



EXPLORING THE TRANSITORY EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANTS IN RURAL ONTARIO

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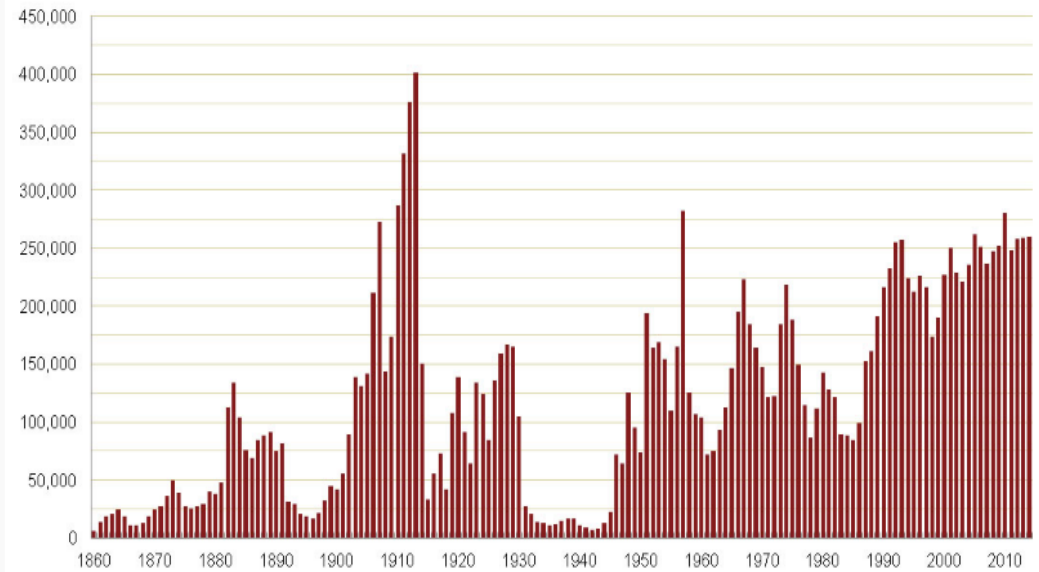
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Context

- Historical immigration trends in Canada
 - From 1860-2014
 - Peaks: 1910, 1950
 - Slumps: 1914, 1918, 1940
- Post 1960s
 - Rise in Asian and Latin American immigrants
 - 'Cherrypicking' immigrants based on skills

Canada – Permanent residents, 1860 to 2014



(Government of Canada [GOC], 2015)

Urban immigration

- Historically rural but recently more urban focused
 - Three centres: Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal (Stats Can, 2015)
- In Ontario:
 - 97.2% immigrants live in urban areas
 - 68.3% live in Toronto and surrounding areas (Moazzami, 2013)
- Why these areas?
 - Economic opportunities
 - Friends and family
 - Educational opportunities (Moazzami, 2013)



(Jump for Joy Toronto, 2017)

State of rural areas

- Facing relative decline in population
 - Economic restructuring
 - Loss of primary industries
 - Youth out-migration
 - Declining natural birth rates

(Lauzon, Bollman & Ashton, 2015)

- A smaller and ageing population implies declining tax base (Caldwell, Khan & Labute, 2015)
- A challenge for local businesses to thrive
- So is attracting immigrants THE solution?



(VCHRI, 2016)

A solution

- Newcomers in a community can help revitalise the economic and social fabric of a place
- Bring a diverse cultural perspective

BUT..

What do the people who are
already living there think about this?



Goal

The research goal of this project is to explore the transitory experiences of new immigrants who move to rural areas in Ontario.

