

# Geography

## Theme II: Spaces Transformed by Globalisation

### Chapter 6: The United States of America and Globalisation

#### Introduction

The United States of America is the world's biggest economic power. This power is based on an immense territory which is firmly integrated into different global networks. Globalisation has also transformed America.

#### Times Square, NYC



Times Square, New York City, in 2015, a district that is emblematic of globalisation. Known as 'The crossroads of the World', the walls are covered with adverts for well-known brands and real time information from the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street. It attracts some 300 000 visitors daily.

## D.N.L. Vocabulary

1. **American way of life:** refers to lifestyle of people living in the USA
2. **American Dream:** national ethos of the USA, it includes the idea that everyone is equal and prosperity and success can be achieved through hard work
3. **CBD (Central business district):** business centre of a city, it usually contains skyscrapers because of limited space and high land values
4. **Industrial belt (or Rust belt):** Region of north-east USA which contains older manufacturing industries such as the automobile industry
5. **Sun Belt:** region of southern and western USA characterised by a warm climate and hi-tech industries

## The role of the USA in the world

Since the end of WW2, the US has played a major role on the international scene. It helped to create important institutions like the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the UN (United Nations).

The interventions decided by the UN depended considerably on American military power. It has the biggest military in the world. This is known as hard power.

The US has also created **NAFTA** (North American Free Trade Agreement) to increase trade between the different countries of North America. The stock exchange (bourse) in New York is the biggest in the world and the **dollar** is the world's principal currency. Americans also invest huge amounts of money in other countries. English is the principal language of the USA and is used in international business and most scientific publications. The USA also possess an enormous capacity to diffuse information through the way it dominates the internet and the power of its media organizations such as CNN. This is known as soft power.

## Spatial Dynamics of US Territory



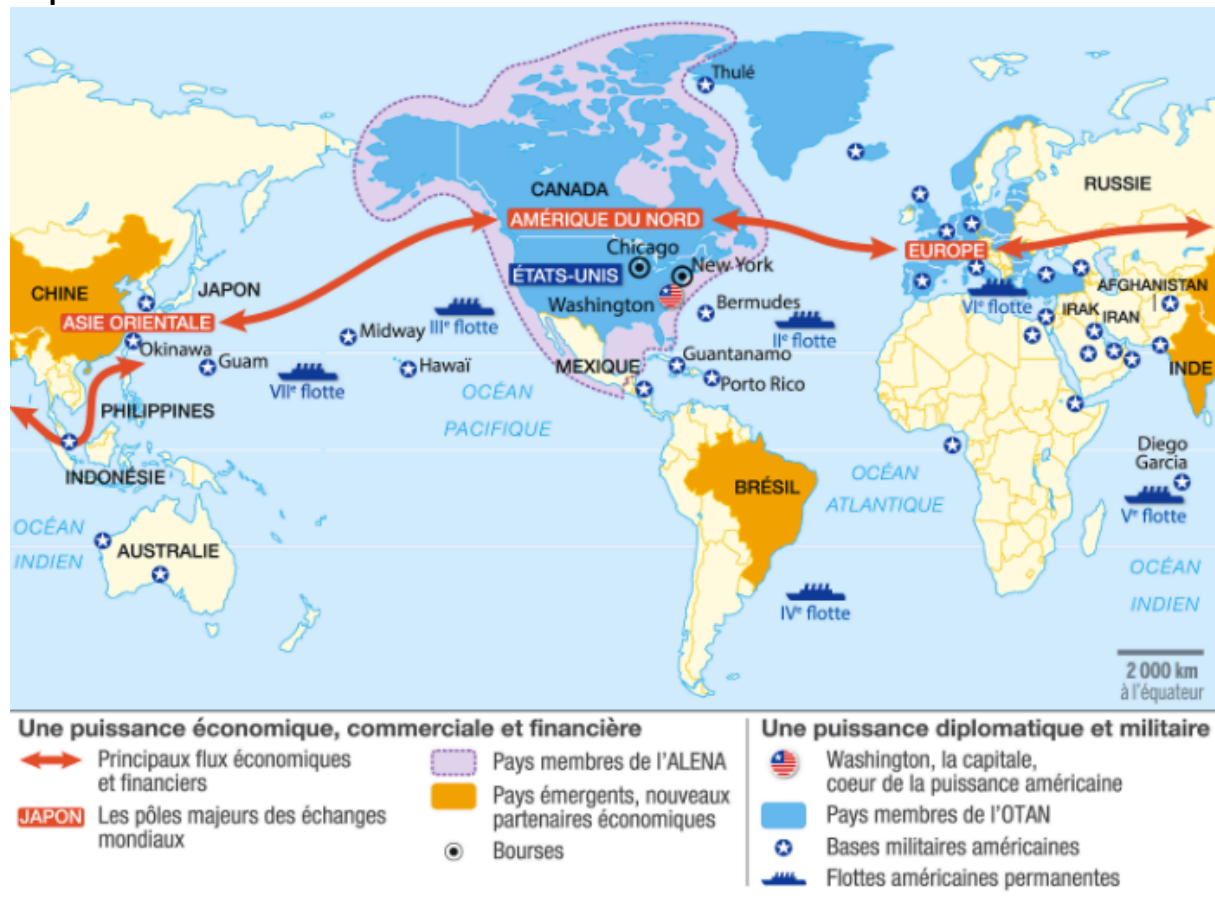
Regions	Territorial Organisation	A Globalised Space
West	Megalopolis	New Motor Regions
Great Plains	Global Cities	Maritime facades
Sun Belt	Principal Cities	Dynamic cross-border regions
Old South	Principal Airports	Immigration
North-East	Principal Ports	
Hawaii and Alaska	Hi-tech Parks	
	Internal Migration	

