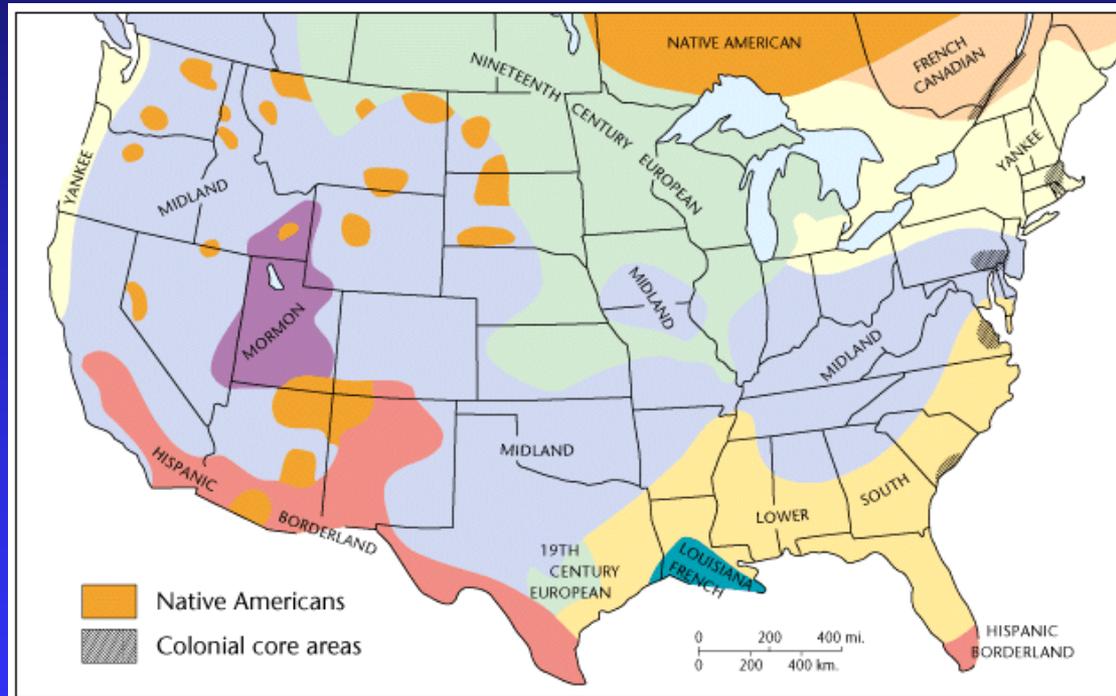


Regions and the Folk Cultural Tradition

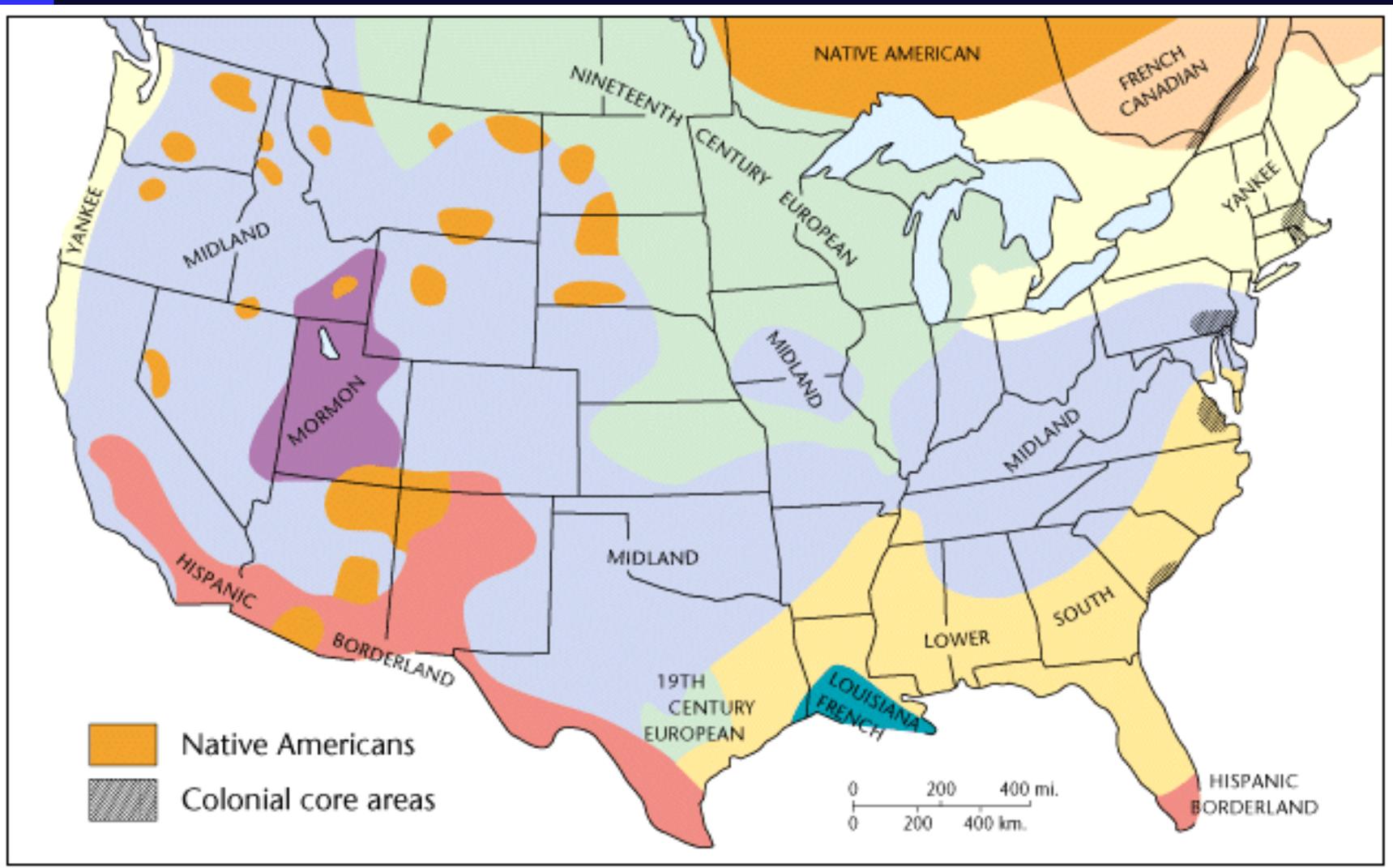


Culture Regions

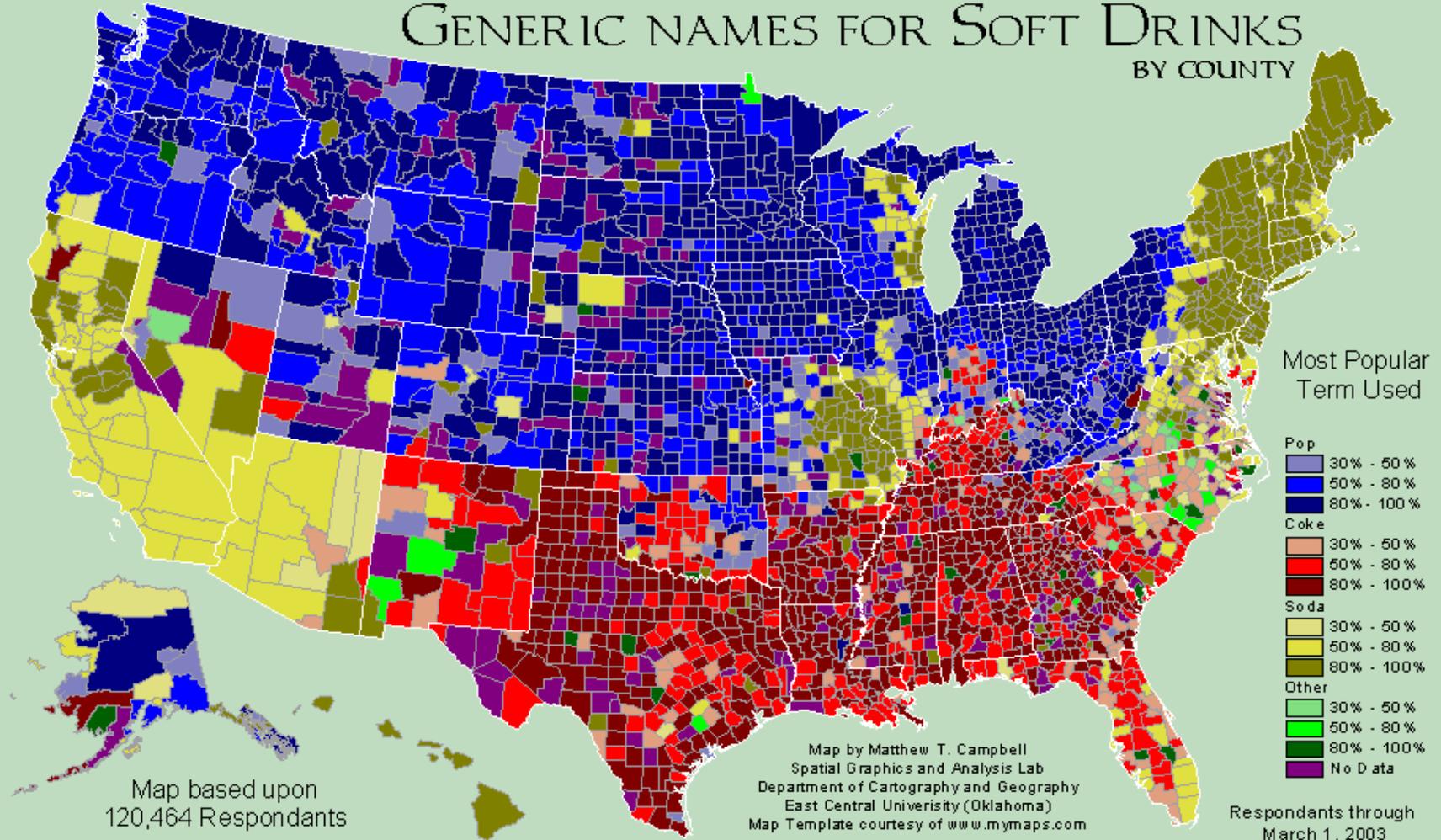
- Defined as a *contiguous* and *bounded* grouping of places according to certain sets of criteria
- Culture regions can be mapped
- Culture regions tend to overemphasize differences between places which in reality are ‘blurred’
- Because every place is implicitly unique, the concept of the region is a geographical tool, a way of simplifying complex spatial patterns
- Three types of culture regions: (a) formal, (b) functional, and (c) vernacular

