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## Counterurbanites and Commercial Landscape Change in the Canadian Countryside: Insights from Paris, Ontario

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# **Counterurbanites and Commercial Landscape Change in the Canadian Countryside: Insights from Paris, Ontario**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the role of in-migrants in the functional transformation of amenity-rich places. Its overarching goal is to determine if and how internal migrants arriving from larger settlement areas (i.e., counterurbanites) are contributing to the creation of functionally diverse (hybrid), or functionally limited (pure) commercial landscapes in places endowed with heritage assets. We focus on Paris, an historic town situated at the confluence of the Grand and Nith Rivers in southern Ontario. Three objectives guide the research: (1) to determine which commercial landscape form (hybrid or pure) and landscape generating process (creative enhancement or destruction) best characterizes the downtown; (2) to establish counterurbanite presence in this commercial core; and (3) to assess their role in the downtown's recent evolution. Evidence gleaned from secondary sources, and local fieldwork reveals that creative enhancement (functional addition), rather than creative destruction (functional displacement) is the dominant process. This has given rise to a hybrid landscape, where quotidian businesses (i.e., those selling ordinary goods and services) accompany five non-quotidian (i.e., distinctive) product types (i.e., authentic heritage, infused heritage, heritage-enhanced, faux-authentic heritage, and non-heritage boutique), each relying in different ways on the town's heritage assets. Information gathered from 35 proprietors finds that counterurbanites, and other in-migrants, dominate the downtown core, with only six non-migrant proprietors represented. In-comers, including counterurbanites, sell both quotidian and non-quotidian products, with non-migrant vendors offering *only* ordinary goods and services. These findings reveal that by selling both product types, counterurbanites are contributing to the creation of a hybrid landscape in the city's countryside. Their attraction is thus an important ingredient for facilitating diversity and economic viability in small settlement areas.

**Keywords:** counterurbanization, tourism, creative enhancement, creative destruction, Canada

## **1.0 Introduction**

The commercial districts of Canada's small towns and villages have undergone profound changes during the past 50 years. In many regions (e.g., the Prairies), global competition and labour-saving technologies have reduced the number of productivist workers, leading to a falling demand for quotidian (i.e., ordinary) products and, hence, reduced need for commercial ventures (Stabler & Olfert, 2009). In some areas (e.g., Central Canada), non-quotidian (i.e., distinctive) goods and services have appeared in places offering natural or cultural amenity (Stolarick, Denstedt, Donald, & Spencer, 2010). Their introduction has added to the commercial inventory in some locations (Shannon & Mitchell, 2012) resulting in the creation of functionally diverse, hybrid landscapes; in other places it has resulted in reduced quotidian offerings (Dahms & McComb, 1999), leading to a purer landscape form (Mitchell, 2013).

In Canada's amenity-rich places, these shifts in commercial activity are frequently accompanied by in-migrant arrival (Rockett & Ramsey, 2016). While in-comers have myriad origins, many are "counterurbanites" (Berry, 1976) who have moved down the settlement hierarchy from places of greater to lesser population concentration (Mitchell, 2004). Their ongoing or temporary presence influences a destination's demographic structure (Dahms, 1996), and has the potential to also impact its commercial base (Stolarick et al., 2010).

This paper seeks to determine the extent to which in-migrants (particularly, counterurbanites) are contributing to the creation of hybrid (functionally diverse), or pure (functionally limited) commercial districts in amenity-rich (particularly heritage-endowed) settlements. We undertook this study because no attempt has yet been made to connect these landscape types, or their underlying processes (i.e., creative destruction and enhancement), specifically to the commercial activity of this migrant cohort. While international (e.g., Bosworth, 2010) and Canadian (e.g., Mitchell & Madden, 2014) scholars have shown that in-migrants (including counterurbanites) are active in rural places, none have yet related this activity to the development of commercial landscape forms, nor their underlying landform generating processes. This article begins to fill this gap and, in doing so, responds to Finke & Bosworth's (2016, p. 633) recognition of the "need to understand the processes that drive changes in rural landscapes."

Our study focuses on Paris, Ontario, an historic community of about 12,300 residents (Statistics Canada, 2019a) whose economic transformation has followed a "production-shock-amenity trajectory" (Morzillo et al., 2015, p. 82). Historic research (Smith, Nichol, & Pickell, 1956) reveals that production followed the discovery of gypsum (i.e., plaster of paris) in 1793. This resulted in the subsequent opening of a plaster mill in 1823—the first of many to capitalize on a proximate water supply (provided by the Grand and Nith Rivers) and to benefit from the arrival of an international rail line (the Great Western and Buffalo-Goderich). By the early 1860s, more than two dozen manufacturing plants had opened in Paris, ranging from flour, grist, and plaster mills, to tanneries, cooperages, and cabinet makers (Smith et al., 1956). These were accompanied by at least 60 shops that met the needs of local residents and neighbouring farm families (Smith et al., 1956). Among these were 19 stores selling clothing, footwear and accessories, 14 selling food, and eight offering a varied selection of dry goods (Smith et al., 1956).

