

MARTIN  
**Prosperity***Institute*

# Satisfaction Guaranteed? Talent Mobility and Regional Satisfaction

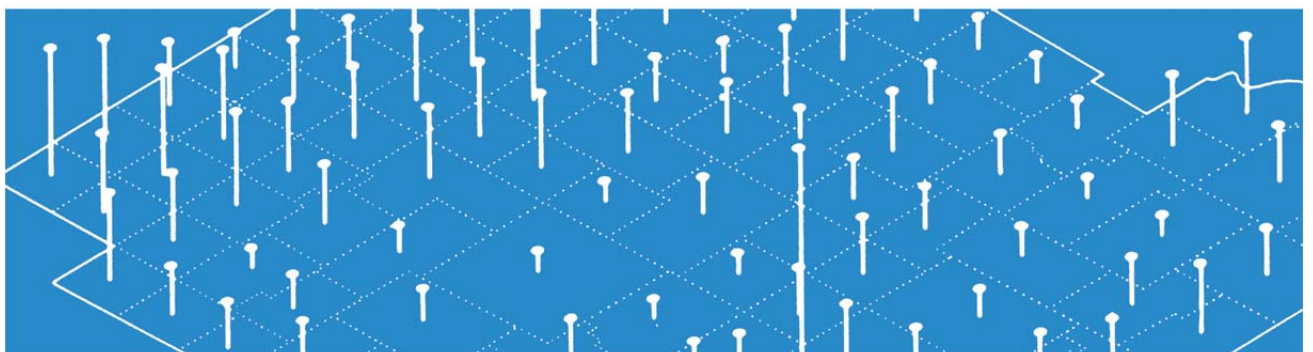
**Working Paper Series:**  
Martin Prosperity Research

Prepared by:

Brian J. Hracz, University of Toronto  
Kevin Stolarick, University of Toronto

March 2011

REF. 2011-MPIWP-006



**Abstract:**

This chapter draws on interviews with musicians in Toronto to develop a framework to explain their mobility. The findings suggest that musicians are initially attracted by expectations of the amenities and other socioeconomic conditions they will find in a specific location. Places that meet or exceed expectations are deemed authentic. The research provides a nuanced theoretical framework relating regional amenities, attractiveness, and stated mobility intentions to inform policy actions that regions can use to help attract and retain talented individuals.

## Introduction

Individualization of life situations and processes thus means that biographies become *self-reflexive*; socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced and continues to be produced. Decisions on education, profession, job, place of residence, spouse, number of children and so forth, with all the secondary decisions implied, no longer can be, they must be made.

(Beck 1992, 135)

As individuals become responsible for constructing their own biographies and decision-making becomes more complex, social scientists endeavour to understand the factors that motivate specific choices. In geography the last decade has witnessed a growing fascination with the locational choices of individuals with high levels of human capital and mobility. Identifying the factors that attract and retain talent has become an important research agenda and one that has produced a robust yet contradictory body of literature. Two camps have emerged. On one hand, Storper and Scott (2009) argue that good quality jobs must be present before talent will migrate. On the other hand, many argue that talent is attracted to locations that offer a rich mix of amenities: Florida (2002) examines the importance of tolerance, Glaeser et al.(2001) point to the availability of consumption opportunities, and Clark et al. (2002) argue that talent is drawn to leisure activities and entertainment amenities.

The binary between jobs and amenities does not provide sufficient nuance to explain choices. It fails to reflect the evolving nature of what constitutes a job and the degree to which the preferences of talent are differentiated by factors including occupation, gender, ethnicity, life cycle, and past experience. Freelance creative workers and entrepreneurs do not migrate for specific firm-based jobs but rather thick labour markets that offer opportunities for paid employment. Moreover, specific amenities such as culture, climate, low crime levels, good schools, and tolerance matter to varying degrees depending on individual tastes, subjectivities, and life cycle requirements. The existing literature says little about scale and access. Recent studies (Hracs 2009) demonstrate, for example, that the mere presence of attractive labour markets and amenities does not ensure that incoming talent will be able to access employment opportunities and enjoy a high quality of life. We view this as a disconnect between the macro-perception of a location, which is often constructed by city-branding strategies (Rantisi and Leslie 2006), and the reality of lived experience at the scale of the individual. This problem is compounded by the tendency of the literature and development strategies to privilege the attraction stage over the equally important retention stage. Understanding what attracts and ultimately retains talent requires a multi-stage analysis.

In this chapter we draw on 51 interviews with musicians in Toronto to explore the factors that motivate individuals to relocate<sup>1</sup>. We combine a conceptual model with sample comments from the interviews to demonstrate that talent retention is based on how well the initial expectations of place are met in reality. We begin by focusing on the initial move and how musicians imagine and select potential destinations. We then explore how the macro-perception of a city matches the lived experience of individuals. In each individual case the variance will produce one of four outcomes. If the expectations have been met the individual will stay in the current location. If the expectations have not been met the individual will either change expectations, move within the

city-region to improve the situation, or leave entirely. By using interviews to explore the decision making process of one strand of talent, this chapter nuances the existing literature and identifies opportunities for further research.

