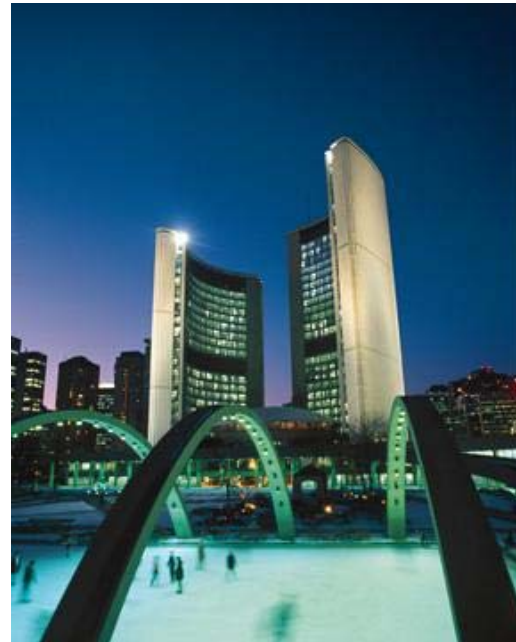


# Architecture in Toronto

## Social Foundations of Talent and Creativity

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# OUTLINE:

## GOALS OF THIS PAPER

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- Why Architecture:
  - Architecture as a creative industry
  - Architects as creative ‘talent’
  - Architecture in Toronto’s cultural renaissance
- Overview of the industry
- Occupational trends
- Emerging themes and questions

# WHY ARCHITECTURE:

## architecture as a creative industry

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- The 'art' of designing buildings
- Combines:
  - Physical, tangible, use value
  - Aesthetic value, semiotic content
- Style, fashion
  - Tension between 'international' (homogenizing) and local (novel, distinctive)

# WHY ARCHITECTURE: architects as creative 'talent'?

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- Design-based creative work:
  - creative and 'super' creative?
  - Part of more general 'star' phenomenon characterizing many creative occupations
- But 'stars' are only a very small fraction of total employment
  - Only a select few have that 'extra sizzle'
- Tension between local 'products' and global stars
  - Mundane/vernacular as well as 'showcase' projects
- Intimately associated with cities
  - Defines a city's look, identity
  - Regulated profession (guild) – territorial jurisdictions
  - Tied to local building cycles

# WHY ARCHITECTURE:

## architecture as a creative industry

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- Surprisingly little work on architects as ‘creative professionals’ or architecture as a ‘creative industry’
  - Previous work on cultural geographies of architecture and representativeness of building form and function (e.g. Lees 2001; McNeill & Tewdwr-Jones 2003; Yeoh 2005)
  - Using foreign architects and megaprojects for city promotion (Olds 2001; Marshall 2003; Jencks 2005)

# WHY ARCHITECTURE:

## Toronto's cultural renaissance

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- \$1B investment in 'iconic' cultural facilities
- Current buzz around profession
- Opportunity to define distinctive Toronto 'brand'?
- 'Starchitect' imports or homegrown talent?

