

On the road again: Mobility and momentum in Newfoundland and Labrador's construction industry

Lachlan Barber and Barb Neis

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CONTEXT

EMPLOYMENT-RELATED GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY (E-RGM)



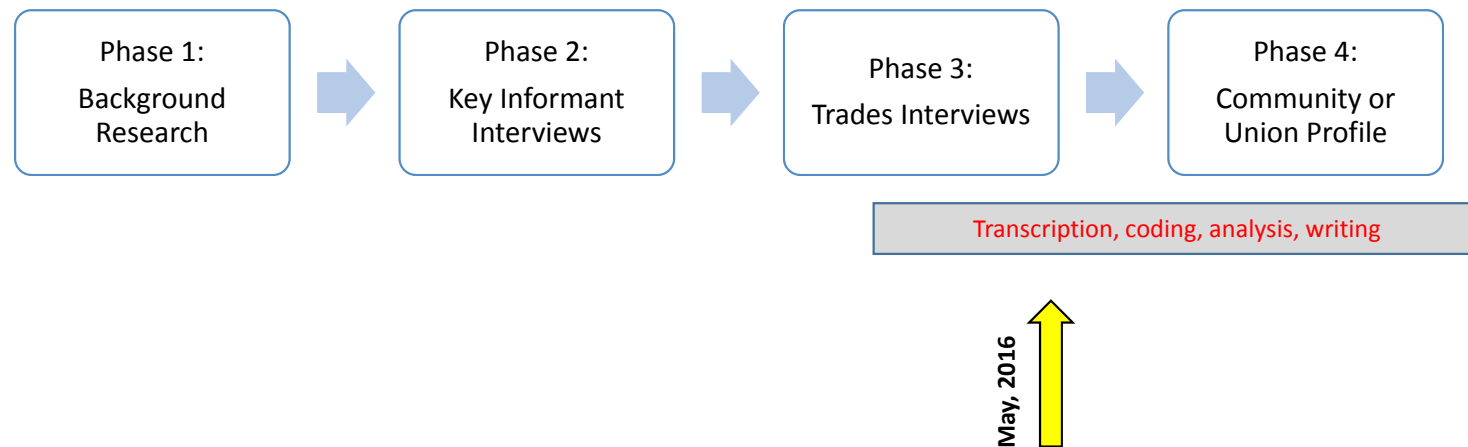
labour
studies

migration
studies

“new
mobilities”

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTIONS

Focus on Newfoundland (and Labrador) industrial construction, qualitative methods (mainly interviews)



FOCUS

- E-RGM in labour relations for trade unions and their members
- Influenced by neoliberalization...
- But also by collective and individual agency

- Objectives:
 - Recognize the role of organized labour as a force shaping the evolution of mobile work
 - Highlight complexity and ambivalence – both good and bad

OUTLINE

1. Collective bargaining in Canada and in the construction industry – project agreements in Newfoundland
2. The NL / AB connection – corporate, union, individual
3. Empirical findings that reflect collective and individual agency, but also show ambivalence and uncertainty in the context of economic volatility

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Regulatory system

- Sectoral coverage
- Few challenges for geographically mobile workers

Representational system

- Bargaining unit coverage
- Geographically mobile workers may encounter challenges

Construction sector

- Provincial labour agreements for unionized work
- Project agreements

SPECIAL PROJECT ORDERS (SPOs)

APPLICATION PROTOCOL SPECIAL PROJECT ORDERS

Introduction

A **Special Project** is an undertaking of construction works designed to develop a natural resource or establish a primary industry that satisfies the legislative requirements of the *Labour Relations Act (Act)*.

A **Special Project Order (SPO)** is issued pursuant to section 70 of the *Act* and is intended to provide labour relations stability. It establishes a labour relations regime that is uniquely tailored to the specific requirements of the project. The collective agreement, which is in effect for the duration of the project, prohibits strikes and lockouts. The legislation can be found at <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/l01.htm>.

