with artists ranging from Peter Gabriel and U2 to the Neville Brothers and Bob Dylan, described:

> Records have high and lows. It's a dynamic range of enthusiasm as well as music. In my experience, enthusiasm will be rekindled by a chance to look at the music from a different point of view. So quite often, if somebody has enough steam left to present the whole operation with a different angle, then that will often keep people going for a couple of days. To give you an example, when Brian Eno and I were working with U2, they would take the weekends off; we would work weekends. We would come with other angles to look at a song. So when they came back we'd say, 'Here's another blend, another mix. Here's another way to look at the rhythm'. If it got a vocal out of Bono, then you can't put a price on that (Schwartz and Stone, 1992, pp. 41–2).

As described in this quote, over the weekend, producers Lanois and Eno worked privately to develop ideas that could provoke new thinking and enthusiasm, and selectively introduced ideas to the band after they had a weekend's distance from recording (and the producers). The producers then stepped back, empowering the band to tap into their own creativity, rather than just simply implementing the producers' ideas.

In combination, producers also engaged in carving out space, leveraging their brokerage role to create space for others' creative contributions and leadership. Producers strategically managed when certain musicians played vis-à-vis others – creating the space for each musician to contribute to the emerging creative whole, without crowding one another out sonically. As part of counterpointing contributions, producers also physically stepped out of the studio space to allow others to connect more fully with each other or to foster others' sense that they were the ones controlling or guiding the creative process. Prior to the sessions, producers shared their vision and specific details for the session with the musician who would take on the role of session lead – typically the lead guitarist. As part of my field work, a producer invited me into a discussion among the producer, session lead, and artist just before they headed into the studio with the other musicians. The guitar player and artist were sitting side-by-side on a couch, while the producer sat in a business chair on the other end of the table, sitting back. The guitarist has worked out all the song charts (a type of musical notation used in Nashville) based on the producers' guidance. He had the pencil and was writing notes on the charts while leading a very intense discussion around suggestions for the artist's songs:

Guitarist::	Plays guitar to show how it might sound
Artist::	Come on down here for that verse
Guitarist::	Let's just come down a bit
Producer::	What about length?

Guitarist::	I cut this one down considerably to make it radio friendly
Guitarist::	Plays guitar to show how it might sound
Guitarist::	Could this be a fade – Want any kind of exit?
Artist::	Yeah. Maybe we could fade it out in the mix
Producer::	Yeah

After letting the guitarist lead discussion with the artist, the producer then introduced the guitarist as 'session leader' to the other assembled musicians. The producer stepped back and allowed the session leader and artists to work through further details of the session as if the producer was not present. As one Nashville producer described, 'I want [the artist] to feel very connected to the players and so I am playing it cool and letting the guitar player run it'. Producers were able to exert creative control while letting the artists feel they were completely in charge.

When carving out space, producers often subtly managed decisions early on to maintain control when stepping back later in the process. As Bruce Fairbairn notes, 'I think I'd be happiest if bands just said, "We work with Fairbairn because he lets us make our record the way we want to make it". However, he further shared that he steps forward early on as players lay down rough acoustic tracks to "…identify those really strong ideas and encourage them and help them along rather than waiting until the last minute when it can be much more difficult to change things"' (Schwartz and Stone, 1992, p. 46). During the development phase, it was important for producers to step back to enable other participants to co-create with each other and communicate ideas and possibilities directly, rather than mediated through the producers. Producers brought experts together, created the scaffolding and prompts to spur thinking, and then stepped back. Yet they did not simply release control. Instead, they proactively exerted influence when ideas were still emergent, infusing future development with the producer's vision and market perspective.

Crafting narratives. Building on the creative brokering practices enacted in prior phases, producers not only sought the feedback and suggestions of those external to the immediate co-creation process, but also managed their expectations and involvement. In Phase 3, producers navigated interactions among multiple stakeholders, including managers, family members, marketing and distribution gatekeepers, and especially record labels who had a large stake in the venture and often sought control over decisions made during this phase. Record label personnel, who were constantly monitoring market data regarding what was 'hot' in the market, often encouraged copy-cat or 'cookie cutter' approaches and sounds that were uninspiring to artists, producers, and session musicians. Label personnel might fall in love with a certain guitar hook or sound and insist that the star session musicians simply reproduce those ideas, instead of inventing their own personal contributions. These actions could in turn undermine the trust and creative dynamic the producers had fostered among those involved. In response, producers engaged in the creative brokering practice of *crafting narratives*.

