



Should I Stay
or Should I
Go?



Evaluating Toronto's
Ability to Attract and
Retain Musical
Talent

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Why Study Musical Talent?

Biochemists and Poets:
not all strands of talent are equal

Performing two roles:
Musicians create cultural goods/services AND
vibrant bohemian scenes

Talent Magnets: understanding the residential choices
and employment trajectories of musicians can help us
predict the flows of talent more generally



Escaping the 'Black Holes'

In the United States, the map of recording companies reveals three large clusters as almost all the majors and their affiliates are located in Los Angeles, New York, and, to a lesser degree, Nashville. The independent labels also follow this pattern with 51 locating in Los Angeles, 44 in New York and 9 in Nashville (Scott, 1999).

Discussion





Openness
to Creativity

Selective Scenes

"I guess **Sneaky Dee's is kind of our home base**...We have been connected with them since they started...we are very tight knit. **It is incestuous in a way**, there is a group of people and they all play in each other bands and we usually just draw from that pool for new bands, shows or session work." (Mr. L, Guitarist and Singer, May 2007)

"It is so hard for people who have the talent but **don't have the connections** or the know-how...they don't even know where to start." (Ms. L, Singer, May, 2007)

"It is a little clique and if they don't like you or the band you're in, **you won't be able to get any gigs**, or if you don't hang around at the bars that they hang around at. **The networks can be exclusionary** just like high school.... **Toronto is not that open** and it has gotten worse....I think the city labors under the delusion that it is so open-minded." (Ms. D, Drummer, June, 2007)

The Benefits of Clustering

Clustering allows firms to benefit from a range of localized complementarities

Access to suppliers

Collective resources

Large pools of talent

Specialized infrastructure

Clusters can generate knowledge spillovers, learning and innovation

Clusters are self-reinforcing

The Cluster Conundrum

“Getting paid for gigs is a treat...because there is a lot of **competition.**”
(Mr. J, Drummer and Guitarist, June, 2007)

“I think people have **too many alternatives** in Toronto, people get blasé about it.” (Ms. D, Drummer, June, 2007)

“It is **common to not get paid** or to have to pay to play which of course makes no sense at all. Now (after three years) we are getting paid more consistently but it is a **maximum of \$50 or \$60** divided amongst the members in the band. **That does not even really cover the cost of equipment and rehearsal time.** Usually it will buy you dinner for that night, and maybe the gas to get to the show.” (Mr. A, Drummer, March 2007)

The 'Buzz' of 'Being There'