### **The Individualized Nature of Locational Choice**

To preface the empirical analysis, we acknowledge the rich literature on locational choice: in particular, choice has long been recognized as a highly individualized process. For example, Tiebout (1956) argued that individuals who were dissatisfied in their current location voted with their feet. He argued that individuals move to places that offer the bundle of public goods and services and taxes that best fit their requirements. In this way migration reflects a market-like solution in which people attempt to find their best fit. In other words, every individual creates their own calculus by weighing specific factors related to employment and amenities. By extension, Rosen (1979) and Roback (1982) demonstrate that, in some cases, individuals will accept lower wages or higher cost of housing in exchange for an increase in their quality of life. Underpinning our subsequent discussion on intra and inter-regional migration, Blomqvist et al. (1988) indicate that these tradeoffs apply for movements both within and across regions.

In the global competition for talent reconciling broad attraction strategies that tout specific amenities with the subjective preferences of individuals is problematic: the literature offers several cautionary tales. In their analysis of Singapore's Global City of the Arts initiative, for example, Chang and Lee (2003) argue that the results from significant investment towards attraction proved marginal at best. Indeed, in this case low awareness, appreciation, and participation created amenities that did not meet the needs, desires, or expectations of the citizenry. Donald (2001, 269) warns against conflating measures of quality of life with quality of place, and explains that "Quality of life is an individualized concept, whereas quality of place suggests a consensus in place regarding how quality of life strategies should be prioritized in terms of an overall development plan." She argue that the *descriptive* analysis of the relationship between amenities and regional growth -- put forward by Florida, Clark and Glaeser -- has been translated into *prescriptive* development efforts at the local and regional scale. Donald (2001, 11) explains that this translation has resulted in a "focus on marketing the consumption value of gay neighbourhoods and 'funky' bohemian districts. Yet, surface-level 'place' marketing may have the potential of glossing over the essential investments required to maintain and enhance a creative city."

Behavioural scientists suggest that the subjective perceptions of potential migrants are an important determinant of location choice. Wolpert (1965) argues that individual-level behavioural traits are critical to understanding migration patterns. He describes three dimensions to understanding migration behaviour. First is the value individuals either gain from staying in their current location or expect to gain from an alternate location. Second are the constraints (spatial and social) on the flow of information about the current and potential locations. Personal characteristics including age, race, income, marital status, and occupation comprise the third critical dimension. The ability of an individual to obtain correct, objective information about their current location and alternate locations is limited and filtered by individual perceptions and the availability of information. Evaluation of this information is further complicated by

individual traits, expectations, and life-stage characteristics. The result is that the analysis of migration decisions is invariably subjective and is as varied by individual as by location. Wolpert argues that research in migration decision-making must account for attitudes and choices being determined by highly personal, individual lived experiences. Using uniform, fixed criteria to determine quality of life within a region without accounting for individual expectations and traits is likely to be difficult and problematic.

Herzog et al. (1986) and Whisler et al. (2008) note that satisfaction with current location affects the decisions of individuals to stay or move. Florida et al. (2010b) find that place-based factors, in particular the beauty and physical appeal of the current location and the ability to meet people and make friends, explain more of an individual's desire to stay than does community economic conditions or individual demographic characteristics.

At present the literature on talent attraction and retention displays a tendency to aggregate and generalize. Although recent studies including Scott (2009) and Niedomysl and Hansen (2010) succeed in reversing this trend, important specificities related to place and occupations are often overlooked. Drawing on the work of Markusen and King (2003) -- who call for an occupational approach to talent -- our empirical investigation focuses on one strand of talent in one location: independent musicians who are currently living and working in Toronto.

### **The Case of Independent Musicians in Toronto**

To explore the decision making process in a population with a high degree of mobility, we chose independent musicians. In the reconfigured landscape of digital music production, independent musicians -- who are not tied to established music industry centres such as Los Angeles, New York or Nashville (Scott 1999) -- can essentially live and work anywhere<sup>2</sup> (Hracs 2009; Hracs et al. forthcoming). Between 2007 and 2008 we conducted 51 interviews with independent musicians. To get a broad cross-section of experiences and opinions, the musicians interviewed varied by age, gender, level of education, genre, and career stage. Figure 1 describes the research participants.

[Figure 1: Interview sample -- *goes about here*]

Although each musician was living and working in Toronto at the time of the interview, only half of the musicians were born in Toronto. Moreover, many in the sample had lived and worked in other music centres before arriving in or returning to Toronto. The diversity of the sample allows us to explore the perceptions and expectations of musicians who have different reference points. For example, we can contrast how Toronto is perceived by musicians with no experience in other larger cities to those of musicians who have lived and worked in New York, London, Los Angeles, Berlin, Amsterdam, Halifax, Montreal, and Nashville.

Perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction are relative constructs shaped by prior experiences. For example, while musicians from small towns may regard Toronto as a Mecca for opportunity, those with broader frames of reference may consider Toronto competitive and exclusionary. To ensure consistent coverage of key issues across the interviews we used an interview guide. In

particular, we probed the spatial history of each participant, their locational preferences, their perceptions of living and working in Toronto, and whether they intended to stay in Toronto or relocate in the future. The responses demonstrated the individualized way in which musicians think about place and relocation. To investigate the process, we have developed a multi-stage model (Figure 2) based on the interview responses. Although we acknowledge its simplicity, the model is meant to add structure to the discussion. In the following sections we walk through the stages of the model and provide illustrative quotes and analysis.

