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## Canada: A Country of Regions within a Global Economy

### Learning Objectives

- To summarize Canada's regional character and structure
- To consider recent faultlines and potential implications for Canada
- To outline the role of cities in the advanced economy
- To consider the impact of globalization
- To look to the future

## Chapter Overview

Canada is a large and diverse country which has led to it being a country of regions—six regions. Canadian society and identity are being reshaped by more open immigration policies and three federal policies—multiculturalism, immigration, and reconciliation—have played a leading role in pushing Canada's population in a new direction. With respect to Canada's economy, natural resources and manufacturing remain important yet we see Canada moving into a high-tech advanced world where automation, digitalization, and robotics dominate. In this concluding chapter, five critical topics are addressed:

1. Canada's regional character and structure
2. The role of cities in the advanced economy
3. Canada's faultlines
4. Globalization
5. Future directions

### Regional Character and Structure

Canada's regional structure is best described by the core/periphery model whereby Canada has two core regions (Ontario and Québec), two rapidly growing regions (Western Canada and British Columbia), one slow-growing region (Atlantic Canada), and one resource frontier (the Territorial North). Canada's regional structure is subject to forces such as global prices and trade that push and pull each region.

### Urban Canada and the Advanced Economy

Toronto, Montréal, and Vancouver are Canada's largest cities. They are experiencing renewal, to some degree, through gentrification of old industrial areas and environment-friendly innovations such as green roofing. These cities face urban issues such as traffic congestion; however, there are

opportunities for mid-sized cities in Canada to mitigate issues through choices of rapid transit, innovative urban planning and design, etc.

### Canada's Faultlines

In addition to the four faultlines discussed throughout the text, Bone outlines recent examples of faultlines in Canada including the Northern Gateway pipeline issue between Alberta and British Columbia, and the Energy East pipeline issues between Alberta and Eastern Canada involving transport of oil sands bitumen to existing refineries in Montréal, near Québec City, and in Saint John.

### Canada and the Global Economy

With the global economy idling, what happens in the next few years will have a direct impact on Canada and its six regions. A positive scenario is that the global business cycle has already reached its low point and that, after 2016, it will begin to recover, led by a resurgence of the economies of the United States, China, and the European Union. With resurgence, Canada would be poised to manage new challenges such as managing rapidly advancing technology in the form of artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and robotics.

### The Future

In the next decades, the country needs to build cultural and economic bridges between its regions; to provide more powers and revenue to its cities; and, in so doing, to strengthen the economy and national unity. Bone states “Such unity in a country like Canada, however frail or fractured it sometimes appears, is the linchpin holding the nation and its six regions together” (p. 404). With respect to resources, it may take some time for commodity and energy prices to recover. As for the general resurgence and the future, Bone outlines four aspects:

1. The six geographic regions will continue to define Canada within the core/periphery framework, but global forces—and forces within a polarized United States—will help shape and reshape their economies.
2. The outcome of the environment and pipelines debate will determine the fate of the Alberta oil sands and the future of fossil fuels in Canada.
3. Canada's major cities will house and drive the knowledge-based economy.
4. Urban Canada will move to a softer, gentler, and more inclusive society where the creative class flourishes, where downtowns become more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly, and where newcomers to cities, both immigrants and Indigenous people, thrive. Shaping such a society remains a work in progress, but Canada is moving in the right direction.

## Challenge Questions

1. Each of Canada's regions has its own identity. Does Canada have a national identity and, if so, what is it? What are the advantages and disadvantages to Canada's identity quandary?
2. Regional power is shifting in two directions—westward and inward to major cities. Discuss.
3. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution arrives, what challenges exist for Canada to create a knowledge-based industrial structure within a technologically advanced world?
4. In what ways have global trade and immigration been shaping regions of Canada?

5. What indications are there that hollowing out of manufacturing has been happening across Canada?
6. In what ways are technical innovations and greater efficiencies in industry affecting Canada's industrial structure?
7. In what ways might the Territorial North play a more prominent role in Canada because of global warming?

## Key Terms

**Environmental determinism** The assumption that human activities are controlled by the physical environment. Now considered far too deterministic, it was a popular philosophical position of geographers in the late nineteenth early twentieth centuries. (p. 405)

**Ethnoburbs** Suburban residential and business areas with a significant ethnic character composed of new Canadians. (p. 405)