



Exploring Local Music's Place in Global Streaming

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on behalf of all authors:

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In 2019, we observed an interesting trend:

**Countries had growing access to the rest of the world's music
But, they were increasingly listening to their own “local” music**

See the full paper:



Local Trends in Global Music Streaming

Samuel F. Way, Jean Garcia-Gathright, Henriette Cramer
ICWSM 2020

What role should “local” play in shaping online, global music streaming?

Was the trend real? What should be done about it?

GOALS

1. Setting aside existing definitions, how do listeners and artists define “local” music?
2. Applying that definition, what is the opportunity for localized recommendations in global music streaming?



STUDY 1:

A qualitative investigation into “local’s” current meaning

QUALITATIVE STUDY OVERVIEW

Cultural probe¹, in-depth interviews, surveys

3 international locations

24 Listeners, 6 Artists
(8 and 2 per locale)

Salvador,
Bahia,
Brazil

Port Harcourt,
Rivers,
Nigeria

Houston,
Texas,
USA

[1] Krueger et al., “Guided User Research Methods for Experience Design...”
(From the the Fraunhofer Institute in Stuttgart)

Dimensions of local music

Despite an evolving landscape, consistent themes:



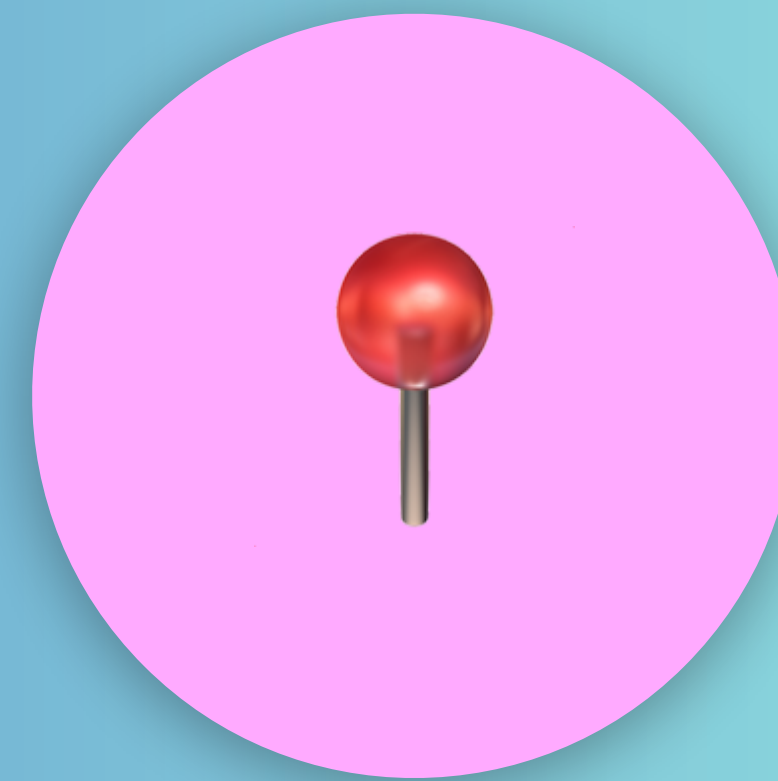
Contains signifiers of that place

The art itself is infused with the language, instruments, etc. of that place



Creator is “a local”

Creator is from or deeply connected to that place



Accessible in that place

The music, from conception to production, is proudly created in that place.