Research Objectives

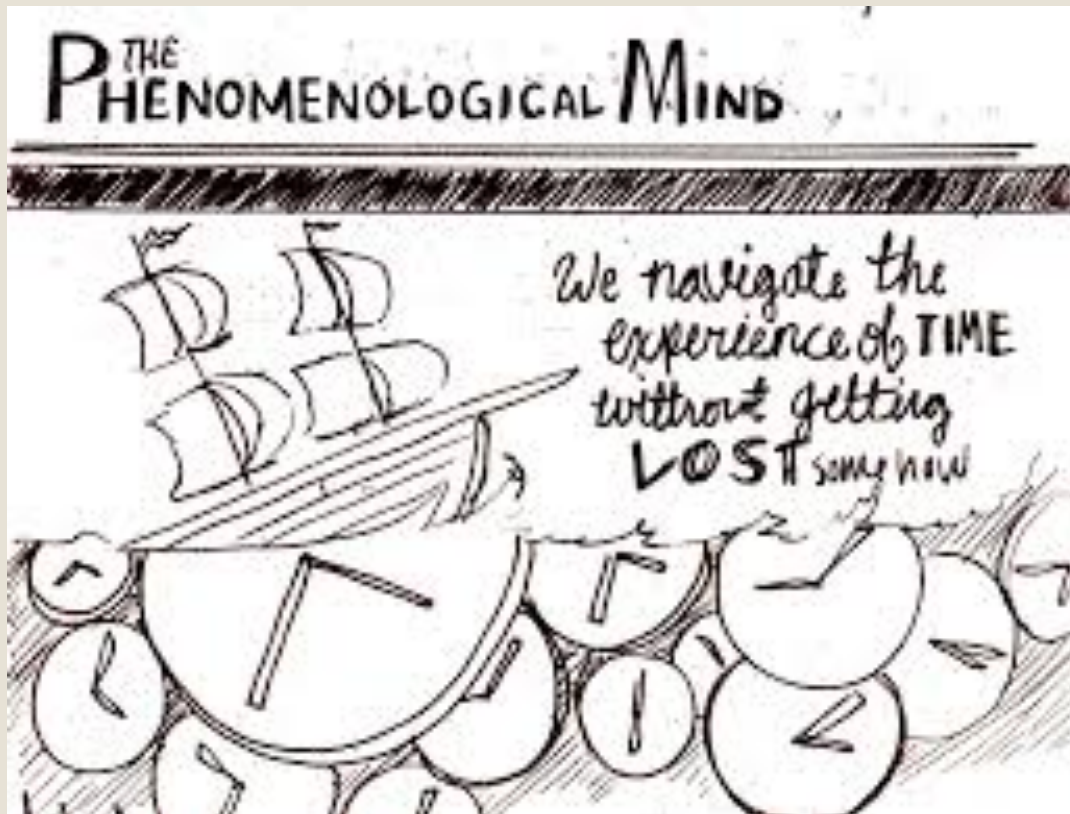
1. Understand the **economic** transitory experiences of immigrants who move to rural Ontario
2. Understand the **social** transitory experiences of immigrants who move to rural Ontario
3. Understand the **cultural** transitory experiences of immigrants who move to rural Ontario

Epistemology

- Phenomenology

- The way one perceives things is considered more important than what the 'real situation' is because 'truth' is interpreted differently by each individual (Gallagher, 2012, p.9).

- A phenomenological analysis takes into account the experiences of the person and the connection that takes places between the person and the material world around them (Moustakas, 1994)



(Zahani, 2013)

Project Design

- Qualitative study
- Bruce & Grey county
- 15 participants through key informants
 - Challenges
- Focus on depth and not numbers



(N.A., 2017)

Findings so far...

Economic	Social	Cultural
Precarious Employment	Safe Canada- biggest attraction	Lack of social & cultural freedom
Upgrading Qualifications	Lack of social networks	Culture restricted to private spaces
Dependency- lack of public transport	Poor education quality for children	Altering intergenerational relationships
Insufficient support services	Natural beauty- outdoors, camping	Lack of a community

So far...

- “This is a good country to live in. It is really safe, and it is a developed country so it doesn't have the same problems as back home. You have more opportunities to find a job and salaries are better.”
- “..small towns have Walmarts and Dollaramas, that kind of things but for immigrants they have more education so that they have so many options. So I think you can move them here but they don't have good job offers here.”
- “Back home, I even had jobs after I retired.”
- “What do you mean social life? It doesn't exists here!”

We need to ensure that immigrants don't become an economic means to an end but engaged citizens who are part of the community.

Suggestions

◦ For both integration and retention, you need:

1. Immigration centre or community centre with dedicated space
2. Programs to build connections with other immigrants and older community members
3. Support services AND awareness about them
4. Job opportunities that match skill levels



Immigration Centre Manitoba

Further research

- Lack of social connections and the impact on health and well-being
- Role of children in building community in rural areas
- Effects of having a major employer in town

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Thank you!