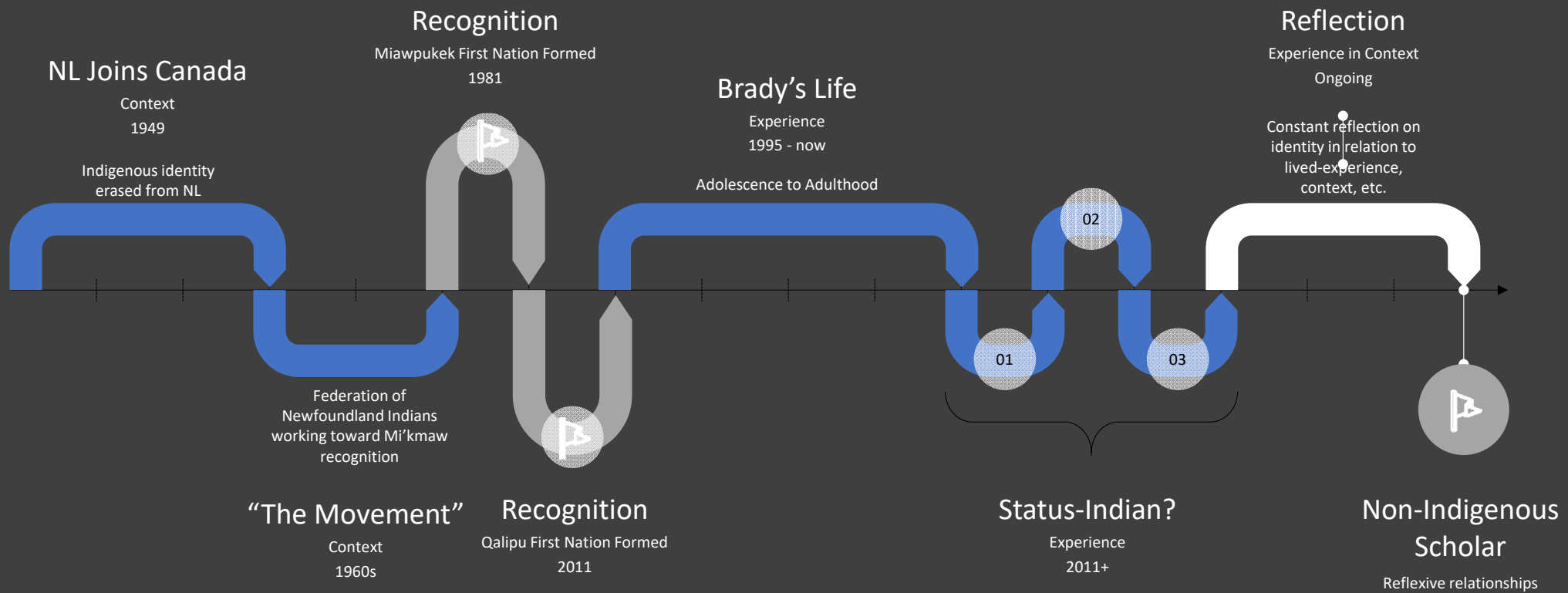


Mining Injustice

Exploration and decision-making: The Ring of Fire pushes on despite lack of inclusion of community voices