# INDUSTRIAL OVERVIEW: architectural services

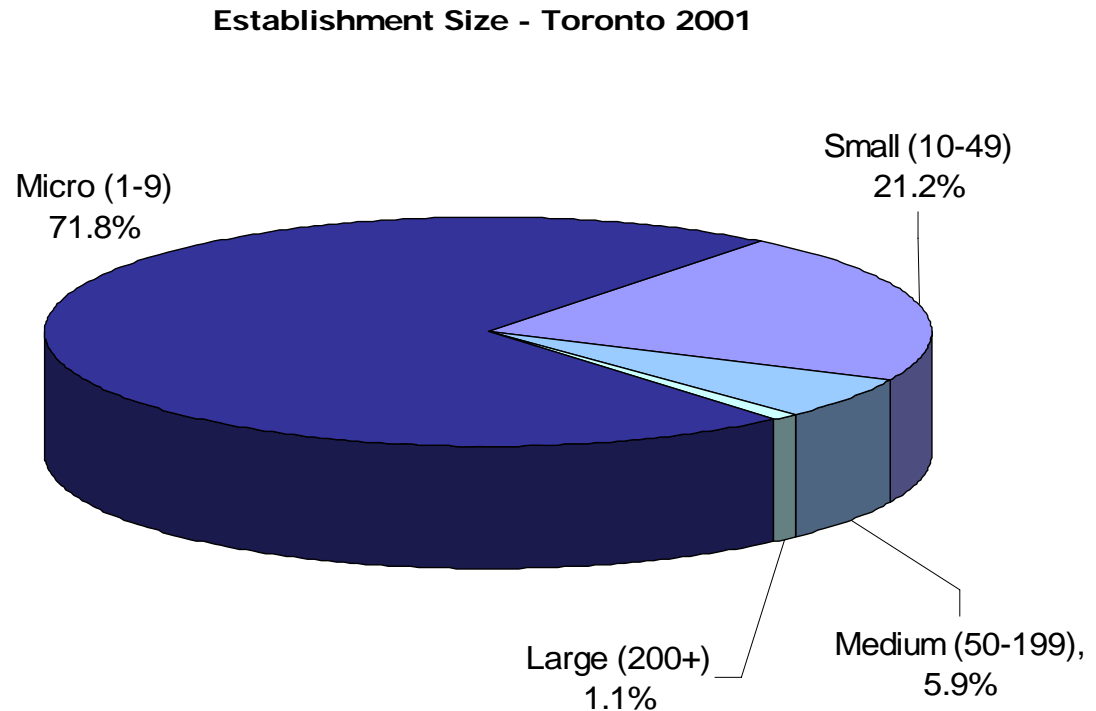
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- Statistics Canada (2002) definition
  - “Establishments are engaged in **planning and designing** the construction of residential, institutional, leisure, commercial and industrial buildings and other structures, **by applying knowledge** of design, construction procedures, zoning regulations, building codes and building materials”

# INDUSTRIAL OVERVIEW: architectural services

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- 4,500 architectural service establishments in Canada (2005)
  - 1,664 in Ontario
- Dominated by small firms
- Project-based work?
- How is the risky nature of industry managed by individuals and firms?

