



For Immediate Release

## Are Robots Coming for Our Jobs?

**December 19, 2019** – Automation can have both positive and negative effects on economies. This report examines the impact of automation on industries, jobs, income, income distribution, and communities in Northern Ontario.

*“Automation: A process of substituting machines or computers for human labour. Automation can be partial or complete. Partial automation is the automation of certain tasks within an occupation. On the other hand, complete automation occurs when a new technology makes an older technology and its associated capabilities obsolete.”*

Some say that automation can result in increased productivity, income, and standard of living. Others are concerned that new technologies could accelerate the pace of change and bring unprecedented occupational disruption and unemployment. In fact, automation's impact can be profound. It changes the nature of work and demand for skills, and it benefits some workers while putting others at risk. The report also mentions that substitution of jobs by robots raises concern about government's ability to collect taxes.

“The majority of job losses [to automation] have been in occupations involving routine tasks such as retail salespersons and cashiers that required a lower level of education and skills. Employment in occupations involving non-routine cognitive tasks have indeed increased in all regions” said author Dr. Bakhtiar Moazzami professor of Economics and Econometrics at Lakehead University.

It is important to note that the occupational and geographical impacts of automation on jobs vary from community to community. Here are some key findings:

- Few occupations are projected to be fully automated, but many positions will be significantly transformed due to new technology
- In general, the share of employment in non-routine cognitive and analytical occupations in Northern Ontario has increased while the share of routine cognitive and routine manual jobs has declined significantly
- 74.0 per cent of employment in Northeastern Ontario and 76.2 per cent in Northwestern Ontario are in sectors with relatively low potential for automation
- Approximately 32.2 per cent and 37.2 per cent of jobs in Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario respectively are in education, health care, and public administration, which have very low potential for automation

“This report was important for NSWPB as we need to be aware of future workforce demands and skill gaps” said Madge Richardson, Executive Director of North Superior Workforce Planning Board, “technology advances will have a huge impact on how the labour force is changing.”

To read, *Are Robots Coming for Our Jobs? The Economic Impact of Automation on Northern Ontario's Economy* click here :

<https://www.northernpolicy.ca/impact-of-automation>

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**About Northern Policy Institute:**

*Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.*

**About the author:**

*Dr. Moazzami has taught Economics and Econometrics at Lakehead University since 1988. He is well known for his research activities particularly related to Northern Ontario. He has written many reports on Northern Ontario's economic development challenges and opportunities. He was commissioned by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to undertake a comprehensive study of Northern Ontario's economy as a part of the research conducted for the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. Included in the study were the identification of growing, declining and emerging industrial clusters in the region. Professor Moazzami has also written extensively on Northern Ontario's Aboriginal people and Northern Aboriginal economy. Dr. Moazzami's expertise and influence reaches beyond Lakehead University and Northern Ontario. He has been a regular guest speaker at the University of Waterloo's Economic Development Program.*

**Project Partners:**

**North Superior Workforce Planning Board**

*Our vision is to ensure that our human resource pool will be strategically aligned, competitively positioned and progressively developed to meet future social and economic demands across Northwestern Ontario.*



**North Superior**  
Workforce Planning Board

*Our mission is to connect community partners to improve the quality of life in our communities through workforce development.*

**Local Employment Planning Council**

*The Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) is one of the eight pilot project sites funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.*



**Local Employment**  
Planning Council  
Conseil local de planification  
**en matière de l'emploi**

*The LEPC will be working with 35 local communities to develop labour market information that is relevant to Northern stakeholders such as businesses, employers, employees and employment and training service providers.*

*We will be working to develop and strengthen partnerships, foster integrated planning and coordinate services.*