Divided province: Ontario politics in the age of neoliberalism

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Pages 151 to 204

| 5 |

Northern Ontario and the Crisis of Development and Democracy

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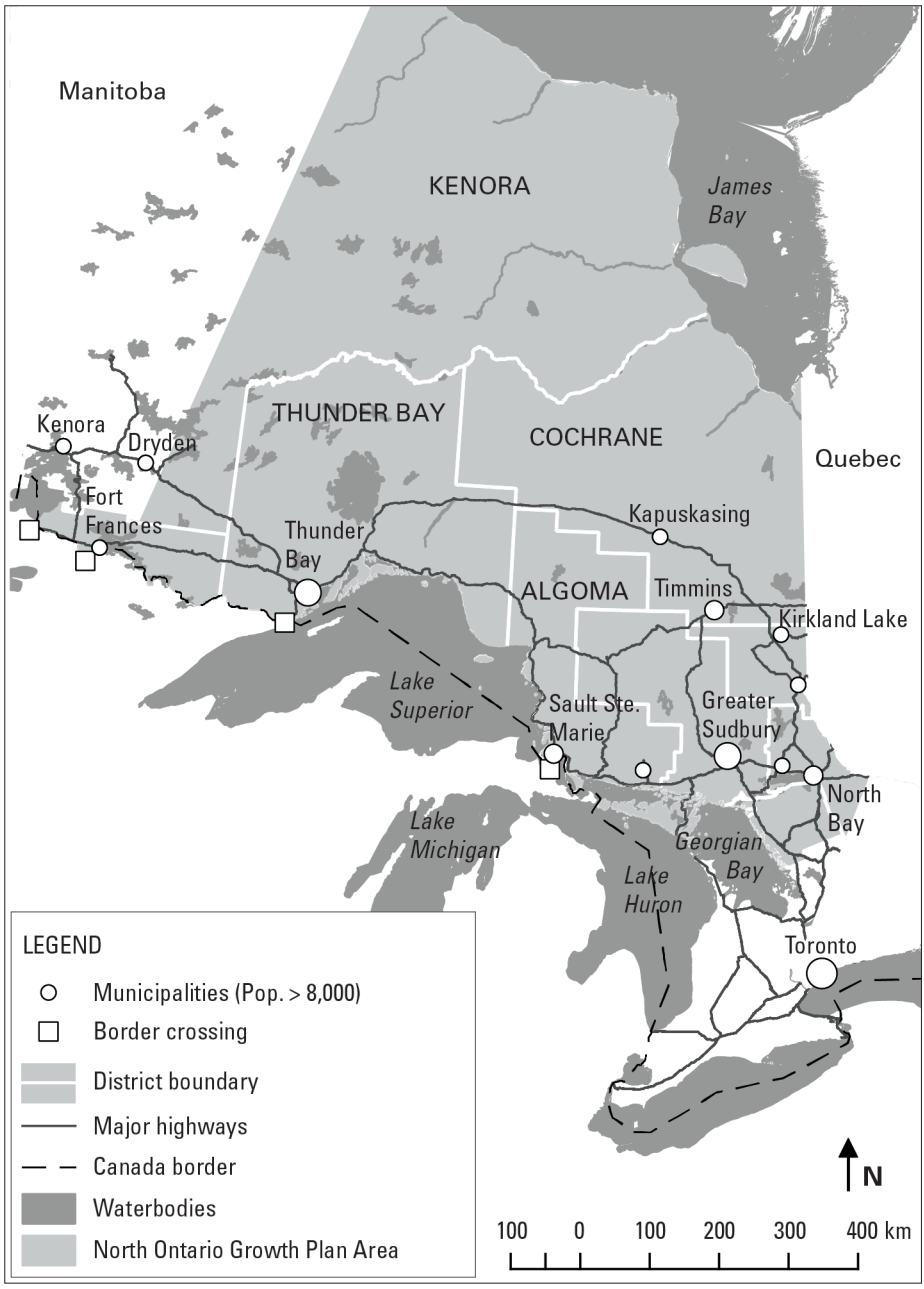
Northern Ontario has a land area of over 800,000 square kilometres – over 87 per cent of the province of Ontario. The population in 2016 was about 780,000, including over 128,000 Indigenous Peoples and 120,000 Franco-Ontarians. While it has about 6 per cent of the province's total population, Northern Ontario has about 34 per cent of the Ontario Indigenous population and about 24 per cent of the Ontario francophone population.[1]

There exists some contention over the boundary for Northern Ontario, at least its most southern portion, which divides "the North" from "the rest of Ontario" – what in Northern Ontario is usually called "Southern Ontario." In much common use, this southern boundary is taken to be from Lake Huron across the French River (la "Rivière des Français") through to Lake Nipissing and Mattawa to the Ottawa River. However, for some political purposes the boundary has been pulled south, essentially so that bordering areas, particularly Parry Sound and Muskoka, might access funds or arrangements dedicated specially to Northern Ontario. An example of this is the *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario* (Ontario 2011b) developed by the McGuinty Liberal government of Ontario. As can be seen in map 5.1, Northern Ontario includes not only the nine districts (and City of Greater Sudbury) usually identified as such, but also the bordering district of Parry Sound.[2] Some Northern political interests have challenged such enlarged boundary definitions as they could reduce the already limited provincial or federal funds available to the existing Northern districts.



Map 5.1 | Northern Ontario as defined by the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (Adapted from: Ontario [2011, 55], *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for Northern Ontario*)

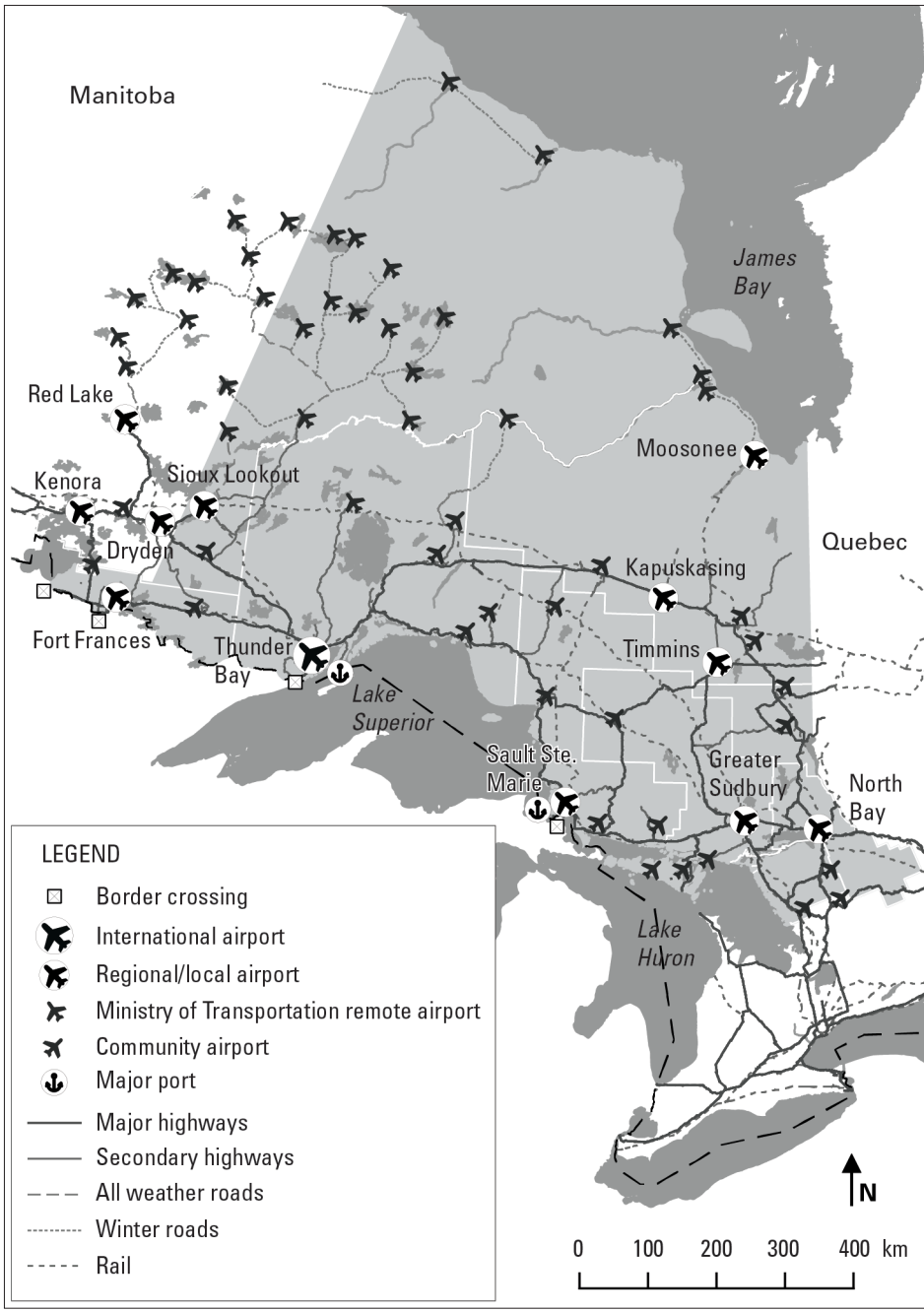
This said, the boundary districts in question have often faced similar economic problems. One can view this conflict as reflecting the widening area of impoverishment, decline, and social division being visited on the hinterlands of Ontario and Canada. Further, it is a conflict reflecting a colonial history in which Indigenous Peoples have been excluded in determining the politico-administrative divisions of their original territories.

Despite the boundary issue, Northern Ontario is evidently vast: about 8 per cent of Canada's land area, larger than most provinces, and larger than the homelands of its early colonial masters, France and Britain, combined. Bioregionally, Northern Ontario is a creature of the Canadian Shield, the source for its fresh water, mining, forestry, hunting and trapping, and clay belt agriculture as well. The area can be seen as having two main watersheds with two main types of land cover, the Hudson Plains to the north of the Laurentian (Continental) Divide and the Boreal Shield to the south.[3]

The Ontario government recognizes that Northern Ontario has 106 First Nations, a number of Métis communities, 144 municipalities, and over 150 unincorporated communities.[4] The southern areas of Northern Ontario are relatively urbanized, and concentrated near the two transcontinental rail lines (the CPR and CN), the TransCanada highway, and Great Lakes ports (map 5.2). Some call this the "mid-North" or the "near North," preferring instead to characterize the lands above the Laurentian Divide as the "far North." Under pressures for mining, the Ontario government has moved to define the latter area and to introduce land-use planning measures in the Far North Act, 2010. Thus defined, the Far North is largely the Hudson Bay Lowlands and a portion of the Boreal Shield, which together make up over 40 per cent of the area of Ontario; most of the thirty-six communities and about 90 per cent of the 24,000 people in the Far North are First Nations (Ontario 2011a).

