



Lecture 2

Canada and Regional Geography

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Introduction

- Geography helps us understand our world
- Canada is best understood from a regional perspective
- Canada consists of six regions; each has a strong sense of regional identity and unique sense of place

Geography as a Discipline

- Geography provides a description and explanation of lands, places, and peoples beyond our personal experience
- Geography as curiosity about place
 - Based on living, working, and sharing together in a common space
- Regional identity and consciousness

Geography as a Discipline

Geographers DeBlij and Murphy (2006:3) state that:

Geography is destiny.

What does this mean?

Regional Geography

- Regional geography is the geographic study of a particular part of the world
- People, interacting with their economic, physical, and social environments, place their imprint on landscapes, just as landscapes influence their lives and activities
- Regional geographers study how the resultant human landscapes vary
- Dialectical relationship between people and the environment

Regional Geography, cont'd

- Today, geographers place more emphasis on the human side (shift from environmental determinism)
 - The physical environment is shaped by culture, economy, and technology
- Examine regional belonging and consciousness
- Sense of place
- Regional self-interest can result in conflicts and different views of the “nation” and its regions

Canada's Geographic Regions

- Regions are designated by:
 - Selecting critical physical and human characteristics that logically divide a large spatial unit into a series of regions
 - Each region is distinguished from adjacent ones

Canada's Geographic Regions

- Six geographic regions of Canada:
 - Atlantic Canada
 - Québec
 - Ontario
 - Western Canada
 - British Columbia
 - Territorial North

