

10

Yankee Cultural Imperialism and the Northern Cities Shift

Chapter 1 advanced the general principle that the community is conceptually and analytically prior to the individual; conversely, the behavior of the individual cannot be understood without a knowledge of the larger community that he or she belongs to.¹ This chapter is an endeavor to penetrate the structure of one very large community, the Inland North. A continuing problem is to account for its extraordinary homogeneity on the one hand and, on the other, to explain the sharp cleavage that separates it from neighboring speech communities, Chapters 6, 7, and 8 dealt with the internal development of North American sound changes, where neighboring systems are driven in opposite directions by unidirectional principles. Chapter 9 wrestled with efforts to identify the driving forces that animate these sound changes, and concluded without fixing on any one factor that was large enough to account for the scope of the phenomena. Here we will consider the historical and social setting in which the governing principles of sound change operate, and the possibility that the unconscious shifting of vowel systems is reinforced by long-standing ideological oppositions on a national scale.

10.1 The North/Midland Boundary

Figure 10.1 is a view of the Northeastern quadrant of the United States at night, from composite photographs taken by satellite in the 1970s. The photographs show the heat and light emitted from urban areas; the major cities involved in the Northern Cities Shift are labeled. The North/Midland line is shown in grey.

There are two questions of dialect geography to be resolved here: (1) Why is the North/Midland line located where it is? (2) Why do the cities of the Inland North all follow the Northern Cities Shift, while the dialects of Midland cities – Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St Louis – differ considerably from each other? These are matters of settlement history.

The boundary between the North and the Midland was first established by Kurath in 1949, and later extended through the Midwest by Shuy (1962), Allen (1964) and

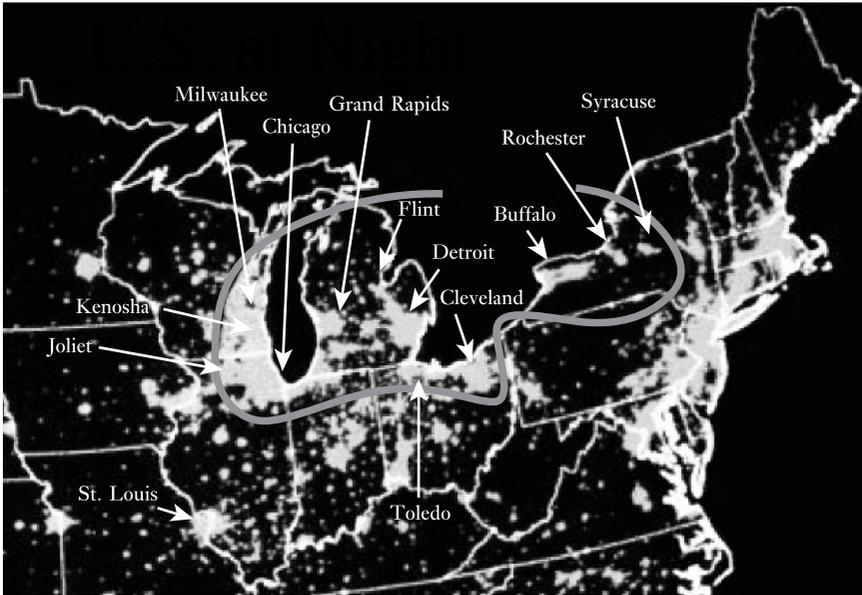


Figure 10.1 The US at night, from composite photographs taken by the US Air Force Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) Operational Linescan System, with major cities of the Inland North labeled

Carver (1987). Figure 10.2 shows pairs of words used by Carver to define the North/Midland boundary (the ordering from east to west has no geographic significance). It is evident that most of them are rural and agricultural terms established during the earliest period of settlement in the nineteenth century. Many of them are now obsolete, or certainly not known to city dwellers: calls to livestock (sheep: *ko-day!* versus *sheepie!* or cow: *boss!* versus *sook!*); animal sounds (a calf's *blat* versus *bawl!*); farm mechanics (*stone fence* versus *rock fence*, *sambuck* versus *trestle*, *stone boat* versus *mud boat*).² The individual lexical isoglosses do not at all coincide as our phonological isoglosses do. Carver, who believed that all dialect differences formed seamless continua (see Chapter 8, p. 165), defined the various areas by the combined frequencies of Northern and Midland words.

Nevertheless, the line formed by the general trend of lexical oppositions is very close to that formed by the linked phonological features of the NCS and by other phonetic criteria as well. Chapter 8 (Figure 8.3) has demonstrated the coincidence of four measures of the NCS (AE1, EQ, ED, UD) with the lexical line. Figure 10.3 adds two other features of the North that are not connected with the NCS. One of these Northern delimiters is the ON isogloss (shown as a grey dotted line). It concerns the pronunciation (for those who distinguish /o/ and /oh/) of the vowel in the unique word *on*, which is /o/ in the North and /oh/ in the Midland (ANAE, Map 14.2). The second delimiter is the fronting of

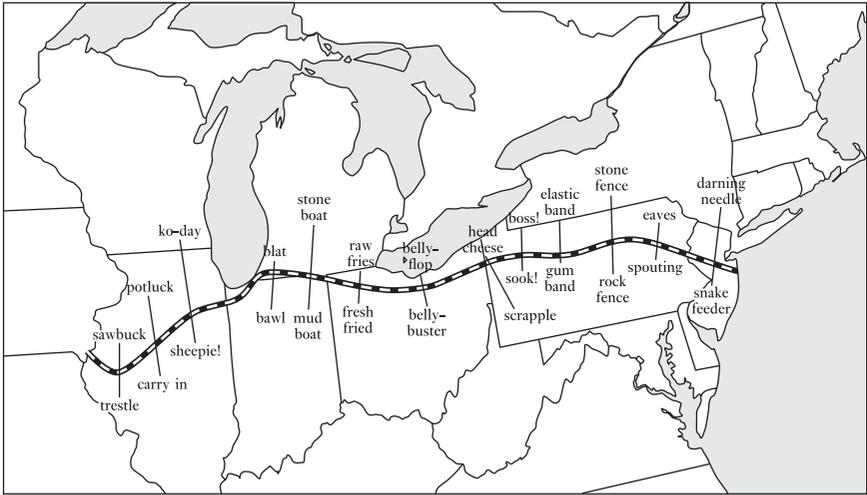


Figure 10.2 Lexical oppositions across the North/Midland boundary

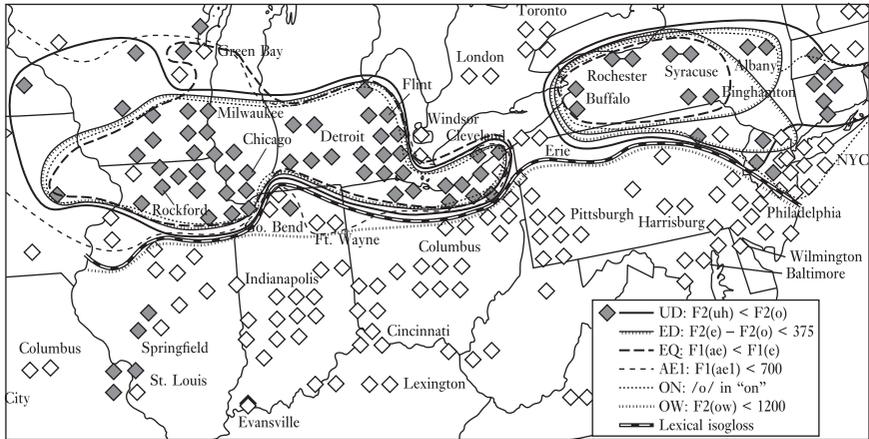


Figure 10.3 Coincidence of the North/Midland lexical isogloss with four measures of the NCS, the ON line and resistance to fronting of /ow/

/ow/, which separates the Midland, Mid-Atlantic and Southern regions from the North and New England. ANAE, Map 12.3 displays the isoglosses for F2 of /ow/ < 1100 Hz, < 1200, < 1300 and > 1400. The line of demarcation between the North and the Midland is the isogloss for F2 < 1200 Hz; as Figure 10.3 shows, this isogloss runs very close to the NCS bundle (the striated line running just below the lexical isogloss).