QUALITATIVE STUDY FINDINGS

Dimensions were emphasized differently across study locations

(e.g., accessibility was hugely important in Houston, signifiers in Salvador + Port Harcourt)

“Spotlight lesser-known artists”

Listeners and artists emphasized up-and-coming artists with distinctively localized followings

“Recommend music the listener enjoys”

Localness enhances enjoyment if it's a good match

“Target the city level, if possible”

Smaller geographic scale = more local

STUDY 2:

Large-scale experiments of local artist recommendations

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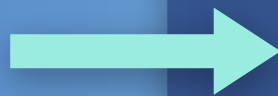
“Recommend music the listener enjoys”

Localness enhances enjoyment if it's a good match

“Target the city level, if possible”

Smaller geographic scale feels more local

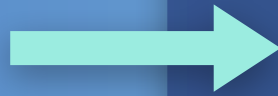
“Spotlight lesser-known artists”



- **Require:**

- Artist is from/distinct to listener’s state
- Artist has a small- or medium-sized following (i.e., 100-50k) and listenership

“Recommend music the listener enjoys”



- **Base:**

- Use artist’s associated microgenres and listeners’ affinities for them

“Target the city level, if possible”



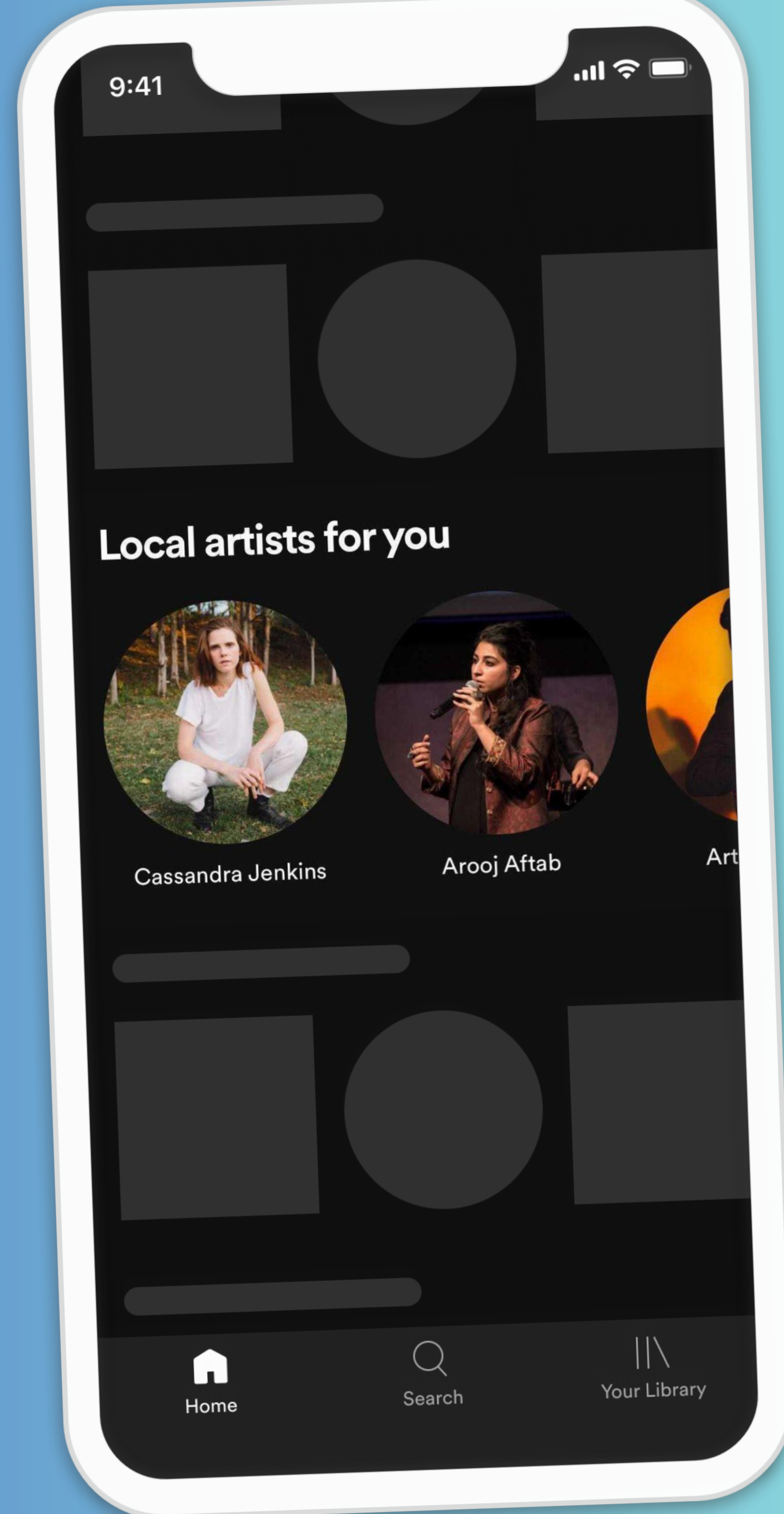
- **Boost:**

- If the artist is from and/or distinct to the listener’s city



HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE

**Localized
recommendations
performed similar to
top discovery models**



	Streams	Views	Follows
Boomers	ns	ns	ns
GenX	ns	ns	+38.4%
Millennials	ns	+10.0%	+46.2%
GenZ (18+)	+8.1%	+23.2%	+39.8%

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Strongest engagement from younger age cohorts

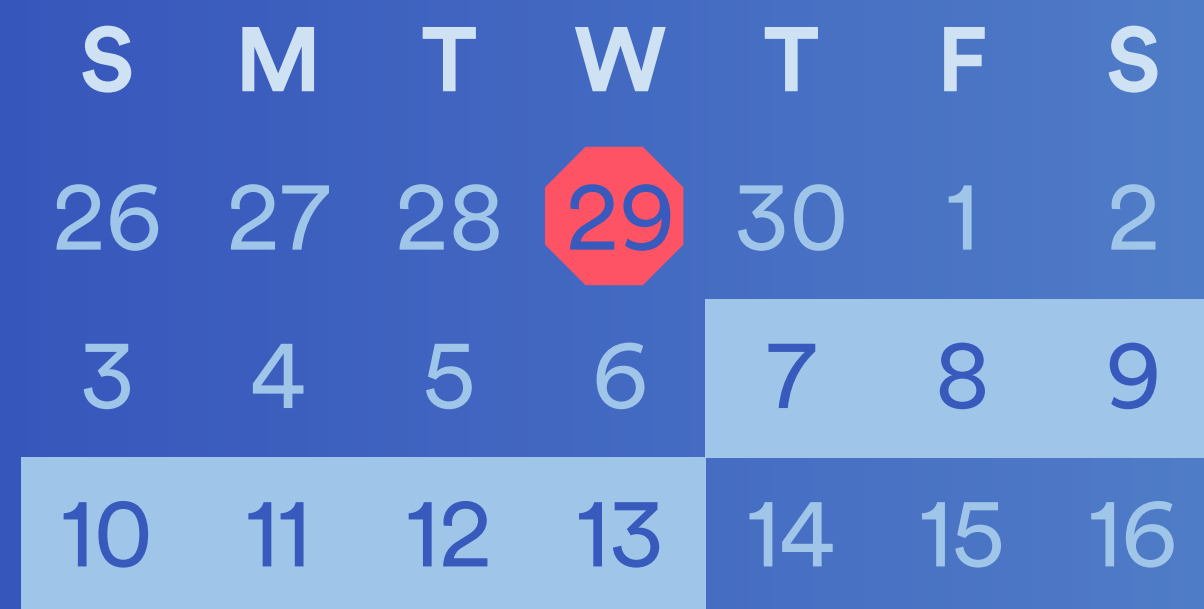
(Aligns with previous work highlighting the social importance of live music for young people)

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Millennials	ns	+10.0%	+46.2%
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Most impactful for follows

(A very strong signal: the listener wants to know when the artist releases new music, is touring, etc.)

