

STRUCTURE & AGENCY IN PROCESS OPERATOR STUDENT MOBILITIES

by © Jessica Earle

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ABSTRACT

This research project is a study of structure and agency in the education-related mobilities of women and men participating in a trades-related course, Process Operator, designed to increase the provincial labour pool for natural resource industry mega-projects like Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador. Using a biographical approach (Ni Laoire, 2000), student mobilities are seen as structured by the attraction of students into other skilled trades, the promotion by government initiatives, the organization of educational funding, and influences from family and friends. Agency in student mobilities is facilitated by financial and social resources mainly from parental support. Responsibilities for accomplishing mobility are left to family and individual resources, and there should be improvements made to providing government support to Process Operator students, graduates and Blue Seal trades workers.

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List of Abbreviations

ABE – Adult Basic Education

AES – Advanced Education and Skills

CAS – Comprehensive Arts and Science

CNA – College of the North Atlantic

CNA-Placentia – College of the North Atlantic, Placentia campus

HRLE – Human Resources, Labour and Employment

INCO – International Nickel Corporation

IOC – Iron Ore Company of Canada

KI – Key Informant

MUN – Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

NL – Newfoundland and Labrador

NSCC – Nova Scotia Community College

PO – Process Operator

YRAS – Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Scholarly interest in the outmigration of people from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) is not new. Most of this work focuses on large-scale migrations to other provinces or out of the country, highlighting increasing rates of youth unemployment and participation in post-secondary education as the most common motivations for relocating (Thornton, 1985; Reeves, 1990; Thorne, 2004; 2007; Sinclair, 2003). Less research has examined returners, those people who had moved away and then return. Return moves indicate a complex trajectory of geographical mobilities and highlight the strength of the desire to be close to family and friends, in addition to one's ability to access employment, as key in shaping these geographical mobilities (Sinclair and Felt, 1993).

The current research explores the education-related geographical mobility experiences of women and men participating in the 2014/2015 Process Operator (PO) course at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, NL (CNA-Placentia). The PO course was developed to supply qualified workers to companies like Vale, operators of a nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, NL. Although Placentia is located in close proximity to large scale resource development projects in the province, there are still persistently high rates of youth unemployment in the area (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011). Mobility is defined and used in the research not as a single event but as part of an individual's biography, including small-scale everyday practices to large-scale moves, enabled through access to economic and social resources (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Ni Laoire, 2000). Understanding mobility as part of an individual's biography compels the

researcher to account for both agency and structure in shaping education-related geographical mobilities. Experiences of mobility are influenced by the social, economic, and political context of an individual's life. Gender, relationships with family and friends, attachments to place, labour market conditions, and access to educational and employment resources are all examples of contextual variables that impact mobility. Mobility is enabled for some, while others are restricted or excluded. The ways people negotiate structural constraints and make use of the social and financial resources available to them through their relations with others, demonstrate the degree of agency they have in mobility decision-making. Work that sees certain mobility experiences as embedded in economic and social structures, as part of a "culture" or a normalized way of life, can reproduce the patterns identified (Ni Laoire, 2000). However, it is the actions of human agents that create and reproduce culture and social structures. Some forms of mobility like moving to a different province or country, or moving away from a rural place for education or employment, are dominant narratives presented by the media and government, while other experiences and voices are marginalized. Through taking a biographical approach to studying mobilities, the extent to which PO student experiences illustrate and/or challenge common explanations of education-related mobility decisions can be evaluated. In this thesis I ask young people to recount their experiences of moving for education and employment in order to determine the validity of government and employer discourses about the educational mobilities of youth.

This project presents the untold education-related mobility experiences of women and men participating in a trades-related college program located in a rural area of NL, which challenges mainstream perceptions of the ways rural youth move by focusing on

individual mobilities. I look at how student experiences of mobility are impacted by labour market conditions, personal interests and perceptions of academic abilities, relations with family and friends, and access to resources like educational funding, affordable housing, and advanced education opportunities. Relations or connections to places, family and friends involve exchanges of information, communication, and support between students and their networks. More than the emotions students associate with their home communities and interactions with other people, these relations are also about social supports, and the accessibility of resources needed to live well in a given place. Students can have connections with more than one place and just because they move to another community does not mean they abandon their connections. It is possible to maintain multiple emotional geographies (Power, Norman, & Dupré, 2014), which are ways of talking, feeling, and thinking about places and the relationships and resources they provide.

In recent years there has been an increase in large-scale natural resource industry projects in the province of NL (Hall, 2014; Lysenko & Vodden, 2011; Vale, 2012; Walsh et al., 2015). Along with the emergence of these worksites, colleges have also increased their natural-resource trades-related course offerings (“Designated Trades,” 2017). An example of this is the PO course, created with input from local employer Vale, the provincial government, and the college, and hosted at only one CNA campus in Placentia. The course was developed in an attempt to provide local people with related educational opportunities in order to create a qualified labour pool for natural resource sector mega-projects and to attract and retain trades workers in rural places (Hall, 2014; Lysenko & Vodden, 2011).

Vale is a Brazilian mining corporation operating in more than 30 countries around the world (Vale, 2012). Vale's (2012) most recent project in the province, the hydrometallurgical nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, NL, was projected to supply up to 500 permanent jobs upon completion in 2013. In establishing this nickel processing plant, Vale donated close to three hundred thousand dollars to CNA to fund scholarships, and just over two million dollars to the Town of Placentia (Vale, 2012). Links are perceived to exist between Vale and the PO course as Vale encouraged its development. Key informants believe the PO course is hosted by CNA-Placentia because the school delivered a 20-week contract program, whose graduates were employed at Vale's demonstration plant in Argentia, NL. Lysenko and Vodden (2011) note that since 2006, Vale has donated 28 scholarships annually to young people graduating from high schools in the local area who want to pursue education programs relevant to mining operations (p. 16). However, the number of scholarships provided to students enrolled in the PO course specifically has decreased, and were not available for the 2014/2015 class. Questions remain on what supports are provided to students who enroll in the program, and if they are being hired by local employer Vale.

In addition to scholarships and financial contributions to students from Vale, the provincial government has also increased their focus on supporting young people pursuing trades-related education programs (HRLE, 2009). Financial contributions by both Vale and the provincial government suggest a favorable climate for young people pursuing education related to the skilled trades. This chapter introduces questions addressed in the research and outlines the content of chapters to follow.

Research Questions

Given the economic, political and social context described above, and that the PO course is a direct product of government initiatives to support trades-related education programs to increase the available labour supply for provincial natural resource-sector mega-projects, how are student mobilities impacted? This study asks,

1. How do students demonstrate agency in education-related mobility decision-making within the structuring forces of their lives, and how is mobility accomplished?
2. Are there gender differences in mobility experiences and access to the resources needed to accomplish mobility?
3. What is the role of personal educational interests, perception of academic abilities and labour market considerations in constructing mobility plans?
4. What resources are provided to students engaging in mobility in terms of affordable housing options, and information on further education and employment opportunities?
5. How do relations to places and people, and the financial and emotional support they provide, facilitate or limit student mobilities?
6. How is the education-related mobility of young people portrayed in provincial government documents and media sources?
7. What supports are provided to young people who move to, or stay in, rural places to participate in education related to the skilled trades?
8. What supports are needed or lacking?

In order to answer the research questions, the current project involved the collection and analysis of documents from government and media sources, a survey, and interview data. Documents are used to clarify the economic, political, social and educational context of NL, and the Placentia area. The web-based survey collected demographic information on students in the PO course and information about mobility practices and intentions, which were used to develop interview schedules for the 2014/2015 class of POs. Data from the survey were linked to student interview responses. Finally, interviews collected student responses to questions designed to clarify structure and agency in education-related mobility experiences. Interviews examined the role of education and employment factors, and connections to people and places in relation to student mobilities.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical background to the study, which uses a biographical approach encouraged by Ni Laoire (2000) to go beyond expectations of moving to look at the actual ways mobility is accomplished within the economic, political and social context of lives. This involves analyzing how structure and agency interact. The next section reviews themes within the literature centering on changes in economic, political and social contexts and how this impacts expectations of moving and the value of post-secondary education as a way to access employment. Economic shifts are emphasized in work reviewed. Changes in labour markets, like diversification from fishing or farming, sometimes connected to political initiatives and power structures, and how this has affected youth education and mobilities are examined, as well as views on rural places as lacking in educational and employment opportunities (Bjarnason &

Thorlindsson, 2006; Cairns, 2008; Corbett, 2007; 2009; 2013; Genge, 1996; Whelan, 2000; Pinhorn, 2002). Next I look at how effects on youth mobility stemming from the economic changes adds to ideas about cultures of mobility. Finally, I examine the finding that interpersonal relations and place attachments impact mobilities (Corbett, 2007; 2009; 2013; Ni Laoire, 2000; Walsh, 2009).

Chapter 3 describes the research methods that I used in this study. They include content and thematic analysis of documents, a survey and interviews. I present a summary of the survey demographic results and profiles of the interview participants.

Chapter 4 looks at the economic, social, political and educational context of NL and the research site. Research that provides details on large-scale industry projects and looks at education rates in the Avalon Gateway Region is reviewed. Vale is discussed in more detail and links between the PO course and the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour are discussed. Information on the PO course is also provided.

The following two chapters focus on themes emerging from research with women and men participating in the 2014/2015 PO course. Chapter 5 looks at students' past interactions with post-secondary educational institutions, and how the enrollment capacity of other trades programs influenced PO course choices. It also looks at how for some students, participation in the PO course is a facilitator for further trades-related education. The organization and accessibility of government educational funding sources structured mobility for some. Within this chapter students' opinions on local employment opportunities and plans for future mobility are explored.

Chapter 6 discusses how the availability of affordable rental housing in the Placentia area limits the mobility of some, and how student feelings about living in the

Placentia area increase mobility. Parents provide financial, emotional, and academic support for students. Many students who moved to participate in the course travel every week to maintain connections with family and friends despite geographic distance.

Finally, Chapter 7 is a discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature on the education-related mobilities of young people, and an attempt to answer the research questions set out in this study. I end by discussing possible limitations of the current study, and suggestions for future research and ways to support PO students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework informing the current study and looks at themes emerging from past research. I detail the approach of accounting for structure and agency in mobilities by using a biographical approach (Ni Laoire, 2000). The literature review is organized thematically. The first section looks at changes in economic, social and political contexts of different places and how these developments impact the education-related mobility plans and experiences of young people (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006; Cairns, 2008; Corbett, 2007; 2009; 2013; Genge, 1996; Whelan, 2000; Pinhorn, 2002). The following two sections look at the role of culture in constructing mobility imperatives, and how attachments to places and connections with family and friends influence mobility (Cairns, 2008; Corbett, 2007; 2009; 2013; Ni Laoire, 2000; Walsh, 2009). The literature and notable gaps in this field of research are discussed in relation to my study.

Structure and Agency in Mobility Research

There are several approaches used to explore the education-related mobility experiences and decision-making processes of young people within the literature reviewed. One common theme is the tension between structure and agency in shaping student mobilities. Structure is sometimes equated with culture, or the political, economic, and social conditions of student lives, and taken for granted “ways of life.” Agency represents students’ freedom and ability to make choices about education and their related mobilities. In this thesis I conceptualize mobility as part of an individual’s

biography, which enables an analysis of the relationship between the ways in which mobilities are constrained and enabled by structures, and the result of individual agency and choice.

Some work argues global developments in technology, communication, infrastructure, and neoliberal policies mean less attachment to places and people, and exposure to many ways of life, enabling mobility (Cresswell, 2006; Urry, 2007). The dominant scholarly and popular interpretation of young people's educational mobilities is as a transition to adulthood, out of the parental home and towards independent living (Christie, 2007; Giddens, 1991; Holdsworth, 2009). In work on the mobilities of university students in Scotland, Christie (2007) argues "the value placed on this mobility is intimately bound up with the project of modernity where the process of leaving home allows students to construct a new and individual identity for themselves, free from the ties of their families or connections to their home spaces" (p. 2445). Christie (2007) argues that such a simple interpretation of mobility renders invisible the ways in which independence is produced by remaining at home.

Similarly, Holdsworth (2009) investigates a trend of students in England enrolling in higher education programs *locally* rather than engaging in a move, and unpacks "the taken-for-granted assumptions about student mobility and transitions to independence and adulthood" (p. 1849). Students who stay are viewed as having less agency in their mobility decisions, because the socially (re)produced importance of moving for post-secondary education implies those who leave are more autonomous than those who stay (Holdsworth, 2009; Ni Laoire, 2000). However, this privileging of student mobilities overlooks the ways in which the university student experience of going away to school is

highly structured and normative, rather than representing individual choice and agency. Holdsworth (2009) argues that when students move for education, they are following a clearly established route, engaging in a “guided right of passage with a clear structure of support and advice. Hence, despite the ideal of freedom and individuality, student migration to university is not necessarily about freedom of expression or movement, but about following a predetermined journey” (Holdsworth, 2009, p. 1858). Work by Holdsworth (2009) involves students attending university programs, however, which are often well-established, in comparison to the trades-related Process Operator (PO) course at CNA-Placentia.

Corbett (2009) suggests

The social space of late modernity is characterised by a breakdown and diversification of established normative patterns including: traditional life trajectories (educational, work, conjugal); the importance of face-to-face communities in which these life trajectories were normally lived out; social norms regulating a wide range of social behaviour, particularly concerning gender construction and relations; the timing of major life transitions that have now become highly individualised and diverse; and established forms of family, conjugal and affinity relationships. (p. 178)

Perceived as free to choose education or employment-related mobility paths based on personal interests and values, research that approaches mobility decision-making in this way sees people as becoming more “individualized,” less affected by the way society is structured, and more responsible for their own life plans (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1990). “The brute fact of getting from A to B becomes synonymous with freedom, with transgression, with ‘life itself’” (Cresswell, 2006, p. 3). The freedom to move is identified as a necessity and a result of individualization (Holdsworth, 2009).

Although human agency clearly plays a role in deciding to move or not, structural factors also “shape normative meanings of student mobility” (Holdsworth, 2009, p. 1851). Experiences of mobility vary based on socioeconomic background and access to economic, social and cultural resources (Holdsworth, 2009). Economic-rational theory (Becker, 1976) sees mobility as structured by place-based labour market conditions and economic resources. People move for jobs providing the highest economic return, or for education, which is perceived to lead to employment. Decision-making processes are seen as rational and based on financial considerations and cost-benefit analysis. However, economic theories have been criticized because some do not account for the role of human agency in mobility experiences. Also, emphasizing economic factors alone ignores other structural processes and place-based attachments. Strong attachments to family, friends and living in one’s home community are viewed as constraining mobility and decreasing motivations to move.

Holton (2015) compares local and non-local undergraduate university students attending school in the UK, and looks at experiences of forming a student habitus, or way of life associated with student living, through making use of individual resources. Work by Holton (2015) finds students who did not move to enroll in university still engage in everyday mobilities, such as daily commutes to school, challenging the notion that local students are immobile, or that those who move have more agency in their mobilities than those who stay. Furthermore, Holton (2015) finds individuals living with parents described themselves as having the freedom to “move between their student and non-student friendship groups, essentially selecting the most appropriate elements with which to establish their own nuanced student habitus” (p. 2381). This work takes issue with

discourses that assume moving for education is part of the “student experience,” because they ignore “how these participants adapted and transformed their habitus in *spite* of their previous social endeavours, allowing them to align themselves in positions they felt most suited to” (Holton, 2015, p. 2386). Holton (2015) suggests students still have agency in their mobilities and education-related decisions even though their economic and social backgrounds may constrain options for some.

The literature most valuable to this thesis approaches mobility from a social constructionist framework which accounts for how experiences of mobility and mobility decision-making are shaped by the economic, political and social context of lives. The biographical approach of Irish researcher Ni Laoire (2000) suggests work around young people’s decisions to move or not must go beyond the single question “why did you move?” to examine the interplay of structure and agency in mobility. Ni Laoire (2000) observes that “each life decision they make reflects a process of negotiation which requires some kind of trade-off (...) Through an individual life-story, the relative importance of, and inter-relations between, different forces and structures can be seen” (p. 238).

The approach taken by Ni Laoire (2000) and others (Corbett, 2005; 2007; 2009; 2013; Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Holdsworth, 2009) recognize that mobility is influenced by what is happening economically, politically and socially in a certain place, and the ways people make use of financial and social resources are structured by context. Mobility is an action in time, and must be analyzed as part of an individual’s biography (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993). Any given person can have multiple reasons for engaging in mobility. The ways people make use of the resources available through relationships with

others and their social and economic position in society, helps clarify the role of human agency in student mobilities. Work by Halfacree and Boyle (1993), drawn on by Ni Laoire (2000), argues mobility decision-making happens in “in the realm of practical consciousness which refers to the ‘taken-for-granted’ and seemingly automatic actions of daily life, as well as in the realm of discursive consciousness, that which is actively thought about” (p. 235). The biographical approach to migration is both methodological and theoretical because in focusing on both the context of student lives and life histories in students’ own words, it is possible to examine how mobilities are both constrained and enabled by social structures, and the role of human agency in determining actions. In asking students to think and talk about individual mobility experiences, it is possible to “raise the realm of practical consciousness to that of the discursive” (Ni Laoire, 2000, p. 235). In doing this, and in potentially collecting unique stories, it is possible for new ways of thinking about student mobilities to emerge, thereby challenging commonly accepted narratives of moving, and giving marginalized voices an opportunity to be heard.

Ni Laoire (2000) points to a gendered division of labour, uneven access to education and employment opportunities, and place-based rural economic and social inequalities as factors that shape mobility. My study argues personal interests are influenced by the social, economic, and political conditions of the time and place in which a person lives. Even if context did not influence personal interests, mobility is enabled through access to economic and social resources and interpersonal relations. Therefore, you can explain *why* someone moves in terms of personal interests or economic considerations, but you cannot explore *how* mobility is accomplished without

deeper analysis of experiences in terms of the biographical context in which structure and agency interact. The following sections explore themes within the literature and discuss the research in relation to the current study.

Rural Development, Education-Related Mobilities, and Future Plans

Several themes within the literature focus on how changes in economic, social and political contexts of rural places over time impact expectations and experiences of education and employment-related mobility, decision-making, and plans for the future. International, Canadian, and NL research that relates the mobility of young women and men to the image of rural places as lacking in educational, employment and lifestyle opportunities, is presented and discussed in this section. Much of the literature is restricted to rural locations in Nordic countries, the UK and Atlantic Canada because of the economic, population, and geographical similarities to rural NL, the focus of the current research.

Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) use logistic regression analysis to predict the expectation of mobility in a “subset of rural adolescents in fishing and farming communities,” which included close to thirty-five hundred rural Icelandic youth ages 14-16 from 1992 and 2003 national survey data (p. 293). Researchers state, “the complex social, political, economic, cultural, and technological changes collectively known as globalization have profoundly affected the nature of migration and migration intentions” (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006, p. 297). Iceland has undergone demographic, economic, political and social changes over the last century. An economy once dependent on farming and small-scale fishing is now diversified, and the population of Iceland’s

capital Reykjavík grew from 15,000 in 1910 to 180,000 in 2001 (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006, p. 292). The population of rural Iceland has not grown at the same rate as the capital and surrounding areas, making employment options limited and highly gendered in small communities.

Rural Iceland has high rates of unemployment and seasonal work, fewer primary sector jobs, contributing to an overall view by secondary students that employment in rural Iceland is insufficient. Young people are exposed to many education and employment options, in many different places, through interactions with other people and information provided by the government, media, and Internet sources. Possible life paths seem plentiful, but financial resources and social supports are not always distributed evenly. Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) suggest the geographic location of educational, employment or lifestyle opportunities matter less today, because people are more willing to engage in mobility. Most rural youth surveyed anticipate moving for post-secondary education, and are not interested in pursuing primary industry jobs in the local area. Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) find youth perceptions of job opportunities in the local area to be the strongest predictor of geographic movement for both women and men. Young people who see themselves staying and working in Iceland's rural natural resource sector are usually men with low levels of education (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006).

Research by Cairns (2008) investigates student "mobility orientations and experiences," related to education and employment (p. 232), and includes survey data from 250 women and men enrolled in undergraduate programs at two universities in Northern Ireland between winter 2006 and spring 2007, along with 15 follow-up

interviews. Two-thirds of student participants live in the Northern Ireland city where the universities are located, while the rest commute to school from outside rural areas. Cairns (2008) outlines how economic, social, and political developments in Northern Ireland impact student mobility experiences and plans. Poor labour market conditions, an inflation of housing prices, and an unstable political atmosphere filled with conflict influence mobility plans for more than half of students, who sense moving away post-graduation to secure employment is necessary, but not desirable (Cairns, 2008). Moving is viewed as easy by those who have travelled before, or have previous mobility experiences. In comparison to rural students, Cairns (2008) found students living in the city to be twice as likely to view working in a different country as an option for future mobility, and more positively oriented towards mobility in general. Cairns (2008) argues urban student participants may be less attached to where they live during the study, viewing the local area as lacking opportunity, and having an “attraction to the idea of mobility” as a way to find future employment (p. 242).

Michael Corbett (2005; 2007; 2009; 2013) examines how young people engage in, or consider, mobility and education-related decision-making in rural Atlantic Canadian coastal communities. Corbett’s work focuses on two studies from 2001 and 2007. The first is a collection of life histories of women and men who graduated high school in the early 1960s to the late 1990s. The second presents data collected from parents, teachers, and twenty students between the ages of 13 and 15 in 2004, who were interviewed once a year until 2007 (Corbett, 2013). Corbett notes that the social, economic and political context of the coastal community studied is defined by,

Well-known factors such as: concentration of resource ownership in traditional industries; declining populations and out-migration; the emergence of eco-tourism and temporary residents (often from urban places); an increasingly networked production, consumption and communication system; the globalisation of markets; the intensification and mechanization of traditional and emerging forms of resource extraction; and, importantly, the environmental and sustainability challenges that all of the above pose for rural places. (p. 166)

Corbett (2007) analyzes data from 2001 on the mobility and educational experiences of women and men using fieldwork and two surveys collected between 1998 and 2000 (p. 432). Like many rural areas of NL, the social and economic context of Corbett's study area has changed over time due to restrictions placed on the fishing industry, which has decreased mobility for some and increased education and employment-related mobility for others. Experiencing post-secondary education seems to matter less for men inclined to pursue resource sector employment, which requires fewer educational credentials (Corbett, 2007).

Corbett (2007) suggests some women feel pressure to move after high school, because jobs in the local area that pay well, without requiring a degree or certificate, are mostly in male-dominated labour markets. Women in the study area engage in mobility for education more than men, but the majority of moves are to locations no more than fifty kilometers away (Corbett, 2007). Some women who stay, work part-time service sector jobs to save money for future employment or education-related moves. In comparison, men in the area can attain privileged fish harvester status along with high paying jobs in the resource development industry without needing higher education (Corbett, 2007). This specific scenario portrays a gendered labour market and a context in which gendered economic roles continue to exist and influence mobility (Corbett, 2007).

Shifting to NL literature, research by Whelan (2000) and Genge (1996) look at the post-high school career plans of rural students in the context of the 1992 fishery closure, to determine whether or not economic changes influence the career goals, plans and perceived barriers of NL students. Whelan (2000) examines the immediate and future career plans of over 100 grade twelve students attending five different high schools in rural areas of Western NL, and around 70 students from one high school in St. John's by analyzing survey responses collected in the late 1990s. Whelan (2000) finds that the economic and social context of NL post-fisheries decline positively influences student plans to pursue post-secondary education, and work in employment sectors hiring at the time. Most study participants anticipate working outside of NL five to ten years in the future. Some students have trouble deciding what education programs to enrol in, do not have high enough grades, or lack the financial resources for post-secondary education (Whelan, 2000).

Whelan (2000) notes that none of the students surveyed want to work in the fishing industry, and very few have interests in other primary resource sectors, such as mining. Students interested in fields such as mining, are from rural places, but despite a positive outlook on NL's mining and oil industries, very few rural students from Western NL wanted to pursue careers in these fields in the late 1990s. Whelan's research (2000) supports the notion that the NL fisheries crisis impacts the education and employment-related mobility intentions more than developments in natural resource extraction in the late 1990s, but also suggests that student's low interest in primary industry occupations could be due to a lack of information available on such jobs. Student plans are instead

based on perceptions of work opportunities in the NL context, which are influenced by interactions with family, friends, and teachers.

Similar to Whelan (2000), Genge (1996) looks at the post-secondary and career plans of over 200 women and men in high school on the northern tip of NL and the southern coast of Labrador in the 1990s. Unlike Whelan (2000), Genge (1996) only surveyed rural students, and found that most were making gender stereotypical choices, with more women planning on attending MUN to study social sciences, medicine and health. Like Whelan (2000), Genge (1996) sees the closure of the fishery as encouraging the participation of young people in post-secondary education. Research by Pinhorn (2002), which includes survey and interview responses from 16 grade 11 high school students from two high schools in rural NL, also confirms the importance placed on post-secondary education by rural students. Pinhorn (2002) found that students were more focused on the economic outcomes of their education than those surveyed by Genge (1996). Students in Pinhorn's (2002) study believed education would lead to increased employment opportunities and a "better life."

This section covers information contained in past literature about changing social, economic, and political contexts of places, and how mobility plans and experiences of young women and men are impacted. Much of the literature focuses on a lack of well-paying jobs and post-secondary education programs available in rural places, and indicates economic considerations as the main reasons for moving away. The decline of traditional industries like fishing and farming in rural places influences how young people view their future mobility plans. Local labour market conditions structure mobility; many young people in rural places anticipate moving, even though it is not something they

desire. The next section explores further the anticipation and expectation of moving by young people in rural places, and draws on literature to present how these opinions and views are formed in the context of their lives.