The North/Midland bundle is remarkably compact. As the last chapter noted, there are only two notable exceptions to the clean separation of cities into those with Northern phonology and those with Midland phonology:

- Northern Indiana: the line representing the general raising of short *a* in Indiana extends below Fort Wayne, which is otherwise a Midland city. The line for /ow/ < 1200 descends below both South Bend and Fort Wayne.
- the city of Erie in Northwestern Pennsylvania: this city lies outside of the Inland North as defined by the NCS, and so separates the Inland North into two discontinuous areas. Erie is not defined for the ON line, since /o/ and /oh/ are merged – a feature which separates Erie even more clearly from the Inland North. In Figure 10.3, Erie differs from the Midland only by the lack of /ow/ fronting and by its position on the lexical line. Evanini (2009) provides a detailed history of this development and sets the limits of Erie exceptionalism.

10.2 The History of the North/Midland Boundary

The location of the North/Midland boundary is clearly reflected in the settlement history of the region. Figure 10.4 is from Kniffen and Glassie's (1966) study of the diffusion of building methods. It shows three streams of westward migration: (1) the Northern migration from various areas in New England; (2) the Midland westward flow through Pennsylvania, moving south into the Appalachian area, then westward to lower Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa; and (3) the coastal South, moving inland up to the Piedmont area. The meeting ground of the Pennsylvania and New England stream shows a remarkable coincidence with the North/Midland linguistic boundary, and the area of the New England stream as it passes through New York corresponds quite closely with the Inland North of Figure 10.3.

To understand the great differences in dialect distribution in the North and Midland, it is necessary to follow the differences in patterns of westward migration. The New England stream was a community movement on a large scale, continuing the model of large-scale migration from England to the New World.

Mass migrations were indeed congenial to the Puritan tradition. Whole parishes, parson and all, had sometimes migrated from Old England. Lois Kimball Mathews mentioned 22 colonies in Illinois alone, all of which originated in New England or in New York, most of them planted between 1830 and 1840. (Power 1953: 14)

Entire communities of young New Englanders [...] emigrated to the area of New York west of the Adirondack and Catskill mountains [...]. (Carnes and Garrity 1996: 90)

The settling of Marietta, a Yankee enclave in Southeastern Ohio, is described by Holbrook (1950: 23):



Figure 10.4 Westward settlement streams as shown by building material (Kniffen and Glassie 1966, Figure 27). Copyright © 1966, reprinted by permission of the National Geographic Society

The cabins and fort were hardly finished when the first families began to arrive. The women and children were in season to pick wild fruits and harvest the first vegetables the men had planted [...] Within a few months a school was being held, taught by Miss Bathsheba Rouse. There had been preaching from the very day the pioneers landed when Founding Father David Story had [...] thanked God for their safe passage and prompt arrival.

On the other hand, the settlement of the Midland was largely a movement of individual families.

The Upland Southerners left behind a loose social structure of rural “neighborhoods” based on kinship; when Upland Southerners migrated – as individuals or in individual families – the neighborhood was left behind. (Frazer 1993: 630)

The originating areas of the settlement streams of Figure 10.4 match quite well the four “cultural hearths” posited by David Hackett Fischer (1989) as the source of American folkways. The New England stream continues the tradition of the Puritan migration from East Anglia to Massachusetts; the Pennsylvania stream expands the Quaker migration from the North Midlands to the Delaware Valley; the coastal South was originally settled by a movement of Cavalier society from the South of England to Virginia, and then to the Carolinas. Not shown so distinctly is the fourth movement, from the borderlands of England to the upland South. Much of the expansion in the Midland area from the Ohio River northward represents the movement of the Scots–Irish who came through Philadelphia and moved southward, first through the Appalachian area, then into the Midwest. The cultural conflict described by historians reflects the opposition between Yankees from New England and settlers from Fischer’s “borderland” regions who migrated northward from the upland South.³ In the discussion of cultural oppositions to follow, “Southerners” represent this upland Southern population, a culture quite distinct from the coastal or plantation South.⁴

These distinct patterns of migration of Yankees and upland Southerners are summarized in Fischer (1989: 813–14), from which Table 10.1 is extracted. This table shows preferred community type, typical house location, and persistence (percent of adults remaining in a community after ten years).⁵ As noted above, Yankees moved as entire communities. They built towns and cities, established their houses along the populated roads and tended to stay put in the cities and towns they had built. Yankee communities maintained a strong emphasis on literacy; schools and colleges were among the first institutions built. In contrast, upland Southerners moved as single families or small groups, built houses in isolated rural locations and showed a strong tendency to move on before too long.

Table 10.1 includes Fischer’s parameters for the Quaker cultural group, which expanded westward from Pennsylvania and Delaware into the Midland. The Quaker settlement pattern is intermediate in all three respects. They formed farm communities rather than towns, and built houses near their farms. The persistence of community populations was also intermediate. Since the nineteenth century, the cultural opposition across the North/Midland line has been perceived as a contrast of Yankee versus Upland South patterns, with less focus upon the Quaker heritage.

Table 10.1 Migration patterns of Yankees and upland Southerners

	Yankee	Upland South	Quaker
Settlement	Towns	Isolated clusters	Farm communities
House location	Roadside	Creek and spring	Corner-clusters
Persistence	75–96%	25–40%	40–60%

Source: David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 814

This difference in settlement patterns had important linguistic consequences. In the North, children had continuous contact with other children speaking the same dialect. As this chapter and the last one show, an identical phonological system was transmitted intact from Western New York State to Wisconsin. The homogeneity of the Inland North is in marked contrast to the heterogeneity of the Midland cities. Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cincinnati and St Louis each display different organizations of their vowel systems, while the vowel systems of Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Gary, Chicago, Kenosha, Milwaukee and Madison appear to be identical.

10.3 The Material Basis of the North/Midland Opposition

The settlement streams defined by Kniffen and Glassie (1966) in Figure 10.4 are based on geographic differences in cornering techniques in log cabin construction. The two most common types of cornering are shown in Figure 10.5. False cornering is the simplest and quickest, while V-notching, like dovetailing, is more effective in locking logs into place. Figure 10.6 shows, somewhat surprisingly, that V-notching was characteristic of the Midland, while false corner timbering prevailed in the North.