Building on the brokering practices enacted in prior phases, producers continued to proactively provide upbeat highlights to keep external parties committed and enthusiastic,

elicited feedback, and carefully monitored the buzz for the artist within the larger market. As one Nashville producer described, 'Yeah, I'll play them [the label] the chorus when it's really rockin… Just enough to tease them along and keep them pumped…'. Producers also teased works-in-progress of what they deemed to be hit songs with key industry players – radio programmers, fans, and critics– in advance of formal release dates. Yet, as needed, producers were also purposively vague when sharing progress reports so as not to limit creative options prematurely. Crafting narratives was especially important when artists were struggling with head colds, performance anxiety, or personal or drug issues. Producers also engaged in this practice when they felt their creative control was being challenged by a label, or when labels were demanding updates before the development process had fully evolved. One Nashville producer shared his efforts to be purposively vague with the label:

> The label and everyone wanted to see what the album will be. Well if you want to see what the album will be, you can wait until the fucking record is recorded. Don't give them the goddamn album. Like with that project, I intentionally… booked the studio at nine in the morning and I literally mixed 18 or 20 songs in no more than two passes. I just sort of clanged through it up there and intentionally left it as uneven and sketchy as was tolerable.

As this quote shows, producers recognized that they were beholden to the labels for helping fund, market, and distribute the artist and their music, yet also recognized the negative impact they could have on the creative elaboration process if not managed deftly. Producers strategically shared positive information with those external to the immediate development process, but did not engage them deeply, if they could get away with it. In the end, however, producers needed to balance this carefully or the record labels would not market the artist.

In summary, the developing opportunity phase presented the most complex leadership challenge for producers. An expanded network of parties was involved in co-creation, each with differing perspectives on and interests in the developing opportunity. Further, even as producers attempted to foster experimentation, they had to navigate the potentially constraining influences of the competitive market. In response, producers engaged in three additional creative brokering practices: 1) counterpointing contributions; 2) orchestrating individual success; and 3) crafting narratives. As they enacted these practices, producers leveraged their brokerage role to shape when and how they brought ideas and people together, and how they kept them apart. At the same time, producers iteratively stepped forward to exert creative control and offer market perspective and stepped back to allow others to leave their creative signature and co-create directly with others. In doing so, producers built upon the creative brokering practices enacted in earlier phases. For example, producers' prior efforts to shape possibilities, cultivate the concept, and elicit market feedback while curating introductions enabled producers to more effectively step back in the development phase, while still maintaining control over the emerging co-created opportunity. By proactively engaging in leadership behaviours that built artists' musicality and market buzz in prior phases, producers laid the groundwork for maintaining the ongoing enthusiasm and commitment of key external stakeholders during the development phase – even as producers strategically limited their involvement.

Done deftly, the producers could successfully develop an artist opportunity that was accepted by the label for further exploitation in the form of global marketing and distribution. If the label did not embrace the outcome, the producers would have to cycle back to re-record songs, or even find new songs to record.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, I provide a rich, contextually situated description of how entrepreneurial leadership drives the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity. Drawing from these findings, my article offers three primary contributions to scholarship. First, I develop an inductively derived model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering – the practices and process by which entrepreneurs leverage their brokerage role to lead and mobilize a complex network of actors in co-creating and advancing opportunity. Second, I extend extant research on creative brokering by examining how more distal actors – including competitors, consumers, and other market influences – inform creative brokerage action. Third, I contribute to our understanding of creative brokering and leadership towards creative outcomes by showing how they involve not only bringing actors together and keeping them apart, but also iteratively stepping forward to exert creative control and infuse market perspective and stepping back to foster creativity and commitment among those involved. I discuss each of these in turn.

Towards a Model of Entrepreneurial Leadership as Creative Brokering

Responding to the call for empirical studies that capture the every-day, situated and dynamic nature of how entrepreneurial leadership behaviors drive the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity (Gartner et al., 1992; Hjorth et al., 2015; Leitch and Volery, 2017; Sklaveniti, 2017), this paper provides a model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering – the practices and process by which entrepreneurs leverage their brokerage role to lead and mobilize a complex network of actors in co-creating and advancing opportunity.

As summarized in Figure 4, this process comprises three primary phases: 1) eliciting opportunity; 2) securing resources; and 3) developing opportunity. Entrepreneurial leaders encounter three tensions as they attempt to move opportunity through this process: the need to 1) generate novel ideas and fit them within a competitive landscape; 2) incubate opportunity and seize the moment in the market; and 3) foster experimentation and navigate hyper-competition. I show when each tension arises in the process (as detailed in the respective phase boxes), and convey the increased complexity of co-creation over time as tensions build upon each other and as the network of salient actors expands (as indicated by the increasing size of the phase boxes). To move their opportunities forward, entrepreneurial leaders attempt to navigate these tensions by leveraging their brokerage role to engage in six creative brokering practices: 1) shaping possibilities; 2) cultivating the concept; 3) curating introductions; 4) orchestrating individual success; 5) counterpointing contributions; and 6) crafting narratives. I show how practices are used in combination in each phase to navigate the salient tension, and how practices build upon each over time to advance the co-creation process. If entrepreneurial leaders are

unsuccessful in navigating these tensions and advancing opportunity to the next phase, they may continue to cycle within that phase or return to earlier phases as needed.