[Figure 2: Conceptual model of locational choice goes about here]

### *Stage 1: Establishing Expectations*

The first stage of the model involves the decision to move. Here we are interested in the impetus for relocation and how expectations about potential destinations are formed. Highlighting the complexity of the process, our sample included musicians who approached this stage in a rational way, researching locations and weighing their options according to criteria found in the literature. Others, however, reported coming to Toronto because of subjective reasons including personal relationships or a feeling that Toronto was the place to be. In some cases, specific employment or educational opportunities served as the primary attraction. As one musician explained, “I was born in Hong Kong and came to Toronto 10 years ago. I came here to study with a great violinist who taught at the Conservatory of Music.” Or as another musician put it:

*I was born in Orlando, Florida. I came to Toronto for my work here. I was invited to audition for Tafelmusik, which operates here. Prior to that I had never been to Toronto. I knew the orchestra existed up here but I never seriously contemplated moving here...I agreed to come here and work with the orchestra to see what the city and the orchestra were like.*

These two musicians had never worked in or visited Toronto but simply intended to come for a position to see how things went. This underscores the incompleteness of the decision making process. In other examples, respondents reported moving to Toronto on the advice of peers. As a musician explained:

*I am from a smaller town, Guelph Ontario. When I was 27 I moved to Toronto. I came for the music. I had been playing local jams and cafes in Guelph but then you start to play out of town. You get older and everybody you know, one by one, they all just migrate to Toronto and it just seems like the thing to do.*

Another musician recalled:

*I am from Calgary originally. I spent five years in Europe and I never intended on returning to Canada. I thought I would spend the rest of my life in Europe. I really love it there. I was in London and I was playing so much music there, I felt like I was home. But after three years my visa expired and I had to return to Calgary. I worked at the Banff Centre for Music and fully intended to return to England. Honestly what happened, I met a guy and we moved to Toronto. He wanted to move to Montréal. I knew that there wasn't*

*much happening there musically and I knew I wouldn't be able to work there. But I knew that there would be a lot of work in Toronto, I called a friend and they said please come there is so much work, we need somebody like you. I never thought I would end up in Toronto but I have been here for 14 years now.*

It is clear that a variety of factors can attract talented individuals to specific locations. In the next section we consider how individuals determine their locational satisfaction and whether or not they will stay or relocate in the future.

### *Stage 2: Stages of Locational Satisfaction*

Once in Toronto individuals attempt to realize their expectations of place. People enter the labour market, find a place to live, form networks and social relationships and begin to explore and consume the available amenities. After a period of time opinions of place can be formed and individuals can compare their lived experience to their expectations. This evaluation process can be triggered by major life cycle events, a bad day in traffic, or not at all. In the context of the research reflexivity was prompted by our interview questions. Although we asked each participant about their experience of living and working in Toronto, respondents were free to discuss any aspects of the city. The range of responses and evaluative criteria highlights the individualized nature of experiences, but for the purposes of analysis here we focus on dominant themes related to diversity, employment, affordability, and amenities. The quotes presented demonstrate that each individual experiences aspects of a place differently and forms different perceptions and opinions. The personal evaluation of experience ultimately compels individuals to stay or go.

Florida (2002) uses population diversity as a measurable proxy for tolerance and openness. He argues that places that are welcoming and provide low barriers to entering the labour market and trying out new things will attract and retain talent. In Toronto, diversity -- in the form of foreign-born residents -- is considered a competitive advantage and an indication that the city is easy to plug into. Over 53 percent of the Toronto region's population are immigrants (Statistics Canada 2006). Our findings suggest that individual perceptions of diversity vary depending on musicians' frames of reference and their experiences living and working in Toronto. One European musician, for example, focused on multiculturalism in Toronto:

*I find Toronto amazingly diverse and tolerant. I am a foreigner myself, but I never feel like a foreigner because everyone else has some kind of accent too. You don't get that anywhere else. For example, I was just in Amsterdam last week and there are a lot of Muslims but it is not working very well in terms of integration...You see these Muslims sitting in the bus and they're looking down at the floor, they are uncomfortable, it is not a happy mix...So I think Toronto is unique in terms of multiculturalism and it is just really nice, I really like that about the city.*

One musician had a different interpretation of tolerance:

*My experience totally confirms the idea that Toronto is an open and tolerant city. Compared to the years, for example, that I lived in London Ontario, Toronto for me is like*

*heaven. Even for me coming from Halifax, made a big difference. I am gay so Halifax is probably fine for that now but when I was a high school student it was pretty tough. So coming to Toronto was like another world altogether. That is huge for me. For me that is where diversity matters a lot and Toronto is a great safe and happy place to be.*

Finally, a self-described woman of colour was interested in diversity within power structures:

*The power structures aren't that diverse within the city, especially among the decision-makers for arts and culture. In one meeting we went around the room and talked about what makes Toronto great and a lot of people talk about the whole diversity thing but there were two non-white people sitting around a table in this large group. So those are important things to discuss, the demographics yes are diverse but it is about more than just being there, it is about who is there at the decision-making table and who's calling the shots. So diversity hasn't really trickled up to that level yet.*