SETTLER COLONIZATION

As with other hinterland areas of modern Canada, the political economy of Northern Ontario has its structural foundations in the history of colonial expansion, first French and English, then Canadian internal colonization. Though colonization transformed profoundly the



Map 5.2 | Northern Ontario transportation (Adapted from: Ontario [2011, 61], *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for Northern Ontario*)

societies and environment of Northern Ontario, the modern colonial-capitalist period has been short – perhaps 4 per cent relative to the long span of human history in the area. Archaeological evidence from the Sheguiandah site on Manitoulin Island shows an active human presence in Northern Ontario over 9,500 years ago, shortly after the last Ice Age.[5] Long before the impacts of colonization, there had evolved culturally rich, diverse, and sovereign Indigenous societies. Copper from around the Lake Superior area was used in tools and was traded; silver, too, from around the Cobalt area was traded. As Abel (2006, 16) writes of the Northeast over five centuries before European contact, "there were many small autonomous communities, but each recognized a connection to a broader regional population of similar communities, and each was also connected to the outside world through trade, intermarriage, and travel. It was a cosmopolitan society that was by no means isolated or inward-looking." The diversity one finds today includes three broad language groups in Northern Ontario, all part of the Algonquian family of languages: Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe), Cree (Iliniimowin for the Moose Cree and Ininiimowin for the Swampy Cree), and Oji-Cree (Anishininiimowin).[6]

Colonialism in Northern Ontario first appears in the rival fur trading and religious missions of the French and English beginning in the 1600s. But the modern era of mass settler colonization and large-scale extractive industry comes two centuries later, especially following the penetration of the CPR and other railway corporations from the 1880s. This was a colonization dominated by monopoly capitalism and a ruling class based in southern Canada's metropolitan centres of Montreal and Toronto. This colonization reflected a much higher scale of capitalist accumulation and centralization than during the first phase of capitalist industrialization in Canada, which was apparent economically by the 1840s and politically in the Confederation arrangements of 1867 (Ryerson 1973). Though the participants in the colonial expansion included US and British finance capital, it was primarily a Canadian internal colonialism.

The process of settler colonization in Northern Ontario had the classic form of other hinterland areas of the old North-West Territories (Leadbeater 1984): the establishment of Canadian state power; dispossession of First Nations; railway development; natural resource

exploitation; Euro-Canadian settlement; expansion of the internal market.[7] However, unlike colonization in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or Alberta, Northern Ontario did not achieve provincehood or any state form sufficient to achieve ownership of the region's natural resources and some control of its economic and political development.[8]

The Canadian state, at both the provincial and federal level, had largely completed taking control of the territory of Northern Ontario by World War I. State power and an authoritarian administration was the sharp edge of colonization, enforcing and smoothing the dispossession and removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands, surveying and privatizing lands, protecting the property of the mining, forestry, and railway companies, regulating settlement, and imposing a tax and customs regime to pay for its activities and help subsidize the colonization. State power was established over the vast area and depended on the balance of power against and among the Indigenous Peoples, the particular encroachments of mining and logging companies, rival federal and provincial interests, the physical advance of railways and other means of transport and communication, and the strategic direction of the state, particularly relative to US western expansion.[9]

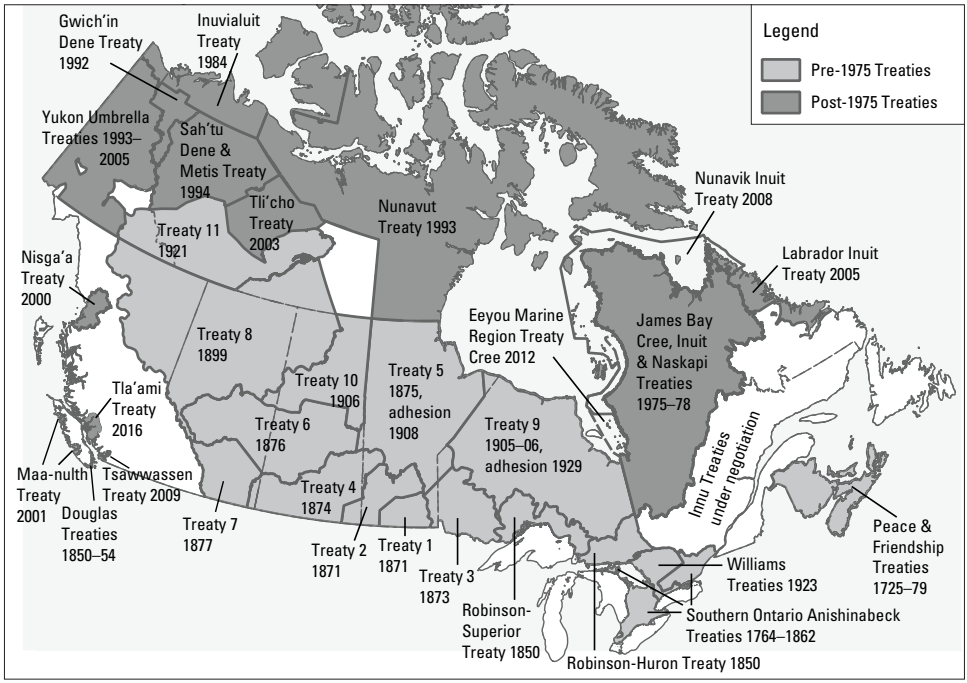
At the time of the Confederation in 1867, the occupied land of Ontario – and of its colonial predecessors Canada West (1840) and Upper Canada (1791) – was a fraction of its current size. The new Canadian state claimed all territory north to the Laurentian Divide; the territory north of the divide was still part of Rupert's Land, ruled since 1670 as the private colonial territory of the Hudson's Bay Company. In Southern Ontario there were growing pressures centred in Toronto for northward expansion under the aegis of the Ontario government, though such expansionist pressures were evident before Confederation.[10] This gave rise to a colonial scramble for the North and a political struggle within Canada's rising ruling class. The growing capitalist power based in Toronto, particularly under the Mowat Liberals (1872–96), pressed aggressively for the expansion of the provincial boundaries against the mainly Tory federal government, with a closer British imperial interest and based in Montreal, still by far the largest city in Canada and then hub of finance.

Underlying the provincial colonial drive was the control of land and resources. The terms of the Confederation arrangements (BNA

Act, 1867, s. 92) provided for provincial control of lands and their resources ("The Management and Sale of the Public Lands belonging to the Province and of the Timber and Wood thereon"), which in the northern area would mean Ontario (Crown) ownership and resource revenues.[11] But there was more, notably the possibilities for political corruption, as Baskerville (2005, 127) expresses it: "The winner would also gain control of numerous opportunities for political patronage – in the establishment of municipal government, the granting of liquor licences, the appointment of judicial and other officials – that could be used for partisan purposes." The eventual outcome was a vast northward and westward expansion of Ontario's territory.[12]

In the mid-1800s and the early colonization period, the primary instrument of state power was the militia (the army). Professionalized public policing was then very limited, and that only starting in the largest urban centres (Greer 1992); in rural and hinterland areas there was practically none. The militia was used against Indigenous Peoples over their control of lands as early as 1849 in the so-called Mica Bay incident (Chute 1998). The Canadian government formally took charge of its own militia in the Militia Act (1868), then strengthened further the colonization process with the founding of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1873, following the Red River (First North-West) Uprising of 1869–70. Corporations, most notably the railways and large mining companies, developed their own private police forces, which were especially active in company towns. With the growth of independent towns and local taxation, municipalities gradually increased policing under local control. In 1909, in part due to perceived lawlessness in the silver and gold boom areas of Cobalt and Timmins, the provincial government formed the Ontario Provincial Police, which marked a shift to a much expanded and direct supra-local role of the state in policing.

Canadian colonization was founded on the forced removal of Indigenous Peoples from their land and its resources, the extinguishing of legal title and reassigning of it to the colonizers, and the concentration of the Indigenous population into "Indian Reserves." Short of outright genocide, this has been a pattern typical of modern colonialism, whether seen in the US reservation, the Spanish *reducción*, or the South African bantustan. By 1860, while Canada was still under



Map 5.3 | Historical and new treaties in Canada. Historical treaties are pre-1975 and modern treaties are post-1975 (*Sources*: Southern Chiefs Organization [2018]; Canada [2018])

the British colonial Province of Canada, the administration of Indigenous lands had come under Canadian settler control (Dickason 2002, 231). Although British and French colonialism have had their particular atrocities in Canada and elsewhere, what occurred in Northern Ontario was primarily a domestic Euro-Canadian colonialism led by an expanding Canadian-based capitalism seeking natural resources and transportation and communication corridors. The point deserves emphasis, given a persisting belief to the contrary among powerful parts of the Canadian population – not least Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper, who as recently as 2009 claimed that in Canada, "We also have no history of colonialism" (Ljunggren 2009).

The key means used by the Canadian state was the now well-studied process of treaty-making and administration backed by military power and economic advantage, and legitimated by racist ideology.[13] First

Nations were dispossessed in the general order in which they stood in the way of Euro-Canadian exploitation of their land and its resources. Six main treaties came to cover Northern Ontario (map 5.3).

The Ontario government was also actively initiating "province-building" measures for the development of the North – leading the era of "New Ontario." First, in 1902 the Ontario government built the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway (now Ontario Northland), which reached Cochrane in 1909 and Moosenee in 1932. This stimulated a massive increase in mining, new forest-based activities, and agricultural settlement in the "Great Northern Claybelt."[14] Second, related to expanding transportation came policies and substantial expenditures for directed settlement, initially through Ontario's Bureau of Colonization then with the Northern and Northwestern Ontario Development Act (1912). Third, under popular pressure against the export to the US of raw logs and minerals with little milling or other processing, the Ontario government imposed the famous "manufacturing condition" (or value-added condition) on forest exports. Pine cut on Crown land was to be sawn in Canada (the 1898 sawlog condition) and spruce cut for wood pulp had to be manufactured in Canada (the 1900 pulpwood condition).[15] Fourth, the development of Ontario Hydro (1906), while focused initially on the Niagara and Southern Ontario, began in the 1920s to play a major role in the North, particularly in advancing electrification, providing relatively lower-cost power in the North, and transmitting power south as a large part of Ontario's hydro generation.[16]

Despite these developments, the North never achieved a balanced or self-sustained industrialization. The mining, forest, and rail towns remained essentially that, though there was some diversification in small-scale manufactures for local consumption (such as dairies and brewing) and a slowly growing secondary sector of public services. On the whole, large-scale corporate diversification did not occur. Critics have noted, for example, the failure of agriculture settlement policies, but they have also noted that adopting the heralded "manufacturing condition" was more political rhetoric than substantial in its economic effects (Kuhlberg 2014). Only Sault Ste Marie and the Lakehead appeared by World War I to be shifting towards more diversified industrialization with the capacity for export. The Sault became the centre

of a heavy industry complex, from transportation and hydro power to a pulp mill, ferro-nickel plant, iron mine, and railway. At least until the 1920s, and despite a series of near-terminal financial and leadership crises, what became Algoma Steel (now the Mumbai-headquartered Essar Steel Algoma) managed to produce more iron than any operation in Ontario.[17] The Lakehead diversified even further, particularly with secondary manufacturing, from a historic base in water and then rail transportation to drydocks and shipbuilding, pulp and paper, flour milling, and rail car manufacture (now Bombardier). However, the private development was not self-sustained, and, since the 1970s, both areas have witnessed relative and even absolute employment decline, like many areas of the North.

