Population Clusters

- United States and Canada have highly urbanized populations.
- Both have high degree of cultural pluralism, or cultural diversity.
- United States has higher growth rate due to natural increase and immigration.
- Canada’s population increase is even more affected by immigration.
North America’s Physical Geography:
Physiographic Regions

• The realm has diverse physiographic regions that each exhibit natural landscape homogeneity.
  
  • Some high-relief regions:
    – Pacific Mountains
    – Rocky Mountains
    – Appalachian Mountains
  
  • Some lowland regions:
    – Great Plains
    – Interior Lowlands
    – Various Coastal Plains
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**North America’s Physical Geography: Climate**

- Physiographic variety is matched in climatic variety.
- Considerable 4z and 5f climates are suitable for large-scale farming.
- Significant rainshadow effect of the western mountains blocks moisture to the Great Plains.
- Humid east experiences weather extremes due to frigid Arctic and subtropical seasonal air masses.

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**North America’s Physical Geography: Great Lakes and Great Rivers**

- Two great drainage systems between the Rockies and Appalachians:
  1. Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River into the northern Atlantic
  2. Mississippi-Missouri Rivers into a delta on the Gulf of Mexico
- Both have been modified by human engineering.

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**European Settlement and Expansion**

- Indigenous North Americans
  - Known as Native Americans or First Nations
- Devastated by arrival and expansion of Europeans
  - Displaced from their homelands
  - Native American nations relegated to impoverished and isolated reservations
European Settlement and Expansion

• European colonies:
  – Current population geography: a legacy of French and British settlement
  – Diversified local economies

• American Revolution and opening of the West:
  – Interior lowlands favorable to farming and settlement
  – Political acquisition of western territories made by new states by purchase or concession
Slide 13

Cultural Foundations

- Language
  - Near-universality of English
  - Undergoing change, especially worldwide
  - Facilitates mobility
  - Dominant medium of interaction
- Religion
  - Christianity dominant in the U.S.
  - Regional denomination diversity
  - Religious tolerance for most; Islam a contemporary exception

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The Federal Map of North America

- Similarities
  - Internal political geographies
  - Dominated by straight-line boundaries
  - Elsewhere, physical features mark boundaries
  - Result delimiting prior to settlement
  - Federal state structures
  - Each country’s subdivisions vary in their significance

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The Distribution of Natural Resources

• Uneven distribution of natural resources across the realm
• Water
  – Relatively well-supplied
  – Concerns for future supply:
    • Arid Southwest and Great Plains rely on other areas for water.
    • Overuse of ground water aquifers lowers water table.

The Distribution of Natural Resources

• Abundant mineral reserves are in three zones.
• Fossil fuels or oil, natural gas and coal energy sources:
  – Not enough to satisfy demand, so imports are necessary.
  – Alternative energy sources, especially nuclear power, are not well-developed.
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The Distribution of Natural Resources

Map Analysis Activity: Comparing Natural and Human Resources

1. What is observed in the locations of North America's natural resources and its population distribution?
2. Based on the two maps, do these themes have a relationship? Why or why not?

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Urbanization and the Spatial Economy:

Industrial Cities

- Industrialization and urbanization in tandem
- A new urban system:
  - Cities specialized in raw materials or manufacturing
  - Interconnected by growing transportation network
  - American Manufacturing Belt emerged as foundation of the North American Core
- Shifting spatial economy:
  - Primary sector in decline due to mechanization
  - Secondary sector growth and decline
  - Tertiary sector expansion
Urbanization and the Spatial Economy:
Realm of Railroads

- Initiated an integrated continental-scale economy
  - Rail predominantly for cargo, not passengers
  - "Intermodal" cargo from ships, to trucks and rail
- Revival as shipping costs decline and international trade grows
- New boom requires adding to the rail system
Among the Realm’s Great Cities...

**New York**

- A true “world city”
  - Global influence as a cultural and media capital
  - Sprawling megalopolis
- Urban problems:
  - Socioeconomic issues
  - Immigrant ghettos
  - Aging infrastructure and industry
  - Current economic crisis
- Bold plans to resolve its problems

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Among the Realm’s Great Cities...

**Toronto**

- Historic heart of English-speaking Canada
  - Leading economic center
- Known for its...
  - Livability
  - Diversity
  - Vibrancy
- Central city-suburban cooperation
  - Difficulties in managing increasing suburban clout

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Urbanization and the Spatial Economy: Deindustrialization and Suburbanization

- Transportation and communication innovations increased interconnectedness and mobility.
- Evolution of the outer city:
  - Residential suburbia had its own businesses and industries, entertainment, and other amenities.
  - Relative decline in the central city.
- Coincided with deindustrialization:
  - Loss of manufacturing jobs meant opportunities were found in suburbia.
  - Those who could, moved out of the inner city.

Urbanization and the Spatial Economy: The Information Economy and City Regions

- Information economy:
  - For some cities, helped recovery from deindustrialization and high employment
  - Rising employment in tertiary and quaternary service-based sectors
  - Information-based economic activity is found in established CBDs, on urban fringes or in suburbs:
    - Silicon Valley: world’s leading center for computer research and development
    - Favorable combination of locational dynamics

Urbanization and the Spatial Economy: Polycentric Cities

- Multiple centers:
  - CBD still at the center.
  - Outer city’s have their own CBDs.
- Gentrification involves land-use changes and urban neighborhood restoration:
  - Raises property values and taxes
  - Displaces former low income residents with newer more affluent ones
Urbanization and the Spatial Economy: Effects of the Great Recession

• 2008 financial crisis:
  – Banking sector’s “toxic assets” as a result of predatory mortgage lending and irresponsible borrowing
  – Burst of housing bubble and problem of negative equity:
    – Housing bubble grew by speculation and drive for profit
    – Greatest in fast-growth areas with high housing demands
    – Drastic rise in foreclosures

• Canada’s experience was less severe:
  – Conservative banks
  – Strong economy
The Making of a Multicultural Realm: The Virtues of Mobility and Immigration

- Changing population distribution and character:
  - Center of gravity of U.S. population is moving southward to the Sunbelt, aided by air conditioning
  - Other major migrations:
    1. Urbanization
    2. Rural to urban movement of African Americans
    3. Suburbanization and beyond
    4. Return of African Americans to southern cities
    5. Steady influx of global immigrants

The Migration Process...

- Both United States and Canada are products of international migration, or permanent relocation:
  - Migration decision depends on perception, information, and distance.
  - Push and pull factors motivate or attract.

- Destination:
  - North America is a "land of opportunity."
  - Immigration is 40 percent of growth.
The Making of a Multicultural Realm: The Challenge of Multiculturalism

• Growing pluralism:
  – Transnationalism and beyond national borders
  – Melting pot of blended cultures being contested by increasing ethnic and cultural complexity
  – Mosaic culture as even more heterogeneous complex of separate, distinct groups

What do you think?
– What type of society results from multiculturalism? Melting pot or mosaic culture or both? Why?

Regional Issue:
Immigrants: How Many Can North America Accommodate?

Immigration Brings Benefits
• It is part of the region’s history and has never been heartily welcomed.
• It fuels economic growth.
• It is not just unskilled, but also skilled and educated.
• Native population is aging, and immigration brings youth.
• Illegal immigration should be curbed.

Limit Immigration Now
• High level of legal immigrants is unsustainable.
• Demands for social services strain state budgets.
• Immigrants displace working-class Americans by accepting lower wages.
• Amnesty for illegal immigrants attracts more, and that’s a security issue.

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