

RESEARCH BRIEF

Informing the Standard's Cultural Competency: Caregiving Experiences of Immigrants and Indigenous Carer- Employees

The Research

This Community-Based Participatory Project explored the transnational caregiving experiences of Indigenous (English-speaking), visible minority (English, Arabic, or Spanish-speaking) and European (English-speaking) immigrants who identify as Transnational Caregiver Employees (TCEs), are at least 18 years old and reside in London, ON.

Transnational caregiving may involve long-distance moral, emotional, financial and/or decision-making support.

Transnational Caregiving Employees (TCEs) in this study are identified as immigrants who reside and work in Canada while simultaneously providing care to parents, adults living with a disability, and children who live in their home country. CE's may be engaged in paid work or volunteering (in the case of immigrants) to gain the Canadian experience necessary for securing meaningful paid employment.

Transnationalism in an Indigenous context refers to the flow of people, practices and cultures across distinct Indigenous nations and communities within Canada, including unpaid caregiving.

Research Objectives

- 1) To generate insight into the caregiving experiences of Indigenous and immigrant (Visible Minority and European) TCEs.
- 2) To adapt existing research approaches to support effective and culturally responsible strategies in qualitative research processes.
- 3) To ensure that the 'Carer-Inclusive Organizations Standard' [formerly known as Canadian Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Standard (CFW)] is culturally competent.

What is the importance of this research?

Globalization and immigration policies between Canada and immigrant-sending nations have heightened transnational caregiving. While there is growing research on transnational caregiving, to our knowledge, this study is the first to specifically address the experiences of TCEs in Canada..

The initial goal of this study was to better understand the lived experiences of immigrant transnational carer-employees (TCEs). When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the nature of the research shifted to explore TCEs' experiences before and after the onset of COVID-19. In doing so, the project addresses a range of socio-spatial drivers of mobility, settlement and/or resettlement of migrants in London, Ontario, Canada

What was done?

- Within this participatory and arts-based research, we gathered data using multi-modal ethnography (i.e., in-depth interviews, photographs, field notes, artifacts, poems, storytelling, and drawing);
- Research Advisory Committee (RAC) provided ongoing direction and consultation throughout the research project.
- In-depth interviews were conducted in English, Arabic and Spanish (Pre-COVID in-person; during COVID-Zoom);
- Thematic analysis of the interview data and the art pieces was conducted in NVivo 12 Pro.

Participants:

- *Indigenous* (N=10); (M= 3; F=6; Two-spirit =1); First Nations =7; Inuit=1; Did not identify=2
- *Visible Minorities* (N= 29); (M= 15; F=14) Syria (4), Nigeria (6), Pakistan (2), Zimbabwe (1); Colombia (10), Venezuela (1), Haiti (1), Barbados (2). Uganda (1), Kenya (1);
- *European* (N=6) ; (M=2; F=4) Germany = 2; Croatia = 1; Greece =1; Scotland

What did the researchers find?

Key Themes

1. *Cultural Expectations of Caregiving* - The duty to provide care increased during COVID-19. Feelings of guilt due to participants' inability to provide financial care.

2. *Caregiving and Geographical Distance*- Anxiety regarding the economic, social, and physical well-being of care recipients. The pandemic-related travel restrictions created emotional stress for participants and their family members.

3. *Workplace Influence* – Most participants were not aware of any policies to help them balance paid work and caregiving. Lack of cultural understanding and accommodation in the non-Indigenous workplace



Figure 1

Figure 1: “When you immigrate to another country, a piece of your heart remains in your country of origin and with your loved ones.” Antonio (Visible Minority TCE)



Figure 2

Figure 2: “The drawing is of myself with bear paws which represent my clan. An Elder told me the things I do to take care of my family fall into my responsibility as a member of the bear clan.” Marilyn (Indigenous)

“Love you will find only where you may show yourself weak without provoking strength.”

A quote by Adorno - Submitted by Alex (European TCE)

Research Team

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So what?

These results illuminated participants' intersectional identities as immigrants and TCEs. Also, the ways in which these identities impact their lived experiences. The data yielded from this study will provide a better understanding of how to best accommodate and sustain TCEs in the workplace.

The Indigenous findings can help Western health care and other service settings to incorporate culturally based programs and services specific to and led by Indigenous peoples, health care workers and other practitioners.

Next Steps

- Employers must consider implementing workplace support (such as work flexibility, job sharing, etc.) to help TCEs manage caregiving responsibilities while staying engaged at work.
- As TCEs are a heterogeneous group, future research should aim at compiling a comprehensive understanding of how transnationality shapes cultural and gendered expectations of the provision of care across diverse intersections such as race, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic class, work status, and citizenship.
- More arts-based research and intervention work is needed amongst a more diverse population of caregivers.

Publications

1. Rottenberg, S., Sethi, B., & Williams, A. (2023). Transnational caring in times of COVID-19: The experiences of visible minority immigrant carer-employees. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 4, 1-7.
2. Sethi, B., Williams, A. & Leung, J. (2022). Caregiving Across International Borders: A Systematic Review of Literature on Transnational Carer-Employees. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 37(4), 427-461.
3. Sethi, B. (2022) Negotiating culture, geographical distance, and employment: The lived experiences of transnational carer employees, *Wellbeing, Space,*

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