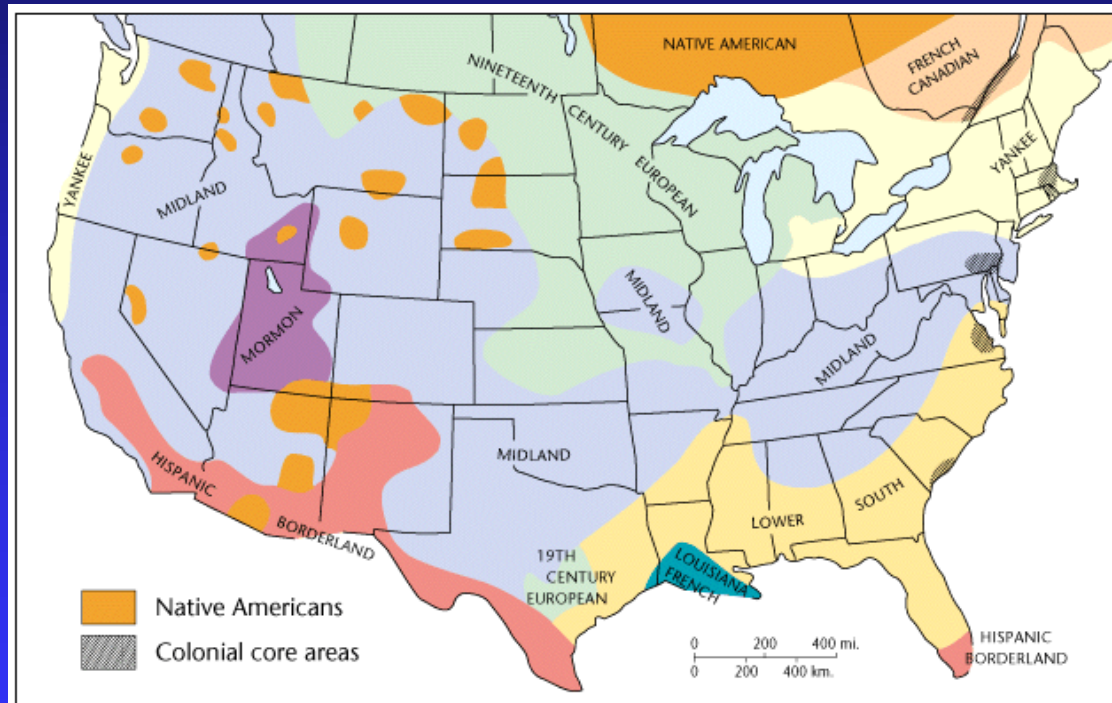


# Regions and the Folk Cultural Tradition

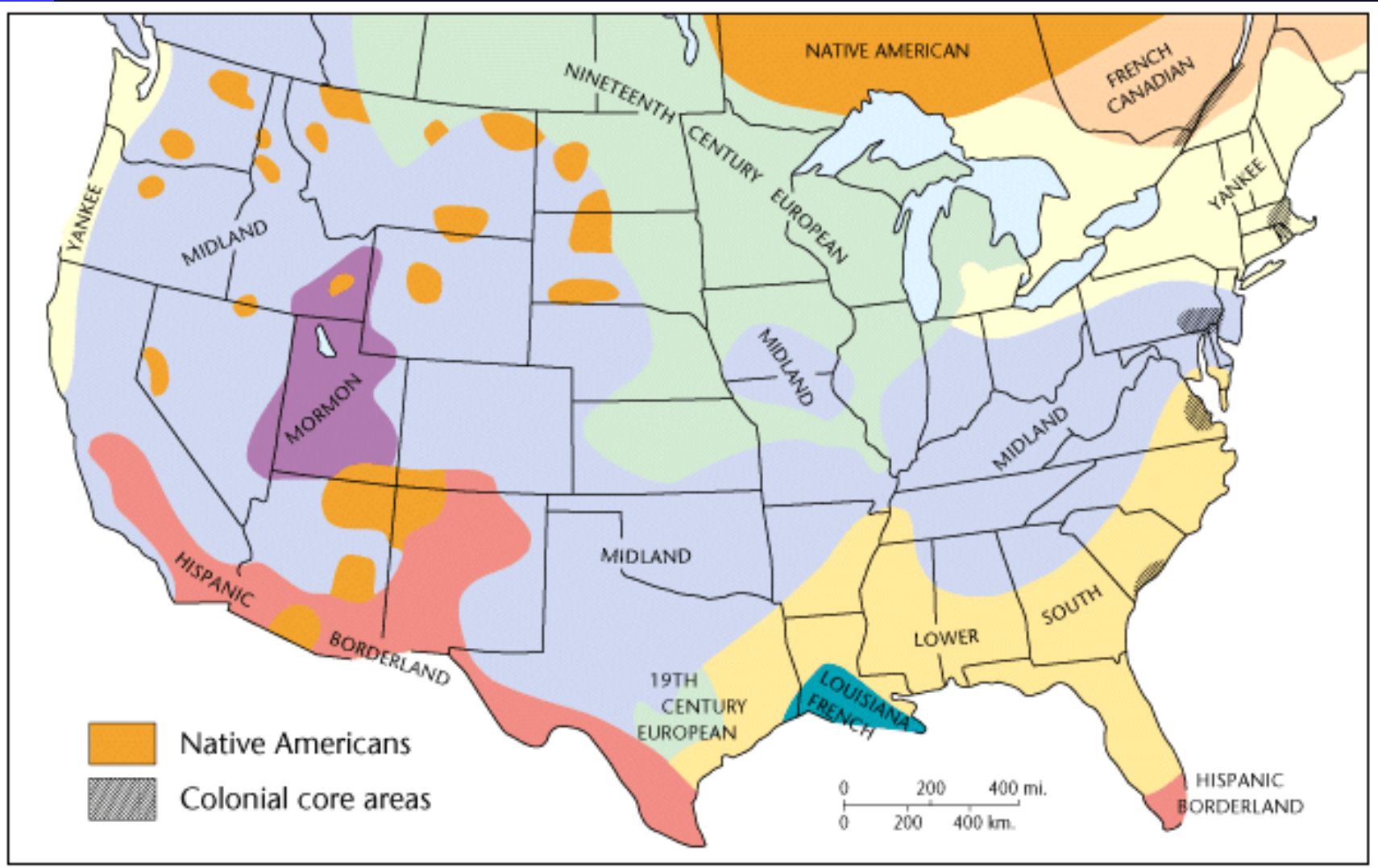


# Culture Regions

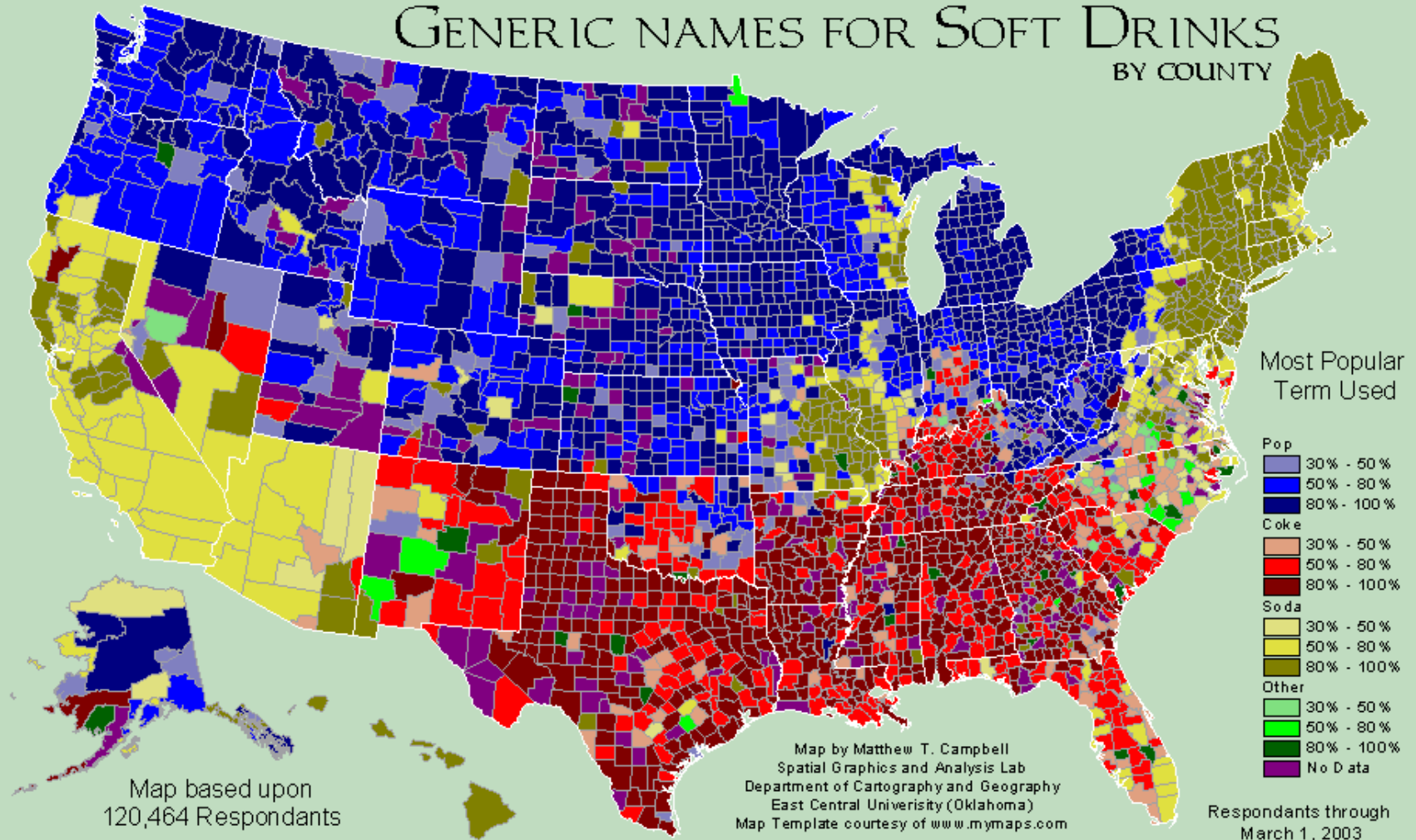
- Defined as a *contiguous* and *bounded* grouping of places according to certain sets of criteria
- Culture regions can be mapped
- Culture regions tend to overemphasize differences between places which in reality are ‘blurred’
- Because every place is implicitly unique, the concept of the region is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