Kniffen and Glassie explain this situation in terms that accord well with Fischer's differentiation of settlement patterns:

The predominance of the simpler methods of corner-timbering – square and saddle notching – over V notching and dovetailing in the Northern tier of states tends to support the conclusion that the migrating New Englanders, like the English of the Tidewater, regarded log construction as so temporary as to be unworthy of the skills they undoubtedly possessed as workers in wood. (Kniffen and Glassie 1966: 64)

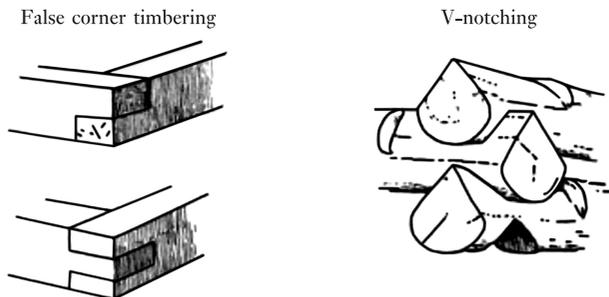


Figure 10.5 Two common types of log cabin corner construction (Kniffen and Glassie 1966). Copyright © 1966, reprinted by permission of the National Geographic Society

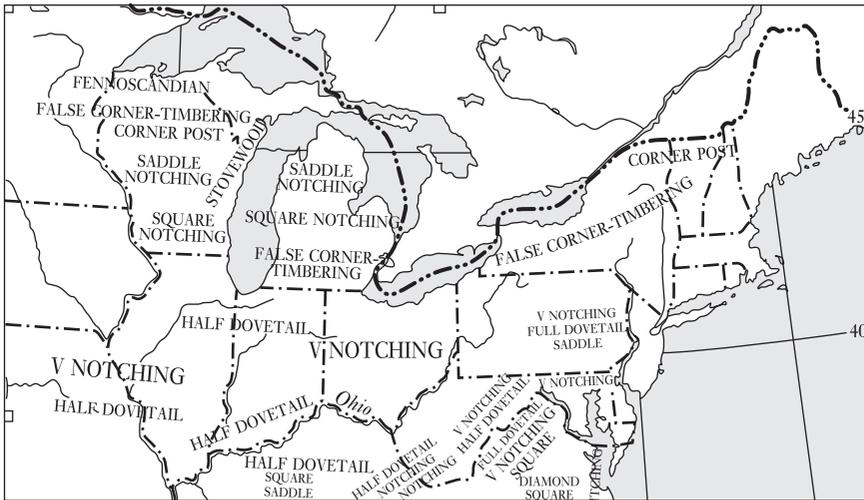


Figure 10.6 Types of corner construction in the North and Midland (Kniffen and Glassie 1966). Copyright © 1966, reprinted by permission of the National Geographic Society

In other words, Yankee settlers used simpler log cabin construction methods because they usually began work immediately on more permanent residences in their newly founded towns and cities.

Chapter 5 showed that the Northern settlement route was greatly facilitated by the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. This led to the great expansion of New York City, which quickly surpassed Philadelphia as a port of entry and commerce, and to the rapid development of cities along the canal: Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. The effect on the east–west communication pattern was reflected in the situation of farmers in New York State who were located any distance from the canal. Wheat farmers in Cortland County (in south central New York) could not compete with wheat farmers in Ohio and Indiana, since the all-water voyage from the Great Lakes to the Hudson River cost less than a thirty-mile journey by road to the Canal.

Figure 10.7 shows the major transportation routes, including the main roads and canals, in the North and Midland regions in the period 1820–35. The general patterns of east–west communication are both the precondition and the consequence of the settlement routes of Figure 10.4. The canal era reached its peak in 1850, when water transportation gave way to the railroads.

In the North, railroads move westward around the Great Lakes to Chicago, and in the Midland, from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and westward to Columbus, Indianapolis and St Louis. On the other hand, there is no major passenger traffic displayed here from Pittsburgh to Buffalo or from Columbus to Cleveland. This absence of north–south connections reflects and continues the patterns of migration and settlement that were established over two generations earlier, in the early 1800s.

Power carries his indictment of Yankee cultural style one step further:

Taxed with being busybodies and meddlers, apologists own that the instinct for meddling, as divine as that of self-preservation, runs in the Yankee blood; that the typical New Englander was entirely unable, when there were wrongs to be corrected, to mind his own business. (Ibid., p. 6)

Thomas J. Morain examined the cultural characteristics of Yankees in a small town in Iowa. Even in his account of educational advancement, his resentment of the Yankee style is evident.

One of the most distinguishing features of the Yankees of the nineteenth century had been their confidence that theirs was a superior vision and that America's future depended on their ability to impose their order on the life of the nation [...] They established thousands of public schools and private colleges, filled churches and lodge halls with committed believers, and codified their version of morality in the statute books. (Morain 1988: 256).

Morain essayed to codify Yankee cultural style under four headings of a "Yankee Confession":

- Life is a struggle, a test of will.
- The individual, not the government or any other social unit, is responsible for his or her own well-being.
- Success is a measure of character.
- The righteous are responsible for the welfare of the community.

To this, he adds the following:

While conversion of the sinner to the higher path was the preferable means of reform, it was sometimes necessary to use the legal authority of the state by making immoral activities illegal. (Ibid., p. 45)

Yankee historians do not as a whole disagree with this analysis. Holbrook (1950) traced the Yankee pattern of emigration from New England through the orders that came back for Montpelier crackers and Gorton's codfish. He adds:

[A]long with their crackers, their codfish, and their theology, they carried their peculiar ideas of government and managed, in spite of Kentucky statutes in Illinois, to impose their township system throughout the state [...] [T]hey did the same to or for Michigan, and also established the whipping post, in words taken from Vermont's original laws. When Wisconsin was carved out of Michigan, Yankees poured in so fast as to dominate politics, supplying eight of the state's first eighteen governors, and seven of its early United States senators. (Ibid., p. 16)

Yankee interference with Midland cultural patterns extended to language as well:

At Greensburg in Southeastern Indiana, the Reverend J. R. Wheelock advised his Eastern sponsors that his wife had opened a school of 20 or 30 scholars in which she would use “the most approved N.E. school books,” to be obtained by a local merchant from Philadelphia. “She makes defining a distinct branch of study and this gives her a very favorable oppy. of correcting the children and thro’ them, the parents of ‘a heap’ of Kentuckyisms.” (Power 1953: 114)

The Yankee’s negative view of the upland Southerner was not confined to language. More explicitly, we read that in McLean County, Illinois, “the Northerner thought of the Southerner as a lean, lank, lazy creature, burrowing in a hut, and rioting in whiskey, dirt and ignorance” (*History of McLean County* 1879: 97).

Note that the term “Southerner” here refers to adherents of the upland South cultural pattern, who were in immediate contact with the Yankees. We do not find Yankee orators making the distinction between upland South or Backcountry and the coastal South. As the Civil War came to a close, the general denunciation of the South grew stronger. The prominent abolitionist preacher Henry Ward Beecher proclaimed:

We are to have charge of this continent. The South has been proved, and has been found wanting. She is not worthy to bear rule. She has lost the scepter in our national government, she is to lose the scepter in the States themselves; and this continent is to be from this time forth governed by Northern men, with Northern ideas, and with a Northern gospel. (Beecher 1863)

10.5 Coincidence with Geographic Boundaries of Political Cultures

Figure 10.8 displays the geographic distribution of three political cultures of North America defined by Elazar (1972):

MORALISTIC This group expects the government to help people achieve good lives. Governmental service is “public service.” The community can intervene in private affairs if this serves communal goals.

INDIVIDUALISTIC This group views government in utilitarian and individualist terms. Politics is a business like any other, which is dominated by “firms” (parties). Government should not interfere much in individuals’ lives.

TRADITIONALISTIC This group combines hierarchical views of society with ambivalence about “government-as-marketplace.” Popular participation is scarcely important

in comparison with elite participation. There is also a strong preference for maintaining the status quo, as evidenced by the South's general resistance to the civil rights movement.

It is immediately evident that the distribution of these three political cultures coincides with the dialect regions North, Midland and South. The characteristics of the moralistic group fit closely the Yankee traits described by the various historians cited above, and the individualistic group displays the opposition to Yankee reliance on control through governmental action, an opposition attributed to upland Southern inhabitants of the Midland.