Industrial activity, particularly textile production, continued to drive the local economy well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Smith et al., 1956). By the Second World War, however, industry waned as the textile industry transitioned from a stage of “hesitant maturity to decline” (Parr, 1990, p. 4; cited in Mair, 2006). The closure of Penman’s plants in 1982, Canada’s largest knitting company (Parks Canada, 2018), combined with a national recession, greatly altered the economic situation in Paris. Although the downtown business district continued to serve some local needs, such as stationery and hardware (County of Brant Public Library, n. d.; J. M. Hall - The House of Quality Linens, n. d.), the loss of productivist activity necessitated diversification.

Tourism was identified as a potential economic driver (Mair, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. The focus on this post-productivist (Gill & Reed, 1997) trajectory was not surprising, given the town’s historic and physical amenity assets. This includes numerous 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings (e.g., the John M. Hall - The House of Quality Linens; see Figure 1), 11 of which are designated heritage properties (e.g., the Arlington Hotel and the Penman Textile Mill; County of Brant, n. d. a; see Figure 2), and a nationally designated heritage river (the Grand), “renowned for its recreational opportunities, water quality, cultural heritage and wildlife” (Grand Experiences Outdoor Adventure Company, 2019; see Figure 3). Since the early 1990s, the municipality has actively promoted this industry (Mair, 2006), describing Paris as both the “Prettiest Little Town in Canada,” and its “Cobblestone Capital” (County of Brant, n. d., b). While the former captures its “fairytale riverside scene,” the latter reflects its “second to none” architecture, which, according to the county, “needs to be experienced in person to be fully appreciated” (County of Brant, n. d., b).

Figure 1. John M. Hall – the House of Quality Linens.



Source: Photograph taken by Clare Mitchell, July 25, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Space does not permit a detailed discussion of the municipality’s original involvement in functional change and development of the tourism product. Readers are encouraged to consult Mair (2006) for additional information.

*Figure 2. The Arlington Hotel.*



Source: Photograph taken by Clare Mitchell, July 25, 2019.

*Figure 3. The Grand River.*



Source: Photograph taken by Clare Mitchell, July 25, 2019.

Both visitors and in-migrants are drawn to this amenity-rich settlement. In 2016, the County of Brant (2016) reported that 118,350 people attended the county's "marquee events," many of which are held in Paris (e.g., Paris Lions Maple Syrup Festival, Springtime in Paris, Paris Fair, and Christmas in Paris). For the same year, Statistics Canada (2019a) revealed that nearly one-fifth (19.3%) of the resident population (age five years and over) had moved to Paris within the past five years from another Canadian census subdivision, with most contributing to the town's somewhat undiversified (i.e., largely European or Canadian-based) ethnicity. Indeed, in 2016, only 2.2% of the population identified as a visible minority, up only marginally from 1.5% in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2019a,b). Given their arrival,

however, it is highly likely that the retail district in Paris has diversified to support their presence. Our goal in this paper is to deconstruct this commercial landscape and to consider what role counterurbanites have played in its transition. Before embarking on this task, we set the context for this study by providing a brief overview of the literature on counterurbanization, and commercial change in small settlement areas.

## **2.0 The Context**

### **2.1 Counterurbanization**

Counterurbanization is one of three demographic movements that may influence the commercial structure of recipient destinations. It is most frequently defined as migration (both permanent and seasonal) down the settlement hierarchy from places of greater to lesser population concentration (Halfacree, 2014; Mitchell, 2004). It contrasts with lateral migration, which is movement between similarly-sized places (Bijker & Haartsen, 2012; Gkartzios & Scott, 2009; Stockdale, 2016) and urbanization, which is migration up the settlement hierarchy from centres of lesser to greater population concentration (Gkartzios & Scott, 2012). While there is international evidence of all migration types (e.g., Gkartzios & Scott, 2012; Stockdale, 2016), most scholars conclude that counterurbanization is the dominant movement driving positive population change in small municipalities of advanced nations (Stockdale, 2016) and, increasingly, in those that are emerging (e.g., Qian, He, & Liu, 2013).

