

# Community Impacts of E-RGM: Previous Work and Emerging Findings

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AND TEAMS!

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# Outline

1. Canadian Resource Industries and the Rise of Long-distance Labour Commuting
2. Research Focus
3. Mackenzie, BC and the Avalon Isthmus, NL
4. Findings: ERGM and Community Dynamics
5. Implications for Research

# Rise of the Long Distance Commute

on the move  
partnership

- Mobility as a historical norm
- Post-war resource towns
- Senior government and industrial restructuring
- Rural and small town change



# LDLC: Business Case & Drivers



1. Cost of running camps vs. new town development;
2. Restructuring, competitiveness in industrial sectors (rationalization);
3. Worker choice and challenges with remote communities;
4. Attraction and retention of workers;
5. Communications, transportation.

# Research Focus

**Our focus:** impacts and implications of LDLC on home (source) and host communities

- Home (source) = permanent residence of worker
- Host = commute to location
  
- Social dynamics and impacts
- Employment and income benefits
- Planning, policy and governance

# Scale / Location





# Mackenzie, BC

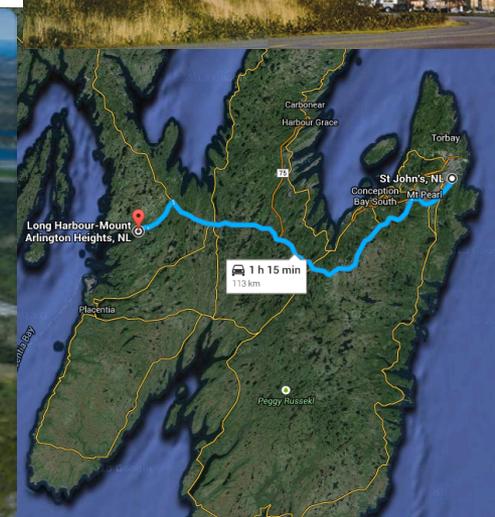
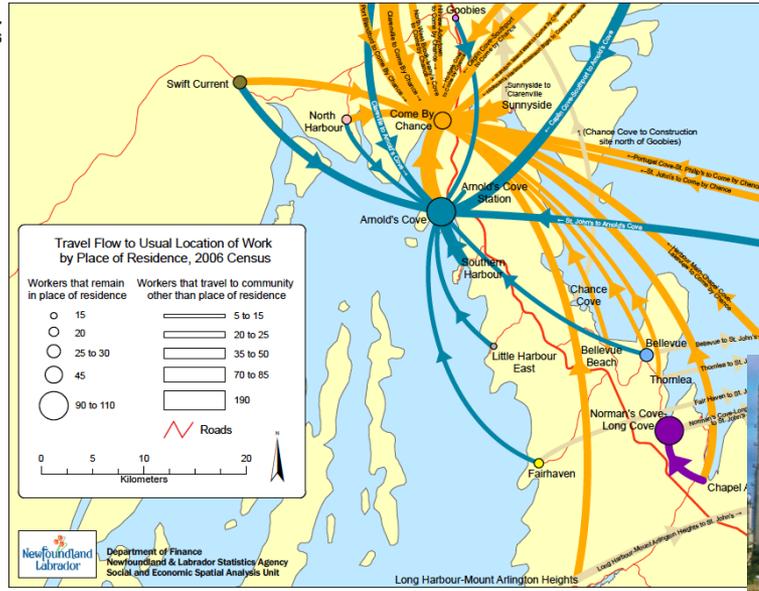
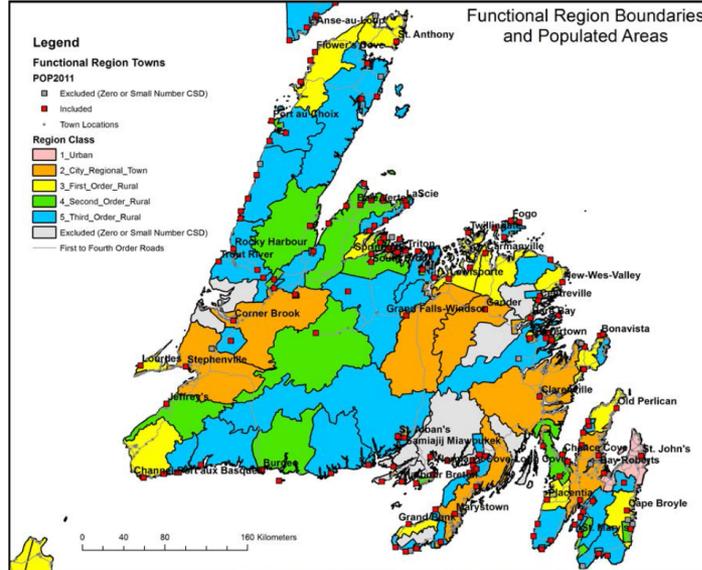


