

# **Fly-in/Fly-out Work Arrangements: Perspectives on the Pros and Cons**

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# Commute employment defined

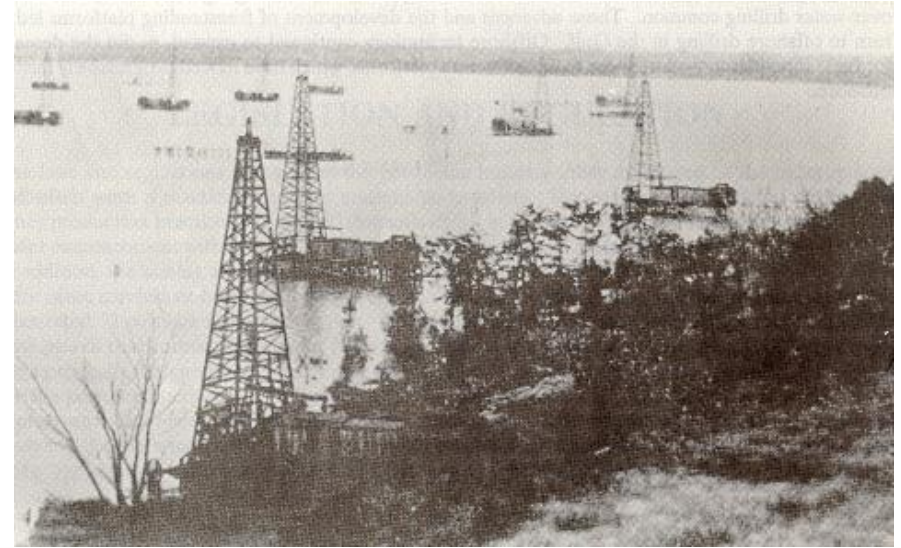
Commuting employment refers to all employment in which the work place is beyond daily commuting distance of the workers' homes such that food and lodging accommodations are provided for them at the work site and schedules are established whereby employees spend a fixed number of days working at the site followed by a fixed number of rest days at home.

Based on Hobart 1979

# Origins of the FIFO Model

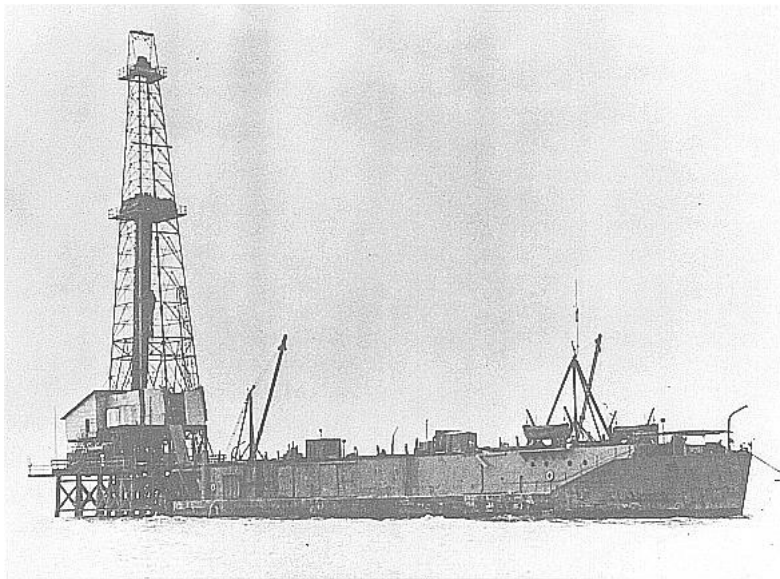
Model evolved from 1940s oil industry in Gulf of Mexico