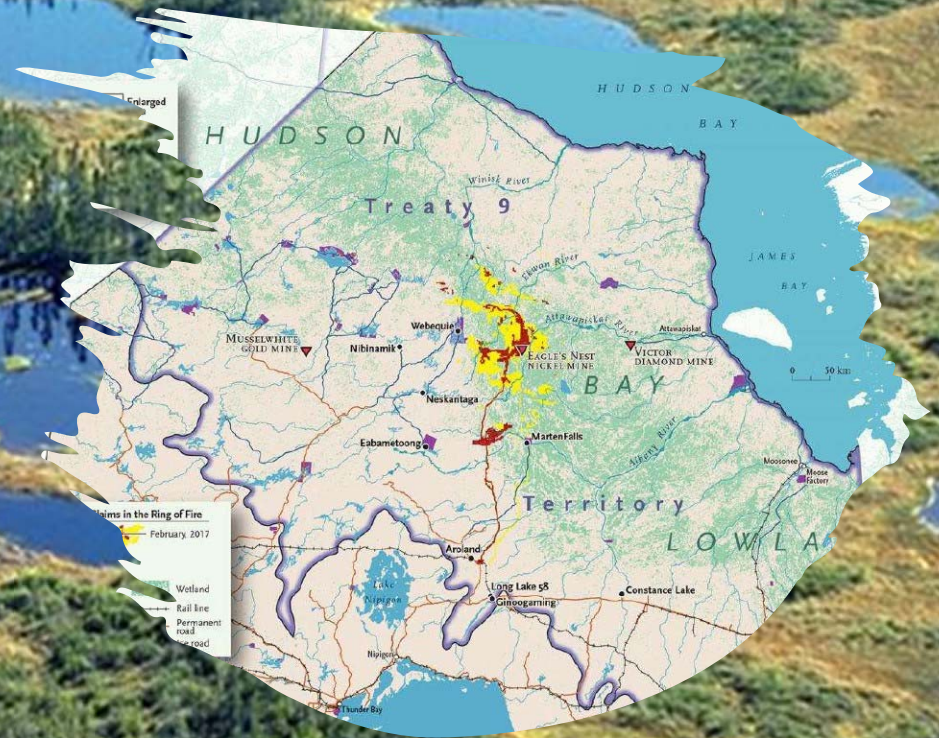
Brady Reid, Kerrie Blaise and Mike Koostachin

Positionality as a process (context + experience)



Getting situated...

- The “Ring of Fire” is
 - A disputed deposit of minerals in **Treaty no. 9 Territory in Northern Ontario, Canada**
 - **Estimated** to have \$60 billion in various minerals, particularly chromite (used for stainless steel)
 - **Largest wetland** complex in Canada, one of the largest in the world
 - Provides 10% of **global cooling** benefits from peatlands
 - Thus far, **environmental assessment practices have not been designed appropriately nor recognize the unique situation of Indigenous communities in the region**

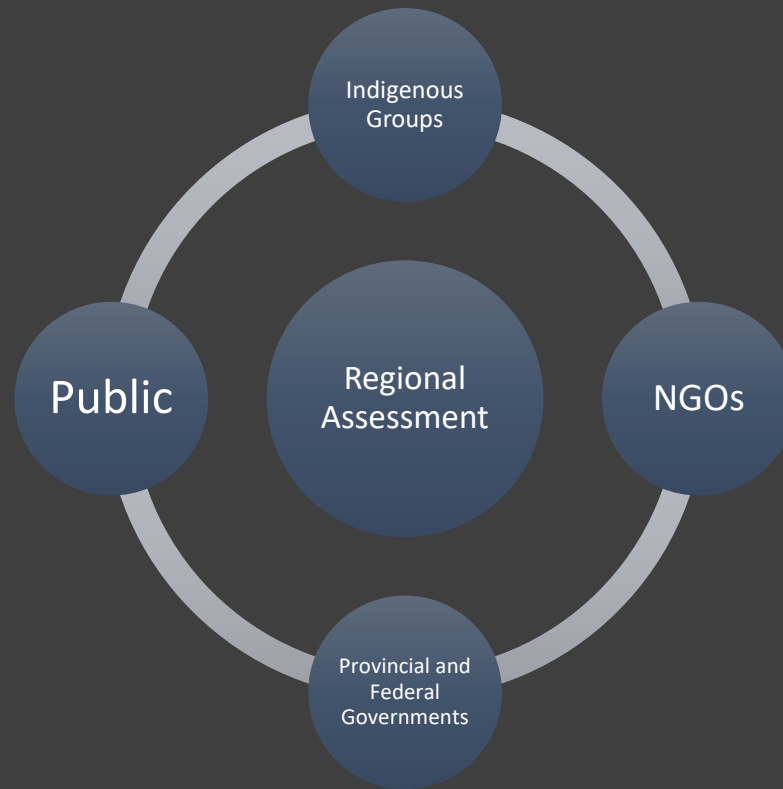


Business-as-usual consultations during COVID-19 are inadequate and do not meet Canada's Duty to Consult with Indigenous groups.