This model extends the entrepreneurial leadership literature in several ways. First, while prior research on entrepreneurial leadership has focused on behaviours within phases, the model articulated here helps invigorate and springboard research on entrepreneurial leadership as an emergent and dynamic process (Hjorth et al., 2015; Leitch and Volery, 2017; Sklaveniti, 2017). To my knowledge, this is the first study that uses fine-grained, rich ethnographic evidence to show how entrepreneurs lead and navigate a complex network of actors as they form and advance opportunity. The model developed here illuminates the interdependence among leadership actions over time (Langley, 1999), and especially how behaviours enacted earlier in the process both inform and are informed by dynamics unfolding later on.

For example, in Phase 1, entrepreneurial leaders shape possibilities to subtly and proactively delimit subsequent co-creation and decisions regarding how and when to pitch the emergent opportunity to resource gatekeepers. Simultaneously, leaders engage in empathic inquiry with their core team so as to build a foundation of trust and credibility in anticipation of potential difficult decisions and unexpected challenges that might arise in later phases. In Phase 2, they not only reinforce this foundation by selectively introducing experts who validate leaders' perception of the emerging opportunity, but they also draw upon this foundation with the core team to navigate differences in opinion regarding when and how to strategically pitch the opportunity to external gatekeepers. Further, as leaders cultivate the concept and curate introductions, they elicit feedback from a broad array of external stakeholders and further proactively refine the contours of the evolving opportunity. In turn, this affords leaders the latitude to step back and enable co-creation among internal team members to flourish in Phase 3, while still maintaining control over the emergent opportunity. Finally, by eliciting feedback, building market buzz, and allowing internal team members to shine and build connection with key external stakeholders in Phase 2, leaders are better able to strategically limit external actors' potentially negative impact on co-creation during Phase 3 – even while maintaining the stakeholders' ongoing enthusiasm and commitment to exploiting the opportunity in the future.

In addition to illuminating the interdependence of leadership behaviours over time, the paper extends research that identifies tensions that exist within phases (Volery and Mueller, 2018; Volery et al., 2015) by showing how tensions build upon each other over time as the entrepreneurial process unfolds. By detailing the link between the tensions and the behaviours observed, the model provides insight into not only which entrepreneurial leadership behaviours are evident (Mueller et al., 2012), but also why and how they may be used over time and in combination to advance opportunity, depending on the tensions and parties involved. However, the model does not specify when and how decisions are made to advance opportunity to the next stage – tensions are navigated rather than resolved – leaving open to future research the exploration of these dynamics in more detail.

Second, while extant research emphasizes the need for entrepreneurial leaders to attend to both internal and external stakeholders (Antonakis and Autio, 2006; Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Gupta et al., 2004; Mueller et al., 2012; Pollack et al., 2017), how entrepreneurs navigate and negotiate across these parties' differing perspectives, interests, and

contributions has remained a black box. The model developed here brings an explicit focus to leading and mobilizing actors on all points of the entrepreneurial compass – internal team members and external stakeholders who may not be immediately engaged, but play a role in the co-creation process. Further, by considering dynamics among actors across phases, this study illuminates how the network of actors involved becomes increasingly complex over time and requires a greater number of practices to navigate the salient parties simultaneously. As the findings suggest, entrepreneurial leaders are aware of how actions occurring earlier on could shape subsequent dynamics among participants. While they could not fully control the co-creation process nor dictate what the final outcome would be, they could proactively engage in behaviours to structure the interactions among actors. As such, these leadership practices could be considered a 'social skill' (Fligstein, 2001; Suddaby et al., 2015) that enables entrepreneurs to lead a complex network of actors in the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity.

Contributions to Scholarship on Creative Brokering

The model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering presented here extends prior research on creative brokering in several ways. First, it brings distal actors, such as consumers, competitors, and market gatekeepers who can inform creative brokering practice to the fore. Extending Lingo and O'Mahony's (2010) research that shows how brokers buffer the collective creative process from resource gatekeepers who might limit idea generation, the model presented here details how creative brokers exclude and introduce an array of distal actors at key moments in the creative process to reinforce brokers' decisions and spur and preserve co-creation. The paper also illuminates how creative brokering within entrepreneurial, market-based contexts involves navigating two, interconnected spheres: the immediate co-creation and synthesis within the venture, or project, and the competitive market context in which the venture is embedded. The findings illustrate how creative brokers navigate within and across both spheres – strategically leveraging their brokerage role to cultivate trust among those immediately involved, infuse the emergent product with market perspective, buffer creative experts from market pressures, and construct a market for their opportunity.

The paper also extends our understanding of creative brokering as a leadership practice by showing how it involves not only bringing actors together and keeping them apart, but also stepping forward and stepping back. For example, in the first phase, leaders step forward to ask questions and introduce market input to foster new thinking among their core team and then step back to listen deeply and enable others to generate new insights. By stepping back and inquiring empathically, leaders proactively build a relational foundation with their core team in anticipation of future challenges. As the process unfolds, leaders step forward to exert creative control and infuse the emergent process with market perspective, and step back to let others shine, forge connection, and co-create without their involvement. Stepping back is a critical component when securing resources – leaders can lay the groundwork to sell a product or team members, but other actors need to demonstrate their potential and ability to deliver what was promised. Stepping back is also invaluable as it allows leaders to assess and shape the overall buzz around the venture.

