



The networks of Montreal's independent musicians

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Presentation outline

- Introduction
 - A study of Montreal's independent music scene
 - Research objectives
- Literature review
 - Creative industries, linkages, independent music
- Methodology
 - Semi-structured interviews
- Preliminary findings

Introduction: Creative industries

- Creative industries have become more prominent in urban economies of the developed world (Scott, 1997)
 - e.g. film, multimedia, festivals, music
- Creative industries are seen as engines of economic growth themselves (Scott, 1997) and as lures for human capital (Florida, 2002)

Introduction: Social networks

- Social networks affecting economic interaction are a new focus in economic geography (Peck, 2005)
- Thus, economic geographers are studying the social networks in creative clusters (e.g. Storper & Venables, 2004; van Heur, 2007)

Introduction: Montreal

- Montreal has experienced de-industrialization (Picard, 1986) and its creative sector has assumed a more vital role (Stolarick & Florida, 2006)
- The city's independent music scene has received international publicity (e.g. The New York Times, 2005; Spin Magazine, 2006)

Introduction: Montreal

- Famous, independent Montreal bands include the Arcade Fire, The Dears, Islands, and Wolf Parade



Wolf Parade



Islands

Introduction: Montreal

- The Plateau & Mile End neighbourhoods are seen as the music industry's 'creative centre' in Montreal
 - Important venues: Casa del Popolo, Le Divan Orange, Barfly, Green Room



Casa del Popolo



Barfly

Introduction: Research goals

This study has two main goals:

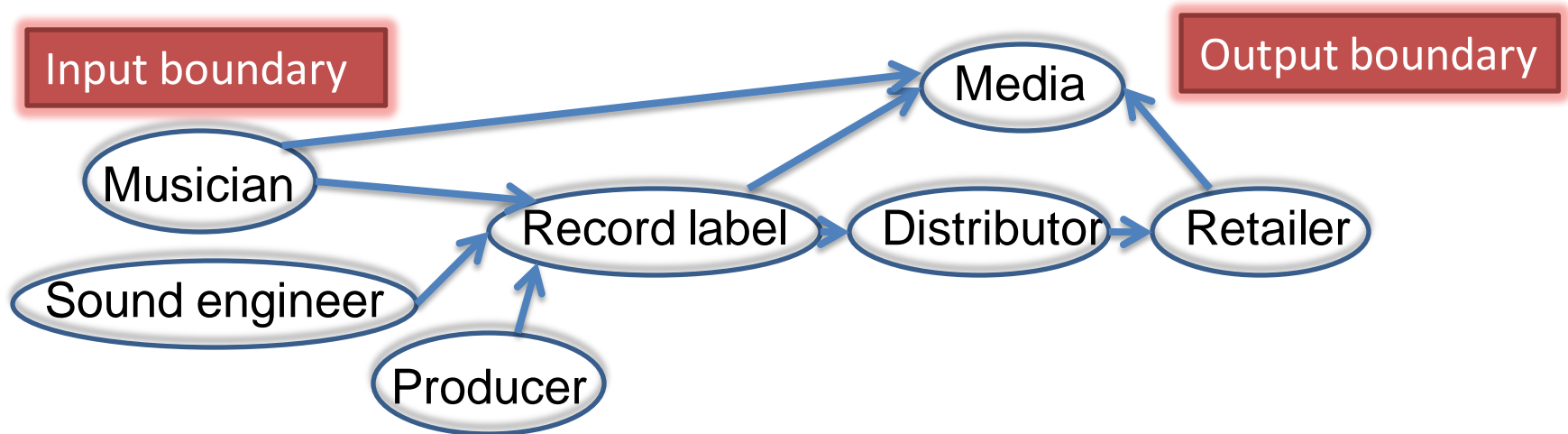
1. To describe the networks of Montreal's independent musicians
 - The nature (e.g. positive, negative, local, global) of vertical and horizontal relationships
2. To identify the place-based attributes of Montreal that either contribute to or detract from the city's music industry
 - e.g. low rents, festivals, bilingualism

Literature review: Creative industries

- Capitalism “is moving into a phase in which [...] human culture as a whole is increasingly subject to commodification” (Scott, 1997, p. 323).
 - Signs and symbols (Lash & Urry, 1993)
- Innovations from creative industries seen as vital to economic success (Putnam, 2000)
- Policies have been put in place encouraging creative industries

Literature review: Networks in creative industries

- Hirsch, 1972
 - Industry-systems approach to understanding how creative industries operate
 - Different actors are necessary for the completion of the final product



Literature review: Clustering of creative industries

- Scott, 1999
 - Outputs are the result of interactions between large numbers of actors
 - Clustering due to external economies of scale
- Buzz and face-to-face contact (Storper & Venables, 2004)
 - Transfer of tacit knowledge vital to creative industries

Literature review: The music industry

- The music industry can be divided according to record label into major and independent
- The four major labels control 90% of U.S. music sales and 80% of global music sales (Leyshon et al., 2005)
 - AOL-Time Warner, Sony-BMG, Universal-Vivendi, and EMI (Fox, 2005)
- Independent labels comprise all the remaining record labels

Literature review: The music industry

- Music is over-produced to cope with uncertain demand (Hirsch, 1972)
 - The chances of commercial success for any artist are quite low
- Turnover is high due to over-supply, uncertain demand, and low barriers to entry and exit (Scott, 1999)

Literature review: The music industry

- Independent labels associated with underground genres
- Underground scenes interconnected globally
 - e.g. house, metal, folk



Methodology

- Research design: case study of Montreal
 - Good for answering ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions in a specific context (Yin, 1994)
- Methodology: semi-structured interviews
 - Researcher uses an interview guide containing open-ended questions
 - Ideal for an exploratory, descriptive study

Methodology: Sampling

- The sample is limited to people gainfully employed in Montreal's independent music industry
 - Musicians and people with whom musicians interact
- Snowball sampling
 - I will stop seeking out new interviewees once saturation is reached (theoretical sampling)
 - 40 to 50 interviews in total?

Methodology: Interview guide

- ISRN Theme II questions on attraction and retention of human capital
- Interviews last 60 to 90 minutes

Methodology: Interview guide

- Current musical projects
- Other income
- Advantages and disadvantages of working in Montreal
- The nature of vertical and horizontal relations between actors in the music industry

Methodology: Interview guide

- Promotion/marketing strategies
- The Internet
 - Promotion, distribution, networking
- Montreal's bilingualism
- Music festivals
- Governmental support
 - Federal? Provincial?

Preliminary findings (nine interviews)

- Face-to-face contact is the primary form of interaction
- Serious musicians have multiple projects, with overlapping networks
- Networks associated with different projects or genres have different geographies (local, national, international)
- Montreal offers cheap rents and a cultural milieu conducive to creativity

Thank you

- Questions? Comments?