"We are writing to express our disappointment and dismay that remote Indigenous communities like ours that are currently dealing with acute social emergencies exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic are still being asked to respond to mining exploration plans and permits, so as to expedite those approvals"

Chris Moonias, Former Chief, Neskantaga First Nation, April 30th, 2020

“Regional” Assessment In the Ring of Fire...



...let's theorize

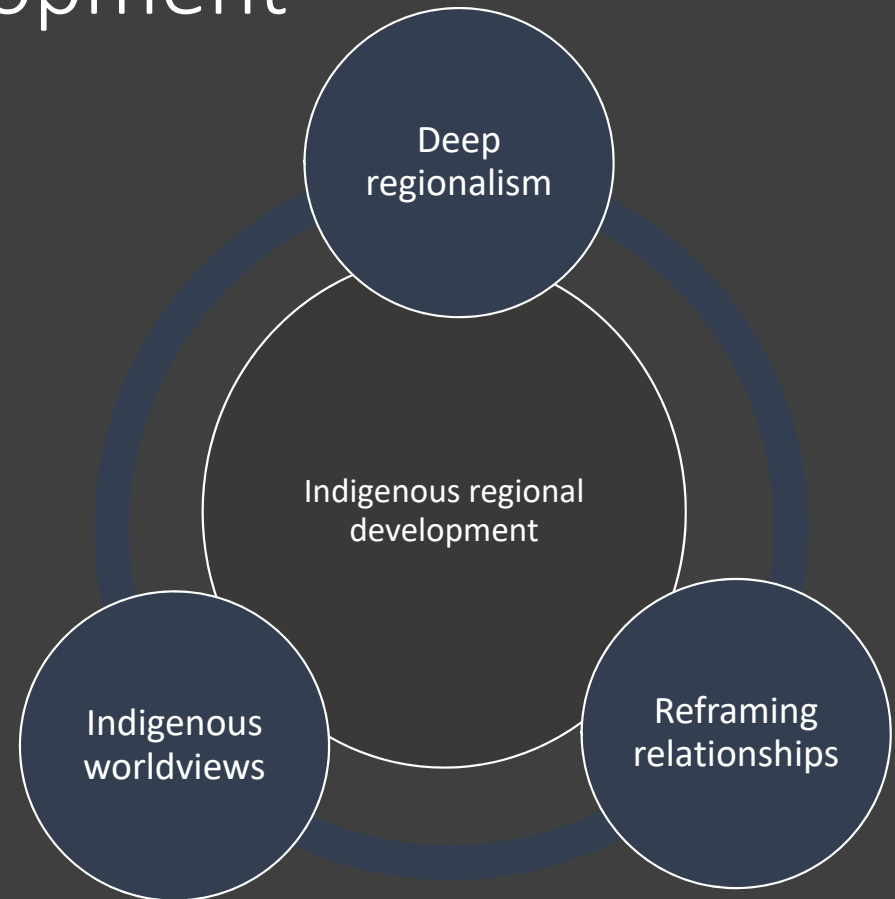
New Regionalism

- Theory of regional development
 - emerging in the early 1990s to now
 - fosters regional cooperation, integration, and identity while shifting decision-making agency to local-level organizations
 - vs. “old” regionalism top-down governmental imposition
- In practice for Ontario’s Far North?
 - Has potential, in-principle, but exists in western theoretical discourse



Indigenous regional development

- Theory of regional development
 - Recently proposed by community and scholars in Australia
 - Similar to new regionalism in shifting power to local organizations
 - Goes one step further to re-define perceptions of Indigenous communities from “passive” to “active” participants in regional development



In practice?

- How does current (and COVID-related) policy reflect engagement with Indigenous communities across Ontario's Far North?