Finally, leaders provide initial scaffolding for the emergent venture and then encourage co-creation by stepping back – crafting new viewpoints or carving out space to let others take a leadership role or directly improvise on each other's ideas. Taken together, this additional focus on stepping back provides greater nuance to our understanding of what brokers do when they bring actors together (Obstfeld, 2005, 2017; Simmel, 1950). Even as brokers forge connection and step back, they engage in ongoing action—monitoring the creative process, scanning the environment, shaping other actors' perceptions, and managing third-party relationships—to navigate the complex constellation of actors involved.

Despite these contributions, however, we have little sense of whether and how entrepreneurs' network structure might shape the process and practice of creative brokering described here. Quintane and Carnabuci (2016) find that individuals' use of either *tertius iungens* or *tertius gaudens* brokering strategies depend on whether brokers are engaging in interactions beyond (unembedded) or within (embedded) their long-term network of relationships. In their synthesis of the network and creativity literature, Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017) suggest that leaders advancing idea journeys – from initial idea generation through idea elaboration, championing and implementation – face different cognitive and social demands within each journey phase. They suggest that ideas are more likely to be advanced to the next phase if there is a fit between a particular phase's demands (e.g., cognitive flexibility) and the individual's relational ties (weak or strong) and network structure. Considering these studies together with this paper suggests a rich opportunity for future research to combine both formal network analysis with rich ethnographic insights – an opportunity also highlighted by scholars studying the practice and process of entrepreneurial networking (Anderson et al., 2010, 2012; Jack, 2010).

Contributions to Scholarship on Leading toward Creative Outcomes

This paper also provides greater nuance to our understanding of how entrepreneurial leadership behaviours advance a process of co-action and co-creation (Sklaveniti, 2017). Extending Sklaveniti's four intertwined relational processes of creativity genesis, creativity enactment, direction genesis, and direction enactment, the model of entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering presented here identifies tensions that may complicate co-creation in practice, and the important role of entrepreneurial leadership behaviours in navigating those tensions in order to move opportunity forward. Perhaps surprisingly, the findings also suggest that theories of entrepreneurial leadership as co-creation must also consider how some parties' involvement may limit creativity and options prematurely. As shown in this paper, entrepreneurial leadership involves both fostering creativity among actors and limiting actors' potential negative or constraining influence on the co-creation process. Entrepreneurs engage in individual leadership behaviours – strategically leveraging their brokerage role – in service of, and to enable, co-created outcomes.

The paper also extends and enriches conceptions of entrepreneurial leadership that emphasize interdependence, collective and shared leadership, and plurality rather than the myth of the charismatic lone genius (Foo et al., 2006; Hmieleski et al., 2012; Leitch and Harrison, 2018; Leitch and Volery, 2017). Much of this research focuses on dynamics among top leadership team members. In contrast, the model presented here suggests that while there might be a core leadership team (in this case, the producer, artist, artist's family

and manager), a much broader array of actors contribute to and inform co-creation. In addition to illuminating the iterative process by which leaders step forward to exert creative control and step back to let others shine and co-create within the team, the paper focuses attention on how external actors may be strategically brought into the co-creation process – to elicit the broad array of expertise, feedback, and commitment needed to move the idea forward. In doing so, the paper suggests that future research on shared and collective leadership in entrepreneurial settings might also seek to attend to a broader network of actors and how they might be strategically engaged to co-create and advance opportunity.

Similarly, these findings can also extend scholarship in the emerging area of creative leadership. In their recent synthesis of the highly fragmented creative leadership field, Mainemelis et al. (2015) identified three creative leadership contexts – facilitative (facilitating others' creativity), directive (directing others' actions to advance the leaders' creative vision), and integrative, where the leader must integrate others' heterogeneous creative contributions, including their own. Integrative creative leadership seems to best inform the entrepreneurial challenge of creating and advancing opportunity as it focuses on contexts in which leaders must elicit and synthesize the contributions of creative, technical, and managerial experts from across a network (Lingo, 2018), rather than from within a single organization (Lundin et al., 2015). However, creative or technical experts and other external stakeholders who are critical to the co-creation process may not see themselves as followers or the entrepreneur as the 'leader'. Defining who are leaders and followers becomes problematic in integrative creative leadership contexts, yet this issue remains unexplored in the entrepreneurial leadership literature. The findings from this study suggest how leadership might unfold when explicit leader-follower relationships do not exist. In these cases, leadership involves a strategic dance of not only bringing an array of actors together and keeping them apart, but also stepping forward to exert creative control and stepping back to let others shine and contribute their heterogeneous expertise and perspective. Future research could explore this dynamic more explicitly.