The Impact of Culture on Education-Related Mobility

The previous section reviews research on some of the ways changes in social, economic, and political contexts of different places over time impact the mobility plans and experiences of young people in those places. One main finding is that young people are moving, and anticipating future moves for education and employment. The majority of literature focuses on movement away from rural places, but research from Cairns (2008) and Whelan (2000), which include urban and rural students, find some young people living in urban places also expect or desire to move to a different country or province. How do young people develop these perspectives? The next section includes literature that explores how cultural context affects the way young people frame moving or staying.

Migration Imperatives

Ni Laoire (2000) explains that a “culture of migration” can be developed locally through processes that involve selecting particular experiences or stories of geographical movement, while silencing others (Ni Laoire, 2000). This creates contradictory messages for young people that may make the decision of whether to move or not for education more complex and layered. In the case of Irish youth mobility, Ni Laoire (2000) finds that geographical movement is related to local “histories of migration” and their

“intersection with wider and national media portrayals of Irish migration” (p. 239).

Similarly, in Holdsworth’s 2009 study of local students attending university in the UK, dominant stories of enrolling in higher education disseminated through educational institutions, the government, and media, often assume geographical mobility.

Universities themselves often promote not only education programs but also the location of the school, implying that moving itself is part of the university experience (Holdsworth, 2009). Ni Laoire (2000) takes issue with certain forms of mobility being viewed as part of a culture or way of life, and challenges the view of moving as “normal” for certain groups in society. Her work suggests the complexity of how people move is reflected in the “processes of negotiation and the struggles that underlie any migration decision. A biographical approach to migration can bring these struggles to the surface and thereby contribute to a greater understanding of migration decision-making processes,” and the way structures and individual agency interact (Ni Laoire, 2000, p. 241).

Cairns’ (2008) research on undergraduate students in Northern Ireland indicates women and men’s mobility mostly leads to educational opportunities and advancement. Post-secondary education is linked to increased mobility, however those who engage in mobility for higher education are often those who can afford it financially (Cairns, 2008). Cairns emphasizes the influence of personal and educational interests on plans of moving and staying. The young people surveyed engaged in mobility mainly for leisure purposes, leading Cairns (2008) to argue that mobility for purposes such as work and study are often the minority rather than the norm, contesting the notion of a “culture of migration,” or the perception that youth must leave rural places to find opportunities for success.

Work by Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) argues the mobility plans of young women and men in rural Iceland, and the persistence of an expectation of moving away, can mostly be explained by local labour market perceptions. Their findings suggest that,

Perceived job prospects can be seen as mediating the total experience, hopes and fears of rural adolescents for the future and their perceptions of their opportunities in the larger world (...) Traditionalism may draw youth down the well-worn path from rural to metropolitan areas, and late-modernist or post-modernist youths may choose to build their own universe in the old hometown or homestead. Such shifts in the currents of population migration will determine the urban and rural landscape of future generations. (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006, p. 299)

Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) take an economic-centered approach, recognizing the presence of a common mobility narrative in the rural Icelandic context, in which young people expect to move for education and employment. However, the research also suggests there are young people who do not follow traditional paths, instead choosing to stay in their home community. This finding has the potential to add to the body of research on education-related mobility and decision-making.

Rural communities in Atlantic Canada are often viewed as unstable places that are failing economically, holding few opportunities for higher education or employment (Corbett, 2013). Young people are encouraged to leave for education, but leaving is not an option for everyone. Corbett (2013) posits “the combination of pro-mobility discourse and the doom and gloom economic and population forecasts for rural Atlantic Canada add a powerful sense of urgency to the idea that one needs to leave in order to make a career and even a life” (p. 279). Ni Laoire (2000) emphasizes the contradiction some young people feel between the necessity of leaving their home and the attachments to place, and the associated networks of support. In some cases, rural schools provide resources and

support to young people with the educational ability to move away for post-secondary education, often at universities (Corbett, 2013).

In an earlier study, Corbett (2009) argues many young people in small communities hold the view that if they want to do well in life they have to move. Young people develop these opinions from government discourse on education, and in social interactions with family, friends, teachers, and other networks. Young people are also exposed to information and opinions through the mass media and the Internet. The observed trend of young people in rural spaces receiving encouragement to move represents a “culture of migration” (Ni Laoire, 2000, p. 239). Corbett (2009) argues a “culture of migration” means being raised properly in a rural community and involves encouragement to move away for education, employment, and lifestyle opportunities. Corbett (2007) suggests feeling pressure to attain higher education but having few options locally, represents a “migration imperative” (p. 431) where the education-related geographical movement of young people is viewed as a moral responsibility.

There is work that finds young people who move away from small communities attain higher levels of education, and higher paying jobs than individuals who stay, and some research suggests the process of moving or not is itself an indication of perceived ability or intelligence (Carr & Kafalas, 2009). Corbett (2009) found little evidence of the notion that the smartest youth with the most potential leave small communities. This points to the idea that categorizing young people as the “best and brightest” or as “lacking” based on decisions to stay or go, is neither productive nor accurate (Corbett, 2009; 2013). Corbett (2009) argues that young people do have choices, some more limited or constrained than others, and life stories are always unique to the individual.

Women and men who want to engage in university studies, or have a desire to be employed in a non-service or resource based industry, often move away from small communities on a temporary or permanent basis because the educational programs and jobs they seek are not available in their areas. However, this does not mean that people who move to rural areas to participate in education programs are less intelligent than those who enroll in courses and programs elsewhere, as some research suggests.

In her 2009 dissertation, Walsh looks at women under the age of 30 from Newfoundland who have moved, stayed, and returned to their community in central NL over time. Walsh's (2009) relational-biographical approach, adopted in part from Ni Laoire (2000) engages people, their mobilities and interpretations of experiences, as points of entry for understanding geographic movement. Her work finds that women often move for reasons other than employment opportunities, so approaching studies of geographical movement from a purely economic stance can downplay larger social processes and individual agency. In line with results from Ni Laoire (2000), who found that leaving was in line with young people's life courses, Walsh also found that for the women in her sample, leaving was normal and most expected to leave the study area.

Differing from previous literature however, Walsh (2009) found that moving is not imperative, because young people have more options for post-secondary education, including distance education, enabling them to attain credentials from home. For the women who stay in the local area, choices are not viewed as "abnormal," and no evidence is given to suggest they are treated differently for staying when others leave. Walsh (2009) argues some women exercise agency in staying, when others move. However, staying is only a choice for those with the resources and knowledge to access local labour

markets. Others who wish to move, but cannot because of a lack of financial and social resources, have less agency in staying. Walsh (2009) argues the common story of youth mobility involves leaving rural areas of NL, but this does not provide a complete picture of the ways people move or stay for education and employment, and it does not allow for analysis of how mobility is accomplished. Walsh (2009) also found women in her study returning to their communities. These returns are related to “local employment opportunities, family connections, the presence of children, attachment to place, and age” (p. 182).

This section explores how dominant stories of mobility in certain areas influence the movement of young people, mostly in rural areas. The common story involves young people moving away from rural areas for education and employment due to a lack of economic or social context in their home community. Research that views rural places as lacking in education and employment options, and work that interprets young people who move away as more capable or intelligent than those who stay has been criticized. Accepting common narratives of mobility disguises the decision-making processes and actual movements of people. Cultures of mobility recognize structures like local labour market conditions but do not fully account for other factors like place attachments, personal relations and gender, or how uneven access to social and financial resources impact mobility plans and experiences. The next section looks at literature that discusses how interpersonal relations and place attachments can shape youth mobilities.

Connections to Places, Family and Friends

How a person relates to their family, friends, and community has been shown to

have an impact on geographical movements and plans of moving (Corbett, 2007; 2009; 2013; Holdsworth, 2009; Ni Laoire, 2000; Walsh, 2009). People who feel positively about their relationships with families and where they live, are often less likely to plan on moving away. However, relationships between mobility, attachment to place, and connections to friends and family are not always straightforward. This section explores how the influence of these factors on the mobility plans and experiences of young men and women is approached within the literature.

Attachment to place is defined and used in certain research to represent the notion “that the place to be is not just about the qualities, size of a place or its indicators of attractiveness (...) it is about a relation to the place that operates in a nexus of other relations that are layered, stacked and interacting” (Walsh, 2009, p. 184). Attachments to place can be highlighted through analyzing the way people construct and talk about places in personal narratives. The way people feel and think about their home communities is often tied up with their relations to people within the community, what the place offers in terms of education, employment, and lifestyle options, and the accessibility of financial and social resources needed to live well. In their work on youth connections to communities in rural NL, Power, Norman, and Dupré (2014) refer to this concept as emotional geographies. Data from the study reveals,

Participants described their communities simultaneously as safe, free, supportive, communal, and family-oriented, *and* as backward looking, in decline, lacking in job and recreational opportunities, ‘nosey’, and not oriented towards youth. Youth talked about their community as ‘a great place to raise a family’ and as a supportive environment for children where ‘everybody knows everybody.’ At the same time, they complained about adult surveillance and a lack of community space for youth. (p. 4)

Young people included in research by Power et al. (2014) who saw their home town as

lacking in employment and lifestyle options, talked about moving away. This research is not about mobility specifically, but it does help clarify the ways young people talk about their connections to places and people can be negative and positive simultaneously.

Some work (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006) finds attachment to place has no effect on youth mobility plans, because perceptions of employment prospects are more significant in the expectation of moving. However, Corbett's (2007) research on men and women in NS found that nearly two thirds of study participants who had moved, had only gone 50km or less away. The geographical distance moved is significant in the way people construct narratives about relocating. Engaging in short-range movements is not always seen as entering a different cultural space by the individuals included in Corbett's research (2007), because the social, economic, and cultural attributes of locations less than 50km away are similar to their home community. Furthermore, it is mostly women engaging in short distance moves away who speak about their ability to maintain connections with family, friends and their communities because of improved road infrastructure, enabling regular travel home, and advances in communication technologies. For the women in the study, attachments to home increase mobility (Corbett, 2007).

It is beneficial to look at geographical movement in terms of how women and men define themselves in place and space, in their own words. Instead of an emphasis on only the symbolic aspects of gender and place, researchers are now considering social practices and ways of thinking about and representing gender as interconnected.

Throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries some research noted an observed sexual division of labour in NL, which structured the work of women and men in

different communities (Bourgeois, 2009; Neis, 1999; Porter, 1987). There is much support for this argument, however, it is clear that spheres of work sometime overlap. Porter's (1987) post-Confederation study of mothers and daughters living in a community near Grand Bank, NL, suggests gendered social relations are not given, but continually negotiated. Porter (1987) argues the women in her research area develop values in a context where men are expected to be engaged in paid employment, while women have to choose between working, or being a wife and mother.

Porter (1987) suggests, "In preparation for their role as women and marriage partners, girls try to reject anything that is not specifically feminine, which includes serious consideration of career" (p. 33). Porter (1987) explains that cultural values promoting a vision of women's dependence on men was reinforced by the secondary school system, and religious institutions. These views emerge because of the ways women relate to their community and their interactions with community members, family, and friends. Some researchers view women's lives in small out-port communities as being mediated by "familial patriarchy," or the tradition of male-dominated communities and families, and a sexual division of labour (Neis, 1999; Porter, 1987). Given the perception of limited opportunities for females, some young women receive messages from parents to leave their home communities for better education and job opportunities. Some move or consider moving not only for education, but also because the atmosphere and characteristics of their home community are isolating, with close-minded people and a negative atmosphere that involves gossip and judgement (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006; Corbett, 2009; Ni Laoire, 2000).

Individuals experience and perceive education and employment opportunities as

differentially accessible. However, these constructions can be influenced by information they are exposed to through family, friends, education, and the media. Family and friends can provide valuable information about education and employment opportunities and sometimes facilitate the mobility experiences of young people, but close ties to family, social networks, and the community, can also constrain decisions to move (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006). Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) find that,

Parental occupation was associated with migration intentions in 1992, but parental support and parental control had taken its place by 2003. In other words, the occupation of parents no longer predicted migration intentions among their children, but weak interpersonal bonds of parental support and parental control had emerged as predictors of migration intentions. This can be interpreted as a shift from traditional caste-like effects of family occupation towards the increasing importance of family dynamics. (p. 299)

If parents are not supportive of relocation, or refuse to provide financial support, then a young person may pursue education or training in the local area instead. The decisions young people make are structured by the parental support and control they experience. Parental support is not only emotional, but also financial (Holdsworth, 2009).

Corbett (2013) and Ni Laoire (2000) find that despite the common image of rural places as insufficient and declining economically, young people have difficulty leaving because of their place attachments and relations with family and friends. Moving is not an option for everyone, because the financial resources needed for mobility are not accessible to all. Parents play a role in the mobility plans of women and men included in Corbett's work. Corbett (2013) notes that moving for education was once reserved for elite women, however he finds the pursuit of post-secondary education to be a common goal among both genders in rural NS after the fisheries decline. Corbett suggests,

Postsecondary choices in this emerging climate of rural decline, pressure and

credentialism tend to favour those that are relatively quick, seamlessly attached to job-ready certification, and the known universe of work. Those jobs that can be seen in line of sight of a family's history and resources make the most sense (...) of being 'convenient and coherent' choices. Choices are always made in context representing a logic that represents strategizing from a social location. (Corbett, 2013, p. 279)

Parents from working class backgrounds encourage their children to enroll in one or two-year education programs, like trades, which are linked to becoming employed post-graduation (Corbett, 2013). However, Holdsworth (2009) found that class background made very little difference to which students depended on their parents for financial support while attending university, when comparing local students and those who had moved. Class or parental socio-economic status may influence decisions and information availability, but it does not act on student mobilities in isolation, as there are ways to overcome financial limitations, such as through government funding.

Attachments to home communities, family and friends can influence young people to stay or return. In these cases, staying is not necessarily perceived as missing out or being denied opportunities. Instead, the desire to stay home and close to family can be a purposeful and satisfying decision. Ni Laoire (2000) finds through follow-up interviews with 25-29 year olds in Ireland that sometimes attachment to place is connected to feelings of guilt and ideas about family. One man in the study moved back to Ireland after he finished his post-secondary degree at school in the UK. He felt guilty about leaving his home community, and more specifically about leaving his parents, so one of his reasons for returning centered around supporting his family. These findings show that relations between parents and children should not be simplified, and that perhaps young people provide emotional support to their parents as well.

Whelan (2000) and Genge (1996) found that young people made career and education choices that were based on: personal desires, family values, family finances, parental encouragement, ideas about the value of work, teacher and peer influences, perceptions about ability, and perceptions of the work opportunities in the economic context of NL. Many students interviewed believed education would lead to better job prospects and a better life. Whelan (2000) found parental encouragement to be important in the career planning of young people. Women viewed their mothers as most influential on their plans, while men indicated their fathers. Although Whelan (2000) and Genge (1996) both emphasize family in affecting student plans, Genge (1996) also identifies family income as playing a role in decision-making processes. Whelan (2000) finds students who know what jobs they want to pursue often gain information through conversations with someone employed in their field of interest. Students form future plans around ideas and information shared with them by parents and friends to a greater extent than communication with teachers. However, students did suggest information through school career fairs, courses, and reading materials was influential, which is facilitated by school administrators (Whelan, 2000).

This section looks at how attachment to place and relations with family and friends are discussed within the literature on mobility and decision-making. Feelings about the places youth live are connected to relations with family, friends, and other people in the local area. Looking at how young people speak about their home communities and mobility experiences and plans, in their own words, can uncover more nuanced ways attachments to place impact decisions to leave or stay. Changing economic, political and social contexts over time also involve changes in how parents and

communities value education, and what messages they send to their children, which may influence mobility plans and experiences. Close relations with family and friends, and positive feelings about the home community, is shown to decrease the likelihood of mobility away from rural places. However, the return of some young people to their homes after moving away, due to feelings of guilt leaving their parents, shows that relations and attachments are multidimensional (Ni Laoire, 2000). The information and experiences parents and other networks have, are influenced by the economic, social and political context they live in, so it is important to look at the influence of all factors reviewed in this chapter together. The next section details how I will apply the ideas and themes explored in this chapter to the current research.

Current Study

In this thesis I draw on the approach developed by Ni Laoire (2000) that sees mobility as a part of an individual's biography. The economic, political, and social context of a person's life shapes the way women and men approach education and employment related mobility decision-making. Economic changes and developments, like the closure of the cod fishery in NL, and emerging large-scale natural resource sector projects, places importance on post-secondary education as a way to gain employment. My study builds upon previous work on education and mobility in the NL context, which recognizes the observed trend of large-scale movements of young people away from rural areas, but goes beyond this dominant narrative of moving to give attention to the individual mobilities of young people enrolled in a trades program in rural NL. This work compares PO student mobilities to the ways provincial government and institutional

discourse talk about the geographic movements of young people within NL. Chapter 4 details the research site and provides information on economic, political and social developments in NL. In Chapters 5 and 6, I present my findings. In Chapter 5 I examine how mobility is shaped by local labour market conditions, the organization of educational funding and trades-related college programs, and students' future plans for education and employment, which helps analyze the ways structure and agency interact in student decisions regarding mobility. Chapter 6 focuses on themes emerging student interviews centering around the ways place attachments and interpersonal relations can structure, but also increase, agency in mobilities.

The biographical approach to mobilities requires attention to be paid to both structure and agency. Having choice is a privilege, and agency does not exist in pure form, because we live in a world where certain things are beyond the control of one individual. There are options, for those who get accepted to education programs in multiple places. However, sometimes a lack of financial or social supports means some opportunities are less accessible than others, which complicates the concept of "choice." People who stay in rural places, or move to rural places, should not be viewed as lacking ability or ambition because they have different interests or motivations for staying. Moving to be close to family and friends, or staying in home communities is constructed by some as settling or sacrificing educational aspirations, but this is not always the case. Emotional geographies (Power et al., 2014), or the ways people feel and talk about different places and connections they have with family and friends in these places are important because they can both encourage and restrict the ways people move. The literature identifies that mobilities are gendered, meaning men and women often leave or

stay rural communities for different reasons and in different ways. Gendered local labour markets and gendered divisions of care work have implications for the mobility biographies of women and men. In this thesis, I tease out some of the ways that gender structures these mobility pathways, by highlighting gender differences in the ways students access affordable housing in the Placentia area, and information about future trades-related employment options.

Conclusion

This chapter looks at existing literature on why people decide to move, or not, to participate in education and employment. There is research that argues people, often women, move away from rural areas to larger centers to pursue education and employment because there are no opportunities where they live. Such lines of thinking offer preferences, interests, and labour market conditions as explanations of mobility. Sometimes, however, when economic conditions are strained, young people are less likely to move. Furthermore, there is research that finds young people are not interested in pursuing jobs related to local natural resource development industries. Due to different levels of access to support and information, young people have the ability to move to different degrees. For some, that means staying in a rural place without opportunities.

For others, staying in a rural place or moving to a rural place for education is not constructed in a negative way. Some people move to or remain in rural places so they can stay close to their family and friends. For these people, mobility or lack thereof is not seen as sacrificing opportunity. The different ways people speak about the role of family and friends in influencing moving or staying, help clarify how mobility is accomplished,

adding to the body of work on the interplay of structure and agency in mobilities. The group of students from whom I am collecting survey and interview data, and the course they are taking part in have not been the subject of sociological research. I go beyond expectations of, and motivations for, moving, instead focusing on how student education-related mobility is achieved within the social, economic, and political context of lives through access to financial and social resources. The next chapter outlines the methodology used in the present research.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

This research examines the education-related mobilities of young men and women enrolled in a Processing Operator Course that was originally designed to train workers for a Nickel Processing Plant to be constructed at a later date in the local area where the course was being offered. I ask the following questions: How are decision-making processes and experiences of mobility influenced by the economic, political and social context of their lives? How does access to educational, economic, and social resources impact mobility? Are individuals free to do as they choose or do factors beyond one's control structure movement? How might extended family be implicated in the process? What kinds of social and economic supports are needed by Process Operator (PO) students to participate in the course? What about after their program is finished? With at least a possibility of gaining employment in the area, what will students expect of their future decisions regarding geographic movement? What do they hope to do?

In order to answer these questions, I used multiple methods including content and thematic analysis of documents, a web-based student survey, and qualitative interviews with students and key informant representatives from the College of the North Atlantic, Placentia campus (CNA-Placentia), the PO course instructor and the campus administrator. Analyzing qualitative interview data facilitates dialogue on how people “create and maintain their social realities,” exposing the researcher to views and opinions of others, and how daily lives are significant and structured by society (Berg, 1998, p. 7). Tim May (2001) argues documents are social constructions because they are reflective of social practices. He suggests that, “What people decide to record is itself informed by

decisions which, in turn, relate to the social, political and economic environments of which they are a part” (p. 183). In my study, attention is given to how documents tell us something about the dominant constructions of youth mobilities in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Industry- and government-produced documents may offer a different version of youth mobilities from youth themselves.

Using at least two data collection methods represents a technique called “triangulation”, which is an analytic tool for combining ways of investigating the same phenomenon, often used in mixed-methods research (Bowen, 2009). Engaging in different collection methods is done with the intent of uncovering patterns or trends that can be examined with data from other sources. In doing this, themes from documents, surveys, and interviews can be analyzed together. Bowen (2009) suggests triangulation reduces researcher biases and can be used to integrate findings from different methods. To summarize, collection and analysis of information from documents, surveys, and interviews, are used in combination to highlight common themes and discrepancies within the data.

Securing the Research Site

The PO course at CNA-Placentia was selected as the research site because it is an educational program in a rural area developed to supply workers to provincial natural resource sector mega-projects and processing industries. Specifically, the course was designed to train workers for a nickel processing demonstration plant in Argenteia, NL and later for Vale’s Long Harbour operation. This course offered an interesting case to examine education- and employment-related mobilities. I was interested in how the

delivery of the training and potential subsequent employment opportunities would shape interest and enrolment in the program. Would the students come primarily from the local area? Would students come from outside the region and expect to stay based on prospective employment? Provincial government discourse on youth mobility and some past literature has focused on movement away from rural places, but this study presents an opportunity to look at young people moving to and staying in a rural place for an education program with perceived links to local employment opportunities. Some students are from the Placentia area, while others have moved from within the province, and outside of NL. Despite the financial investments and research efforts the NL government and educational institutions dedicate to meeting the educational and employment needs of youth in rural places in NL, there is little information available on these women and men. The current research responds to this issue, in part, by providing narratives from 8 young people living in rural NL.

I first contacted CNA-Placentia on January 2, 2013 to inquire about background information on the PO course and to ask if they would be willing to participate in my research. I received a positive response from the campus administrator, who agreed to email the student development officer (SDO) and she, in turn, would email the survey link to 7 students in the 2013/2014 PO class, 6 women and one man. I followed up with the campus administrator via email once ethics approval was granted by Memorial University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) on December 6, 2013. On February 2, 2014 I was informed that the SDO was no longer working on the CNA-Placentia campus, but the campus administrator agreed to ask the PO course instructor to forward my web-based survey link to 2013/2014 students.

Survey responses were collected from both the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 classes of PO students, however interviews were only conducted with consenting students from the 2014/2015 class of POs on December 4, 2014. An attempt was made to interview students from the 2013/2014 class in April, 2013, but the two women who agreed to be interviewed after the survey, did not respond to my follow-up. I believe this was due to poor timing, as it was close to the end of their course. This was something I overlooked when attempting to involve the 2013/2014 class in follow-up interviews. Details on the specific data collection processes utilized are provided next.

Documents: Content and Thematic Analysis

Documents were used as sources to establish the social, economic, and political context of the PO course delivery and student mobility. A complete list of the documents reviewed throughout various stages of the research can be found in Appendix B. Some documents reviewed were produced by government departments or for government purposes. Others documents included industry reports, college and university publications, and information obtained from the media. Reports by Lysenko (2011), Lysenko and Vodden (2011), Hall (2014), Walsh et al. (2014), and Vale (2008) provide demographic and economic information on the Placentia area. Work by Lysenko (2011) and Lysenko and Vodden (2011) reveal high rates of unemployed people in Placentia with trade certificates, suggesting there is a labour-skills mismatch in the area (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011). Links between the PO course and Vale were clarified, specifically Vale's proposal for the creation of the course to CNA and the provincial government (CNA, 2012; Hall, 2014). Additional contextual data on Vale was drawn from their

website (“Our history in Canada”, n.d.), the “Long Harbour Project Overview” report (Vale, 2012), and media articles (Roberts, CBC News, 2014), highlighting perceptions on local employment opportunities and financial contributions. The Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy (YRAS) focuses on educational and employment resources young people need to stay in NL, especially those pursuing skilled trades and apprenticeships (HRLE, 2009). These documents helped me to construct the economic and political context within which to interpret student mobilities, as well as to get a sense of the dominant discourses of young people’s education-related mobilities.

Documents were useful throughout all stages of my research. I initially spent a few months collecting the bulk of material to be used. There were times when information in the documents raised additional questions, which led to further investigation, and sometimes the collection of more documents. Documents were analyzed through an examination of themes (Boyatzis, 1998), which are patterns identified in the information. I used elements of content analysis and thematic analysis when working with the data. Documents were given a first read, where important passages or data were identified, then content was organized into categories relating to the research questions and review of theory from previous literature (Bowen, 2009). Initial categories emerging from the data include: the problem of youth outmigration in NL; the perceived value of education for employment in the NL context; trades-related education and employment as a way to earn a good living; how PO course connections to local and provincial employers and government initiatives influence future mobility plans; moving and staying for education and employment; how students access the financial, educational, and economic resources needed to move; and the role of connections to

places, family and friends in shaping and supporting student mobilities.