A SUBORDINATE CAPITALISM AND THE NORTH'S NEW CRISIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the view argued here, the economy of Northern Ontario is a form of subordinate capitalism. Northern Ontario reflects the crises, impoverishment, and social disparities of capitalist development generally, but its conditions are aggravated by an additional layer of problems associated with the fact that its economic base, resource extraction, is largely owned and controlled externally and is at the sharp edge of the global environmental and imperial crisis – and that its population has lacked the political and democratic levers to reorient this. One can speak of this situation, imposed through internal colonization, as "colonial" – and, for Indigenous Peoples and a large part of the land area, it *is* indeed colonial, whether as indicated by the reserve system, the Indian Act, thwarted land rights, or unfulfilled sovereignty. For the non-Indigenous population, the situation could perhaps be characterized as semi-colonial or neo-colonial, in the sense that there is external economic control but certain forms of political representation, as limited as they are, in Parliament, the provincial legislature, and municipalities. This said, the situation does not even come close to autonomy – let alone to the formal political independence usually associated with the latter, such as occurred in the prairie provinces. In this context, I outline key elements of Northern Ontario's contemporary economic development.[18]

Table 5.1 | Class structure compared for Northern Ontario and Southern Ontario, 2017 (employed persons, in thousands)

	Northern Ontario		*Southern Ontario*	
	persons	*%*	*persons*	*%*
Total employment	348.1	100.0	6,779.9	100.0
Employees	309.3	88.9	5,710.4	84.2
Self-employed, employers	15.2	4.4	309.2	4.6
Self-employed, own account	23.2	6.7	752.9	11.1
Unpaid family workers	0.4	0.1	7.8	0.1

	Northern Ontario			*Southern Ontario*		
Employees with union coverage	*all employees*	*union employees*	*union %*	*all employees*	*union employees*	*union %*
All employees	309.3	119.7	38.7	5,710.4	1,491.7	26.1
Public sector	91.7	69.8	76.1	1,237.4	872.7	70.5
Private sector	217.6	49.9	22.9	4,473.0	618.9	13.8
Public sector %	29.6	58.3		21.7	58.5	
Private sector %	70.4	41.7		78.3	41.5	

Note: Northern Ontario combines the economic regions of Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario.

Southern Ontario is Ontario outside (minus) Northern Ontario.

The self-employed, employers include incorporated and unincorporated self-employed with paid help.

The self-employed, own account include incorporated and unincorporated self-employed with no paid help.

The number of unpaid family workers, reported as zero for Northern Ontario because the count was below the threshold of 1,500 for reporting, is estimated here by subtracting other self-employed from total self-employed.

Some totals do not add exactly due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom order.

First, the Northern Ontario economy has a largely capitalist structure as defined by the predominance of private corporate ownership of production and the capitalist labour market. In more northern areas, traditional Indigenous land-based economies continue and evolve, though much has been displaced and penetrated by capitalist relations

and priorities; indeed, corporate and government policies have long aimed to push capitalist forms of development and division in the colonial hinterland. As table 5.1 indicates, capital accumulation and capitalist relations have reached a level where nearly 89 per cent of persons within the statistically measured economy are primarily wage and salary workers.[19] This level is about 5 percentage points higher than in Southern Ontario. Much of the higher level in the North can be explained by the industry structure of the Northern economy, notably the relatively small agriculture sector which historically has been a main base of small-scale independent production and self-employment.[20] As well, most of the key sectors in Northern Ontario are dominated by highly capitalized, large-scale firms, and the public sector is substantially larger. Not surprisingly, there is a relatively smaller employer class in the North. Most major corporate employers in Northern Ontario are located outside the region; for the Canadian corporations, typically in Toronto.

The wage and salary population (broadly, the working class) of Northern Ontario is not only relatively larger; it also has a higher level of unionization. The higher level of unionization in the private sector stems from the importance of large-scale resource, primary manufacturing, and transportation industries together with the history of militant unionism in the mining, forest, and transportation sectors. However, even in such a traditional bastion as hard rock mining, union coverage is below half of mining employment.

Second, as a classic colonial-hinterland region, Northern Ontario has as its economic base primary production and transportation coupled with a high level of monopoly power, external ownership, and export dependency. The main primary production is mining, forestry, and hydro-electricity. The transportation is oriented largely toward transit across the territory, principally through rail, roads, pipelines, and ports, and toward the removal of the resource commodities. Table 5.2, which compares the industry structures of Northern Ontario and Southern Ontario, reveals this division of labour. The gender division of labour follows that elsewhere in Canada. Mining, forestry, and other primary industries, as well as transportation and construction, are highly male-dominated, while public and other services are majority female.[21] Overall, though employment rates are generally lower

Table 5.2 | Industry structure of employment compared for Northern and Southern Ontario, 2017 (employed persons, in thousands)

	Northern Ontario	*Southern Ontario*	*Northern Ontario employment as % of all Ontario*
Total employment	348.1	6,431.8	4.9
Industries (% of total employment)	100	100	
Goods-producing industries	23.5	19.9	5.7
Agriculture	0.7	1.0	3.6
Forestry and logging	1.1	–	72.7
Fishing, hunting, and trapping	n/a	n/a	n/a
Metal ore mining	3.4	–	83.7
Other mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	1.9	0.1	43.3
Utilities	1.1	0.6	8.5
Construction	8.3	7.1	5.6
Manufacturing	6.9	11.0	3.1
Services-producing industries	76.6	80.1	4.7
Trade, wholesale, and retail	14.6	15.0	4.8
Transportation and warehousing	5.3	4.8	5.4
Information and culture	1.1	2.0	2.8
Finance, insurance, real estate (FIRE)	3.4	8.1	2.1
Professional, scientific, and technical	3.9	9.1	2.2
Business, building, and waste services	3.1	4.5	3.4
Education services	8.2	6.9	5.8
Health care and social assistance	16.9	12.0	6.8
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.5	2.4	5.0
Accommodation and food services	7.1	6.3	5.5
Other services (repair, religious, civic, household)	4.2	3.9	5.3
Public administration	6.2	5.2	5.8

Note: Northern Ontario combines the economic regions of Northeast and Northwest Ontario.
Southern Ontario is Ontario excluding (minus) Northern Ontario.
Employment includes both full-time and part-time employees as well as self-employed persons.
Industry categories based on the NAICS 2012. Forestry and logging includes support activities. Other mining includes support activities to mining.
Statistics Canada does not report employment numbers smaller than 1,500, which is indicated here by "n/a." "–" indicates a negligible value that would round to zero.
Due to rounding some totals may appear not to add up exactly.

Source: Statistics Canada (2018), Labour Force Survey, custom order.

in Northern Ontario, among those who are employed the percentage who are female is as high as, if not higher than, the average for Ontario. For example, contrary to some images from an earlier era, the female percentage of employed workers has been higher in both Thunder Bay and Sudbury than in Toronto.[22]

The largest part of "other primary" is the mining industry, which one can also treat as illustrative of the general situation.[23] Of Northern Ontario metals output, gold was nearly half of the value of all metals production and accounted for nearly 55 per cent of all gold production in Canada. This has been dominated in recent years by Vancouver-based Goldcorp Inc. (particularly through its ownership of the major Red Lake mine as well as four other mines in the North), and by the Toronto-based Barrick Gold Corporation, the largest gold mining corporation in the world (particularly through its ownership of Hemlo mines). The next most important metal mined is nickel, of which about 32 per cent of Canadian production comes from Northern Ontario. Since 2006, production has been controlled by Brazil-based Vale (formerly Inco), the largest nickel and iron ore mining corporation in the world, and, to a lesser degree, by Anglo-Swiss Glencore (formerly Xstrata and Falconbridge), the largest commodity trading company in the world. Though Sudbury is probably the second-largest nickel mining area in the world, the production of this industrially valuable non-renewable resource is foreign-owned and controlled. Indeed, for Canada as a whole, a majority of mining is now foreign-owned and controlled, though gold, perhaps the least socially useful of metals, remains under Canadian corporate control.

Another significant feature of the Northern economy is the larger importance of public sector employment and services. The public sector is about 29.6 per cent of all employment in Northern Ontario; it is 21.7 per cent in Southern Ontario (table 5.1). This is due in part to the vast territory over which services are provided and the limited economies of scale in key services. Some limited decentralization of government agencies to mitigate high unemployment has also played a role (for example, the headquarters of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation are located in Sault Ste Marie). However, the higher levels of public employment do not reflect higher standards, particularly in educational services and health care. The situation of public services in

Table 5.3 | Northern Ontario employment by industry, selected years, 1987–2017 (employed persons, in thousands)

	1987	*1990*	*1992*	*2003*	*2007*	*2017*
Total employment, Northern Ontario	342.6	367.5	335.5	371.7	368.9	348.1
Index (1990=100), Northern Ontario	93.2	100.0	91.3	101.1	100.4	94.7
Index (1990=100), all Ontario	94.3	100.0	95.0	119.6	126.0	137.2
Agriculture, fishing, hunting and trapping	4.0	4.1	5.1	3.9	3.2	2.5
Forestry and logging	6.6	5.8	7.2	4.2	4.0	4.0
Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	34.9	32.1	19.8	14.9	17.6	18.3
Metal ore mining only	31.3	27.2	16.5	12.0	10.6	11.8
Utilities	4.5	4.7	4.4	3.0	4.3	4.0
Construction	18.4	23.1	19.2	22.6	21.5	28.9
Manufacturing	38.7	40.5	34.4	41.1	31.2	24.0
Wood product manufacturing only	8.8	7.5	4.8	10.7	10.1	4.6
Paper manufacturing only	11.2	14.3	10.8	13.6	5.1	3.6
Primary metal manufacturing only	9.3	9.3	6.8	4.8	5.0	3.1
Trade, wholesale and retail	52.3	55.3	51.4	57.0	58.4	50.9
Transportation and warehousing	19.9	19.3	17.3	20.7	20.6	18.4

/continued

Northern Ontario, such as the availability of medical, educational, and social services, has been worse overall.

Third, the dynamic pattern of Northern development has had a historic change – not only is there continuing cyclical vulnerability but also a long-term employment decline. As can be seen in table 5.3, for the last three decades the general level of employment in Northern Ontario has been stagnant if not declining, especially in primary industries and manufacturing. By contrast, Ontario as a whole had a general employment increase of approximately 40 per cent over this period, though this increase was insufficient to reduce unemployment

Table 5.3 | *continued*

	1987	*1990*	*1992*	*2003*	*2007*	*2017*
Information and culture	5.1	7.5	6.0	6.7	5.9	4.0
Finance, insurance, real estate (FIRE)	14.5	15.2	15.3	14.4	12.8	11.9
Professional, scientific, and technical	6.7	7.6	9.1	13.0	15.1	13.6
Business, building, and waste services	6.0	6.7	6.2	12.8	14.2	10.8
Education services	21.4	26.5	27.2	27.2	31.4	28.6
Health care and social assistance	38.9	42.3	41.3	55.5	53.8	58.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3.8	4.6	4.0	8.3	8.1	8.6
Accommodation and food services	23.4	29.7	25.3	26.8	25.9	24.8
Other services	20.4	15.0	15.0	16.3	13.4	14.5
Public administration	23.1	27.2	27.3	23.0	27.5	21.7

Note: The year 1987 is the first for which consistent Labour Force Survey data for economic regions are available, while 2017 is the most recent year available at the time of writing.
The years 1990, 2003, and 2007 are the main employment peaks in Northern Ontario during the period; 1992 is the deepest employment trough.
Employment includes both full-time and part-time employees as well as self-employed persons.
Industry categories based on NAICS 2012. Due to rounding some totals may appear not to add up exactly.

