



Paring Old Dixie Down: The Dixie Highway and the Mapping of a Vernacular South

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Introduction

This study attempts to approximate boundaries of the American South using the keyword “dixie” from phone book listings. This approach is not new. However, we argue that prior scholarship utilizing this technique has inflated the size of the region by including instances of establishments named “dixie” due to proximity to the Dixie Highway system. This nascent highway system acted as a significant driver of tourism and commercial development during the early 20th Century. In the study, we approximated the methods of previous studies recording all instances of “dixie in the contiguous 48 United States mapping them by ZIP Code.

Methods

We recorded all instances of the term "dixie" in nationwide listings at yellowpages.com. Before the initial analysis, we removed duplicate entries as well as firms whose names were derived from individuals named “Dixie” and Winn-Dixie grocery stores

In order to establish proximity to the Dixie Highway, we created a shapefile that approximated the route of the highway system as it existed circa 1920. Next a .5-kilometer buffer was created around the highway to generate two study populations with one population that included all instances of the “Dixie” keyword and one that excluded the instances within the highway buffer.

We then use the Getis-Ord Gi* statistic to calculate hot and cold spots based on the term “dixie”. We employ a fixed distance band of 100 km after tests from spatial autocorrelation indicated that this distance had the highest levels of spatial autocorrelation at the scale of the study area. We calculated the Getis-Ord Gi* statistic twice, once on the entire dataset, and once on the data with instances of dixie removed within the .5-kilometer buffer around the historic route of the Dixie Highway.