Elazar recognizes that this distribution follows from the westward settlement patterns seen in Figures 10.4, 10.7 and 10.8. He traces the Northernmost pattern to the New England Yankee culture in ways that are consistent with the concept of "cultural hearth" developed by Fischer (1989). He also shows how the various immigrant groups of the later nineteenth and twentieth century – German, Irish, Italian, Polish – adapted the cultural patterns of the earlier settlers, following the doctrine of first effective settlement (Zelinsky 1992). What is particularly important for our current analysis is that the geographic pattern in Figure 10.8 is based on a series of case studies of political behavior which are completely independent of the dialect data. Figure 10.9 displays the individual data points on which Figure 10.8 is founded.⁶

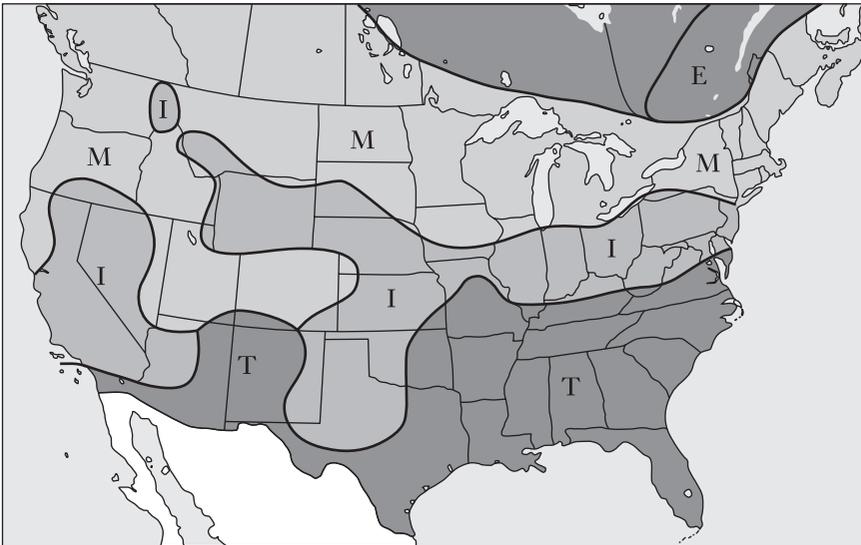


Figure 10.8 Distribution of political cultures in North America. M = Moralistic; I = Individualistic; T = traditional (Kilpinen 2010, based on Elazar 1972, Figure 11). Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education

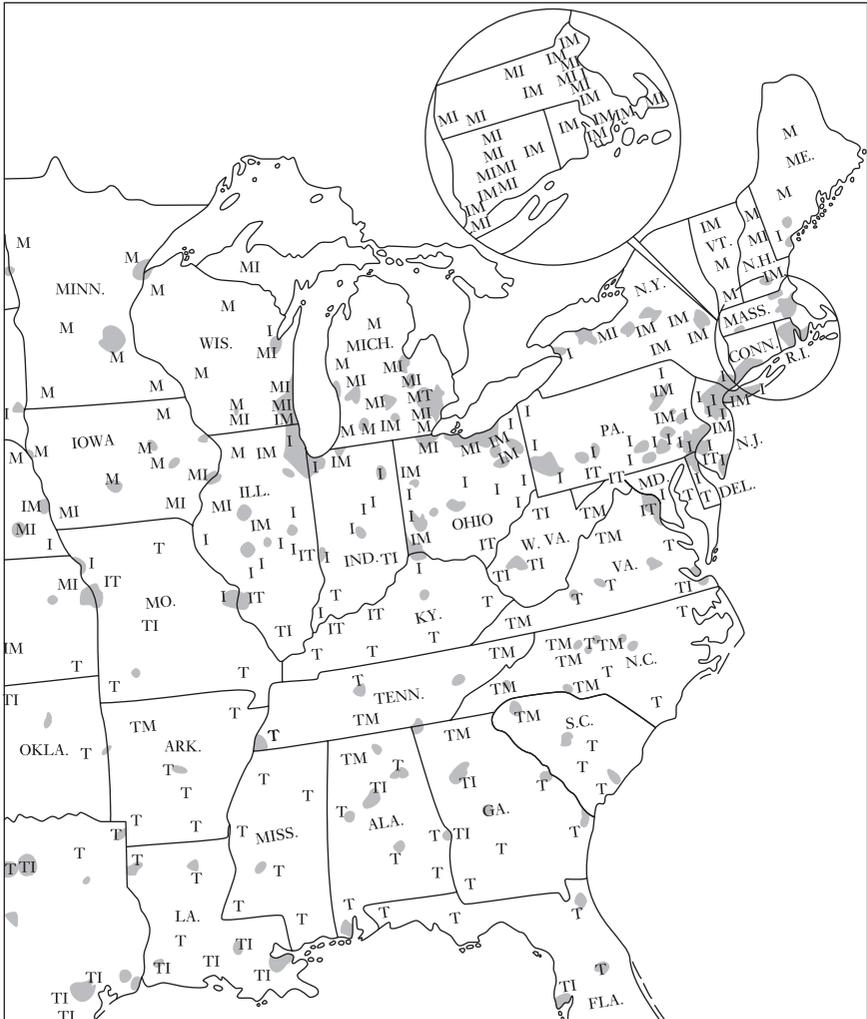


Figure 10.9 Political cultures of the US (Elazar 1972, Figure 11). M = moralistic; I = individualistic; T = traditional. Two letters juxtaposed indicate either a synthesis of two subcultures, or the existence of two separate subcultural communities in the same area, with the first dominant and the second secondary. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education

Most obvious is the predominance of “I” in the Midland areas of Pennsylvania, Southern Ohio, Indiana and Southern Illinois. The “M” symbols are frequently combined with “I” in the North, but are rarely encountered south of the North/Midland line. The Chicago area shows an unexpected “I,” as does Buffalo. But the

great majority of Northern cities are marked by “M” symbols. It is interesting to see that Erie in northwest Pennsylvania, the only city that shifted its membership from the North to the Midland in the ANAE records, shows the characteristic Midland “I.”

10.6 Red States, Blue States, and the Northern Dialect Region

The term “Yankee cultural imperialism,” which I have used in this chapter heading, is taken from a chapter of that heading in Frazer’s *Heartland English* (1993). Midland linguists have been particularly critical of John Kenyon’s selection of Northern dialect patterns as the basis for standard broadcast English, as codified in the National Broadcasting Company pronunciation guide, and as a referent for the mythical “general American”:⁷

[W]e must learn what led to the establishment of Inland Northern as a prestige dialect in the Great Lakes region; we need to understand as well why scholars like Kenyon, George Phillip Krapp and Hans Kurath . . . embraced the concept of Inland Northern as a General American.” (Frazer 1993: 80)

Frazer’s indignation extends to the political sphere:

Perhaps the language of “Yankee cultural imperialism” was appropriate for a century of corporate expansion, leveraged buyouts, and American military intervention in the Philippines, Central America, the Caribbean, Vietnam, and the Middle East. (Ibid., p. 88)

This is a striking extension of a cultural critique to a political denunciation. Yankees are here identified with, and even held responsible for, the extreme right-wing politics of more recent times. One can see some rationale for this identification by observing the similarity between the cultural style of nineteenth-century Yankees and that of the New Christian Right in the twenty-first century. Both are marked by absolute certainty in their commitment to a moral position and by the promotion of legislation designed to ensure that everyone else conforms to that position.⁸ Nevertheless, the geographic area we are dealing with, the Inland North and the Northern region surrounding it, along with the New England area from which the Northern settlement originated, is now recognized as the core of the Blue States – that is, the center of liberal political and ideological patterns in the United States.