Source: Statistics Canada (2018), Labour Force Survey, custom order.

and poverty in Ontario given current distributional policies. Further, the boom and bust pattern long associated with primary industries has not only continued, but there is evidence of an increased volatility of commodities markets associated with increased globalization and financialization (Wray 2008).

Crucial in this change has been a massive loss of employment in primary industries, especially mining and primary manufacturing. From the peak year of 1989 for the period covered in table 5.3, mining employment was 37,600; by 2017 it had fallen by half and was less than 6 per cent of Northern employment. As well, in primary manufactur-

ing, there have been major refinery closures in Sudbury and Timmins, and, in forestry-dependent towns across the North, a swath of mill closures and downsizing. Employment in primary metal manufacturing (mainly smelting and refining) fell by around two-thirds. Wood product and paper manufacturing, which together had at least 20,000 jobs in 1987, were cut to 8,200 by 2017. The causes of this massive shift are several, the most important being corporate consolidation and technological and managerial changes, though capital export and international competition also played a role. Canadian-based transnational mining and oil corporations have become a notable domestic force pushing globalization, and are viewed by some critics as central to the rising profile of Canadian junior-partner imperialism.[24]

Mining and forestry still remain the export base of material wealth produced in the Northern economy.[25] However, for the working class and for community development in the North, lower resource employment means that a smaller proportion of the resource revenues generated goes to worker households and their communities. This situation has been aggravated by Ontario government policies to reduce levels of corporate and resource taxation, which further limits the possible benefits going to hinterland areas. Indeed, while Toronto has emerged as the leading mining finance centre in the world, the employment benefits of mining to the North have declined and mining's tax benefits are among the lowest in Canada (Deneault and Sacher 2012; Weir 2012; PricewaterhouseCoopers 2011). A parallel situation exists in the forestry sector; indeed, an even greater number of smaller Northern communities have been hit by forestry closures and losses of employment, and royalty benefits from the forestry industry may be even lower than those from the mining industry (MacDermid 2012).[26] Such grinding Northern economic conditions are barely engaged, let alone seriously challenged, by the Toronto-based corporate media, mainstream political parties, or government officials, and they are reinforced by the funding power and personal connections of resource corporations and related financial interests.[27]

Mining dependence especially is unsustainable. In the context of Northern Ontario, as a mature mining region, much of the most accessible minerals have been removed and the probability of new large finds reduced for future generations. Even more pressing, transnational

mining corporations have been increasing alternative international sources of supply, particularly in countries with lower wages and weaker labour and environmental regulation. While for many decades until the 1970s Inco and Falconbridge mines in Northern Ontario almost monopolized the supply of nickel in Canada, the US, and many other countries, in 2011, Northern Ontario produced only about 5 per cent of world production, and the US had other sources of supply including Russia and Australia.[28] In gold production, Northern Ontario has been less important in world production; in 2011, the region's production was less than 2 per cent of world production, and, even for the US market, exports from Mexico surpassed those from Canada.

Fourth, environmental limits are being reached, if not already overshot. This constrains the role of primary production, especially resource extraction, as a basis for economic development, and likely some forms of growth itself. Mining in particular is known as one of the most environmentally destructive of industries, in both its effects on air, water, and habitat, and its heavily energy- and carbon-intensive production. In terms of supply, the readily accessible, lower-cost reserves are declining and so pushing exploration further into more remote and unspoiled areas, which are also areas where ownership and sovereignty are increasingly contested by Indigenous Peoples worldwide.[29] Beyond this, conventional oil and gas extraction in Canada has already reached a peak and is in decline; there is need also to consider declining ore grades and the prospect of region-specific peaking of minerals, and how the current approach to resource management is compromising the availability of non-renewable resources for future generations.

Neoliberal policies of deregulation will not alter these environmental limits, and are more likely to accelerate further environmental degradation. Ontario saw a destructive wave of environmental deregulation unleashed under the Harris Conservatives in the 1990s (Cooper 1999), and the neoliberal direction has continued since. One major event in this direction was the Conservatives' Lands for Life proposal affecting about 45 per cent of Ontario's land mass, much of it related to the boreal forest of the mid-North (about 90 per cent of Ontario's forest is publicly owned). The proposal, formalized in 1999 in Ontario's Living Legacy land use strategy and the Ontario Forest Accord, was

a major shift in the direction of the privatization of the management of public lands. The proposal privileged the forest industry and initially increased mining access, while again parading over Indigenous sovereignty and land rights; a particular feature of its success was politically dividing environmental organizations, with a more conservative, parks-oriented group (formed as the Partnership for Public Lands) cooperating formally with the province to increase the role of private sectional interests in the management of such a huge land area.[30]

As a consequence of these fundamental changes since the 1970s, Northern Ontario has been facing a new crisis of economic development (Leadbeater 2008). Its economic expression is a widening and deepening of the typical capitalist tendencies to impoverishment. In terms of labour market conditions, Northern Ontario has been rendered into a labour reserve, like several other hinterland regions in Canada. The three decades of post-World War II expansion, characterized by overall growing labour demand and lower unemployment (though fluctuating) and often higher wages, are long over. Today, working people in Northern Ontario face overall lower employment rates, higher unemployment, persisting out-migration (especially of younger generations), and sharper downward pressures on wages and conditions including among unionized workers. The closures and downsizing of mines, refineries, plants, and mills across the North, such as at Elliot Lake, Smooth Rock Falls, Terrace Bay, Kirkland Lake, Porcupine, and many others, have been shown to have devastating impacts on employment conditions, loss of homes and savings, economic dependency, and bankruptcy (Leadbeater 1998, 1999). In 2016, Northeast Ontario and Northwest Ontario had employment rates of only 53.1 per cent and 54.8 per cent, respectively, compared to the Ontario average of 59.9 per cent and the two metropolitan centres of Toronto and Ottawa which were both at 61.1 per cent.[31] Predictably, there continue to be high levels of poverty, homelessness, and hunger. The mass level of poverty and the provincial government's treatment of the poor was reflected in the tragic death of Kimberly Rogers in Sudbury in 2001, which provoked province-wide outcries for change (Kuyek 2008).[32]

Along with the deteriorating employment conditions of Northern Ontario has been a persisting net outflow of population since

the 1990s. For example, Statistics Canada's *Annual Demographic Estimates* showed an absolute decline between 2005 and 2010 from 817,312 to 805,247. In Northeast Ontario, the key factor in 2009–10 was outmigration to Southern Ontario, typically to places like Barrie, Toronto, and Ottawa; in Northwest Ontario, the key factor has been leaving the province, typically to a western province. This outflow includes First Nations youth, though overall the Indigenous population within the North is growing. At the same time, outside First Nations there is continuing rural and small town depopulation and re-concentration into some larger Northern centres like Sudbury and Thunder Bay, though these larger centres are facing overall decline or stagnation in population. Population stagnation or decline in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, and it may have positive features, such as reducing pressures on the environment or reversing pressures for encroachment on First Nations lands. But in the context of capitalism, such a tendency is associated with increased impoverishment and regional disparity, not social sustainability.

NORTHERN AUTONOMY, THE NATIONAL QUESTIONS, AND CLASS

Given Northern Ontario's legacy of colonialism, external corporate domination, resource-export dependence, and the new crisis in hinterland development, it is difficult to foresee fundamental change in Northern Ontario's economic and social conditions without there being a transformation in the ownership and control of the economy (especially of natural resource extraction), coupled with decolonization and a new, more democratic form of political representation and state administration. Debates about the North's socio-economic conditions have often gravitated towards calls for greater regional control, Northern autonomy, and, at times, provincehood. Greater democracy and greater regional control – the two are not necessarily the same – would have implications for class power, above all, relative to the external corporate interests commanding the Northern economy. But in Northern Ontario this class question and the issue of greater autonomy or provincehood are deeply intertwined with the question of who are to be considered the fundamental national constituents of the region, which relates particularly to Indigenous Peoples and to the

Franco-Ontarian national minority. These issues need to be dealt with *ensemble*.

Studies of Northern Ontario typically hold that its politics diverge from those of Southern Ontario. Weller (1997, 1977) has argued that the North is characterized by a "politics of disaffection," and Miller (1985) refers to "Northern alienation" within a context of four Norths ("the northeast and the northwest, and the north of the larger towns and that of the smaller communities"). Dyck (1996, 311) speaks of a northern regional political "sub-culture": "This is a culture of alienation, dependence, handouts, and frustration, based on isolated settlements, distance from Toronto, poor communications, and inadequate services."

One of the more recent expressions of opposition to the current structure has been the Northern Ontario Heritage Party (NOHP). Initiated in 1977 by Ed Deibel, a North Bay motel operator, the NOHP first emerged from leading a fight against a tax increase by the Davis Conservatives and became a small but public voice advocating provincehood for Northern Ontario.[33] There also exists a range of views short of provincehood, with some presence in local business and academe, calling for greater local and regional political control (Atkins 2006; Neiguth 2009; Whitehouse 2009; Robinson 2011). At least one strand of thinking does not foresee Northern Ontario as a single entity: Northwestern Ontario would join Manitoba, which is felt to be not only physically closer but also potentially more responsive to the Northwestern region (Di Matteo 2006). However, such proposals typically ignore Indigenous and Franco-Ontario populations as collectivities or societal constituents with histories and collective rights differing from those of the dominant Ontario population.

Elected members in the Ontario legislature, who in recent decades have been mainly NDP and Liberal, have often backed greater autonomy and improved services for Northern elements of provincial and federal programs. But there has been little action or sympathy for any major institutional shift in the form of Northern representation, let alone provincehood (Peet 2009) and decolonization. The common belief is that fewer benefits would be gained than lost, such as for health care. Overall, Northern Ontario, given its history of social struggles, its deep concerns about regional inequities, and the larger economic

importance of public sector services and jobs, tends politically to the left of Southern Ontario. The 7 June 2018 Ontario general election saw a polarization that resulted in a sharp political shift to the right. While the Ford Conservatives were elected by a majority of seventy-six of 124 seats (61.3 per cent) with an electoral vote of 40.5 per cent, the NDP received forty seats (32.3 per cent) with a vote of 33.6 per cent, and the Liberals collapsed to seven seats (5.6 per cent) with a vote of 19.6 per cent. By contrast, in the thirteen Northern provincial constituencies, the NDP had a majority of eight seats (61.5 per cent) with an electoral vote of 44.2 percent, compared to the Conservatives' four seats (30.8 per cent) with a vote of 32.3 per cent, and the Liberals' single seat (7.7 per cent) with a vote of 15.6 percent.[34]

As a democratic representational system, such "first-past-the-post" voting to a single-chamber legislature is woefully inadequate for Ontario as a whole. But it is also unsustainable for the North. In the current system, Northern Ontario is actually overrepresented by population in the Ontario legislature;[35] at the same time, Northern Ontario's weight in the province, both economically and socially, continues to decline. These trends suggest that the current representational system is even less capable of defending or advancing Northern rights and needs in the long term, let alone recognizing Indigenous national rights and representation.