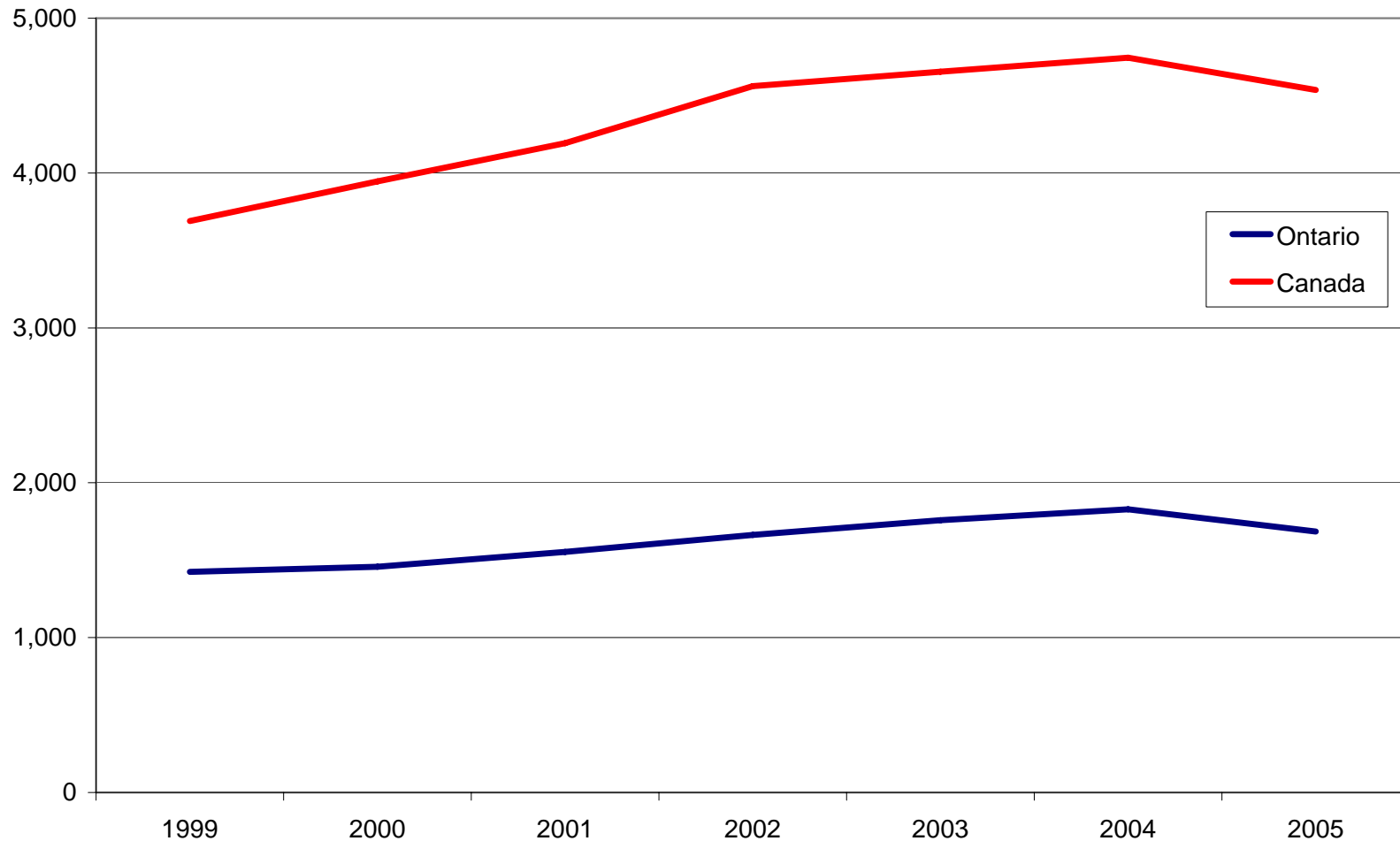




# INDUSTRIAL OVERVIEW: number of architecture firms, 1999-2005

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**Architectural Services: Number of active establishments**

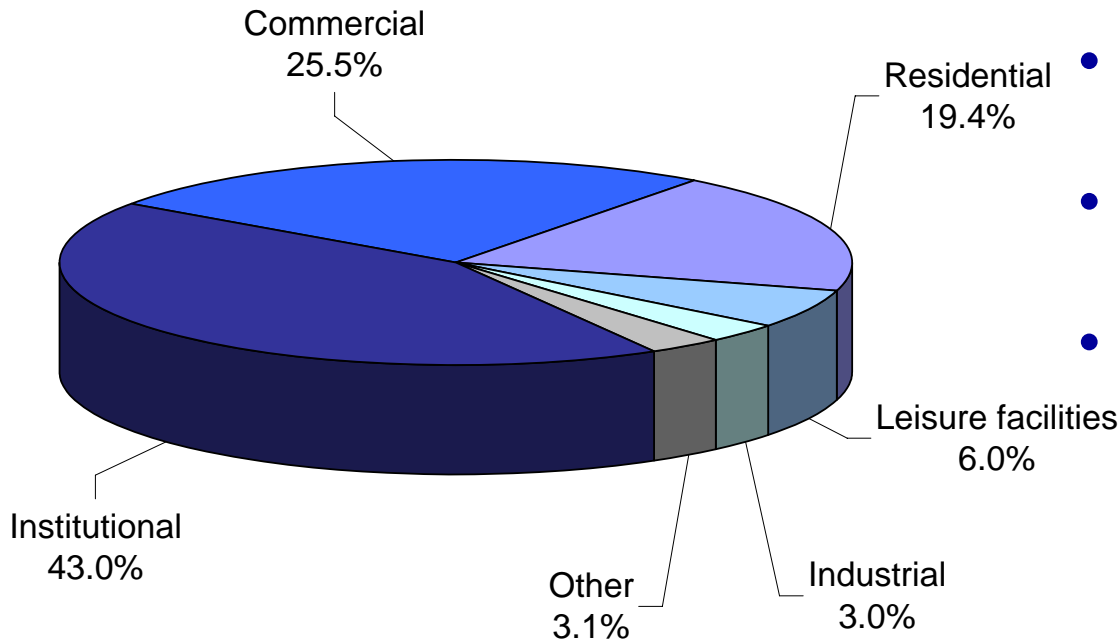


# INDUSTRIAL OVERVIEW:

## firm income generated by project type

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Income generated by type of project  
Ontario, 2002



- Highest fees charged on institutional projects
- Importance of public sector clients
- Lowest fees charged on residential projects
- Specialized vs. more 'general' architecture service establishments?