Daily commute from onshore becomes impractical as distance from shore increased



Drilling over water

Gulf of Mexico, 1930s



*Kermac 16*

first offshore drill rig with  
onboard accommodations

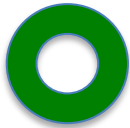
1947

Resource



Resource Town

Urban Centre



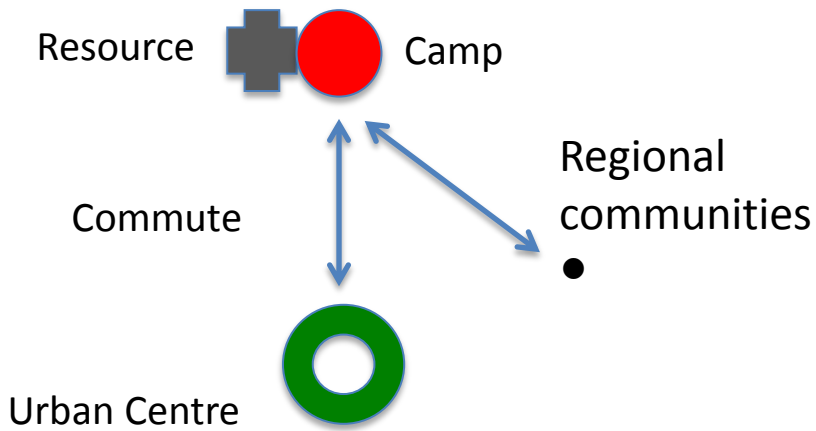
*Traditional Model: "New Towns"*



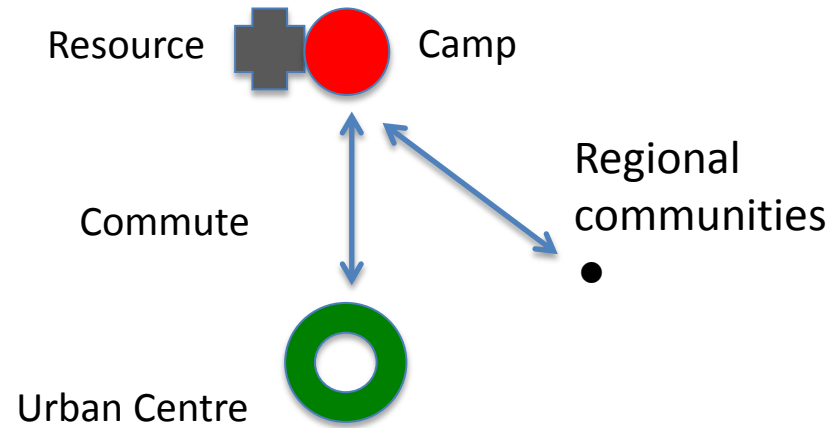
Tumbler Ridge, BC - coal







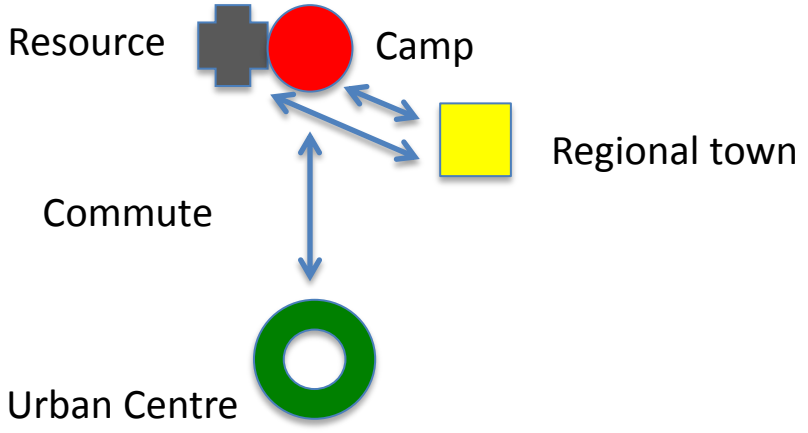
*Type 1: Remote camps:  
No Alternative -Construction*