In terms of public administration, Ontario had a government branch (1912), then a department (1926), responsible for "northern development." Only in 1985 did the province create a ministry, and only in 1990 were the headquarters moved from Toronto to Sudbury. However, changing the Department of Mines and Northern Affairs into the new Ministry of Northern Affairs and Mines and finally into today's Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has done little to alter the long-standing, subservient position of the North. The state remains primarily as an adjunct for expanding corporate resource extraction and transportation, particularly mining and forestry.

Without fundamental change, the future form of Northern Ontario will be tied to its subordinate and colonial political economy: not only the role of external corporate control, but also the balance of class and national constituents within the North. Unlike the colonized prairie areas of the old North-West or older eastern provinces, Northern

Ontario has never seen the emergence of a strong and cohesive regionally based business class, in part because it lacked some of the province (or region)-building levers that state power would have given it. Also by comparison, the working class has had a larger socio-economic weight relative to the farmer or small-producer population, although the labour movement has yet to play a major role in leading an alternative direction in Northern development (some of the reasons for which are discussed below). Much of the North's history as a network of resource-export-based company towns and local-regional corporate monopolies still continues. The local-regional business class across most sectors and areas is highly dependent on and penetrated by the transnational corporate dominance of the regional economy, whether in mining, forestry, finance, transportation, or retail franchising; that dominance extends to the perspectives of local chambers of commerce.[36] Within the current balance of power, it is more likely that initiatives towards greater Northern autonomy would lead to strengthened external corporate domination rather than to greater democratic power.

At present, the main force compelling structural change in Northern power relations is First Nations Peoples. Among the more visible recent struggles is that of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) over their right to say no to mining exploration and extraction on their lands, which led to the jailing of six leaders of KI in 2008, and became a factor in revisions to the Ontario Mining Act.[37] In another historic struggle, after a decade of legal battles against the Ontario government, in 2011 the Grassy Narrows First Nation won a case before the Ontario Superior Court, which decided that the province does not have the right to authorize logging on lands protected by treaty. Starting on 11 December 2012, a hunger strike by Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat First Nation (of James Bay and Treaty 9) near the federal Parliament triggered a massive wave of Indigenous-led protest in Canada and international solidarity actions against federal omnibus Bill C-45, which tramples over treaty rights and obligations to consult. The Harper Conservatives' bill, designed to promote even more aggressive corporate resource exploitation through weakening public consultation and environmental regulation, was also condemned by labour and environmental leaders, who expressed support for Chief Spence.

While the initiating focus of the "Idle No More" movement was Bill C-45, the context was ongoing government inaction and duplicity in dealing with treaties as well as with persisting poverty, health, housing, and other socio-economic crises.

As First Nations resistance has increased, the transnational corporations and their governmental allies have shifted more often to conciliatory and co-optive strategies. Hence, there has been an increased use of impact and benefits agreements between corporations and First Nations, and more talk of "consultation," "co-management," and "capacity building." However, beyond strategies that would continue corporate resource extraction in the still-colonial framework, there is a fundamental alternative that has been articulated by KI (2011):

> While others talk of co-management and even co-governance, in the wake of the KI struggle, in the wake of our jailing, our imagination of the good life returns to the law of Kanawayandan D'aaki – the sacred duty and sacred responsibility to look after our land.
>
> It is our land, not shared land!
>
> The KI are turning away from the idea of First Nations as communities with legal rights, defined under the Constitution of Canada, and in non-Aboriginal courts, towards a struggle to bring a different world for First Nations into existence.

Democratic resolution of colonial oppression and the national question[38] requires the ending of oppression of one nation by another, whether small or large, which applies to colonial situations like that of the First Nations. However, neither the dominant conception of Canada nor the Canadian constitution has recognized that Canada has not a bi-national but a *multinational* character.[39] In 2007, the Harper Conservative government, along with Australia, New Zealand, and the US, were in a tiny minority opposed to the UN General Assembly's adoption of the historic Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The UN declaration recognized not only that "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination" (Article 3), but also, among other important rights, that "Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied

or otherwise used or acquired" (Article 26.1). In 2010, the Harper government relented and supported the declaration as an "aspirational" and "non-legally binding" document. In 2015, the Trudeau Liberal government went somewhat further, committing the federal government to implementing the declaration, though since then there has been no fundamental change in the operative policies of the Canadian government towards recognition of First Nations territorial and self-governance rights. Nor has the Ontario provincial government transformed its approach on such fundamental democratic rights, which would seriously contradict its neoliberal policies – especially (but not only) on the ownership, control, and use of natural resources.

Indigenous political forms and expression have been many and varied (the subject is elaborated elsewhere in this volume). In terms of organizations in Northern Ontario, the largest are the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), head office in Thunder Bay, and the Union of Ontario Indians (Anishinabek Nation), head office near North Bay. There is a growing Indigenous presence and leadership in mainstream political parties and in labour unions. The North has also given rise to a small Indigenous political party, the First Peoples National Party of Canada, which among other policies expresses the need for a fundamental shift in the constitutional structure of Canada (FPNP 2011): "Abolish the Senate and [have it] replaced with an equal but second house, the First Nations House/Gimaa-gamig (First Nations elected representatives for First Nations Peoples of Canada) in the House of Commons equal to that of the present parliament."

Franco-Ontarians in Northern Ontario played a central part in the colonization process, but they themselves have also been the object of a history of English and Anglo-Canadian colonialism and prejudice in Canada. As in Quebec and Acadie, this oppression gave rise to many decades of struggle for Franco-Ontarian national minority rights, particularly on matters of language, education, and socio-economic development. Though there has been a francophone presence in Northern Ontario since the 1600s, the main wave of francophone migration and settlement, largely from Quebec, occurred in the wake of the CPR and other railways.[40] Francophone settlers worked primarily as farmers and labour in forestry and mining, though a small profes-

sional, church, and business elite came to dominate Franco-Ontarian politics over the decades. The Ontario government's efforts to expand anglophone migration and European immigration to the North were partly to limit and oppose the expansion of Quebec and the influence of the Catholic church (Bernard 1988, 33–7). In 1912, during the pre-World War I period of intense anglo-chauvinism, the Ontario Conservative government banned the use of French in Ontario schools, in the infamous Regulation 17. This unleashed a major political struggle and galvanized Franco-Ontarian political action, led by the Association canadienne-française d'Éducation d'Ontario (ACFÉO, formed in 1910). ACFÉO was able to weaken and eventually reverse the ban, though the history of the struggle remains alive in the politics of Franco-Ontario, and in the successor organizations of ACFÉO, the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO) and today the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO).

During the 1960s and 1970s, there emerged a more radical current of Franco-Ontarian politics that led to the Franco-Ontarian flag (1975), and gave voice to and added energy for the expansion of French-language education, culture, and services in French. Although the postwar Conservative governments gradually allowed the expansion of francophone schooling, it was not until 1984, following a ruling of the Ontario Court of Appeal, that the right of francophone students to an education in French was recognized. The Peterson Liberal government passed the French Language Services Act in 1986 and, in 1987, established public French television, La Chaîne Francaise, now TFO, as an offshoot of TVOntario. These shifts might be explained at least partly by democratic and constitutional struggles, and by the change of government from the Conservatives as the "English party" to the Liberals as the "French party." While significant, the changes were also delayed and limited in responding to class and regional pressures to Franco-Ontarian cultural and political losses.

Northern Ontario (particularly the Northeast) at one time had many majority francophone communities, but their extent was reduced in more recent decades due to rural and small town economic decline and migration, the continuing dominant anglophone pressures for assimilation, and government budgetary recalcitrance in expand-

ing education and cultural (including media) rights. Critics of the francophone elite have also argued that the elite's often passive and accommodationist approach, ignoring working-class Franco-Ontarian realities, has been disempowering (Dennie 2008). Francophone representation in the AFO, school boards, and similar institutions is dependent largely on government funding. Religious conservatism has also been raised as an element in Franco-Ontarian politics, a division that is evident, for instance, in the existence of two publicly funded French-language school board systems (public and Catholic) which compete with each other even in small Northern communities (Boudreau 2008). The lack of broader protections and the weakness of the francophone elite are visible in a variety of educational, cultural, and social development policies. One larger example of this occurred in 2001 with the forced amalgamation of several communities surrounding Sudbury into the single-tier City of Greater Sudbury. Although this included majority francophone communities and individual concerns were voiced, the francophone leadership was notably silent in the face of this highly prominent political takeover, another neoliberal-type action that would reduce democratic representation and facilitate cuts to municipal services (Leadbeater 2008).

The diverse working-class majority population in Northern Ontario has had little effective political power in determining the direction of Northern development. Indeed, worker and community interests under globalization have been further diminished and are in a more clearly antagonistic relationship with transnational corporate power. The politics of globalization and the labour movement in Ontario are discussed elsewhere in this volume, so here I draw attention to features more particular to Northern Ontario.[41]

Overall, the corporations dominating Northern Ontario have become much larger and more diversified, and less dependent on labour or sources of supply in Northern Ontario.[42] By contrast, workers have faced relatively lower levels of employment opportunity and wages, and higher levels of unemployment and increased social insecurity, reflecting the new crisis in hinterland economic development. Hence, globalization has brought a further shift in economic and political power in favour of transnational corporations and against workers,

their unions, and communities. The results are seen in declining strike activity and, when strikes do occur, they have often been protracted struggles with losses, sometimes threatening the very existence of the unions as effective bargaining forces.

Even in hard rock mining, the seven-month Mine Mill Local 598/ Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)-Falconbridge (now Xstrata) strike in 2000–01, and the twelve-month United Steelworkers (USW)-Vale strike in 2009–10, were turning points where the unions suffered contract setbacks.[43] Both these Sudbury strikes were by the largest mining locals in Northern Ontario, and both unions were pressed nearly to the point of being broken as effective bargaining forces. In the end, they were able to hold together and, despite concessions, they came out of the ordeal in certain ways strengthened organizationally.[44] The two strikes were unprecedented for large-scale mining operations, in that the corporations employed professional strike-breaking firms and scab labour, which a Mine Mill lawyer likened to invasion by "private corporate armies" (Kuyek 2008). In the forest industries, too, workers suffered major setbacks, such as the 2006–07 lockout and then closure at Grant Forest Products in Timmins. Neither of the key forest unions were able to stop the epidemic of closures or consolidations, which did major economic damage to numerous Northern communities.