# INDUSTRIAL OVERVIEW:

## profile of firms

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- Predominantly a **local** practice
  - Only a handful of firms have offices in more than one province
  - In 2002, fee income from foreign projects totaled \$51 million (less than 3% of industry revenues)
  - United States is the single largest foreign market
    - > half of industry exports

# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS:

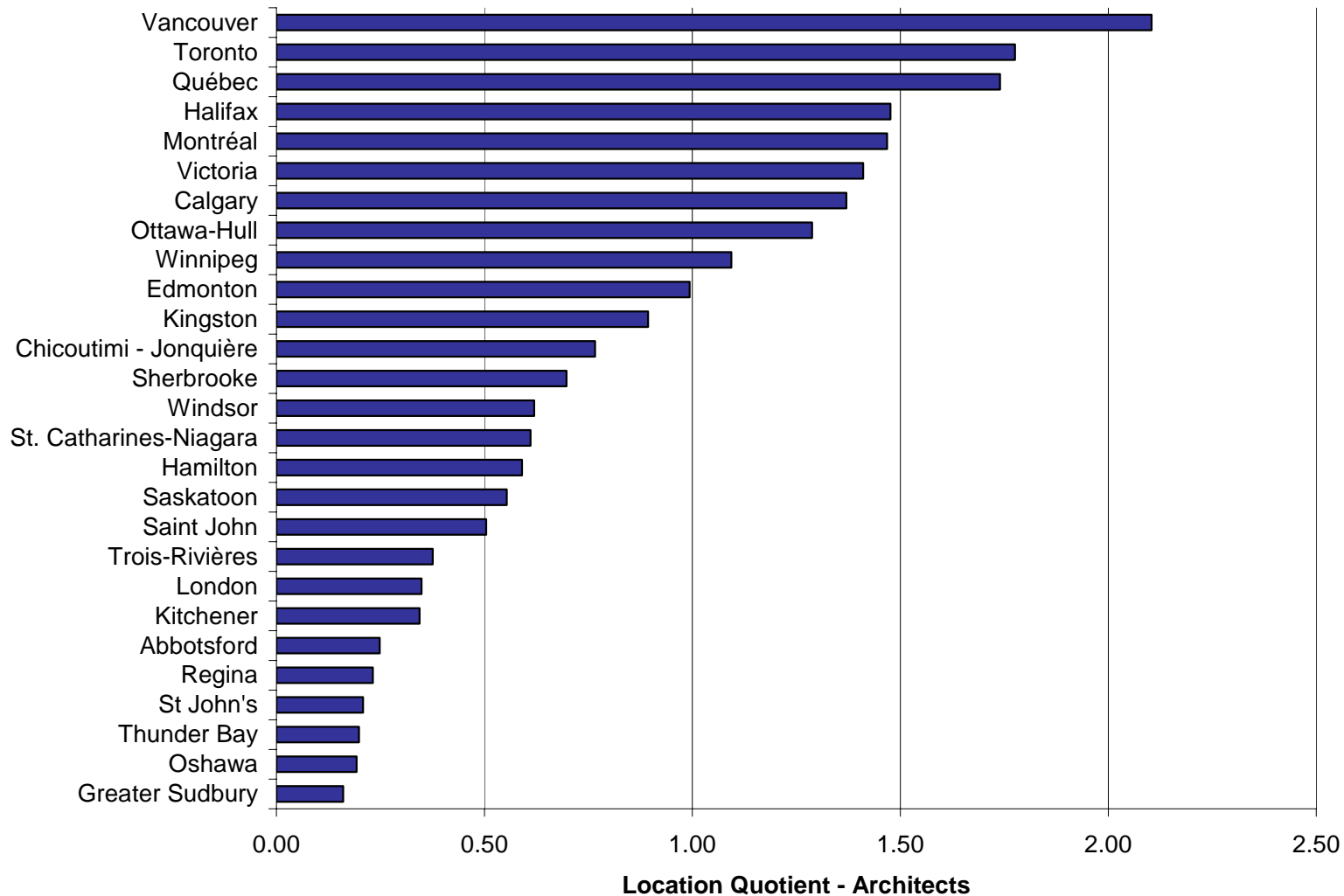
## geographic concentration of architects