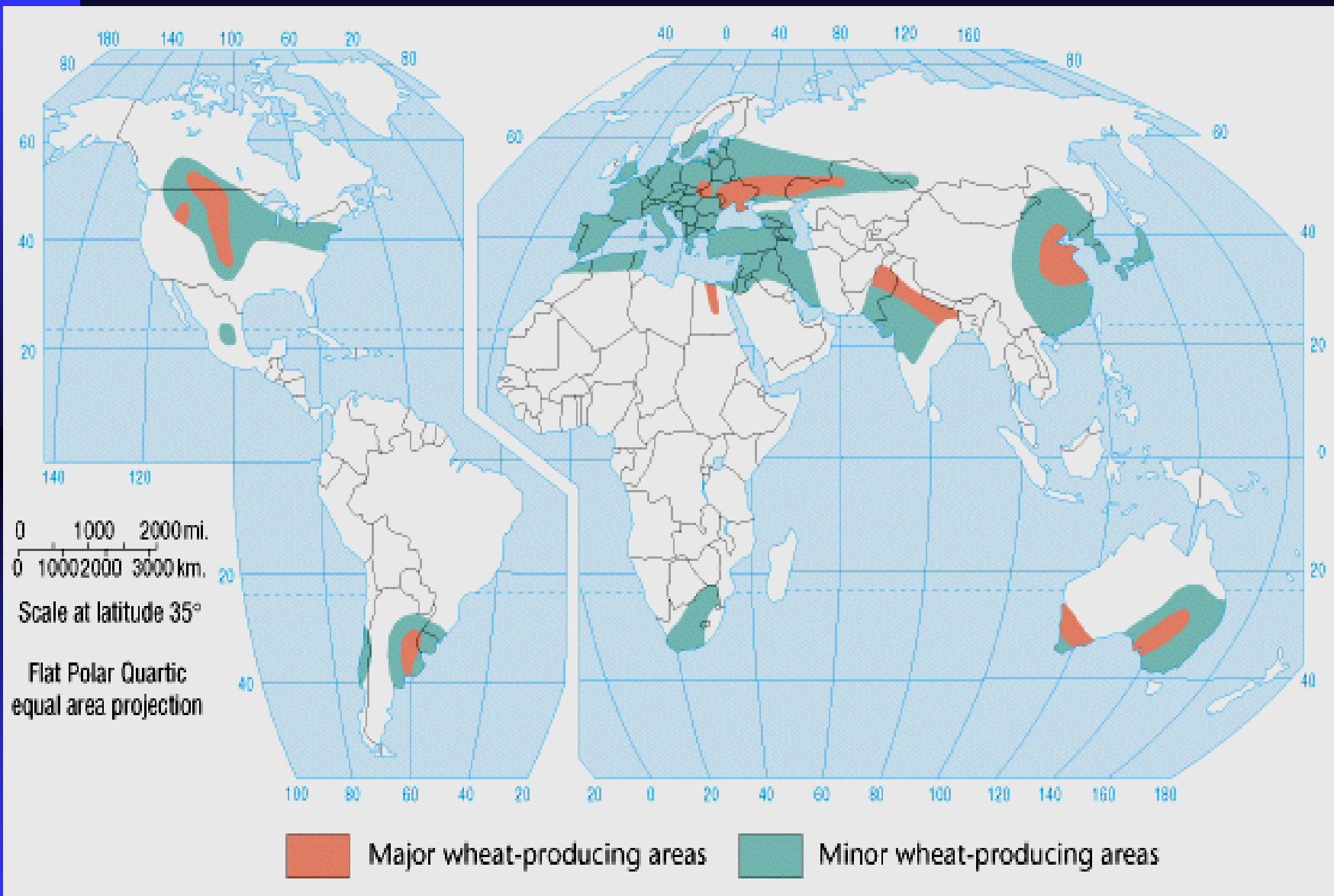
## a. Formal Regions

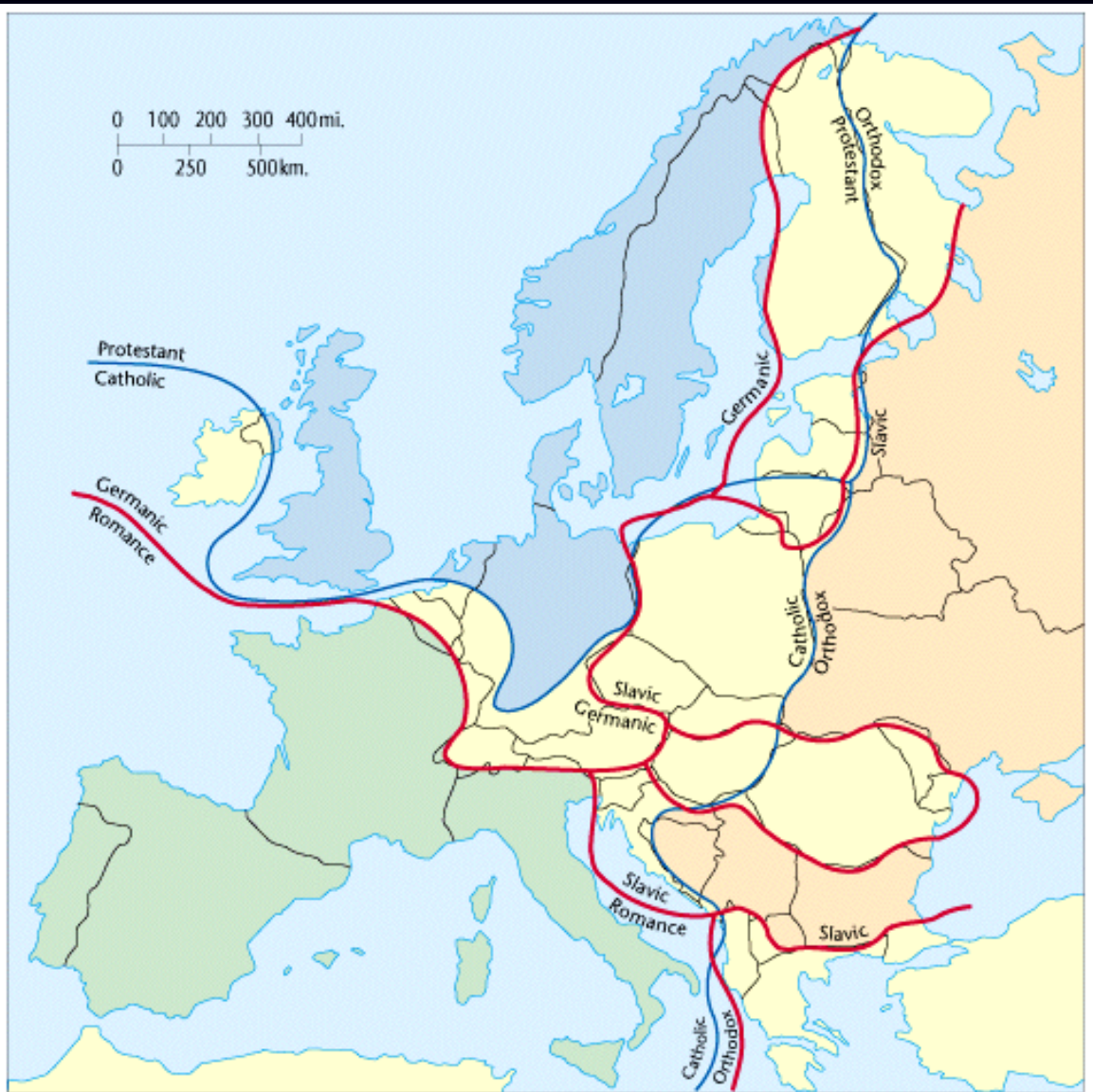
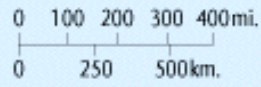
- An area inhabited by people with one or more identifiable trait in common
- Describes spatial differences and commonalities of economic activity and social and cultural traits



# GENERIC NAMES FOR SOFT DRINKS BY COUNTY








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

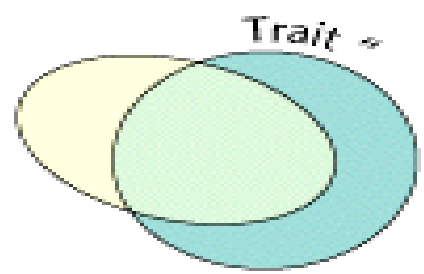
## a. Formal Regions


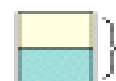
- An area inhabited by people with one or more identifiable trait in common
- Describes spatial differences and commonalities of economic activity and social and cultural traits
- Recognition of multiple traits or characteristics complicates mapping of formal regions