For individuals who work in creative occupations the ability to access employment opportunities and collaborative opportunities is important (Christopherson 2002; Hauge and Hracs 2010). As this access is often granted via networks, the degree to which places are welcoming and easy to plug into influences their attractiveness. Once again, Toronto's music scenes can be perceived in different ways depending on individual experiences. A classically trained musician from Guelph found Toronto welcoming and easy to engage:

*There is so much going on and so much creativity and new things all the time. We meet so many people who are really eager to collaborate and do new things. I think it is amazing! It is really exciting, constantly exciting. I think it is pretty warm and welcoming too.*

An indie rock musician from Ottawa, however, found Toronto exclusionary.

*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.*

Although employment opportunities are important to all workers, highly educated and mobile individuals migrate to optimize their employment experiences. In other words, thick and robust labour markets that offer high quality employment opportunities are attractive (Florida 2002; Storper and Scott 2009). The following three quotes illustrate the disconnect between labour markets and specific scenes and highlight the influence of lived experience on individual perceptions. Due to her skill set and network, one musician reported an abundance of satisfying work in Toronto: "Strings are in demand right now so I can always get work. I have worked on contemporary dance and original compositions. I play in classical groups and indie rock groups, too." One musician commented on the broader characteristics of Toronto's labour market that make it attractive:

*There is no other market in the country that has the amount of affluence to support what we do...As a manager of musicians, as somebody that puts different groups of musicians together for performances Toronto's standard quality of musicianship and number of*



*musicians is the only way I could actually keep my business going. In Toronto there is a thick labour market that I can draw from.*

By contrast, one musician expressed frustration about the lack of quality employment opportunities in the city:

*It is hard to make money as a musician. Often you play and at the end of the night you get \$20 and that is of course for the whole band. So you think, "I played for this? I schlepped all my stuff down here and paid for gas and parking for this"?*

In addition to employment opportunities, creative strands of talent are attracted to places that can support various artistic forms and are open to creative experimentation. In probing perceptions of this openness, we found that individual goals and experiences helped to differentiate the responses. Although some respondents described Toronto as a "great place to experiment or dabble in different styles," others felt their career ambitions constrained by the city's lack of support. In comparison to Niagara Falls, one musician found Toronto open to new styles:

*I consider Toronto as being pretty open specifically because I am coming from a small town where nothing gets made really there. In Niagara Falls all the bands are cover bands of Pink Floyd or Led Zeppelin and that is as far it goes. So being able to come here and make original music from scratch, music that people will listen to, it is so impressive to me. So Toronto is amazingly open in my experience.*

By contrast, one respondent described the difficulty of making it as a metal musician in Toronto:

*Toronto is probably the worst city for Metal for getting a following. You would think that because of its size Toronto would be a great place but there are too many alternatives and things to do. You can't develop a steady fan base. Europe and the States and even South American and Japan are much better. Canada is the worst: you can't make it here.*

Although talent is highly paid on average, income figures vary by occupation. According to the 2006 Canadian Census, musicians in Toronto had average annual incomes of \$14,659 (Statistics Canada 2008). Respondents emphasized the importance of finding affordable places to live and work; however, the perception of affordability varied. For musicians who had lived and worked in other global cities such as New York and Paris, Toronto was considered relatively cheap. As one musician explained:

*New York has huge apartments with large rooms and high ceilings but nobody in my class can live in a whole house. Musicians in New York have to live in chopped up little apartments. But I can live in Toronto and live in the equivalent of a rowhouse or brownstone. I think it is fantastic, I can live in this city, I can live in this urban environment. I can live five minutes walk from the subway and a five-minute walk from shops and restaurants. I can do my food shopping on foot which I think is a great thing about living in an urban environment. So that to me is the great thing about Toronto, its livability.*

For musicians with expectations of affordability based on their experiences in smaller cities or places like Montreal with strong rent controls, the high cost of living in Toronto was a major

concern. As one musician argued:

*When your work is not steady and you have a low income Toronto can be very difficult because it is so expensive here...In Montreal I was paying \$650 for a large place. But here in Toronto I was paying just over \$1,500 for a place that is barely big enough to fit my double bed.*

Despite the emphasis placed on amenities in the literature on talent attraction (Florida 2002; Clark et al. 2002) few respondents spoke about being attracted to specific amenities. In fact, several respondents indicated that the availability of amenities is a non-issue because they simply do not have the time or money to experience them. Moreover, like housing, the perception of affordability varied by respondent. For one established and affluent musician, Toronto offers quality of life at a discount:

*I go to probably 50 events a year. I couldn't do that in any other city in Canada and I couldn't have the quality of life and standard of living I have in large cities. I love London, London is fantastic but you have to be a millionaire to live there. So Toronto has an affordability aspect to it: it is livable.*

For other musicians trying to cope with the demands, uncertainty and low incomes associated with independent music production, Toronto's quality of life amenities seemed expensive and inaccessible: "Of course there is a lot going on in Toronto but I don't tend to do any of it. This is mainly because I can't afford it, but also because I am too busy trying to make a living."