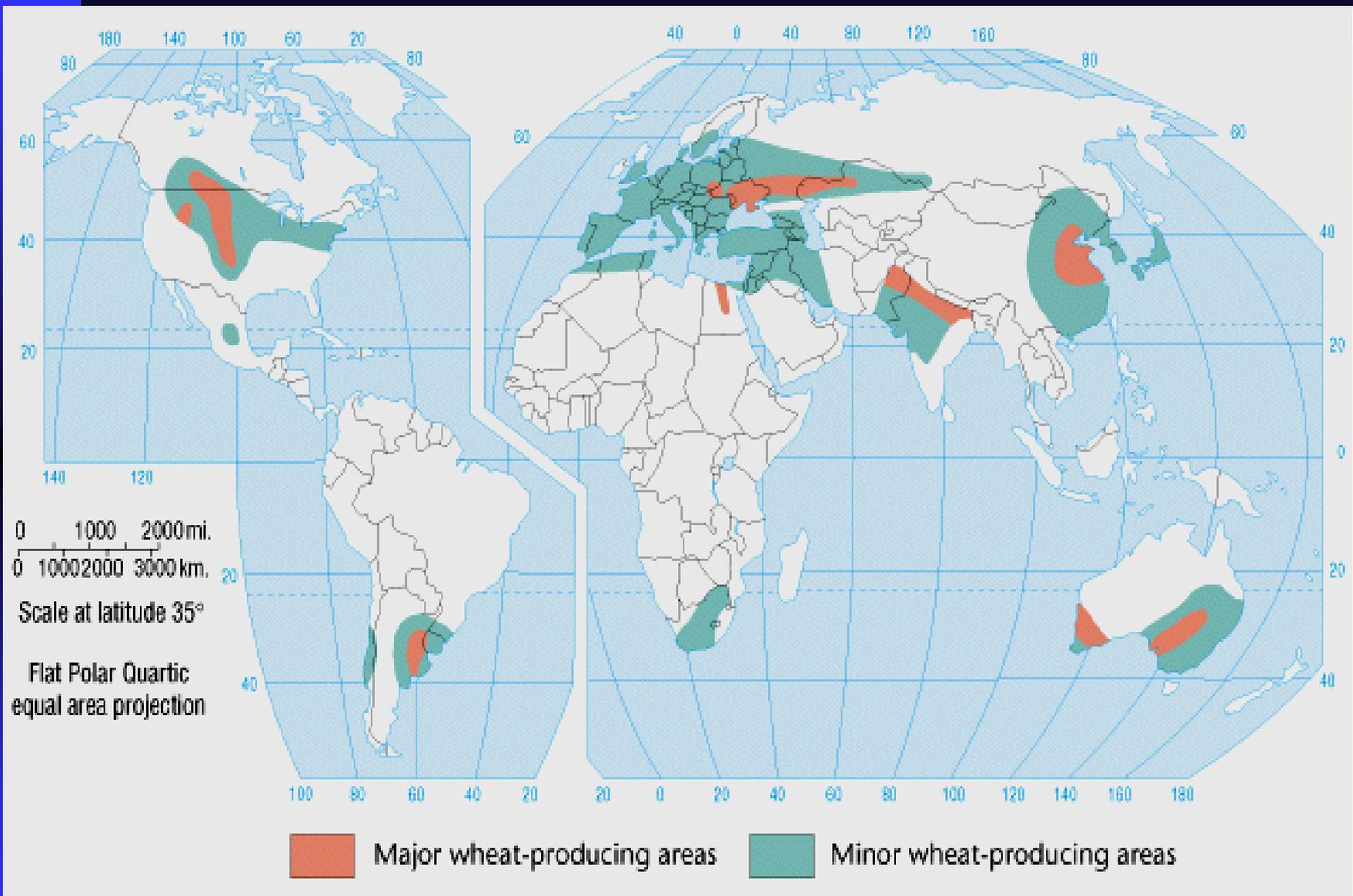
a. Formal Regions

- An area inhabited by people with one or more identifiable trait in common
- Describes spatial differences and commonalities of economic activity and social and cultural traits



GENERIC NAMES FOR SOFT DRINKS BY COUNTY





0 100 200 300 400 mi.
0 250 500 km.



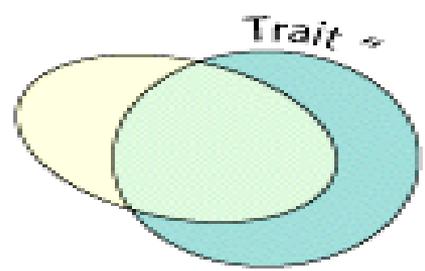
- Religious border
- Linguistic border
- Orthodox and Slavic language
- Catholic and Romance language
- Protestant and Germanic language

a. Formal Regions

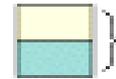
- An area inhabited by people with one or more identifiable trait in common
- Describes spatial differences and commonalities of economic activity and social and cultural traits
- Recognition of multiple traits or characteristics complicates mapping of formal regions

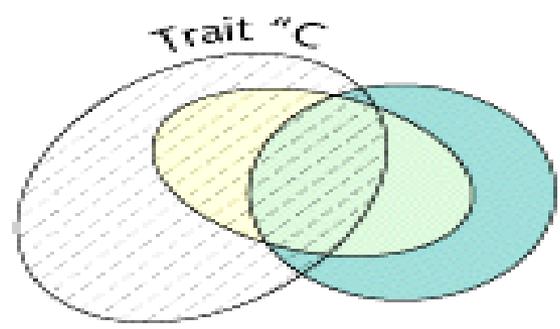


 Culture region based on trait "A"