Second, social conditions have evolved in a contradictory fashion, though in some key ways they have weakened the labour movement. Women's much increased labour force participation has helped to transform highly male-dominated primary industry towns and to economically strengthen households. However, the main industries in Northern Ontario (mining, forestry, transportation, utilities) have remained recalcitrant when it comes to desegregating their workplaces, thus holding back the progressive social effects that greater inclusiveness and equality in these central economic activities would bring. Further, even in the midst of high levels of unemployment and underemployment, there is also a trend towards increased family and individual working time – overwork – as well as the spread of shiftwork, which weakens the free time and concerted participation of workers.

Third, the monopolization of the mass media and weakening of critical journalism has had especially negative effects in hinterland areas,

which have ever fewer outlets and less competition than large metropolitan centres. Daily newspapers, already small and still the main source of local and regional news despite the enormous expansion of the internet, have seen major reductions in staffing, diminished investigative reporting, and reduced readership (St Pierre 2008), while the role of corporate public relations, media campaigns, and advertising has increased in importance.

Fourth, besides the increasingly adverse economic and social conditions, there exist unresolved political divisions. Most of the labour movement, especially in the industrial unions, has been dominated by social democracy, though a portion, more in the craft unions, has continued ties with liberalism. As the politics of capitalism itself has shifted towards neoliberalism and the right, so generally has social democracy, which has led to a greater political differentiation and conflict within and outside the labour movement. In Northern Ontario, conflicts also broke out between public sector and some private sector unions under the Rae NDP government, as well as over support for the Days of Action against the Harris Conservative government (Closs 2008). Though the North has a history of militancy and independent class action, it was also a centre of Cold War attacks and anti-communism that weakened and divided the movement. Most prominent were the USW raids against Mine Mill (now Unifor); though the division today is much reduced, it is still felt. Division is also felt over the issue of Canadian sovereignty in the labour movement. In Northern Ontario, the largest industrial union, the USW, is still headquartered in the US, as are the main craft unions in construction and transportation. Even within Canada, the internal union structures are metropolitanized to a degree, like those of capital. Despite the large number and dispersion of workers in the North, key union functions such as research, organizing, and bargaining are based in Toronto and Ottawa. Indeed, recent internal Canadian Labour Congress restructuring has reduced staff support to Northern Ontario.

Despite the many obstacles faced by the labour movement, globalization and its neoliberal policies are clashing with the interests of workers and hinterland communities and continually generating sparks of criticism, discontent, and active resistance – both organized and spon-

taneous. As decline continues and exasperation accumulates, it would not be surprising to see social upsurges or rapid shifts in direction. The specific forms of unity, alliance, and militancy that are needed to change the balance of power and to democratize the direction of development in the North are not yet widely discussed or clear. But for the labour movement and the interests of First Nations, Franco-Ontarians, women, the poor, and others of the excluded, they appear to converge on the issue of greater democratic control and a form of economic development that directly addresses hinterland inequalities and prioritizes social and environmental well-being rather than subordination to corporate capitalism.

NEOLIBERALISM VERSUS DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

Provincial as well as federal government policy for Northern Ontario, driven by the regressively redistributive policies of neoliberalism, has inflicted disproportionate damage on hinterland areas. The neoliberal policy complex – coined the "the corporate agenda" in labour circles – has emerged since the 1970s into a fairly well-known form: "free trade" (more accurately, free capital movement), privatization of public assets and programs, deregulation, outsourcing, and cuts to social program standards. Conjointly, it also includes increased expenditure and power for the core repressive aspects of state power (such as policing, prisons, and the military) that are required to enforce the greater wealth concentration, social polarization, and aggressive natural resource exploitation (domestically and internationally) that neoliberalism itself generates. Further, there is a regional dimension that is less well acknowledged: the weakening of cross-regional minimum social standards and the reinforcing of metropolitan domination.

For instance, the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (1988) and NAFTA (1993), together with the enfeebling of the Foreign Investment Review Agency, paved the way for the full foreign takeover of the nickel industry in Northern Ontario in 2006 without union, community, or public involvement – an event which was approved at the federal level with provincial support.[45] Then, for a region with higher levels of social transfer needs, the reduction of social program standards – reduced

eligibility – has had disproportionate regional effects on Northern Ontario. That has occurred both with federal policy such as the Chrétien Liberals' "reform" of Unemployment Insurance (now EI), and provincial policy such as the Harris Conservatives' "reform" of Workers Compensation (now WSIB).

The overall approach of neoliberalism to regional inequality has been to devolve and withdraw from larger-scale structural and needs-oriented policies, in favour of decentralized small-scale business development initiatives, community grants and mollification, and labour market "adjustment" and training.[46] Without substantial regional employment demand, so-called "adjustment policies" have limited effectiveness and, in practice, lead to greater reliance on both large-scale resource projects and social program transfers.[47] In the context of globalization, the weakening of regional policy and the use of natural resources largely for international export is facilitating a weakening of economic links (particularly value-added links) within Canada and encouraging deeper north-south integration into the US economy (Savoie 2003, 159–60).

Though Ontario governments since the 1970s have faced legislative debate over particular neoliberal policies, to date the political division has been less about overall direction than about the pace and means of implementation – whether aggressively forcing it forward (Conservatives, 1995–2003) or trying to straddle and smooth over the social divides generated by it (Liberals, 1985–90; NDP, 1990–95; Liberals, 2003–18). Indeed, despite the experience of the financial crisis of 2008 and the mounting evidence critical of resource export-based development, current policy towards Northern Ontario continues to double down on neoliberalism and to reinforce a metropolitanist vision of the North as an area of unending natural abundance specialized in resource extraction and export in a foreordained provincial and international division of labour. Such is the corporate globalist vision of the recent *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario* (2011),[48] whose key essentials simply repeat earlier cant on resource export-based development and add little to knowledge about the North.[49]

On the core development issues of employment and distribution, the *Growth Plan* nowhere recognizes the new conditions of diminished re-

source employment and other reduced local benefits from resource extraction, nor the declining situation of manufacturing value-added, nor does it even discuss seriously long-standing Northern concerns about the level and sharing of resource rents and corporate taxation.[50] One is left again with the strategy of large-scale resource export-dependent development subsidized massively (in infrastructure investments and tax policy) with an emphasis on boosterist political conformity and deferential patron-client relations – as against democracy. The latest version of this is the proposed "Ring of Fire" chromite mega-project in the James Bay Lowlands, led currently by Toronto-based Noront Resources and KWG Resources. The project as proposed is – above all – not conditional on settlement of Indigenous land rights, and it would require massive government subsidies for transportation infrastructure and electricity, with little prospect for major compensating revenues during the life of the proposed mines (Kuyek 2011).

During the 2018 provincial election campaign, all parties in the legislature supported the Ring of Fire project – without a clear condition requiring the consent of the Indigenous Peoples, without limits to public subsidies, and without specified resource-revenue sharing for Indigenous Peoples and Northern Ontario – and no party proposed any substantial development alternative for the North. In August 2017, under pressures from mining interests, the Wynne Liberals made the colonial decision to start road construction for the project in 2019, but without consent from the Mattawa First Nations on whose ancestral lands the road would be located (OJAMS 2017; Powers 2018). In the campaign's Northern Ontario debate in Parry Sound, now premier Doug Ford promised an even more aggressive approach: "All we've heard is talk, talk, talk, no action … We're going to go in there and start mining" (Meyer 2018). Once elected, Ford combined three extraction project-focused ministries under a single super-minister as the Ministry of Energy, Mines, Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs. Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler responded that Indigenous relations had taken a "step backward" and that the move "sends a clear signal that improving relations with Indigenous Peoples is not a priority for the Ford government" (Northern Ontario Business 2018). Adding to such aggressive pressures, Noront Resources

started promoting an "accidental" gold discovery in the Ring of Fire area, which could be mined and the gold flown out without road access (Friedman 2018).

The *Growth Plan* (2011, 2) feels compelled to claim that Northern Ontario "has large areas of wealth and prosperity. Its economy is diversifying and becoming less reliant on traditional resource industries." But there is no mention that Northern Ontario also has even larger areas of lower employment rates and high poverty (the word "poverty" does not appear once in the text), and the *Growth Plan* does not deign to examine why this might be so after decades of experience with the existing development model. As for the diversification notion, this is more a wishful delusion than a reckoning with the real long-term trends in market-oriented sectors, not least the massive decline in both primary and manufacturing employment. Indeed, the main source of diversifying, non-resource-based job growth has been through the public sector, insofar as it has occurred.[51]

On the Northern environment, the *Growth Plan* (39) claims to support a "culture of conservation" and sustainability practices. Yet it nowhere even asks whether minerals here, especially those that are less expensive and destructive to access, could one day be economically exhausted (and if some areas had not already seen that); nor is there a perspective on, let alone a plan for, transforming the existing non-renewable and fossil fuel-dependent energy system. And, while there is mention of the consequences of climate change – "Average temperatures are rising more quickly in the North than in the rest of Ontario" (37) – one is left with the discredited neoliberal policy of "carbon offsets markets" and nothing of substance on the climate impacts of current forms of resource extraction.[52] Further, there are no specific commitments about or even thoughtful mentions of critical recurring issues like the destruction of old growth forests, which is widely known since the Temagami struggles (Hodgins 1989; Hodgins et al. 2003), or the use of the North as an area for waste transport and disposal, which is widely known from the 1990s debates over the Adams Mine proposal for Toronto garbage (Angus 2013) and from current efforts to locate a nuclear waste disposal site in the North. Even the belated climate actions of the Wynne Liberals were deemed too much by the Ford Conservatives. Within a month of coming to power, they not

only acted to revoke the cap-and-trade program but also to close the Green Ontario Fund, including support for two Indigenous-led and two municipal-led wood heating pilot projects in Northern Ontario.[53]

The brief foray of the *Growth Plan* into urban policy encourages the further weakening of smaller towns and rural areas. Communities are to be oriented to serving economic and business priorities; and larger cities, in particular, will be favoured as "economic and service hubs." This is in line with the neoliberal perspective of metropolitanization, unending scale and agglomeration economies, and, when opportune, the forced amalgamation of weakened municipalities such as occurred around Sudbury in 2001.

Unfortunately, much of what is raised today as alternative policies to challenge neoliberalism reflects thinking from the post-World War II "golden age" of the 1940s to mid-1970s: large-scale resource projects, limited Keynesian-type stimuli, and cross-regional sharing of aggregate productivity gains. Generally a period of capitalist expansion, the living standards of the mass of workers and working-class families rose, which depended on a sharing of the gains of productivity, a growing proportion of two-earner families, the expansion of social programs, and fewer immediate environmental crises. However, unemployment and inequality did increase despite it all; the "golden age" was never glittering for Indigenous Peoples, the growing numbers of poor, or the many declining towns and rural areas in the hinterland; and profound environmental issues were largely unaddressed.