The North East of the USA is very populated with 40% of the population. The region around the Great Lakes is called the Manufacturing Belt and is responsible for 40% of industrial production. It has been experiencing deindustrialisation since the 1980s as industries such as metal works (sidérurgie) and textiles have relocated to less developed countries where costs are lower. However this region also contains the capital city, Washington D.C. and New York which has the headquarters (sièges) of many big companies and the Wall Street Stock Exchange.

Since the 1960s, the south and west of the USA, known as the Sun Belt because of its warmer climate, has attracted many high-tech activities. The aeronautic industry has developed in Seattle (Boeing) and the computer industry has developed in California (eg in Silicon Valley). Along the frontier with Mexico are hundreds of factories called Maquiladoras. These factories are US owned but employ Mexicans because they work for lower salaries than people in the USA.

## The USA: A Global Power

### Map of US Global Influence



### An economic, commercial and financial power

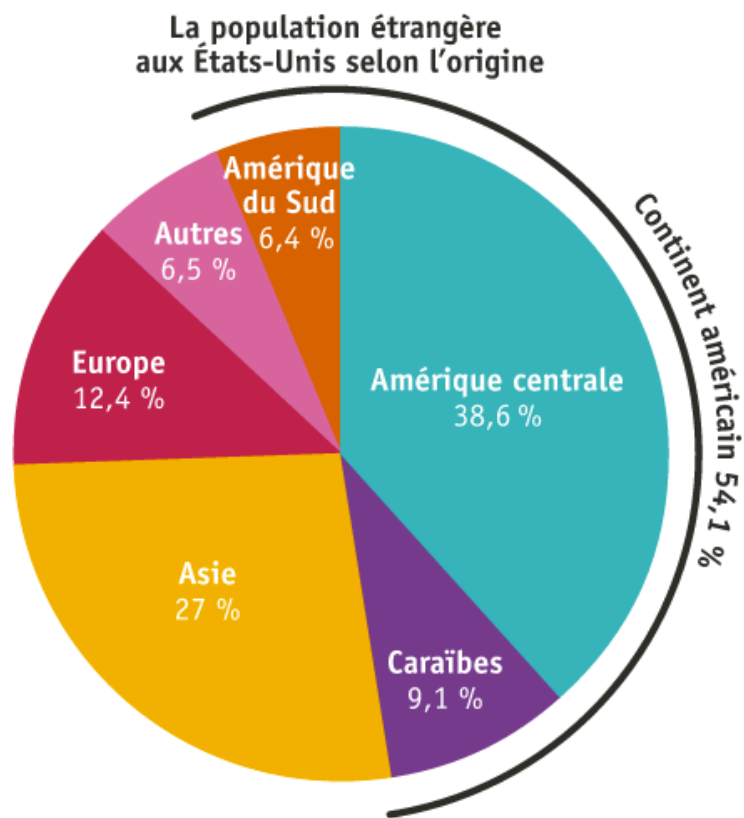
- (red arrow) Principal economic and financial flows
- (red box) Region of global exchanges
- (purple) Members of NAFTA
- (dark yellow) Emerging countries
- (black circled dot) Stock Exchanges