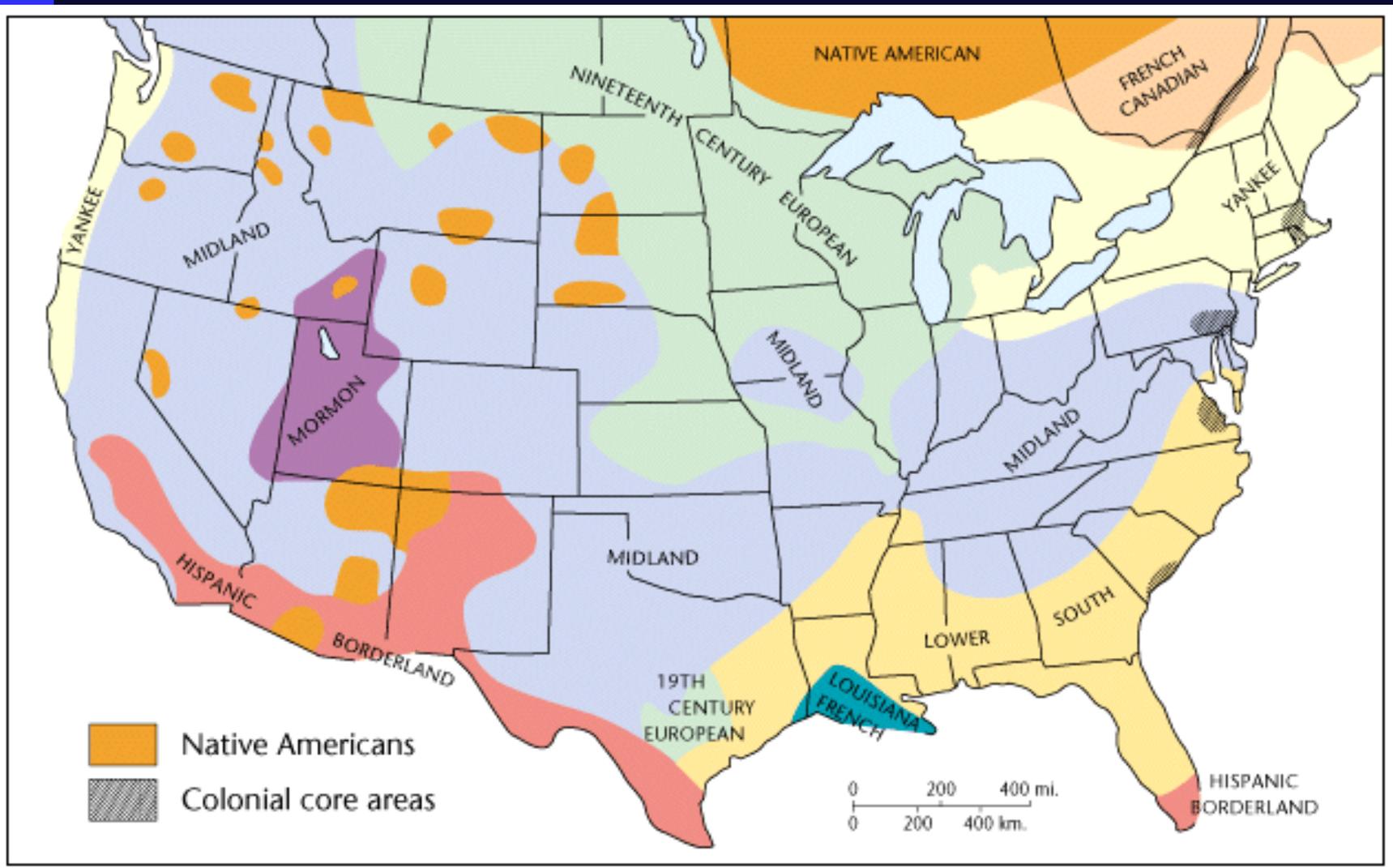
 Culture region based on traits "A" and "B"