Two types of research have uncovered counterurbanization in Canada. Case studies of individual settlements have found this cohort residing in small municipalities of Northern (Vannini & Taggart, 2013), Western (Nepal & Jamal, 2011; Spina, Smith, & DeVerteuil, 2013), Central (Dahms & McComb, 1999; Guimond & Simard, 2010; Ngo & Brklacich, 2014; Simard, Guimond, & Vézina, 2018) and Eastern (Mitchell & Madden, 2014) Canada. Analyses of sub-national and national migration trends have also uncovered counterurbanization occurring at various times and in various places (e.g., Anderson & Papageorgiou, 1992; Bourne & Simmons, 2002; Dahms, 1998; Field, 1988; Newbold, 2011; Simmons, 1980). A recent study (Mitchell, 2019), for example, described internal migration between Canadian census classes and concluded that 62.3% of all moves taken to metropolitan influence zones (i.e., census subdivisions that lie beyond the country's census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations) originated in larger municipalities, with more than 70% of those taken in Ontario having the same origin. Thus, counterurbanization is clearly occurring in myriad locations as migrants seek out smaller settlement areas.

Economics, family, and amenity are among the factors bringing in-migrants into the city's countryside, and beyond. The presence of a lower cost of living (Halliday & Coombes, 1995), or employment opportunities (Halfacree, 2012) may draw economically-motivated migrants to metropolitan adjacent or more distant locales (Kuentzel & Ramaswamy, 2005). Familial ties may be an important motivator for others. The desire to engage with family, or one's ancestral roots, generates kinship migration, undertaken by returnees, often to isolated destinations (Friedrich & Warnes, 2000). In many cases, however, it is the prospect of living in an amenity-rich territory that lures both amenity-migrants (Argent, Tonts, Jones, & Holmes, 2013; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Taylor & Hurley, 2016) and those seeking a new (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009) and sometimes radical (Vannini & Taggart, 2013)

lifestyle. In Canada, their presence is contributing to population change in recipient places (e.g., Mitchell, 2019) and, in many locales, to new commercial activity (Dahms & McComb, 1999; Guimond & Simard, 2010; Rockett & Ramsey, 2017).

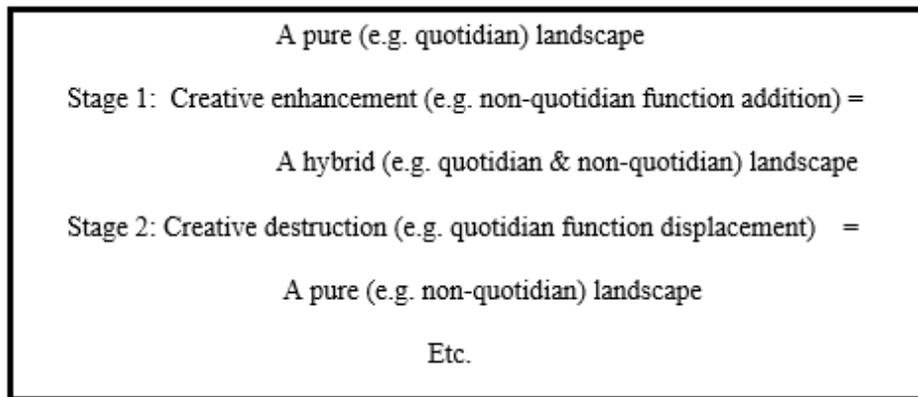
## **2.2 Commercial Change**

The commercial district of Canada's rural towns and villages historically developed to provide for essential consumption—the purchase of ordinary, or quotidian goods and services by individuals engaged in productivist (primary and secondary sector) activity. Mitchell (2013) describes these “pure” commercial settings as task-scapes—a word originally coined by Ingold to describe a “pattern of dwelling activities” (1993, p. 153). Over time, many of these districts have been compromised as productivist employment loss has reduced demand for quotidian products (Stabler & Olfert, 2009).

This loss has been countered in Canada's amenity-rich settlement areas by the introduction of non-quotidian (distinctive) goods and services. In regions of Western (e.g., Halpern & Mitchell, 2011; Meech et al, 2006; Nepal & Jamal, 2011), Central (e.g., Dahms, 1998; Guimond & Simard, 2010; Simard, Guimond & Vézina, 2018; Stolarick, Denstedt, Donald & Spencer, 2010), Northern (Steel & Mitchell, 2017) and Eastern (Mitchell & Shannon, 2018; Rockett & Ramsey, 2017) Canada, at least three product types have been inventoried, often distinguished by consumer type (Mitchell, 2013). Heritage products, the first, are authentic goods (e.g., antiques) or experiences (e.g., guided tours) that cater to the authentic-seeking consumer (Yeoman, Brass, McMahan-Beatti, 2006). They are found across rural Canada, but particularly in places promoting cultural heritage tourism (e.g., rural Newfoundland and Labrador, Mitchell & Shannon, 2018). Boutique products (Guimond & Simard, 2010) are high-end goods (e.g., designer clothing; specialty food) and experiences (e.g., spas) that serve well-to-do incomers residing in metropolitan-adjacent settlements in, for example, Ontario (Mitchell & deWaal, 2009) and Quebec (Guimond & Simard, 2010). Finally, leisure goods and experiences are often found in themed villages (e.g., Vulcan, Alberta; Mair, 2009), or “playgrounds for the middle class” (e.g., Collingwood, Ontario; Law, 2001). They cater to the post-tourist (Feifer, 1985), who is drawn by “surfaces and signs” more so than authenticity (Sherlock, 2001, p. 282).