### A diplomatic and military power

- Washington, capital city of the USA
- (blue box) NATO member states
- (star inside circle) American military bases
- (ship outline) Permanent American fleets

**Pie Chart showing the migrant composition of the US population**

The foreign born population of the US numbers more than 40 million people, which represents 13% of the total population.



Translations

Population of the US  
according to origin

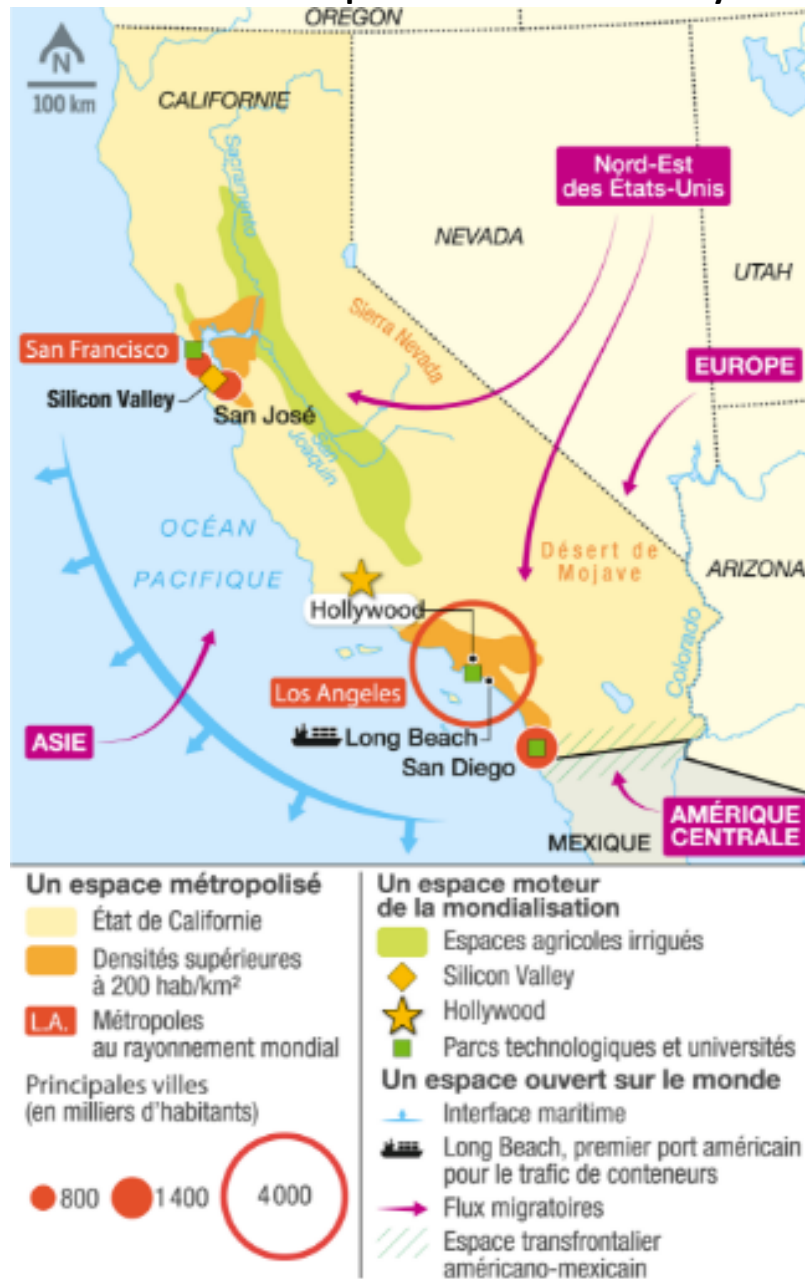
American continent  
accounts for 54.1%

Central America  
Caribbean  
Asia  
Europe  
Others  
South America



# California Case Study: A Territory of Global Innovation

## Document 1: Map of Californian Territory



### An urban space

State of California

Population density of over 200 inhabitants per square km

City with a global influence

Principal cities (in thousands of inhabitants)

### Driver of globalisation

Irrigated agriculture

Silicon Valley

Hollywood

Science and University Parks

### An open space

Maritime interface

Long Beach (USA's biggest container port)

Migration Flows

Mexican cross border region

## Document 2: Introduction

California is the richest state in the USA. It has a population of almost 39 million inhabitants and a surface area of 424 000 square kilometres (compared to a total of 550 000 square kilometres for metropolitan France). A large number of hi-tech industries are concentrated in the state together with world-renowned universities such as Stanford and Berkeley.

## Document 3: The headquarters of many TNCs are located in Silicon Valley



## Document 4: The Wikipedia Entry for Silicon Valley

The word "silicon" originally referred to the large number of silicon chip innovators and manufacturers in the region, but the area is now the home to many of the world's largest high-tech corporations, including the headquarters of 39 