Next, thematic analysis was undertaken, including a more thorough examination of the data, where emerging patterns became categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). During this careful re-reading of the data, themes about how students accomplish mobility and what may structure their movements was explored. Themes drawn from documents are compared to themes in survey and interview data.

Although documents are successful in conveying flows of young people away from the province and from small communities to larger economic centers within NL, there was a lack of information on student processes of moving or staying for education in general, and for PO students specifically. I found very little reference to the role of family, or how student relations to people and places may shape their everyday and future mobility plans. Finally, the documents reviewed did not contain stories from students told in their own words and there were few concrete examples on what supports are provided to students participating in educational programs related to the skilled trades. Documents did, however, provide contextual information about how and why the PO course was created: for people in the local area, to supply workers to resource development projects like Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, as an attempt to improve rural employment conditions. Using the findings from my document analysis (see Appendix A) set the context for the development of a web-based survey (see Appendix C for survey questionnaire). Throughout this section I have detailed my rationale for including content and thematic analysis of documents in my research. The next two sections will expand on my use of survey and interview data.

Web-based Survey

A web-based survey administered electronically is a cost-efficient way of collecting demographic information. I used the demographic information to determine who met my study's main inclusion criterion (e.g., age) and as a way to recruit eligible students to participate in an interview. Demographic information and responses collected from the survey helped to develop semi-structured interviews for students and key-informants. Survey responses were linked with corresponding 2014/2015 PO students at the beginning of my interviews by asking the men and women what year they were born and if they had moved or not. The linking of the survey data and the interview participants allowed me to develop a richer account of the students' mobility biographies. In addition to demographic information, the survey provided information about residential history and the range of mobility practice students engaged in, including the time and distance spent travelling to school each day, and whether or not students had access to a vehicle. Students also provided information on how their education was funded and whether or not they see themselves working and staying in the local area post-graduation. The interview questions expanded on the survey, and aimed to understand why and how students moved for the PO course.

In January 2014, I purchased a membership for SurveyMonkey and developed my online survey. With the help of CNA staff, survey responses from 6 women enrolled in the 2013/2014 PO course were collected. Six women and one man were enrolled in this class of POs. Two women agreed to participate in follow-up interviews at the end of the survey, however they did not respond when contacted. Due to this, I shifted my focus to the 2014/2015 class of PO students, where nine students enrolled, five men and four

women. The online survey link was forwarded to students by the course instructor. I collected eight full responses from five men and three women. A summary of demographic information gained through web-based survey responses is provided below. The proportion of women enrolled in this course is striking, and sits in contrast to most skilled trades courses where women are disproportionately underrepresented.

Table 1. Demographic Overview of Survey Respondents

| Demographic Overview of Survey Respondents |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 men and 9 women from two classes: 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 • Ages ranging from 19 to 53 • 9 never married and 5 in cohabitating relationships • 12 without children and 2 with children • 4 reside with parents • 8 moved for the course, 6 did not • 7 live in Placentia while going to school • 7 commute daily distances of 10km to 300km • 9 commute to school alone, 4 drive with others and 1 travels on foot |

The survey respondents are students from two classes (2013/2014 and 2014/2015) of the Process Operator course at the College of the North Atlantic – Placentia campus (see Table 1). An attempt was made to include all of the students participating in the course and survey data was collected from a total of 14 out of 16 people, 64.3% (n=9) women and 35.7% (n=5) men. Respondents were 19 to 53 years old (a 34 year age range). The mean age of students from the class of 2013/2014 who completed the survey is 39, while the mean age of student respondents from class of 2014/2015 is 21. In total, 11 women and men aged 19-30 were surveyed, and all of the students interviewed were within this range. Most (64.3%) of the students who completed the survey (n=9) are

single and have never been married, 14.3% (n=2) are married, one person (7.1%) is in a domestic partnership or civil union, and 14.3% (n=2) are single, but cohabitating with a significant other. Two women who completed the survey have children (14.3%) while the other twelve respondents (85.7%) do not have children.

At the time of the survey, half (n=7) of the students lived in Placentia and the other 50% (n=7) lived in places of varying distances 5km to 150km away from CNA-Placentia. 57.1% (n=8) of students moved for the PO course, while six people (42.9%) did not. Most of the students (71.4%) did not live with parents or guardians, while 28.6% (n=4) did. Of the ten students who did not live with their parents, half (n=5) of them lived with a spouse or intimate partner and the other five lived alone. Individuals in the course report engaging in commuting activities ranging from very short trips of 0.2km to substantial distances of 300km round-trip, each school day.

At the end of the survey, students from the 2014/2015 PO class did not volunteer for follow-up interviews. The course instructor suggested I visit CNA-Placentia on December 4, 2014, to briefly present my research, and conduct interviews with consenting students. After presenting on the purpose of my research, and the importance of student perspectives, all of the survey respondents (n=8) consented to interviews and agreed to the use of direct quotations. Pseudonyms were created to protect the identities of students, and are used when quoting interview excerpts. The survey helped to make sure my interview schedule was appropriate for the study sample. For example, the 2014/2015 PO students surveyed did not have any children, therefore, I did not have to include interview questions around this topic. The next section describes the process of collecting key informant and student interviews.

Interviews

In addition to collecting documents and survey responses, I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the 2014/2015 PO students who submitted full responses to the survey (n=8), and two key informants, the PO course instructor and the campus administrator of CNA-Placentia. Gaining accounts of education-related mobilities in student's own words enabled me to assess to the extent to which dominant discourses about youth and educational mobility reflect the experiences of young people in this study.

Key Informant Interviews

Interviews with key informants collect details on the development and intent of the course and PO training. The key informant interview schedule is provided in Appendix D. The course instructor and campus administrator both read and signed a consent form included in Appendix E, agreeing to the use of direct quotations. Key-informants were interviewed separately, both in private. The PO course instructor was interviewed in the classroom provided for speaking with students, while my second interview took place in the campus administrator's office.

When I interviewed the PO course instructor, I was sitting on the side of the desk where he would normally teach, while he was seated across from me, like the students interviewed. The campus administrator's office was significantly smaller, the lighting dimmer, and he was sitting as he normally would, while I was on the opposite side of the desk. Minute as these details may seem, it did affect the atmosphere, or the power

structure of interviews, and signaled a difference in the kind of information that each of the key informants offered. The course instructor offered more detail, more information above and beyond what I was asking for, and expressed a genuine interest in my research and potential benefits for students. The course instructor, who spends much more time working closely with PO students was able to give some post-course details on students. The campus administrator gave briefer answers to interview questions and had less direct information about past students and where they are now. However, he was very knowledgeable about the structure of apprenticeship training and the political, economic and social context regarding the development of the course. What one key-informant interview lacked in data, the other contained, allowing for comparisons between perspectives.

Student Interviews

Three women and five men were interviewed, while students surveyed include 9 women and 5 men. The survey and interview samples are quite different because the survey respondents are from two classes of PO students (n=14), while interviews included students from the class of 2014/2015 only (n=8). Differences in the age range between survey respondents and interviewees is substantial. There are group discrepancies in marital statuses, commuting activities, and sources of educational funding. Below, Table 2 provides a demographic overview of students interviewed.

Table 2. Demographic Overview of Students Interviewed

| Demographic Overview of Students Interviewed |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 men and 3 women from the class of 2014/2015 process operators • Ages ranging from 19 – 26 • 8 never married, 1 cohabitating with a significant other • All without children • 2 men living with parents • 2 work part-time • 6 moved to participate in the course • 5 live in Placentia and 3 live outside of Placentia • 3 women commute daily distances of 10km to 50km (round trip) • 5 commute to school alone, 2 with others, and 1 travels on foot |

Ages of interviewees range from 19 to 26 years old. None of the students interviewed have ever been married (n=8), but one student cohabitates with a significant other. Most of the students (n=6) moved to participate in the program, while two men were living in Placentia before the course began and reside with their parents. Many of the students live in Placentia (n=5), but the women in the course (n=3) commute distances of 10 to 100 kilometers round-trip every school day.

Consent was obtained from the students who engaged in follow-up interviews (Appendix H) and all participants agreed to the use of direct quotations using pseudonyms in the place of their real names. Interviews explore student's lives before the 2014/2015 PO course. I asked why they enrolled in the course, and how they are supported by family and friends, financially and emotionally. For students who moved for the course, I asked what was involved in the process, if they experienced any problems along the way. For students who did not move, I asked what factored into this decision. Both interview schedule of questions asked about students' daily commuting

activities: how they get to school every day; how long it takes; the distance travelled.

Finally, all students were asked about what they would like to do after they finish the course, what they have heard about job opportunities in the area, and whether or not they hope to move when they finish their program.

Interviews were conducted in a spacious, quiet, and private classroom at the College of the North Atlantic – Placentia campus. I was positioned across a desk from each student and I used my smartphone to record interviews. Interview participants were made aware of the phone as a recording device and it was placed on the desk in plain view. They entered one at a time, closing the door behind them, while the others waited in the hallway outside. When the students sat down, I first asked them if they had moved or not to participate in the program and what year they were born so that I could match interviews with their corresponding survey responses, and so that I could make sure I used the correct schedule of questions for the interview. Students then read and signed the interview consent form. Interviews with students ranged from 10 to 20 minutes and I provided an opportunity to add anything else they thought would be beneficial to my research at the end of the interview. Interviews with students were short because I had limited time while on campus. I was allotted the equivalent of one class time slot to complete my interviews as students were breaking for lunch immediately after. Follow-up questions and probes were used when appropriate to extract more information from the students interviewed. For example, when one of the women speaks about difficulties finding an apartment in Placentia due to high rental rates and shared accommodations with men, probes and follow-up questions were used to collect more information on how she settled on an apartment.

Analysis of interview data was completed once I transcribed the interviews in private. The audio was transcribed into word, and I then read through each word document identifying themes around student mobility present in the literature reviewed, along with themes not covered by past work (e.g. gender differences in accessing the rental housing market in the rural area studied). Attention is paid to mention of the role of family, experiences of moving and finding somewhere to live, and views on the characteristics of Placentia, surrounding areas, and the places students moved from. I look at whether these views are positive or negative and categorize quotes according to whether mobility has been constrained or enabled. I examine the ways students talk about perceptions of local job opportunities, and ideas about future mobility. Themes relating to agency in student choices and experiences were identified during the analysis stage (e.g., travelling home on weekends to maintain interpersonal relations) and I noted any interactions between structure and agency I observed (e.g., using information and resources provided by family to accomplish mobility and secure suitable housing, which was lacking for women in terms of rental options). Student interview data are compared with themes in documents, surveys, and past work on education-related mobilities.

Research Participants

Throughout this thesis, interview excerpts from students participating in the 2014/2015 PO course are discussed. To protect student's identities pseudonyms are used in the place of actual names and locations are generalized. Some initial details on participants are outlined below.

Claire completed the Adult Basic Education (ABE) course at CNA in St. John's while living at home prior to enrolling in the 2014/2015 PO program. She applied for a Radiography course offered by CNA and was accepted, but moved to Placentia instead of staying close to home. Claire obtained a one-bedroom apartment in a community 15km from Placentia and commutes to school by car. Claire travels home on the weekends so that she can spend time with her family and friends.

Tim finished high school in Placentia and then moved to St. John's where he enrolled in first year Engineering and six weeks of Architectural Engineering Technology, both at CNA. He then took a year off and decided to pursue Pipe Fitting at CNA in Clarendville, but stayed home because it was easier financially and was encouraged to enroll in the PO course by his mother. Tim gets a ride to school with his friend and lives 2km from CNA-Placentia.

Cathy graduated from high school in 2011 and then took a year off from education to work. She attended Memorial University (MUN) in St. John's, close to her family home, but did not enjoy it, so she worked for another year. Cathy says she enrolled in the PO course because of personal interests. She had a choice between renting an apartment close to CNA-Placentia, or moving to the house her mother grew up in, located in a community approximately 50km from the college. Since Cathy spent a lot of time in the neighboring community when she was younger and always wanted to live there, she moved to her family-owned house to reside rent-free. She commutes back and forth to school by car, and travels to the St. John's area every second weekend to spend time with family and friends, and her mom travels to see her on alternate weekends.

Adam graduated from high school in a Western Canadian province where he lived for 6 years before enrolling in the PO course. He is originally from NL but moved with his family so his father could pursue employment opportunities. After high school his family moved back to the community they left, about 130km away from Placentia, so that his father, who is employed in a skilled trade, could be closer to large-scale industry projects. Adam was accepted into the PO course and the Millwright program, both of which are offered at CNA-Placentia. He describes his experience of finding a place to live as easy. He chose an apartment that he shares with four other men located less than a kilometer from the college.

Robert grew up in Placentia, lives with his parents, and just finished high school before enrolling in the course. He heard about the program from his friend, and also has two friends working at Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour as process operators, although neither have taken the course. Robert wanted to stay in school so he applied for the PO course. He drives to school every day with his friend, just a short distance of 3km.

Fred moved to Placentia from a province in Atlantic Canada. He is a member of the Canadian Forces Reserve and has spent considerable time travelling. He worked in Western Canada and has university experience. He considered enrolling in a Power and Process Engineering program at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), but saw the CNA course as less of a time commitment. He has plans to continue his education by enrolling in the Power Engineering program offered at the Corner Brook CNA campus after the course is done. Fred had difficulty finding a place to live when he moved to

Placentia, but received help from a local hotel owner who put him in contact with a man who owns properties in town. Fred's apartment is 1km from CNA-Placentia.

Matthew graduated from high school in a community less than 200km from the province's capital city in 2013. He moved to St. John's to attend MUN like his friends. Matthew finished two semesters at MUN but half way through the second semester he realized it wasn't for him. His Dad submitted an application for the PO course without telling him, so when Matthew finished at MUN, he had a seat waiting for him at CNA. Matthew has relatives in the Placentia area and lives rent-free in a house left to his father by his grandparents, less than 1km from the school. Matthew drives to his parent's house and spends time with his family and friends every weekend.

Amy completed the Comprehensive Arts and Science (CAS) program in central Labrador prior to enrolling in the PO course. She considered going to MUN but thinks trades work is more suited to her. After looking at the CNA course book, Amy was most interested in becoming a PO. She also applied for a spot in the Power Engineering program at CNA-Corner Brook campus, which she was accepted into after the PO course began. She was living at home with her parents prior to moving, but now rents a one-bedroom apartment, which costs about a thousand dollars a month, and is 2km from CNA-Placentia.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methods for my study. The rationale behind focusing on students participating in the PO course at CNA-Placentia was explained. Details were provided on the mixed methods of data collection used in this research,

including document analysis, surveys, and interviews. The last section of this chapter provides an introduction to the 2014/2015 PO students interviewed. The next chapter details the economic, social and political context for the current study, provides information on youth unemployment and outmigration in NL, and describes the research site and PO course in more detail.

Chapter 4: Economic, Social and Political Context of the Research Site

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: first, to set the context for the current research and second, to present the dominant employer and government discourses about youth, mobility, education and employment. A brief economic history of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and mobility is provided and the emergence of large scale natural resource projects is outlined, introducing Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, NL. Next, the problem of youth unemployment and outmigration in NL is presented, and the social, economic and political context of the research site is discussed. Background information on the Process Operator (PO) course at the College of the North Atlantic, Placentia campus (CNA-Placentia) is provided, drawn from documents on the course formation and data gained through interviews with key-informants, the PO course instructor, and the campus administrator of CNA-Placentia. Additionally, I describe the role of Vale and the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, NL in the development and placement of the PO course at CNA-Placentia are explored.

Newfoundland and Labrador: A Brief Economic History

The economic and social context of NL has changed over time. NL is the youngest Canadian province, which includes the island of Newfoundland and a north eastern part of the mainland of Canada, Labrador (Bourgeois, 2009). Bourgeois (2009) described the province: "NL is an island of 43,359 square miles, has a rocky coastline, little soil that is suitable for farming, and harsh, unpredictable weather" (p. 16). The first people to settle in the province were early aboriginal groups who migrated to different

parts of Labrador and the island 9000 to 1000 years ago (“History”, n.d.). Leif Erikson and the Vikings were the first European explorers to come to the Northern Peninsula of NL, but did not settle permanently. Hundreds of years later in 1497, John Cabot landed in Bonavista. NL was declared a colony by England in the 1800s, and European people migrated to the province thereafter (Bourgeois, 2009; “History”, n.d.). The French, Portuguese, Irish, Spanish and English regularly travelled to NL during the 16th and 17th centuries to take advantage of abundant fish stocks.

The early economic history of NL is centered around natural resources, fishing and merchant trading until the mid-to late 1800s. NL’s economic development took place in small outport fishing communities, and in St. John’s, where the elite and fish merchants resided, eventually making it the administrative and business center of the province (Overton, 1996). Although NL developed through migration to the province, researchers observed many people moving away from the province for employment (Reeves, 1990; Sinclair & Felt, 1993; Sinclair, 2003; Thorne, 2004; 2007; Thornton, 1985). By the beginning of WWII, more communities across NL emerged due to new pulp and paper mills, mines, and American Air force bases (Bourgeois, 2009). When NL joined the Canadian Confederation in 1949, Joseph R. Smallwood became the first Premier of the province.

Smallwood’s focus during the 1950s and 1960s was on transitioning NL to a “modern monetary economy” (Overton, 1990, p. 49), or a capitalist society pursuing material wealth and economic progress (Bourgeois, 2009). Developments in manufacturing, wage labour, road construction, the supply of electricity, and the creation of formal education financed by the government happened during this era in NL

(Overton, 1990). The Premier's approach was to modernize all areas of the province, but rural areas in particular because they did not fit the image of a developing society, an image promoted by groups in power. Some people were forced to relocate to larger industrial centres within the province because this was viewed by Smallwood's liberal government as the best plan for economic growth (Matthews, 1993). By the late 1960s it was clear that most attempts at renewing, industrializing and expanding the provincial economy had failed despite wasting large amounts of public resources and money (Matthews, 1993). Attempts to attract investment in the province lead to the accumulation of debt, and dependence on the fishery, which was now controlled by the federal government (Overton, 1978).

By the late 1980s and early 1990s the Canadian federal government banned the fishing of cod, arguing stocks were depleted because of overfishing, and that social resources like Employment Insurance (E.I.) attracted too many fishery workers (Neis and Williams, 1997). The effects on Atlantic Canadian communities and families depending on the fishery to make a seasonal living were financially devastating, especially for those in rural places. Neis and Williams (1997) estimate the moratorium left over thirty thousand NL people unemployed, and suggest the government's actions reflected a "New Right" ideology, promoting the privatization of public assets and conservative social and economic policies decreasing social resources provided by the state.

Prior to 1949, much of women's work in rural NL was unpaid domestic work in the household: feeding their families, making clothing, and splitting wood (Felt & Sinclair, 1995; Porter, 1993). Some women helped with drying and salting fish, or were hired as domestics during the Great Depression (Porter, 1985; Neis, 1996). However,

women's participation in the labour force grew after NL joined Confederation, and nearly 12,000 women lost their jobs mainly in fish processing due to the moratorium on cod fishing (Neis & Williams, 1997). The crisis also affected women doing unpaid administrative work in their husband's fishing enterprises, and those employed in childcare for fishery-dependent communities.

During this period of labour market constriction, the government of NL invested heavily in post-secondary education, offshore oil and gas exploration, and mineral production, encouraging participation in higher education and tailoring programs to the needs of the economy to achieve social and financial progress (Bourgeois, 2009). Starting in the early 1990s with the construction phase of the Hibernia oil-platform, Terra Nova and White Rose developments, and Voisey's Bay mine/mill, large-scale natural resource extraction projects required large capital investments and provided a source of employment for NL people (Vale Inco NL, 2008). A demonstration plant for the processing of nickel from the Voisey's Bay mine operated in Argentina, NL from 2005 until 2008 (Vale Inco NL, 2008). Long Harbour, NL was later chosen as the permanent site for the plant because it offers underwater storage required for hydrometallurgical nickel processing residue (Hall, 2014).

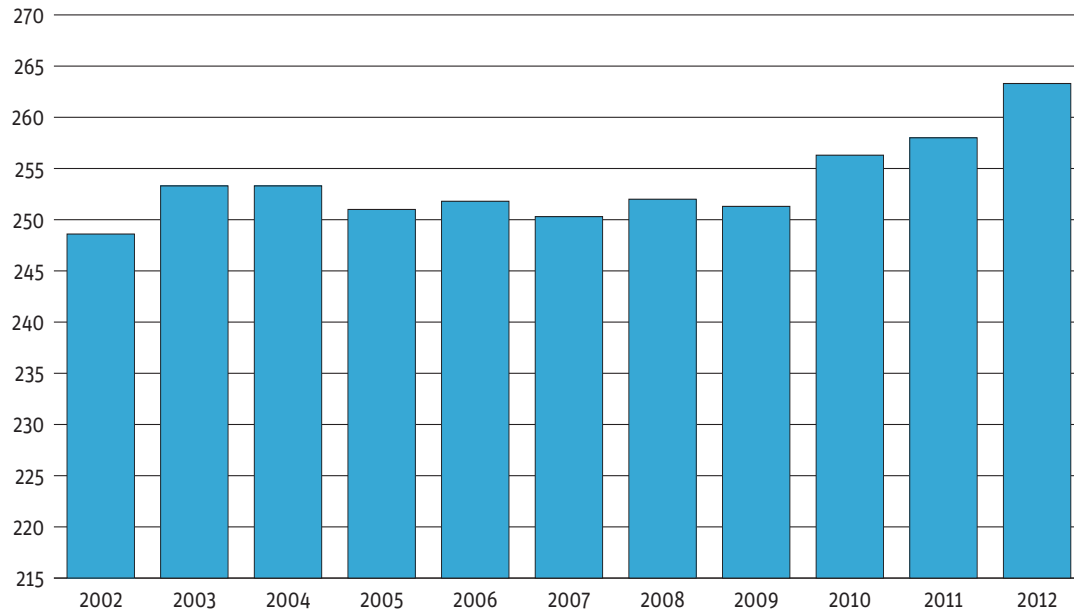
Brazilian mining corporation Vale currently operates the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, which was acquired from the International Nickel Company (INCO). INCO emerged in the early 1900's and was the premier force in metal discovery and processing for over a century. In 2006, Vale announced a \$19.4-billion takeover bid. In 2007 the stakeholders of INCO approved the takeover and in 2009 the company adopted a new corporation name worldwide: Vale S.A. ("Our history in Canada", n.d.). The Long

Harbour processing plant entered the construction phase in 2009 and by 2011 over two thousand people were employed full-time at the site, increasing to 4500 people in 2012 (CBC, 2011; Vale, 2012). However, Vale expressed labour shortage concerns at the start of, and during, the operations phase, as they depended heavily on mobile workers from NL and other provinces, along with temporary foreign workers to fill positions at the plant (Vale, 2012). Vale added to CNA's scholarship fund, made sizeable donations to the Town of Placentia and invested in Long Harbour (Vale, 2012). Despite contributions to post-secondary education and provincial economic growth from industry projects, concerning social trends still persist. The next section explores the problem of youth unemployment and outmigration in NL.

Youth Employment and Outmigration in NL

Participation in the NL labour force has been increasing since 2002. In Figure 1, data from Walsh, Johnston & Saulnier (2015) sourced from Statistics Canada, demonstrate provincial employment rates increased from 56.2% in 2009 to 61.3% in 2012, the highest recorded participation since 1976.

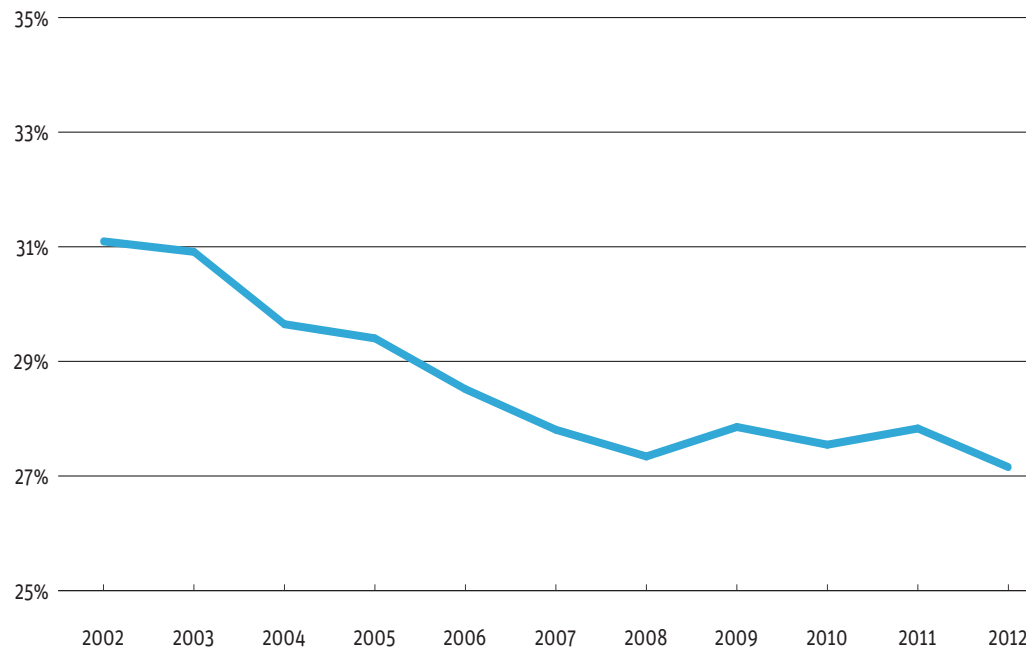
Figure 1. NL Labour Force, 2002-12



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 282-0002 Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by sex and detailed age group, annual (persons x 1,000)

The provincial economy has been improving in recent years due in large part to the growth of natural resource extraction projects (Walsh et al., 2015). While labour force participation has expanded, the employment rates of young people aged 20 to 34 have declined.