Soothing Spaces

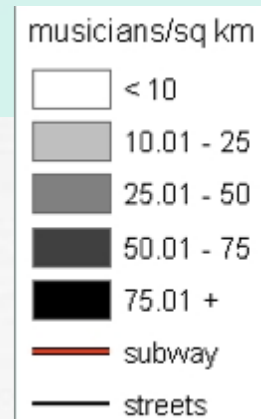
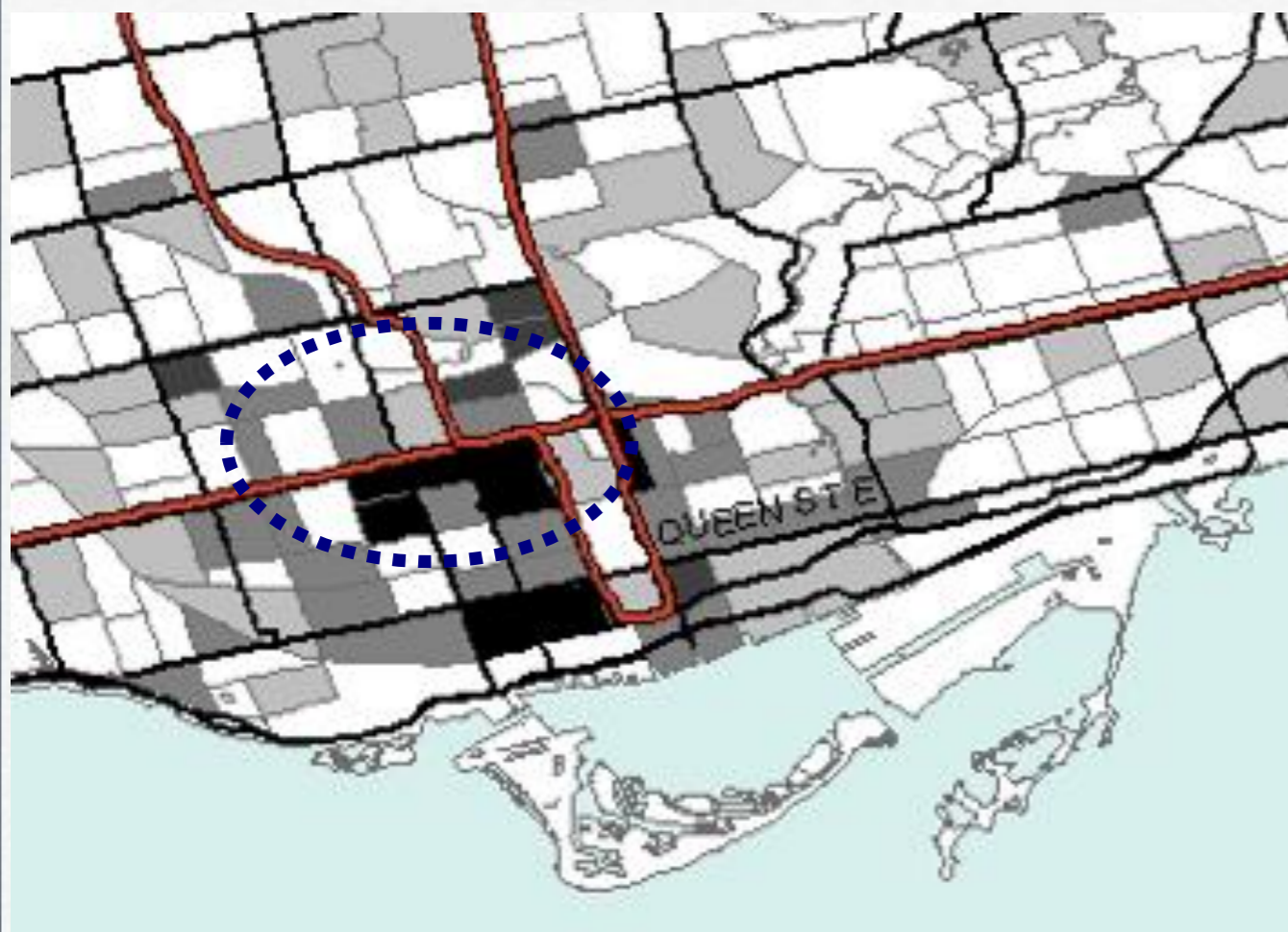
“There is a **partying lifestyle** that comes with being a musician in a band...There is late night stuff, drinking, drugs, which embodies that whole lifestyle...you are as good as your environment is and you can get sucked into the party atmosphere... **I fell victim to it.**” (Mr. G, Drummer, April, 2007)

“Some people have the mentality that it goes along with **being a rock star, doing drugs, getting drunk** and partying constantly. I have seen so many fall off because of it. Our band is just not into that, that is not our mentality, **we are driven and not party animals.** We are smarter than that and we have goals that we are determined to reach, so **that would just get in the way.**” (Mr. B, Guitarist, May, 2007)