The introduction of non-quotidian products has one of two impacts on a settlement area. It may add to the existing stock of retail firms, as in the case of Elora, Ontario (Westhues & Sinclair, 1974; Mitchell, 2013), or, over time, may cause quotidian firms to close as proprietors shift their attention to more lucrative non-quotidian product offerings, as found in select settlements around Georgian Bay (Dahms & McComb, 1999). Mitchell (2013) uses two concepts to describe these outcomes (see Figure 4). She coins the term creative enhancement to capture functional addition or the co-existence of two functionalities within a hybrid space (e.g., quotidian and non-quotidian products). She borrows the phrase creative destruction from Schumpeter (1942) and Harvey (1985) and interprets it as functional displacement that may follow functional addition (e.g., the closure of stores selling quotidian products, following the opening of non-quotidian venues). This process gives rise to a pure landscape form, characterized by limited commercial functionality (i.e., non-quotidian). As Figure 4 shows, these processes may replace one another over time, giving rise to shifting landscape forms.

Figure 4. Processes of Landscape Change in Amenity-rich Settlements.



Source: Adapted from Mitchell (2013)

These twin concepts are used internationally to describe the evolving functional structure of myriad geographic settings. Creative enhancement, which gives rise to hybrid landscapes, is the dominant process identified. It has been observed in Australian regions that combine different types of festivals (George, 2015), sometimes with Indigenous activity (Catanzaro & James, 2018). It describes the situation in New Zealand, where cultural wineries and sheep farms harmoniously co-exist (Perkins, Mackay, & Espiner, 2015), and in Japan, where mine technology training facilities accompany mine heritage tourism initiatives (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2017). In Canada, creative enhancement has been observed in Muskoka, where leisure activities have been developed alongside those promoting the region's cultural heritage (Gallant, 2017), and in the village of Elora, where multiple quotidian and non-quotidian venues co-exist in this hybrid setting (Mitchell, 2013).

Creative destruction, as interpreted by Mitchell (2013), also has been acknowledged, although somewhat less frequently. It has occurred in South Africa, in the absence of central planning, where student housing has gradually displaced agricultural activity (Ndimande, 2018). It has emerged in Wuhan, China (Zhang et al., 2019), where quotidian venues have been replaced by non-quotidian functions at the direction of the central government. In Canada (St. Jacobs, Ontario), it has unfolded in the presence of a profit-driven discourse, where establishments providing ordinary goods have been displaced in the downtown by those catering to a tourist clientele (Mitchell, 2013). This diverse research suggests that both pure and hybrid landscape forms are emerging in diverse locations, as creative destruction and enhancement respectively unfold.

Commercial change and counterurbanization are thus clearly occurring in Canada's small settlement areas, as they are across much of the developed (and increasing, the developing) world. As a demographic movement, counterurbanization brings newcomers and returnees often to smaller, amenity-rich settlements located both within, and beyond, metropolitan boundaries. These movements are accompanied by the introduction of a variety of non-quotidian (and sometimes quotidian) product types. Their presence may promote creative enhancement and functionally diverse (i.e., hybrid) landscapes or, over time, creative destruction and functionally limited (i.e., pure) landscapes, as quotidian businesses are displaced. While the presence of counterurbanites has been documented, and the creation of these commercial landscapes explored, the relationship between these two has not yet been

established. This study makes this connection by examining in-migration and commercial change in Paris, Ontario.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The research has three objectives. The first is to determine which commercial landscape structure (hybrid or pure) and landscape generating process (creative enhancement or destruction) best characterize the Paris downtown. The second is to determine if in-migrants, and in particular counterurbanites, are present in this commercial core. The third is to assess the role played by counterurbanites in the creation of the town's pure or hybrid downtown landscape. A variety of methods is used to meet these goals.

Three steps are taken to meet objective 1. We first inventory past and present businesses in the downtown, which is defined by the county as “the peninsula of land bordered by the Nith River and the Grand River” (County of Brant, n. d., c). Past business structure is ascertained from an analysis of Street View images captured by Google Earth beginning in 2009 and re-captured in 2012, 2014, and 2016; current structure is revealed through fieldwork conducted in 2019. Once inventoried, we then establish each venue's dominant functionality (quotidian and various types of non-quotidian) by drawing on information gathered during fieldwork and from an analysis of each company's current, or inactive web pages and social media sites (i.e., Facebook). We then total the number of firms of each type and draw conclusions about the presence of creative destruction or enhancement in the study site, and its resulting commercial landscape form.