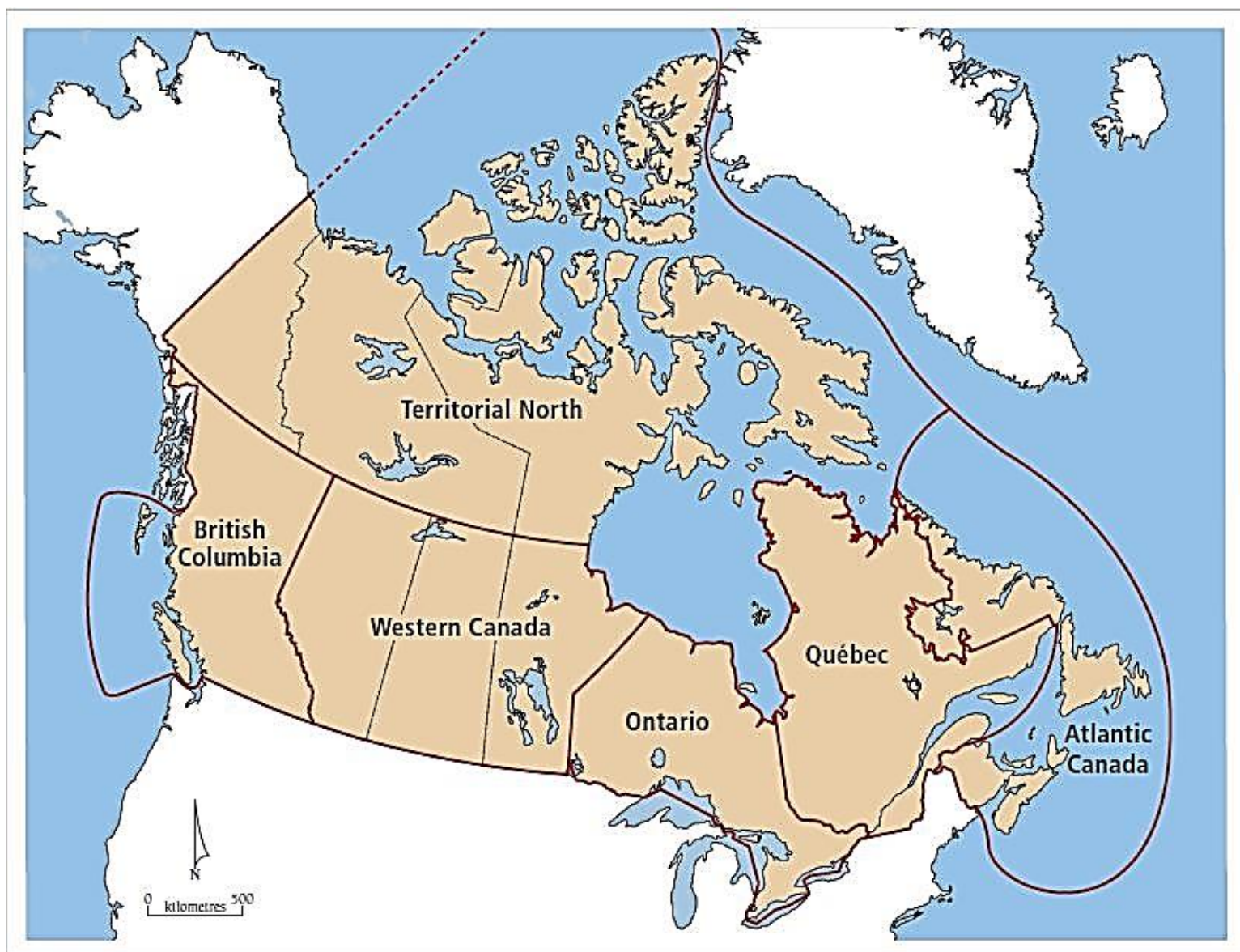


Figure 1.2 The six geographic regions of Canada

The coastal boundaries of Canada are recognized by other nations except for the “sector” boundary in the Arctic Ocean, which is shown as a dashed boundary. In the near future, the Territorial North may extend well into the Arctic Ocean and its seabed. In 2013, Canada will submit its claim to the “international” portion of the continental shelf of the Arctic Ocean. If successful, Canada may gain a portion of the Arctic Ocean’s seabed as large as the Maritimes. The vast petroleum resources beneath the Arctic seabed may, by the end of this century, become as important to Canada as the Alberta oil sands are today. See Chapter 10 for more on this topic.

Canada's Geographic Regions, cont'd

- Why these six regions?
 - Manageable number, balanced size, and economic importance
 - Reflect distinctive physical features, natural resources, and economic activities
 - Reflect political structure of Canada
 - Facilitate use of statistical data
 - Linked to regional identity
 - Reveal regional economic strengths and cultural presence

Canada's Geographic Regions, cont'd

- What distinguishes each region?
 - Geographic location
 - Historical development
 - Area
 - Population
 - Economic strength
 - Economic activity

The Dynamic Nature of Regions

- Regions are not static entities
- Since Confederation, Canada's population has increased approximately 10 times
- How else are regions dynamic entities? Think about the different spheres within which people act.

Are regions the answer?