Figure 2. Young Workers (20-34) As Proportion of Total Labour Force, NL, 2002-12



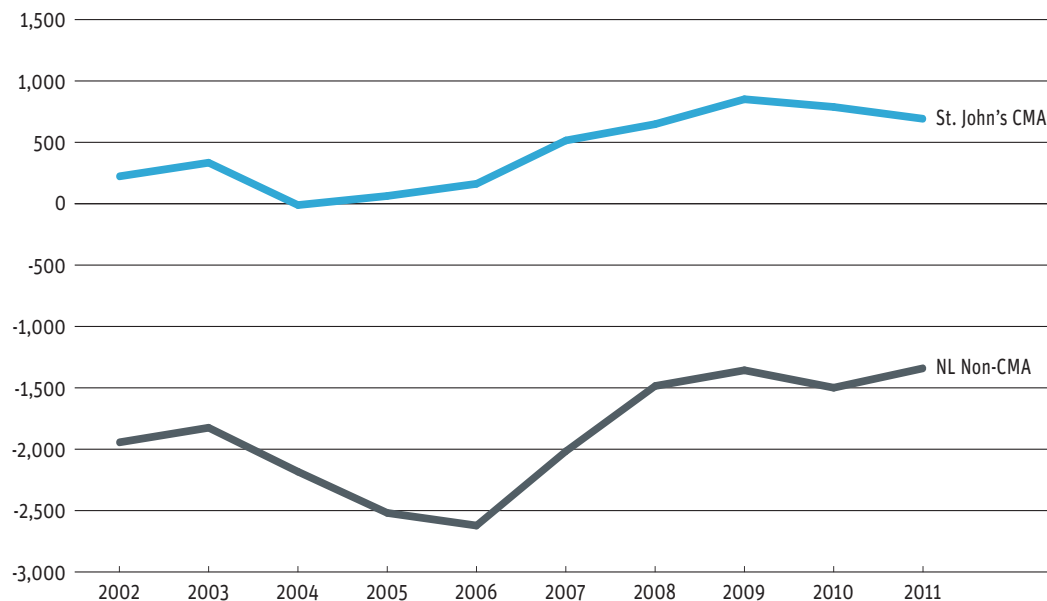
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 282-0002 Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by sex and detailed age group, annual (persons x 1,000)(11,12)

While youth employment rates have not declined dramatically since 2002, there was an observed decrease from 31% in 2002 to 27% in 2012 (Walsh et al., 2015). The employed population of 15 to 24 year olds in NL, however, declined by 19% between 2002 and 2012 (Walsh et al., 2015). In contrast to 1990 when youth represented almost 45% of fulltime workers, people between the ages of 20 and 34 now represent only a quarter of the NL labour force (Walsh et al., 2015, p. 15).

Unemployment rates for young people in the province are high (17%), and higher for women (18%) in NL than women in other parts of Canada (12%) (Walsh et al., 2015). Youth unemployment rates and declining labour force participation is attributed in part to the movement of young people away from the province. From 2002 to 2012

approximately 15 000 young people moved away from NL. Net youth migration estimates between 2002 and 2011 in NL are provided below in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Net Youth Migration (18-24), NL, 2002-11



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 111-0028 In-, out- and net-migration estimates, by provincial regions and age group, annual (number)

Net migration estimates for St. John's and surrounding metropolitan areas are unlike those in all other areas of the province. In general, numbers suggest more young people are moving away from places outside of St. John's, while the population of St. John's is on the rise (Walsh et al., 2015). However, 80% of job growth in Atlantic Canada since 1987 has happened in urban areas like St. John's, so people may be moving for employment-related reasons (Walsh et al., 2015).

The increasing importance of post-secondary education may be another reason young people make up a lower proportion of the NL workforce today than they did a few decades ago, and why they seem to be on the move. Walsh et al. (2015) note that, “The government estimates that approximately 66.7% of all job openings in the 2011 to 2020 period will be in management occupations or will require some form of post-secondary education” (p. 33). Some young people move for university or college because they need skills and credentials to obtain employment. However, the movement of young people away from NL, especially from rural areas of the province, has been framed as a problem by the government. In effect, strategies for reducing youth outmigration and improving access to education and employment have been proposed.

The provincial government has increased their focus on supporting young people in trades-related education programs in response to an observed “skills mismatch” where there is a shortage of people with the right qualifications willing to fill available jobs (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011; Walsh et al., 2015). The provincial government established the Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy (YRAS) in 2008 in order to “enhance and expand local partnerships among schools, post-secondary institutions, and employers to help shape the curriculum for career development,” and emphasize initiatives to support the government’s apprenticeship hiring program and wage subsidies (HRLE, 2009, p. 32). By supporting young people with trades-related work aspirations, the pool of available labour for projects within the province increases. Financial contributions by Vale and the NL government suggest a favorable climate for young people pursuing training related to the skilled trades. However, it is unclear how these programs and initiatives have benefitted students. The next section provides details on the research site.

Research Site: Economic, Social and Political Context

The research site for this study, the College of the North Atlantic (CNA), is located in the town of Placentia, on Placentia Bay's shore, 131km or a 90-minute drive from St. John's, the capital city of NL. The college services students from all areas of NL as well as other provinces. The Placentia campus is one of 17 CNA sites throughout the province and is home to the PO course. The course was developed to enhance local labour market supply and was proposed to the college and provincial government by Vale, operators of the nickel processing plant 40km away from CNA-Placentia (Hall, 2014; Lysenko and Vodden, 2011).

In a 2011 government report "Labour Market Profile of the Avalon Gateway (Economic Zone 18)," Lysenko outlines the economic context of three sub-regions within the SouthWest Avalon, including the Placentia area. A map of Economic Zone 18 and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is provided below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Map of NL and Economic Zone 18



Source: Avalon Gateway Regional Economic Development Inc., 2008

Placentia's population is 4,500 which accounts for just over half of the Avalon Gateway's residents (Lysenko, 2011, p. 4). This town has a more favourable economic climate than the other regions in Zone 18 because it is a regional hub, with hospital and government services, a ferry terminal and a CNA campus. Placentia is a short distance from the oil refinery in Come by Chance, the Hebron oil platform in Bull Arm and the Commercial Hydrometallurgical Nickel Processing plant in Long Harbour, which was under

construction when Lysenko's (2011) report was released. Lysenko and Vodden (2011) suggest the close proximity of this region to industrial and large-scale resource sector projects makes the labour market different from other areas in the province.

The population of the Avalon Gateway region has been decreasing since 2001, a decline that has been attributed in part to people moving away, along with lower birth rates. High rates of outmigration could be due to a volatile labour market and job losses caused by closures of the fish plant in Jerseyside, the phosphorus plant in Long Harbour, and the USA Naval Station in Argentia (Lysenko, 2011, p. 5). Unemployment rates in Zone 18 are similar for men and women (around 30%), but Placentia has much higher employment rates than the rest of the Avalon Gateway. However, rates vary between communities within the Placentia area (Lysenko, 2011). Many tradespeople and skilled workers commute to jobs outside of the Avalon Gateway and seasonal employment is common (Lysenko, 2011). Eastern Health, the Department of Education, and Vale employ the most people from Zone 18 (Lysenko, 2011; Lysenko & Vodden, 2011).

In terms of education, the number of people within the Placentia region who have high school and university-level credentials is lower than the Canadian average (Lysenko, 2011). However, the proportion of the population with an apprenticeship, trades certificate or a college/non-university diploma "exceeds not only the provincial average, but the Canadian average as well" (Lysenko, 2011, p. 9). The percentage of people who finish high school in the area has tripled since 1996, but the number of residents with university education has decreased by 33%. Lysenko (2011) suggests the lower percentage of university graduates in the area is because people choose to live and work in other, often urban, places after completing post-secondary education.

A related university-funded report by Lysenko and Vodden (2011) “Applicability of the Local Labour Market Development Approach in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Case Study of the Avalon Gateway Region” suggests there is a skills and labour mismatch in Economic Zone 18. Lysenko and Vodden’s (2011) work collects data from unemployed people receiving EI and Social Assistance, local employers, and organizations that provide resources for Avalon Gateway job seekers. Sixty percent of benefit recipients have college or trades certificates and 90% have high school education (Lysenko and Vodden, 2011, p. 18). Despite a high number of unemployed people seeking jobs, Lysenko and Vodden (2011) also found evidence of unfilled labour demand which some attribute to low education levels of local residents. Lysenko and Vodden (2011) suggest low levels of education are not the only reason for high rates of unemployment, instead highlighting other barriers to job participation like biased recruiting practices and a lack of information exchange between local employers and people seeking work. Lysenko and Vodden (2011) suggest developing strategies to match employers with local workers.

In their 2015 progress update on the YRAS “Great Expectations: Opportunities and Challenges for Young Workers in NL,” Walsh and colleagues find the perception of a labour mismatch applies to the whole province, instead framing the situation in terms of a “preference mismatch,” when people view certain jobs as unappealing or lacking in status, even if they are qualified. They also found mismatched expectations when young people assume quick advancement in well-paying jobs, but they lack the “soft skills” employers want like being capable of filling out paperwork, speaking in public, dressing appropriately, and having a strong work ethic. “This mismatch of expectations is

underscored by a lack of information and a lack of training” (Walsh et al., 2015, p. 35).

The following section outlines the development of a training program intended to enhance local labour supply and give students the skills they need to find employment post-graduation.

Development of CNA-Placentia’s PO Course

Studies by Hall (2014), Lysenko and Vodden (2011), and Walsh et al., (2015) note Vale’s development proposal for the PO course was an attempt to increase the available pool of local POs. There are clear links between the PO course and Vale, key-informants reveal, as the course was designed due to the success of past students in gaining employment at the demonstration plant in Argentina, before Long Harbour was selected as Vale’s permanent site. However, several sources emphasize the course was developed in a general way so that people who complete the program do not depend solely on Vale for employment post-graduation (Hall, 2014; Lysenko & Vodden, 2011). Although Vale presents itself as wanting to employ people from local areas less than 50km from Long Harbour (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011), it is not clear how successful they have been in such endeavors.

PO training is essential for safe, incident-free startup and operation of plant facilities. Duties include: “demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviors, evaluating and controlling plant operations, maintaining adequate records of variables such as production, volume, yield, consumption of chemicals on a daily/weekly/and or monthly basis, sample and test process, and taking appropriate action when required” (CNA, 2012). POs oversee the operations of the setting in which they work. For example,

someone working at a nickel processing plant would observe, evaluate, and record the efficiency of steps involved in refining nickel. A person working at a brewery would be able to account for the process of making and bottling beer, with duties including those listed above.

CNA-Placentia is the only institution in Canada to offer this type of PO course. There are two programs that are exclusively Mining/Mineral PO programs. One is offered at the Northwest Community College in Smithers, British Columbia, and the other is offered by Keyin College in Grand Falls-Windsor, NL (“Mineral Processing Operator”, n.d. ; “Mining Mill Process Operator”, n.d.). The course offered by CNA-Placentia is unique because it is not restricted to the mining industry. The course instructor describes the program as:

entry level, to give students a basic knowledge of what’s happening in a processing plant, and that can be from a fish plant to an industrial setting. Some basic ideas about the process involved in maybe... creating... in the case of Vale it would be nickel... the process in that and the steps involved. Some basic skills such as repacking a pump, changing valves, familiarity with tools... power tools, hand tools... just some basic needs for an operator to go out there and be able to have the knowledge [to work]. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

CNA-Placentia’s campus administrator situates the course within the industries of potential post-grad employment, saying,

the process operator program is a program designed to prepare people to work in any industry that involves a process. So that might involve oil & gas, mining, the brewery, Country Ribbon... anything like that. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

The course enrolls approximately 15-20 students per academic year and at the time of the interviews in December 2014 about 50-60 students had completed the PO program (KI, interview, December 4, 2014). The course starts at the beginning of September and runs for 30 weeks (CNA, 2013); however, the first class of POs started in January of 2012 and

another class started September of 2012, therefore the 2014/2015 class of POs was the fourth class to take the course. Past students (n=50-60) have mostly been women. The class of 2013/2014 PO students had six women and one man, however the class of 2014/2015 had nearly equal numbers of men and women participating, four women and five men (KI, interview, December 14th, 2014).

Lehmann, Taylor and Hamm (2015) suggest young people are enrolling in short duration education programs at community colleges across Canada because of an increasing demand for skilled workers to fill trades-related positions that have resulted from industry projects. While speaking with key-informants an attempt was made to clarify when and how the PO course was created. The campus administrator remembered,

it was first delivered three years ago [January, 2012]. Before that, we delivered a contract program, a 20-week process operator program. That was delivered probably about ten years ago [2004]. We spent 7 or 8 years developing the program that's in existence now. That was in partnership with AES [Advanced Education and Skills]. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

AES is a provincial government department that provides social and financial resources to help NL people access employment, education and training. AES also oversees apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship is an opportunity to further trades-related education while obtaining work experience to increase qualifications and pay.

Apprenticeable trades are organized in blocks. When entry-level courses are complete and employment is secured, workers can register as an apprentice, and record hours spent learning from certified journeypersons certain skills or tasks required to advance in their trade, determined by AES's Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division. In the NL context, when workers complete the required number of hours for on the job training,

they can return to CNA to complete additional Blocks. When all Blocks are complete and upon successful completion of an exam, apprentices become journeypersons. There are Red Seal trades and Blue Seal trades. If you are a Red Seal journeyperson you are certified across Canada. If you have a Blue Seal trade it is only valid within NL.

When the PO course was first introduced by the Department of Education in 2011, Plans of Training only included one Block of entry level courses. However, by the end of 2012, Plans of Training were released by the AES Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division and updated to include two Block 2s and Block 3. Block 2a is focused towards hydrometallurgical refining, while Block 2b focuses on mineral processing (AES, 2012). Plans of Training for the PO course have been summarized in Appendix A, and full versions are available on the AES website. Advanced Blocks seem to line up with the needs of certain sectors of the provincial industry (e.g., the focus on hydrometallurgical refining and metal processing, both of which are relevant to PO jobs available at Vale's Long Harbour plant).

When asked about the industry partners that played a role in the creation of the PO program, the course instructor said,

to my knowledge, it was an agreement at the time between INCO, who approached the college. I think IOC [Iron Ore Company of Canada] was at the table too. There were a number of companies that were approached and asked to create a course that would be beneficial to some of the companies throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

The CNA-Placentia campus administrator points to how the provincial natural resource industry may have influenced the implementation of the PO course. He recounts a round table discussion facilitated by AES involving representatives from the college and industry partners like INCO, IOC, a mining company from central NL, and the North

Atlantic Refinery (KI, interview, December 4, 2014). The PO course instructor also articulates connections between the development of the PO course and the existence or potential emergence of large natural-resource industry projects in NL.

Representatives from CNA-Placentia informed me that no graduates of the PO course have registered as apprentices with the province of NL. Furthermore, Advanced Blocks have been developed by CNA and AES but the campus administrator says students have not been interested in coming back for further education. The course instructor recalls multiple students that have gained employment as POs at Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, or with other companies, both within and outside of the province.

Data presented by the provincial government suggests many people register as apprentices, but the PO course is not represented (HRLE, 2009). CNA-Placentia's campus administrator argues that until working POs are required to register as apprentices, the numbers will not change. He thinks POs do not register as apprentices because they work in environments that do not support the furthering of education. When people engage in Advanced Blocks training, they traditionally have to give up working for a six to eight-week period. It is a disadvantage to the employer and employee in the immediate because the employer is without a worker and workers are without regular wages, but in the long run it is advantageous because employees improve skills and have the potential to increase their pay. HRLE (2009) suggest some ways of improving supports available to apprentices, which will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

The PO course instructor believes Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbor, influenced the decision to make the Placentia campus home to the PO course because

CNA had already helped supply qualified workers to the demonstration plant in Argentina. He suggests the new plant was “coming on stream” and that “a pool of employees probably somewhat trained, or knowledgeable at least in some of the operations” was convenient for Vale (Interview, December 4, 2014). The campus administrator noted CNA-Placentia was chosen to offer the PO course after a proposal submitted by the college’s academic planning team was approved. He refers to the 20-week PO course offered in 2004 at CNA-Placentia as a success, due to the employability rate of students, which he accounts to the close proximity of the demonstration plant in Argentina and the “industries in St. John’s” (Interview, December 4, 2014). However, the program offered in 2004 was associated with INCO. The campus administrator suggests that since Vale took over operations at the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, they’re “not as kind” to people who complete the PO course, meaning graduates don’t necessarily get hired after the program. He problematizes Vale’s updated hiring practices and aptitude tests, suggesting he isn’t sure “they know what kind of person they’re looking for” (KI, interview, December 4, 2014). The campus administrator recognizes the PO course was designed for any manufacturing or processing industry and not exclusively for Vale.

The course instructor expands on the sort of information students are exposed to and the way he approaches teaching.

I teach them from my knowledge, not only what the government says I should teach them. But I teach them things, or try to instill in them things that I know are going to be beneficial to them out there. Like, nowhere in the course does it say a student has to learn about using a cutting torch. I take the time to show them that because it’s beneficial to them. Nowhere in my course does it tell them how to drill a hole, tap a hole, what it takes to get the process running. And then I think my students should have a better advantage than the person off the street, because the students I put out know the hand tools, they know how to drill a hole, thread a hole, make a tool with a cutting torch, do some blueprint reading... well blueprint

reading is part of the course. They have that knowledge, and they go to do [job application process... if they don't do well... if they're young students and nervous doing an aptitude test, then that's as far as they go. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

The instructor provides students with material and lessons that are above and beyond the course requirements, demonstrating his commitment to the course and his willingness to make connections with employers from the local area. However, to what extent do local employers utilize his expertise? Furthermore, to what extent are students aware of job opportunities in the area? Do they see their participation in the Process Operator course as beneficial to searching for a job post-graduation? These ideas are explored in the following chapters.

According to CNA-Placentia's website, upon graduation, students will be able to find employment in a number of industries, including: "mining, oil and gas, pulp and paper, food and beverage production, and natural gas processing" (CNA, 2012). More specifically, the college's annual report states this program is preparing students for employment at Vale's Long Harbour processing operation and around the world (CNA, 2012). The information available through the college and the provincial government gives a positive outlook on the future local employability of PO course graduates. However, the degree to which this positive outlook holds up in terms of employment of people who have completed the PO course is unknown because there is no formal follow-up post-completion with students nor is there any evaluation of the program.

Vale donates 28 scholarships a year to high school graduates on the Avalon Peninsula to pursue education programs relevant to mining operations (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011, p. 16). However, these scholarships were introduced by INCO, and there

is little information on how funds are awarded or if they are divided equally among campuses. Vale (2012) provides information in publicly available reports about their financial contributions to the school and local area, but they do not specify which CNA programs the scholarship funding supports. Their website does not state any concrete links between Vale, the Placentia CNA campus, and the future local/regional employability of students on their website or in any reports reviewed. In fact, information gained through key-informants suggests the support provided to PO students by Vale has declined since the induction of the course.

The course instructor said, “Vale has... it started out being nine... scholarships for people strictly in the process operator program. Last year [2013] that changed to two, and it was supposed to be equally divided between men and women... but last year I only had 8 students [7 women, 1 man] so everyone thought they were going to get a thousand dollars” (Interview, December 4, 2014). Two of the women from the 2013/2014 PO course were awarded the Vale scholarships based on financial need. The observed decrease in financial support provided to students in the PO course suggests that Vale is less supportive of the training program as a way to recruit potential processing operators.

DISCUSSION

Through reviewing publicly available documents and interview data gained from key-informants, several dominant ideas held by the NL government and industry players about young people in the province and their related engagement in post-secondary education, labour markets, and mobility become evident. There is a focus on addressing provincial youth unemployment, especially in rural places, and the idea that local

unemployment can be remedied through the provision of educational training tailored to the needs of the economy, which in recent years involves expanding trades-related course offerings to supply workers to large-scale natural resource industry projects. The government often assumes young people leave rural places because their expectations of suitable employment options in their local areas are too high, for the educational credentials they possess. However, as Lysenko and Vodden (2011) reveal, there is a high proportion of individuals with trades-related skills and qualifications in the Placentia area who cannot secure employment. This raises important questions about discrepancies between how NL youth mobilities are constructed and portrayed in public discourse versus how young people speak about and experience their individual mobilities. The following data chapters provide information on the actual lived experiences of 2014/2015 PO students and demonstrate how the ideas about youth mobilities contained in public documents and government/industry perceptions can in fact hide the challenges and real life circumstances of youth education-related mobility in rural NL.

Conclusion

This chapter sets the context for the current research, and provides a brief economic history of NL, focusing on the economic shift from fishery dependence to natural resource extraction, and promoting post-secondary education. After the cod moratorium, the government invested in post-secondary education and large-scale natural resource projects emerged. These projects provide employment for NL people, but do not always provide job security, and youth unemployment and outmigration persist. The economic, social and political context of the Placentia area and research site was

discussed in relation to it being centrally located around natural resource sector mega-projects. Information from reports prepared by Lysenko (2011) and Lysenko and Vodden (2011) were summarized and discussed, which facilitates the provision of demographic data. One of the most interesting findings was the high percentage of people in the Placentia area who have trades certificates, who are without work and receiving EI and Social Assistance because it suggests there are supports lacking for people with trades-related education (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011). Connections between Vale, the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, and the proposal to develop a process operator course at CNA-Placentia as a solution for the skills-labour mismatch (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011) was discussed.

Finally, the development of the PO course was explored through excerpts from interviews with key-informants. Links are perceived to exist between Vale and the course as Vale encouraged its development. Key-informants believe the close proximity of Long Harbour influenced the placement of the course at CNA-Placentia. Vale has donated money to the CNA for scholarships intended to support students who are studying trades relevant to the mining industry. However, the number of scholarships provided to students enrolled in the PO course specifically has decreased. Questions remain on what supports are provided to students who enroll in the program, and if they are being hired by local employer Vale.

Discussion in this chapter supports the reasoning for exploring the role of economic, social and political context on education-related mobility decision making processes. What does enrolling in a course designed to increase local labour supply, in a time when trades-related education programs are supported by government initiatives and

funding, imply about the future employment-related geographic mobility of students?

Since links between the PO course and Vale's plant in Long Harbour exist, do students that move from other areas of the province for the course intend to stay in the area after graduation, or travel for work? How do students view provincial employment prospects, and what influences their opinions?

The next chapter discusses how decisions to enroll in the PO course, and related forms of mobility, are affected by the promotion of other trades programs and class sizes, access to educational funding and advanced training, and perceptions of the local and provincial job market.

Chapter 5: Education and Employment

Introduction

In this chapter I describe the education-related mobility biographies of the Process Operator (PO) students, and discuss how these mobility biographies reflect personal interests that are mitigated by structural issues related to access to training (e.g., financial resources, structure of CNA training, dissemination of information about training programs and local labour markets). I also discuss the role of gender, class, and family as shaping pathways to the PO course, and how students' future employment plans reflect a wider culture of migration in NL, involving shift rotations and working in a different province. Themes emerging from interviews with students and key informants related to educational and employment structures are detailed in this chapter, passages from follow-up interviews with key informants and 2014/2015 PO students are presented, and data gained through analysis of survey responses and documents produced by the Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) government, CNA-Placentia, Vale, media sources, and other agencies is provided. First I look at how students talk about the process of deciding to enroll in the PO course. Specifically, I present the way negative experiences with other post-secondary programs or institutions structure decisions, and how despite interest in other programs, the organization of CNA campuses, class sizes and wait lists for courses constrains the educational mobilities of some students.

The following two sections center on how the structure of provincial educational funding and a lack of information on Advanced Block training provided to PO students impacts moving to Placentia and everyday mobilities, as well as future mobility plans. Additionally, I outline what Adam, Amy, Cathy, Claire, Fred, Matthew, Robert, Tim and

key-informant's say about employment opportunities in the local area, contrasted with what is contained in publicly available documents. Finally, ideas about student's future employment-related geographical mobility plans are explored. Student interview data suggests a willingness to travel for work if it means having a rotational schedule, so that relations with people and places can be maintained.

Educational Experiences, Institutional Organization, and Personal Interests

The 2014/2015 class of POs and the PO course is a useful sample and research site, because it is a relatively new, and unique program in Canada, which is only offered at one CNA campus in Placentia, NL. The program is designed to support young people interested in trades-work and the natural resource industry (CNA, 2012). However, in Chapter 4 course effectiveness was questioned. Unlike two PO courses mentioned in my context chapter, this program is not designed for the mining industry alone, although connections are suggested, and Advanced Blocks training related to provincial industries are developed. This section explores how student decisions to enroll in the PO course relate to educational experiences, personal interests and perceptions of academic ability, and future education and work ambitions. Most students (85.7%) heard about the PO course through the CNA website or other Internet sources (35.7%), parents (21.4%), and friends (28.6%).

When describing their lives before deciding to enroll in the 2014/2015 PO course, six out of eight student interviews refer to other experiences with post-secondary education as influencing their decisions. Some students talk about their past experiences as not in line with their personal interests or academic abilities, and see the PO course as

more suitable for them. Others have been influenced by information from family and friends. All students interviewed considered other educational programs, mostly skilled trades programs. There is more information available on Red Seal trades courses and programs, that are promoted by NL's provincial government and have been established for decades. When trades with higher enrollment rates reach capacity, students are wait listed. Not being able to pursue their first course choice, some decide to enroll in the PO course. There are options for some, who are accepted to multiple courses, but their education-related mobilities are structured by access to financial, educational and employment resources.