The location decisions of musicians directly influence the availability of musical amenities for other existing or potentially new residents. The evidence presented in this section demonstrates the individualized nature of lived experience and how widely the expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction with a place can vary even within one occupational group. In the next section we consider the outcomes of the evaluation process.

### *Stage 3: Mobility Decisions*

Our conceptual model identifies four potential outcomes from the evaluation process. If the expectations of a place are met the individual is satisfied and will stay in the current location. As one musician put it, “I love living in Toronto, I have never wanted to live anywhere else since I moved here.” If, however, the expectations are not met the individual can recalibrate expectations or change the employment situation. The individual may also decide to relocate either within the existing city-region (intra-city move) or to a new destination (inter-city move). Our findings suggest that the decision reflects the level of dissatisfaction or the discrepancy between expectations and experience. If the discrepancy is minor or moderate moving to a different neighbourhood that better suits the needs and preferences of the individual might suffice. Hracs (2009) argues that musicians who were dissatisfied with aspects of living in the downtown core, including the cost of living and labour market competition, chose to relocate to Toronto’s inner and outer suburbs. These musicians still wanted to live and work in Toronto but tried to optimize their situation by relocating.

In other cases, if the individual does not think satisfaction can be attained by staying in the city-region, the process starts again with the individual making expectations about a new range of potential locations. When asked about where they would like to move to and why, each respondent provided a different answer based on their past experiences, current situation, future goals, and preferences. Even when more than one respondent described a location, the factors contributing to its attractiveness varied. New York, for example, was deemed attractive because of employment and lifestyle considerations by different musicians. As it becomes more difficult to sell recorded music and the emphasis shifts to live performances, the number of venues a location offers represents a strong pull factor (Hauge and Hracs 2010). As one musician put it:

*I would move to New York or Los Angeles primarily because there are just so many venues and so much going on there with music. They are both great places to go to get noticed. Toronto is great for Canada and indie rock has been a hotbed lately. But for playing clubs and getting that quality exposure and playing for 300 people on a weeknight Los Angeles or New York are the places to go. It is the mass and the concentration of people: they have millions and millions of people. There are three million people in Toronto but we only have two all-ages venues. I think that is ridiculous. If you go to a place like New York there is a huge market and endless amounts of venues.*

For musicians who are dissatisfied with the limited respect they and music receive from citizens and consumers in Toronto, more supportive scenes such as Halifax or Seattle were reported as potential alternatives (Hracs et al. forthcoming). As one musician explained:

*I would move to Seattle because I visited there once and the main reason why I am playing music is because of the scene that came out of Seattle. I have read a lot about Seattle and a lot about the music bank and what went on there and how much they really respect music up there. You go up there and everybody loves music and nobody treats anybody differently because there are a musician or an artist. There is more support there. Whereas in Toronto sometimes I feel like the general public does not appreciate the amount of hard work and*

*dedication it takes to be a musician and the hardships. I mean they look at us like we are bums ....*

Finally, several respondents expressed a desire to take advantage of their mobility to move to smaller, rural, or aesthetically pleasing locations. As one musician put it:

*The more I live in Toronto the more I want to go somewhere else. Now that I do the advertising work I don't necessary have to live in Toronto because I can work from anywhere. I can upload the files to firms in Los Angeles, Vancouver, or New York...I see myself outside of the city trying to make a living in a quiet little place somewhere with less action and hassle, in a smaller place. I want to live in a green space with lots of trees. To have the ability to be in one room and have all of this technology and be so hooked up and connected to all these different parts of the world but then step through another door and just have peace and like a rabbit hopping around. So I don't see myself in Toronto. I want to try the online approach to my work.*

### **Implications for Theory and Practice**

The ability of a region to attract and retain talent results from a subjective but fully describable iterative process as presented in Figure 1. First, individuals develop expectations about one or more locations to which they could move. Those expectations are limited by available information, restricted search, and personal priorities. Second, based on expectations, a person selects and moves to a region. As the person lives in that region, his/her experiences meet, exceed, or fail to meet the original expectations. However, simply having unsatisfied expectations is not sufficient to trigger a person to consider moving. By default, individuals will maintain the status quo and stay put; however, something (which could range from the very mundane to a dramatic life-stage event) can trigger the final stage. Then, the individual can either stay by changing their expectations or employment situation or move by developing a new set of expectations about a different neighbourhood within the city or different city all together.

While somewhat complicated, our model takes into account the limited (satisficing) nature of available information and information-seeking behaviour and the limited cognitive energy most individuals devote to location decisions as revealed in the interviews. It also considers three other important factors. First, regional expectations are subjective and not objective: what is important to one person may not even be considered by someone else. The model does this without resorting to some undefined utility function: it assumes that although the combination and specific values may be individually unique, the factors are identifiable. Second, as individuals' expectations evolve over time, the model dynamically allows expectations to change with life-stage or with lived experience. The evolution of expectations, however, does not necessarily imply relocation. Finally, the concept that a trigger brings about the evaluation process is more in line with reported experiences and observed behaviour than modelling the mover/stayer question using some kind of continuous evaluation process.