Advantages

- Helps us organize ideas

Disadvantages

- Generalizations of large areas

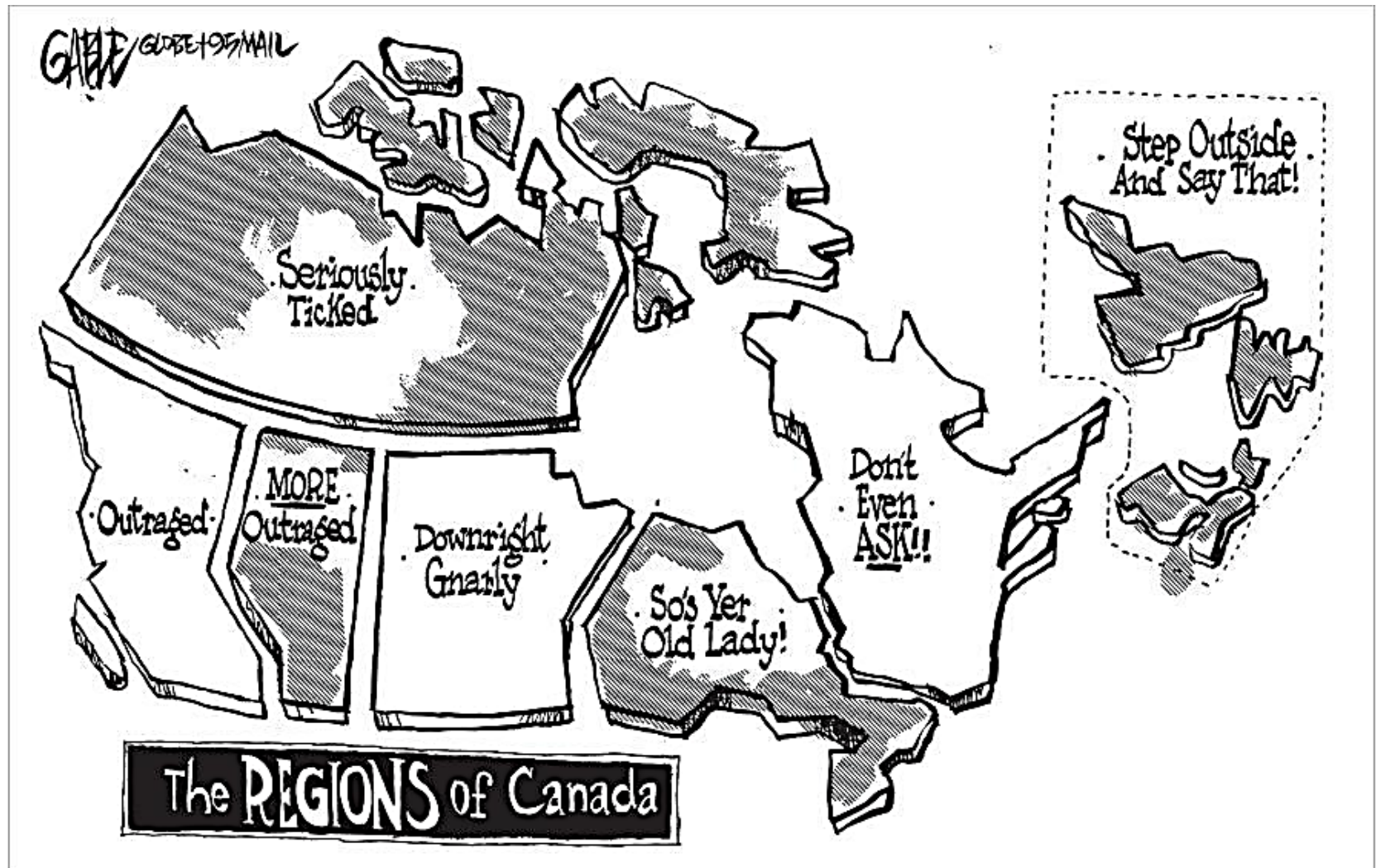


Figure 1.1 Gable's regions of Canada

Political cartoonist Brian Gable aptly captured the occasionally fractured relationships between provinces and territories with his map of Canada. In 1985, regional tensions reached the boiling point over the threat of Québec separating from Canada. The results of the 1995 referendum were very close, but afterwards the heated political scene cooled somewhat. Another fractious issue arose in the twenty-first century, when the economic success of the resource-rich western provinces greatly outpaced that of Central Canada's manufacturing provinces. Hot words were exchanged between provincial leaders with the Premier of Ontario charging that the oil sands caused the high Canadian dollar, which in turn resulted in a decline in the manufacturing sector of his province. Adding fuel to the fire, the federal NDP leader entered the fray by declaring that the oil sands created a Canadian version of the Dutch disease, which linked a high Canadian dollar with the oil sands and led to a declining manufacturing industry. Such would not be the case, the NDP leader said, if the oil sands companies paid the full cost of the environmental damage.

Table 1.1 General Characteristics of the Six Canadian Regions, 2011

Geographic Region	Area* (000 km ²)	Area (%)	Population	Population (%)	GDP (%)
Ontario	1,076.4	10.8	12,851,821	38.4	39.6
Québec	1,542.1	15.4	7,903,001	23.6	20.5
British Columbia	944.7	9.5	4,400,057	13.1	12.2
Western Canada	1,960.7	19.6	5,886,906	17.6	21.5
Atlantic Canada	539.1	5.4	2,327,638	7.0	5.7
Territorial North	3,909.8	39.3	107,265	0.3	0.5
Canada	9,972.8	100.0	33,476,688	100.0	100.0

*Includes freshwater bodies such as the Canadian portion of the Great Lakes.

Source: Statistics Canada (2006a, 2012a, 2012b).

Table 1.2 Social Characteristics of the Six Canadian Regions, 2011

Geographic Region	French (000s)	French (% of regional population)	Aboriginal Peoples (000s)*	Aboriginal Peoples (% of regional population)
Ontario	493,300	3.9	301,425	2.4
Québec	6,102,210	78.1	141,915	1.8
British Columbia	57,280	1.3	232,290	5.3
Western Canada	126,915	2.2	574,335	9.8
Atlantic Canada	272,315	11.9	94,490	2.6
Territorial North	2,970	2.8	56,225	52.4
Canada	7,054,975	21.3	1,400,685	4.3

*These population statistics from Statistics Canada are based on the **Aboriginal identity** question rather than the somewhat higher figures generated from the ethnic-based census question known as **Aboriginal ancestry**. In 2011, Aboriginal identity population was based on a census question that defined identity by three groups of Aboriginal peoples: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit while Aboriginal ancestry is based on a self-declaration of ethnicity. In previous censuses, Aboriginal population data were collected from the obligatory long form census, but in 2011, census questions that determine Aboriginal populations were modified and assigned to a voluntary survey known as the *National Household Survey*.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2012d, 2013).