Criteria

In order to qualify for a special project designation a construction project must meet the following criteria:

- 1) A construction of works that develops a natural resource or establishes a primary industry;
- 2) A construction period that exceeds two years; and
- 3) Includes all ancillary work, services and catering relating to the undertaking or project.

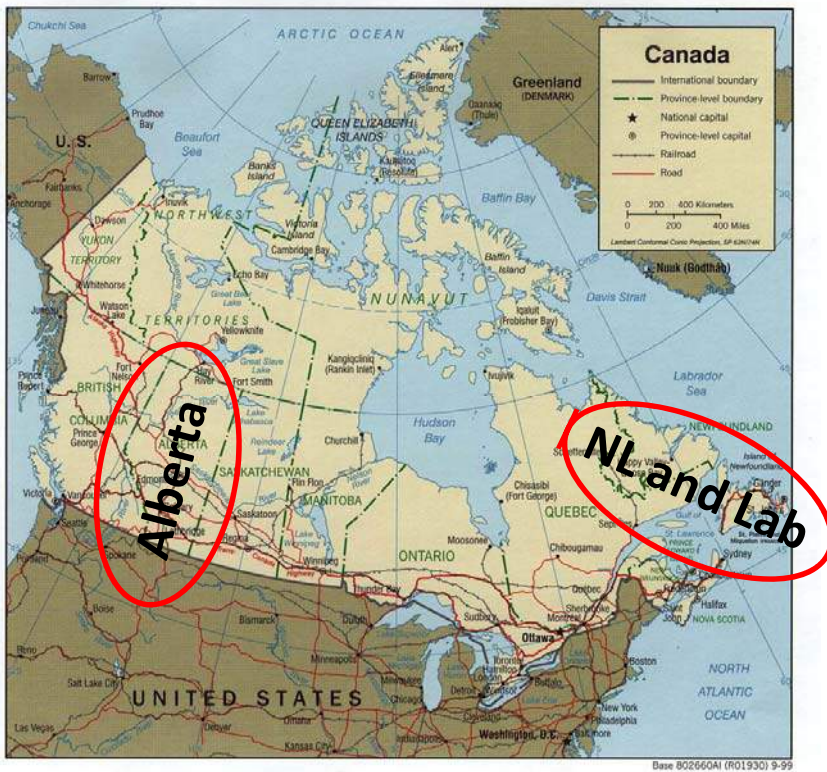
Or

- 1) A construction or fabrication of works that occurs at the Bull Arm site; and
- 2) Includes all ancillary work, services and catering.

SPO PROJECTS SINCE CHURCHILL FALLS

Project	Type	Date	Location
Churchill Falls	Hydro Energy	1967-1975	Labrador
Hibernia	Offshore Oil (GBS)	1990-1997	Newfoundland
Terra Nova	Offshore Oil (FPSO)	1997-2002	Newfoundland
Voisey's Bay	Mining	2002-2005	Labrador
Long Harbour	Nickel Processing	2009-present	Newfoundland
Hebron	Offshore Oil (GBS)	2011-present	Newfoundland
Muskrat Falls (Lower Churchill)**	Hydro Energy	2013-present	Labrador
Maritime Link	Hydro Energy	2014-present	Newfoundland