Tim, Amy, Claire and Matthew refer to their participation in classes at MUN and CNA in St. John's before deciding on CNA-Placentia, as not being the right fit for any of them. When explaining life before the PO course, Tim disclosed:

I finished high school, then I went and did first year engineering, and then I did six weeks of architectural [both at CNA Ridge Road campus in St. John's], and I wasn't very fond of that [laughs]. I didn't like being on a computer all day, so I took last year off trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I was looking at the trades, and I didn't think I was very hands-on so I didn't think this program was as much hands-on. It was more of like, the education side to it. So I got into this and now, just hoping to get a job. I was kind of thinking about doing Pipe Fitting in Clarenville, but I came into this. Mainly just because... living home kind of thing... less expensive. (Tim, interview, December 4, 2014)

Tim highlights what he dislikes about his participation in other programs at CNA versus what he hears about the PO course, and uses this reasoning to explain his choice of enrollment. Tim's decision-making process is centered on personal interests and perception of academic abilities, drawn from his previous post-secondary education experiences. His interview responses suggest he views the PO program as more academically oriented than other skilled trades involving manual labour, like Pipe Fitting

for example. Tim considers enrolling in a program that would require a move, but decides to stay in Placentia because he is financially supported by his parents who provide housing, resources to live, and pay for his education.

Interview responses from Amy demonstrate the role of personal interests, perception of academic abilities, and interactions with other educational paths in her decision to move for the PO course. She explains,

I was doing the CAS [Comprehensive Arts & Science Transition] program in GooseBay last year. I was going to transfer over to MUN, but I don't really like schoolwork that much so I decided to get a trade instead. I sat down and looked through all the trades and this is the one I wanted to do, so I came here and did this one. I read all the descriptions of all the trades that CNA offers, and this one seemed the most interesting to me. (Amy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Like Tim, Amy also emphasizes her experience with other courses as shaping her decision to enroll. However, Amy perceives the PO course as being less academic because it is a trade, whereas Tim distinguishes between trades, seeing it as more academic. Amy uses information from the college to make her decision on program enrollment.

Claire also talks about her experiences with post-secondary education prior to joining the PO course. She points out,

Well I graduated from high school three years ago, and then I took a year off. Then I went to MUN and I really didn't like it, so I worked for the year again... I was looking through the college book, and this is what I thought I would be interested in I guess... I applied for another course at the college [CNA]... it was in Instrumentation, and it was in... it might have been Seal Cove. Well I said I applied to the other one, and this is the one I got into. But I was looking in the book and those are the two that kind of jumped out at me. (Claire, interview, December 4, 2014).

Claire's account of moving indicates her past experience with university courses influences her decision to move for the PO program, which suggests her mobility is

shaped by interactions with educational institutions. She loosely relates her enrollment to her personal interests and use of college information on courses; however, she also applied to another program and did not get accepted. This is something beyond Claire's control that structures her education-related mobility.

Matthew mirrors Claire in his dislike of university classes and demonstrates how past educational experiences and his relations to family and friends structure enrollment and decisions about mobility. He explains,

I graduated in 2013. My first year I actually went to MUN because... I was unsure of what I wanted to do and it was where the majority of my friends were going. So, I wanted to be with my friends to make the transition as easy as possible. I finished two semesters but at the end of the second semester, well half way through the second semester I realized it wasn't my... I wasn't cut from that cloth, and that's when I had a pending application that my Dad had submitted for the Process Operator program. The same time I applied for MUN he had applied to this program on the side. I didn't even know about it and when I got out of MUN I had this seat waiting for me so I was like, thanks Dad! (Matthew, interview, December 4, 2014)

Unlike Claire and Tim, Matthew's past mobility for MUN and his move to participate in the PO program is not based on personal interests, but it does involve his self-perception of academic ability. He has ideas about the kind of people who do well at MUN, and from his point of view, he does not fit that image. Matthew is open about his lack of direction, and indicates family and friends are his main education-related mobility shapers. His father applied to the PO course without his knowledge, exercising parental control, however Matthew views his father's actions as supportive.

Tim's and Adam's parents also influenced their decisions to enroll in the PO course. Adam moved from a community 150km away from Placentia, while Tim did not move. Tim's mother played a role in his decision to stay in Placentia. He states, "a

couple of years ago my mom, during the year that I took off, she sent this program to me and I could have probably got in last year if I wanted to but I didn't know enough about it. So I just looked into it and stuff and ended up getting into it then (this year)" (Tim, interview, December 4, 2014). Adam says he chose the PO course over other programs because, "Well my father – when he was working out west, and he was working with Process Operators, and I have bad knees and he said it's a lot less physical labor. That was basically what it came down to" (Interview, December 4, 2014). Matthew was also influenced by his family, as his father applied to the PO course for him without his knowledge. Clearly decisions to enroll by Tim, Adam and Matthew are influenced by information received from and action taken by their parents. Tim refers to information on the course provided by his mother that influenced his enrollment while Adam uses his knowledge of his father's profession as a reason for choosing the PO program over other trades.

Robert and Cathy both mention the PO course had no waiting list for acceptance, which influenced their decisions to enroll. Robert states, "I just wanted to stay in school so I just thought I'd put my name down here. I was thinking about doing Mechanics actually [in St. John's at CNA], but it was full. I chose this course because there was no waiting list" (Robert, interview, December 4, 2014). Robert's decision to live at home and enroll in the program has less to do with his academic interests and more to do with his parents supporting him financially, but not providing resources to move. He says his parents missed his sister when she moved to St. John's for education, suggesting perhaps a sense of responsibility for his parents.

Cathy's account differs from Robert's however, because she could have enrolled in Radiography [CNA-Prince Phillip, St. John's], but she moved to Placentia after finishing her Adult Basic Education (ABE) course.

I did the ABE program at CNA for a year and then it got moved to the Discovery Centre, so I went there then just to get my English grade up because I wanted to do Radiography, but there was a huge waiting list so I applied for this and I actually got accepted to both at the same time, but I chose this one. (Cathy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Cathy's explanation of enrolling in the PO course demonstrates she did have a choice in educational paths. She moved to Placentia instead of participating in a Radiography program close to home. Cathy wants to obtain a well-paying job after the course, and has a positive perception of PO employment opportunities in the province, which helps explain her decision to enroll. She has a friend that works for Vale, who commutes from St. John's to Long Harbour by bus, and sees this as a plausible option for the future. This finding supports the rationale for exploring labour market considerations and interpersonal relations in addition to personal interests, and their effects on the education related decision-making processes of PO students.

Finally, several students plan on pursuing further studies after they finish the course. Fred moved to Placentia from Atlantic Canada to participate in the program. He considered the Power and Process Engineering program at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) prior to choosing CNA-Placentia.

Well it was the one my friend suggested; he said it's an interesting and obviously a very... well-paying job in the Power Engineering. I like the fact that I can go and do that. They actually split it up in CNA. There is Power Engineering and there is a Process Operator program, where in Nova Scotia you do both in two years right after each other. Power Engineering is in Corner Brook I think I saw online, so yeah I decided I wanted to do Process Operator first and then work my way up to Power Engineering. (Fred, interview, December 4, 2014)

Fred constructs his participation in the PO course as a precursor to further education that will help him get a well-paying job and thus, have economic benefits. His plans are influenced by information friends provide. Taking the one-year course appeals to him more than the two-year course offered in Nova Scotia, even though the NSCC program would not have required a move. Fred's interest in the Power Engineering course at CNA in Corner Brook after he graduates, if he does not secure PO employment in the offshore oil industry, demonstrates the role of labour market conditions in shaping future education and employment-related mobility.

Amy considered the Power Engineering course at CNA referred to by Fred. She says,

I applied for a Power Engineering program in Corner Brook, but it started in January. I got accepted for that one but I'm already half way through this one so I'm going to stick with this. Hopefully I'll get a job with this trade, and if not – if I come back and do another trade, once you've done one you've pretty much done them all. (Amy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Amy sees her participation in the PO program as a way of gaining employment in the future. However, she is willing to return to school and learn another trade if she doesn't find work. Amy doesn't recognize differences between trades offered by the college, holding the opinion that completing one makes pursuing others easier. She perceives trades programs as non-academic, which do not require a lot of effort or commitment. Amy does not find the PO course work challenging, and says Placentia is boring, so she works part-time in the service industry.

Matthew also talks about his future plans for education, relating them to his desire to gain employment. He explains,

I'm enrolled actually, also in Welding for next year. I looked at that because I've heard it's good pay... it's, well there's... I've heard a lot of bad things about it but I've heard a lot of good things as well. But it was too late, and I already had a seat in the Process Operator course, and I didn't really want to dive into a trade. Like this trade, you've got the one-year and then there are Blocks proposed but so far to date – the Block system hasn't been developed. So I looked at this as a one-year thing and not that big a time commitment. And if I like trade work, I'll come back next year and do Welding. (Matthew, interview, December 4, 2014)

Similar to Fred, Matthew was attracted by the length of the course. By the time he was accepted for the Welding program, he had already decided to enroll in the PO course. He sees trades-work as economically rewarding, but also unpredictable, which is discussed further below. Fred and Matthew see the PO course as a facilitator for future education and employment, the short duration of the course contributing to agency in future mobilities.

Views on Future Local Employment

POs find employment in a wide range of fields including: mining, oil and gas, pulp and paper, food and beverage production, and natural gas processing. POs focus on safety requirements and hazards associated with the processing of materials, environmental issues, consistent and efficient plant operation, and the importance of meeting both production requirements and product quality specifications while operating the process as efficiently as possible (CNA, 2012). This section focuses on student perspectives of employment opportunities in the Placentia area and how these impact both potential and actual mobilities, and related decision-making.

All student interview participants emphasize a desire to obtain PO employment post-course, although some envision further education before entering the workforce if

they do not find employment after graduation. All of the students from NL speak about Vale and the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, and their desire to work there after course completion. Matthew has previous experience pursuing PO employment with Vale, and has heard about other PO job opportunities in the province. He explains,

I've heard a nice bit about Newfoundland. Newfoundland is like the sleeping giant almost; we haven't really had our big boom yet. We're becoming a 'have' province; it will take time though to get the infrastructure there. But to date, I've heard about the plant down in Long Harbour, there's always been the refinery in Come-by-Chance, but I've heard bad things about that one because it's always changing hands? You don't know if you could be there one day and gone the next, right. The offshore, I've heard stuff about the offshore. I've heard about the mud from the offshore gets treated, so that could be a Process Operator job in Foxtrap. I don't really know many people who have done this program, because it isn't offered anywhere else and I think it's only been here for 5 years. (Matthew, interview, December 4, 2014)

Matthew mentions large-scale provincial natural resource sector industry projects covered in Chapter 4. Matthew hears mixed reviews on PO employment in the Placentia area and other parts of NL. His knowledge of local job opportunities is drawn from information from personal connections, like family and friends. Although he recognizes multiple locations he can pursue PO work, there is also a lack of clarity around the likelihood of gaining employment with these projects with qualifications from the course. Matthew refers to the unstable nature of the resource extractive sector, where seasonal work and lay-offs are common, which provides evidence for the barriers to employment identified by Lysenko and Vodden (2011) in Chapter 4.

When asked if she expects to leave the area after she finishes the PO course, Claire expressed a desire to stay in NL, but would move to secure employment if she does not obtain well-paying work otherwise. In regards to local opportunities, Claire has heard things about Long Harbour, and Vale. She said, "That's what everyone is talking about.

Some people get jobs down in Long Harbour and some people don't" (Claire, interview, December 4, 2014). Like Matthew, Claire also notes a lack of consensus around who Vale hires, and the usefulness of completing the course in getting a job. Although there are clear links between the course development, government initiatives to support trades students, and supplying workers for local projects, Vale does not seem to value the course in qualifying people for employment in Long Harbour, instead focusing on personal attitudes and psychological aptitude tests, which could eliminate students from advancing before they are even given a chance to engage in the interview process (KI, interview, December 4, 2014).

Labour market perceptions and the availability of well-paying jobs definitely impact student plans of moving or not. Fred reveals his opinion of job opportunities in the local area, and if he expects to move once the course is complete. He offers,

Well from what I've heard it's not that great. I mean a lot of people have done this course and actually have applied to Long Harbour and from what I hear – I don't know I'm not a local – not gotten a position. Whereas any person off the street would go and get a job in the area we're getting an education for. I hope to finish this course and obviously pass. I'd like to get employment offshore if I could and if not I'll have to go out West. Well, if I can I'd live in St. John's and work for an offshore rig because that's where most of the offices are located so, but I would stay in the Newfoundland area if I could. (Fred, interview, December 4, 2014)

Interviews with Matthew, Claire, and Fred show uncertainty surrounding the usefulness of the course in pursuing local employment opportunities. Student views demonstrate the crucial role of labour market considerations in determining future employment-related mobilities. Students are willing to move where there is work, which can signify agency in mobility decision-making, however, the structure of available jobs and labour market conditions strongly shape future plans.

Fred is discouraged by information he is exposed to about employment opportunities at Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour. Cathy mirrors his concerns. She says,

I don't really know. I heard that Long Harbour doesn't hire, like if you have this course, which makes no sense, but I heard that! So I hope that's not true, because I really wouldn't mind working out there. It's not too far... like I drive sometimes... if I don't have class until 2[pm] I'll just stay in town [St. John's area] and drive the next day, and it's really not that bad... so I wouldn't mind driving. Or even get the bus... I had a friend who used to do that [bus to Long Harbour] and she said it wasn't too bad. (Cathy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Despite negative information Cathy hears about past students trying to gain employment with Vale, she would still like to work there after she is finished the course so she can stay close to home by commuting back and forth to Long Harbour. Her education-related mobility is enabled through her ability to travel between the St. John's area and Placentia, through access to a vehicle and related financial resources.

Amy shares her opinion on future employment plans, which is similar to the confusion Claire, Cathy, and Fred express. She reveals,

I didn't really hear that much. I've heard people in Long Harbour [employers] don't hire people who do this program. It really doesn't make much sense. I should have just applied for a job instead of doing the program. Well, not really. I guess this is where the work is to. If I could work at Long Harbour I'd stay here [Placentia]. (Amy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Amy moved over 1,500km to participate in the PO course, and is willing to stay in the area after she finishes the course if she can get a job. This suggests Amy's mobilities and future plans are highly structured by available employment options. Amy, Claire, Cathy, and Fred's words convey the confusion surrounding missing links between the PO course and job opportunities in the Placentia area, specifically Long Harbour. Many of the students want to work in the Placentia area post-graduation, but they are also exposed to

information that calls the usefulness of the course into question. Although course and future employment links are quite clear in publicly available documents on the course, after enrolling, students hear conflicting information from individuals in the program who have personally applied for a job with Vale, or have been informed by the experiences of others.

However, not all PO students interviewed construct information about future local employment opportunities negatively. Robert suggests, “I know someone who did it [the course] before and didn’t get a job with it and two of my buddies who didn’t do it and did get [PO] jobs with it [Vale in Long Harbour], so it shouldn’t be too bad (Robert, interview, December 4, 2014). Robert is optimistic for job opportunities post-graduation despite the fact that his two friends who did get PO jobs in Long Harbour did not complete the course he is doing. Adam also has a positive perception of the provincial job market, which he relates to his family’s employment-related mobility experiences.

From what I heard it’s a lot better than when I moved out West. That’s why I moved out West, so my Dad could get a job. But ah, yeah the last few years or whatever, it seems like there’s a lot more here than there used to be so that’s why they came back to Newfoundland. And ah, I’m okay with that. (Adam, interview, December 4, 2014)

Adam’s positive outlook on future employment is based on information from his father’s work experiences. His father is a journey person that works with POs. Adam’s family moved to Western Canada from NL when Adam was a child so that his father could pursue work. After he finished high school, Adam’s family moved back the province because his father was able to secure local employment. Again, much of the student interview data on mobility decision-making centers around employment and job

prospects, but views on local labour markets are influenced by information from family, friends, and public discourse on trades-related education and employment.

I asked key informants about past PO students and whether or not they found employment post-course. The campus administrator said, “I don’t know, I know some of them are working. When people leave we kind of lose touch with them. I’m sure someone in the college might have that information, but I don’t have it (Interview, December 4, 2014). The course instructor was more informed, offering:

There’s one, I think I had two – just trying to think from last year’s students – three I think went out working in the field. My first class I put off, I think there’s actually five of them who work for Vale down in Long Harbour, and it’s a job to keep track of everybody. Some of them look out West actually because Alberta advertises for Process Operators in the oil patch, so some of them are looking to go that way, you know? (Interview, December 4, 2014)

Although the course instructor’s information on employment of former students is quite limited, he says some PO students are working for Vale in Long Harbour, while others have gone to Western Canada for work. For some past students, course completion is a precursor to future employment-related geographic mobility. However, how is mobility accomplished?

Once students finish the program it seems there is little follow-up by CNA-Placentia, and few connections are forged by the college with local employers. Matthew would like greater access to employment resources, and shares his job application experience with Vale before he enrolled at CNA-Placentia.

Right out of high school I tried to get a job with Vale. I applied because I didn’t really know what I wanted to do and the starting wage was \$28/hour so I said lets go for it. They had a series of hiring processes, there were like 5 steps. You had to give a resume, cover letter; application... then there was a phone interview, aptitude test, and a single interview... I got to the single interview but I was late for it because I was trying to get there on the Metrobus, and the bus was late.

They had their way with me. It was more of an interrogation. If I got past that fourth stage, then I would have had a board interview. Then if I passed that I would have had to pass a medical test, so they could make sure I wasn't on drugs or anything I guess. Then and only then would they offer me the job... Hopefully with this course I'll have a better shot. (Matthew, interview, December 4, 2014)

Matthew sees his participation in the PO course as increasing his employment chances post-graduation. He doesn't question the value of completing the course like some of the other students. The negative impact of being late for his interview with Vale because of the Metrobus suggests mobility can be constrained without the proper resources, like a car. The timing of the Metrobus schedule and structure of public transportation is something beyond Matthew's control.

Educational Funding for 2014/2015 PO Students

This section explores how the structure of educational funding restricts student mobilities, and how these limitations are resolved. Student interviews reveal delays in receiving student loans and government funding, and a lack of access to the information needed to obtain loans. Funding delays were mediated by parental finances and personal employment savings. Information drawn from government and college documents suggest students can access loans, grants, financing, scholarships and awards, but there are few funds dedicated to PO students or Blue Seal trades specifically. According to the survey data, program funding is obtained from parental contributions (35.7%), personal employment savings (21.4%), line of credit/student loan (14.29%), sponsorships (from HRDC or other government agency) (28.6%), and other sources such as RRSP contributions and Employment Insurance (14.3%). Data from survey results show all of the students interviewed (n=8) indicated their education as being funded, at least in part,

by parental contributions. Interestingly, *none* of the students surveyed report their education as being funded by scholarships.

During key informant interviews, I inquired about sources of funding provided to students in the PO course. Their responses contained similar information, but different perspectives. The course instructor outlines some of the scholarships he has knowledge of, and how they are presented to students.

So it's a Blue Seal trade, which means it's just a provincial ticket. You can get funding through the government, through E.I. and whatever resources they have, and actually, Vale has a number... it started out being 9... of scholarships for people strictly in the Process Operator program. Last year that changed to 2. There's a number of scholarships of course. That one was unique to the Process Operators. But there's other ones. Offshore for example there's one from the Ocean Ranger, there's a number of them that are available. I think last year there was probably about, again ballpark figure, somewhere around \$17,000 in scholarships issued to students at this campus. It's actually in their little package that they get. They get a student handbook and if you go into the beginning of the handbook there will be services that are available at the college, and I think when they get an orientation package it's all in there. You know, the Learner Services Directory. (KI, interview, December 4, 2014)

The course instructor identifies several sources of scholarships for students at the CNA-Placentia campus. However, the instructor also indicates that financial support targeting PO students has decreased. Vale initially contributed nine, one thousand dollar scholarships to PO students, then only two scholarships to the class of 2013/2014, and finally provided no funding for those enrolled in 2014/2015. However, the CNA website lists 2016 recipients of Vale's PO scholarship. One woman and one man received \$1000 dollars from the Vale Process Operator Bursary. The woman is from rural NL and the man is from a Western province ("Scholarships and Awards – Winners 2015/2016," n.d.). A search for PO scholarships on CNA's funding information website returns no results.

CNA-Placentia's campus administrator describes funding for PO students, and how it is accessed.

When someone applies for any program in the college, you can apply to student aid, to financial aid if you want a student loan. Some people get grants, you can apply to... I don't know what it's called now, it used to be HRDC, and whatever it is, so some people are sponsored by that to go to school. Then some students just pay their own way because it's only \$726 dollars a semester for tuition. It's not a lot of money so... and we have a lot of scholarships for example, so our student development officer and our staff will tell the students what scholarships are available. We also post things on the board when scholarships become available and I mean our SDO [student development officer] tells the students about financial aid. We don't have one right now but [there] will be [a] new SDO in January. (KI, interview, December 4, 2014)

The campus administrator considers CNA tuition affordable. The role of CNA's SDO is to notify students of available scholarships, however, the campus administrator reveals there was no one responsible for providing 2014/2015 PO students with information on how to access funding sources. Due to this lack of information, some students experienced delays in receiving funding, and were left to cover financial expenses on their own or with the help of parental resources.

The AES website provides information about receiving financial assistance from the provincial and federal government while enrolled in post-secondary education full-time ("Full-Time Students," 2016). The NL government has increased the availability of provincial non-repayable grants, and ensures tuition fees do not rise. Financial assistance offered to students can cover tuition and living expenses, however women and men dependent on their parents who live home and move away for post-secondary education, receive fewer benefits than those who have been out of high school for more than four years, or worked full-time for two years post-high school before enrolling. For dependent students, parental income factors in to the financial assessment, meaning more students

and their families are responsible for covering the costs of post-secondary education and associated living expenses (“Full-Time Students,” 2016). However, this is only true for students whose parents make above a certain level of income. Young people from low income families are better able to access student loans and grants provided by the provincial and federal government.

The federal refers to Financial Aid Offices as places where students can receive support in the application process (“Canada Student Loans,” 2016). However, there are only two locations in NL, one in St. John’s and another in Corner Brook, therefore consulting someone face to face is difficult to achieve for many students in other rural locations. Representatives are available by telephone, but wait times can be lengthy.

Cathy and Fred talk about the experience moving for the PO course. They both experienced funding delays, which made their moves more difficult. Cathy explains:

I got a student loan. I just got that actually, like a week ago [laughs]. It’s December, so my parents were just paying everything. Well yeah, I mean my parents – they were paying for it, but it’s still a lot like you know... Your rent, then your groceries, then your gas, then your books. Like it’s a lot, and the funding really doesn’t cover all of it when you think about it. (Cathy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Cathy criticizes the loan processing time and the amount she receives, noting that even with funding, her living and education expenses may surpass the amount she gets from provincial and federal government funding. Cathy is supported financially by her parents, who cover her expenses until funding is secured. The CNA website describes a financial credit system where the school covers tuition fees until students receive loans (“Fees and Charges,” n.d.), but Cathy does not mention whether or not she made use of this option.

Like Cathy, Fred also struggles financially while moving to participate in the PO course. He outlines how his education is funded,

For this semester it was completely by myself [employment savings] I didn't get a student credit line. And then next semester the skills and development program in Nova Scotia is going to pay for things. It would have been nice to have the first semester paid for but just due to some conflicts with information we had to figure that out and we didn't get it until about late October or so, it was too late by then and I had already paid for my tuition. I'm currently on unemployment with the skills development program. (Fred, interview, December 4, 2014)

Although Fred has obtained funding from the NS skills and development program, both he and Cathy found alternate methods of paying tuition in September due to delays in receiving loans and funding. Unlike Cathy, whose parents help her financially, Fred covers the expense of tuition himself through personal employment savings. Cathy notes the long wait time for receiving her loan, but does not describe why her loan was late. Fred, however, has to wait a semester for government support because of missing information needed to secure funds.

Advanced Blocks and Training

Students in the 2014/2015 PO course express an interest in learning more about Advanced Block training to increase their education level in their chosen career, and it seems the curriculum is already in place to accommodate continued learning. Since the course is a Blue Seal trade, it is an apprenticeship process that can only be completed within the province of NL. However, it appears that links are missing in connecting potential workers with potential employers, and in connecting past students working as POs with the information they need to register as apprentices and engage in skills development. Fred mentioned he would like access to “a little more information on the

next steps for Blocks and things because it's a newer program and they're still working out the kinks and all of that" (interview, December 4, 2014).

Key informants are questioned about opportunities for apprenticeship, advanced blocks, and training. The course instructor offers his knowledge on advanced training and PO apprenticeship, what he has heard from students and the advice he gives them, in the passage below.

Most of them have expressed an interest to me, about where do they go from here... how do they get their logbook and that, and they actually do a course here called... It's called introduction to apprenticeship. There aren't any registered apprentices in the province right now, and no journeypersons. It's going to have to be grandfathered in, like there are people out there that know the program, whether they're supervisors or superintendents, or whatever. Someone has to initially sign off on these hours, and if you're working at it I'm sure the person that's above you should have the qualifications to sign off the first group. The advanced blocks may be developed. I don't know. I know there's been a lot of work done in it, because I've been asked to comment on some of it or sit in on some of it. What I tell the students when they ask me where do I go from here... I just know from other trades programs, which is to contact the apprenticeship board. You know... tell them you're working as a process operator. Tell them you need a logbook or ask, where do I go from here? They have to do that [the students], take the initiative themselves to start. I tell students if you are working as a process operator, you need to keep track of your hours because once it does start you'll have all these hours. Like I know from my first class, some students working down at Vale [Long Harbour] they've been down there for 3 years now right? At Vale now they're calling them plant technicians I believe. They should have or could have advanced by now. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

The course instructor recollects past students who have been working for Vale in Long Harbour for three years. None of the students who have completed the PO program have registered as apprentices in the province. This calls in to question the accessibility of advanced education for POs in the province.