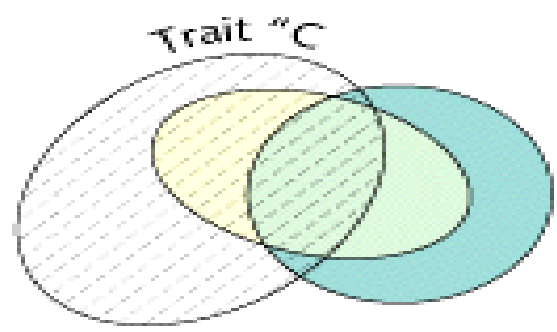




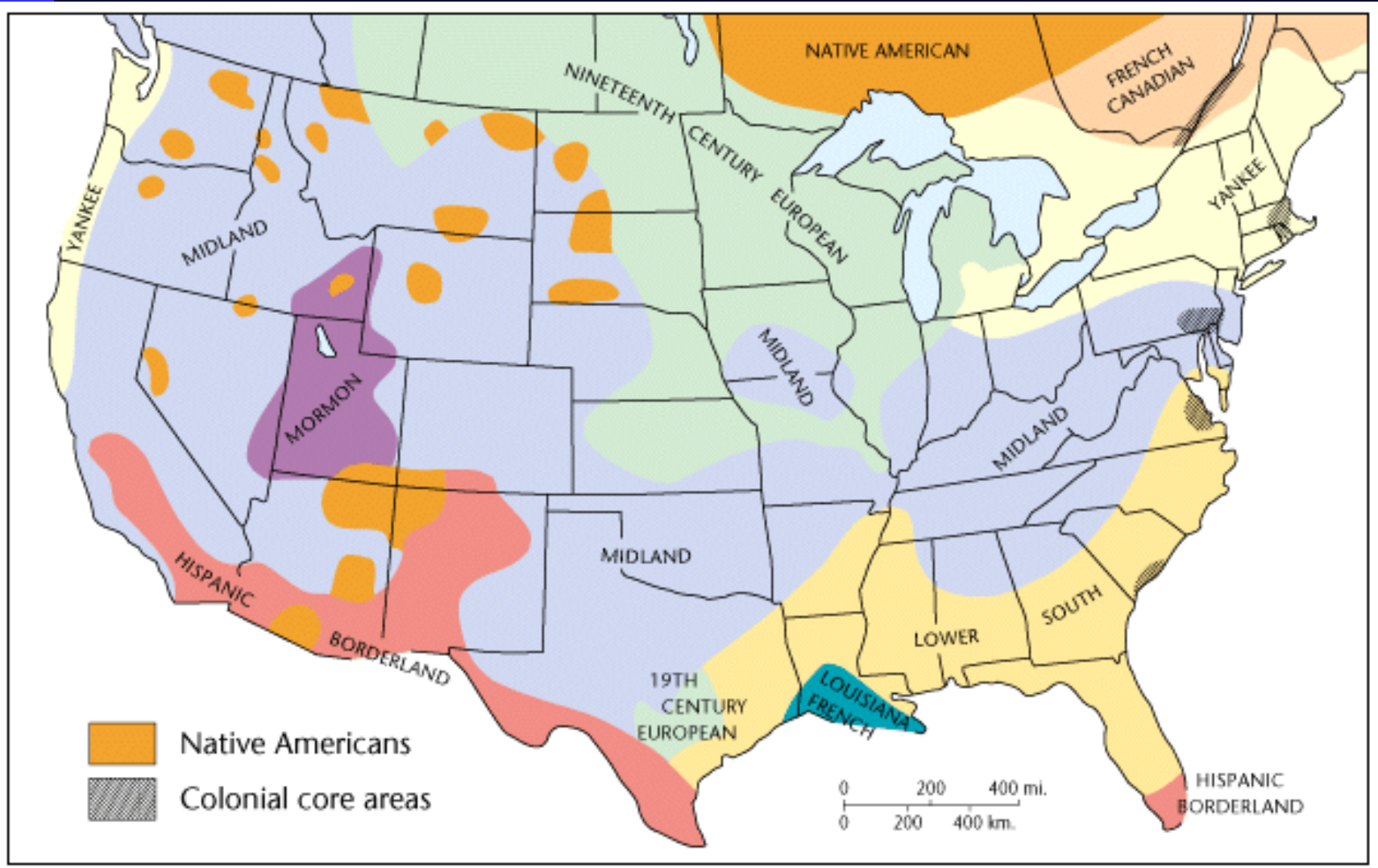
 Culture region based on trait "A"