** Includes separate orders for the transmission line and generating station



Interprovincial mobility

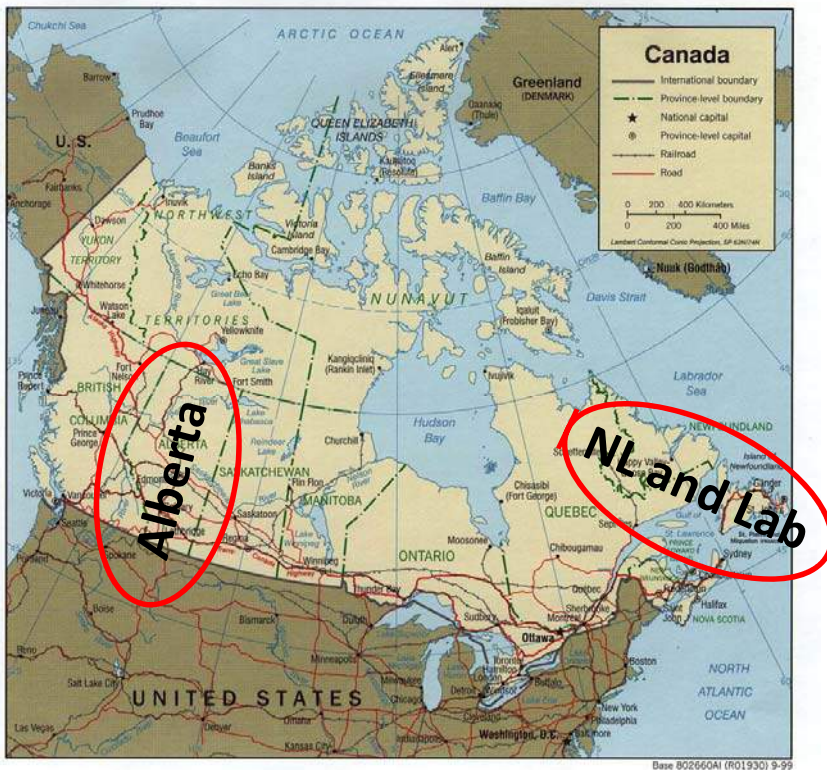
- >> Migration/relocation
- >> Temporary work
- >> Fly-in/fly-out – since around 2004

The “Alberta model”

- Consists of “everything that has been done to enable a workforce to move fluidly” (female, oil and gas company rep):
 - Employer-supported travel
 - Safety values
 - Camp standards and arrangements
- Travels with and through
 - Corporate representatives
 - Union representatives
 - Workers



Source: Calgary Herald



Interprovincial mobility

- >> Migration/relocation
- >> Temporary work
- >> Fly-in/fly-out – since around 2004

“Well there was work home some part of the year, but in order to work pretty well all the time you had to travel. And that’s the nature of a Newfoundlander... A Newfoundlander lives out of a suitcase, works out of a suitcase.” (male, union rep)

“... it’s been a struggle for tradespeople here for quite a long time, you know, to make ends meet. And we’d get one project, like after, when Hibernia was built it was a good project but then it was twenty years before we get... well not twenty years... Terra Nova was probably 10 years, you know, later. So it’s a long time, so **there’s no consistency.**” (male, union rep)

“When we’re slow here in our province we’re hopeful that other locals across Canada are busy, so we go to those locals to work. Like when they need some help to complete a project, so they got their people working, we’ll come in and enhance their work.”

THEN AND NOW

Then...

“Yeah, there was actually fellas that just slept in their vehicles. They just drove right across the island and hit every hall... They’d drive to Ontario’s hall and stop in and say hey do you have any? If no, go to Manitoba.” (male, union rep)

Now...

“There’s a significant amount of thought, I guess, that goes into that element from the workforce.” They “are pretty adept and pretty savvy at determining, ok, where is the best place for me to go now.” (female, construction labour organization)

WORKING HOME

“Like this is a good job, right, because **most of us are home every night**, right? We might have an hour drive but we are home. And you’re making, you know, **reasonably good money.**” (male, electrician #1)

“As long as I’m working. I prefer to work here on the island. **I will take something on the island, even if it is less pay if I’ve got to.**” (male, ironworker #1)

“After we found out she was pregnant, that’s when I started looking for something with a rotation. I knew we were having a little boy or a little girl, **I wanted to raise him home.** I didn’t want to raise him in Alberta... I started with a different company and they offered a rotational program. So that’s when I moved home, when they started off in the rotational.” (male, ironworker #2)