Engagement sustained in the weeks following the experiment



	Streams	Views
Boomers	+44.4%	—
GenX	+52.5%	+87.8%
Millennials	+34.8%	+116.0%
GenZ (18+)	+39.6%	+150.7%

Note: percent changes are comparing the number of listeners with at least one stream

“—” means not statistically significant (χ^2 with Bonferroni Correction for 8 tests)

WRAPPING UP

**There's clear demand for
localized recommendations**



**Our work provides a clear
framework for how to satisfy
that demand**



Slides

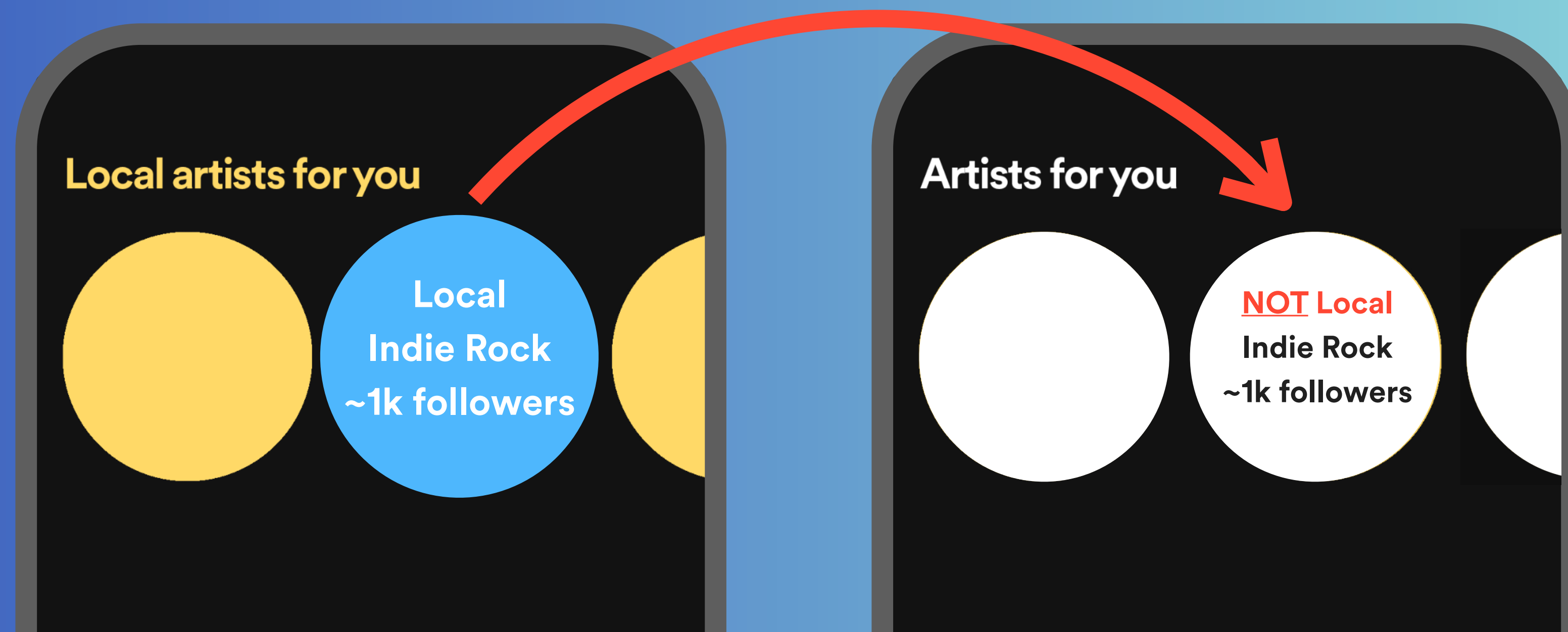
Thanks for listening.