Globalization and the new crisis in hinterland economic development have fundamentally altered the basis of those postwar conditions. Democratic alternatives are needed in Northern Ontario to overcome increasing corporate power and socially regressive neoliberal policies that reinforce the subordinate economy and exploitive resource export-dependent development. Alternatives deserving discussion include: public ownership, democratic control and long-term planning of resources and resource extraction to break dependence on both transnational corporations and resource export; value-added "manufacturing conditions" and research and development requirements; heightened environmental protection and restoration; an integrated, accessible, and green Northern transportation system; food, housing, and health security with renewed development of regional agriculture;

universal free public education to postsecondary levels with far greater regional content and respect for language and national rights; support for independent and local media development and measures against corporate concentration of media; and a renaissance in Northern cultural expressions. Little of this can occur without a fundamental political shift to decolonization, the ending of racial injustices, and the recognition and settlement of land rights and sovereignty issues with Indigenous Peoples. Nor will it occur without political devolution and greater regional autonomy, and, potentially, a new political structure akin to provincial status within a renewed pan-Canadian constitutional structure. Such a more radical and democratic alternative to neoliberalism is needed, actually overdue.

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NOTES

1 See maps 5.1 and 5.2. For the purposes of this chapter, Northern Ontario is taken to be Statistics Canada's combined Northeast and Northwest Ontario Economic Regions. The former includes the districts of Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Timiskiming, Cochrane, and Alogoma, as well as the City of Greater Sudbury; the latter includes the districts of Thunder Bay, Rainy River, and Kenora. Geographical and population data are from Ontario (2010, 2011a) and Statistics Canada's website *Census Profile, 2016 Census*. Land area does not include freshwater area. The number for Indigenous Peoples is based on the 2016 census's Aboriginal identity counts, which are likely underestimates due to census under-coverage of First Nations areas and the currently higher growth of the Indigenous population. Southcott

(2009) calculates that between 1996 and 2006 the Aboriginal identity population of Northern Ontario grew by 52.1 per cent. A large part of the growth came from those self-identifying as Métis. By contrast, the non-Aboriginal population declined by 4.4 per cent. Hence, the Aboriginal population grew from 7.9 to 12.6 per cent of the Northern Ontario population. Southcott estimates: "If this trend continues, Aboriginals will represent the majority of the population of Northern Ontario by the year 2086." The numbers for francophones are as defined by Statistics Canada for the official language minority population based primarily on mother tongue; this likely underestimates by around 10 per cent the Franco-Ontarian national minority based on the "Inclusive Definition of Francophone" of the Ontario government, whose 2016 numbers were not published at the time of writing (see Statistics Canada 2015, s. 1).

2 Excluding the District of Parry Sound would reduce the 2016 Northern Ontario population by 42,824 (5.5 per cent); including the District Municipality of Muskoka would increase it by 60,599 (7.8 per cent). The province's Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation includes the Parry Sound District in its service area, while the service area of the federal government's FedNor includes Muskoka. Statistics Canada treats Muskoka as part of the Muskoka-Kawarthas Economic Region.

3 Statistics Canada (2011b). The Laurentian Divide within Ontario marks the height of land where water to the north flows into Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean, and water to the south flows into the Atlantic Ocean, mainly via the Great Lakes, Ottawa River, and St Lawrence River. In Northeastern Ontario, the northern watershed is marked on Highway 11 just north of Kenogami Lake; in Northwestern Ontario, it is marked on Highway 17 near Raith, a community about an hour northwest of Thunder Bay.

4 To date in their website documentation, the Métis Nation of Ontario in collaboration with Ontario has identified at least six historic Métis communities in Northern Ontario. See also Lischke and McNab (2007).

5 For sources and further reading related to this paragraph see Julig (2002), Burnaby (1984), Abel (2006, chap. 2), and Lankton (2010, chap. 1).

6 The spelling of "Anishinaabemowin" (Northern Ontario) as distinct from Nishnaabemwin (Southwestern Ontario) reflects that "speakers of the language prefer to spell words phonetically" (Corbiere, personal communication). "Northern word[s] have vowels not found in the corresponding [Georgian Bay]/Lake Huron word[s]. The vowels are not pronounced in the latter dialect because of a prominent rule of vowel syncope, which deletes vowels that are not stressed" (Valentine 2001, 4). While among its speakers Oji-Cree is viewed as a language, linguists have tended to view it as a dialect of Ojibwe and/or Cree, though mostly of Ojibwe. An introduction to Indigenous languages in Ontario and their transmission is Burnaby (1984),

a background on the earlier European contact period in Northern Ontario is Bishop (1994), and an overview of Indigenous language populations in Canada is Norris (1998).

7 The most comprehensive historiography on Northern Ontario is Epp (1996). More recent and selective is Abel (2001), though it is limited in covering material on working-class history and political economy; as well, the large and sophisticated Franco-Ontarian literature is not addressed. The literature on Northern Ontario has recognized both rivalries and affinities with the old North-West Territories, particularly Manitoba. I would argue that understanding the specific character of colonization in Ontario requires greater emphasis on the rivalry between Ontario and Québec and their respective metropoles, Toronto and Montreal. For decades, Québec had a much larger population, industry, and territory (the latter it still has).

8 Manitoba became a province in 1870, but was not transferred ownership of natural resources until 1929; Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces in 1905 and were not transferred resource ownership until 1930.

9 Innis (1967, 153) argued that the more active role of the state and its rapidity stemmed from the early history of colonization and the relatively later metropolitan development in Ontario:

> The advance of industrialism which followed the opening of the West and of New Ontario was accomplished by the activity of the state and of private enterprise. The rapidity of development, the long tradition of state support dating to the French régime and linked to the problem of the upper St. Lawrence waterways, and the relatively late development of metropolitan areas as contrasted with Montreal were factors responsible for the part of the government in the formation of the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission and of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway. The peculiarities of the economy of Ontario are deep rooted and vitally related to her position as an outpost of the lower St. Lawrence.

10 In 1858, the colonial Province of Canada established in Canada West the first two of what were northern districts, Algoma and Nipissing. They were created under pressures for mining and logging development using Lake Superior and the Ottawa River, respectively. These districts allowed for incorporated improvement districts, townships, villages, towns, and cities. However, unlike Southern Ontario with its counties, the districts were themselves not incorporated and they were without an elected council (Archives of Ontario 2009). This was followed by the districts of Parry Sound (1869), Thunder Bay (1871), Rainy River (1885), Manitoulin (1888), Muskoka (1888), Sudbury (1907), Kenora (1909), Temiskaming (now Timiskaming, 1912), and Cochrane (1921).

11 Di Matteo (1999) examines the history of resource revenues to the province. The flows and distribution of economic surplus in profits and other forms still remains to be studied.

12 Soon after the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada, in 1874, Ontario's boundaries were expanded provisionally to the north and to the west. But the Conservative federal government clashed with Ontario over expansion into the former area of Rupert's Land, and Manitoba clashed with Ontario over control of the Kenora area. After a series of negotiations and legal battles, the federal government agreed through legislation in 1889 to the extension of Ontario's northern boundary to the Albany River and also awarded Ontario the Kenora area. The next major expansion came in 1912, when the western boundary was reduced and the northern boundary extended to its present form.

13 Ontario governments have shared responsibility for maintaining the racist structures and ideology that are fundamental to colonialism in the North. For instance, the Ontario government was central to the infamous St Catherine's Milling (1888) case. Tied to expansionist desire, Ontario premier Mowat fought the case for extending provincial jurisdiction into the North on a belief that "there is no Indian title at law or equity." In that context, the courts lined up with colonialism. As one judge expressed a prevalent racist view: "As heathens and barbarians it was not thought that they had any proprietary title to the soil." In the end, the Indigenous Peoples were allowed a right of occupancy but not title, "a personal and usufructuary right, dependent on the good will of the Sovereign" (Baskerville 2005, 127–30). See also Hall (2003, 414–17; 1991).

14 One reminiscence gives an indication of the significance of the railway (Pain 1970: 1–2):

> There is a sub-province of 100,000 people here now, and a glance at the names on a timetable of the opening up of Northern Ontario. Latchford for timber; Cobalt for silver; Haileybury as the centre of government; New Liskeard for farming; Swastika, Kirkland Lake, Larder Lake for gold; Matheson for farms, gold and asbestos. Then the fabulous Porcupine for gold again; Iroquois Falls for pulp and paper; Cochrane as the centre of an immense farming belt; and Moosenee, which is Ontario's port to the vast seas of the Arctic. They were opened up practically in that order, as the railroad started amidst misgivings and then could hardly push ahead fast enough to keep pace with developments.

15 See Nelles (2005, chap. 2), Wallace (1984), and Radforth (1987, chap. 1).

16 See Denison (1960), Manore (1999), Nelles (2005, chap. 6–7), and Luby (2016).

17 See McDowall (1984), Wallace (1984), Inwood (1987), and Beaulieu and Southcott (2010, chap. 4–7). Much has been written about entrepreneurial failure (especially of Francis Clergue in the case of the Sault), inadequate finance, adverse location, and the like in these cases, but less to discern what is systemic to the development process in colonial and hinterland conditions. Both cases can also be seen to illustrate the important if not decisive role of state policies in subsidies, tariffs, transportation, war, and procurement.

18 Limits of space prevent discussion of various single- or multiple-factor explanations that have been given for relative development failure in Northern Ontario, including adverse geography, lack of concentrated populations, transportation costs, tax and resource policies, and education. Here my focus is on the fundamental role of the political economic structure of capitalist development, particularly resource dependency in colonial and semi-colonial contexts, though such factors as those noted (as well as others) could be addressed within a larger study and are not necessarily in conflict with the present focus.

19 The overall higher level of wage and salary earnership, which is a key indicator of proletarianization in Marxist terms, must be viewed in the full context of the Northern economy. In particular, Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS), a household survey from which the data here are collected, excludes recognized First Nations territories ("Indian reserves"), and smaller and remote areas are likely underrepresented. Discussion of inadequacies in official statistics goes beyond this chapter. However, I would emphasize that Northern Ontario, by being treated as merely another "sub-provincial" region – despite being larger than some provinces – has been denied adequate public statistical services. Neoliberal cuts to statistical services further hurt hinterland regions, such as the Harper Conservative government's elimination of the mandatory long form for the 2011 census, which was a blow to Northern Ontario as well as another attack on science.

20 It needs noting, though, for both the North and South, that a substantial portion of the self-employed are dependent contractors (frequently from corporate downsizing), so are often similar in position and interest to wage and salary earners. This would reduce further in both areas the numbers in "independent" self-employment.

21 Statistics Canada Labour Force data indicate that for primary industry occupations (which includes farming occupations), female employment in Canada in 2010 was about 21.6 per cent and had not changed or more likely declined over the previous more than 20 years. In 2011, for Ontario service-producing industries, 54.7 per cent of those employed were women.

22 According to the 2016 census, for the Toronto CMA 48.2 per cent of the employed were female, while for the Thunder Bay CMA it was 49.8 per cent and for the Sudbury CMA it was 49.3 per cent. This said, women's wages are overall lower in Northern Ontario, and the female-male wage gap has often been higher, though it has been reduced by the deteriorating conditions in wages and jobs in the higher-paid male-dominated industries in the North.