Instant Town Planning...  
with High Amenity Values



# Avalon Isthmus, NL

Map 1e Newfoundland Island Functional Region Class



# Methods

## Mackenzie:

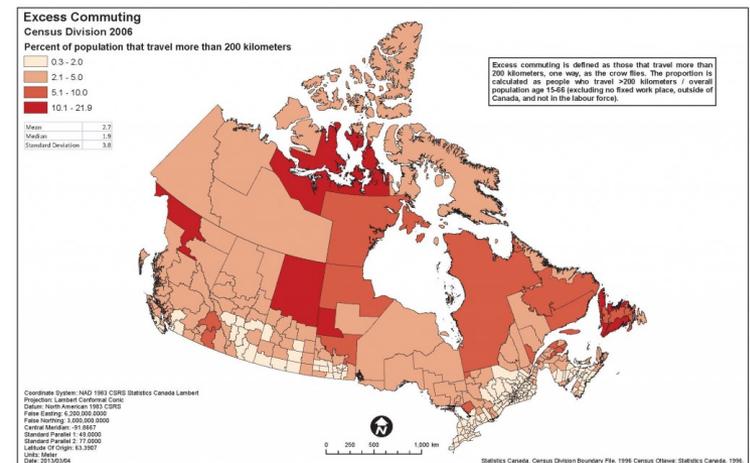
- Survey: 1,537 residents (41.2% response rate)
- Key informant interviews: community clubs and organizations (17 – with many representing multiple groups)

## Avalon Isthmus:

- 7+ regional meetings/workshops (2012-2014)
- Document review and related/affiliated studies
- Key informant interviews (Hall – 14 to date in the study region)

# Findings: Community Drivers

- Employment opportunities
  - Occupation and income
- Connection to place
- Services and amenities
- Relative location
- Culture and history of mobility



# Findings: ERGM & Community Dynamics

1. Local economies and labour markets
2. Sense of community and social relations
3. Community services and infrastructure
4. Flexible, place-based responses

**COMPLEXITY**

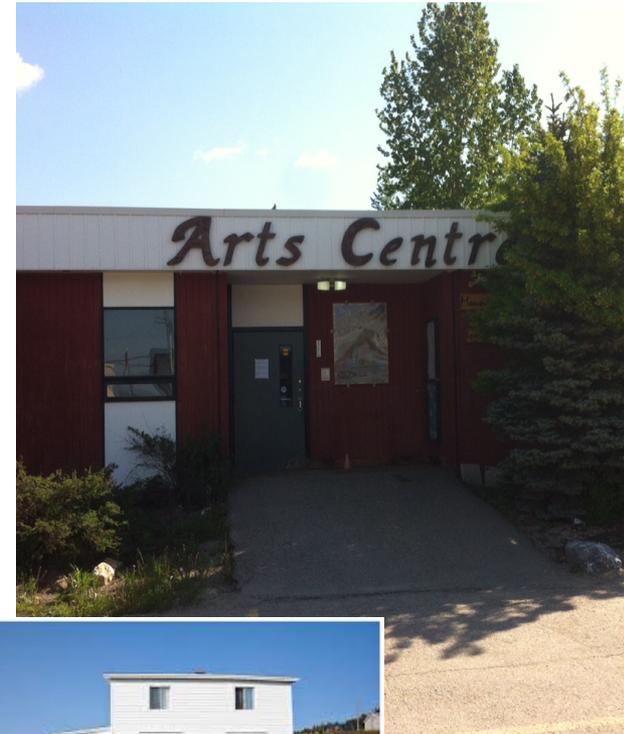
# Findings: Local Economies & Labour Markets

- Employment and income for residents
- Competition for workers & impacts on small business
- Small business opportunities (service & retail)
- CSR donations and tax base
- Income divides and tensions associated with employment leakage



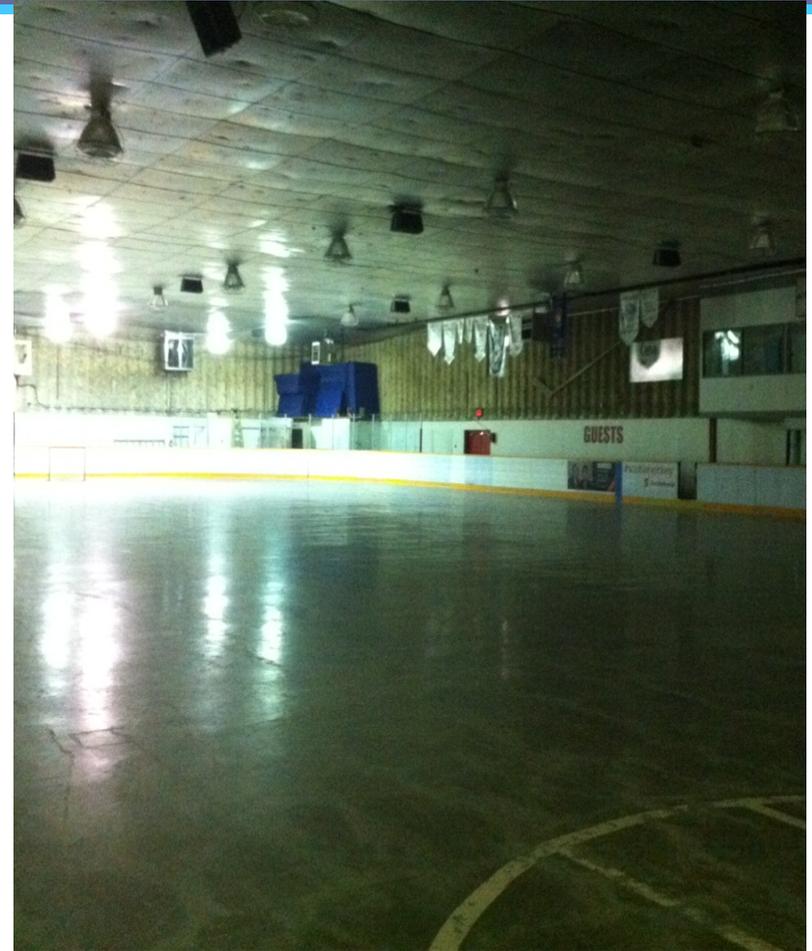
# Findings: Sense of Community & Social Relations