Although the course instructor has students express interest in furthering their trade, the campus administrator proposes students do not register as apprentices because it

is not required or advantageous to those working in environments unsupportive of apprenticeship training. He offers,

Well we have no Advanced Blocks yet. We do have the Blocks developed but we haven't had any students come back yet for it, but then again that's more of a department question [government] than a college one. Until the department looks at them and then says you need to be registered and come back and do your blocks I guess people aren't going to come back and do them. Because then when you do that you have to give up work and everything else too. It depends on the employer, because you usually get a pay wage and some like, down at Vale that doesn't happen. They don't hire on apprentices. They'll hire anyone and call them process operators or process technicians, and I mean they don't buy into the apprenticeship thing. They're trying to hire people down there because they can't get enough people to work in their plant. They're always putting out jobs ads, but they're saying some people aren't good enough even if they've passed the program. There's links missing somewhere. (KI, interview, December 4, 2014)

Despite an abundance of job ads seeking process operators to work for Vale in Long Harbour, those who complete the program and apply are not always hired. There is a lack of organization and information when it comes to PO apprenticeship registration. As the course instructor emphasizes, students have to “take the initiative themselves to start.” However, if employers do not encourage advanced education for employees, do not commit to hiring PO apprentices, and tend to hire people without the course certification, what is the benefit of participating in the PO program?

Negotiations: Future Employment-Related Mobility

Throughout interviews with 2014/2015 PO students, I question future plans and whether they anticipate moving to find work or not. Nine out of the fourteen students surveyed express a desire to live in the Placentia area, or in a larger centers like St. John's, in order to work or commute to somewhere within the province or to another province for employment. Cathy, Adam and Matthew hope to obtain a job with work

rotations that will allow them to work for an extended period of time followed by being off for an extended period of time. An example of a shift rotation would be three weeks on, and three weeks off. Cathy suggests,

Well, I hope to graduate [laughs]. I hope to get a job in town [St. John's], with good pay, but if not I don't really mind moving. Well, I say that now... but, I probably wouldn't enjoy it... but I wouldn't mind. I probably wouldn't move away but I would do the two weeks there, or off, or whatever. From town, I would expect to leave the area, because... well, you can get some jobs in town like at the Brewery, but I would probably rather work at a job like in Long Harbour, so if I could get one there, yeah. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

Cathy's main objective is to secure a well-paying job. She doesn't want to move permanently, but she is willing to commute for work or move on a temporary basis if it means she can stay in St. John's. Cathy's story contributes to a more layered understanding of how people think about mobility as she is willing to move temporarily to work so she can still live close to home, and spend time with her family and friends.

Adam and Matthew share Cathy's desire to find employment after they finish the PO course. Adam says, "I'm not sure if I want to go offshore on a rig or if I want to work here just I don't know, I do a lot of hunting so... but I was thinking like a turn-around where I could get a week off instead of a weekend." (Adam, interview, December 4, 2014)

Adam is willing to work offshore or in the Placentia area, but would like to have a job that allows him to come home and engage in local activities he enjoys. Matthew on the other hand, relates his desire to work in the province to making money and having personal time.

I'd like to stay in Newfoundland and I'd like to work on an oilrig. I adore the idea of working turn-arounds... 3 weeks on, 3 weeks off sort of thing. Nine to five jobs are good for families and stuff but at this point in my life I haven't really

considered family. I'm just in the business of making quick money and having a lot of time to myself. So a nice turn around on the rigs would be good. I'd be willing to move just to make money. I'd rather stay here but if I have to I'll go. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

Like Adam, Robert hopes to be employed in the province, but will also move on a temporary basis or work a rotational schedule. Stories from Cathy, Robert, Adam, and Matthew demonstrate the tension between wanting to remain close to home or within the province, but accepting that if they have to move for work, they will. However, they all wish to maintain their attachments to home. Some lines of thought, like Matthew's, center around his individual personal desires for time to himself, whereas Adam enjoys what the Placentia area has to offer him in terms of leisure activities like hunting, and Cathy wants to be near her family in St. John's.

Throughout interviews, the women and men participating in the 2014/2015 PO course report their perspectives on local employment opportunities by describing what they have heard. Many of their stories centered around Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, which is only a short distance from Placentia, although there were students who make reference to other potential fields of employment. Some of the students heard negative information about job prospects with Vale, recounting tales heard from past students, who complete the PO course and do not get hired. One of the women in the course, Amy, wonders why she even took the course at all if it is true that Vale does not hire people with the PO certification.

A job ad for a Process Plant Technician (PPT) with Vale at the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, obtained online from Workopolis, presents Vale in a positive light. Within the job posting, Vale claims:

The Processing Plant Technician position at Long Harbour is unique in the Canadian metals processing industry. Our Technicians are multi-functional, participating in a wide range of activities within the operations environment. They come from a range of educational and employment backgrounds - this diversity is essential to the success of our team. Our work environment is constantly evolving and there is an expectation that employees will continuously strengthen their knowledge, skills and abilities, while motivating and supporting each other to develop as a high performance team. (Vale: Plant Processing Technician [Job ad], August 2014)

Vale refers to the uniqueness of the PPT position and emphasizes their focus and support for advanced skills development. Since Vale was involved in the development of the PO course, you would think students who complete the course would be suitable candidates for positions in Long Harbour. However, as the students and key informants interviewed demonstrate, graduates of the course are not necessarily hired by Vale.

The course instructor clearly demonstrates his willingness to adapt his teachings of the PO course to the needs of local employers. Within the YRAS, the NL provincial government says they intend to, “work with employer and labour representatives to encourage the private sector to support their employees through skills and career development programs and continue to support the development of co-operatives in rural Newfoundland and Labrador” (HRLE, 2009). However, the extent to which the government has followed through on their recommendations is unclear. There are people working as POs and there are students interested in Advanced Blocks, but none have registered as apprentices or returned for further education. There is missing information and a lack of organization that must be improved to support students in their future endeavors.

DISCUSSION

The education-related biographical mobilities of PO students involved in this study give insight into how young people determine their individual journeys to employment, demonstrating class and gender patterns, in addition to labour market and institutional challenges. Themes emerging from exploring PO student enrollment include the role of personal interests, past experiences with education-related mobility and education programs, student perceptions of academic abilities, parental control and support, and the structure of CNA courses, including class sizes and wait lists resulting from certain trades being promoted and talked about more than others. Some students have choice in deciding where and what to study, being accepted into multiple programs, while others are restricted to courses not at capacity. Students' access to financial resources in some cases facilitate mobility and in other cases, staying.

My data gives support to work from Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) which finds that mobility plans are explained by local labour market perceptions. Changing labour markets and economic circumstances means some students take non-traditional routes to education and employment. This is evident in my work because there are women from urban and rural places moving to a rural place to participate in a trades-related course, which is linked to the primary industries. The young people in this study are dedicated to improving their educational credentials to gain employment, which has influenced some past mobility experiences. Many of the young people interviewed had already engaged in or considered other education programs. Students who decided to stay in Placentia, and those who moved to participate in the PO course, illustrate the necessity of accessing this training in order to potentially gain employment. However, the links between completing the course and becoming employed are not clear. According to some

students and key-informants, Vale isn't hiring people who complete the PO course, which is discouraging for those from outside the local area, who may consider staying post-graduation. This demonstrates how student mobilities are shaped by not only personal interests, but also by past education-related moves, and perceptions of the local labour market, drawn from information from family and peers.

Class, family, and gender influence students' program choice and education-related mobilities. Matthew and the other students who discuss their past educational experiences are taking individualized routes to post-secondary formed through their access to different forms of capital like information on educational programs and financial support from parents, which are shaped by the economic, social and political context of their lives, in line with some of the literature and theory reviewed in Chapter 2 (Corbett, 2013; Christie, 2007; Cresswell, 2006; Holdsworth, 2009; Holton, 2015; Ni Laoire, 2000). For example, Tim's choice of training program and its location were facilitated by parental financial support and encouragement. Students with working class parents are encouraged to participate in the course because it provides a possibility of gaining local employment post-graduation. This lines up with work from Corbett (2013), who finds parental occupation and income impact the educational paths and programs students are encouraged to take. Additionally, for some students, the course was local, or close to home, which in some cases means parents have a greater ability to provide support in terms of housing and financial help.

Whelan (2000), Genge (1996) and Bourgeois (2009) suggest women and men are attracted to different kinds of programs based on personal interests and perceptions of academic abilities, in combination with information and influence from family and

friends. Some research finds male students more interested in pursuing hands-on technical work, while women are drawn towards university, but my data does not fully support these notions. In fact, Adam's Father suggested the PO course to him because it is a less manual job than other working class employment. Tim's perspective diverges from past literature that suggests individuals, men in particular, who pursue programs in rural places have fewer educational aspirations than those who go to university (Corbett, 2005; 2007; 2009). However, the rest of the students, male and female, find the PO course less academic and university-like. Amy's views diverge from research (Genge, 1996; Whelan 2000; Bourgeois, 2008) that finds women from rural areas prefer university and academic courses, but in terms of trades-related programs, the PO course is more academic, which could be the reason why enrollment among women is so high. Gender differences in course enrollment are not straightforward, suggesting gender is not the main influence on student decisions, but does play a role in shaping mobilities, supporting the work of Ni Laoire (2000).

Much of what 2014/2015 PO students hear about job opportunities centers on Vale and the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, other large scale natural resource industry projects throughout the province, and opportunities in Western Canada. Even though students have heard negative things about the unstable nature of work from industry projects, both women and men in the course want to pursue these fields of employment for economic reasons, but also so they can stay in the province, or work shift rotations, which allow for temporary moves. The young people in this study prefer to stay within the province for school and work. Some prefer living in larger areas, while others have a desire to commute or work shift rotations in a rural place or elsewhere.

There are students willing to move to or stay in the Placentia area if they could be employed by Vale. Students' views are examples of the possible negotiations associated with mobilities and illustrate a wider culture of migration in NL, which involves working turnarounds or in Western provinces like Alberta. There is a desire to be employed, but also to be close to family and to live in NL, even if that means engaging in mobility. Mobility plans should not be reduced to only economic considerations, but also involve attachments to home communities, or NL more generally, and the support and resources they receive from personal networks like family and friends, the government and educational institutions, in line with the theories of Ni Laoire (2000).

Key-informants reveal sources of funding for students in the PO course have decreased and the availability of information on employment and advanced training is restricted. Although information drawn from government and college information on student loans, grants, awards, scholarships, and other sources seems encouraging and generous, the degree to which students have the resources to access required information to avoid delays, are not even. Problems receiving funding in a timely manner supports the notions of research like Ni Laoire (2000), Bourgeois (2008), and Corbett (2009; 2013) who find government initiatives are based on neoliberal values, which hold individuals and families responsible for financing post-secondary education, instead of promoting a dependence on the state.

The institutional organization of the apprenticeship program deters student advancement because although there are Blocks developed and people working in the province as POs, no one is registering. This may be due to a lack of information and coordination by AES, who see enrollment in Advanced Blocks as a personal

responsibility, and also evidence of tensions between government plans for advanced training and the needs of Vale. A main perception is that Vale is not hiring individuals with the PO course, which could indicate the company doesn't want employees leaving for apprenticeship training, so instead they hire workers without specialized training. This suggests the youth unemployment and outmigration strategies proposed by the government are flawed, because a program designed to qualify local people for local jobs is actually attracting more people from larger places, and it is unclear whether Vale is hiring people with the PO course, because there is no information on past students once they leave CNA. Therefore, we can't tell whether outmigration is reduced, or whether the course has any positive benefits to the area and local people.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have provided interview excerpts from women and men in the 2014/2015 PO course and from key informants. Students focus on experiences with past educational programs, waiting lists for other programs, issues obtaining government funding, and confusion surrounding the availability of Advanced Blocks training for PO employment. They also told me what they have heard about employment opportunities in the Placentia area. Specifically, students have heard negative information about the acceptance of their qualifications at Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour. Despite the negative things they have heard, many of the students still wish to gain employment in the Placentia area or another location in the province, where they can work turnarounds.

Interest in pursuing employment related to the natural resource industry and

mega-projects diverges from previous literature (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006; Genge, 1996; Whelan, 2000) that finds young people are likely to expect to move away despite close proximity to resource-related employment. The ambivalence apparent in the ways students speak about their decisions to move or not to enroll in the 2014/2015 PO course suggests there is more involved in the process than just considering personal interests and preferences for educational choices and opportunities for future employment.

The structure of educational funding, the promotion of skilled trades by the government and the popularity among certain well-known trades, combined with labour market perceptions strongly shape student possibilities for education and employment-related mobility. Within the social, economic, and political context of their lives, it is through their strategic use of individual resources, interests and abilities, in combination with support from family, that mobility plans, actual, and every day mobilities are accomplished (Ni Laoire, 2000). The next chapter gives further details on the ways emotional geographies and relations with family and friends structure and enable the education and employment-related mobilities of students.

Chapter 6: Relations with People and Places

Introduction

This chapter explores the role of place-based connections in shaping education and employment-related mobility. In particular, I use the biographical approach to these students' experiences to argue that individualized and meritocratic interpretations provide only partial explanations for POs' educational-related mobilities. The biographical mobilities of POs, including moves to where the course is located and local/daily mobilities to campus, demonstrate the salience of gendered local labour markets, family resources (especially access to property) and connections to the local place. Relations with people and places are important because although past experiences with education, structures of funding, the promotion of trades-related courses, and views on local employment opportunities indicate the role of personal interests and institutional structures on decisions to move or not, they do not fully account for human agency in student mobilities. First, experiences of finding housing in Placentia for those who moved is examined. For some students, relocation for education was smooth, but for others housing and isolation were significant issues. Then, the influence of family and friends in student experiences of moving or not to enroll in the 2014/2015 PO course are considered. Family and friends are sources of educational information, and parents provide financial and emotional support. Relations to family also play an important role in how students engage in mobility that is more complex than simply relocating for school. Many students who moved for education drive to see their family and friends on the weekends or their parents travel to visit them.

Discussion in Chapter 5 reveals student biographical mobilities are influenced by class, gender, family, and past interactions with educational institutions and the labour market. Despite negative perceptions of local job opportunities, students still desire to remain and work in the province and local area after finishing the course. The emotional geographies of students, which Power and colleagues (2014) define as ways of thinking, speaking, and feeling about home communities, the people who live there, and the education and employment resources available and accessible, reveal another layer of mobility decision-making and deepen an understanding of how the PO students in this study move. In the current study, emotional geographies actually enable mobility for most students, but only for those who moved to participate in the course. The men and women in the 2014/2015 PO course present their future employment-related geographical mobility plans as a strategy for economic gain, but also to be close to home, with the support of family and friends.

Securing Affordable Housing in Placentia

This section looks at student experiences of finding housing accommodations in Placentia and how the structure of available housing, influenced by labour market conditions, restricts the mobility of some. Housing in Placentia features mostly single-family dwellings with a few apartment complexes and no residences owned by educational institutions. CNA-Placentia does offer apartment listings however, some of which are for full houses while others are room rentals. Overall, the perception by students interviewed is that affordable and suitable housing options are limited in the Placentia area. This is supported by information provided in Hall's (2014) report, in

which key-informants discussed the affordable housing crisis, a lack of rental options, and the inflation of rental prices due to the proximity of Long Harbour. Experiences of finding housing in Placentia area varied for the six students interviewed who moved from their home communities to participate in the 2014/2015 PO course. Some were limited in finding housing, while for others, securing living arrangements was a smooth process.

When questioned about finding a new place to live once deciding to move, Adam describes a process he constructs as without complications.

There wasn't much to it I guess. I wanted the place with the least amount of driving and I live just down the street [from CNA-Placentia] like half a kilometer. I live with four other people but no one that I knew before. Two are from St. John's, one is from Cape Broyle and one is from the Philippines. He works in Long Harbour. (Adam Interview, December 4, 2014)

Adam shares a house with four men he did not know prior to moving, and describes finding a room to rent in a positive way. In Adam's experience, the structure of available housing rentals in the Placentia area enable his move, and so do his parents, who fund his education and living expenses. Adam selects the apartment closest to the college, to reduce driving, meaning he does not engage in a long distance daily commute to school. However, he drives to his home community on certain weekends to spend time with his parents, which suggests student mobilities are complex.

Unlike Adam, Cathy's apartment search was difficult and time consuming.

Living situations like Adam's are not ideal for Cathy. She explains,

Well, I've never been out here [Placentia] before so I just... me and my parents came out and we just drove around. Well, they have a sheet on the CNA website that gives you like places, so we called all them and most of them were taken so we just came out and like drove around. All the 'for rent' signs, we just called them all... they were all either too much [expensive rent] or they were just like for people in Long Harbour. You know, so there was like men sharing apartments, or there was one house that had five people living in it, stuff like that. Anyway,

actually on the sheet there was one and we couldn't get a hold of her and finally we got a hold of her. We went to see it and it was like perfect, so I told her right then I was taking it! (Cathy, interview, December 4, 2014)

Housing options are limited for Cathy, who did not find living accommodations close to the school desirable or affordable. Unlike Adam, Cathy's move is made difficult by the structure of available housing for rent in the Placentia area. Gender is a factor as much of the available living accommodations are shared rentals with men. As a woman, Cathy does not want to live with multiple men so she settles on an apartment in a neighboring community, which her parents and government funding finance, enabling her move to different degrees.

Claire also commutes to school daily from a smaller community outside of Placentia, where she lives in a family-owned house her mother grew up in. She relocated from the St. John's area to that community to enroll in the PO course. When asked about the process of moving, Claire talks about how she "just had to think about the gas I was going to be spending [money on] and having to get up and drive here every morning. On a day like today with the rain, it took like 45 minutes but normally I can get here in about 35... It's not too bad" (Claire, interview, December 4 2014). Claire identifies the poor road conditions connecting Placentia to the surrounding communities as a factor that can increase the time required to commute to school every day. Resources facilitating Claire's course participation include access to a vehicle, money for gas, and time for commuting. Without financial support from her parents, Claire would not be able to access these resources, or accomplish education-related mobility.

Amy speaks of difficulty securing housing when moving for the PO course. The cost of housing is directly affected by the proximity to the Long Harbour work site. She

says, “Well, I moved from home, [1500km from Placentia] by myself. There’s nowhere to... there’s no residence or anything, so I’m paying about \$1000 dollars a month for an apartment. It’s pretty steep out here because of Long Harbour and stuff” (Amy, interview, December 4, 2014). Amy is funded through the government and she feels supported financially (Interview, December 4, 2014). She expands on the process of looking for an apartment. “Oh that was really stressful. I was like all summer on Kijiji and stuff looking for an apartment and I finally found one and it’s not that great and it’s really expensive” (Amy, interview, December 4, 2014). Navigating the structure of available housing in the Placentia area was difficult for Amy. While Claire is able to commute on a daily basis because of her access to a vehicle, Amy does not have a car and is limited to higher priced apartments in closer proximity to the college. This adds another layer to her mobility considerations, which are constrained by a lack of affordable housing options and access to resources like a vehicle.

Fred moved alone from Nova Scotia to Placentia before the course began, and also addresses the cost and availability of housing. Fred emphasizes the cost involved in the move to participate in the course. He says,

I had to pay for the ferry to get here obviously, and then it took a while to get a spot to live. Then due to Long Harbour and Argentia, rent here is actually very expensive, so that was a concern. For the first few days I was staying in a hotel and was ready to go camping [laughs], but ah fortunately I met the owner of some of the properties around here and he said he’d look around for me and I found the spot I’m in now. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

Fred is funded by his personal savings and in part by government funding, which was delayed. He engaged in interprovincial education-related mobility for the PO course.

Fred expands on the process of securing housing. He declares, “it took me a while (...)

especially staying in a hotel, not having your own bed. Eventually like I said the owner of the hotel said I should talk to the property owner, so I did and a couple days later he had a spot for me” (Fred, interview, December 4, 2014). The process of affordable housing in Placentia area was difficult for Fred. The place he rents is a one-bedroom apartment owned by a male landlord who Fred was able to contact through a connection made with another local man. His ability to form these connections enabled Fred to secure housing.

Living in Placentia: Familiar for Some, Isolating for Others

This section looks at the ways 2014/2015 PO students interviewed express their feelings about living in Placentia. The process of deciding to move to Placentia is a positive experience for some of students, like Claire and Matthew. Claire lived in the city before moving to Placentia, but for Claire the move was to a familiar place.

Well I only moved back to the house that my mother grew up in, so it kind of wasn’t really a move because I was out there growing up when I was a little girl, so... and my parents come out every second weekend. That’s in [a nearby community], on the other side of Long Harbour. (Claire, interview, December 4, 2014)

Claire suggests that by staying in the house her mother grew up in, and having her parents visit her every second weekend, it’s almost like she hasn’t moved. She still gets support from her parents because of their mobility and hers. Claire maintains her connections with family and friends at home, through being mobile.

Next Claire explains what she considered when moving. She elaborates on the process involved.

Well, Mom was like do you want to come live in Placentia and like pay for an apartment, or do you want to go to [nearby community] and pay for the gas back and forth. And I chose [nearby community] because it's where I always wanted to live. Mom lives in [St. John's area], but when she's off, she's out. (Claire, interview, December 4, 2014)

When I asked Claire if her situation improved or changed since moving, her response was: "not really, cause I'm back in town every second weekend so it's not like I left my friends and family and everything... so I do still see them" (Claire, interview, December 4, 2014). She can still communicate with her family and friends while they are in separate places through texting, phone calls, and the Internet. Claire's relations and support from friends and family increase and enable her mobility.

Matthew outlines his process of moving in order to participate in the PO course.

He states,

Moving is not really too hard for me. I moved to go to St. John's my first year out of high school and that was further than I am now. If anything my first year out moving to St. John's was harder than moving to Placentia. Because Placentia is where my Father's side of the family is so I have relatives down here, and I have a house down here that I can stay in that I don't have to pay rent, and I also have a vehicle. When I was in St. John's I was renting off of a friend, and I was taking the Metrobus. (Matthew, interview, December 4, 2014)

Matthew compares his experience of deciding to move to Placentia with his previous move to St. John's to attend MUN. He is slightly closer to home now that he attends CNA-Placentia. He has family in Placentia, a house he can live in for free, and access to a car, all of which he identifies as making the move easier. Having family in Placentia and driving to see his parents on the weekend means he doesn't feel like he is abandoning emotional connections by living in a different community.

Not all accounts of deciding to move for the course are positive, however. Cathy describes moving to the Placentia area and how she feels about her living situation. She laments,

I don't enjoy it. It's my first time living by myself so it kind of sucks. I drive back home every weekend so, yeah I drive back every weekend... back to St. John's. But then I'm here for the week and, I don't know... it sucks, being by yourself. Well my boyfriend moved with me for the first two weeks but then he got a new job so, I'm out here by myself... me and my dog. It's just that I was not used to being by myself and I've never lived by myself before... so I was like, you know... didn't know what to do. And then I had to go buy stuff for a house and all this. But yeah... just being alone pretty much. It's different. (Cathy, interview, December 4, 2014)

When asked if her situation has improved or changed since moving, Cathy expressed that she is adjusting to living in the Placentia area as time goes by. Her experience of moving for school is characterized by feelings of loneliness. Cathy's story indicates student relations with family and friends, and maintaining these connections despite moving, actually enables mobilities in this case. However, because Cathy does not have family connections in the area like Matthew and Claire, adjusting to her move has been more difficult.

Although Amy does not suggest that she feels alone, she does think the social atmosphere of Placentia is boring and that there is a lack of social or entertainment activities. However, she likes being closer to her sister who lives in St. John's, and who visits her. Amy works part-time as a way of passing time. She reveals that, "I work at [local fast food establishment]. I don't really have to and I'm only allowed to work about 20 hours but it's really boring here, and I worked at [same chain] last year. I figured I'd go up there and apply and I did" (Amy Interview, December 4, 2014).

Similarly, Tim and Robert, who did not have to move to participate in the program, also suggests there is not much to do in Placentia, but staying in the area is related to financial benefits and family support. Tim comments, “well for me it’s... I live at home so I don’t have to pay rent or anything, and other than that there’s really nothing [laughs]” (Tim, interview, December 4, 2014). Robert says he enjoys being home with family and being supported financially by his parents.

Relations with Family and Friends

Themes regarding student relations with families and friends emerged through the interviews as influencing mobility. Men and women participating in the 2014/2015 PO course share views on how their families support them in accomplishing mobility. Student interview data contains information on how friends influence decisions to move for school and views on future employment-related geographical mobility. The men in the 2014/2015 PO course mention the influence of friends on decision making processes, but the women interviewed do not. Friends provided information on the PO course and stories about the conditions of local employment opportunities. Some of the men interviewed portrayed relations with friends as providing connections to future employment.

Data collected from the three male students, Adam, Robert, and Matthew, demonstrate the role of family in their education-related mobilities and decision-making. Adam suggests he enrolled in the PO course partially to be close to his family, who moved back to NL from a Western Canadian province, and also because CNA is more affordable than other programs he considered. In regards to future possibilities for work,

Adam explains, “if I can stay on the Island close to family I will, but if it comes down to it I will go out West” (Interview, December 4, 2014). Adam has past experience with employment-related mobility, so the idea of moving for work post-graduation is something he considers when thinking about his plans for after the course.