The results of our research contribute to the debate between jobs, amenities, and the fuzzy concept of authenticity. Storper and Scott (2009) investigate the relationship between the impact

of amenities and increased production (jobs) on urban growth, which they mistakenly identify as prosperity. While failing to recognize the potential sea change in location decision-making that has resulted from the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial knowledge economy, they essentially find that although amenities may play a role, employment opportunities prove the more significant factor to regional growth. Indeed, while the presence of available jobs is a *necessary* component to regional growth, it is no longer *sufficient*. However, in today's post-industrial or creative (or knowledge) economy, the exact same thing is generally true of various kinds of regional amenities. In other words, both the right kind of unfilled jobs and the right kind of amenities are needed if a region is to attract new residents and retain its current residents. Regional increases in productivity, with their corresponding increases in regional wages and prosperity, require innovation and creativity generated by talented skilled individuals who are either retained in or attracted to that region.

Earlier work (Florida 2002) pointed to authenticity as being the most important factor for attracting talented skilled individuals to a region. However, other than a generally unsatisfying definition of "the opposite of generic" (Florida 2002, 228), authenticity has proven somewhat difficult to nail down. By modeling talent mobility and regional satisfaction using individual expectations, triggers, and evaluation processes we may develop new ways of understanding and measuring authenticity beneficial to future research.

Our model also helps to generate important policy recommendations. The limited nature of available information and the way it is gathered and used (or misused) points to the limitations of regional branding initiatives. Individual expectations affect decisions about whether and where to move. Regions need to be aware of how localities are presented and perceived and need to make sure that those perceptions are accurate. It does a region no good to advertise itself as something that it cannot be. Additionally, the limited nature of the search that most people undertake means that migrants put a great deal of weight on rumours, hearsay, and the opinions of colleagues, neighbours, friends, and family. If a region is specifically interested in attracting talented skilled individuals, the subjective nature of the expectations and the limits on available information will result in people looking to others in their professional networks to find out more about a place. Musicians learn about places from other musicians and creative individuals. Experience suggests that the same holds for computer professionals, MBAs, researchers, and educators. As a result, regions need more than one brand: they need tailored brands for each type of people and families that they would like to attract. In other words, regional talent attraction should not be based on a one-size-fits-all approach to either economic opportunities or amenities.

### **Acknowledgements:**

The authors would like to thank Dr. Jill Grant for helpful comments, Michelle Hopgood for the graphic design of Figure 2 and Joe Minichini for research assistance. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the musicians in Toronto who donated their time and their ideas to the research.

## References

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.

Blomquist, Glenn C., Mark C. Berger, and John P. Hoehn. 1988. New estimates of quality of life in urban areas. *The American Economic Review* 78(1): 89-107.

Chang, Tou, Chuang, and Wai, Kin Lee. 2003. Renaissance city Singapore: A study of arts spaces. *Area* 35(2): 128-41.

Christopherson, Susan. 2002. Project work in context: Regulatory change and the new geography of media. *Environment and Planning A* 34: 2003-15.

Clark, Terry, N., Richard Lloyd, Kenneth W. Wong, and Pushpam Jain. 2002. Amenities drive urban growth. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24(5): 493-515.

Connell, John, and Chris Gibson. 2003. *Sound tracks: Popular music, identity, and place*. London: Routledge.

Donald, Betsy. 2001. Economic competitiveness and quality of life in city regions: Compatible concepts? *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 10(2): 259-74.

Florida, Richard. 2002. *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.

Florida, Richard, and Scott Jackson. 2010. Sonic city: The evolving economic geography of the music industry. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 29(3): 310-21.

Florida, Richard, Charlotta Mellander, and Kevin Stolarick. 2010a. Music scenes to music clusters: The economic geography of music in the US, 1970-2000. *Environment and Planning A* 42(4): 785-804.

Florida, Richard, Charlotta Mellander, and Kevin Stolarick. 2010b. Should I stay or should I go now: The effect of community satisfaction on the decision to stay or move. In *Working Paper Series*, 1-31. Toronto: Martin Prosperity Research. Available at [http://research.martinprosperity.org/papers/Should%20I%20Stay%20or%20Should%20I%20Go%20Now%20\(2010\)%20Florida%20Mellander%20Stolarick.pdf](http://research.martinprosperity.org/papers/Should%20I%20Stay%20or%20Should%20I%20Go%20Now%20(2010)%20Florida%20Mellander%20Stolarick.pdf)

Glaeser, Edward L., Jed Kolko, and Albert Saiz. 2001. Consumer city. *Journal of Economic Geography* 1: 27-50.

Hauge, Atle, and Brian, J. Hrac. 2010. See the sound, hear the style: Collaborative linkages between indie musicians and fashion designers in local scenes. *Industry & Innovation* 17(1): 113-29.

Herzog, Henry W. Jr., Alan, M. Schlottmann, and Donald, L. Johnson. 1986. High technology

jobs and worker mobility. *Journal of Regional Science* 26(3): 445-59.

Hracs, Brian J. 2009. Beyond bohemia: Geographies of everyday creativity for musicians in Toronto. In *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*, edited by Tim Edensor, Deborah Leslie, Steve Millington and Norma M. Rantisi, 75-88. London: Routledge.

