

Understanding America 60 minutes and 30 slides



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Three, Four or Ten Americas?

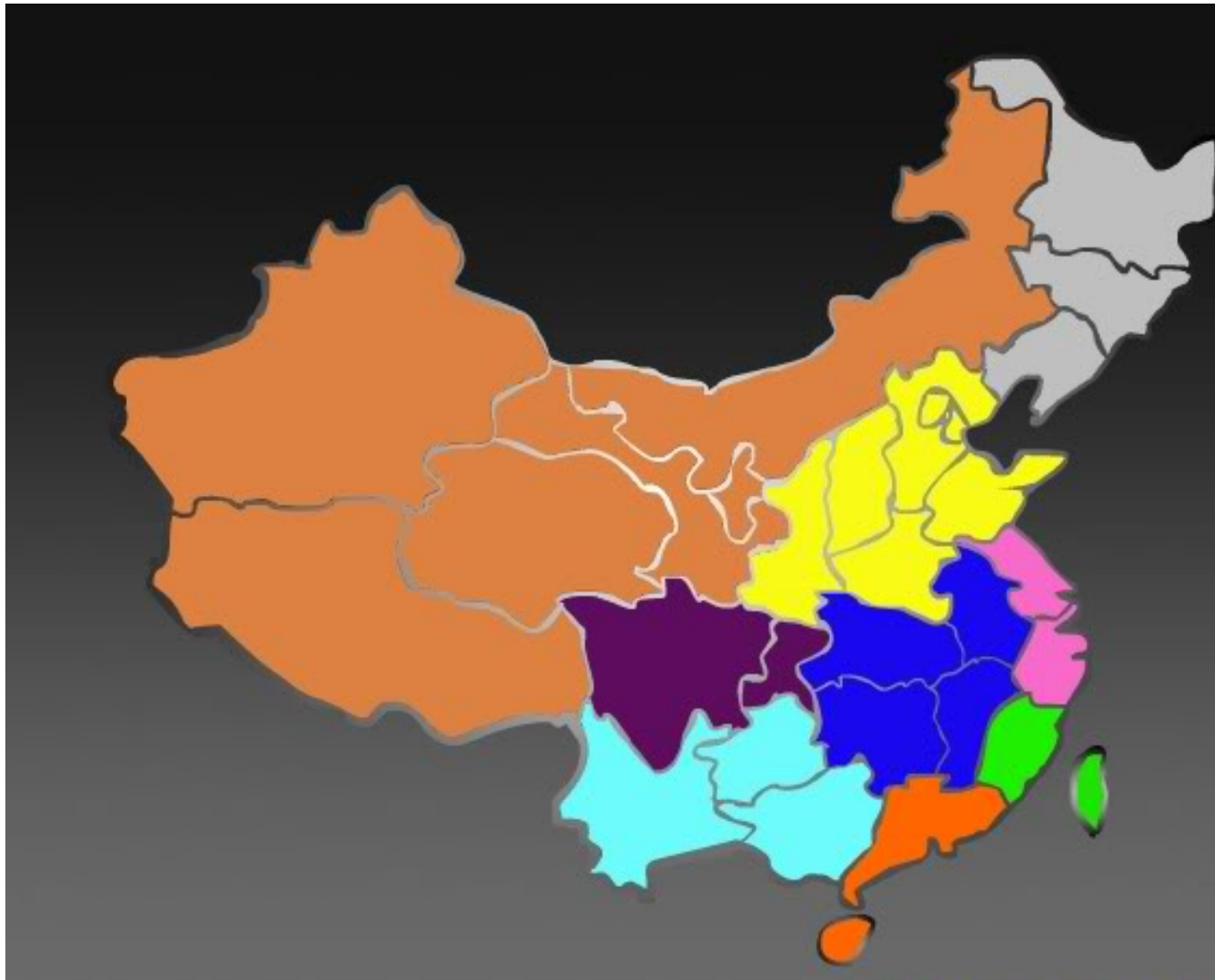
- The United States, like China, has multiple divisions.
- United by a common language, but divided by significant differences in political values and cultural assumptions.
- Three main groups:
 - Yankees
 - Middle Americans
 - Southerners