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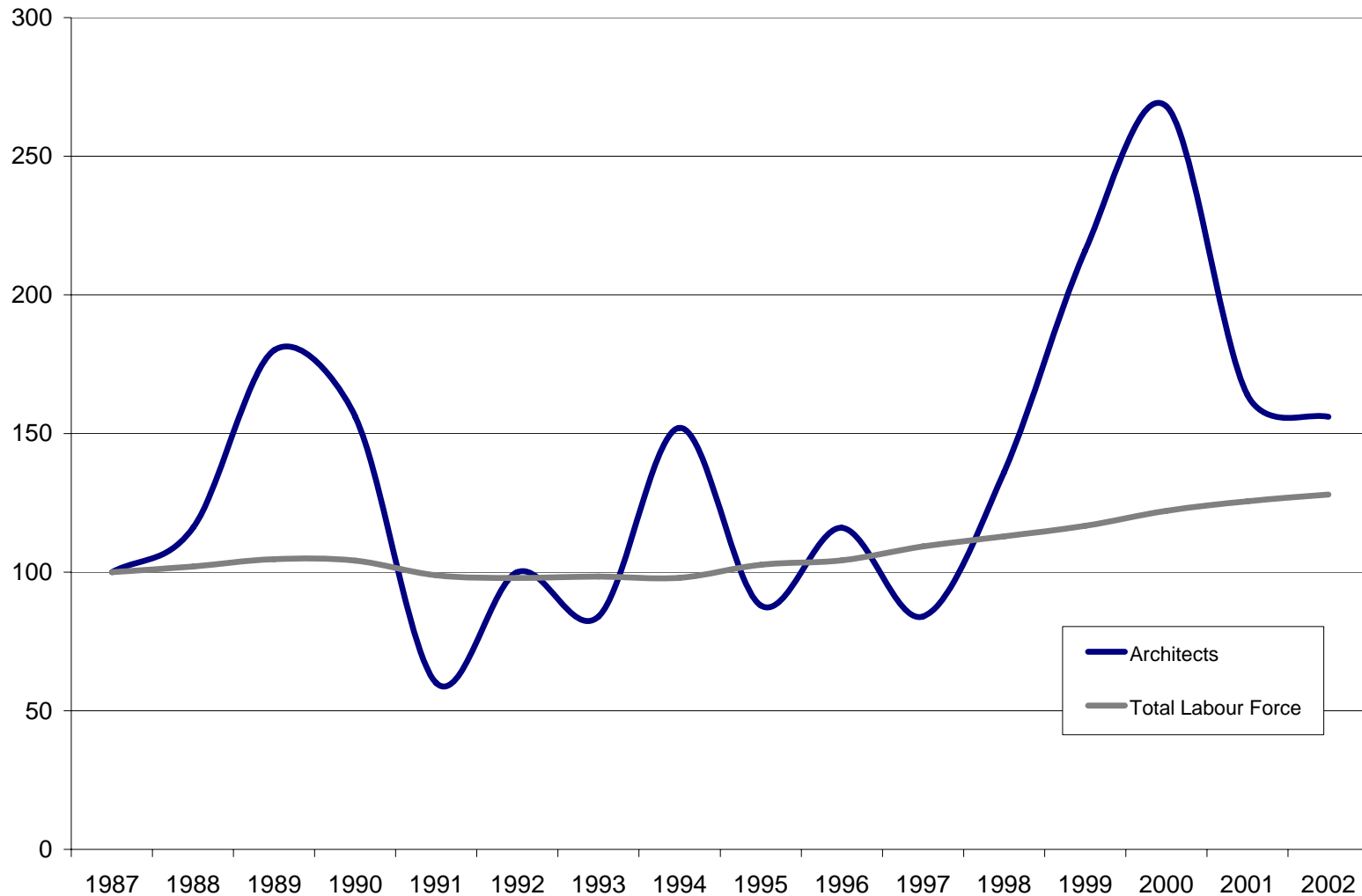
- 12,800 architects in Canada; 5,135 in Ontario
- 3,690 in Toronto working in 608 registered practices
  - 72% of Ontario architects work in Toronto
- High growth profession: 4.2% average annual growth rate, 1991-2001 (vs 1% average for all professions)
- Labour shortage?
  - “We must **educate** and **graduate** and **immigrate** more architects. At present we only graduate 400 per year – and we are designing more than \$6 billion of buildings across this country” (Royal Architecture Institute of Canada, 2007)

# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS: geographic concentration of architects

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# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS: employment of architects, Toronto, 1987-2002

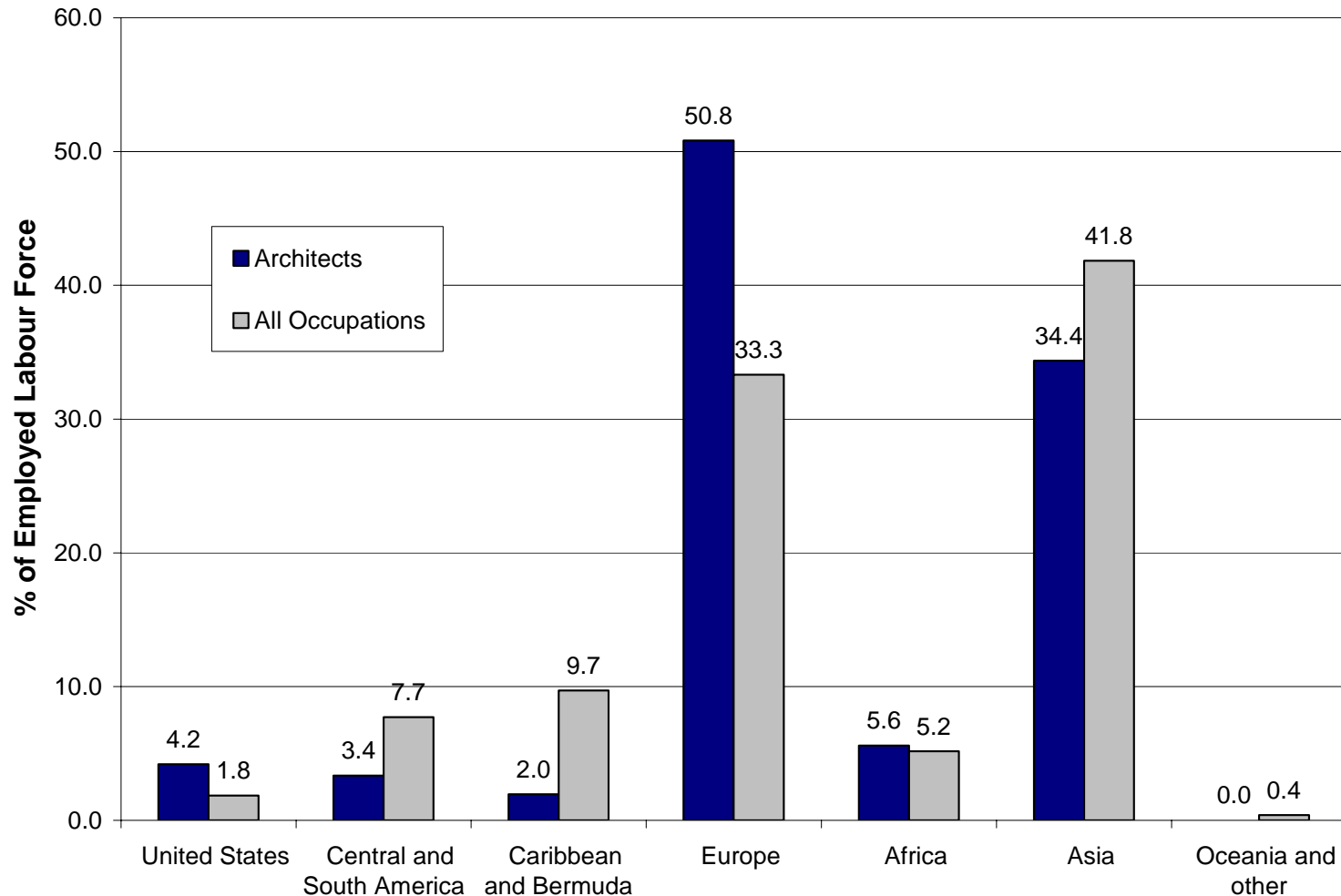


# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS: profiling architectural 'talent' in Ontario

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- *Designing the Economy* (Gertler & Vinodrai 2004)
  - Male-dominated profession: 78%
  - Foreign-born