Generalizability, Limitations and Future Research

While my research focused on one industry, I expect that the model of entrepreneurial leadership developed here will be generalizable to other entrepreneurial ventures that develop novel products within highly competitive industries and which require a diversity of disciplinary expertise to co-create and bring the idea to market, such as video game and software development, biomedical engineering, or industrial design. Nevertheless, several aspects of the setting may limit the generalizability of these findings (Simons et al., 2017). First, in the Nashville music industry, music producers are not responsible for marketing and distributing the artist – thus the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity described here does not include opportunity exploitation. While the long shadow of exploitation – marketing and distribution – loomed large in the co-creation process, future research could examine more explicitly how creative brokering in early co-creation phases shape subsequent exploitation. Second, artist ventures could be considered a non-typical form of entrepreneurial opportunity as the opportunity is an individual, rather than a product or service. While entrepreneurship has been conceived as the study of the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane, 2003), how might the

opportunity-as-individual shape the nature of the tensions and practices observed here? Further, the project-based nature of actors' careers brought to the fore the need for certain creative brokering practices, such as orchestrating individual success. While I suspect that such career implications matter in other entrepreneurial contexts, future research could tease out to what extent and how entrepreneurial leaders manage egos and reputations of experts – especially in contexts where longer term employment relationships are more common. Finally, given the number of opportunities that producers advance on a regular basis, producers arguably could be considered 'mature' entrepreneurial leaders (Cope et al., 2011) who have refined their ability over time to engage in the practices observed. Future research might consider how first-time entrepreneurial leaders build capacity to effectively enact these creative brokering practices, or how factors such as gender or race might impact leaders' ability to effectively utilize the creative brokering practices observed here.

Implications for Practice

The findings presented here have important implications for entrepreneurs and policy makers. First, while prior research has focused on leadership qualities and behaviours within different phases of the entrepreneurial process, or with different types of actors, the process model presented here illuminates entrepreneurial leadership 'in 3D' – leading and mobilizing actors over time, and on all points of the entrepreneurial compass – including team members, specialized experts, funders, customers, competitors, and other external stakeholders and gatekeepers. In doing so, the model underscores the importance of understanding entrepreneurial leadership as navigating an emergent and dynamic process – how behaviours build upon each other over time to proactively guide subsequent co-creation and enable entrepreneurs to negotiate relationships between and among the increasingly complex array of actors involved.

The model also provides useful insight into how entrepreneurs might exert control and advance their own vision for their venture, while also encouraging the creativity, enthusiasm, and commitment of internal team members and external actors. Entrepreneurial leadership involves a strategic dance of both stepping forward to build trust, exert creative control, and infuse the emergent process with market perspective, and stepping back to let others shine, forge connection, and co-create without the entrepreneur's involvement. For example, stepping back is a critical aspect of securing resources – leaders can initially step forward to introduce the concept and craft a story around a ventures or team members, but then they also need to step back to let others connect and demonstrate their potential and ability to deliver what is promised. Future efforts to advance theory and practice may seek to develop entrepreneurs' fluency in knowing with whom, when, why, and how to effectively step back and step forward to drive the process of co-creating and advancing opportunity.

Finally, this study suggests that policy makers and entrepreneurial leaders might benefit from looking beyond traditional entrepreneurial domains to other contexts, such as the cultural industries, where entrepreneurs regularly are engaged in co-creating and advancing portfolios of opportunities across networks. The gig- and project-based nature of these industries may provide particularly useful insight into the fundamental leadership

dynamics highlighted here – of leading across a constellation of specialized and technical experts and leading when explicit leader-follower relationships do not exist – that may increasingly characterize entrepreneurial leadership in a globally networked environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Ahmetoglu, G., Leutner, F. and Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2011). 'EQ-nomics: Understanding the relationship between individual differences in Trait Emotional Intelligence and entrepreneurship'. *Personality and Individual Differences*, **51**, 1028–33.

Alvarez, S. A. and Barney, J. B. (2005). 'How do entrepreneurs organize firms under conditions of uncertainty?'. *Journal of Management*, **31**, 776–93.

Alvarez, S. A. and Barney, J. B. (2007). 'Discovery and creation: Alternative theories of entrepreneurial action'. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, **1**, 11–26.

Alvarez, S., Barney, J. and Anderson, P. (2013). 'Forming and exploiting opportunities: The implications of discovery and creation processes for entrepreneurial and organizational research'. *Organization Science*, **24**, 301–17.

Alvarez, S. A., Barney, J. B., McBride, R. and Wuebker, R. (2017). 'On opportunities: Philosophical and empirical implications'. *Academy of Management Review*, **42**, 726–30.

Anderson, A. R. and Jack, S. L. (2015). 'An introduction to the constant comparative technique'. In Neergaard, H. and Leitch, C. M. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Techniques and Analysis in Entrepreneurship*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 15–20.

Anderson, A. R., Dodd, S. D. and Jack, S. (2010). 'Network practices and entrepreneurial growth'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, **26**, 121–33.

Anderson, A. R., Drakopoulou Dodd, S. and Jack, S. L. (2012). 'Entrepreneurship as connecting: Some implications for theorising and practice'. *Management Decision*, **50**, 958–71.

Antonakis, J. and Autio, E. (2006). 'Entrepreneurship and leadership'. In Baum, J. R., Frese, M. and Baron, R. A. (Eds), *The Psychology of Entrepreneurship*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 189–208.

