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On the Move on the Rock

December 2013

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Inaugural newsletter of *On the Move*'s Newfoundland and Labrador Field Team



On the Move on the Rock is a biannual newsletter that aims to share the progress of ongoing research, training and activities by members of the NL field component of the On the Move Partnership.

Research for the On the Move Partnership is taking place over 7 years all across Canada. This newsletter will highlight the exciting research being conducted here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Newfoundland Field Component Team is comprised of university researchers, students

and partners, including government departments, community organizations, industry and labour. Together we hope to better understand employment-related geographical mobility in our province, how it is changing and how it impacts individuals, families, businesses and communities.

Important Date:

NL Team Meeting
January 24, 2013
11 am - 4 pm
School of Business
Boardroom, Memorial
University

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For more information, visit
<http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca>

What is the On the Move Partnership in NL?

The purpose of the On the Move Partnership is to explore the nature and impacts of Employment-Related Geographic Mobility (E-RGM) on communities, companies and workers. E-RGM can be defined as travelling extensively from a permanent place of residency to another location as part or because of one's employment. Any related absences incurred because of this travel is also an important part of E-RGM.

Researchers are carrying out field research in the Avalon Isthmus and surrounding regions. The types of work found in this region are often boom and bust in character. Changes in sectors such as the fishery and the need for skilled workers in major industrial projects have made employment on the Isthmus very mobile. Researchers are looking at how travelling for work has changed over time in a number of sectors including transportation (ferries), shipping and transshipment, construction, nickel processing and fisheries and seafood



PHOTO CREDIT: KATHY FITZPATRICK

processing. This project aims to understand and explain the consequences and benefits of being mobile for your job and the reasons why people choose mobile lifestyles. Consequences for economic development, local volunteerism, health and housing are just a few of the issues we have already heard are important and will explore further.



A COUPLE OF THE RESEARCHERS

George Gmelch (left) Professor of Anthropology, University of San Francisco and Diane Royal (right) Research Assistant to George Gmelch

George Gmelch and Diane Royal are carrying out Anthropological research on the spectrum of employment-related geographical mobility (E-RGM) in the Newfoundland Avalon Isthmus and surrounding regions, working specifically in the shipping and transshipment sector within the oil and gas industry.

Visiting Newfoundland this Summer

By Georgy Gmelch and Diane Royal

This past June, we spent most of the month in Newfoundland getting acquainted with the research objectives and looking for several communities that might serve as research sites and doing some interviews. We spent the first week in St. John's reading E-RGM related literature in the MUN library, meeting with Barb, Sharon, Nicole and Kelly, and doing some preliminary interviews aimed at developing an interview guide. We also spent time and had delightful dinners with old MUN colleagues of George's from

the early 1970s. We then went on the road, spent eight days in Arnold's Cove, Bay de Verde and a few other the places along the way doing our first interviews with our draft interview schedule. Invariably, the people we approached for interviews seemed eager to help, and most were interested in the project. We are looking forward to our return to Newfoundland next June to resume the research.

MORE OF THE RESEARCHERS

Employment Mobility in Nickel Processing

By Heather Hall



I am investigating labour mobility, nickel processing and regional development and conducting a comparison of Long Harbour NL and Sudbury ON.

Heather Hall, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Geography, Memorial University; co-lead for the nickel-processing component of the On the Move Partnership.

Growing up in Northern Ontario, my father and my grandfather were both involved in the mining industry and I witnessed at a young age the booms and busts of the resource economy and the importance of strong governance and regional policy. As a result, my research interests focus on regional planning and regional development in resource-based regions.

In the nickel-processing component of the On the Move Partnership we are interested in answering the following questions: (1) What is the nature of long-distance commuting in the nickel-processing sector in NL and Northern Ontario?; (2) What are the impacts of long-distance commuting for “home” and “work” communities and what are the respective responses by companies, unions, local and provincial policymakers etc.?; and (3) What are the impacts of institutional context (i.e. provincial legislation, history, community proximity to mine-

sites, corporate policies, labour policies etc.) on long-distance commuting? We hope that this project will create new knowledge on long-distance commuting that could benefit workers, communities and other organizations from a planning and policy perspective. To this end I began conducting interviews in the Long Harbour and Avalon Peninsula region in fall 2013 and now in Northern Ontario. I will return to NL for additional field work in 2014.