    - 44% (architects) vs 29% (Ontario average)
  - Highly educated workforce
    - 85% with a university degree
    - 21% with Master's degree or higher (highest of all design professions)
  - High levels of self-employment
    - 33% (architects) vs 11% (Ontario average)
  - Most architects (86%) work in architecture firms

# ATTRACTING ARCHITECTURAL TALENT: place of birth for foreign born architects - Toronto, 2001





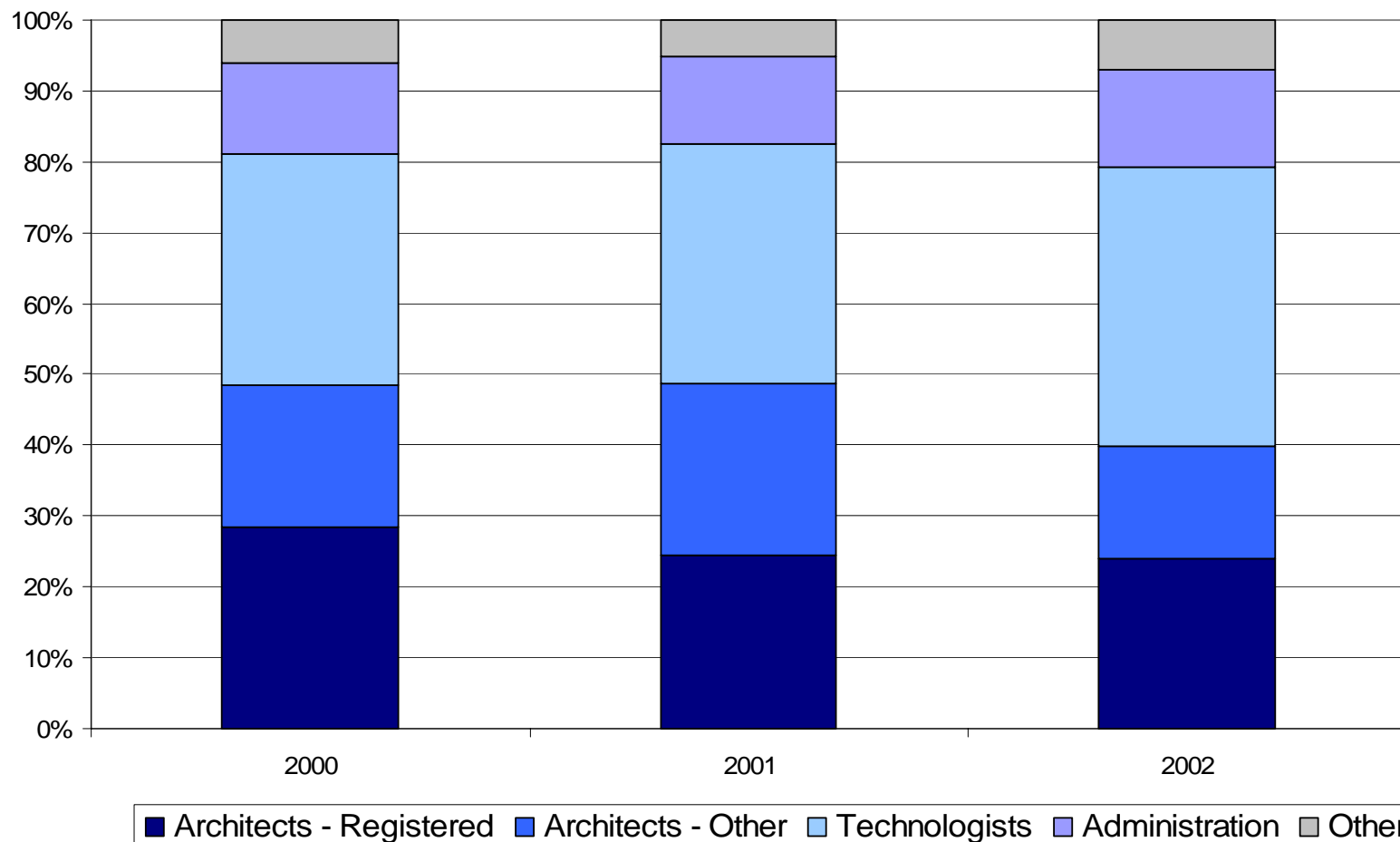
# OCCUPATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR: 'creatives' and 'supercreatives'?