Barley, S. R. and Kunda, G. (2001). 'Bringing work back in'. *Organization Science*, **12**, 76–95.

Baron, R. A., Tang, J. and Hmieleski, K. M. (2011). 'The downside of being "up": Entrepreneurs' dispositional positive affect and firm performance'. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, **5**, 101–19.

Baron, R. A. and Jintong, T. (2008). 'Entrepreneurs' social skills and new venture performance: Mediating mechanisms and cultural generality'. *Journal of Management*, **35**, 282–306.

Baron, R. A. and Markman, G. D. (2003). 'Beyond social capital: The role of entrepreneurs' social competence in their financial success'. *Journal of Business Venturing*, **18**, 41–60.

Baum, J. R. and Locke, E. A. (2004). 'The Relationship of entrepreneurial traits, skill, and motivation to subsequent venture growth'. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **89**, 587–98.

Bechky, B. A. (2006). 'Gaffers, gofers, and grips: Role-based coordination in temporary organizations'. *Organization Science*, **17**, 3–21.

Breugst, N., Domurath, A., Patzelt, H. and Klaukien, A. (2012). 'Perceptions of entrepreneurial passion and employees' commitment to entrepreneurial ventures'. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **36**, 171–92.

Brown, J. S. and Duguid, P. (1991). 'Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation'. *Organization Science*, **2**, 40–56.

Brundin, E., Patzelt, H. and Shepherd, D. (2008). 'Managers' emotional displays and employees' willingness to act entrepreneurially'. *Journal of Business Venturing*, **23**, 221–43.

Burgess, R. J. (2001). *The Art of Music Production*. New York: Omnibus Press.

Burt, R. (1992). *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burt, R. (2000). 'The network structure of social capital'. In Sutton, R. I. and Staw, B. M. (Eds), *Research in Organizational Behavior*. New York: Elsevier/JAI Press, 345–423.

Burt, R. (2004). 'Structural holes and good ideas'. *American Journal of Sociology*, **110**, 349–99.

Cai, W., Lysova, E., Khapova, S. and Bossink, B. A. G. (2019). 'Does entrepreneurial leadership foster creativity among employees and teams? The mediating role of creative efficacy beliefs'. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, **34**, 203–17.

Cardon, M. S., Wincent, J., Singh, J. and Drnovsek, M. (2009). 'The nature and experience of entrepreneurial passion'. *Academy of Management Review*, **34**, 511–32.

Charmaz, K. (2003). 'Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods'. In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds), *Strategies for Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 249–91.

Chen, M. H. (2007). 'Entrepreneurial leadership and new ventures: Creativity in entrepreneurial teams'. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, **16**, 239–49.

Cogliser, C. C. and Brigham, K. H. (2004). 'The intersection of leadership and entrepreneurship: Mutual lessons to be learned'. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **15**, 771–99.

Cope, J., Kempster, S. and Parry, K. (2011). 'Exploring distributed leadership in the small business context'. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, **13**, 270–85.

Creswell, J. W. and Miller, D. L. (2000). 'Determining validity in qualitative inquiry'. *Theory into Practice*, **39**, 124–30.

Creswell, J. W. and Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Daley, D. (1998). *Nashville's Unwritten Rules*. New York: The Overlook Press.

Edmondson, A. C. and McManus, S. E. (2007). 'Methodological fit in management field research'. *Academy of Management Review*, **32**, 1155–79.

Ensley, M. D., Hmieleski, K. M. and Pearce, C. L. (2006a). 'The importance of vertical and shared leadership within new venture top management teams: Implications for the performance of startups'. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **17**, 217–31.

Ensley, M. D., Pearce, C. L. and Hmieleski, K. M. (2006b). 'The moderating effect of environmental dynamism on the relationship between entrepreneur leadership behavior and new venture performance'. *Journal of Business Venturing*, **21**, 243–63.

Fleming, L. and Waguespack, D. M. (2007). 'Brokerage, boundary spanning, and leadership in open innovation communities'. *Organization Science*, **18**, 165–80.

Fleming, L., Mingo, S. and Chen, D. (2007). 'Collaborative brokerage, generative creativity, and creative success'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **52**, 443–75.

Fligstein, N. (2001). 'Social skill and the theory of fields'. *Sociological Theory*, **19**, 105–25.

Foo, M. D., Sin, H. P. and Yiong, L. P. (2006). 'Effects of team inputs and intrateam processes on perceptions of team viability and member satisfaction in nascent ventures'. *Strategic Management Journal*, **27**, 389–99.

Gartner, W. B., Bird, B. J. and Starr, J. A. (1992). 'Acting as if: Differentiating entrepreneurial from organizational behavior'. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **16**, 13–32.

Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G. and Hamilton, A. L. (2013). 'Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology'. *Organizational Research Methods*, **16**, 15–31.

Grimes, M. G. (2018). 'The pivot: How founders respond to feedback through idea and identity work'. *Academy of Management Journal*, **61**, 1692–717.