Figure 10.10 shows the Blue States in terms of the 2004 election: those states colored grey voted for John Kerry on the Democratic ticket, and those colored white voted for George Bush on the Republican ticket. Superimposed on this map are two isoglosses. The solid isogloss is the Northern region, defined by conservative fronting

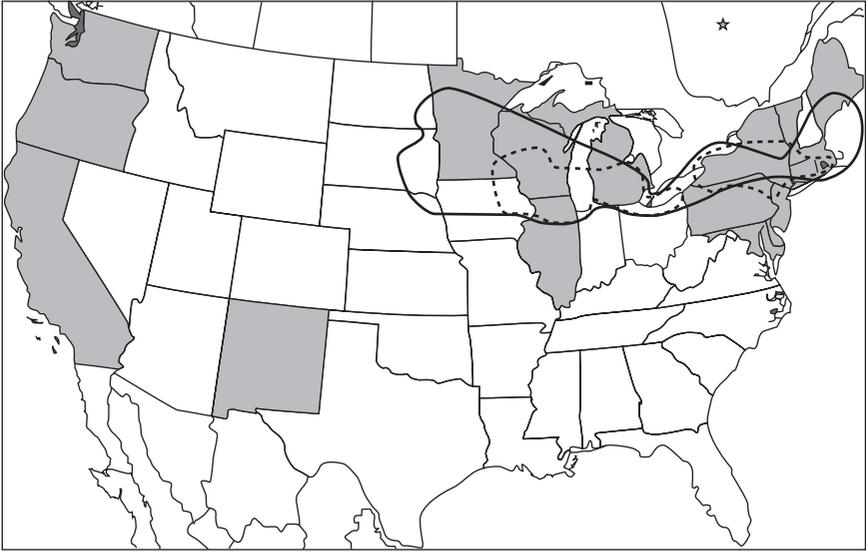


Figure 10.10 States voting Democratic in the 2004 election. Solid isogloss = the Northern region; dashed isogloss = the Inland North as defined by the UD criterion

of /ow/ (mean < 1200 Hz) and by the AWW criterion (which requires that the nucleus of /ay/ be fronter than the nucleus of /aw/). The dashed isogloss shows the Inland North defined by the UD criterion, as in Figures 5.19, 8.3 and 10.3.

The match between the Northern dialect region and the states voting Democratic is only a rough approximation of the relation of dialect areas to political stance, since dialect boundaries rarely follow state borders. A more precise view of this relation can be obtained by considering the vote county by county. Here maps are not as useful, since the rural areas dominate the geographical dimension, while our linguistic data are confined to cities of population over 50,000. The analysis to follow will take as units the counties in which the ANAE cities are embedded. In many cases the city is coextensive with the county; it is most often the county seat, and it always represents the largest part of the population in that county. The database is formed of seventy such counties in dialect regions on either side of the North/Midland boundary.⁹

10.7 Relation of Dialects to County Voting Patterns

The relation between the county voting patterns in 2004 and the North/Midland dialect opposition is displayed in Figure 10.11. The white circles, which represent

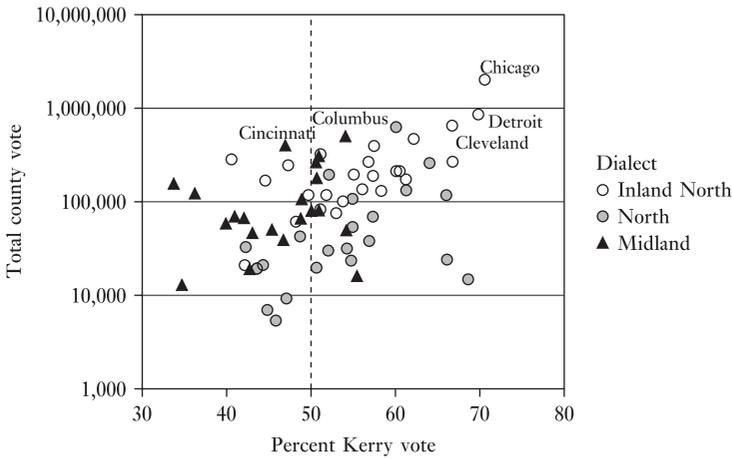


Figure 10.11 Percent county vote for Kerry by total county vote in the 2004 presidential election for counties in the Inland North, North and Midland dialect areas

Table 10.2 Democratic vs Republican county vote by dialect in the 2004 presidential election

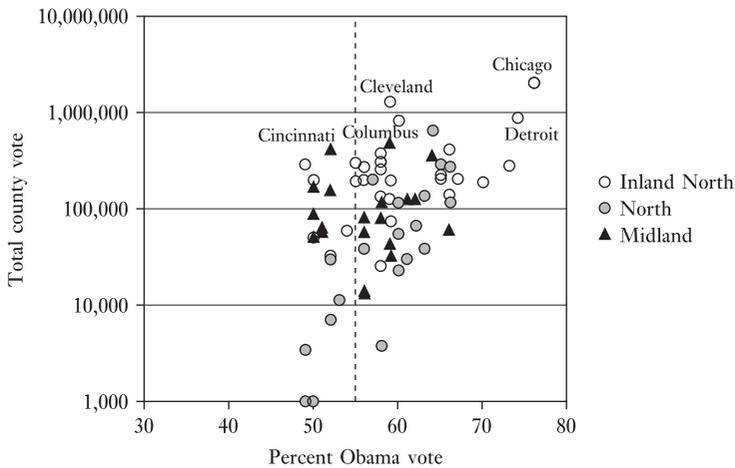
	Inland North	North	Midland
Kerry majority	20	15	8
Bush majority	6	7	13

the Inland North counties, are shifted well to the right of the black triangles, which represent the Midland counties and fall as a whole to the left of the 50 percent Kerry voting line. The grey circles, which represent speech communities in the North outside of the Inland North, are also well to the left of the black triangles. Since on the whole these communities form smaller cities, they are located lower in the diagram.

Table 10.2 sums up this radical difference in the voting patterns of these two dialect areas. But it does not tell the whole story. Figure 10.11 indicates that population, as reflected in the total county vote, is a major factor in determining voting patterns. As we have seen, the Inland North has an especially large concentration of big cities, so that it is heavily urban compared to the North in general. Table 10.3 shows the results of two regression analyses of the data in Figure 10.11. The Midland is the residual group against which the North and the Inland North are compared. Analysis 1 shows that city size and the use of an Inland North or North dialect (as against the Midland dialect) are major contributors to the Kerry vote.

Table 10.3 Regression analyses of percent county vote for Kerry in 2004 presidential election by dialect groups, with and without total votes as an independent variable

Variable	Analysis 1		Analysis 2	
	Coeff	prob	Coeff	prob
Log county total vote (millions)	3.7	≤ .0001		
North dialect	10.7	≤ .0001	8.0	.0001
Inland North dialect	6.1	.0037	9.1	.0000

**Figure 10.12** Percent county vote for Obama by total county vote in the 2008 presidential election, for counties in the Inland North, North and Midland dialect areas

At the level of 2004 county-by-county voting patterns, dialect areas coincide more precisely with Democratic preference than we observed at the state level, and we can now be sure that this is not an accidental phenomenon. Table 10.3 predicts that, in cities of comparable size on either side of the North/Midland boundary, like Columbus and Cleveland, we can expect a mean difference of about 6 percent in Democratic voting, which is enough to affect the state outcome (see Figure 10.11). But the second analysis in this table indicates that, if observers do not take city size into account, they will see an even larger difference. The voting pattern of the Inland North is a joint product of its urban character and the ideological background; the fact that big cities favor the Democrats is also the by-product of ideological history.

The political orientation represented by the Blue States/Red States geographic split was not notably different in the preceding election of 2000. Major shifts can be observed in the 2008 presidential election, as Figure 10.12 illustrates. Almost all Northern and Midland counties are advanced in the Democratic vote beyond the 50 percent level. The figure is compressed on the horizontal axis, indicating a

Table 10.4 Regression analysis of percent county vote for Obama in 2008 presidential election by dialect

Variable	Analysis 1		Analysis 2	
	Coef	prob	Coef	prob
Log county total vote (millions)	2.3	.0002		
Inland North dialect	2.8	.09	4.7	.01
North dialect	3.9	.026	2.5	.19

reduction in political orientation by city size. Table 10.4 is a regression analysis of the 2008 election comparable to Table 10.3 for 2004. The effect of population size is much reduced; but, when we do not take it into account in Analysis 2, the Inland North effect is magnified. An overall reduction in the polarization of the community is evident, but the correlation between dialect and voting pattern remains.