Similar to other rural researchers (Charney & Palgi, 2014; Kilpeläinen & Seppänen, 2014; Stockdale, 2016), we distributed questionnaire surveys to determine who is involved in the downtown business community (objective 2), and their role in functional change (objective 3). All available proprietors (80) in the downtown were approached during the fall of 2018; 70 agreed to complete the survey, with 36 actually doing so (51%), yielding 35 useable questionnaires. This response rate was comparable to those obtained in similar studies (Kilpeläinen & Seppänen, 2014) and higher than reported in others (e.g., Charney & Pagli, 2014; Mitchell & Madden, 2014). We gathered information on vendors' residential and commercial history, demographic characteristics, and migration motivations to establish who proprietors are, and their contribution to the downtown's commercial structure.

## **4.0 Findings**

### ***4.1 Functional Change in Downtown Paris: Creative Destruction or Creative Enhancement?***

Our first objective is to determine which commercial landscape structure (hybrid or pure) and landscape generating process (creative enhancement or destruction) best characterizes the Paris downtown. Creative destruction will be evident if businesses providing quotidian products have declined over time as those offering non-quotidian goods and services have increased; creative enhancement will be present if there is stability in the number of businesses providing ordinary products, despite the introduction of distinctive offerings. The former will result in a pure landscape form if quotidian venues are essentially absent from the downtown; the latter will generate a hybrid landscape with elements of both quotidian and non-quotidian activity.

The inventory we assembled of downtown businesses (see Table 1) reveals that both creative enhancement and destruction have unfolded during the ten-year period. Creative enhancement occurred between 2009 and 2012, when eight new non-quotidian firms opened, along with two new quotidian venues. Two years of creative destruction then followed (2012-2014), when four of the 67 quotidian businesses closed, and the number of non-quotidian firms stabilized (at 30). Creative enhancement then re-emerged after 2014, as quotidian and non-quotidian establishments increased. Hence, although creative enhancement is the dominant process unfolding in Paris, it has been punctuated in the past by creative destruction.

Functional addition has resulted in the creation of a hybrid landscape. In 2019, 125 quotidian and non-quotidian establishments could be found in the downtown—somewhat more than were present in 2009 (87). Seventy-two of these offered ordinary products (compared to 65 in 2009), with most (47) providing services, including dental, medical, and insurance; 25 others sold ordinary products, including hardware, paint, and pizza. These businesses likely gain most of their custom from local and regional residents, although it is conceivable that visitors, too, may meet their need for particular ordinary items (e.g., gasoline) in Paris as well. Although the number of firms offering these products has grown over time, the percentage of total downtown businesses providing ordinary goods and services has fallen (from 74.7% to 57.6%). This has occurred as additional non-quotidian venues have opened in structures that formerly housed non-retail uses (i.e., private homes or vacant buildings). In 2019, these distinctive ventures numbered 53—considerably more than identified in 2009 (22).

Table 1. *Dominant Products Offered by Paris' Downtown Vendors: 2009 - 2019*

	2009	2012	2014	2016	2019
<b>Dominant Product</b>					
Quotidian	65	67	62	66	72
Quotidian percentage	74.7	69.1	67.4	56.9	57.6
Non-quotidian	22	30	30	50	53
Non-quotidian percentage	25.3	30.9	32.6	43.1	42.4
Total	87	97	92	116	125
Total excluding Winsey Mills weekend market vendors	87	97	92	103	112
Vacant	5	8	8	5	2
<b>Permanent non-quotidian vendors</b>					
Authentic Heritage	2	2	2	2	2
Infused Heritage	4	7	7	7	13
Heritage-enhanced	2	3	4	7	4
Non-heritage Boutique	14	18	17	21	21
<b>Temporary Winsey Mills weekend market vendors</b>					
Infused Heritage	-	-	-	6	8
Non-heritage Boutique	-	-	-	6	5
Quotidian	-	-	-	1	0

Sources: Google Earth (2009-2016), Fieldwork (2019), Winsey Mills (2018), Wingbury Properties (2016).

Given the diversity of distinctive products that we find in the Paris downtown, we create a more nuanced typology than provided by Mitchell (2013). We distinguish five potential product types, based on their use of place-based, heritage assets: authentic heritage, infused heritage, heritage-enhanced, faux-authentic, and non-heritage boutique (see Table 2). Authentic heritage products (Mitchell, 2013) include intangible heritage experiences (e.g., landscape experiences: Gamito, Madureira, & Santos, 2019), or tangible heritage goods (e.g., local antiques) that rely directly on the commodification of local heritage. Infused heritage products are new goods or services created with, or inspired by, local heritage. Among these are products that reinvent traditions (Gamito et al., 2019) by incorporating local ingredients (food or fibre) or local technologies (e.g., weaving). Faux-authentic heritage products (Mitchell, 2013) appropriate heritage assets to create mass-produced souvenirs or fantasy, worldmaking experiences (Mair, 2009). Heritage-enhanced products, in contrast, use heritage only to add value to their non-heritage offerings. These goods or services are marketed not only on their internal worth (e.g., superior taste in the case of international cuisine), but also on the extrinsic benefits that arise from their heritage location (e.g. relaxation in an historic or scenic setting). Finally, non-heritage boutique products (e.g., imported designer clothing, luxury spas; Mitchell, 2013) bear no direct relation to local heritage. They do not draw explicitly on extrinsic value created by this resource but simply rely on the market generated by this asset to support their offering. These varied types will appeal to both a visiting and local clientele—particularly to guests and in-migrants who are drawn to the community by its heritage assets.