Hracs, Brian. J., Jill. L. Grant, Jeff Haggett, and Jesse Morton. Forthcoming. A tale of two scenes: Civic capital and retaining musical talent in Toronto and Halifax. *The Canadian Geographer*.

Leyshon, Andrew. 2009. The software slump? Digital music, the democratisation of technology, and the decline of the recording studio sector within the musical economy. *Environment and Planning A* 41: 1309-31.

Markusen, Ann, and David King. 2003. The artistic dividend: The art's hidden contributions to regional development. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Available at [http://www.hhh.umn.edu/img/assets/6158/artistic\\_dividend.pdf](http://www.hhh.umn.edu/img/assets/6158/artistic_dividend.pdf)

Niedomysl, Thomas, and Hogni K. Hansen. 2010. What matters more for the decision to move: Jobs versus amenities. *Environment and Planning A* 42(7): 1636-1649.

Rantisi, Norma, M., and Deborah Leslie. 2006. Branding the design metropole: The case of Montréal, Canada. *Area* 38(4): 364-76.

Roback, Jennifer. 1982. Wages, rents, and the quality of life. *The Journal of Political Economy* 90(6): 1257-78.

Rosen, Sherwin. 1979. Wage-based indexes of urban quality of life. *Current Issues in Urban Economics* 3: 74-104.

Scott, Allen, J. 1999. The US recorded music industry: On the relations between organization, location; and creativity, in the cultural economy. *Environment and Planning A* 31: 1965-84.

Scott, Allen J. 2009. Jobs or amenities? Destination choices of migrant engineers in the USA. *Papers in Regional Science* 89(1): 43-63.

Statistics Canada. 2006. Census of Population, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 97-564-XCB2006008 (Toronto, Code535).

Statistics Canada. 2008. Census of Canada 2006: Labour Force Activity, Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree, Location of Study, Age Groups and Sex. (Topic-based tabulations; – 97-564-XCB2006005)

Storper, Michael, and Allen J. Scott. 2009. Rethinking human capital, creativity and urban growth. *Journal of Economic Geography* 9(2): 147-167

Tiebout, Charles, M. 1956. A pure theory of local expenditures. *The Journal of Political*

*Economy* 64(5): 416-24.

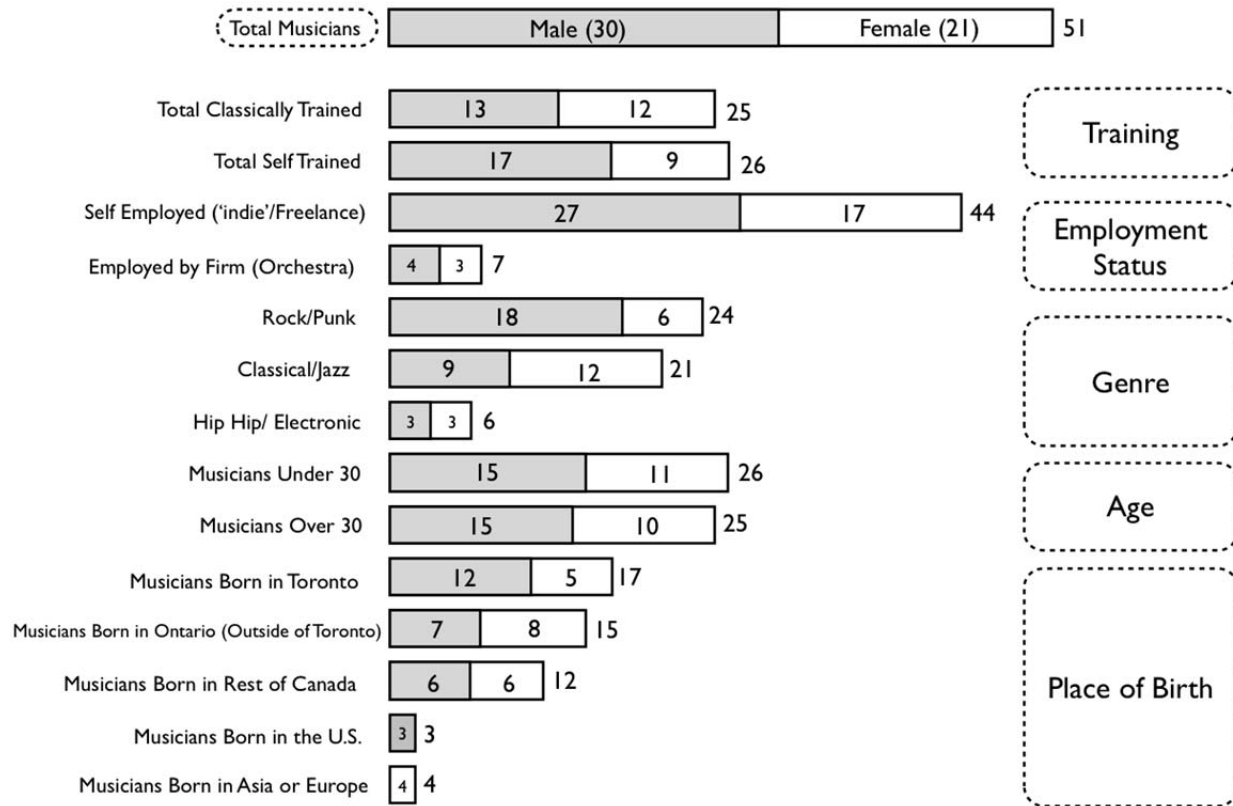
Whisler, Ronald, L., Brigitte, S. Waldorf, Gordon, F. Mulligan, and David A. Plane. 2008. Quality of life and the migration of the college educated: A life course approach. *Growth and Change* 39(1): 58-94.