Unlike Adam, Robert did not move for the PO course. He is close to the CNA-Placentia campus, and enjoys being home with his family because of the supports they provide. When asked if his family are affected by his decision to stay in Placentia for further education, he answered:

Kind of and kind of not. They wanted me to stay in school, but if I had to go they would have been okay with it... but they're pretty happy because I'm still home with them. They didn't really want me to leave yet. My sister went away and they miss her. She went to town for a few years and did OHS. (Robert, interview, December 4, 2014)

Robert's parents provide financial and emotional support, by paying for his living expenses and education. His parents do not exert full control over his education-related mobilities or lack thereof, but their views drawn from missing his sister when she moved to the city, show that Robert's decision may be shaped by his family connections and suggests Robert and his sister provide emotional support to their parents as well.

When speaking about his family, Matthew says his parents “still do the same routine as they've always done. I see them every weekend so it's kind of not really like I'm gone, right?” (Interview, December 4, 2014). Matthew's mobility is enabled by the support he provides his parents, and the support they provide him. Matthew's process of moving was made easier by his family resources, specifically the house in Placentia owned by his father (Interview, December 4, 2014).

Parents provide financial support, information about the PO course and trades work and help secure temporary housing in the Placentia area. Robert's parents fund his education and he feels supported. Robert expresses a desire to stay in the Placentia area to maintain his relations with his family. "It would be nice to stay; I don't really want to leave" (Robert, interview, December 4, 2014). If he doesn't find employment close to home, Robert doesn't allude to the fact that he would move. Instead, he suggests he would pursue another education program at the CNA-Placentia.

Adam's education is funded by his parents, in addition to personal employment savings. He offers that,

Since I was born my Dad had been putting away quite a bit of money each month or every paycheck or whatever and that's how it's funded. That's what I'm going off of. And some of the money I made in the summer, but the majority is from my parents. (Adam, interview, December 4, 2014)

Adam feels supported and "doesn't have any worries." Matthew's education is funded in the same way as Adam's. He feels supported at college, by the course instructor and college personnel, and at home, by his parents. Matthew does not identify any difficulties moving, other than a problem with a roommate, who no longer resides with him.

Friends provide on-going decision-making, emotional and social support for the students interviewed. Robert, Tim, Fred and Matthew mentioned the role of friends in their decisions to move for the course. Robert and Tim are unique because they are friends who are both from Placentia area and did not move to participate in the course. As their interviews show, although they did not engage in a significant geographic move, they do engage in daily mobility by driving to school together. This demonstrates the complexity of the concept of mobility for education in the sense that it covers a wide

range of mobilities including short commutes, and the role of relations with friends in education-related mobility decision-making.

Robert heard about the PO course from his friend who commutes less than 5km to school with him, both live with their parents and did not move to participate in the course. Robert has lived in Placentia his whole life. His home is only two or three minutes away from school. He picks up Tim, and they drive to and from school together Monday to Friday. Robert demonstrates the role his friendship with Tim plays in deciding to enroll in the PO course. He also shows how his relations with friends have shaped his knowledge of local employment opportunities.

Tim is only five minutes away from school and he carools each morning with his Robert. He says that, although most of his other friends are living in St. John's, there is nothing he dislikes about his decision to pursue school in Placentia. When questioned about what he hopes to do in the future, Tim says he would like to gain employment at Vale's nickel processing plant in Long Harbour; "but I wouldn't mind living in St. John's since my friends are in there. Maybe get a job where I could fly in and out" (Tim, interview, December 4, 2014). His outlook on future employment-related geographical mobility is highlighted. If he can, he would like to remain close to home and work in Long Harbour. Another option is to move closer to his friends in St. John's and engage in employment outside of the province by travelling back and forth. In both scenarios, his mobility decisions center around maintaining the relations he has with people and places.

Fred, a student with a wide range of life, work, and educational experiences explains the role of information from friends in his decision to move for the PO course. A suggestion from his friend resulted in his search for information on the PO course.

Fred's position in the Canadian Forces means he has already moved multiple times for work as well as education-related mobility. Since he is already technically employed in the Canadian Forces, Fred is an outlier in the student sample, but his story may suggest that for some, moving for education and employment is "normal" or routine.

Finally, Matthew's response to whether anyone moved with him to Placentia highlights how relations with one friend in particular impacted his decision to move.

I had a roommate first when I got here. It was a friend I knew from Clarendville. When I came down here, well it was a new town and a new school so I wanted to have someone I knew and this person, I brought it up with him cause I knew he was looking for a spot, so he came down with me. And I also thought if I do him a favor now maybe he'll do me one in the future because I know his father has some connections in Alberta and I thought all the refineries and stuff up there. If I helped him out, I'd scratch his back he'd scratch mine kind of thing. He isn't living with me now though; we had a falling out. (Interview, December 4, 2014)

Matthew's story shows that the role of friends in his mobility decision-making is more than education-related. Moving with a friend made the transition to living in a new place easier and reduced feelings of uncertainty and loneliness, enabling mobility. Matthew also views the connection he had with his former friend who moved to Placentia with him as his roommate, as a relationship that had potential to lead to future employment opportunities.

DISCUSSION

By approaching student mobilities from a biographical standpoint, it is possible to see how individualized and meritocratic theories of mobility, training and employment are flawed. In fact, the biographical mobilities of students, which include both moves to Placentia and every day mobilities to campus, indicate the effects of gendered local

labour markets, resources provided by family like access to property, and connections to the local place.

Students secured living accommodations in the Placentia area through family resources by living in the parental home, or in family-owned property. Cathy demonstrates the newness and uncertainty involved with moving to a rural place. In the literature (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006; Corbett, 2005; Ni Laoire, 2000) it is often moves to larger urban places that elicit these responses. Cathy did not feel comfortable renting a room in a house where a number men resided. As a woman, her options for securing living accommodations in a rural place were more limited than the men in the course who moved to participate. This shows how gender interacts with other structural factors, like the availability of affordable housing in and the economic context of the Placentia area to constrain options. Large resource development projects in Long Harbour inflate the cost of rental properties in the local area, which target people employed on these worksites, the majority of which are men. In effect, the room rentals available in the area were not as ideal for women. This resulted in women finding housing in neighboring communities, adding to their daily commute. In general, all of the women settled for apartments that were expensive, or required commuting to school. Their commutes to school reflect agency in negotiating the structure of affordable housing availability in the study area, showing individual PO student mobilities are layered, in line with the theories of Ni Laoire (2000).

Integrating socially into the Placentia area for those who moved was easier for students who had local family connections, like relatives living in the area or family-owned property. Most rentals did not facilitate visits from family or friends, and students

who lived by themselves expressed feelings of loneliness. Even local students complained about boredom; however, connections with their family helped alleviate this as they were provided with emotional support, while also supporting their family. Some stay in the local area, which in a way constrain everyday education-related mobilities. However, staying seems to have been a conscious strategy to attend CNA while living for free and being supported by their families, diverging from literature criticized by Holdsworth (2009) and Ni Laoire (2000) that sees leavers as having more agency than those who stay. Despite the loss of friends and moments of boredom, local students speak positively about their lives, not giving support to the theory that student mobilities are geared towards independent living and detaching from family connections (Christie, 2007; Giddens, 1991; Holdsworth, 2009).

Fred's experience of finding housing was constrained by an absence of relations. Fred did not have similar access to the social and financial resources of his family as the other students interviewed. However, through actively developing new relations in the community, Fred is able to negotiate constraints, and demonstrates how relations can shape agency, while agency in turn creates new relations or structure. The ways students are able to secure housing vary by gender, but also within gender categories, suggesting the availability of resources and relations have a greater impact on choices. For example, unlike Cathy and Amy, Claire's experience of securing housing was easy because she moved to a family-owned home. Her daily mobilities negotiate the structure of affordable housing near the college and demonstrate her agency in selecting a place to live, which is influenced by her family relations and resources, and connections to place, reflecting the economic and social context of her life.

Interviews with 2014/2015 PO students support the work of Corbett (2009) who finds school to work transitions, social norms surrounding mobility, and interpersonal relations have become diverse and individualized, which is why this study employs the biographical approach promoted by Ni Laoire (2000). Cathy and the other students who engage in weekly or bi-weekly trips to their parental residences demonstrate agency in their mobilities, which are ways of negotiating distance so students can maintain their emotional geographies. Although Cathy's initial education-related move has been made harder by feelings of isolation, there are multiple forms of mobility at play, in which structure and agency interact. Unlike research that argues connections to place decrease plans to move away (Christie, 2007; Corbett, 2009), this work finds when students feel positive about their home communities and family relations, mobility is enabled, demonstrating student agency. Furthermore, when people feel negatively about living in Placentia, but positive about the support provided by family and friends at home, mobility is also made possible.

Christie (2007) argued that retaining family and social relations is just as important in deciding to live at home for education as financial and or parental influences. This work goes further in stressing the fact that mobility can also be a strategy for retaining personal relations and associated resources. In effect, student relations with family can increase agency in their mobilities, while these mobilities also redefine and shape the nature of family dynamics. Data suggests that although parents provide support for their children, the relationship is dual natured, as children also provide emotional support to their parents. This idea is supported by Ni Laoire's (2000) work, which finds some students return to their home communities later in life because of guilt about

leaving their parents. However, the students in this work do not express any guilt about moving, mainly because they engage in mobility to maintain their connections. Unlike Corbett's (2009; 2013) focus on parental encouragement to move, the men who stayed in the rural area did mention friends and a sibling who went away, but did not suggest their parents suggested they move. Parents did encourage participation in post-secondary education however. The effects of a culture of migration seem to be mediated by personal resources and perceptions of job opportunities in the local area. Every rural area is unique and so are the student's individual mobilities, although there are commonalities in experiences, namely, the way mobility is enabled in order to maintain interpersonal relations.

A final theme emerging from analysis involves the availability of information about the course and accessibility of connections to aid in future employment, which reveals a gendered labour market. While men and women both said family members provided information about the PO course and related local jobs, only the men recounted information provided by friends, who were also men. This is reflective of the gendered nature of trades-related employment and resource extraction industries, which have been traditionally male dominated. Therefore, because there are fewer women participating in this employment sector, women friends of either sex will likely have less information about opportunities to notify friends of. Although trades programs are seeing higher enrollment rates among women than in previous years, the future work-related mobilities of women and men will likely demonstrate this gendered system of social networking.

Conclusion

Student feelings about Placentia varied. Two men in the course live with their families and did not move to participate. They engage in daily carpooling for school. Their decisions to stay in their home community for post-secondary education are enabled by having family as a source of financial and emotional support. They note that many of their friends have moved away from the area to larger places like St. John's. However, despite not having friends close and finding the atmosphere boring, they still speak about Placentia positively and want to stay and work at Long Harbour post-graduation, if they can. If they cannot stay close to home, they would like to move to St. John's to be close to friends while working either within the province or in another province on a rotational schedule. Despite mixed reviews of local employment opportunities, the two men in the course who are from Placentia, would like to remain in Placentia, or at least within NL, so that they can maintain relations with family and friends. The experiences and perspectives of Tim and Robert are different from the other students. They have the ability to *not* engage in mobility, and to maintain connections with family and friends by staying. Their positive experiences of staying offer a corrective to academic work that tends to assume that staying in rural areas is somehow equivalent to missing out. Remaining in the Placentia area and living in the parental home can also be conscious decisions or strategies that minimize financial burdens and risks associated with moving for post-secondary education (Holton, 2015).

For the other six people interviewed, the decision to move was tied to their enrolment in the 2014/2015 Process Operator course. The variation in accounts points to the importance of family (e.g., access to property, emotional and financial support) in facilitating integration into the place/region. Two of the women in the course, Cathy and

Claire, moved to Placentia from the St. John's area. Cathy feels isolated within the small community because she lives alone and this actually increases her agency in deciding to travel home on weekends. She encountered issues with finding affordable housing, and information on available rentals. Cathy was limited in where she could live in Placentia, but with the help of family resources she was able to find an apartment she approved of. Despite Cathy's move being somewhat negative, she is adjusting to life in Placentia because she is able to maintain her relations with family and friends. Her interview excerpts don't point to any specific characteristics of the St. John's area that she is attached to. Rather, it is the support from relationships with family and friends that Cathy emphasizes.

Stories from Claire, Cathy, and Amy demonstrate differences between the women in the course and their perspectives, but also show maintaining relations with family and friends enables mobility for each one of them. For the men in the course, friends play a role in determining mobilities as well as parents. This is a gendered finding, and could point to men being more aware of trade-related education and employment opportunities in the NL context.

Many students express a desire to live and work in the Placentia area, or to move to larger centers to be close to friends and work rotational schedules either within the province or outside the province. They engage in many forms of mobility and see their future employment-related geographical mobility as influenced by and connected to their relations with family and friends. It is not only the physical characteristics of a place that make emotional geographies. It is the students' feelings associated with their relations to the people who live in such places (Power et al., 2014). The next chapter will discuss the

findings/limitations of the present research and areas for future study. The last chapter draws together analyses from this research, and demonstrates how I add to a growing body of literature on structure and agency in education and employment-related mobility of young people in NL. Finally, I highlight areas for future research and make suggestions on what can be done to improve supports provided to students participating in the PO course at CNA-Placentia.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to answer my initial research questions. Each question is addressed as I summarize findings and connect my data to themes present in the education-related mobility literature and theoretical perspectives. I also consider the limitations of my work, followed by some thoughts on areas for future research.

Summary of Findings

1. How do students demonstrate agency in education-related mobility decision-making within the structuring forces of their lives, and how is mobility accomplished?

Training and education are in many ways individualized projects, aimed at facilitating individual labour market participation and often upward class mobility. Likewise, educational and employment-related *geographic* mobilities are often assumed to be part of individual mobility projects. However, Ni Laoire (2000) suggests that contemporary youth mobilities must be understood in relation to the particular history and structuring of mobilities in any given place. My findings highlight both variation and commonality among students' educational mobilities, suggesting that students negotiate their educational pathways in ways that are shaped by broader structural constraints. Interviews with women and men in the study suggest that student possibilities are strongly shaped by the promotion of other skilled trades by the government, college class sizes, local labour market conditions, and the accessibility of educational funding and

advanced training opportunities. Family and friends provide information and resources, enabling mobility in some cases, and constraining it in others.

Structure and agency interact in student mobilities and decision-making processes. Mobility is accomplished by access to the financial and social supports needed, mainly through relations with family. A key finding here is that strong connections with family and place both facilitate movement away from rural areas and movement *to* rural areas, a finding that diverges from past theoretical contributions (Christie, 2007; Giddens, 1991; Holdsworth, 2009). Student mobilities are just as likely, if not more so, to be enabled by individual emotional geographies (Power et al., 2014), then be restricted by them. However, the structuring of available rental housing in the Placentia area around large scale resource-extraction industries in the region enables certain kinds of mobility for some male students, and present challenges for the female students. For the women who moved to participate in the course, the gendered structure of the local labour markets and the associated rental housing market was negotiated by the support of family.

Like Ni Laoire's work (2000) that finds young people leave, stay and return because of their sense of responsibility for and connection to family, the PO students' mobilities in this study were influenced by connections to family. Mobility is enabled by relations with family and friends, but also limited for the men who stay in Placentia, because of their dependence on family resources for financial support. Although they did not move for the course, these men do engage in every day mobilities in carpooling to school, which demonstrates more a more layered concept of education-related mobility, in line with work by Holton (2015). These men can be seen as exercising agency in staying, as a strategy for negotiating the risks of moving for education, like financial burden. In a

context where students must negotiate complicated and even convoluted processes to access financial resources to support their training, they often have to rely on financial and other kinds of support from family which of course vary depending on the family's resources and the quality of relationship between parent and child.

2. Are there gender differences in mobility experiences and access to the resources needed to accomplish mobility?

Ni Laoire (2000) points to a gendered division of labour as influencing the mobilities of young people, and my data support this notion. All of the women participating in the 2014/2015 Process Operator (PO) course moved to the Placentia area, while three out of five of the men interviewed moved, and two did not. Most women and men in the course see the PO course as less academic than university. Amy sees all trades as non-academic, while Tim views most trades as hands-on, while the PO course is more “the education side to it.” This suggests gender may play influence the way students perceive the course, but their self-perception of academic abilities is also a factor. My research is different than literature emphasizing women and men as interested in different fields of studies, or how they value education in different ways (Bourgeois, 2009). One reason women may be navigating towards this course is because it is less “hands-on” than other trades, but this is not exclusive to female students, as it influenced the enrollment of men in the course as well. While women were as or more likely to access the course, the fact that the trades have historically been male-dominated, and that the economies of rural regions have long depended on industries around primary resources, often dominated by men, means there are still barriers to their access to these opportunities and related sources of

information. Students' perceptions of the course as less academic than university education, yet less physically demanding than most trades, may help explain why women were enrolled in the course in such high numbers.

Corbett (2009) finds men value education in rural places less than women because they can find work in primary industries, but the men in the PO course value education even though they want to work in the natural resource sector. There are other men hired for PO jobs who did not do the course, but they had other post-secondary diplomas. Participation in post-secondary education is the norm for both genders in NL, and is promoted by the government, parents, and the media. However, there are problems with a lack of information required to access funding without delays, and a lack of access to information about trades-related employment possibilities, which is gendered in nature. Women in social and friendships networks with other women, who are less likely to work in trades and the resources extraction industry, therefore have less information about PO job opportunities to share.

Accessing accommodations in the rural location of this study reveal gender differences. The mobility of the female PO students is constrained by the limited rental market, while the process of securing housing is easier for some male students. This is due to the gendered labour market and economic and social context of the Placentia area. Since the trades-related work associated with natural resource extraction projects has traditionally been male-dominated, the accommodations available in the area have inflated rental prices and many are shared by men. Most of the women also find the atmosphere of Placentia to be lacking leisure opportunities, and isolating, which makes mobility more difficult, but also increases their agency in mobility decision-making

because they travel to visit family on the weekends, which is enabled through access to a car and money for gas. Financial resources were provided to both men and women in the course mainly by parents. There are definitely limitations with assessing the impact of gender on student mobility experiences due to the kind and size of sample used in this research, as the small number of students interviewed did not provide a lot of opportunity for male and female comparisons. However, the interviews point to the gendered structuring of local rental and labour markets that have different implications for young men and women.

3. What is the role of personal educational interests, perception of academic abilities and labour market considerations in constructing mobility plans?

2014/2015 PO students learn about the program from the college website and course book, and information from family and friends, which influence personal educational interests. Information from personal networks center around the value of post-secondary education for employment and link the PO course to well-paying jobs, which supports previous literature reviewed (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006; Cairns 2008; Whelan, 2000; Genge, 1996). There is an emphasis on desires to work in Long Harbour, even though students also hear people with their course do not get hired by Vale, and that the natural resource sector is a volatile job market. While students accept a responsibility for acquiring credentials to find a good job, there is a disconnect between training and job outcomes. Future mobility plans are centered around securing employment.

Another main theme in student interviews was the effect of past post-secondary experiences, which did not align with student interests or academic abilities. Some

students perceive their academic abilities as being low, associate high academic abilities with university education, and pursue trades-work because it is viewed as less bookish than university courses. While others find the PO course less “hands-on” than other trades-related programs. Perception of academic abilities plays a role in course selection, but does not help to explain how mobility is accomplished. Student mobilities cannot be fully explained by economic factors and rational cost-benefit models sometimes employed by governments and institutions when creating discourse and strategies for social change. My data supports Ni Laoire (2000) argument that mobilities must be conceptualized a part of one’s biography, and therefore are influenced by the relations, desires, values, feelings and perceptions unique to each individual, as well as the social, political, and economic conditions surrounding their lives.

4. What resources are provided to students engaging in mobility in terms of affordable housing options, and information on further education and employment opportunities?

Student mobility is structured by the availability of affordable housing in the Placentia area. The rental market in Placentia is influenced by the proximity of Long Harbour and the nickel processing plant. Since housing is in demand, rental prices are inflated. This impacts the women in the course greater than the men, as many properties are shared by men. The college does offer apartment listings online, but options are limited. My findings add to work by Cairns (2008) who argues housing market inflations constrain mobility, as I look at rentals in a rural location and student’s experiences in their own words. However, the effects are gendered, and student agency in choosing

accommodations are enabled through parental resources for most, except for one male student who moved from another province. He negotiated his lack of resources by forming new relations within the community, receiving information and help from a local man with connections to rental property owners in the area.

The accessibility of information available to students on further education and employment opportunities is lacking, and as noted above, gendered. Students and key-informants hear mixed views on gaining work in the province, as employment in the natural resource sector is volatile. Students question the effectiveness of the course in leading to employment and criticize the hiring practices of companies like Vale, who use standardized aptitude tests to eliminate job candidates before they are given a chance.

Information on Advanced Blocks was provided by key-informants who note log books and training materials are developed, but no one working in the province as a PO has registered as an apprentice. The campus administrator thinks this is because people work in environments where advanced training is not beneficial for the employee or the employer, and because responsibility for registering and initiating training is left to the individual.

5. How do relations to places and people, and the financial and emotional support they provide, facilitate or limit student mobilities?

Student enrolment and mobility is clearly impacted by perceptions of employment opportunities, but every day and future education and employment-related mobilities are also shaped by a desire to maintain connections and supports from family and friends. This notion applies to most of the students but not all, since there was one male student

from another province, without the ability to travel to maintain relations. He manages without support from family and friends by forging new connections in the local area. Enrolment in the PO course was directly influenced by parents in some cases, who submitted program applications for the students, or provided information about the course which lead to enrollment. Friends were also sources of information, although to a lesser extent than parents, and only for the men in the course. My findings support those of Corbett (2013), who emphasizes the role of family in influencing student mobilities.

Emotional geographies of students were demonstrated in their emphasis on resources provided by parents, the support students give parents as well, and their connections to place demonstrated in stories about travelling home on weekends, enabling mobility. This finding is different from past work that argues strong interpersonal and place attachments restrict mobility (Corbett, 2007; 2009; 2013; Ni Laoire, 2000; Walsh, 2009).

6. How is the education-related mobility of young people portrayed in provincial government documents and media sources?

The focus is mainly on keeping young people living, working, and going to school in the province. However, instead of a focus on supporting young people moving in and around the province, the government mainly problematizes movement away from rural places. The PO course was created after large-scale natural resource extraction projects were established in the province, like White Rose or Voisey's Bay, which provided Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) people with employment (Bourgeois, 2009; Vale Inco NL, 2008). At the same time, the NL government placed an emphasis on participation in post-secondary education, and made a commitment to support trades-related programs, as

a way to increase youth employment and decrease mobility away from the province (Walsh et al., 2015). Youth unemployment and interprovincial mobility rates have been the focus of government initiatives, like the YRAS (HRLE, 2009). However, the YRAS has been abandoned in recent years for a more general “population strategy” (Walsh et al., 2015). Some institutional barriers were identified in Chapter 5, which illustrate a disconnect between the resources government claims to provide, and how accessible they actually are from student’s own points of view and experiences. Access to information on funding sources, advanced training opportunities, and future employment possibilities are lacking.

There is some evidence of a “culture of mobility” (Corbett, 2009; Holdsworth, 2009; Ni Laoire, 2000; Walsh, 2008) in the study area. There are mobilities that become normalized parts of the job market with resource extraction projects in rural areas of NL. The ways students speak about their preferred future work experiences, for example the willingness to work shift rotations or “turnarounds,” reflect an assumption of the possibility of employment-related mobility. However, normalizing forms of mobility like moving away from a rural place, misses other experiences (Ni Laoire, 2000), like women moving to rural places from urban places and rural places, men moving to rural places, and men staying in rural places. Looking at how student mobility is accomplished helps to understand the ways students find agency in their mobilities, which are shaped by the context of their lives.

7. What supports are provided to young people who move to, or stay in, rural places to participate in education related to the skilled trades?

The Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy (YRAS) and information from the Advanced Education and Skills (AES) website suggest initiatives to inform high school students of trades programs are beneficial (HRLE, 2009). AES also provides job search and financial supports for people who are unemployed, a wage subsidy program that encourages employment, and a grant for people completing Advanced Blocks, but only for Red Seal trades (“Job Search and Financial Supports,” 2016; “JobsNL Wage Subsidy Program,” 2016; “Apprenticeship Grant,” 2015). The PO course is unique, a Blue Seal trade, and was created by AES with input from the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) and Vale, who expressed concerns about labour shortages nearing the operations phase of their nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, just a short distance from CNA-Placentia, where the course was placed (Hall, 2014; Lysenko & Vodden, 2011; Vale, 2009; Walsh et al., 2015). Vale also contributes scholarships to PO students. The context described above suggests there are structuring factors influencing student participation in the PO course, and that students enroll because of the provincial emphasis on post-secondary education and a positive perception of local and provincial employment opportunities.

Although CNA and the provincial government invest time and money to develop supports for NL students, especially those pursuing trades-related programs, the issues students encounter in accessing supports and information needed to make education-related decisions suggests there could certainly be improvements made. Student experiences reveal the PO course, and its link to local employment opportunities needs further development. The government and institutional officials who created and implemented the course should take action in ensuring the course serves its intended

purpose, and that students/graduates have suitable options for local employment and advanced training.

8. What supports are needed or lacking?

One problem with this course is that no information exists on where students go after they graduate, or if they gain employment in their field. There is no way to determine if courses designed to help young people obtain related employment work, so plans cannot be updated or developed. Since the outcomes of initiatives like the PO course are not recorded or followed, it cannot be determined why and how these outcomes take place, therefore we cannot learn how to strengthen programs and initiatives in the future. Although the college provides many sources of information and funding, some students experienced delays in receiving government funding. Having a Student Development Officer (SDO) can alleviate miscommunications and solve cases of missing information in a timelier manner. There are also links missing between PO apprentices, or a lack thereof, and Advanced Blocks that are developed, which students are not registering for, because the organization of advanced education does not work in the favour of students or employers. Students and key-informants are confused about who is hired by Vale, and how useful the course is in gaining employment. Finally, as Lysenko and Vodden (2011) suggest, links between the school, government, and local employers need to be strengthened. Employment supports should be developed for the PO course specifically as well as Blue Seal trades workers.