Table 2. *Non-quotidian Product Types*

<b>Product</b>	<b>Role of heritage assets</b>	<b>Example</b>
Authentic heritage	Assets are commodified in the form of goods or experiences	Local antiques Guided tours
Infused heritage	Assets are incorporated into new products	Paintings of local scenery; repurposed local antiques; products (e.g., food or fibre) made using traditional materials or production techniques
Heritage-enhanced	Asset presence adds extrinsic value to new products	Upmarket international cuisine whose offering in a heritage setting is described as contributing to patron experience
Faux-authentic heritage	Assets provide inspiration for the sale of replicated, mass-produced, goods or experiences	Souvenirs Themed parades
Non-heritage boutique	Assets generate a market to support the sale of non-local, upmarket, contemporary fashionable products	Imported high fashion clothing, designer house-wares and jewellery; up-market restaurant cuisine using imported ingredients

Our Paris business inventory includes four of these non-quotidian product types (no venues specializing in faux-authentic products were identified; see Table 1). Of the 40 permanent shops selling these goods or experiences, the majority (21) provide non-heritage boutique items (52.5%), as they did in 2009 (14 of 29). Many specialize in infused heritage products (13 compared to 4 in 2009), including handmade soaps and paintings by local artists. Other venues (4) sell products that are enhanced by the town's heritage assets (twice as many as found in 2009). One business, John M. Hall - The House of Quality Linens (n. d.), for example, is described as “an old-fashioned linen store established over 120 years ago,” whose “historic features invite you into a bygone era.” The three others are food venues that extol the community's cultural or natural assets in their marketing material. The 1851 Public House, located in the historic Arlington Hotel, is described as an “intimate space . . . defined by its stone walls and warm wood accents, transporting you back in time to that classic era when “bartender” was a professional title” (Arlington Hotel, n. d.). The Stillwaters! Restaurant also connects to the town's heritage assets, by advertising that their patio “offers a panoramic view of Paris and the Grand River with a focus on pure relaxation” (Stillwaters! Plate and Pour, 2018). Similarly, the 2 Rivers Restaurant promotes the extrinsic benefits that arise from this venue's proximity to the river: “Overlooking the Grand River, 2 Rivers is located in beautiful downtown Paris. The Riverside Terrace allows visitors to enjoy the view while dining on our delicious foods” (2 Rivers, 2019). Accompanying these heritage-enhanced venues are two authentic firms (the Grand Experiences Outdoor Adventure Company and the Grand River Rafting Company), which each provides creative learning experiences along the nationally-designated heritage river.

In addition to these 40 permanent vendors, we also inventory businesses that operate for three days each week in the former Winsey Mill (see Figure 5). This 19<sup>th</sup> century structure historically housed a textile factory, and most recently, a Canadian Tire store that vacated the space in 2013 (Business View Magazine, 2017). This unique building was later purchased, restored and opened in 2016 as a “creative space . . . where locals and visitors can shop, learn, work and share” (Winsey Mills, 2018). In 2019 it housed 13 temporary vendors, including eight that offered infused heritage products, such as “vintage-inspired trinkets” (Ogilvie, 2017), and five that sold non-heritage boutique wares, including international food and crafts. In addition, this structure houses several permanent quotidian and non-quotidian vendors (two selling non-heritage boutique and one providing heritage-infused items) that were described above. The opening of this venue has significantly increased the number of businesses in the downtown, and, with its mixed functionality, is contributing to the maintenance of the downtown's hybrid status.

#### ***4.2 Downtown Proprietors: In-migrants or Non-migrants?***

We now consider who is contributing to commercial change in the downtown core (objective 2). Our analysis of 35 questionnaire surveys finds that 29 in-migrants operate downtown businesses (see Table 3). Seventeen of these proprietors are counterurbanites who moved to their present residence from a larger settlement area and have been in business, on average, for about five years. Of these counterurbanites, however, only seven relocated to Paris; ten others moved down the settlement hierarchy to a different community and commute to their Paris business. On average, these proprietors are younger and better educated than the non-migrants in the sample, with a median age range of 45-55, and 11 of 17 having a post-secondary degree or diploma.

Figure 5. The Paris Wincey Mills Co. Building.



Source: Photograph taken by Clare Mitchell, July 25, 2019.