23 In 2009, Ontario mines, largely in Northern Ontario, produced about 24.4 per cent of metallic mineral output in Canada. Mineral production and a variety of related data are available from the Natural Resources Canada website under "Statistics."

24 A recent generation of such writing includes Engler (2009), Gordon (2010), and Deneault and Sacher (2012).

25 In 2006, of $8.4 billion in exports about 63 per cent were mining and primary metal products, and 24 per cent were wood and paper products, mainly to the US (Fednor 2010).

26 The "unprecedented and extended downturn" led a specially appointed "Economic Facilitator," Robert Rosehart (2008), to write in his inconsequential report: "Because the Northwest is currently facing different and more extreme challenges, standard programs and approaches of government are not sufficient to offset the significant challenges that are coming."

27 See, for example, Deneault and Sacher (2012, 64–70). MacDermid (1999) found that "the Barrick-TrizecHahn-Munk group, Munk and his spouse, TrizecHahn and subsidiaries (a development company then controlled by Peter Munk) and Barrick and its subsidiaries, made 181 contributions through 29 corporate entities totaling $312,828 to the Harris Tories between 1995 and 1997, the third largest conglomerate total after a residential developer and the companies that built highway 407." A recent study by OJAMS (2018) found that for 2014–16, metal mining companies donated $435,500 with 66 per cent going to the Liberal Party, 22 per cent to the Progressive Conservative Party, and 12 per cent to the NDP.

28 The data on nickel and gold are based on NRC (2011) and US Geological Survey (2012).

29 See, for example, Gedicks (2001) and, for Canada, the website of MiningWatch Canada (www.miningwatch.ca).

30 The three main partners in the forestry accord (and their related websites) were the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/LUEPS/index.html), the Ontario Forest Industries Association (http://www.ofia.com/from_the_forest/living_legacy.html), and the Partnership for Public Lands (http://wildontario.org/). For more critical approaches from the early years, see Lindgren (1998), CELA (1999), and Weis and Krajnc (1999).

31 Data from the 2016 census. The gap of 5–10 percentage points depending on the specific area and years is a major difference and not reflected in official unemployment rate differentials of 9.3 per cent and 9.2 per cent for Northeast and Northwest Ontario, compared to 7.4 per cent for Ontario or 7.8 and 7.1 per cent for the Toronto and Ottawa regions. Nonetheless, the more on-the-ground regional rates used by the Employment Insurance Program typically show that Northern Ontario (excluding Sudbury and Thunder Bay) has the highest unemployment rate in Ontario. Taking another time, in mid-July 2011, this was 12.7 per cent compared, for example, to 8.3 per cent for Toronto and 5.3 per cent for Ottawa. Of course, all these levels are unacceptably high in terms of overall macroeconomic conditions in Canada,

but simple Keynesian-type stimulus measures will not solve the embedded structural problems confronting hinterland areas like Northern Ontario.

32 On coming to power in 1995, the Harris Conservatives imposed a series of regressive social assistance policies hardened by class prejudice that, among other things, cut social assistance levels by 21.6 per cent and imposed a zero-tolerance policy for welfare fraud. Kimberly Rogers, a forty-year-old Sudbury woman with several medical problems, committed suicide while under house arrest under the zero-tolerance policy. The jury at the inquest recommended eliminating the zero-tolerance policy, stating that it was "devastating and detrimental" to society, and the change should be made "to prevent anyone from having to go without food and/or shelter, to be deemed homeless and therefore and most importantly, to prevent the death of impoverished individuals" (Kuyek 2008).

33 The Ontario government has a chronology of "The Idea of a Separate Government" for Northern Ontario originating from the pre-1905 era, and notes that at the turn of the twentieth century "the area's resources were providing about 25 percent of Ontario's revenues" (www.mndm.gov.on.ca/en/about/history). The book associated with the NOHP and its provincehood argument is Brock (1978). Atkins (2010) considers that Deibel's campaign was crucial in establishing the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

34 In Northern Ontario, the Greens received 5.4 per cent of the vote, the Northern Ontario Party 1.6 per cent, and other parties and independents 0.9 per cent. The Northern voting patterns are more pronounced if the Parry Sound-Muskoka constituency is not included with the North.

35 In strict population terms, Northern Ontario has long been overrepresented. In 1996, the Harris Conservatives reduced the number of provincial electoral districts from 130 to 103, legislating that the numbers and boundaries conform to the generally larger federal electoral districts. Under this regime, Elections Canada allocated eleven ridings to Northern Ontario (including Parry Sound-Muskoka) out of the 103 or 10.7 per cent of provincial seats. In 2005, the McGuinty Liberals increased the overall number of provincial ridings to 107 but allowed the North to keep its eleven, which broke with the Harris policy, though it still meant that Northern representation fell to 10.3 per cent of seats. In 2015, the Wynne Liberals raised the total number of ridings to 122 while again keeping the Northern number at eleven. In 2017, the Liberals added two seats in the Far North for the stated reason of increasing Indigenous representation (see Ontario 2017). Hence, for the 2018 election, the North had thirteen seats out of 124 or 10.5 percent in the provincial legislature, while Northern Ontario's population is at about 6 per cent of Ontario. (If one drops the Parry Sound-Muskoka riding, the Northern representation is at twelve of 124 or 9.7 per cent.)

36 See Leadbeater (2008). One can observe this in debates on resource tax policy. Under the neoliberal impetus, Ontario has reduced corporate tax rates

substantially, including for resource corporations, to the point (as mentioned earlier) that they are lower than most other jurisdictions. Northern municipal leaders are not often heard to advocate for higher resource royalties or corporate taxation, or to campaign on the long-standing grievance against the province's exemption from municipal property taxation of the underground assets of mining corporations. More common are calls for lower corporate taxes and special low-tax zones, mimicking the orientation of corporate interests. Today, the primary orientation is to press for a bigger portion of the relatively diminishing share of corporate revenue going to the province. In a revealing moment recently, following another effort by some Northern mayors to request that the province turn over a percentage of the Ontario Mining Tax to municipalities, the corporate Ontario Mining Association actually joined in, requesting that local municipalities and First Nation communities "have a greater share in the benefits of mining through the existing levels of mining tax" (*Sudbury Star*, 6 July 2011).

37 See Peerla (2014), who considers the KI struggle to be prefigurative of a fundamentally different future. Though Ontario amended the Mining Act, the colonial "free entry" regime in mining still remains (Lapointe 2014).

38 The "national question," associated with the internationally recognized right of national self-determination, has a long, deep, and still unresolved history in Canada, and Northern Ontario is itself a microcosm of unresolved conflicts associated with it. It is now widely accepted that "nation" is not necessarily the same as, or defined by having, an independent "state," though democratic rights attach to the recognition of nations, up to and including separation and the formation of an independent state.

39 This does not imply any particular number of nations, or that language is the only marker of national status. Evidently, this is quite different in character than policies of "multiculturalism," though policies on immigration and immigrant rights are also important questions, and considered elsewhere in this volume.

40 There is a large and developing literature on Franco-Ontarians, mostly in French. Key points of access include: Choquette (1977, 1980), Vallières (1980), Arnopoulos (1982), Bernard (1988), Jaenen (1993), Gervais (1993, 2003), Ouellet (1993), D'Augerot-Arend (1995), Cotnam et al. (1995), Dennie (2001, 2008), and Bock and Gervais (2004).

41 For further discussion see Leadbeater (2008, 2014).

42 For example, Vale (formerly Inco) has about 133,000 employees worldwide relative to 4,000 in Sudbury. This contrasts to the pre-1970s decades when Inco had the vast majority of its employment and production concentrated in the region.

43 On the two strikes see Grylls (2008) and Peters (2010). The USW Local 6500, one of the largest mining locals in North America, felt compelled to accept among other things a two-tier pension system and reduced profit-sharing.

44 This was not the fate of the longest strike in recent Canadian history, against Goldcorp at Red Lake in 1996–2000, which ended with the USW local removed.

45 See Leadbeater (2008) and CAW (2006).

46 An official view of the arc of federal regional policy in Canada is Beaumier (1998). The main federally and provincially funded agencies for regional development are FedNor and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. Their activities, arguably more significant politically than in altering the direction of Northern economic development, deserve a more detailed and critical study than can be provided here, though an audit report such as the "Final Evaluation for the Northern Ontario Development Program" covering 2006–10 gives some perspective on how limited are the measures and the concerns about results.

47 The central problem of Northern employment conditions periodically becomes more publicly visible in large-scale layoffs, such as the mine closures at Elliot Lake in the 1990s, or the more recent wave of mill closures in the forest industry, particularly when there are actual or perceived possibilities of mass resistance, although many other thousands of smaller-scale and gradual losses are less visible. On the impacts and some lessons of such layoffs in Northern Ontario, see Leadbeater and Suschnigg (1997) and Leadbeater (1998, 1999).

48 One reads, for instance (2011, 4): "It's the year 2036 and there's a new Northern Ontario. Northern Ontario has a skilled, educated, healthy and prosperous population that is supported by world-class resources, leading edge technology and modern infrastructure. Companies scan the world for opportunities to create jobs, attract investment and serve global markets. Communities are connected to each other and the world, offering dynamic and welcoming environments that are attractive to newcomers. Municipalities, Aboriginal communities, governments and industry work together to achieve shared economic, environmental and community goals."

49 Among earlier "growth plans" were the *Design for Development* plans of the 1970s. Weller (1977, 745) wrote that the plans "indicate quite clearly that the economic development of the region will rely heavily upon raw material extraction and the other presently-established areas and that any secondary manufacturing will be related to those extractive industries and will not be of major importance; nor will the region's economy include the processing of the raw material to any high degree of manufacture."

50 Pertinent here is a comment by the right-wing *Sudbury Star* (20 October 2007), opining after the province had once again rejected a request from Northern municipalities for equitable sharing of resource revenues: "The province might still be open to dishing out more money to the North, but it will do so for projects of its choosing, and share in the political benefits, rather than simply handing over money to the municipalities."

51 Even a prominent official study on diversification found that there was little change overall and most of that was towards less diversification (Beshiri et al. 2006). Further, the typical measure used for diversification, the Herfindal Index, is formulated in such a way that, in conditions of decline, a community such as a rail town that loses its rail jobs and suffers high unemployment, loss of schools, etc., actually becomes more "diversified." Such was the case, for example, of Capreol, which is listed as the number one diversifying community in Northern Ontario. The meaning of "diversification" here as normally understood is turned on its head: most communities see it as meaning new jobs in new sectors to balance or replace existing ones, not an exercise in reducing employment to achieve more balanced relative proportions. The one area often held up as a demonstration of diversification is mining and forestry supply services, yet these are still directly tied to resource extraction and much smaller in jobs created than those lost overall in resource extraction and primary manufacturing.

52 For a critical view of Northern environmental issues, see the website of Northwatch (www.web.ca/~nwatch/).

53 The Wynne Liberals' short-lived cap and trade agreement with Quebec and California was signed 22 September 2017, came into effect 1 January 2018, and revoked effective 3 July 2018 (https://www.ontario.ca/page/cap-and-trade). On the Green Ontario program in Northern Ontario, see Church (2018) and Ross (2018).

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