Gumusluoglu, L. and Ilsev, A. (2009). 'Transformational leadership, creativity, and organizational innovation'. *Journal of Business Research*, **62**, 461–73.

Gupta, V., Macmillan, I. C. and Surie, G. (2004). 'Entrepreneurial leadership: Developing and measuring a cross-cultural construct'. *Journal of Business Venturing*, **19**, 241–60.

Halevy, N., Halali, E. and Zlatev, J. J. (2018). 'Brokerage and brokering: An integrative review and organizing framework for third party influence'. *Academy of Management Annals*, **13**, 215–39.

Hargadon, A. and Sutton, R. I. (1997). 'Technology brokering and innovation in a product development firm'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **42**, 716–49.

Hirsch, P. M. (2000). 'Cultural industries revisited'. *Organization Science*, **11**, 356–61.

Hjorth, D., Holt, R. and Steyaert, C. (2015). 'Entrepreneurship and process studies'. *International Small Business Journal*, **33**, 599–611.

Hmieleski, K. M. and Baron, R. A. (2009). 'Entrepreneurs' optimism and new venture performance: A social cognitive perspective'. *Academy of Management Journal*, **52**, 473–88.

Hmieleski, K. M., Cole, M. S. and Baron, R. A. (2012). 'Shared authentic leadership and new venture performance'. *Journal of Management*, **38**, 1476–99.

Ibarra, H., Kilduff, M. and Tsai, W. (2005). 'Zooming in and out: Connecting individuals and collectivities at the frontiers of organizational network research'. *Organization Science*, **16**, 359–71.

Jack, S. L. (2010). 'Approaches to studying networks: Implications and outcomes'. *Journal of Business Venturing*, **25**, 120–37.

Jones, C. (1996). 'Careers in project networks: The case of the film industry'. In Arthur, M. B. and Rousseau, D. M. (Eds), *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 58–75.

Jones, C., Anand, N. and Alvarez, J. L. (2005). 'Manufactured authenticity and creative voice in cultural industries'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **42**, 893–99.

Kang, J. H., Solomon, G. T. and Choi, D. Y. (2015). 'CEOs' leadership styles and managers' innovative behaviour: Investigation of intervening effects in an entrepreneurial context'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **52**, 531–54.

Kaplan, S., Milde, J. and Cowan, R. (2017). 'Symbiont practices in boundary spanning: Bridging the cognitive and political divides in interdisciplinary research'. *Academy of Management Journal*, **60**, 1387–414.

Kauppila, O. P., Bizzi, L. and Obstfeld, D. (2018). 'Connecting and creating: Tertius iungens, individual creativity, and strategic decision processes'. *Strategic Management Journal*, **39**, 697–719.

de Laat, K. (2015). '"Write a word, get a third": Managing conflict and rewards in professional songwriting teams'. *Work and Occupations*, **42**, 225–56.

Lampel, J., Shamsie, J. and Lant, T. (2006). *The Business of Culture: Strategic Perspectives on Entertainment and Media*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Langley, A. (1999). 'Strategies for theorizing from process data'. *Academy of Management Review*, **24**, 691–710.

Langley, A. (2007). 'Process thinking in strategic organization'. *Strategic Organization*, **5**, 271–82.

Langley, A. (2009). 'Studying processes in and around organizations'. In Buchanan, D. A. and Bryman, A. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 409–29.

Langley, A. and Truax, J. (1994). 'A process study of new technology adoption in smaller manufacturing firms'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **31**, 619–52.

Leitch, C. and Harrison, R. (2018). 'Entrepreneurial leadership: A critical review and research agenda'. In Blackburn, R., De Clercq, D., and Heinonen, J. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*. London: SAGE Publications Inc., 15–37.

Leitch, C. M. and Volery, T. (2017). 'Entrepreneurial leadership: Insights and directions'. *International Small Business Journal*, **35**, 147–56.

Lingo, E. L. (2018). 'Brokerage and creative leadership: Process, practice and possibilities'. In Mainemelis, C., Epitropaki, O. and Kark, R. (Eds), *Creative Leadership: Contexts and Prospects*. New York, NY: Routledge, 208–27.

Lingo, E. L. and O'Mahony, S. (2010). 'Nexus work: Brokerage on creative projects'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **55**, 47–81.

Lundin, R. A., Arvidsson, N., Brady, T., Ekstedt, E., Midler, C. and Sydow, J. (2015). *Managing and Working in Project Society Institutional Challenges of Temporary Organizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mainemelis, C., Kark, R. and Epitropaki, O. (2015). 'Creative leadership: A multi-context conceptualization'. *Academy of Management Annals*, **9**, 393–482.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Washington, DC: SAGE.

Menger, P.-M. (1999). 'Artistic labor markets and careers'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, **25**, 541–74.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mixerman (2012). *Zen and the Art of Producing*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Books.

Mueller, S., Volery, T. and Von Siemens, B. (2012). 'What do entrepreneurs actually do? An observational study of entrepreneurs' everyday behavior in the start–up and growth stages'. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **36**, 995–1017.