The Nine Nations of North America



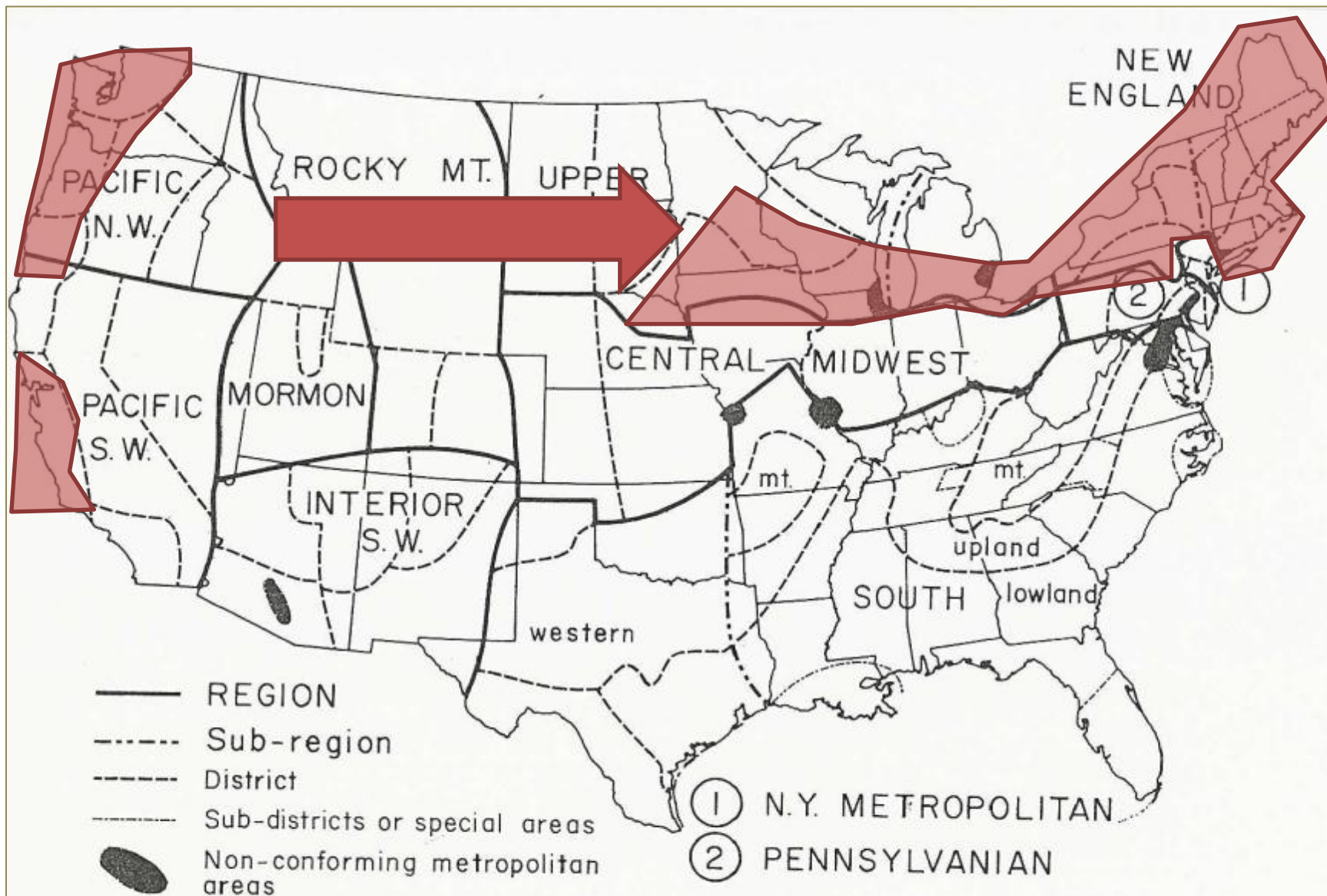
The Nine Nations of China?



Map designed by Anup Kaphle

Yankees

- Settled by religious, industrious, communally-minded English persons.
- Were fortunate to find ample water power and so this region industrialized earlier than other regions of the United States.
- Industrialization attracted waves of immigrants from Europe to these areas.