Wolpert, Julian. 1965. Behavioral aspects of the decision to migrate. *Papers in Regional Science* 15(1): 159-69.

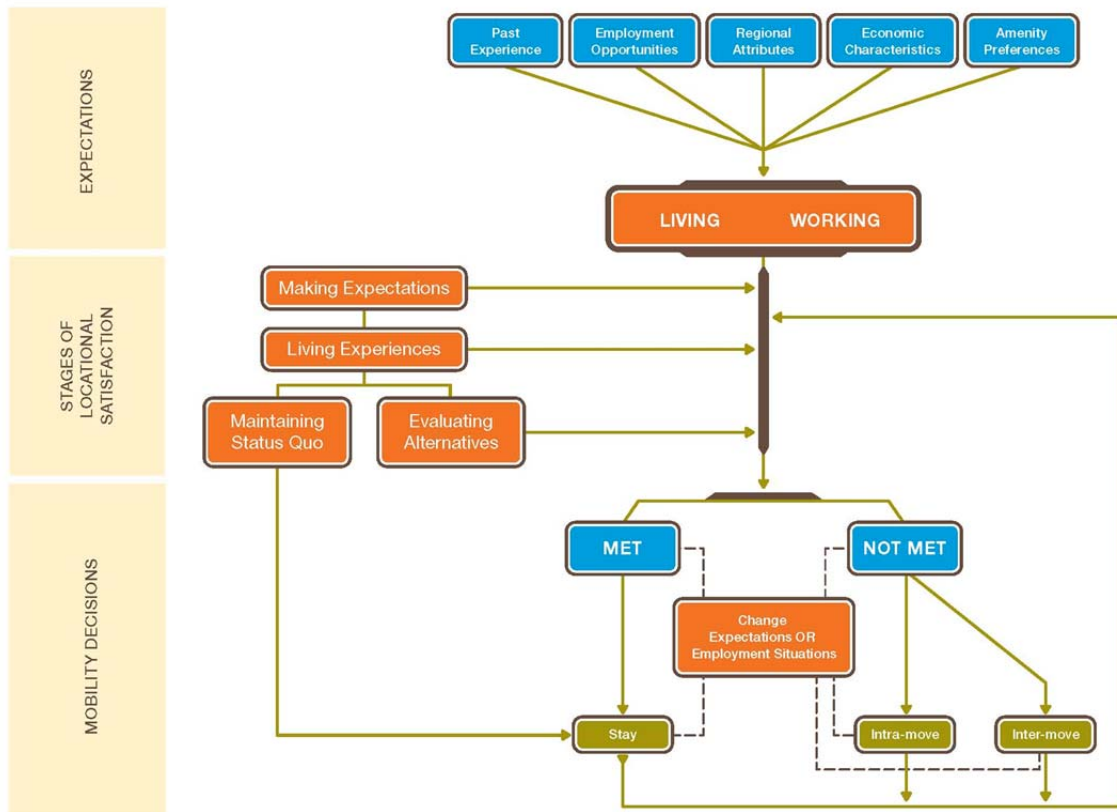


Figures

**Figure x-1: Interview Sample**



**Figure x-2: The Model of Locational Expectations, Satisfaction, and Mobility**



## Endnotes:

---

<sup>1</sup> We used a variant of the interview guide presented in Appendix A, tailored to a sample of musicians, for the interviews.

<sup>2</sup> In the contemporary era of digitally-driven independent music production technology allows individual musicians to control every aspect of production, marketing, and distribution. Although major record labels and capital intensive recording studios still dominate the music industry, home recording studios and online channels of promotion and distribution have made independent music production a viable and relatively placeless alternative. In Canada the majority of all are defined as independent (Hracs et al forthcoming). Therefore, there is an important distinction between the spatial dynamics of independent musicians and those who work under contract for record labels that are primarily located in Los Angeles, New York, and Nashville. This distinction explains the contradiction between studies that argue that music production is becoming more (Florida and Jackson 2010; Florida et al. 2010a) or less (Connell and Gibson 2003; Hracs 2009; Leyshon 2009) concentrated in the digital era.

---

## Author Bio

Brian J. Hrac is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Martin Prosperity Institute, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.

Kevin Stolarick is Research Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. (Kevin.Stolarick@martinprosperity.org)

## Working Paper Series

The MPI is dedicated to producing research that engages individuals, organizations and governments. We strive to make as much research as possible publicly available.

Our research focuses on developing data and new insight about the underlying forces that power economic prosperity. It is oriented around three main themes: economic performance, place, and creativity.

## Disclaimer

The views represented in this paper are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of the Martin Prosperity Institute, its affiliates or its funding partners.

Any omissions or errors remain the sole responsibility of the author. Any comments or questions regarding the content of this report may be directed to the author.