 } Boundary zones



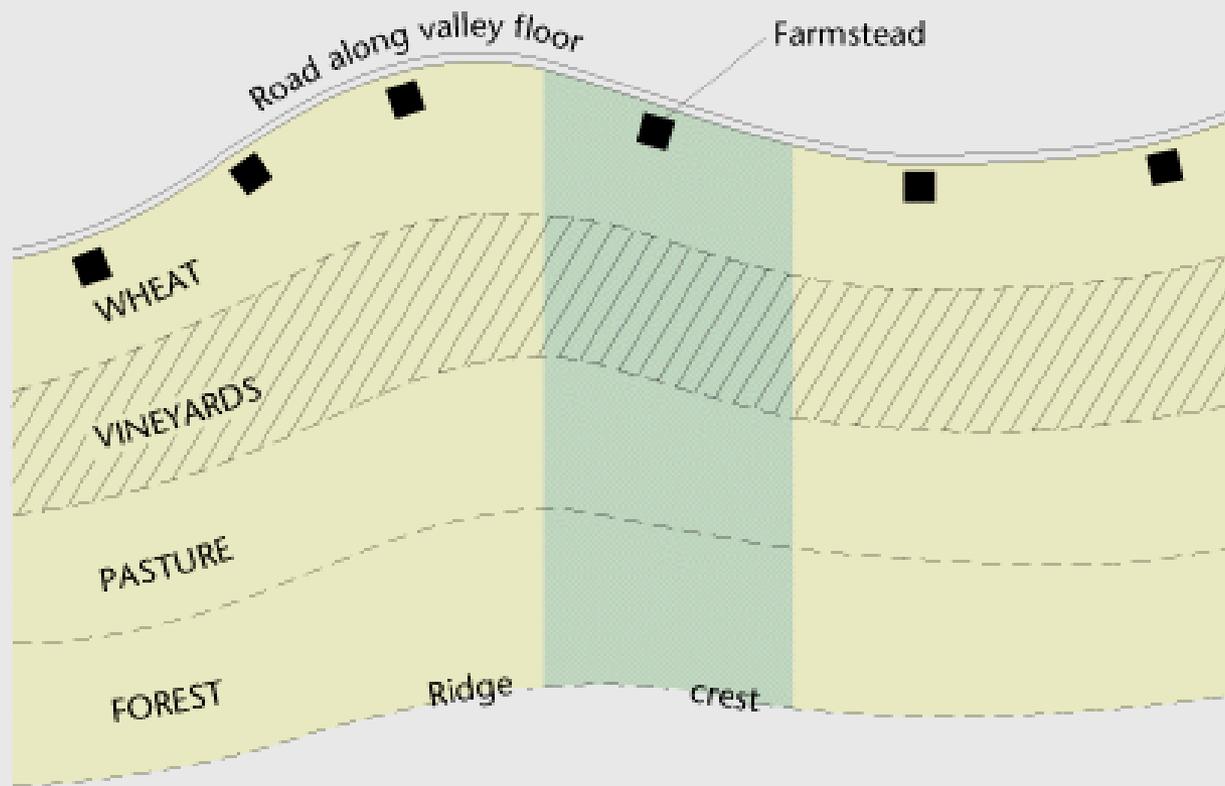
 Culture region based on traits "A," "B," and "C"

 } Boundary zones



b. Functional Culture Regions

- An area organized as a political, economic or social unit to perform a specific function
 - ◆ Functional regions have **nodes** (centers of activity)
 - ◆ Functional regions have clearly defined borders and boundaries
 - ◆ These boundaries may be fixed or variable
 - ◆ Functional regions rarely coincide exactly with formal regions



-  Functional culture region = One farm
-  Formal culture region = Land planted to vineyards



— Present borders of Germany

— “Iron Curtain,” 1945–1990

— Northern limit of divided inheritance (derived from Romans)

- - - Northern limit of Catholic majority

- - - Western limit of surviving rural feudal estates, 1800

— German–Slav, Christian–Pagan border, A.D. 800

■ German-speaking area

c. Vernacular Culture Regions

- An area *perceived* to exist by local inhabitants: like *mental maps*

c. Vernacular Culture Regions

- An area *perceived* to exist by local inhabitants: like *mental maps*
- May be based on environmental, economic, political or historical features