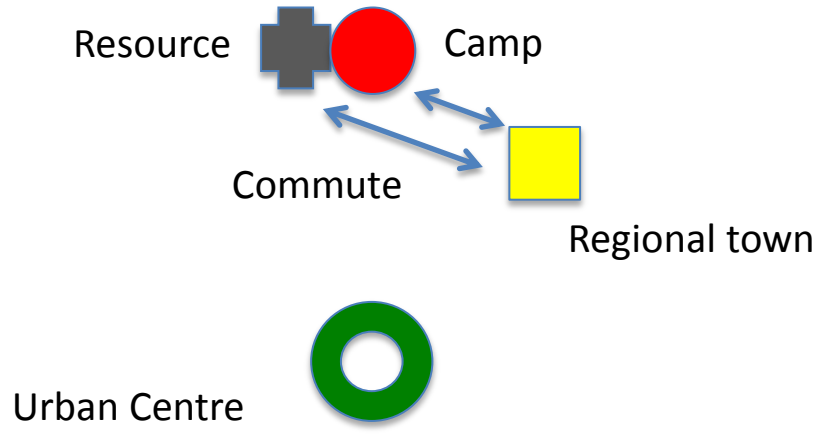
*Type 1: Remote camps:  
No Alternative -Operations*



● Polaris, NWT 1980-2002 zinc, lead



*Type 2: Near-town camps  
Construction*

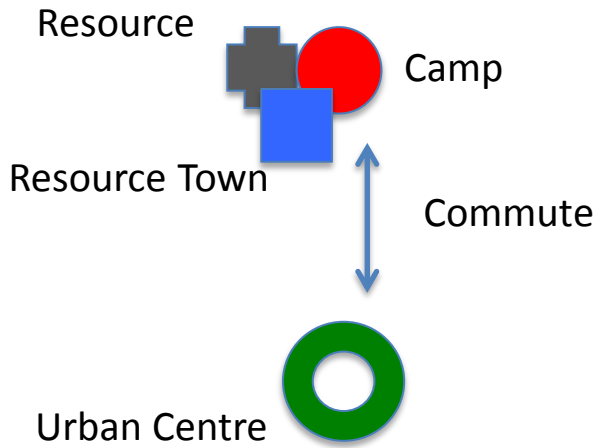


*Type 2: Near-town camps  
Operations*



● Fort McMurray, Alberta – oil sands, 1967-





*Type 3: In-town camps:  
Construction*

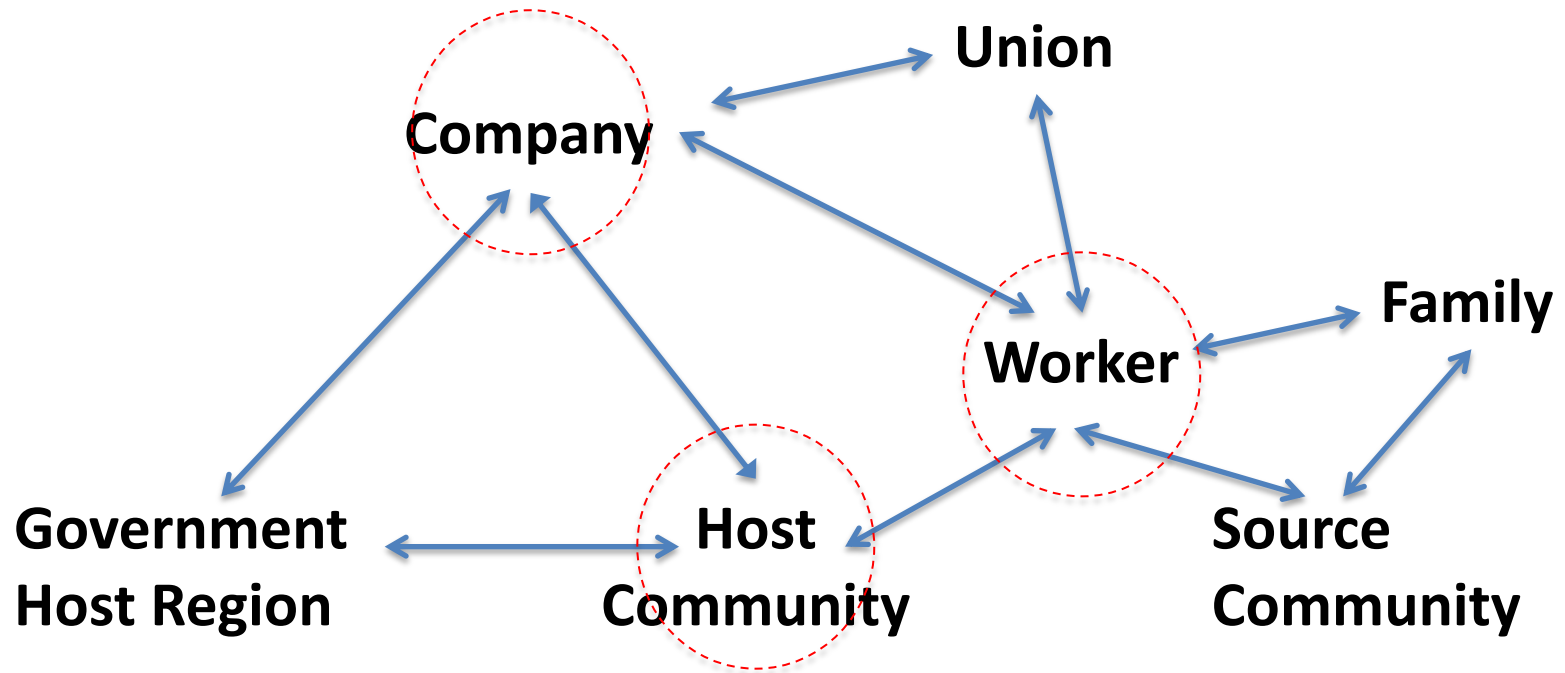


*Type 3: In-town camps:  
Operations*



● Labrador City – iron ore, 1967-

# Principal FIFO Actors





# Pros and Cons of FIFO: Host Community Perspective

## Pros

### *Employment*

- local opportunities

### *Wages*

- local beneficiaries

### *Housing*

- local beneficiaries

### *Expenditures*

- local beneficiaries

### *Corporate engagement*

- donations

## Cons

### *Employment*

- local qualifications/union

### *Wages*

- inequalities, “Dutch disease”

### *Housing*

- rising costs for locals

### *Expenditures*

- “fly-over”/ “fly-through” effects

### *Corporate engagement*

- communications
- transient workforce

### *Infrastructure and Services*

- “free rider” problem

# Pros and Cons of FIFO: Worker Perspective

## Pros

### *Employment*

- jobs, training, experience, responsibility, mobility, career advancement

### *Wages*

- high rates, lifestyle, expenditures

### *Rosters*

- on-shift focus, off-shift family time

## Cons

### *Wages*

- “golden handcuffs”

### *Rosters*

- family separation, child raising, relationships

### *Health*

- fatigue, recovery time