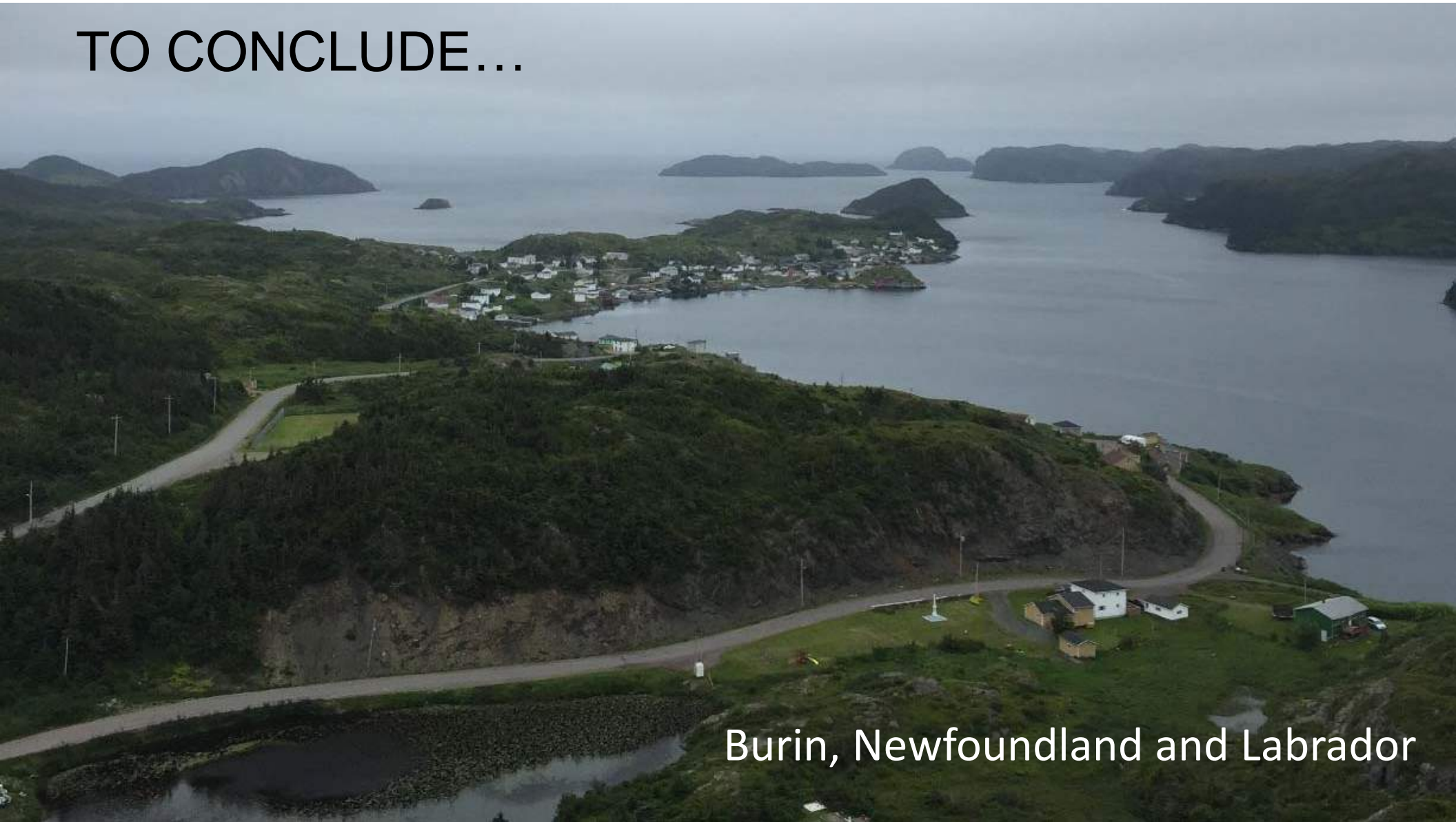
“HAVING TO TRAVEL” FOR WORK

“Well, [traveling for work] is kind of **second nature** now. It’s **the nature of the beast**. If you want to get into the trades you’ve got to accept it.” (male, electrician #2)

“We work at home when there’s work. When that dries up we just move around again.” (male, electrician #1)

“If you’re going to get in to the trades, you’ve just got to accept it. It is what it is whether it’s here in Newfoundland or out in Alberta, or Ontario or anywhere. **If you want to be in the trades, you just have to accept having to travel.**” (male, electrician #2)

TO CONCLUDE...



Burin, Newfoundland and Labrador



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