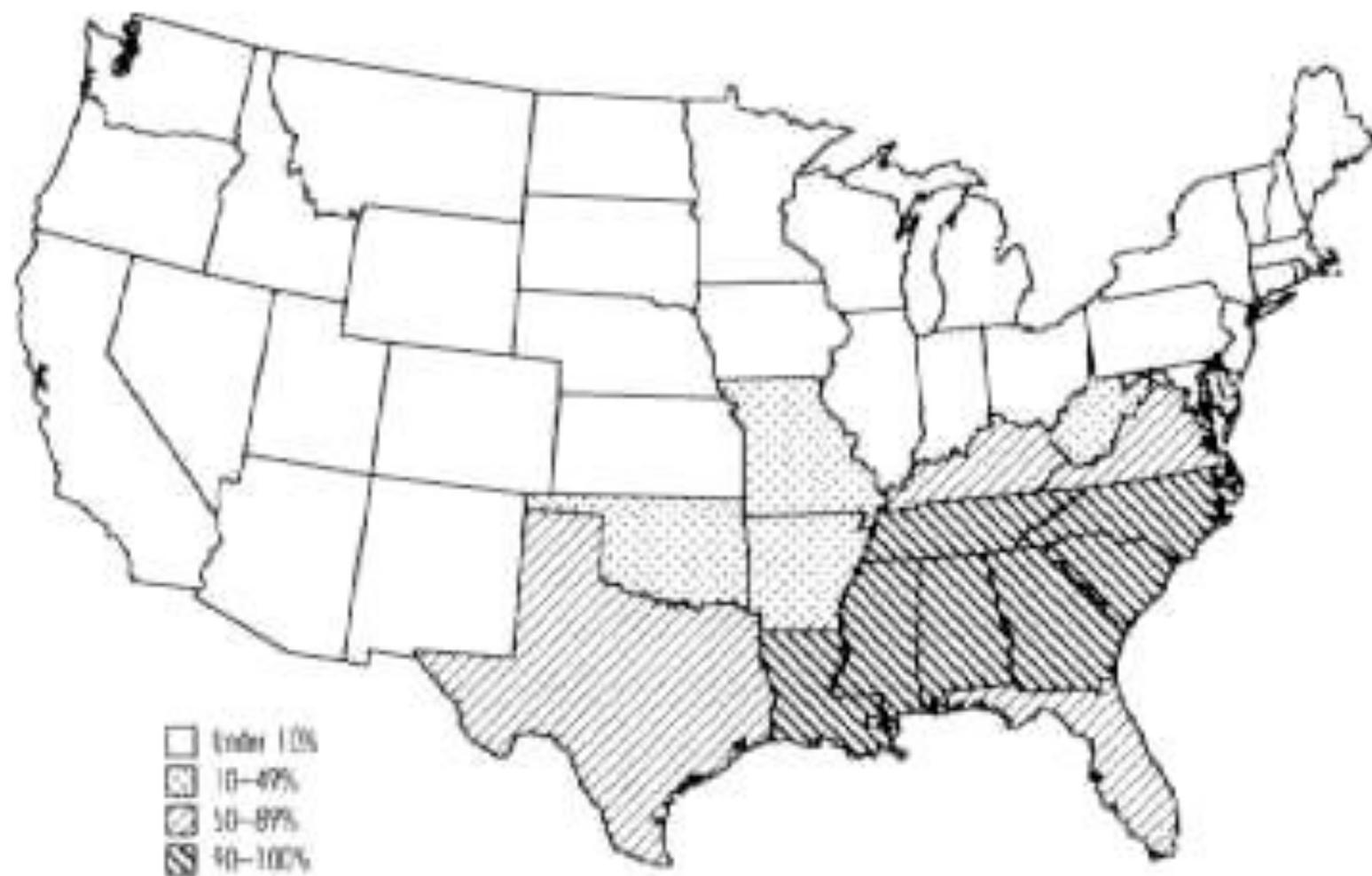


Figure 1. Percentage Who Say Each State Is Southern, "All in All"
 Source: Sixty-eight students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

c. Vernacular Culture Regions

- An area *perceived* to exist by local inhabitants: like *mental maps*
- May be based on environmental, economic, political or historical features
- Often maintained through the media, e.g., local news, regional literature, sports teams
 - ◆ Sports conferences

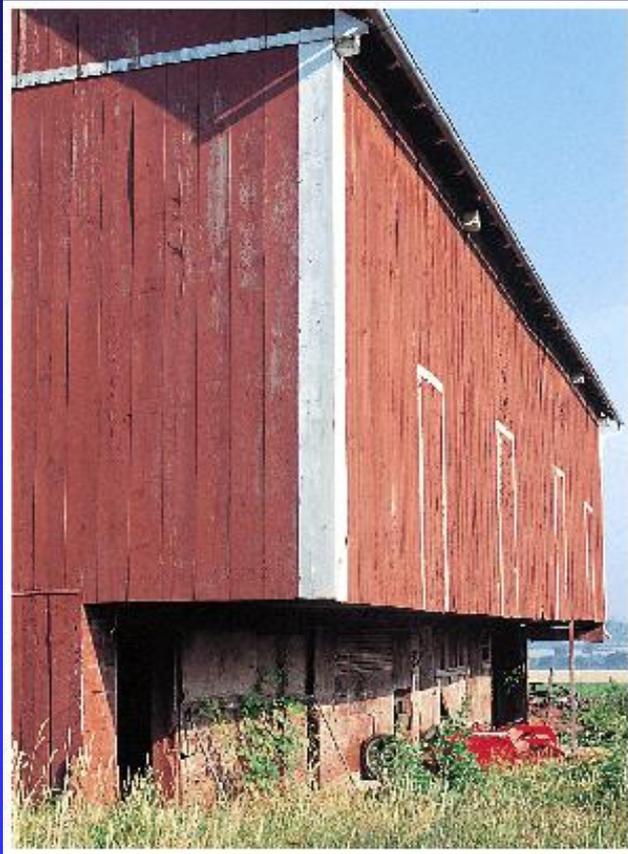
c. Vernacular Culture Regions

- An area *perceived* to exist by local inhabitants: like *mental maps*
- May be based on environmental, economic, political or historical features
- Often maintained through the media, e.g., local news, regional literature, sports teams
- Often lack the organization of functional regions & more complex than formal regions

Folk Culture and Folk Cultural Regions

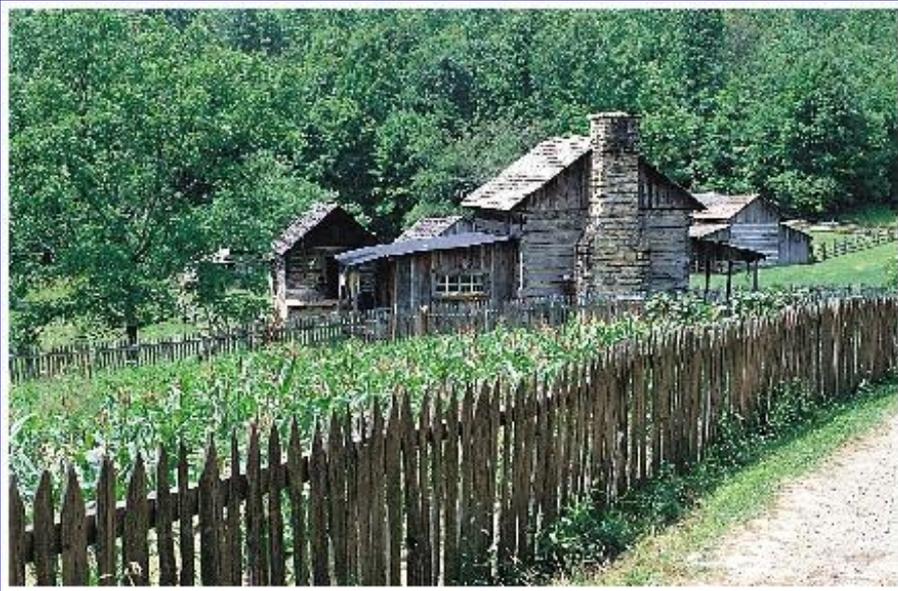
Many formal and vernacular regions (mental maps) are formulated using the characteristics or features of folk culture

Folk Culture and Folk Cultural Regions



- What distinguishes folk culture from popular culture?
- What regional patterns did various folk cultures create in the US?
- What threatens these cultures, ‘ways of life’?