Sense of Place

- Reflects a deeply felt attachment to a region or area by local residents who have bonded to their environment and resulting institutions
- Recognizes that collective experiences have led to shared aspirations, concerns, goals, and values
- Place vs. placelessness

Sense of Place, cont'd

- A region as a synthesis of physical and human characteristics that produces a unique character, including sense of place and power
- An attachment and commitment to “home” region
- Canada as a country of regions that each have a strong sense of regional pride as well as a commitment to Canadian federalism

Sense of Place

Does a local sense of place still matter in a globalized world?

Faultlines within Canada

- Faultlines: a geological metaphor applied to economic, social, and political cracks that divide regions and people, and threaten to destabilize Canada's integrity as a nation
 - Coined by columnist Jeffrey Simpson in 1993
- Four principal faultlines represent struggles between:
 - Centralist and decentralist visions of Canada
 - English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians
 - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians
 - Old and new Canadians

Faultlines within Canada, cont'd

- Centralist/Decentralist
 - Leans most heavily on Canada's geography and political system
 - Federal–provincial feuds (control and equalization payments)
 - Central Canada as representing the “national interest”
 - Rise of western power calls into question



Parliament Hill, Ottawa, ON 2015

Faultlines within Canada, cont'd

- English/French
 - Proportion of French-speaking Canadians has declined
 - Quebec has only majority of speakers
 - New Brunswick only other bilingual province
 - Language remains a sensitive issue
 - How to balance the two language groups and the unity of Canada?



Bilingual stop sign at
Parliament Hill, Ottawa, ON

Faultlines within Canada, cont'd

- Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Peoples
 - Many Aboriginal individuals and communities remain dependent on the state
 - Left in a virtual state of poverty and underdevelopment, slow to change
 - The Indian Act and the role of the federal government



Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School, Lebret, SK circa 1885

Faultlines within Canada, cont'd

- Newcomers and Old-Timers
 - Canada as a land of immigrants
 - Continuous waves of newcomers bringing their own set of cultures, languages, and religions
 - Cultural adjustment and cultural gap



Women leaves
Muslim
Association of
Canada Centre
in Vancouver,
BC where
refugees were
attacked with
pepper spray,
Jan 8th, 2016

The Core/Periphery Theory

- Staples thesis: posits that Canada's regional development was based on the successive exploitation of resources (staples), and heartland and hinterland dynamics
 - Coined by political economist Harold Innis 1930
 - Related concepts: backward, forward, and final demand linkages; staples trap (Watkins)

The Core/Periphery Theory, cont'd

- Core/periphery theory: posits that capitalist economics results in regionally uneven development (Friedmann)
- Canada's regions: 1 core and 3 peripheries
 - Core region—manufacturing (Ontario and Québec)
 - Rapidly growing region—expanding resource base (British Columbia and Western Canada)
 - Slow growing region—declining resource base (Atlantic Canada)
 - Resource frontier—many resources exist but few are viable (Territorial North)

Table 1.4 Economic Structure of Canada and Its Six Geographic Regions, 2011

Economic Sector	Ontario	Québec	British Columbia	Western Canada	Atlantic Canada	Territorial North	Canada (000s)	Canada (%)
Primary	1.9	2.3	2.9	9.3	5.1	13.0	642.8	3.7
Secondary	19.2	19.1	16.8	17.2	15.8	2.0	3,162.2	18.3
Tertiary	78.9	78.6	80.3	73.5	79.1	85.0	13,501.3	78.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	17,306.2	100.0

Sources: Statistics Canada (2012c); for Territorial North, author's estimates based on Yukon (2011) and Northwest Territories (2011).

The Global Economy

- Capitalist world-systems theory
- Manufacturing cores vs. resource-based peripheries
- Super cycle theory
- Balance of economic power shifting to Asia
- Implications for Canada?

Canada in the Global World

- Canada is realigning itself to take advantage of the power shift to Asia and new trade opportunities
- Diversification of trade is a top priority, especially with the Asian market
- The US remains Canada's principal market, though it has declined

Canada in the Global World, cont'd

- Asserting sovereignty in the Arctic
- Increasing Canada's presence on the global stage: hosting global events, more active military involvement
- Issues on the domestic front: Aboriginal rights, environmental activism
- International front: Kyoto Protocol, oil sands development, and oil pipeline

Canada–US Trade Relations

- Despite turbulent global conditions, Canada and the US remain major trading partners and allies
- North America provides a natural economic trade zone
- The economies of Canada and the US complement each other
- “Geography has made us neighbours. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. Necessity has made us allies.” —President Kennedy (1961)