Precarious Employment and Daily Commutes

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Context

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

- To document the relationship between precarious employment and daily commutes in Toronto.
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

Far away location
Multiple locations
Unfamiliar location
Nonstandard schedules
Low income

Long, complex, unfamiliar, unsafe and expensive commutes
And he [temporary agency representative] said “I’m telling you to go if you want to get a job just go” and I said ok because I needed a job. Then I went and it takes 1 hour and 45 minutes and there I worked for 2 hours with seniors...After two hours finished and I came back it also take 1 hour and 45 minutes. Then that guy again phoned me “Next Tuesday you have to go” and I say ok but I don't know how much I will get and he said “For 1 hour you will get $14”. So $28...To go and come back I have to spend on the way more than 3 hours and I will work 2 hours. It is almost I will get paid less than ah ... normal wage.

Maria, 44 years old, from Mexico
“[s]tudies of work have engaged with the growing body of mobility theory in limited ways; by the same token, mobility studies have taken a somewhat narrow and sometimes uncritical view of work, labour, and employment”

(Cresswell, Dorow and Roseman 2016, p. 1).
Policy Implications

- Public transportation
- Employment
- Housing
Ask ourselves...

What happens when individuals are unable to live anywhere close to where they work?
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