Folk Culture and Folk Cultural Regions



Folk Culture:

. . . a rural, cohesive, conservative, self-sufficient group that is homogeneous in custom and race, with a strong family or clan structure and highly developed rituals.



Bill Coleman, www.amishphoto.com

Characteristics of Folk Culture

- Tradition rules: religion and family
- Little division of labor
- Goods are handmade
- Economy is subsistence
- Individualism is weak

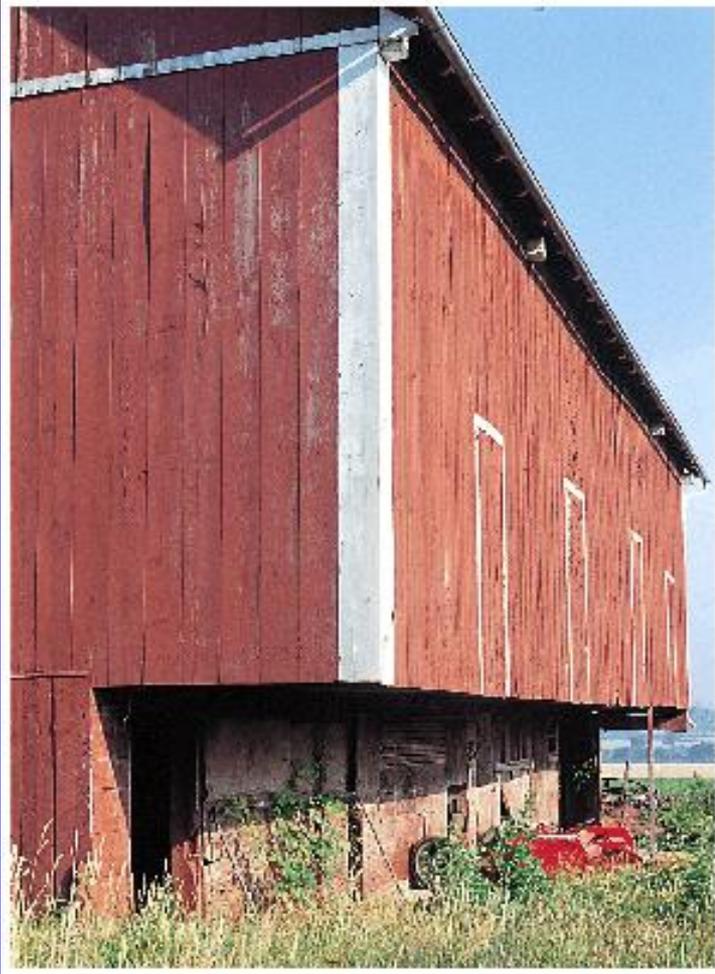
[Click here to see the barn raising scene from
Witness \(1985\)](#)

Mapping Folk Culture

- Material folk culture can be mapped
 - ◆ Tangible items, objects, “things”
 - ◆ Delimit regions (core, domain, and sphere)
 - ◆ Trace diffusion or retreat of material folk culture across space and time

New England Gravestone Art



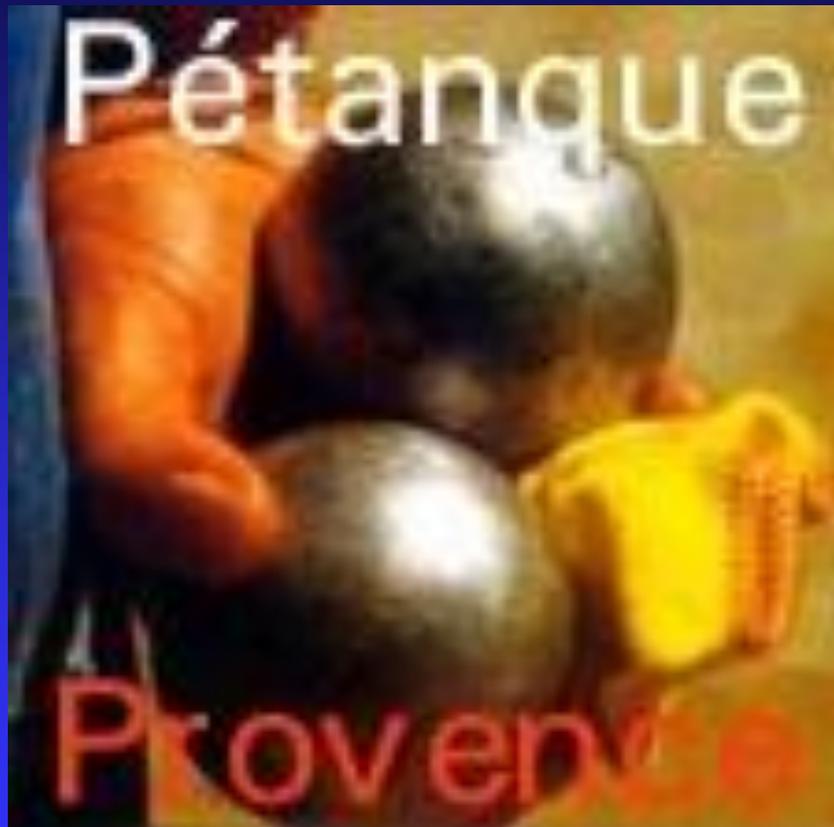


■ Pennsylvania Forebay barn

- ◆ Very large and red
- ◆ Originated in Switzerland
- ◆ Seen throughout central and eastern PA