Nagy, B. G., Pollack, J. M., Rutherford, M. W. and Lohrke, F. T. (2012). 'The influence of entrepreneurs' credentials and impression management behaviors on perceptions of new venture legitimacy'. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **36**, 941–65.

Negus, K. (1999a). 'The corporation, country culture and the communities of musical production'. In Negus, K. (Ed), *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures*. London: Routledge, 103–30.

Negus, K. (1999b). *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures*. London: Routledge.

Obstfeld, D. (2005). 'Social networks, the *tertius iungens* orientation, and involvement in innovation'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **50**, 100–30.

Obstfeld, D. (2017). *Getting New Things Done: Networks, Brokerage, and the Assembly of Innovative Action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Obstfeld, D., Borgatti, S. P. and Davis, J. (2014). 'Brokerage as a process: Decoupling third party action from social network structure'. *Emerald Group Publishing Limited*, 135–59.

Orlikowski, W. J. (2002). 'Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing'. *Organization Science*, **13**, 249–73.

Orr, J. (1996). *Talking About Machines: An Ethnography of a Modern Job*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Owsinski, B. (2016). *The Music Producers Handbook*. 2nd edition. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Books.

Patchett, A. (2007). 'Band of outsiders'. *New York Times*, 23 September, 60.

Perry-Smith, J. E. and Mannucci, P. V. (2017). 'From creativity to innovation: The social network drivers of the four phases of the idea journey'. *Academy of Management Review*, **42**, 53–79.

Peterson, R. A. (1997). *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Peterson, R. A. and Berger, D. G. (1971). 'Entrepreneurship in organizations: Evidence from the popular music industry'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **16**, 97–106.

Pollack, J. M., Barr, S. and Hanson, S. (2017). 'New venture creation as establishing stakeholder relationships: A trust-based perspective'. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, **7**, 15–20.

Quintane, E. and Carnabuci, G. (2016). 'How do brokers broker? Tertius gaudens, tertius iungens, and the temporality of structural holes'. *Organization Science*, **27**, 1343–60.

Reid, S. W., Anglin, A. H., Baur, J. E., Short, J. C. and Buckley, M. R. (2018). 'Blazing new trails or opportunity lost? Evaluating research at the intersection of leadership and entrepreneurship'. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **29**, 150–64.

Schultz, B. (2000). *Music Producers: Conversations with Today's Top Hitmakers*. 2nd edition. Emeryville, CA: MixBooks.

Schwartz, D. and Stone, T. (Eds)(1992). *Music producers: Conversations with today's top record makers*. Charlottesville, VA: Hal Leonard Publishers.

Shane, S. (2003). *A General Theory of Entrepreneurship: The Individual-Opportunity Nexus*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Shane, S. (2012). 'Reflections on the 2010 AMR decade award: Delivering on the promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research'. *Academy of Management Review*, **37**, 10–20.

Simmel, G. (1950). 'The triad'. In Wolff, K. (Ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press, 145–69.

Simons, D. J., Shoda, Y. and Lindsay, D. S. (2017). 'Constraints on generality (cog): A proposed addition to all empirical papers'. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, **12**, 1123–28.

Sklaveniti, C. (2017). 'Processes of entrepreneurial leadership: Co-acting creativity and direction in the emergence of new SME ventures'. *International Small Business Journal*, **35**, 197–213.

Smith, S. M. and McKeever, E. (2015). 'Using constant comparison as a method of analysis in entrepreneurship research'. In Neergaard, H. and Leitch, C. M. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Techniques and Analysis in Entrepreneurship*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 52–73.

Snihur, Y., Reiche, B. S. and Quintane, E. (2017). 'Sustaining actor engagement during the opportunity development process'. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, **11**, 1–17.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Suddaby, R., Bruton, G. D. and Si, S. X. (2015). 'Entrepreneurship through a qualitative lens: Insights on the construction and/or discovery of entrepreneurial opportunity'. *Journal of Business Venturing*, **30**, 1–10.

Van Maanen, J. (1998). *Qualitative Studies of Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Vecchio, R. P. (2003). *Entrepreneurship and Leadership: Common Trends and Common Threads*. Greenwich: Elsevier Inc, 303–27.

Volery, T. and Mueller, S. (2018). 'Managing paradoxes and tensions: A key element of entrepreneurs' leadership behaviour'. In Harrison, R. T. and Leitch, C. M. (Eds), *Research Handbook on Entrepreneurship and Leadership*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 133–55.

Volery, T., Mueller, S. and Von Siemens, B. (2015). 'Entrepreneur ambidexterity: A study of entrepreneur behaviours and competencies in growth-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises'. *International Small Business Journal*, **33**, 109–29.

Zaech, S. and Baldegger, U. (2017). 'Leadership in start-ups'. *International Small Business Journal*, **35**, 157–77.

Zimmerman, M. and Zeitz, G. (2002). 'Beyond survival: Achieving new venture growth by building legitimacy'. *Academy of Management Review*, **27**, 414–31.