These results suggest the possibility of an association of ideological factors with the Inland North dialect. Such an association does not, of course, demonstrate a causal relation; but, in our search for the driving factors of change, it leads us to move beyond local factors, to consider a broader historical inquiry, with greater time depth. Chapter 5 showed that the Northern Cities Shift has its roots in the early part of the nineteenth century, though its full manifestation has become evident only in the second half of the twentieth. The ideological positions reflected in recent elections also have a long history.

10.8 The History of the Death Penalty

Another way of tracing the history of liberal political positions is through the status of the death penalty. This requires a return to the state as the differential unit. Figure 10.13 shows those states where the death penalty is not authorized for any crime, and the same two linguistic isoglosses are superimposed as in Figure 10.10. The association between the absence of the death penalty and the larger Northern dialect region (including North and Inland North areas) is notable. New York cannot be considered a strong exception within the Inland North, since most of its population is outside of the Inland North (14.5 million out of 19.3 million).

The history of the abolition of the death penalty is summarized in Table 10.5, which shows serial waves of abolition and restoration. The states with the earliest abolition are grouped to the left. In 1972, in the case *Furman v Georgia*, the US Supreme Court abolished the death penalty as constituting “cruel and unusual punishment.” In the years that followed, all states except those listed in the last row of Table 10.5 passed legislation to re-instate the death penalty.¹⁰

Table 10.5 States with no death penalty, 1846–2008. ✓ = no death penalty. (✓) = no death penalty except for treason. Grey areas: states within the Northern dialect region

	ME	RI	MI	WI	IA	MIN	ND	SD	KS	NE	NM	TN	OR	WV	NY	VT	MA	NJ	
1846–76	✓		(✓)	✓	✓														
1878–83	✓	✓	(✓)	✓															
1887	✓	✓	(✓)	✓															
1897–1915	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
1916–39	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	(✓)						✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)			
1957–69	✓	✓	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	(✓)												
1972																			
1973–2008	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

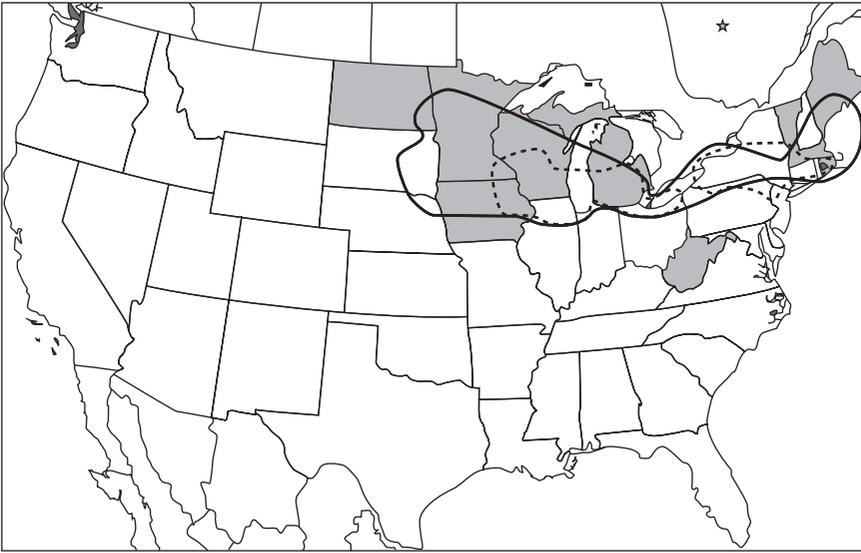


Figure 10.13 States with no death penalty in 2004. Solid isogloss = the Northern region; dashed isogloss = the Inland North as defined by the UD criterion

It is therefore clear that at least one ideological stance characteristic of the Blue States is not a recent development, but was active when the Northern dialect was first formed. We will now examine more closely that ideology and its formation, to see what other continuities and connections may exist.

10.9 Ideological Oppositions in the North

Thomas Morain's critical portrait of Yankee cultural style displayed a rhetorical bias which went beyond the Iowa community, embracing the Northern pattern more generally:

Imbued with the notion that theirs was a superior vision, Yankees dutifully accepted their responsibility for the moral and intellectual life of the nation and set about to do what needed to be done, with or without an invitation from the uneducated, the undisciplined, the disinterested, or the unmotivated.

Cultural uplift Yankee style also meant attacking sin and sloth. The initial settlement of Iowa coincided with three very active decades for American reform movements. Health fads, prison reform, women's rights, crusades for new standards of dress – the Northern states teemed with advocates of one cause or another.

Most important among the reform movements of the day were the issues of abolition and temperance. (Morain 1988)

Phrases like “with or without an invitation,” “sin and sloth,” “health fads” and “teemed with” let us know that the author has judged Yankee activity to be unmotivated, excessive, somewhat comical and annoying. But when I first read the passage I was startled by the final phrase, “abolition and temperance.” Whatever we may think about temperance, the abolition of slavery was not a trivial matter, to be classed with health fads, but an issue of utter seriousness. I turned to a number of other sources to trace the history of the Yankee orientation to the question of slavery. One of the most useful is Curtis Johnson’s 1989 study of Cortland County in South Central New York State in the 1840s – the time and place where the triggering events of the Northern Cities Shift took place.

As noted in Chapter 5, the original settlers in Western New York State came mainly from New England. Johnson’s study reports that 71 percent of the settlers in the 1790s came from New England; 19 percent from New York; and 10 percent from New Jersey and Pennsylvania (1989: 14–15). Like most other migrating peoples, the Yankees arriving in central New York formed their new society in the image of the communities they remembered (*ibid.*, p. 21). However, there are a number of ways in which the westward expansion altered the structure of these communities.

One was the construction of the Erie Canal – which, as we have seen, brought in large populations from other areas, encouraged the development of big cities along the canal and altered agricultural markets for the rural areas. Chapter 5 has argued that the formation of a new *koine* was initiated by this vast population movement.

A second change was the great religious movement that converted Western New York State into the “burned-over district” (Cross 1950). This is the very area where the triggering event of the Northern Cities Shift took place (Chapter 5). Carnes and Garrity (1996) note that “[t]he restless settlers of the ‘Burned-Over District’ readily sought release in millennial and communitarian religion.” The largely secular society of the 1790s was transformed by a series of religious revivals, which multiplied church membership: “In 1810 only one Cortland adult in 10 belonged to a church. By 1845, more than one fourth of the county’s adults had joined a local congregation” (Johnson 1989: 39). This “Second Great Awakening” embodied a general shift, away from the stern Calvinist doctrine of predestination of the elect and towards an Arminian doctrine of free will, which opened the door to new standards of Christian conduct. There were violent disagreements on what those standards might be:

Formalist evangelicals and nonevangelicals shared the conviction that the Christian mission went beyond individual salvation and involved religious endeavors that would benefit the larger community [. . .] In contrast, antiformalists doubted whether humans could change society. (*Ibid.*, p. 68)

A more radical group than the formalists was the “Ultraists,” who believed in total commitment to the eradication of individual, local and national sin (*ibid.*, p. 113): this was an extreme form of Yankee devotion to social change. As the earlier quotation from Morain indicates, the two major evils identified in this program were alcohol and slavery. Prohibition and abolition formed the central political platform of the Ultraists.

All participants in the religious revival agreed in declaring that slavery was a sin; but there was radical disagreement on the political action implied. The Ultraists argued for a complete severance of relations with any church that tolerated slavery.