Musicians in Toronto

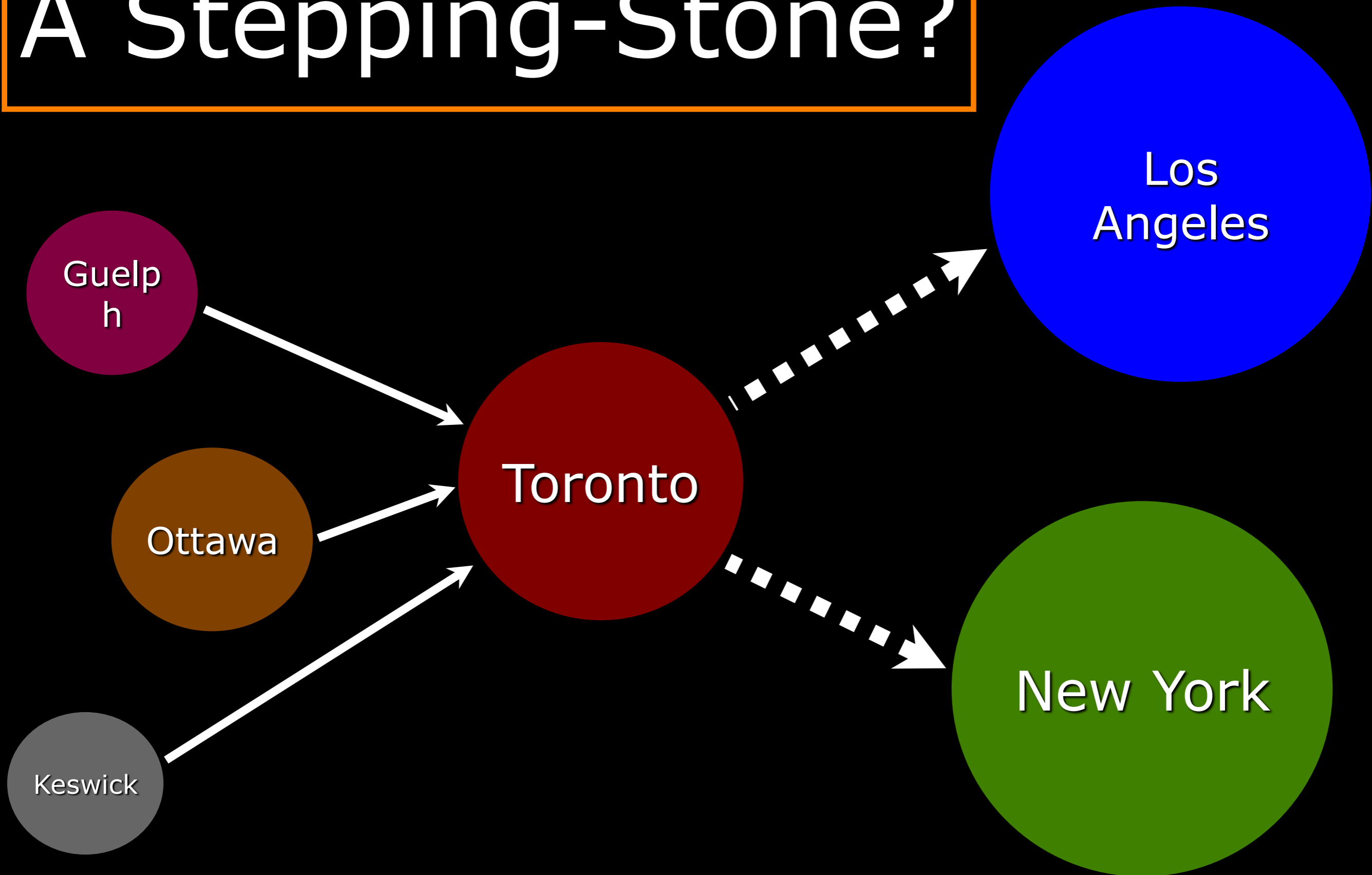
Place of Work

Place of Residence



Source Data: Statistics Canada 2001

A Stepping-Stone?



The energy of people in Los Angeles is different, it is way more aggressive, they think big. In Canada, people think of making it in a little section of Toronto but it is so tiny...**Los Angeles is this Mecca** of people from all over the world who are pursuing their dreams, who know that they have to come to Los Angeles to do it." (Mr. D, Singer and Band Leader, October, 2007)

"**New York**, because that's it, that **is the place to go**. That is not to live, that is to work as a musician." (Mr. O, Singer, May, 2007)

"Toronto is a good place to go work and maybe test things or experiment with things, but as far as being a player on the international scene it is not there yet....I think if you put a list together **Toronto is kind of in the middle**." (Mr. S, Producer, Engineer, Educator, September, 2007)

Toronto's Competitive Advantage



Small Scenes are Supportive and Sustainable Scenes

Policy Recommendations

Toronto's urban managers should;

Create a 'music incubator' based on the successful model of the Toronto Fashion Incubator established in 1987.

Change the system of evaluating grant proposals and provide more funding to a broader range of musical talent.

Protect existing artistic habitats and provide more affordable, flexible and inclusive spaces for musical talent to live, work and 'hang out'.