- personal health practices, health management

### *Safety*

- safety culture, communications, journey to work, turnover

# Pros and Cons of FIFO: Company Perspective

## Pros

### *Labour*

- access to larger pool
- costs
- on-site control – absenteeism, productivity, worker preferences, flexibility (start-up, expansion/contraction, closure)

### *Community*

- regulatory requirements, responsibilities

### *Unions*

- site access

## Cons

### *Labour*

- costs (travel, accommodations, infrastructure), turnover

### *Co-ordination/Management*

- weather, infrastructure and services, communications, roster hand-overs

# Conclusions

- FIFO here to stay
  - will become more important given labour supply issues
- Little attention by provincial governments
  - ones with most ability to fund local community/region costs
- Governments too slow to act
  - companies often act in ways that might not be in best interest of communities/regions
- FIFO preferred choice of many workers cf. relocation
  - place preferences, risk aversion, no cost travel/accommodations
- Pros outweigh cons for most actor groups
  - host communities most likely to see fewest benefits and highest costs





Northern Canada Mining

Greenland Fishery

Voisey's Bay

Labrador West

Lower Churchill

Alberta Oil Sands

7,000 – 9,400

Hebron, White Rose, Long Harbour

Nova Scotia Home Care

Ontario Lake Boats

International Merchant Marine

Newfoundland Offshore Oil

International Offshore Oil