- Less time and fewer resources for residents to engage with community
  - Volunteerism, mutual support, social interaction
- **But** enhanced sense of community – dealing with crisis and support through transition
- LDLC to keep community – but the minute you leave, the community changes
- Resident frustration and community belonging/satisfaction



# Findings: Volunteerism

- Loss of skills, expertise and time
- Leadership roles in community
- Impact on volunteerism rates
- Away or family focused during home rotation



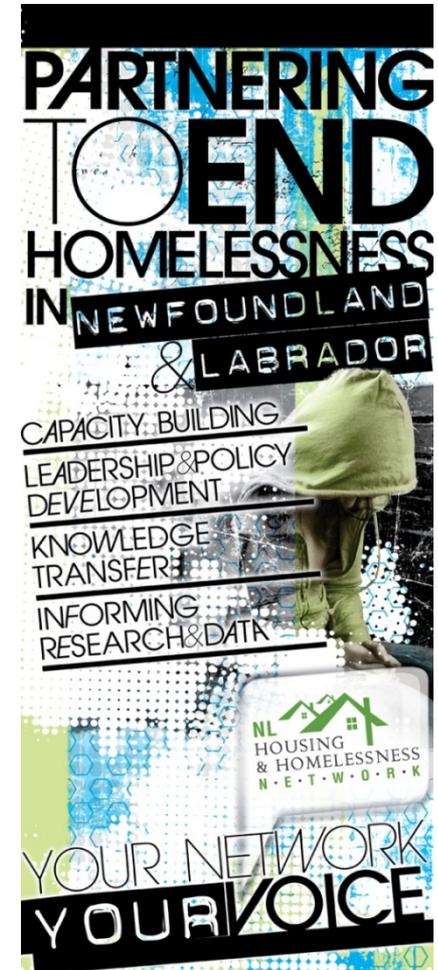
# Findings: Services and infrastructure

- Housing pressures
- Roads/traffic, water, waste
- Health
- Education
- Recreation
- Daycare



# Findings: Flexible, place-based adaptation and response

- Business and service hours
- Increase use of drop-in services
- External assistance (coaches)
- Service provider round tables
- Family programming
- Housing and economic development initiatives
- Lobbying for change – fair share
  
- Limits to planning and response capabilities
  - Role for OTM and academic partners
- Structural issues overwhelming volunteer capacity



# Discussion: Complexity -ves

1. Burnout and decline in community engagement to maintain service and program levels;
2. Pressures on services, community infrastructure and planning capabilities;
3. Changing social dynamics and ways of life;
4. Uncertainty and tensions associated with precarious labour and state of local economy

# Discussion: Complexity +ves

- Remaining home, retaining sense of place, community;
- New relationships, roles (e.g. women in leadership positions);
- New forms of engagement;
- Local economy (LDLC income, small business opportunities + flexible response to shifting dynamics)



# E-RGM = Complexity...

*And I sound like a broken record I know, but they don't have the capacity, I mean St. John's barely has the capacity to keep up with the development .... To hear them [some small towns] talk about it, they got run over. Everything is out of control. It's all great like they talk about it like it's a wonderful thing, but they've got no control over what's happening down there, it's just going mad. (CEO, NL)*

*It's probably brought the community closer together. It's made people more aware of the community. It's taken people out of the state of mind they were in before and realised that we're in this all together. That's probably been the biggest change. (Mackenzie Interview #3)*

# Implications for Research

- Deeper understanding of specific and varied impacts in particular contexts;
- Impacts on community capacity in its various forms (e.g. pressures on the voluntary sector);
- Community monitoring of mobility and its impacts;
- Targeted community responses to address mobility issues (e.g. deployment of family supports, community events and community building efforts);
- Flexible community responses to labour mobility and how these are initiated;
- Role of policy and programs in ensuring local benefits and readiness at different time scales.

# Publications

Hall, Heather. 2014. *Regional Development, Nickel Processing & Labour Mobility: A Comparison of Sudbury, Ontario, and Long Harbour, NL.*

Related studies: [ruralresilience.ca](http://ruralresilience.ca)

Forthcoming: *Journal of Rural Society*

Worker Paper: forthcoming *Geografiska Annuler B*

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