

***Health impacts of work-related geographical mobility
among precariously employed immigrants in Toronto***

<http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/>

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Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
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Canada 

Background

- **Precarious employment refers to work that is temporary, insecure, unpredictable, poorly paid or unprotected.**

Background

- **We know that precarious employment has material, social and health consequences for workers and their families.**
- **The impact on geographical mobility, however, has not been given much attention.**

Objective

- **To examine the relationship between precarious employment and geographical mobility among immigrant workers in Toronto.**

Methods

- **Community-based study with Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services.**
- **We recruited for interviews 27 immigrants who were currently unemployed or precariously employed (15 women and 12 men).**
- **We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews.**
- **Interviews were transcribed. Transcripts were coded and analyzed using NVivo.**

Results – Demographic characteristics

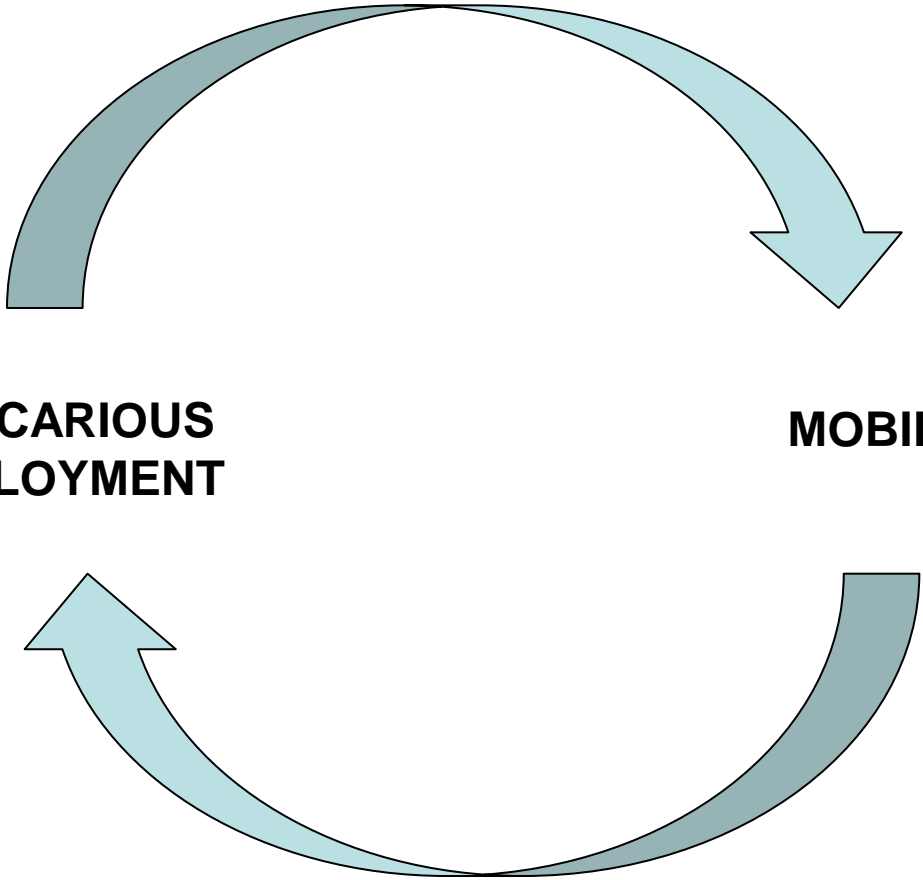
- Participants were from Bangladesh (30%), China (30%), as well as other countries.
- Most participants were between 31-50 of age (65%).
- A plurality of participants made less than \$10,000/year (30%).
- 82% had a university degree.
- 22% < 5 years in Canada; 61% > 5 years in Canada.
- 74% of participants were married and 61% had children.

Precarious employment

- **Participants' work was characterized by involuntary part-time work, casual work, temporary/contract work, on-call work, and multiple jobs.**
- **10/23 participants were currently unemployed.**

**PRECARIOUS
EMPLOYMENT**

MOBILITY



Mobility **Employment** **Health**

“I think it was full-time. I didn't go for the interview. They called me two times...Then I saw it in the like Google. Then I find that no it is too far.”

Jia

“The problem is how to go there...for my interview. ...in this Access Alliance...they gave us a card for Loblaw's. Maybe it was \$15 \$20. And I ask another a friend can you buy me this card...I want for tickets but I feel ashamed...with this I bought the ticket and then I can go for my interview.”