In his study of the “burned-over district” in New York State, Cross (1950: 224) shows that the community focused on slavery as the central moral issue:

In February 1841, [an interdenominational convention] adopted a totally ultra-ist position, condemning the *Baptist Register* and all others who acknowledged evil without taking action, and concluded that “the abolition cause [...] must prevail before the halcyon day of millennial glory can dawn upon the world.”

No other section of the country would throughout the years before the Civil War prove to be so thoroughly and constantly sensitive to antislavery agitation. As the major issue of the century, furthermore, this crusade attracted more attention than others.

Moderate members of the congregation rejected the Ultraists as “fanatics.” A long series of excommunications and church splinterings followed. A test case was the signing of the Liberty Party call for the abolition of slavery in 1841.¹¹ Johnson (1989) provides the data included in Table 10.6.

The most detailed study of the role of religion in politics before the Civil War is Carwardine (1993). Carwardine sees evangelical Protestantism¹² as the principal subculture in antebellum America. “The sheer numbers of evangelical Christians and their relative status in society gave them considerable political significance, whether they wished it or not” (*ibid.*, p. xv).

Again, it appears that slavery was the central issue:

It was from within this relatively small band of radical critics of slave society, particularly from the movement’s orthodox evangelical wing, that the most determined efforts to politicize the slavery question emerged [...] Most respected the rights of slave states to jurisdiction within their own borders, but believed Congress could move against slavery wherever the federal government had jurisdiction. (*Ibid.*, p. 135)

This moderate view was increasingly opposed to a more extreme position, which rejected any laws that permitted contact with, or tolerance of, slaveholders. “From the mid-1830s a number of abolitionists [...] moved further and further down the

Table 10.6 Signers of Liberty Party 1841 Call for Abolition of Slavery in Cortland County by religious orientation

	Members	Signers	Percent males
Formal	739	50	6.8
Antiformal	746	19	2.5
Ultraist	161	40	24.8

‘no-human-government,’ non-resistant, perfectonist, Christian–anarchist road” (ibid., p. 135), and a polarization of Northern and Southern evangelicals followed.

By the later 1850s the idea of slavery as “good, and only good” had taken even deeper root in the South’s churches. [...] A clear orthodoxy existed, centered on the propositions that slavery [...] was “justifiable in the sight of man and God”; that the system had yielded “untold and inconceivable blessings to the negro race.” (Ibid., p. 286)

This opposition was not confined to the South. The central theme of this chapter emerges from Carwardine’s account of the resistance to the Yankee political and cultural program on the part of those upland Southerners whose Midland viewpoint was presented earlier in this chapter. The Democratic Party’s position was designed to appeal to

lower-class rural folk, particularly but not exclusively in the rural South [...] who deeply resented the imperialism of the Yankee missionaries, their schemes for temperance, Sunday Schools and other reforms. (Ibid., pp. 111–12)

Carwardine finds that the Northern religious revival played a major role in the rise of the Republican Party in the 1850s and their victory in the 1860 presidential election:

The emergence and ultimate success of the Republicans were dependent on a particular understanding of politics, one which evangelicals had played a major role in shaping. That political ethic was rooted in the moderate or “Arminianized” Calvinist theology of the Second Great Awakening, marked by an optimistic postmillennialism and an urgent appeal to disinterested action. (Ibid., p. 320)

This ideological movement was fully developed in the years leading up to the Civil War, and culminated in the abolition of slavery.

Next we will want to inquire into how these ideological questions intersected with national politics in the years that followed the Civil War. For this purpose I turn to Curtis Jensen’s work, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict 1888–1896* (1971). This is a study of the continuing ideological opposition in the Midwest, as it affected the outcome of national elections. Again, the split in church ideology plays a major role. Jensen sees religion as the fundamental source of political conflict in the Midwest. “The most revolutionary change in nineteenth century America was the conversion of the nation from a largely dechristianized land in 1789 to a stronghold of Protestantism by mid-century” (ibid., p. 62).

The opposition of formalists and antiformalists reappears as a division between “pietists” and “liturgicals,” as it was expressed in struggles within many different denominations. Pietists were revivalists, emphasizing the experience of personal conversion and flatly rejecting ritualism. In contrast, “[I]iturgicals stressed the positive values of the institutionalized formalities of the old orthodoxies, whether Calvinist, Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic or Jewish” (ibid., p. 64). The political program

Table 10.7 Percentage of popular vote for the Republican Party in Indiana by county type and Yankee origin, 1880–96

County category	1880	1884	1886	1888	1890	1892	1894	1896
49 most rural	48	47	48	48	45	45	49	49
43 most urban	50	49	49	49	45	46	51	53
19 urban and Yankee	54	53	52	53	49	50	55	55
24 urban and non-Yankee	48	46	47	47	42	44	49	51
Statewide	49	48	49	49	45	46	50	51
Winner	Rep	Dem	Rep	Rep	Dem	Dem	Rep	Rep

Source: Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888–1896*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971

of the pietists echoed and continued the Yankee concerns we have documented. Pietists worked for “Sunday blue” laws, for the abolition of saloons and, before the Civil War, for a check to the growth of slavery, or even for its abolition. In the 1850s, American political parties re-aligned into an opposition between Republicans and Democrats, and “the great majority of [. . .] pietists entered the Republican Party, while the great majority of liturgicals became Democrats” (*ibid.*, p. 69). In this political reshuffling Yankees were found on both sides of the fence, but they had a consistent leaning towards the Republican side, as a continuation of their pietistic orientation to social action. Table 10.7 shows the relation between Yankee origins and political orientation in late nineteenth-century Indiana. A “Yankee” county is defined as one in which migration had been predominantly from Northern states.¹³ The counties that favored the Democrats were the 19 “urban and Yankee.” The difference is not large – never more than 7 percent – but it is consistent across eight elections, and it was a critical factor during the long period when Republicans and Democrats were closely matched.

10.10 The Geographic Transformation

Given the Yankee evangelical, anti-slavery core of the Republican Party at the end of the nineteenth century, how do we account for the transformation that aligns the Yankee settlement and dialect area with the Democratic Blue States in Figure 10.10? There are some constant factors that continue to differentiate the two parties over time. From the outset, the Republican Party has identified itself with the interests of business, while the Democratic Party has claimed to represent the interests of the common man. Yet they have also been opposed on the issue of human rights for African-Americans. The major plank on which the Republican Party was founded, in 1854, was opposition to the extension of slavery, while the Democratic Party supported the right of states and territories to decide the issue. Table 10.8

Table 10.8 Presidential elections by four state groups of the Eastern US.

