

New Mobile Realities in Mature Staples Dependent Regions: Local Governments and Work Camps

Laura Ryser, Greg Halseth, Sean Markey*, and Marleen Morris

UNBC, *SFU

CRRF 2016 - Guelph

Outline

- Background
- Study Design
- Results
 - Factors shaping pressures with work camps
 - Zoning / development permit processes
 - Code of conduct agreements
 - Decommissioning of work camps
- Discussion

Restructuring in Resource Regions



- Long history of work camps
 - Labour camps, construction camps, hybrid camp towns
- Post-WWII period of planning in resource regions
 - Goal: attract / retain residents
- Post 1980s, shift away from building resource towns
 - Rising costs, lengthier approval processes
 - Reduced role of senior gov'ts in town development
- Industry
 - Adoption of labour shedding technology
 - Shift towards rotational / mobile workforce practices

- 30 key informant stakeholder interviews
 - Industry, work camp providers, union, host community stakeholders
 - Canada, US, Scotland, Australia
- Questions explored:
 - Workforce / work camp pressures
 - How new labour geographies are shaping opportunities / challenges of local gov't operations
- Latent and manifest content analysis

Results

- I. Factors shaping pressures with work camps
- II. Zoning / development permit processes
- III. Code of conduct agreements
- IV. Decommissioning of work camps

Pressures with Work Camps

- Work camp pressures shaped by:
 - Size of camp / community
 - Type of camp (open vs. closed)
 - Duration of work camp operations
- Lack information about industrial growth
 - Different forecasting models
 - Critical to inform local gov't work camp policies
- Conflicted about work camps in town
 - Fail to capture benefits while incurring expenses
 - Unintended impacts on capacity to attract / retain other residents

Zoning I

- Temporary workforce accommodations
 - To reduce noise, dust, light concerns for residents
- Determining location of work camps
 - In town for more economic benefits
 - Near industry to reduce disruption

Zoning II

- Confusion about appropriate zoning
 - Not industrial or residential = hybrid zoning
 - Collaborative local gov't / industry efforts to develop zoning bylaws
- Few local gov't regulations governing caravans
 - Limit on # of caravans before subdivision regulations designated

Development Permit Processes



- Determine conditions for work camp development permits (i.e. construction phase)

Our council took the position that we would allow a temporary workforce for the construction phase of the projects, but any jobs that were long term or operational, we expected them to live, work, and play in Labrador West. The ***camps were located on land that we leased to the company.*** Plus, ***we gained revenues from the camps as well.*** We actually ***developed a score card for critiquing temporary work camps*** to see if it was really needed or not, and what the benefit would be to the community. If they reached a certain score, then we were permitted to go ahead (Community Leader, Canada).

Development Permit Processes

- Through development permit processes, information collected about:
 - Location / layout / capacity;
 - Traffic route plans;
 - Construction / decommissioning timelines;
 - Service / infrastructure plans;
 - Compensation for impacted property owners, etc.
- Some camps fail to obtain permits that accurately reflect # of people in camp
- New regulations needed for open camps

We have a couple crew camps located in city limits. The regulations are very strict in that they can only be located in industrial areas. And then our biggest thing is a *crew camp has to be fully occupied by the company that's running it...If we have a problem with it, we just go to the company and they deal with someone as an employee issue* (Community Leader, US).

Code of Conduct Agreements

- Guide behaviors / interactions with communities
- Vetted by community advisory panel
- Example: Labrador City, Newfoundland
 - Curfew restrictions,
 - Restricted guests,
 - Limited tolerance for not adhering to work camp protocols
- Industry working groups used to coordinate shift changes and mitigate traffic pressures
 - Roads, highways, airports



Decommissioning of Work Camps on the move partnership

- Few local governments had decommissioning policies in place

The key concern from communities is not that work camps will be built. But once the project is finished, the community may be left with an eye sore. So they ***wrote in the remediation and timelines for renewals and ground rules in place to monitor the process prior to having to deal with the problem.*** So everyone looked at the end of the timelines of the project and ***ensured that an exit strategy was in place*** (Work Camp Operator, Canada).



Decommissioning of Work Camps on the move partnership

- Decommissioning plans can be tied to permits
 - Example: Williams County, North Dakota
 - Temporary work camp permits approved for 2 years
 - Used to ensure compliance with regulations
 - Must submit a bond and decommissioning plan
 - Cleaning up contaminants, replacing topsoil, removing road infrastructure

Discussion I

- Renegotiated labour landscape
 - Workers can choose where they live / work
- Local gov't pressure to avoid camps
- No longer reflects reality of contracts / temporary mobile labour
 - Construction, operations, maintenance
- Resource projects mobilized / withdrawn quickly
- Prompting influx / change of large, rotational mobile workforces

Discussion II

- Policies and information structures have not been retooled
- Rural zoning / permit processes based on traditional settlement patterns
 - No longer reflect new labour geographies
- Calls for local gov't transition from managerialism to entrepreneurialism
- Work camps can be emerging economic sector

Discussion III

- Local gov't policies need to clarify:
 - Temporary / permanent work camps permit conditions
 - Phase of development
 - Size of camp
 - Duration of camp permit
 - Parking needs
 - Code of conduct agreements
 - Decommissioning plans
- Requires resources to monitor camp operations
- Work camps don't easily fit into traditional zoning categories
 - Require buffer zones, rerouting work camp traffic, etc.

Discussion IV

Challenges moving forward:

- Difficult to understand / assess positive and negative impacts of work camps
- Small local gov't staff
- Need formalized responsibilities to maintain work camp / industry relationships
- Political maneuvering to determine who's responsible for infrastructure / program investments
- Still lack renewed building codes for temporary work camp structures

UNBC Canada Research Chair, Rural and Small Town Studies

3333 University Way

Prince George, BC, Canada V2N 4Z9

<http://www.unbc.ca/greg-halseth/canada-research-chair-rural-and-small-town-studies>

The On the Move Partnership is a project of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Research at Memorial University. On the Move is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Research & Development Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and numerous university and community partners.

Le partenariat en mouvement est un projet du Centre *SafetyNet for Occupational Health & Safety Research* à l'Université Memorial. En mouvement est subventionné par le Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada, par la *Newfoundland and Labrador Research & Development Corporation*, par la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, ainsi que par de nombreux partenaires et universités.