MAP 4. Cultural Regions

Town Commons



Water Mill



Boston – Yankee Capital



New Englanders

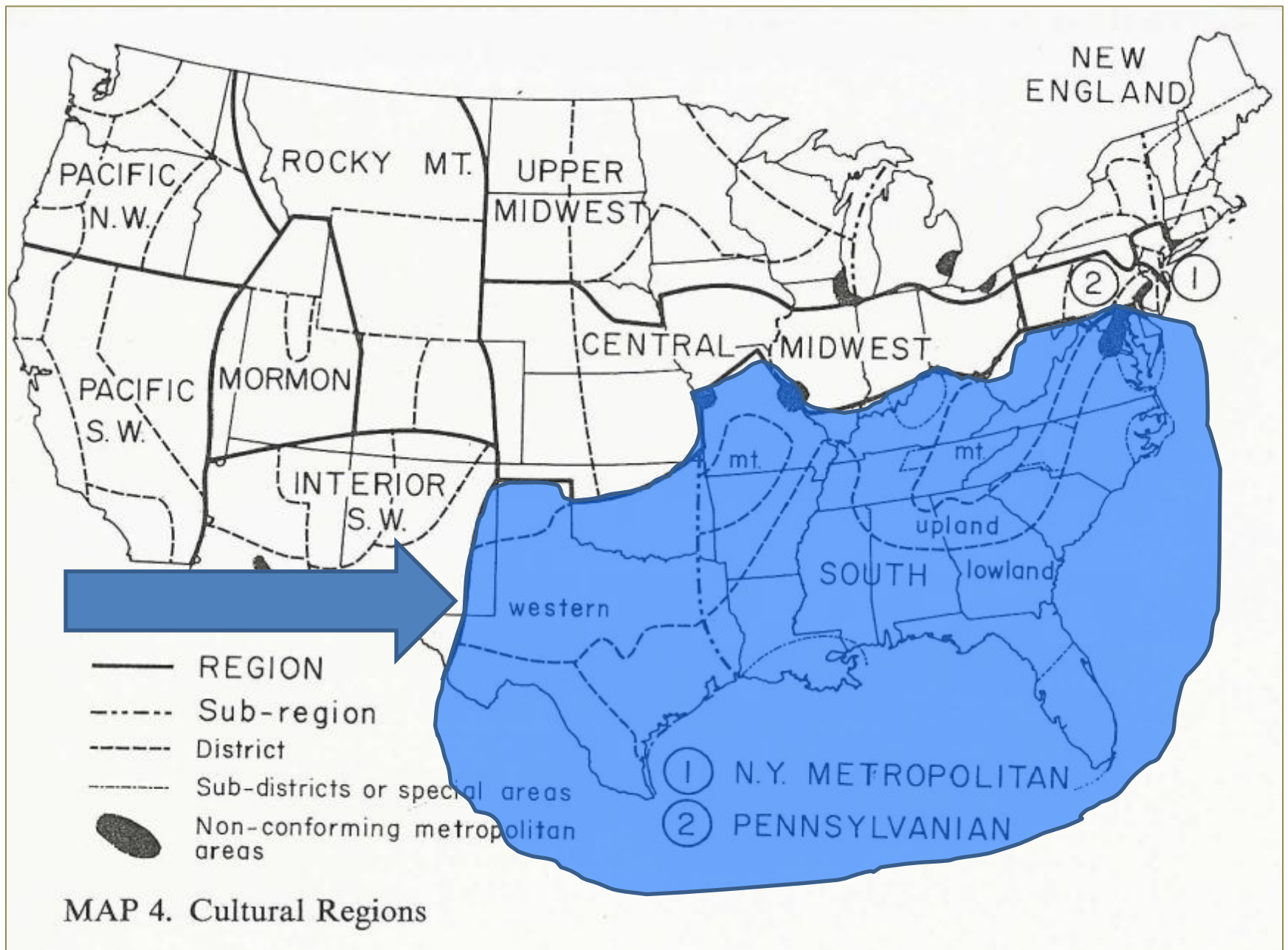


Implications?

- These areas tend to be most open to immigration, cultural change and innovation.
- Both manufacturing and high tech industry.
- Also tend to favor government involvement in business, the environment and cultural issues.
- Higher taxes, but also highest quality of life. Best schools, hospitals, income, parks, etc.
- Larger middle classes. More unions. Less poverty.
- Large population; politically powerful...but not as powerful since the 1980s.
- Favor Obama and other liberal politicians.

Southerners

- Culture largely established by English and Africans.
- Had no water power during 1700-1850s, so remained largely agricultural until 20th century.
- Embrace traditional ways
- Far fewer immigrants than the North.
- Defeated in the Civil War. Bitterness, distrust and rivalry remain still today (150 years later).



