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Declining Dixie: Regional Identification in the Modern American South

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We replicate and extend John Shelton Reed's classic work on regional identification by examining and modeling the prevalence of the words "Dixie" and "Southern" in business names across 100 cities and four decades. We find that the instances of "Dixie" have dropped precipitously, although identification with the word "Southern" has remained more constant, providing evidence of a trend we term re-southernization. We also find that the relative number of blacks in the population provides the most consistent explanation of regional identity. Population density has also emerged as a significant predictor of regional identification in more recent time periods. These findings contribute to the literature on regional identification, the politics of naming and the sociology of the South.

The United States is increasingly homogenized. Strip malls, cookie-cutter housing developments and the rise of chain restaurants make it difficult to tell if you are in suburban Atlanta, suburban Dallas or suburban Cleveland. As a consequence, regional differences may also be fading. Is the South, once thought to be the most distinctive region in the country, still unique? Has the homogenization of America altered regional boundaries? If so, what types of places have experienced the largest declines in regional identification?

One of the best ways to address these questions is to examine place names. The study of place names, or toponyms, represents a long tradition in the social sciences and provides an important window into regional culture and collective identity (Kearns and Berg 2002; Stewart 1958; Zelinsky 1980). According to Alderman (2008:197), "naming is a noteworthy cultural practice not only because of its ability to create a sense of continuity over time but also through its capacity for changing and challenging lines of identity." This line of research has examined the placement (Alderman 2006; Light 2004; Rose-Redwood 2008) and economic impacts (Mitchelson, Alderman and Popke 2007) of street naming, the patriotic significance of county naming (Zelinsky 1988), and most importantly for our purposes, toponyms as a signal of shared cultural and regional identity (Alderman and Beavers 1999; Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Reed 1976; Reed, Kohls, and Hanchette 1990; Shortridge 1987; Zelinsky 1980).

In this article, we examine the changing contours of shared regional identity in the South by replicating and extending John Shelton Reed's classic work published

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in the pages of *Social Forces* (Reed 1976). Like Reed, we analyze the frequency of the words “Dixie” and “Southern” among businesses in 100 cities. In addition to updating previous work, we examine the correlates of regional identification to better understand why some places more strongly identify with the South. Our results provide a measure of regional identity that could be used to explain a host of social and political phenomena and provide a deeper understanding of the changing dynamics of regional identification.

Collective Identity in the South

To many scholars of geography and culture, region is more than a physical area (Paasi 2003). This sense of collective identity is particularly prevalent in the literature on the American South. More than a half century ago, Cash (1941:428-29) argued that there was a distinct “mind of the south.” Reed (1982) also believed that there is a collective identity, particularly among white Southerners. More recently, Griffin (2006:7) summarized the sources of this collective identity, noting that the South was “exceptional in its fierce commitment to slavery, in its failed experiment with secession and nationhood, in its military defeat and occupation by a conquering power, in its poverty, cultural backwardness, and religiosity, and in its pervasive, prolonged resistance to racial justice.”

Southern collective identity also stems from political, demographic and cultural distinctiveness. A range of studies demonstrate that Southerners are more conservative than non-Southerners in a host of areas including religion, morality, international relations and race relations (Glenn and Simmons 1967; Hurlbert 1989; Kuklinski, Cobb and Gilens 1997; Rice, McLean, and Larsen 2002). Even today, the South remains demographically distinct with higher percentages of blacks, lower percentages of high school graduates, lower housing values, lower household incomes and higher percentages of people in poverty (Cooper and Knotts 2004). Southerners also have distinct table manners and maintain strong loyalty to family ties, causing some to label white Southerners a “quasi-ethnic regional group.” (Reed 1982:3)

Nevertheless, there has been some compelling evidence that collective identity and Southern distinctiveness are declining, particularly when “defined against an earlier South that was somehow more authentic, real, more unified and distinct.” (Ayers 2005:46) In 1958, Ashmore wrote *An Epitaph for Dixie*, and much later Degler (1987) noted that the South was being northernized. Others, such as Cobb (2000:3), have defended Southern distinctiveness and identity, noting that “the South has outlived many of its epitaphers.” Similarly, Applebome (1996) argued that the decline of Southern distinctiveness is real, but not because the South is becoming more like the rest of the country. Instead, he makes the case that the rest of the country is becoming more Southern.

Frameworks for Understanding the Changing South

One way to understand changing collective identity in the South is by examining naming trends in the region. Alderman (2008) provides two conceptual frameworks for understanding these naming trends: naming as symbolic capital and naming as symbolic resistance. According to Alderman (2008:196), “naming as symbolic capital is a theme that recognizes how place names are evoked to bring distinction and status to landscapes and people associated with them.” The second framework, naming as symbolic resistance emphasizes that “racial and ethnic minorities are increasingly turning to place renaming as a strategy for challenging the dominance of white-controlled commemoration and asserting the legitimacy of their historical achievements.”

This broader framework is particularly useful when understanding recent trends in the contemporary South. Alderman and Beavers (1999) identify three region-specific trends: de-Confederatization, re-Confederatization and African Americanization. De-Confederatization, as the name suggests, occurs when traditional Southern names are removed. A number of high-profile events indicate the region’s increasing de-Confederatization. Examples of this shift include the abandonment of “Colonel Rebel” at the University of Mississippi, the removal of the Confederate Flag from the South Carolina State House and the elimination of the phrase “Heart of Dixie” from Alabama’s license plate (Associated Press 2004). The de-Confederatization trend would suggest that the frequency of “Dixie” and “Southern” mentions in business names have dropped over time.

