Regional Perspectives on Canada

Towards a summary
Geography of Canada

• Canada is large and complex, its geography is textured in various ways.
Physical Geography

• Physical geography plays an enormous role in setting out some basic constraints and possibilities for human activity.

• The character of the air, land and sea are essential to understanding the country
Physical Geography

- Climate shapes, vegetation, soils and therefore agriculture, forestry.
Physical Geography

- Glaciers, rivers, lakes and waterbodies, sources of water, routeways, obstacles, hydro-electric potential
Physical Geography

- Physiography: mountains, plains, obstacles, routeways
Physical Geography

- Minerals
Physical Geography

- Canada’s physical geography inherited from long periods of geological history
  - Faux Amphibolites of Northern Quebec 4.28 Billion years old
  - The oldest known rocks on earth
  - Earth is estimated at 4.5 billion years old
Plate Tectonics

- Continental shelves, mountains from plate-tectonics
Ores

- Non-ferrous ore bodies from ancient astronomical impacts
Hyrdocarbons

- Hydrocarbons from ancient seas and swamps
Oil & Gas, southern Ontario
Glaciation

- Glaciation stripped the shield of farming soils and created the Great Lakes
- Coated the prairies with soil materials
Human Geography

• Has unfolded over much shorter periods of time than the physical geography
  – Canada in aboriginal hands for tens of thousands of years
  – Almost as much human history/pre-history in the Americas as in the old world.
Clovis hunters swept the continent

Earliest undisputed inhabitants of the Americas, the people known as Clovis descended from late Pleistocene hunters who moved south from Canada, probably through an ice-free corridor that had opened by 12,000 years ago. Skilled at taking mammoth, bison, and other Ice Age animals, they used distinctively fluted spearpoints recovered at sites throughout the U.S. Initial digging at the Richey-Roberts Clovis Cache has exposed the largest Clovis points yet found.
A Settler Society

• Canada a settler society imposed on what was once (and to some extent still is) aboriginal land
• Creates a series of tensions and textures
• A collision with long-term consequences
Via Rail blockade by First Nations that halted Montreal-Toronto trains ends

Protesters in Marysville, Ont., seek to draw attention to missing and murdered aboriginal women


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- Habs not used to Blue Jackets games which have
A Settler Society: old and new migrants

• Among the settlers, old and new there are differences and tensions. Established settler groups being challenged by new arrivals etc.,

• Newcomers continue to challenge those already here

• Booming cities attract fresh migrants
Most Anglos OK with religious symbols for government workers

40% of francophones say much less needs to be done to accommodate religious minorities

The Parti Québécois’s proposed secular ‘values’ charter would ban public sector employees from wearing overt religious symbols. This portrait, shot in 2008, shows three women involved in unveiling the bill.
A Settler Society: language

• One of the cultural struggles of settler society: English vs French
• Major tension within Canada since the C18th or before
To Canada
Vers le Canada
In France
A Settler Society: urbanization, peripherality

- Canada has become an urban society. Metropolitan Canada is now very powerful regionally, nationally, internationally.
- Breeds resentment in non-metropolitan Canada.
- Metropolitan Canada dominates politics, culture, the media, the economy.
• Western Resentment
A Settler Society: economy

- Has a history of various often competing forms of economic activity
- The resource economy (mining, agriculture, forestry, fishing, furs, hydro) where metropolitan and foreign capital exploits peripheral regions for the benefit of metropolitan markets
- Manufacturing and service economy, mainly urban
A Settler Society: demographic shifts

• With a constantly changing population
• Changing in structure and distribution
• Population flowing to regions with rapid economic growth
• Transforms culture and politics
Global Connections

• Important to Canada from pre-history onwards
  – Ancient routeways across the Bering straits
  – Resource and settlement hinterland for colonizing Europeans
  – At the centre of the mid-C20th global economy
  – Becoming resource and settlement periphery for Asia
Geography of Canada

- Is shaped by a combination of factors
- Each region has a different texture
- These textures, patterns are not static but keep changing all the time.