businesses in the Fortune 1000, and thousands of startup companies. Silicon Valley also accounts for one-third of all of the venture capital investment in the United States, which has helped it to become a leading hub and startup ecosystem for high-tech innovation and scientific development. It was in the Valley that the silicon-based integrated circuit, the microprocessor, and the microcomputer, among other key technologies, were developed. As of 2014, the region employed about a quarter of a million information technology workers.

## **Document 5: Social Inequalities in Silicon Valley**

The 68-acre shantytown is just minutes away from downtown and the high-tech giants that made Silicon Valley one of the world's most opulent locations. For years, the city turned a blind eye to "the Jungle." But the camp along the muddy bank of Coyote Creek has become more crowded in recent years and is awash in rotting trash, rats and human waste — so bad that the endangered steelhead trout have essentially disappeared.

After years of halfhearted cleanups, city officials on Thursday plan to begin shutting down the Jungle for good. The sprawling camp has become a major embarrassment, and a potent emblem of Silicon Valley's homeless crisis. In 2013, San Jose and the surrounding Santa Clara County estimated almost 7,600 homeless people, more than in San Francisco. And 75% of them were sleeping outside, on sidewalks, in parks and under freeway embankments — a percentage greater than in any other major U.S. metropolitan area. Officials have blamed soaring housing costs for the displacement. As Silicon Valley rocketed out of the recession, workers streamed in, driving the average apartment rent within 10 miles of San Jose up to \$2,633 in September, from \$1,761 two years earlier, according to the rental website RentJungle.com. The average home price is nearly \$ 700 000.