Results

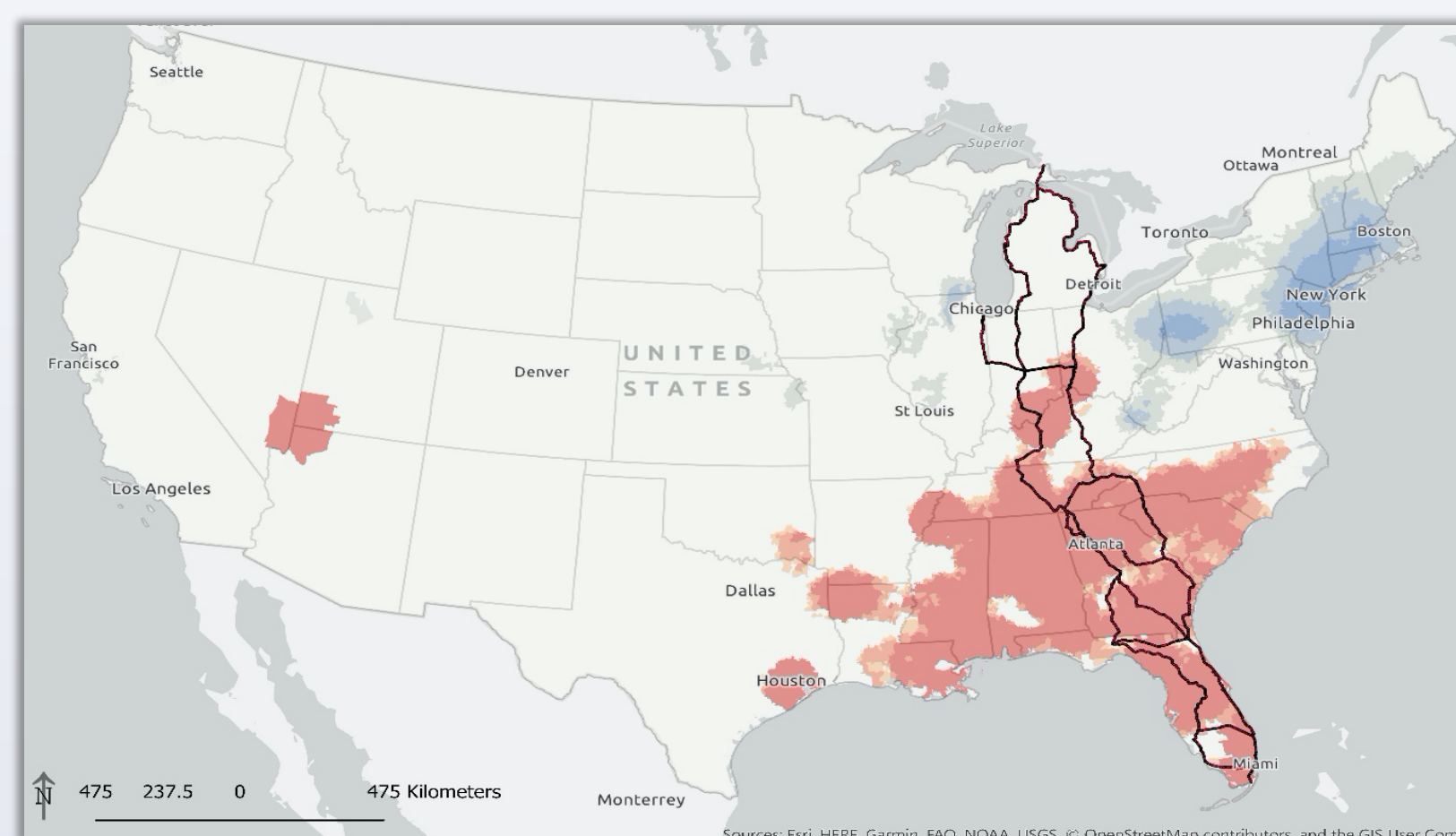


Figure 1. National Dixie Hotspots

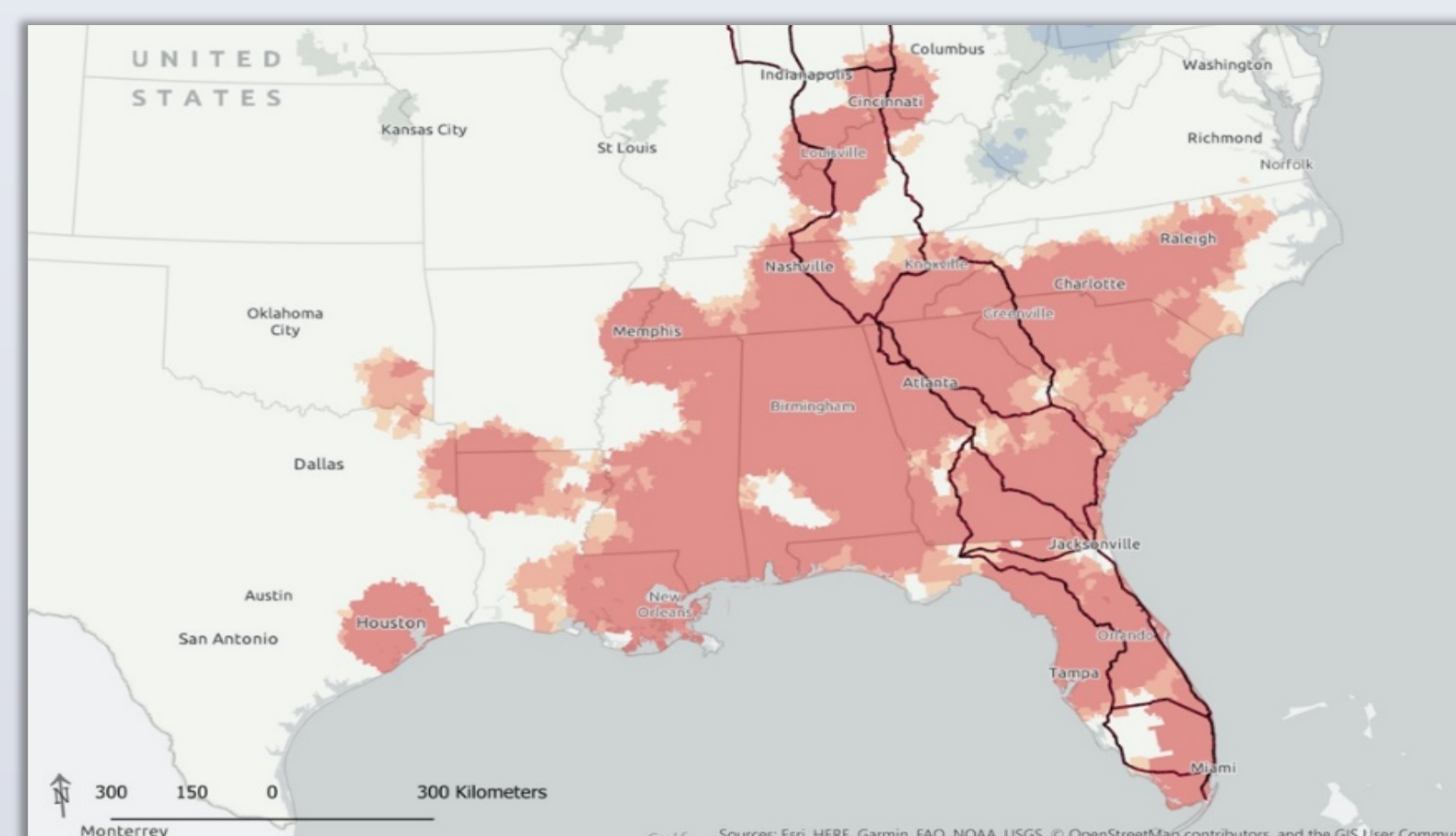


Figure 2. Southeast Dixie Hotspots

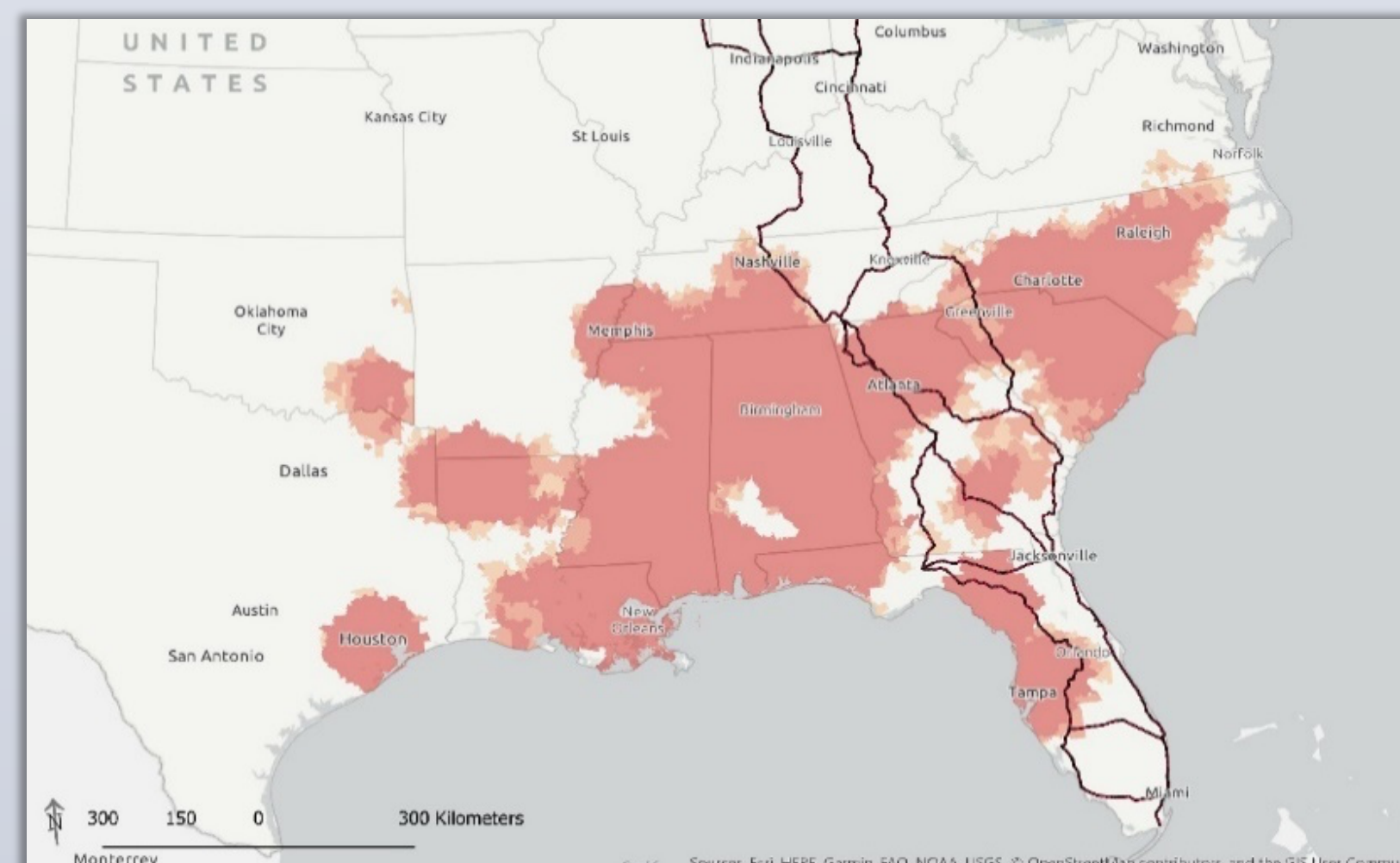


Figure 3. Southeast with Dixie Highway Proximate Establishments Removed

Results

After identifying locations proximate to the highway system, we find 39 percent of instances of “dixie” in the ten states the system crossed lie within a .5-kilometer buffer of its routes.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of ZIP Codes Containing Dixie

Populations	Observations	% Total ZIP Codes	Mean	SD	Range	Description
All Dixie	3718	12.2	1.2	2.42	1 to 78	Total Population of Dixie Establishment ZIP Codes
Dixie Highway Outside of Buffer	1880	6.2	1.5	2.31	1 to 78	Population of Dixie Establishments with Dixie Highway proximate locations removed

Conclusion

Removing Dixie locations within the .5-kilometer buffer around the historic Dixie Highway route reduces the area of Dixie hotspots to approximately 857,000 square kilometers, a reduction in the area of the hotspot of approximately 18 percent, with the most acute reductions occurring in peripheral areas of the region. Southwestern Ohio and the Louisville area disappear as Dixie hotspots as well as East Tennessee and the entire east coast of Florida. Within South Florida, the Jacksonville and Louisville areas, southwestern Ohio, and East Tennessee, virtually all instances of Dixie are within the .5-kilometer buffer along the highway and therefore were removed from the second dataset. The effects are more ambiguous in Georgia, but still surprisingly large. The buffer model removed approximately 40 percent of establishments in north Georgia, while 55 percent of Dixie establishments in southern Georgia were removed. However, the sheer number of Dixie establishments outside the buffer leaves much of the area within the Dixie hotspot, even after the removal of Dixie Highway proximate establishments.