Mining Lands Administration System Update



Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines

Bulletin - Exclusions of Time for Claim Holders Due to COVID-19

The ministry acknowledges that the COVID-19 outbreak and related public health requirements are special circumstances that have created challenges for all claim holders in Ontario. As a result, we are leveraging the tools available under the *Mining Act* to provide claim holders with relief through simplified exclusion orders.

Claim holders with claim anniversary dates on or before December 31, 2020, will be given an exclusion order by making a brief request via email. There will be no cost for COVID-19 related exclusion requests. The exclusion orders will remove the requirement to carry out assessment work for a period of time of up to 12 months.

2020, may also be included in your request if both of the following criteria are met:

- Claims are contiguous to eligible claims due within 30 days of the request; and
- Assessment work credit for work that will be performed in the future is intended to be distributed to all claims listed in the request.

The eligible claims you list in your request will be automatically protected from forfeiture until the ministry has processed your request. After the ministry processes your request, you will receive a copy of your exclusion order which will set a new anniversary (due) date for your claim(s) and the transaction will be entered onto the mining claim abstract(s).

Example of Email Requesting Exclusion of Time for Assessment Work

Ontario to launch Junior Exploration Program

Bulletin
July 2021

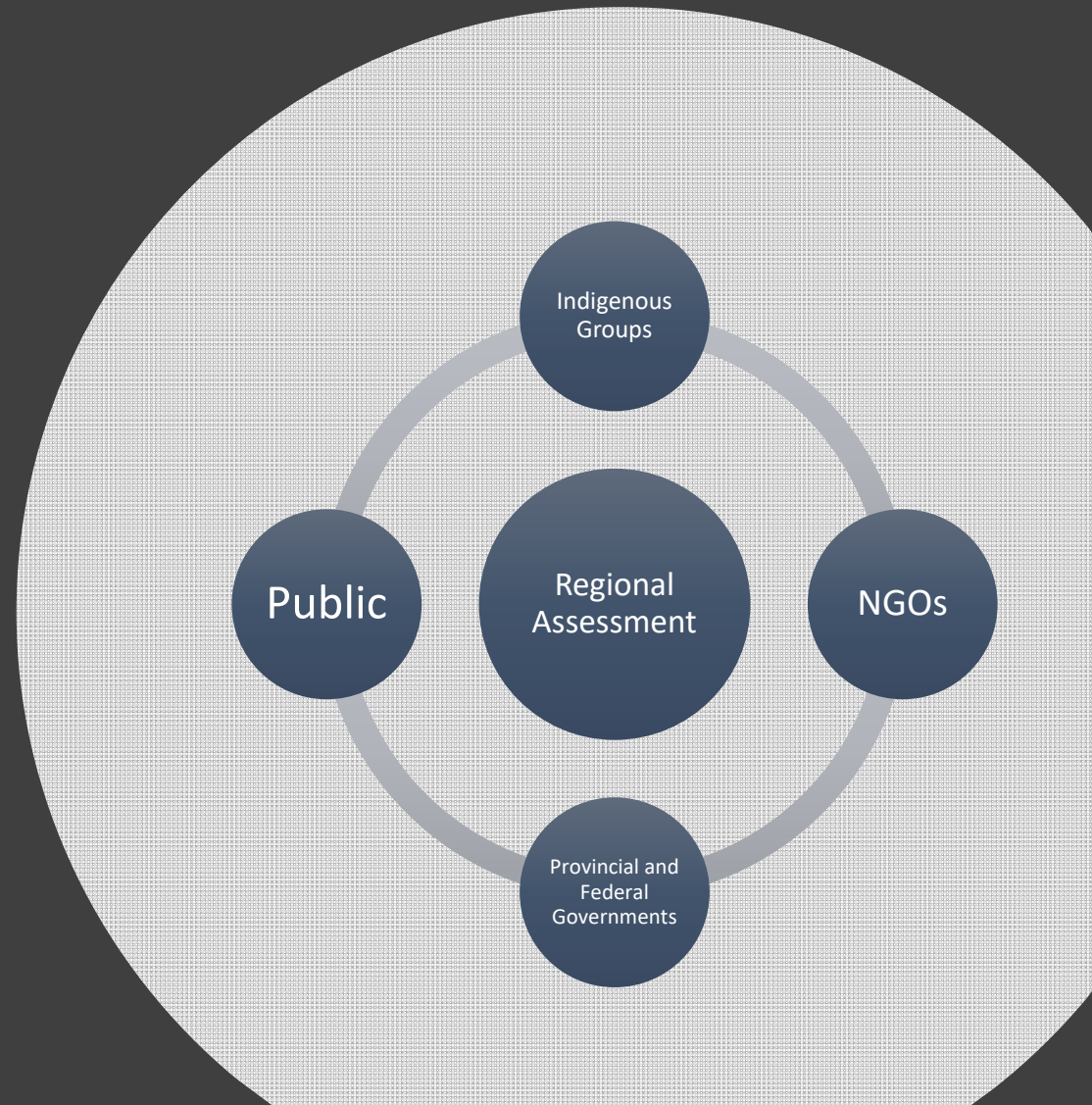
Ontario Launching New Junior Exploration Program