Further work must be done to support young women and men in pursuing trades-related education by making resources accessible to all. In terms of affordable housing,

perhaps the college could explore developing a student housing complex, or work more closely with local property owners to ensure there are options for both women and men. There should be a provincial database developed that links education programs with related employment opportunities. This would involve employers providing information on the kind of positions they hire and schools providing information on the qualifications students have post-graduation.

Limitations of the Current Study

There are several important considerations regarding my research methodology. First, focusing on students from only the PO course, which is offered only at one CNA campus in NL, may limit the generalizability of my research findings. If this research was conducted at a different school in another location, on a different program or course, and with different students, the results may vary. Furthermore, demographic differences between the 2013/2014 class and the class of 2014/2015 revealed through survey responses, mean research findings are not representative of all students who have taken the PO course. For instance, students from the 2013/2014 class who responded to my survey were all women, and many of them were over 30. This class had more women who did not engage in a move before the program began, but there were also people who commuted longer distances every school day. Therefore, I potentially missed out on unique narratives from women of older ages living in Placentia or commuting daily, and how their experiences of course participation and mobility are structured and enabled. Additionally, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the limitations in my gender analysis

must be recognized due to the small sample size and small numbers on which to base comparisons between male and female students.

Finally, there is always the chance that my presence as a researcher impacted the data collected when interviewing students from the 2014/2015 PO course. Questions that are personal in nature always have the potential to cause emotional stress or discomfort in interviewees. My impression is that students were comfortable speaking to me and telling me their stories; and I think the richness and openness of student interview excerpts included support that notion. Regardless, students were informed they could end their participation in the research at any stage without penalty, and that if they did, the information they provided up to that point in time would be destroyed.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research developed throughout the course of this study. Due to the limitations of my work, only the mobilities of 2014/2015 PO students could be explored in student's own words. Future research should involve further investigation of PO students, including past and current classes. This would allow for comparison between male and female students of different age groups, possibly from a variety of places, and the structure and agency in their education and employment-related mobilities and decision-making processes.

Expanding the research to include people from other PO classes can help provide information on who is employed in the province, how their circumstances have changed since completing the course, and the forms of employment-related mobility they may or may not engage in. This could make information on resources provided to POs and Blue

Seal trades workers more accessible, chart the development of the PO course, and improve the experience of future classes. Future research could also involve a large scale study of all trades programs at CNA looking at how full-time students accomplish education-related mobilities within NL, and the resources available, or needed.

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Appendix A
Process Operator Plans of Training
December 2012
Source: Government of NL; Department of Advanced Education and Skills;
Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division

| Block I | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| NL Course No. | Course Name | Hours | Pre-Requisite |
| TS1510 | Occupational Health & Safety | 6 | None |
| TS1520 | WHMIS | 6 | None |
| TS1530 | Standard First Aid | 14 | None |
| OR1100 | Safety | 18 | None |
| OR1110 | Environmental Awareness | 12 | None |
| LA1110 | Fall Protection Awareness | 6 | None |
| LA1100 | Confined Space Awareness | 6 | None |
| OR1150 | Hoisting, Lifting and Rigging | 30 | OR1100, TS1520, TS1530, LA1110 |
| OR1160 | Tools and Equipment | 12 | OR1100, TS1520, TS1530, LA1110, LA1100 |
| OR1170 | Piping and Instrumentation Drawings | 24 | OR1210 |
| PH1020 | Physics | 72 | AM1100, AM1280 |
| OR1200 | Electrical Fundamentals | 30 | OR1160 |
| CH1020 | Chemistry | 72 | AM1100, AM1280 |

| Block I | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| NL Course No. | Course Name | Hours | Pre-Requisite |
| OR1210 | Process Measurement | 90 | OR1160, PH1020 |
| OR1220 | Process Analyzers | 60 | CH1020, OR1100, TS1520, TS1530 |
| OR1230 | Final Control Elements | 60 | None |
| OR1300 | Basic Process Control | 150 | OR1230 |
| OR1311 | HMI and Process Control Systems | 12 | OR1300 |
| OR1320 | Pumps | 18 | PH1020 |
| OR1330 | Introduction to Process Operations | 30 | OR1100, OR1300, TS1520, TS1530 |
| AP1101 | Introduction to Apprenticeship | 15 | None |
| *AM1100 | Math Essentials | 30 | None |
| AM1280 | Process Math Fundamentals | 30 | AM1100 |
| CM2160 | Communication Essentials | 45 | None |
| SD1760 | Workplace Essentials | 45 | None |
| MC1060 | Computer Essentials | 15 | None |
| Total Hours | | 908 | |

| |
|--------------------------|
| Required Work Experience |
|--------------------------|

| **Hydrometallurgical Refining | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|----------------------|
| Block II | | | |
| NL Course No. | Course Name | Hours | Pre-Requisite |
| OR2100 | Introduction to the Hydrometallurgical Process | 30 | Block I |
| OR2110 | Feed Preparation and Handling | 12 | Block I |
| OR2120 | Neutralization | 30 | Block I |
| OR2200 | Pressure Oxidative Leaching | 18 | Block I |
| OR2210 | Solvent Extraction and Cadmium Removal | 30 | Block I |
| OR2220 | Electrowinning | 18 | Block I |
| OR2230 | Water Effluent and Residue Treatment | 12 | Block I |
| Total Hours | | 150 | |

| **Mineral Processing | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Block II | | | |
| NL Course No. | Course Name | Hours | Pre-Requisite |
| OR2300 | Mineral Processing I | 62 | Block I |
| OR2310 | Mineral Processing II | 18 | Block I |
| OR2320 | Mineral Processing III | 70 | Block I |
| Total Hours | | 150 | |

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Required Work Experience |
|---------------------------------|

| Common Advanced Courses | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------|---------------|
| Block III | | | |
| NL Course No. | Course Name | Hours | Pre-Requisite |
| OR2400 | Advanced Control Systems | 90 | Block II |
| OR2410 | Advanced Process Control | 66 | Block II |
| OR2420 | Troubleshooting Techniques | 18 | Block II |
| OR2440 | Work Planning | 6 | Block II |
| Total Hours | | 180 | |
| Total Course Credit Hours | | 1238 | |

Appendix B
List of Documents and Data Analyzed

| Documents selected | Data analyzed |
|--|---|
| Labour market profile of the Avalon Gateway Region (Economic Zone 18). (Lysenko, 2011) | Economic and social context of the Placentia region. |
| Applicability of the local labour market development approach in Newfoundland and Labrador: A case study of the Avalon Gateway Region (Economic Zone 18). (Lysenko & Vodden, 2011) | Information on large-scale industry projects. Economic/social context of Placentia region. Educational context. |
| Creating a Province of Choice: A Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2009) | Youth priorities that guide strategy development. Focus on education and employment support provision for young people. |
| “Annual Report: 2011-2012” (College of the North Atlantic, 2012) | PO course information and connections between the program and local projects/industry partners. |
| “Long Harbour Project Overview” (Vale, 2012) | Contextual data about local employment opportunities and financial contributions of Vale. |
| “Vale, province celebrate first production at new nickel plant in Long Harbour” (Roberts, CBC News, 2014) | Claims about local contributions to job opportunities and regional investment. |
| Great expectations: Opportunities and challenges for young workers in NL. (Walsh et al., 2015) | Progress update on the YRAS. |
| Environmental impact statement: Long Harbour commercial nickel processing plant. (Vale Inco NL, 2008) | Vale’s perspective on socio-economic impacts of mega projects. |
| Regional development, nickel processing & labour mobility: A comparison of Sudbury ON and Long Harbour NL (Hall, 2014) | Information on connections between PO course and nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, NL. |
| Plans of training: Process operator (Department of Education, 2010) | Description of advanced blocks developed for POs. |
| Plans of training: Process operator (Department of Education, 2011) | Further development of blocks related to provincial industry. |
| Zone 18 Strategic Economic Plan 2009-2011 (Avalon Gateway Regional Economic Development Inc., 2008) | Provided Map of NL and details on Economic Zone 18 |

Appendix C
Web-based Survey Questionnaire

1. M/F?
2. Can you tell me the month and year in which you were born?
3. Where were you born? (community/region/province/country)
4. Where is your current place of residence? (town/community/city)
5. What is your marital status? (Single; Married; Separated; Divorced)
6. Do you have children? (Y/N)
7. Do you use paid childcare services? (Y/N)
8. Do you currently live in the same residence as your parent(s) or guardian(s)?
(Y/N)
9. Do you currently live in the same residence as your spouse/intimate partner?
(Y/N)
10. Do you live in the same town as the college you are attending? (Y/N)
11. If no, approximately how many kilometers is your place of residence from the
college you are attending? (List: kms)
12. How long is your commute to school each day? (List: kms)
13. Do you drive by yourself or with others?
14. Were you living in a different town or place of residence before you began this
program in September? (Y/N)
15. Do you work on a part-time basis? (Y/N)
16. How did you hear about the program you are currently enrolled in? (select all that
apply: Internet (college website or other source); friends; education/career fair;

parents; teachers)

17. How is your education funded? (select all that apply: parental contributions; personal savings from employment; student loans; sponsored by HRDC or other agency; scholarships; line of credit/bank loan)
18. What is your highest level of education completed? (Select one: high school; some post-secondary; some college or vocational; post-secondary degree; college or vocational certificate/degree; higher education/graduate studies)
19. Thinking ahead to after you have completed your program, do you hope to be living in the same place of residence as right now? (Y/N/DK)
20. Do you hope to find employment in the area after you finish your program?
(Y/N/DK)
21. Do you anticipate having to move to find work within the province after your program is complete? (Y/N/DK)
22. Thank you for participating in my online survey. I am looking for participants who would like to engage in a brief 15-30 minute follow-up interview that will expand on some of the questions you just answered. Interviews will be done over the telephone or in-person on campus at CNA-Placentia. Please select if you are willing to participate further. If you are, please provide me with a valid e-mail address or telephone number so that interviews can be scheduled. Again, I thank you for your cooperation and for completing this online survey.

Appendix D
Key-Informant Interview Schedule

1. Can you give me a brief description of the Process Operator (PO) program in your own words? (Objectives/outcomes)
2. When was the Process Operator program created?
3. Are you aware of any programs similar to the PO certificate, offered anywhere else in the world?
4. What parties were involved in creating the program?
5. Were there any partnerships between the school and the government, or the economic/resource sector (employers, Vale, etc.) in developing this program?
6. How was the location for the course determined? Why CNA-Placentia?
7. Do you think Vale, and their plans of creating the nickel processing plant in Long Harbour (NL) played a role in bringing this program to CNA-Placentia?
8. What supports do you feel are provided to new PO students? What sources of funding are available? How are the students made aware of supports and services that exist?
9. How many classes (and how many students) have completed the PO program since it was established?
10. What information can you provide on whether past students were employed in the field or in the area post-graduation?
11. Have any of the students from past graduating classes applied to become registered apprentices with the province or participated in advanced Blocks with the college? (If not, why do you think this is?)

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the PO program or the students that you think would be beneficial to my research?

Appendix E
Key-Informant In-Person Interview Consent Form

Title: *Young People on the Move?: Narrative Accounts from Men and Women Process Operator Students at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, Newfoundland and Labrador*

Researcher(s) Jessica Earle; Department of Sociology; Memorial University
Email: jke206@mun.ca
Telephone: (709) 730-9699

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “*Young People on the Move?: Narrative Accounts from Men and Women Process Operator Students at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, Newfoundland and Labrador*”.

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, *Jessica Earle*, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jessica Earle and I am a Masters student with the Department of Sociology at Memorial University’s St. John’s campus. As part of my Masters thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Nicole Power and Dr. Linda Cullum.

In recent years, the provincial government has focused on young men and women in Newfoundland and Labrador who move away from the province for various reasons such as education or employment. Attention has been paid to the rate by which young people are moving away from certain areas, especially regions of the province with smaller populations. These geographic movements are sometimes cast in a negative light, which may impact the regions themselves as well as the individuals who live within them. Research focusing on large-scale patterns such as the outmigration of youth to other provinces is useful in providing evidence for one story that relates to youth mobility in the NL context. However, these studies do not capture the actual geographical movements of youth *within* the province, nor do they address individuals who choose not to move, and the layered nature of such decision-making processes.

Exploring the motivations and stories behind student education-related geographical movement, especially for programs that relate to participation in the skilled trades (like the Process Operator course), could help to assess the level of support provided to young people in this field of study. It could also help to identify where supports are needed or lacking, since provincial initiatives in earlier years (like the 2008 Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy) have since been abandoned for a more general, “population strategy”.

Purpose of study:

The objectives of my research are: to explore the actual and potential education-related geographical movements of men and women of all ages participating in the (2014/2015) Process Operator course at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, NL and the ways in which participant experiences have been enabled, constrained or prevented; to gain a better understanding of the layered nature of deciding whether to move or not for education by investigating the role of individual personal-family, gender, social and economic relations and how these factors may structure movement to different degrees; to clarify how youth geographical mobility is portrayed by the provincial government and other public groups, and whether this relates to the real stories of youth participants in the study; and to provide biographical accounts of the intra-provincial (within the province) movements of youth enrolled in the Process Operator course at CNA-Placentia.

What you will do in this study:

If you agree to participate in a key informant in-person interview you will be probed on your knowledge pertaining to the Process Operator program. Questions in the key informant interview will: collect general information about the PO program; investigate when, how, and why the program was created; how the program has progressed since it was established; and will explore what supports and services are available to students participating in the course. The goal is to gain insight into the program from campus representatives.

Length of time:

The in-person key informant interview should take no longer than 15-30 minutes in total.

Withdrawal from the study:

If you agree to participate and give your consent, you can still choose to stop or end your involvement by alerting the researcher that you would like to end the in-person interview or by telling the researcher you would not like to answer a certain question. You will not be penalized in any way and the data collected up to the point of your withdrawal (if you decide to completely end your involvement) will be destroyed completely up to a cut-off date of April 30th, 2015.

Possible benefits:

Possible benefits to this study for participants include contributing to research that could link CNA-Placentia and the Process Operator program to the local economy, possibly creating positive outcomes or opportunities for students. Participating in this study will

help the researcher in trying to clarify the context in which the course was created, what supports and services are available to students, and where there are potential gaps – or a need for additional supports.

Possible risks:

Possible risks involved in participating in an in-person interview with the researcher are emotional or mental (dis)stress stemming from the personal nature of certain interview questions. If this is the case, you have the right to not answer any question included in the in-person interview and you also have the right to stop participating and completely end your involvement at any point.

Confidentiality vs. Anonymity

There is a difference between confidentiality and anonymity: Confidentiality is ensuring that identities of participants are accessible only to those authorized to have access. Anonymity is a result of not disclosing participant's identifying characteristics (such as name or description of physical appearance).

Confidentiality and Storage of Data:

Confidentiality is limited in the way that this study focuses on one specific program at the College of the North Atlantic – Placentia campus. Since you will be participating in a Key Informant interview if you consent, your name will be used within the report of findings from the study.

If you agree to participate in a key informant interview in person, your responses to interview questions will be audio-recorded and later transcribed by myself in private. All recordings will be transferred from my recording device to a flash drive and kept for 5 years in a secure password protected file along with an electronic copy of the interview transcription. Only I will have access to these original files and audio-recordings. All “data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.” After 5 years all collected data will be securely destroyed.

Anonymity:

Because of the small and specific sample size, anonymity cannot be guaranteed, and key informant interview participants will be identifiable by informed readers.

Recording of Data:

With your consent to participate in a key informant in person interview, your interview responses will be audio-recorded using the researchers smartphone. Only the researcher will hear audio-recordings and direct quotes will not be used unless specific permission is given from the participant.

Reporting of Results:

The information collected from your participation in this follow-up in person interview will be used towards a Masters thesis in Sociology. If consent is given to use direct

quotes, your name and title (position at CNA-Placentia) will be included. If consent is not given, your information may still be used in the form of summarizing but your confidentiality will be assured.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

A report on the findings and related feedback will be provided to participants upon their request and will be sent to the College of the North Atlantic – Placentia campus once completed. Any participant who wishes to have a copy of the report can email a request to the researcher (contact information can be found on this form) at a later date.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Jessica Earle, jke206@mun.ca, (709) 730-9699.

You are also welcome to contact my supervisor(s) with any questions or concerns throughout your participation in this study:

Dr. Nicole Power
Department of Sociology
Memorial University
St. John's, NL
Canada
A1C 5S7
[709.864.6914](tel:709.864.6914)
npower@mun.ca

Dr. Linda Cullum
Department of Sociology
Memorial University
St. John's, NL
Canada
A1C 5S7
lcullum@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed up to a cut-off date of April 30th 2015.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your signature:

I have read and understood what this study is about and appreciate the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

- ☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.
- ☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the in-person interview
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the in-person interview
- ☐ I agree to the use of quotations.
- ☐ I do not agree to the use of direct quotations.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Appendix F
Student Interview Schedule (for those who have moved)

Tell me about how you have gotten to this point in your life, what were you doing before you enrolled and began participation in the program?

1. Tell me about your experience of moving in order to participate in this program.
2. What did you consider when deciding to move?
3. Did you look at enrolling in any other education programs? Where were they located?
4. What made you choose this program specifically over other courses?
5. Tell me about the process of finding a new place to live once you decided to move.
6. Did anyone move with you? (i.e. intimate partners, extended family)
7. Was your family or any specific family members affected in any way by your decision to move for education? How?
8. Can you tell me more about how your education is funded? Do you feel as though you are being supported? How might you feel more supported? What about part-time employment?
9. Did you encounter any issues or hard situations throughout the process of deciding to move for education? Explain. Has your situation improved or changed since moving? Are you encountering any issues at this time?

10. Tell me more about your hopes for the future. What is your opinion of job opportunities in the area? Do you expect to leave the area after you finish your program? Where will you go? What will you do?

Do you have anything else to add about your experiences with moving for your program that you think may contribute to my research?

Appendix G

Student Interview Schedule (for those who did not move)

1. Tell me about your experience of deciding to enroll in this program.
2. Have you lived in the Placentia area your whole life?
3. What did you consider when deciding to stay in the area for education?
4. Did you consider any other education programs in any other locations? What made you choose the Process Operator course over other options?
5. What are the benefits of staying in the area?
6. Is there anything you dislike about your decision to pursue school in the Placentia area?
7. What is your daily routine? Do you live close to the school? Do you commute from an outside community? Do you own your own car? Carpool?
8. Tell me about your family (intimate partner/extended family). Did your family affect your decision to stay in the Placentia area for education? How so? Was your family involved in your decision to stay in any way?
9. Tell me more about how your education is funded. Do you feel as though you are being supported? How might you feel more supported? What about part-time employment?
10. Tell me more about your hopes for the future. What is your opinion of job opportunities in the area? Do you expect to leave the area after you finish your program or stay? Where will you go? What will you do?

Do you have anything else to add about your experience staying in the Placentia area for your program that you think may contribute to my research?

Appendix H
Student Interviews
Informed Consent Document

Title: *Young People on the Move?: Narrative Accounts from Men and Women Process Operator Students at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, Newfoundland and Labrador*

Researcher(s) Jessica Earle; Department of Sociology; Memorial University
Email: jke206@mun.ca
Telephone: (709) 730-9699

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “*Young People on the Move?: Narrative Accounts from Men and Women Process Operator Students at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, Newfoundland and Labrador*”.

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, *Jessica Earle*, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jessica Earle and I am a Masters student with the Department of Sociology at Memorial University’s St. John’s campus. As part of my Masters thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Nicole Power and Dr. Linda Cullum.

In recent years, the provincial government has focused on young men and women in Newfoundland and Labrador who move away from the province for various reasons such as education or employment. Attention has been paid to the rate by which young people are moving away from certain areas, especially regions of the province with smaller populations. These geographic movements are sometimes cast in a negative light, which may impact the regions themselves as well as the individuals who live within them. Research focusing on large-scale patterns such as the outmigration of youth to other provinces is useful in providing evidence for one story that relates to youth mobility in the NL context. However, these studies do not capture the actual geographical movements of youth *within* the province, nor do they address individuals who choose not to move, and the layered nature of such decision-making processes.

Exploring the motivations and stories behind student education-related geographical movement, especially for programs that relate to participation in the skilled trades (like the Process Operator course), could help to assess the level of support provided to young people in this field of study. It could also help to identify where supports are needed or lacking, since provincial initiatives in earlier years (like the 2008 Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy) have since been abandoned for a more general, “population strategy”.

Purpose of study:

The objectives of my research are: to explore the actual and potential education-related geographical movements of men and women of all ages participating in the (2014/2015) Process Operator course at the College of the North Atlantic in Placentia, NL and the ways in which participant experiences have been enabled, constrained or prevented; to gain a better understanding of the layered nature of deciding whether to move or not for education by investigating the role of individual personal-family, gender, social and economic relations and how these factors may structure movement to different degrees; to clarify how youth geographical mobility is portrayed by the provincial government and other public groups, and whether this relates to the real stories of youth participants in the study; and to provide biographical accounts of the intra-provincial (within the province) movements of youth enrolled in the Process Operator course at CNA-Placentia.

What you will do in this study:

If you agree to participate in a follow-up semi-structured in-person interview you will be questioned on your decision to move or not to participate in the 2014/2015 Process Operator course. Questions in the follow-up interview will expand and build upon the brief questions answered in the web-based survey. The goal is to collect stories from participants that are set within the context of their biography and life. Participants will be asked to explain the process behind choosing to move or not in order to participate in their current program at CNA-Placentia and how these choices have been structured or impacted by other factors like financial circumstances or family responsibility.

Length of time:

The in-person interview should take no longer than 15-30 minutes in total.

Withdrawal from the study:

If you agree to participate and give your consent, you can still choose to stop or end your involvement by alerting the researcher that you would like to end the in-person interview or by telling the researcher you would not like to answer a certain question. You will not be penalized in any way and the data collected up to the point of your withdrawal (if you decide to completely end your involvement) will be destroyed completely up to a cut-off date of April 30th, 2015.

Possible benefits:

Possible benefits to this study for participants include contributing to research that relates to the area they are studying in school, and an area of potential future employability.

Participating in this study will help the researcher in trying to clarify the nature of men and women Process Operator students' stories of the decision-making processes behind determining whether or not to move for education, and the ways in which these accounts fit within the context of publicly available information on the geographic mobility of young people in Newfoundland in Labrador.

Possible risks:

Possible risks involved in participating in a follow-up in-person interview with the researcher are emotional or mental (dis)stress stemming from the personal nature of certain interview questions. If this is the case, you have the right to not answer any question included in the in-person interview and you also have the right to stop participating and completely end your involvement at any point.

Confidentiality vs. Anonymity

There is a difference between confidentiality and anonymity: Confidentiality is ensuring that identities of participants are accessible only to those authorized to have access. Anonymity is a result of not disclosing participant's identifying characteristics (such as name or description of physical appearance).

Confidentiality and Storage of Data:

Your participation in this study will be confidential to anyone who is not authorized to have access. Confidentiality is limited in the way that this study focuses on one specific program at the College of the North Atlantic – Placentia campus. The potential sample for the study, (students potentially involved) will therefore be known to the class, the class instructor, and various college administrators. However, no one except for yourself and the researcher will be privy to which parts of the study you participate in, nor will they have access to your specific interview transcripts. To strive for anonymity even throughout the final report and thesis, pseudonyms, individually chosen by the participants, will be used in place of real names in written and verbal presentations of results.

If you agree to participate in a follow-up interview in person, your responses to interview questions will be audio-recorded and later transcribed by myself in private. All recordings will be transferred from my recording device to a flash drive and kept for 5 years in a secure password protected file along with an electronic copy of the interview transcription. Only I will have access to these original files and audio-recordings. All "data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research." After 5 years all collected data will be securely destroyed.

Anonymity:

Every reasonable effort will be made to assure your anonymity as a participant and that you will not be identified in any reports and publications without your explicit permission. Because of the small and specific sample size, anonymity cannot be guaranteed, and participants may be identifiable by informed readers.

Recording of Data:

With your consent to participate in a follow-up in person interview, your interview responses will be audio-recorded using the researchers smartphone. Only the researcher will hear audio-recordings and direct quotes will not be used unless specific permission is given from the participant.

Reporting of Results:

The information collected from your participation in this follow-up in person interview will be used towards a Masters thesis in Sociology and will not be reported using any information that would enable others to identify you personally. If consent is given to use direct quotes, anonymity will still be maintained by using pseudonyms individually chosen by participants. If consent is not given, your information may still be used in the form of summarizing but your confidentiality will be assured.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

A report on the findings and related feedback will be provided to participants upon their request and will be sent to the College of the North Atlantic – Placentia campus once completed. Any participant who wishes to have a copy of the report can email a request to the researcher (contact information can be found on this form) at a later date.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Jessica Earle, jke206@mun.ca, (709) 730-9699.

You are also welcome to contact my supervisor(s) with any questions or concerns throughout your participation in this study:

Dr. Nicole Power
Department of Sociology
Memorial University
St. John's, NL
Canada
A1C 5S7
[709.864.6914](tel:709.864.6914)
npower@mun.ca

Dr. Linda Cullum
Department of Sociology
Memorial University
St. John's, NL
Canada
A1C 5S7
lcullum@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed up to a cut-off date of April 30th 2015.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your signature:

I have read and understood what this study is about and appreciate the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

- ☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.
- ☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the in-person interview
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the in-person interview
- ☐ I agree to the use of quotations but do not want my name to be identified in any publications resulting from this study (use of pseudonym).
- ☐ I do not agree to the use of direct quotations.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date