- Western Plains “Beef Wheel” Windlass device
 - ◆ Used for butchering cattle
 - ◆ Crude type of crane



- Petanque in Quebec
- ◆ Type of bowling game

African American Scraped-earth Cemetery



North American House Types



Yankee "upright and wing"



Yankee "Cape Cod"



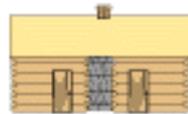
Yankee New England "Large"



African-American "shotgun" house



Acadian "Creole" house



Upland southern log "saddlebag" house, front view



Upland southern log "dogtrot" house

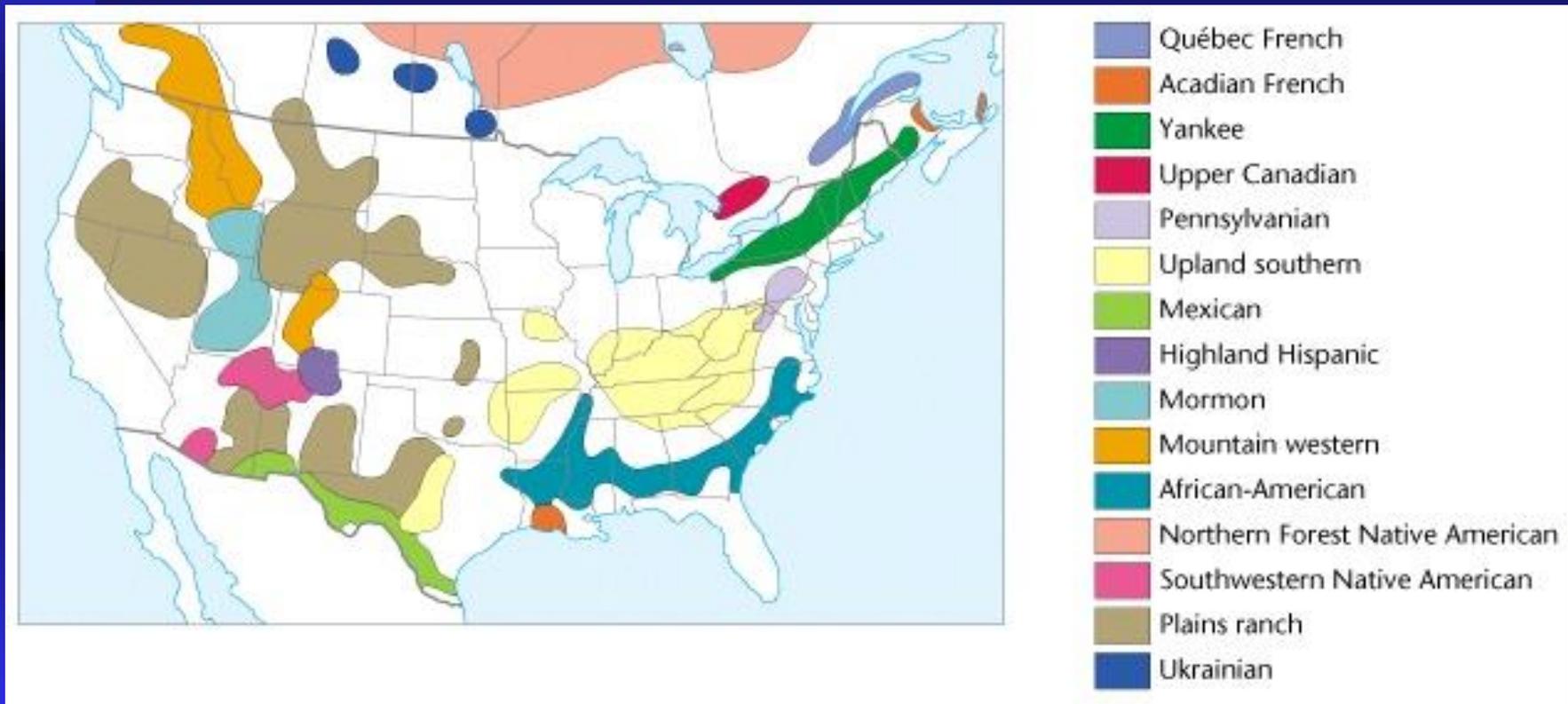


Québec French farmhouse



Upper Canadian "Ontario" farmhouse

US Folk Culture Survivor Regions



Summary

- Folk Cultures are rare and increasingly challenged by modernity
- Folk cultures are “shrinking” spatially
 - ◆ Modified, absorbed by popular society
- Regions are simplifications of reality, a geographical tool
- Regions are formal, functional and vernacular: folk, popular and elite culture
- Diffusional processes create culture regions (esp. formal and vernacular)