Cotton Plantation





Deep South



Atlanta

Capital of the New South



Southerners?

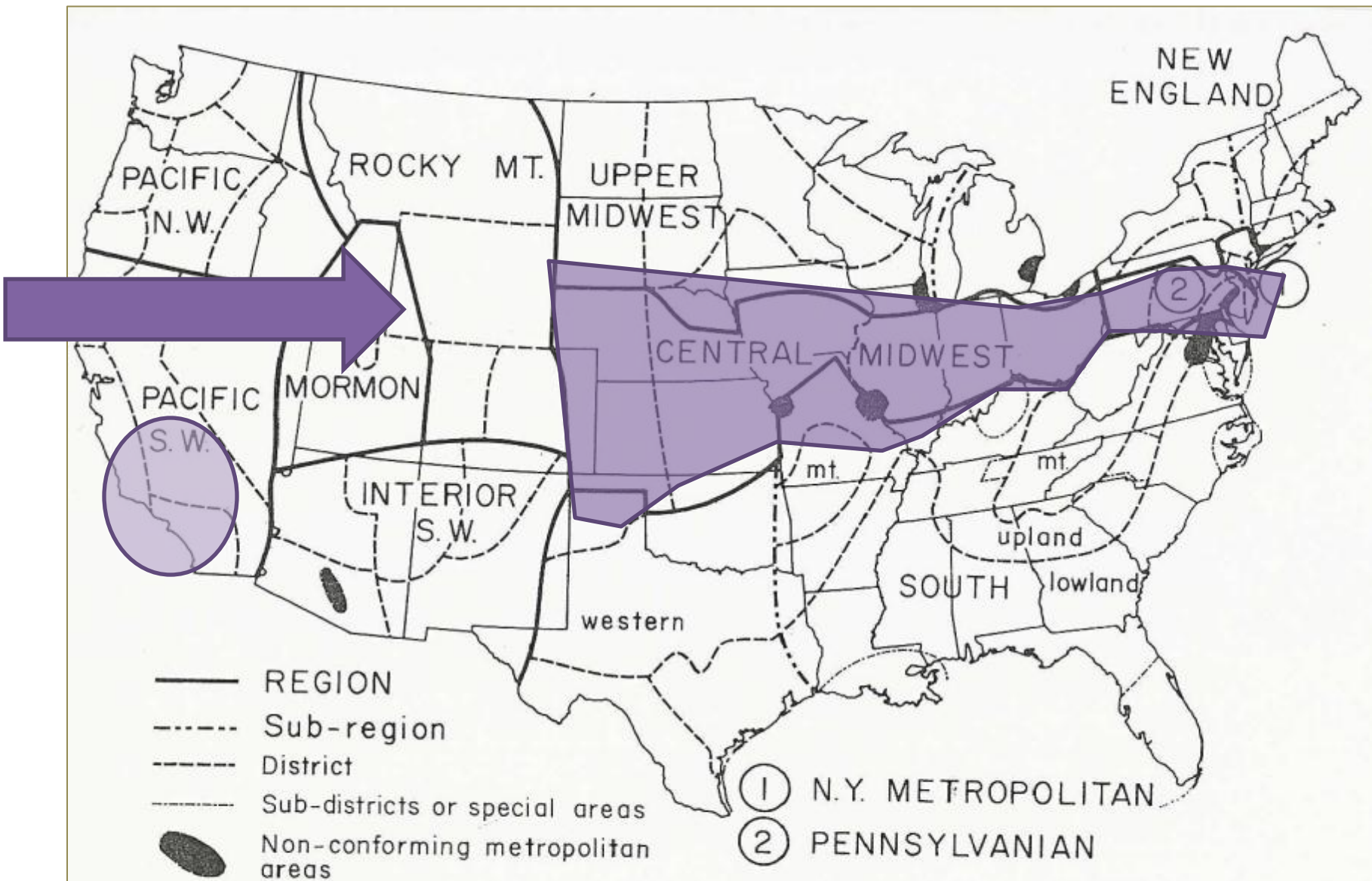


Implications

- Tradition! Less open to cultural change, immigration and new ideas...conservative and highly religious
- Large black populations in old slave areas, but few blacks in mountainous regions of the South.
- Tensions remain between blacks and whites, but they share many traditional cultural values.
- Favor smaller government since 1960s, though more dependent on Federal government programs for help than other parts of the US.
- Distrust government, especially Federal government, “interference” in local affairs, especially on cultural and social matters.
- Small middle class and much poverty.
- Growing population and power since 1980...more industrialization thanks to aggressive tax incentives and lax environmental enforcement.