The majority of the counterurbanite cohort (9 of 17) elected to move voluntarily for amenity or family-related lifestyle reasons. One proprietor, for example, indicated that they moved to Paris because “my husband wanted to live in a small town.” A second commented that the move was taken “to allow my teenage daughter to go to high school in a quiet town,” with a third choosing Paris because the couple “loved the small-town feel and wanted to raise our children” there. We also find four economically-motivated counterurbanites, with two citing the need to secure employment, and two others indicating their need for less expensive housing. Although four participants did not indicate their migration motivation, two of these individuals are returnees suggesting that family-related reasons were an important consideration.

We also find six urbanites in the sample (four living in Paris and two living elsewhere) who moved to their current, larger place of residence from a smaller settlement area. On average, these proprietors have been in operation for a longer period than the counterurbanites (8 compared to 5 years), but they are comparable in age and educational status to this in-migrant cohort (see Table 3). In three cases, non-economic factors played an important role in the migration decision, with one individual citing family reasons and two others noting a desire for a different type of residential setting. In two more cases, economic motives drove the decision, with business opportunities bringing migrants to their new residence. The final urbanite provided insufficient information to ascertain their migration motivation.

Urbanites are accompanied by six lateral migrants (including only one Paris resident), who moved to their present location from a similarly-sized settlement. These proprietors have been in business for a longer period, on average, than other in-migrant groups (about 12 years). However, they are comparable in age and educational status to the urbanite and counterurbanite cohorts and offer similar migration reasons. Although two respondents did not disclose their primary motive, in three other cases, economic (i.e., employment) reasons prompted the move, with

two respondents citing a variety of amenity-related motives, including a preference for “rural living over urban.”

Table 3. *Characteristics of Downtown Paris Vendors*

	<b>Counter-urbanite migrants</b>	<b>Urbanite migrants</b>	<b>Lateral migrants</b>	<b>Non-migrants</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number	17	6	6	6	35
Paris residents	7	4	1	2	14
Median age range	45-54	45-54	45-54	55-64	45-54
Number with a post-secondary degree or diploma	11	4	4	3	22
Number who moved to their destination primarily for economic reasons	4	2	3	-	9
Number who moved to their destination primarily for family or amenity reasons	9	3	2	-	14
Average years in business	5	8	12	24	9

Note: One non-migrant did not disclose their age; six did not disclose their primary motivation.

The remaining participants (6) are non-migrants (two living in Paris and four living elsewhere) who have operated their Paris business for 24 years, on average—considerably longer than the migrant group (7 years, on average). While these vendors are older, on average, than the in-migrant cohorts (median age range of 55-64), they are the same median age of the Paris population, age 25 and older (Statistics Canada, 2019a). Similarly, while they also have less education, on average, than other proprietors, the percentage with a post-secondary degree or diploma (50%) is similar to the Paris population, age 15 years and older (53%) (Statistics Canada, 2019a). Given these findings, it is clear that in-migrants, and in particular counterurbanites, are contributing to demographic diversification as a consequence of their commercial activity in downtown Paris. We did not ascertain migrant’s cultural origins, so we are unable to determine their impact on the ethnic structure.

### 4.3. *In-migrants’ Business Activity: Quotidian or Non-quotidian?*

Our final task is to consider how in-migrants, and in particular counterurbanites, are contributing to the hybrid status of the downtown core. Table 4 reveals that the sample proprietors offer four of the product types presented in Table 1. As described below, though, it is in-migrants, rather than non-migrants, who are responsible for the hybrid commercial landscape described above.

A majority of survey respondents (19 of 35) operate quotidian venues whose products are likely consumed by the resident, or regional population. These venues have operated, on average, for 14 years, with three opened before 1983. All six non-migrants in the sample sell ordinary products; in contrast, a minority of in-migrants (13 of 28) offer quotidian goods and services. All incomer types sell this product variant, with counterurbanites operating five of the 14 stores included in the sample and lateral migrants and urbanites, each operating four businesses, respectively.

Sixteen other in-migrant proprietors sell non-quotidian products, which have been available for a relatively short period of time (4 years, on average). Most (8 of 16) offer infused heritage goods and services, with five of these stores owned by counterurbanites. Non-heritage boutique products are found in seven other firms, six of which are also run by members of the counterurbanite cohort. Only one venue (a restaurant) provides a product that is recognized by its resident counterurbanite owner to be enhanced by heritage asset proximity. These findings thus reveal the important role that counterurbanites are playing in the countryside—they are contributing to diversification, by selling non-quotidian products, but they are also maintaining the base of ordinary goods and services that are necessary to meet consumers’ essential needs.