 Culture region based on traits "A" and "B"  
 } Boundary zones

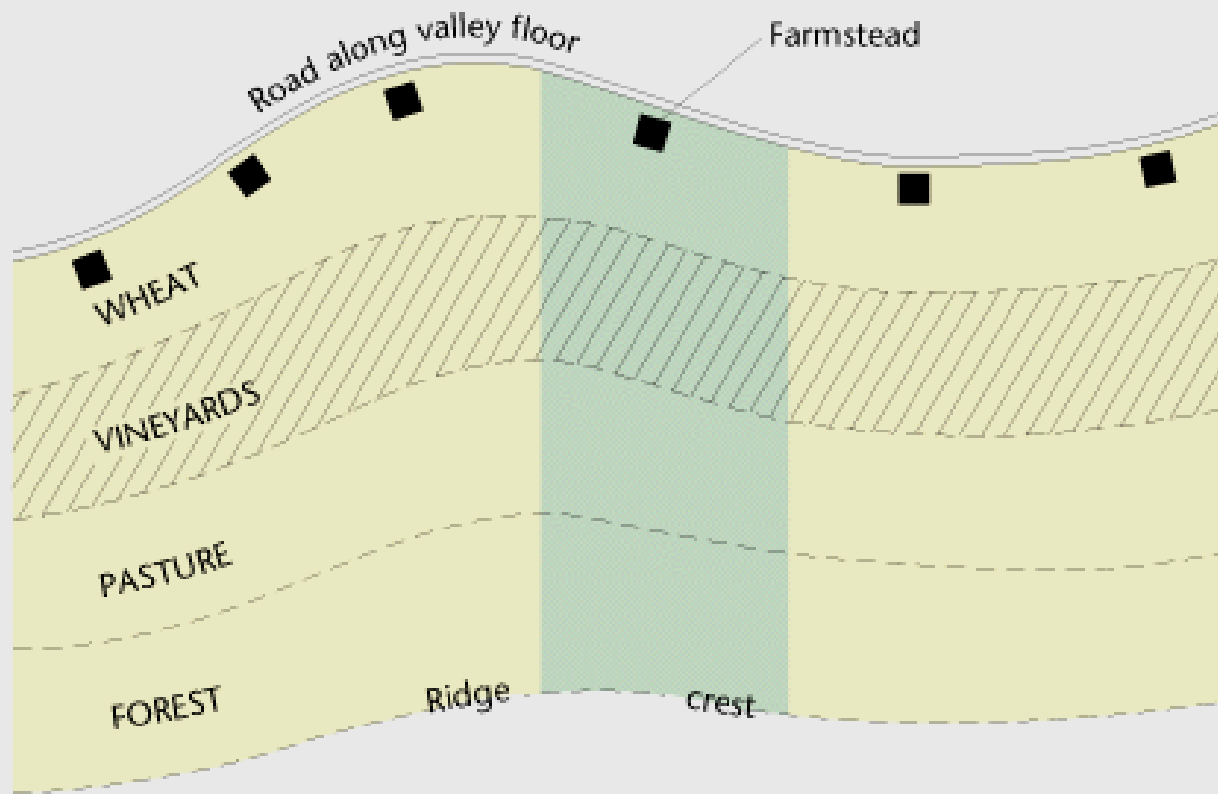




 Culture region based on traits "A," "B," and "C"  
 } Boundary zones



## 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



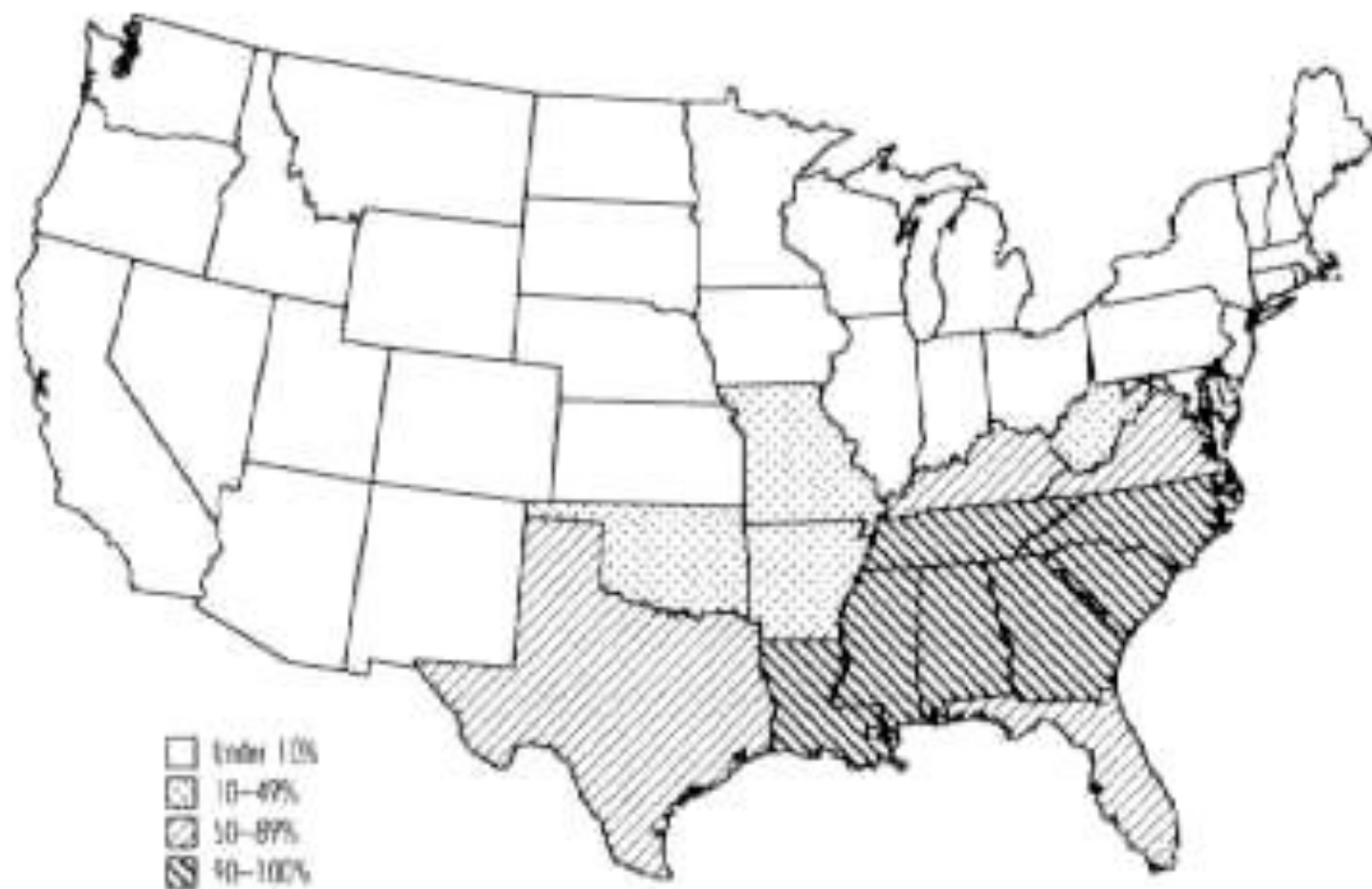
- Present borders of Germany
- "Iron Curtain," 1945–1990
- Northern limit of divided inheritance (derived from Romans)
- - - Northern limit of Catholic majority
- - - Western limit of surviving rural feudal estates, 1800
- German–Slav, Christian–Pagan border, A.D. 800
- German-speaking area