**Adapted from the LA Times**

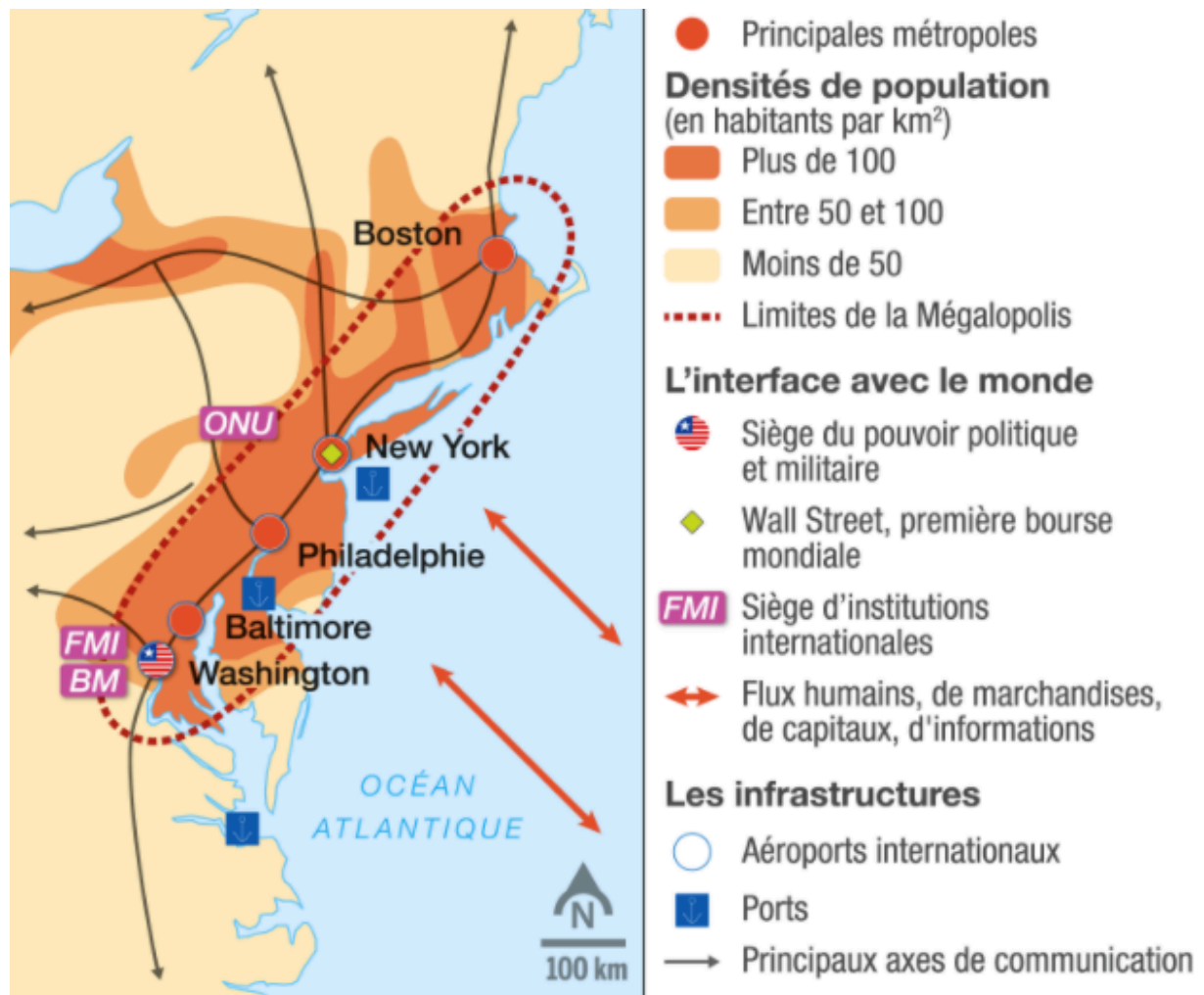
**<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-silicon-valley-homeless-20141204-story.html>**

## **Document 6: San Jose police and city officials look at a makeshift underground home in the camp**





## The American Megalopolis



### Principal cities

#### Population Densities

(inhabitants per square kilometre)

(dark orange) More than 100

(light orange) Between 50 and 100

(peach) Less than 50

Border of the Metropolis

### Global interface

Political and Military headquarters

Wall Street

IMF International Institutions Headquarters

Human flows, goods, capital, information

### Infrastructure

International airports

Ports

Principal Communication Axes

## The American-Mexican Cross-border Region

### An interface between the North and South



The border between San Diego (USA) on the left and Tijuana (Mexico) on the right

The frontier between the USA and Mexico is one of the crossed borders in the world with 350 million crossings made each year. It extends over 3000km and is separated by a wall in many places. Numerous flows of goods and people both legal and illegal migrants cross the border annually.