Table 4. *Surveyed Paris Vendors’ Dominant Product Types*

<b>Vendors</b>	<b>Total quotidian</b>	<b>Total non-quotidian (NQ)</b>	<b>NQ: Infused heritage</b>	<b>NQ: Heritage-enhanced</b>	<b>NQ: Non-heritage boutique</b>	<b>All vendors</b>
All in-migrants	13	16	8	1	7	29
Counter-urbanite migrants	5	12	5	1	6	17
Urbanite migrants	4	2	1	0	1	6
Lateral migrants	4	2	2	0	0	6
Non-migrants	6	0	0	0	0	6
All vendors	19	16	8	1	7	35
Average years in operation	14	4	3	1	6	9

## **5.0 Discussion and Conclusion**

In this article, we set out to examine counterurbanites' role in the functional transformation of a small, amenity-rich settlement. Our specific intent was to determine if internal migrants arriving from larger settlement areas (i.e., counterurbanites) are contributing to the creation of functionally diverse (hybrid) or functionally limited (pure) commercial landscapes in places endowed with heritage assets. Paris, Ontario, was elected for study, given its significant natural and cultural resources and the recorded presence of visitors and in-migrants within its borders. We draw three conclusions in this section that contribute to existing rural scholarship on commercial landscapes, counterurbanization, and counterurbanites' contribution to landscape change.

Our first conclusion is that creative enhancement, rather than destruction, is the dominant process responsible for the shifting commercial functionality of the Paris downtown. The prevalence of functional addition (in this case, non-quotidian establishments), rather than functional displacement (in this case, the closure of quotidian establishments) mirrors conclusions drawn elsewhere in Canada (Mitchell, 2013; Gallant, 2017), and select international locations (e.g., Catanzaro & James, 2018; George, 2015; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2017; Perkins et al., 2015). In each of these regions, as in Paris, innovative functions were found to co-exist with those established under a different accumulation regime (e.g., productivist versus post-productivist), suggesting the emergence of a hybrid landscape form.

We attribute the dominance of creative enhancement, rather than creative destruction, to two related factors: relative size and relative location. Paris is the largest population centre in Brant County and, as such, operates as the regional service centre (population 36,707; County of Brant, Economic Development, 2018). This ensures the ongoing provision of ordinary goods and services, which contributes to the maintenance of the hybrid commercial landscape in the downtown. A similar situation did not unfold in St. Jacobs, Ontario (Mitchell, 2013), where creative destruction occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. With a population of fewer than 2,000 residents (Statistics Canada, 2019c), St. Jacobs is a small municipality situated within the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge Census Metropolitan Area. This location affords easy access to quotidian businesses (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies) that no longer need to be offered in St. Jacobs' downtown. Hence, during its early evolution, the original commercial district became dominated by non-quotidian ventures (Mitchell, 2013), suggesting movement towards a purer landscape form. Relative size, and location, are thus important factors influencing the nature of commercial change in amenity-rich settlement areas.

Our second conclusion is that in-migrants, and amenity and family-driven counterurbanites in particular, are active participants in Paris' downtown business community. This finding corroborates the research of other Canadian (Mitchell, 2013) and international (Collins, 2013; Gkartzios & Scott, 2015; Stockdale, 2016) scholars. On average, younger and better educated than local residents, in-migrant proprietors are contributing to the town's demographic diversity—a situation also reported in other Canadian (Mitchell & Shannon, 2017) and international settings (Kalantaridis & Bika, 2006; Paniagua, 2002). Our study finds that this diversity is ephemeral, however, because many (17 of 29) in-migrant proprietors are not Paris residents, but are commuters who live in adjacent municipalities, in at least one case, due to high housing prices in Paris (Survey Participant, 2018). While this inward

flow is quite small, it does suggest that amenity-rich settlements operate not only as bedroom communities for larger urban areas, but also employment nodes for residents living in nearby towns and villages.

A final conclusion is that counterurbanites are contributing to the development of Paris' hybrid landscape, one that combines ordinary products with a variety of distinctive goods and services (authentic heritage, infused-heritage, heritage-enhanced, and non-heritage boutique). Our results reveal that counterurbanites have used their externally accumulated capital to open both business types, as other scholars have observed (Bosworth, 2010; Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Herslund, 2011), but we have also demonstrated that their business types influence settlement processes and commercial landscape form. Those offering non-quotidian goods and services contribute to creative enhancement—a process leading to the emergence of a functionally diverse hybrid landscape. In contrast, those offering quotidian products reduce the potential for creative destruction and the emergence of a functionally limited (i.e., non-quotidian) commercial setting.

In summary, these findings add to the burgeoning literature on settlement change in rural regions of the developed world. Like other Canadian towns, Paris contains a legacy of industrial and architectural heritage which, when combined with natural features, provides the place-based assets needed to establish a competitive advantage (Markey, Halseth, & Manson, 2012). Counterurbanites have capitalized on this advantage to create a hybrid landscape that now combines the ordinary with the distinct. In-migrant attraction thus appears to be the key ingredient for functional change in communities with heritage appeal.

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