Middle Americans

- Large immigrant populations, but mostly from Germany and Scandinavia. Far fewer Blacks and Southern & Eastern Europeans...until 1900s and mostly in cities.
- Religious, but far more independent and individualistic. Protestants mostly, but Catholic dominate cities.
- The agricultural heartland, but small holders unlike the plantation system that dominated the South.
- Massive industrialization in urban areas...particularly Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, areas.
- Includes most of the people in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and into Colorado.
- Much of California as well...



MAP 4. Cultural Regions

Small Town Midwest



The Dying Factory-Farm Town



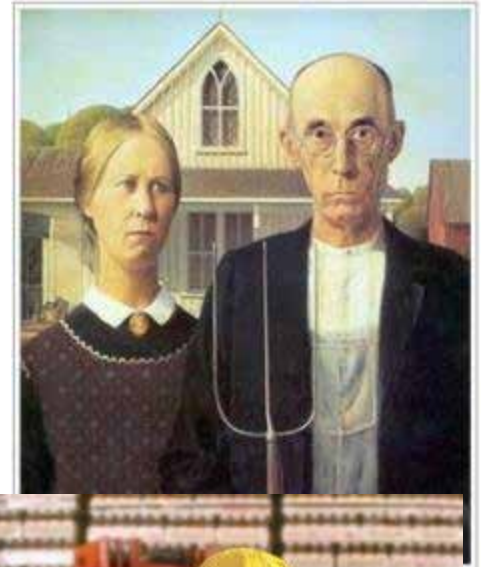
Fields and Factories



Chicago – Farms and Factory Capital



Midwesterners



Implications

- Middle Americans are most average culturally and politically.
- They favor smaller government, but not because of distrust or suspicion, but out of a belief in the power of local communities and/or individuals are better suited to accomplish goals.
- Stuck in the middle of the cultural wars between Southerners and Yankees – “Swing States”