## c. Vernacular Culture Regions

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

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- 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

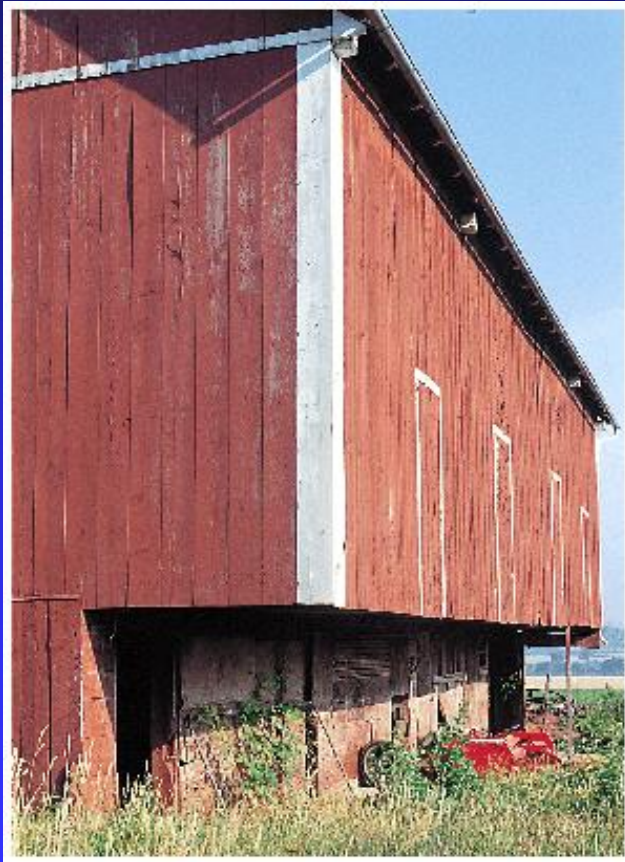
## c. Vernacular Culture Regions

- 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](http://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\* \(1985\)](#)