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- Labour force characteristics (Statistics Canada 2002)
  - 40% architects (registered and other)
  - 40% technologists
    - Proportion of technologists increasing (CAD, animation)
    - (dependent on firm size)
- Creative vs. technical work:
  - Growing division?
  - Architectural technologists: flexibility, (in)security?
  - Technologists perceived as threat by architects (lower fees, no insurance)?

# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS: the rise of the creative class?

Personnel Characteristics of Architectural Services Firms  
Ontario, 2002



# MOBILE TALENT:

## entry and exit of labour and firms

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- Local inter-firm/project mobility?
- Cyclical nature of demand: involuntary mobility?
- Use of contingent labour and outsourcing?
  - architecture firms: 'hanging on by laying off'?
- Voluntary mobility: desire for diverse project experience?

“I think every architect wants to be able to design their own things. They want, I think, ... **a variety of experiences** on different types of projects but also ... more and more of their own control. I'm not saying that everybody is like that, there's a whole horde of people that are perfectly content to work under somebody else, but I think if you've gone into architecture I think you have a certain **creative drive** and want to fulfil it somehow, you know, by taking some kind of **ownership of your own designs**. I mean that's certainly what drove me to start my own firm” (Sally Anne, 40 yr old architect).

# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS:

## occupational division of labour within firms

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- Blurring of work/life division
  - Rise in architecture ‘couples’?

“Couples who build more than relationships: While every married couple’s dynamic might be considered unique, Ms. Diller and Mr. Scofidio are representative of a broad trend of husband-and-wife collaboration that is changing the traditional definition of architecture partnerships. The list of couples is growing, as architects break off from big firms to go into business with their spouses” (*New York Times*, 22 April 2007).

# CONCLUSION:

## TORONTO CITY-REGION AND TALENT

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- Role of the city-region in producing, attracting and inspiring architects
  - As site of production (cultural and institutional resources)
  - As site of consumption (showcasing contemporary design work, combined with local style?)
- Relative importance of factors such as:
  - Depth of employment opportunities, mediating risk
  - Social networking in project work, mediated by place
  - Impact of cultural renaissance projects, generating ‘buzz’ in architecture
  - Relationship between local and ‘import’ talent (competition and collaboration)

# CONCLUSION:

## FUTURE WORK PLAN

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- Interview schedule (summer and fall 2007)
  - 25 to 50 interviews with architects
  - firm size
  - geography of work (local/international)
  - types of projects (institutional/residential/industrial)
- Further interviews with intermediaries:
  - design schools, provincial accreditation boards, professional associations, critics
- Second case study: biomedical

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