Ontario is launching a new cost-sharing program to help junior mining companies finance early mineral exploration. Through the Ontario Junior Exploration Program (OJEP), junior mining companies can apply for up to \$200,000 in funding per project to cover 50 per cent of eligible costs.

The Ontario government is investing \$5 million over two years in the new program, which will boost mineral exploration and support the province's economic recovery, growth and job creation, particularly in northern and Indigenous communities.

Once open, applications will be accepted online through the [Transfer Payment Ontario \(TPON\)](#) website during a five-week intake period, beginning on July 26, 2021. The application process will be done in two phases, with a second call for applications in early 2022.

How do these policies influence these relationships throughout impact assessment?



Community in Focus

The Friends of the Attawapiskat River was formed in response to concerns about the downstream effects of the Ring of Fire and the speeding up of development at the expense of health on environmental protection, health and water



Legal Framework

Canada has a duty to prevent exposure to toxic and otherwise hazardous substances. All of the various human rights recognized by Canada are underpinned by the fundamental principle of non-discrimination.

All business enterprises in Canada have responsibilities to respect human rights. In fulfilling these responsibilities, business enterprises should identify and assess impacts of toxic exposure, and ensure prompt and accurate public reporting.

Shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial government is not an excuse for shortcomings by the Government in taking prompt action to address toxic exposures

“And yet, rights to health, safe water and food, adequate housing, safe and healthy working conditions, and others implicated by toxics, do not appear to be directly actionable under Canadian law.”

“While constitutional recognition of protection against discrimination is applauded, it does not appear to have served as a significant safeguard or recourse for disproportionately affected communities.”

*Baskut Tuncak, UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics
Comments following [Canada Visit](#) in 2019*

Friends comment on the Webequie Supply Road and Marten Falls Access Road "Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines" under the *Impact Assessment Act* noting inaccessible public participation and information sharing

Friends comment on Regional Assessment for Ring of Fire calling for pause on decision making citing capacity, COVID-19 and pre-existing challenges

Jan. 2020

Nov. 2020

Dec. 2020

Jan. 2021

Friends comment on 1300 mining claims, requesting all decisions be paused, no permits be issued

Friends, joined by ENGO allies call for Moratorium in the Ring of Fire

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If you destroy the
Mushkeg, we are all hurt.
It is our lungs, our air, and
our oxygen. If our land
gets affected it would be
on you. NO to the
Ring of Fire.

Dear Canada,
We are the youth of
Mushkeg. Why do you
want to contaminate the
water and land. The lands and
waters are connected.

Peetabeck
Academy

BOGGLE

E	A	C	Q	E
N	O	I	W	R
T	M	L	O	T
J	K	Y	D	S
M	L	E	G	

SPELLING BEE WORDS (Gr. 1, 2)

Handwritten notes and lists on the wall, including a list titled "List 1-100" and various other papers.

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Watersheds Under Threat

Thousands of approved and pending claims for exploration already exist in the Ring of Fire. Together these claims present a high likelihood of cumulative environmental, cultural, and social impacts to the boreal and James Bay lowlands region and its Indigenous peoples.