D = Democrat; R = Republican; (X) = one state deviant; / = 2+ states deviant;

S[outh] = TX, AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, FL, SC, NC, KY, TN, VA

M[idland] = MO, IL, IN, OH, WV, PA, DE, MD, NJ

N[ew] E[ngland] = ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT

N[orth] = NY, MI, WI, IA, MN

		S	M	NE	N	
1848	Fillmore	/	/	/	/	Whig vs. D
1852	Pierce	(D)	D	/	D	Republican Party formed
1856	Buchanan	D	(D)	R	R	
1860	Lincoln	D	(R)	R	R	
1864	Lincoln	S	(R)	R	R	S = Confederate States
1868–1876	Johnson/ Grant/Hayes					Reconstruction
1880	Garfield	D	/	R	R	
1884	Cleveland	D	/	(R)	(R)	
1888	Harrison	D	/	(R)	R	
1892	Cleveland	D	/	(R)	/	
1896	McKinley	D	(R)	R	R	
1900	McKinley	D	(R)	R	R	
1904	Roosevelt	D	R	R	R	
1908	Taft	D	R	R	R	
1912	Wilson	D	(D)	(D)	(D)	Progressive 3rd party
1916	Wilson	D	/	(R)	R	
1920	Harding	(D)	R	R	R	
1924	Coolidge	D	R	R	R	
1928	Hoover	/	R	R	R	S core D: AR, LA, MI, AL, GA, SC
1932	Roosevelt	D	/	(R)	D	NE core R: ME, VT, NH
1936	Roosevelt	D	D	/	D	NE core R: ME, VT
1940	Roosevelt	D	(D)	/	(D)	NE core R: ME, VT
1944	Roosevelt	D	/	/	/	NE core R: ME, VT
1948	Truman	/	/	(R)	/	States Rights: LA, MI, AL, SC
1952	Eisenhower	/	R	R	R	S core D: LA, MI, AL, GA, SC, NC
1956	Eisenhower	/	R	R	R	S core D: AR, MI, AL, GA, SC, NC
1960	Kennedy	/	/	/	/	Electors for Byrd in AL, MI
1964	Johnson	/	D	D	D	S core R: LA, MI, AL, GA, SC
1968	Nixon	W	/	/	/	Wallace (Ind): LA, AR, MI, AL, GA
1972	Nixon	R	R	(R)	R	
1976	Carter	(D)	/	/	/	R: VA
1980	Reagan	(R)	/	R	(R)	
1984	Reagan	R	R	R	(R)	
1988	Bush	R	(R)	/	(D)	
1992	Clinton	/	(D)	D	D	S core R: MI, AL, FL, SC, NC, VA
1996	Clinton	/	(D)	D	D	S core R: MI, AL, GA, SC, NC, VA
2000	Bush	R	/	(D)	D	NE core R: NH
2004	Bush	R	/	D	D	
2008	Obama	/	/	D	D	S core R: [TX], AK, LA, MI, AL, GA, SC

traces the distribution of voting results in national elections by the groups of states that approximate the major dialect divisions of the Eastern United States. The states taken to represent the North are limited to those whose territory falls mostly into the Northern dialect region – so that the upper third of Illinois and Ohio are not represented here, although they contain many Northern speakers. On the other hand, the states representing the South fall almost entirely within the defining isogloss of the Southern dialect region: monophthongization of /ay/ before voiced obstruents.

In Table 10.8 a clear-cut opposition between Northern and Southern states is indicated by means of the grey shading of the letters D and R. At the top of Table 10.6 is the Whig versus Democrat election of 1848, at a time before the Republican Party was formed, when the Democrats were not yet dominant in the South. Democratic control of the South began in the following election and continued without a break for ninety-two years – except for the period of Reconstruction after the war, when local Republican governments were supported by federal troops. Not even the Republican sweep of 1928 disturbed the Democratic monopoly of the six core Southern states. The series of “D” symbols in the Southern column comes to and end in the Truman election of 1948, when Southern opposition to the civil rights movement created a “states rights” third party. Against the tide of the Eisenhower landslides in the 1950s, the Democrats retained their dominant position in six Southern states. However, the electoral map splintered again in the crucial year of Kennedy’s election, 1960, when all four state sections were divided.

In the years following Kennedy’s election, the Southern vote switched sides. In the Democratic landslide of 1964 the South was divided, but the core Southern states were now Republican, not Democratic. In 1968, opposition to the civil rights movement gave these core states to George Wallace’s American Independent Party. The following election, in 1972, was Nixon’s Republican landslide, which won the South as well as the other sections. The last Democratic success in the South was achieved by a candidate from Georgia, Jimmy Carter, but from 1980 on the Republican Party has dominated the South. The South was divided in the Clinton victories of the 1990s, but here the Southern core states were Republican. In 2000 and 2004 one sees the crystallization of the Republican domination of the South in the face of an opposite and opposing Democratic block in the North.

The history of the Northern region can be read from the last column in Table 10.8. From 1856 on, the Northern states are solidly Republican, save for the disruption caused in 1912 by the election of the Progressive Party candidate, Theodore Roosevelt. This situation continued until the landslides of the New Deal era, from 1933 on. At that time, the core “rock-ribbed” Republican vote was not found in the Northern dialect region, but in the New England states of Maine and Vermont. Again, it was the 1960 Kennedy campaign that split all sections and marked the end of the Republican tradition in the Northern states. In the elections that followed up to 1992, the North swayed with the tide, voting mostly Republican

Table 10.9 Votes on original House of Representatives version of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

	Democrat		Republican	
	For	Against	For	Against
Southern	7	87	0	10
Northern	145	9	138	24

in Republican years, Democratic in Democratic years. The most recent sixteen years have shown a solid Democratic outcome in the Northern section, but only in 2000 and 2004 do we see clear opposition of a Democratic North and a Republican majority in the rest of the country. This is indicated by the grey shading of “D” and “R” in 2000–2004, with the positions of these two categories now reversed. The pattern is modified in the 2008 election – but maintained by Obama’s lack of success in the core Southern states.

Table 10.8 shows that the crucial change in the orientation of the two parties occurred between the elections of 1964 and 1968, after Johnson shepherded the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through Congress. As shown in Table 10.9, the Republican Party was not opposed to this legislation: the vote split along regional lines, not party lines.

One of Johnson’s most effective arguments was that passing this legislation was “the late president’s most fitting memorial” (Beschloss 2007: 279). In fact, Kennedy was for a long time ambivalent in his support of the Civil Rights Act, which he postponed many times, mindful of losing the Southern vote that had elected him. In a recorded conversation with Louisiana Senator Russell Long,¹⁴ Kennedy learned of an offer made by segregationists to commit their electoral votes in exchange for the abandonment of the civil rights legislation, as in the deal that led to the end of Reconstruction under Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876. Kennedy responded:

But this isn’t 1876. Because what happens is it will become the most publicized thing [...] everybody’s looking, now what is this president promising this group and pretty soon you’ve got the Goddamndest mayhem.

Long suggested that “the Negro vote might be the key vote” and Kennedy intervened:

At least I could count it [...] I think it’s crazy for the South because this way I’m concerned about Georgia and Louisiana and these places, here’s where we got a chance to carry them, but if I end up with no chance to carry them then I gotta go up north and try to do my business.

The 1964 election that followed showed the first switch of the core Southern states to the Republican column and the first Democratic vote in the North since Roosevelt; this was to lead to the current realignment of Red States versus Blue States. It appears that it was the political act of initiating the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that brought about this realignment.

The common thread that unites this political and cultural history over 150 years is the attitudes of whites towards slavery and the unequal status of blacks and whites in the United States. In the nineteenth-century North, both abolitionists and moderates, both formalists and anti-formalists, both pietists and liturgicals shared the common articles of faith that all men were created equal and that slavery was a sin. A century and a half later, this ideology was the moving force that led to the correlation of the Inland North dialect and the political stance of the Blue States. While the cultural style of the Yankees may resemble that of modern-day right-wing Christian revivalists, the cultural content differed on the crucial dimension of race relations.

We cannot set aside the possibility that this continuation of Yankee ideology contributes to the momentum exhibited by the Northern Cities Shift on a broad scale across the Inland North. Though the NCS remains below the level of social awareness, it is possible that its speakers have (if unconsciously) come to associate this sound shift, over the past few generations, with the political and cultural outlook inherited from the Yankee settlers. Those associations have evolved over time with various social and demographic changes, and especially with the realignment of the two major parties in the 1960s. As long as these ideological differences persist, speakers may be more likely to align their productions towards those around them who share their own identity and world-view. And along the linguistic and cultural border, they may be less likely to accommodate to others whom they perceive as holding different or hostile views. If such accommodation is weakened by the ideological oppositions reviewed in this chapter, it might help to explain why the North–Midland boundary is the sharpest division in North American English dialectology, and why it has remained stable for almost a century.