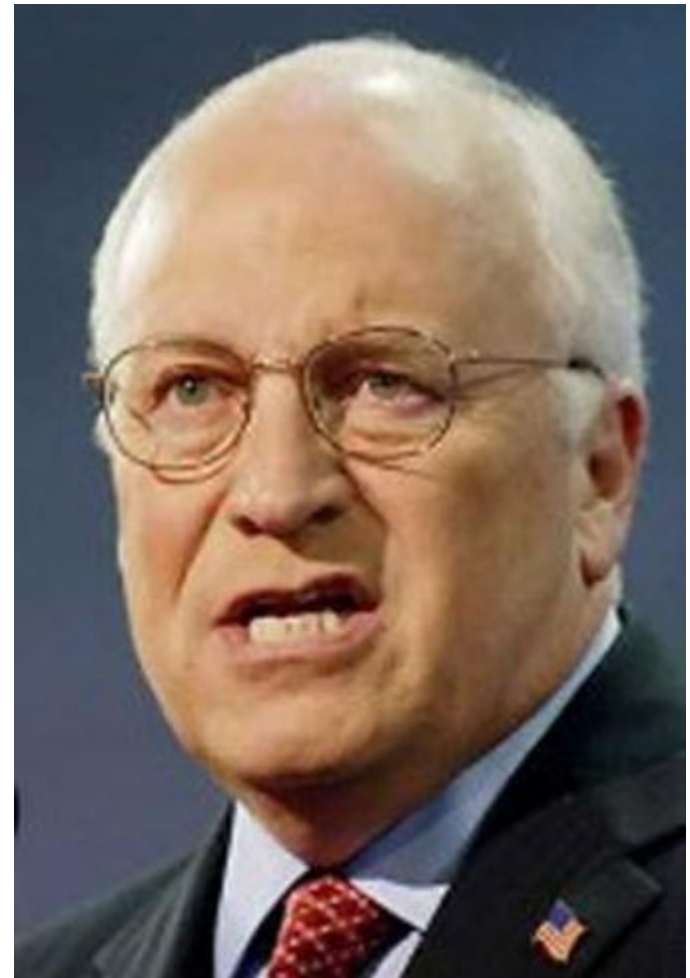
Westerners

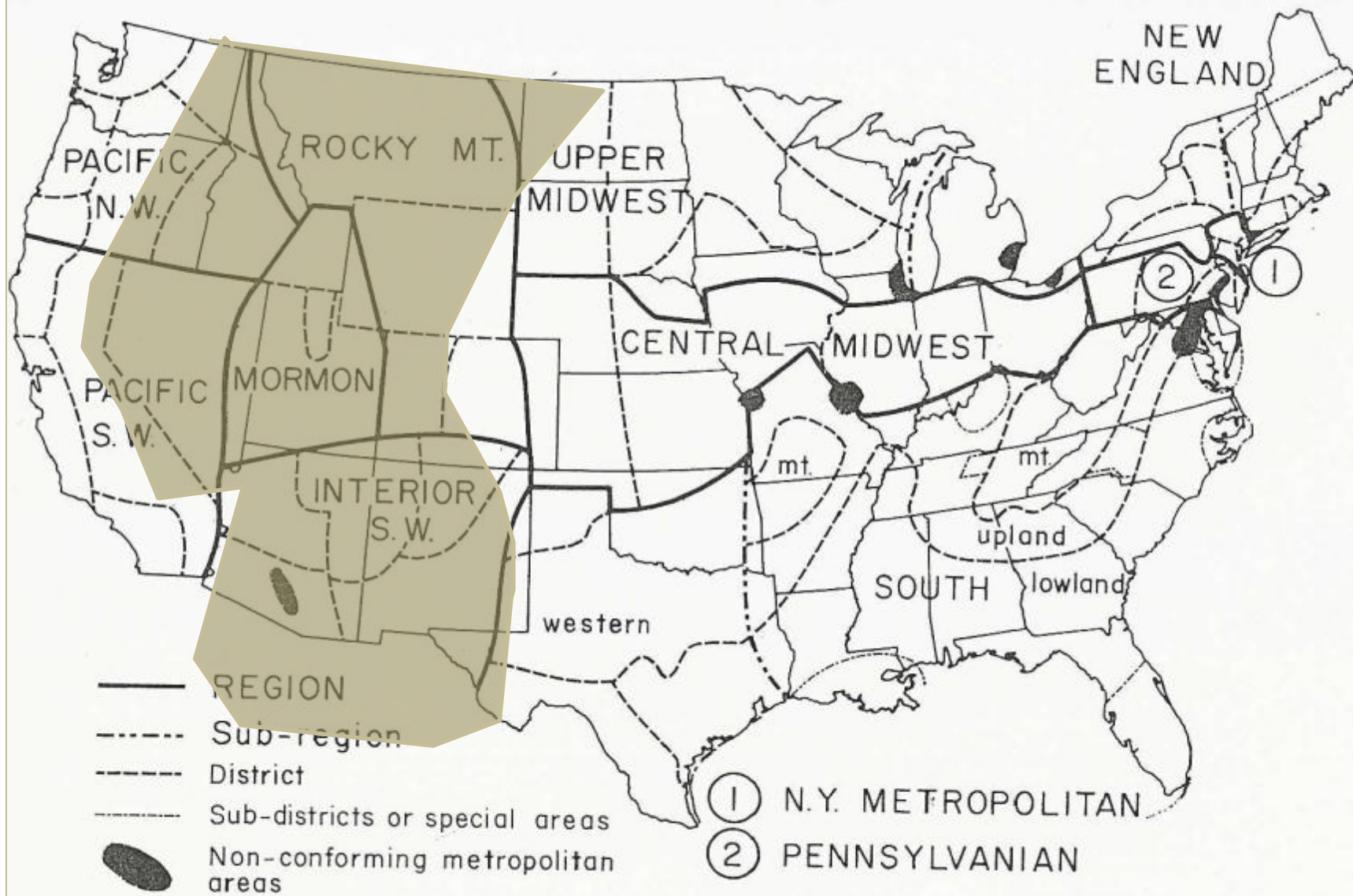
- Those people in the remaining areas are fewer in number and power. (Wyoming has .5 million)
- Religious minorities, like Mormons occupy Utah, Idaho and some of Nevada.
- New Mexico is poor, barren and Hispanic.
- Arizona is similar to New Mexico, but with a larger immigrant population from Midwest and California. Many retirees.
- Extreme politics and cultural behaviors stemming from religious beliefs, isolation, resentment of government regulation of natural resources (forests, mining, rangelands)

No Speed Limit



Myth and Reality





MAP 4. Cultural Regions