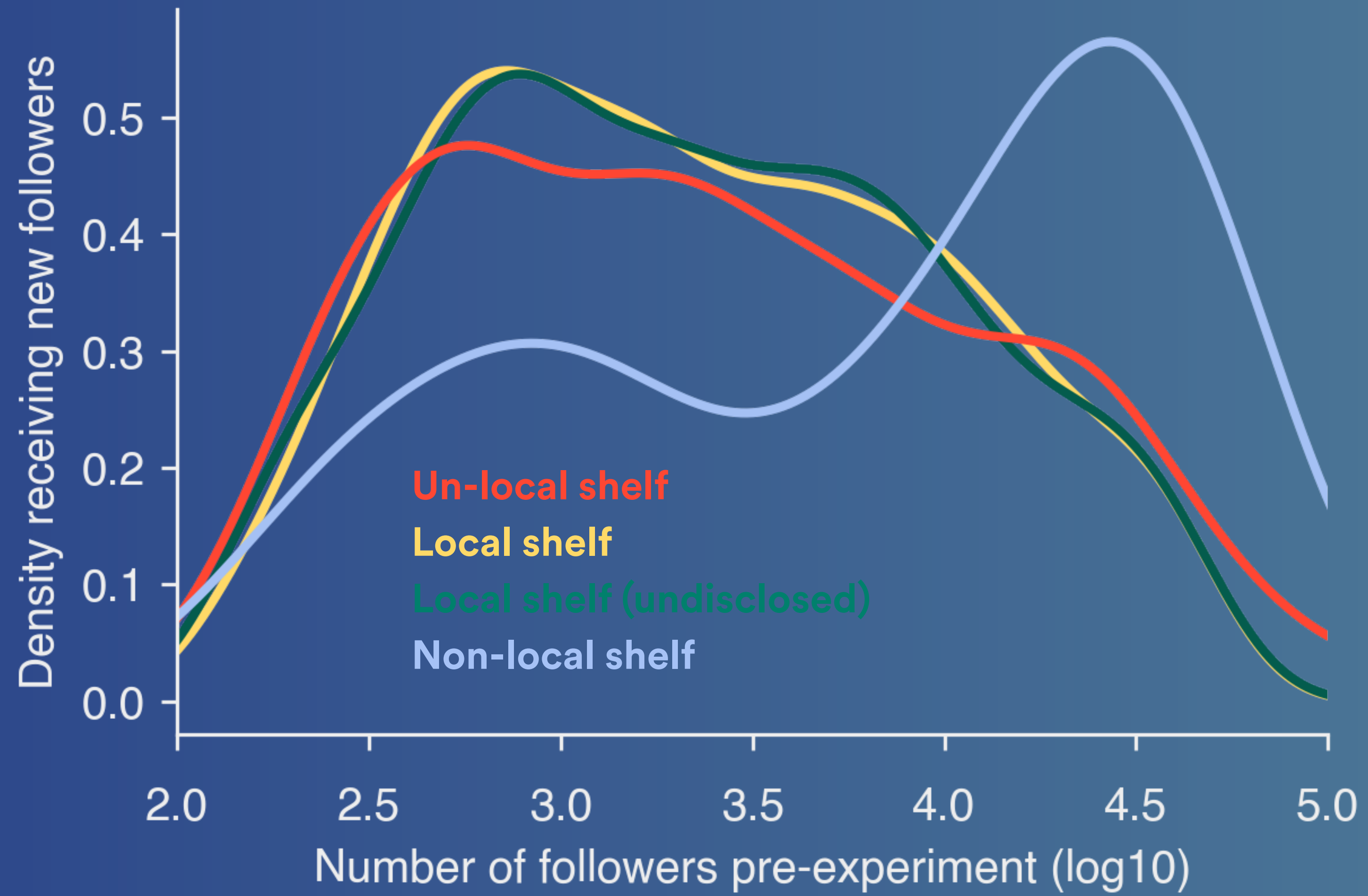
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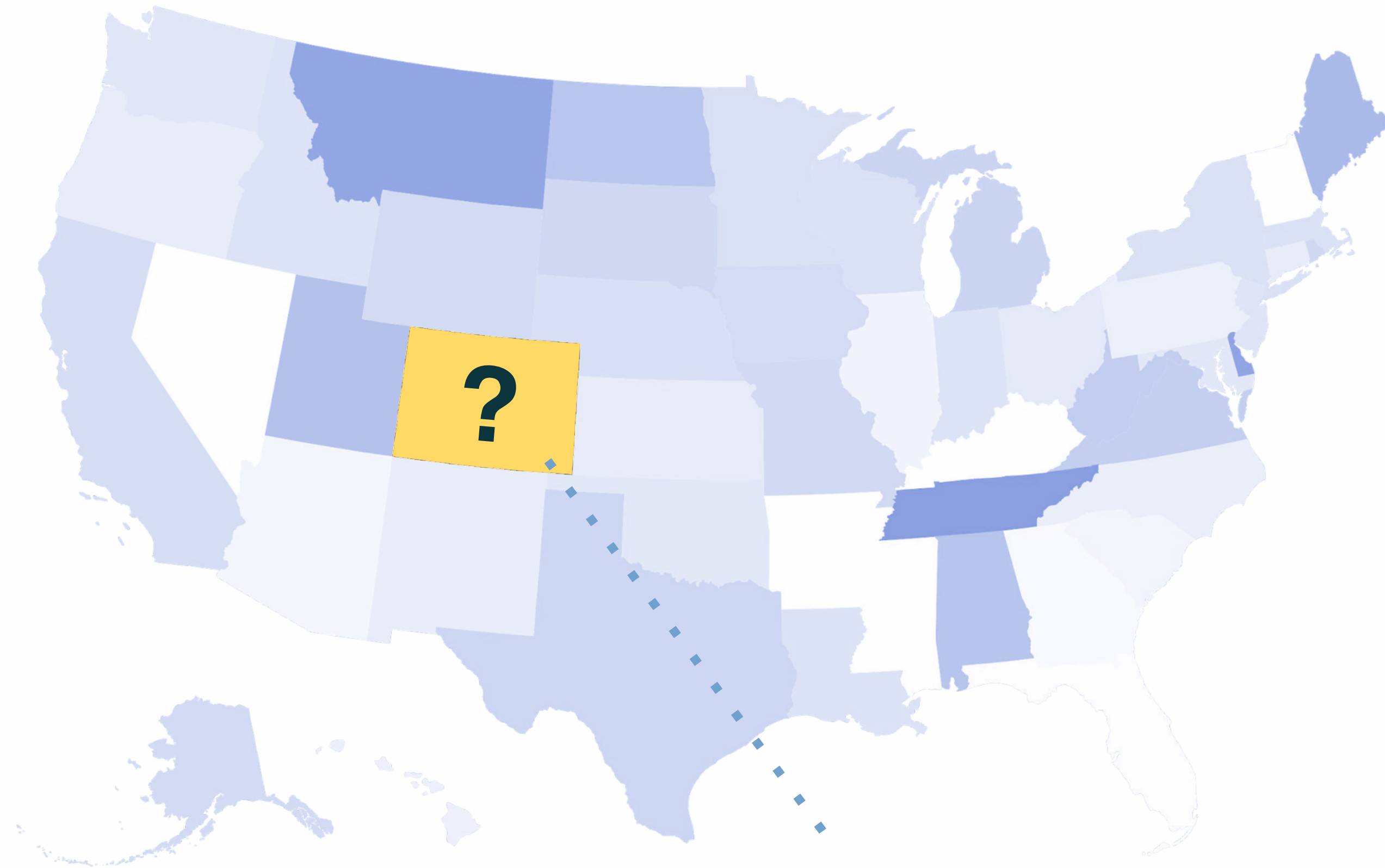
“UNLOCAL” BASELINE

Take the local artist recommendations and replace each with a similar, not-local artist





Looked for unexpectedly localized followings



Given the follower counts in all the other states, estimate how many you would expect in this one — is the actual number unexpectedly high?

We found artists' earliest followers were most predictive of where they're from

Unexpected: actual follower counts far exceed predictions based on other states.

Provides a simple, dynamic signal for amplifying artists wherever they find success