

Examining the Relationship between Precarious Employment and Mobility: The Roles of Gender, Class and Migration

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Context

- In the GTA, 50% of workers are precariously employed.
- The impact of precarious employment on mobility is poorly understood.

Objective

- To document the relationship between precarious employment and geographical mobility while exploring the ways in which gender, class and migration structure this relationship.

Methods

- Community-based study conducted with Access Alliance in 2014.
- Recruitment of interviewees with flyers, peer researcher networks and partner agencies.
- Interviewees were immigrants, had experienced precarious employment and commuting difficulties.
- Semi-structured interviews with 15 women and 12 men.
- Interviews recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed with NVIVO.

Results

- 17/27 in Canada for more than 5 years
- 8/27 from Bangladesh (11 countries of origin in total)
- 18/27 between 31-50 years of age
- 20/27 married
- 18/27 had children
- 24/27 had university degree
- 18/27 had a household income of less than \$25K

Results

- Jobs were largely gendered and racialized.
- Jobs were precarious: Involuntarily part-time, temporary, casual, seasonal or on-call; multiple jobs; nonstandard and unpredictable schedules.
- Jobs were far from participants' neighbourhoods

Far away location

Multiple locations

Unfamiliar location

Nonstandard schedules

Low income



Long, complex, unfamiliar, unsafe and expensive commutes

Results

- Women and recent immigrants may be disproportionately affected because of their over-representation in precarious employment and increased reliance on public transit.
- Certain groups of workers may also be differentially impacted by the dynamics shown.

Results

I would be concerned in winter because...you have to travel say an hour, hour and a half you have to leave home before it's dark. By the time you get home it's dark. So if you live in a dark street where it's isolated and some of the streets are residential streets. Many people don't walk, they have cars and if you have a low paying person that you don't have anybody to pick you up at the bus stop...then you have a concern because you have a lot of rapists that are walking on the street.

Lisa, 57 years old, from Jamaica

Results

I feel very bad. I have responsibility because I am a mom. Yeah I feel very guilty and I say sorry to my kids that mamma can't attend. I apologize to them. They understand it...Sometimes I have to skip my son's school. They have curriculum night or BBQ night or ...[pause]... spring concert, winter concert. I can't attend sometimes.

Sadia, 32 years old, from Bangladesh

Results

I did one volunteer that's far from my home like I said like the secretary, the receptionist at the neighbourhood is far from my home. At that time I am pregnant too. They didn't offer [transportation] to me and they offer nothing so I still go there because I have free time I want to learn.

Jia, 35 years old, from China

Results

The problem that they don't tell you before these things...Just like in the morning and they told me stop, don't work on the machine. You will go at home at 1:00. You know that you are feeling that even you are unrespected. Nobody respecting you. You are nothing. If I am paying for something or I am planning my income...how I will arrange and all this, all this if you are telling me go home in the morning.

Babu, 40 years old, from Egypt

Discussion

- Results underscore the deeply intertwined relationship between upward mobility and geographical mobility.
- Underlying these dynamics is the mismatch between labour supply and demand in low income neighbourhoods.
- Results have implications for transportation and employment policies.

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