Homecare Workers and Mobility

By Kathy Fitzpatrick



Kathy Fitzpatrick, PhD Candidate, Sociology, Memorial University

My study focuses on home care workers living in St. John's and Southwest Newfoundland. I interviewed home care workers in both St. John's and southwest NL. These workers are predominately women, but in St. John's they tend to be younger, more educated and more likely to be single or divorced. The majority of home care workers residing in southwest NL tend to participate in interprovincial and local live-in care whereas all home care workers living in St. John's participate in daily shorter commutes to one or more workplaces. Preliminary findings suggest that the E-RGM of home care workers may affect the hourly rate of pay and fringe benefits.

New Team Members

Lindsay Bell will join the On the Move team in January of 2014 as a postdoctoral fellow with the NL field component. Lindsay comes to the team from the University of Toronto (Sociology and Anthropology). Her doctoral thesis examined the experiences of both Aboriginal and (im)migrant workers in the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories. Her study was part of a larger SSHRC project entitled “Mobility, Identity and the New Economy” (MINE).

Lindsay will carry out research on E-RGM in the construction sector with a focus on oil and gas-related construction. The research program will examine the composition of this subsection of the provincial labour force. For the workers who are engaged in extended commuting to Bull Arm from other parts of NL, other provinces and outside the country, the team will explore the consequences of commuting for them and for their families, any challenges and opportunities employers associate with dealing with differently mobile workers and the consequences for the home communities these workers are coming from, as well as for host communities in the Bull Arm area. This research component will also include attention to NL workers who are travelling out of the province to work in the oil and gas construction sector in other parts of Canada and the world. Lindsay will also liaise between the Partnership and our NL partner, the Economics and Statistics Branch of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, aiding in the transfer of On the Move research results to government, as well as in the development of better tools for monitoring E-RGM and its impacts within the province in the future.

New Team Members Cont'd New On the Website

Suzanne Mills Co-applicant, School of Labour Studies, McMaster University.

Dr. Mills' research has examined employment equity in natural resources work, particularly in relation to Aboriginal peoples. A second focus has been on the relationship between labour unions and Aboriginal peoples. Her current SSHRC-funded research explores how worker mobility in construction interacts with Aboriginal employment when negotiated agreements are in place on large resource development projects. Joining the Partnership will give Dr. Mills opportunities to develop new collaborations and provide the team access to her research and expertise on mobility and equity in the construction sector

What We've Been Doing

- Kathy Fitzpatrick and Christine Knott organized three special sessions for the Canadian Association of Geographers 2013 conference. The CAG presentations are available for partners to access on the team's Basecamp website.
- In May, 2013, there were Regional presentations and feedback sessions held in Carbonear and Clarenville.
- On December 6th, On the Move Director Barb Neis as well as Sharon Roseman, Kelly Vodden and Nicole Power gave a presentation for the department of Geography's Bluebox Seminar Series titled "The On the Move Partnership: Studying Employment-Related Geographical Mobility in the Canadian Context."
- Sharon Roseman and Kathy Fitzpatrick presented Work Mobilities: Studying practices, policies and implications at the Harris Centre's three-day festival of applied research, November 12-14.

There are several new resources available on the On the Move website:

- CBC Ideas, a partner with On the Move, is producing a series of radio documentaries profiling On the Move research. You can listen to the first doc in this series, On the Move to Fort McMurray, via the link on our home page, <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/popupaudio.html?clipIds=2419990513> (originally broadcast Nov. 22, 2013).
- On the Move's Statistics Component has generated mobility maps to provide a snapshot view of what the Canada Census of 1996, 2001 and 2006 can tell us about long distance commuting: <http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/results/maps/>

Acknowledgements

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www.onthemovepartnership.ca

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the On the Move Project, please feel free to contact:

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RECENT PHOTOS AND THEIR STORIES



This photo was taken by Kathy Fitzpatrick. Kathy researches the effects of mobility on homecare workers.



This photograph was taken by Diane Royal and is of Bay-de-Verde Harbour.



This photograph was taken while George Gmelch and Diane Royal were travelling across Newfoundland this past summer