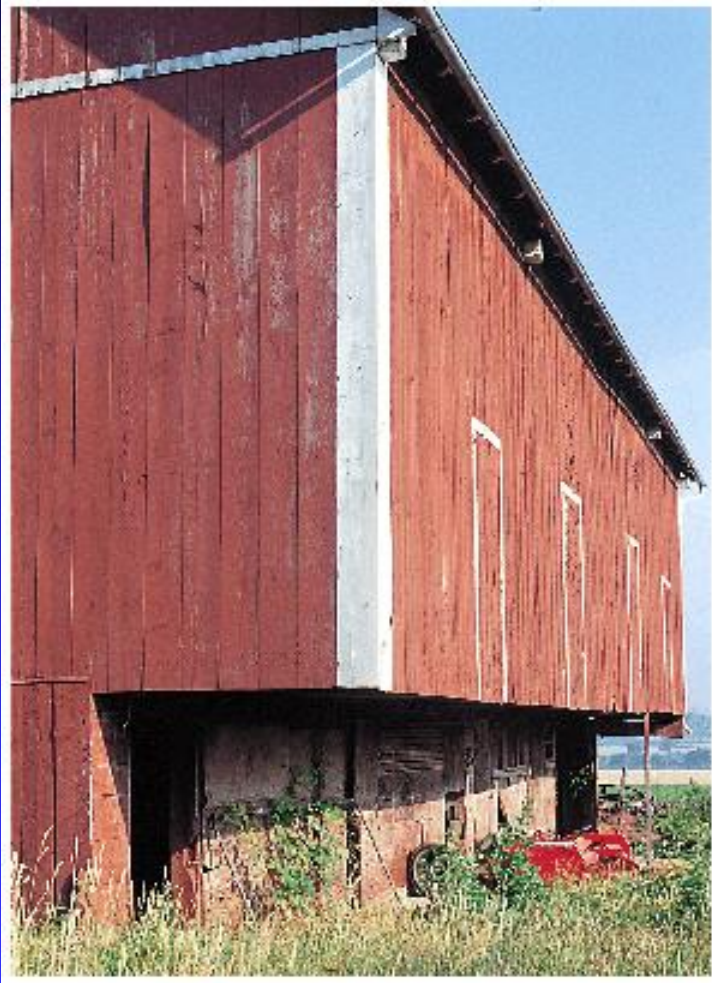
# Mapping Folk Culture

- 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"



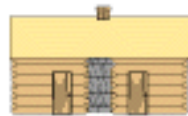
Yankee New England "Large"



African-American "shotgun" house



Acadian "Creole" house



Upland southern log "saddlebag" house, front view



Upland southern log "dogtrot" house

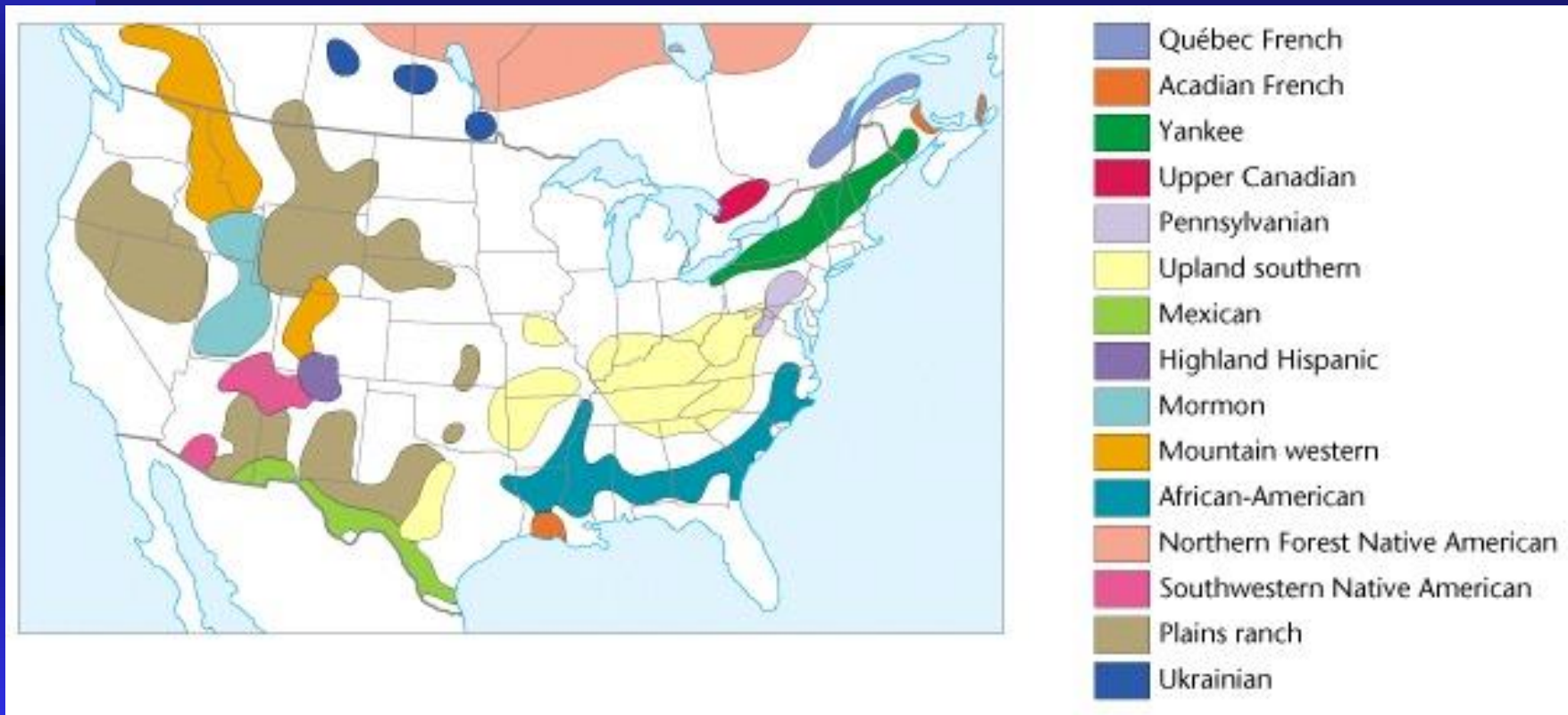


Québec French farmhouse



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)