Maria

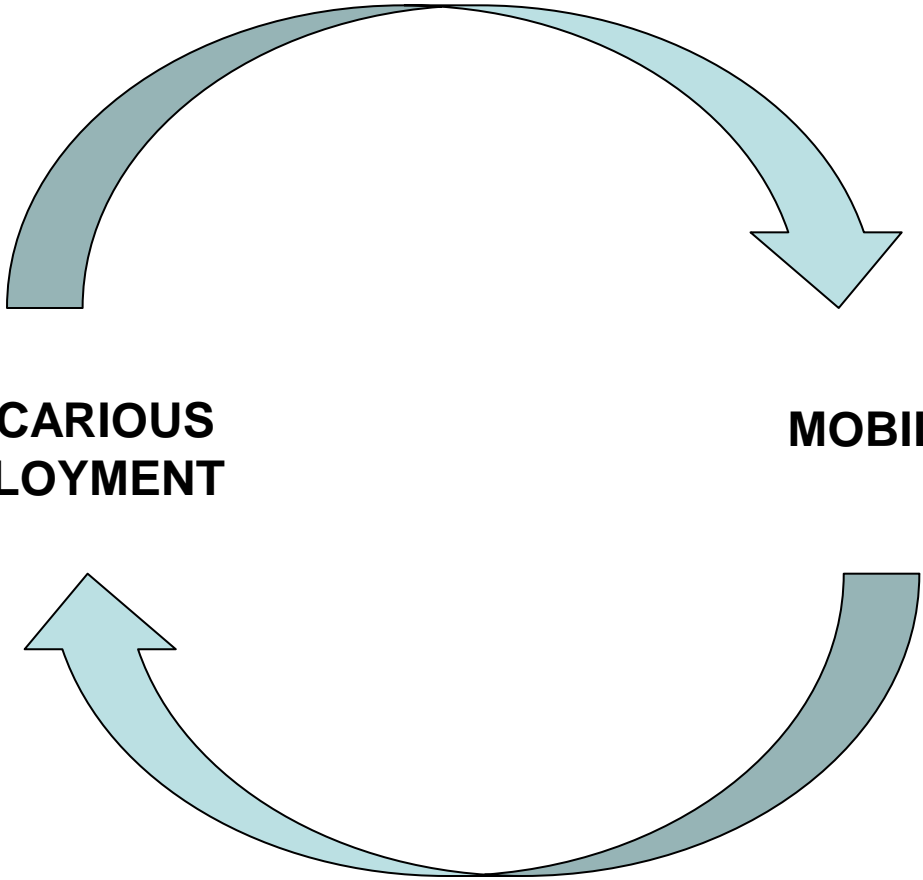
Mobility **Employment** **Health**

“I get stressed. If I not get the TTC on time (yeah) my body is shaking sometimes scared that my supervisor talk with me very rudely. I am not ok with this behavior then I am scared.”

Natalia

**PRECARIOUS
EMPLOYMENT**

MOBILITY



Employment → Mobility → Health

1. Extended travel (time and distance)

“Tired. Commuting tire you out because if you’re commuting 3 hours a day because at one point I was. When you get to work you’re tired and by Wednesday you’re pooped. It will affect your performance.”

Chun

“And he, that job, that type of job is 12 hour shift. So how can he sleep? It’s two hours and back home two hours.”

Carine

Employment **Mobility** **Health**

1. Extended travel (time and distance)

“That time I think I feel sorry for her. For me that is not a problem. It is part of my work. I am spending my time to go and come back. But for her I think maybe bad that she’s waiting, she’s feeling hungry after school. She’s waiting in the library. And there is another problem suppose I didn't mention that one. In the Tim Horton we are not allowed to keep our phone.”

Chun

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

2. Travel to different locations

“It means I don’t have time to stop and drink water. I don’t have time to eat a meal...you can’t eat because I have to rush from here to here. So you can’t stop and take a bite so a lot of these I, I don’t eat yeah or drink water.”

Steven

Employment → Mobility → Health

3. Travel at night and/or to isolated or unfamiliar locations

“So they give me say evening time so that time I have to take this bus or subway say 12 pm back there. So it is very risky...So I take the bus to go to my workplace...To take the bus I have to go on foot some. So it is very risky.”

Lisa

“Yes now I do have safety concern...one night I remember I was coming I think I was coming from school and one guy came on the subway and he was assaulting me so I had to get off. I know women aren't safe on the TTC at night and women have been raped.”

May

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

4. Unreasonable commuting expectations by employers

“When there was a black out that time it was really hard for him...So that time he don’t want to go his work but his owner say if you don’t come I will not continue you anymore. You have to come. So he had to go by taxi because that time subway was not working. So he had to spend most money to go and come back...But the owner she should be a little bit polite. She should understand the situation but she didn't.”

Gemma

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

4. Unreasonable commuting expectations by employers

“I told you, sometimes I’m going to the factory and after I’m going to the factory the manager he is 1, 2, 3, 4 you are 15 I just need today 10. I will take this 10 and this 5 people you will go home.”

Alim

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

5. Transportation costs

“That’s why there’s this paranoia to save whatever tokens you can to put away. Like from the time I accumulate rent money I put that one aside because you know have to sleep somewhere right. And then like if I have to go without food I can probably go without food but I need the rent money there until I can probably get another \$20 and I can buy something to eat.”

Joseph

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

5. Transportation costs (strategies to save \$)

“I remember one night I was walking one night I was frost bitten. My finger was and for two nights in a row when I go to bed at night my finger would hurt because I got frost bitten when I was walking that 40 minutes. I had on the gloves but the gloves wasn’t warm enough.”

May

Conclusions

- **This study highlights the role of employment conditions in creating difficult or unsafe commutes, and how this in turn impacts health.**
- **We are currently exploring how these dynamics are influenced by gender, immigration status and racialization.**
- **Policy options...Example of discount transit pass.**

Questions? Comments?

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