Despite signs of de-Confederatization, some argue that Southerners are responding to a perceived loss of Southern exceptionalism through re-Confederatization, “the creation, preservation, and reaffirmation of place-naming references to Dixie and the Confederacy, often but not always occurring after calls to remove them.” (Alderman and Beavers 1999:195) A recent example of re-Confederatization occurred in Duvall County, Florida, where a school board consisting of three white and two black members voted to retain the name “Nathan Bedford Forrest High School” at a majority black school (Sanders 2008b). One supporter argued for keeping the name, noting that Forrest, an early Ku Klux Klan leader, was “nice to his slaves” and that “the only people [in favor of the name change] are people from the North who don’t care about our heritage.” (Sanders 2008a) There is also an active and influential neo-Confederate movement throughout the South, exemplified through magazines like the *Southern Partisan* (Hague, Beirich and Sebesta 2008). In addition, eight states currently give their citizens the opportunity to display a Sons of Confederate Veterans license plate, complete with the Confederate Battle Flag (Wright 2009). The SCV supports re-Confederatization through its “Chief of Heritage Defense.” Re-Confederatization suggests that we may see a rise in “Dixie” and “Southern” naming as whites struggle to hold on to what they view as their Southern heritage.

A final trend in the modern South is African Americanization, the “rescripting of the landscape to reflect the achievements, ideals, and heroes of Black southerners.” (Alderman and Beavers 1999:195) This growing movement to identify the region with the civil rights movement represents an important development in the South (Dwyer and Alderman 2008). While the most obvious examples of this trend are found in the increasing numbers of streets, monuments and buildings named after Martin Luther King, Jr. (Alderman 1996), there are many other examples including Booker T. Washington monument in Tuskegee, Alabama, the African-American Memorial on the capitol grounds in Columbia, South Carolina, and the Carrie A. Tuggle Memorial in Birmingham, Alabama (Dwyer and Alderman 2008).

Reed’s Approach

Reed examined a range of unobtrusive measures in his quest to understand the South’s culture, geography and politics. He portrayed the socioeconomic South by mapping kudzu growth, cotton cultivation, housing units with indoor plumbing, illiteracy rates and active dentists per 1,000 residents (Reed 1993). Because his focus was primarily on white Southerners, Reed’s cultural South was also reflected by members of Baptist churches, birthplaces of country music notables and states mentioned in country music lyrics.

Most important for our purposes, Reed and his colleagues (Reed 1976; Reed, Kohls and Hanchette 1990) studied business names in the South. This work assumes that business names have symbolic meaning. In addition to helping attract customers, business naming is an opportunity for business owners to make a statement. This statement is often about the product, but sometimes, business names may also say something about an owner’s identity and values.

Reed determined “Southern” entries as a proportion of “American” entries (S scores) and “Dixie” entries as a proportion of “American” entries (D scores) in phone books from a “vaguely purposive” sample of cities (Reed 1976:926). Given this, a city with 50 “Dixie” and 50 “American” entries would receive a D score of 1.0. Similarly, a city with 50 “Southern” entries and 100 “American” entries would have an S score of .5. This strategy allowed Reed (1976:925) to answer three questions: “(1) where is the South (defined this way); (2) where is Dixie?; (3) what is the relation between the two?”

In his initial study, Reed (1976:934) found that S scores were generally higher than D scores, perhaps because “Dixie is, as one journalist observed, ‘a *meaner* word’ than Southerner.” He also found that the S score mirrored boundaries of the South drawn by sociologists and geographers, but the D score was used primarily in the Deep South. Although the two were correlated, Reed concluded that the S score measures both regionalism and sectionalism “while D is more unambiguously a measure of the latter,” adding that Dixie “has more to do with attitude than latitude.”

In later work, Reed, Kohls and Hanchette (1990:222) provided more contrasts between the words “Southern” and “Dixie” noting that, “Dixie is a relatively pure measure of sectional identification, usually connoting a shared history of exceptionalism and opposition to the rest of the country; Southern can have the same connotations, but it can also indicate merely integration into the South’s developing economy.” Summing up the differences between the two terms, Reed and his colleagues concluded that “Dixie evoked the Old South of plantation agriculture, Southern the New South of commerce and industry.”

Alderman and Beavers (1999) replicated Reed’s work, focusing solely on D scores. This research highlights the trend of de-Confederatization as D scores in his study were significantly lower than those found in earlier work. Despite this larger trend, the authors caution that some Southern cities exhibit signs of re-Confederatization as well. Alderman and Beavers (1999:203) also discuss the “hybridity of southern regional identification” noting that “identity for African American and Whites in the South is a series of multiple and overlapping historical and geographic subjectivities.”

Although previous work does an admirable job cataloging the changes in D and S scores over time, there has been no effort to explain what makes regional identification vary across the South. In his 1976 article, Reed argued that high D scores represented the Old South and high S scores represented the New South but did not explore the characteristics of cities with high (or low) D and S scores. In the 1990 article, Reed and his colleagues demonstrated considerable changes in D and S scores between 1976 and 1988, and although they inferred that some systematic factors may explain these changes, they did not empirically model differences. Alderman and Beavers (1999:202) call for more investigation of “the social relations or politics underlying these patterns,” but do not empirically examine these trends.

Our Approach

We begin our study by updating Reed’s work with data from 2008. Using an online phone directory, we identify businesses named “Dixie” and “Southern.”¹ Of course, this method is not without its faults. Choosing to use terms like “Dixie” and “Southern” might reflect what business owners think is socially acceptable, rather than their internal beliefs. There is no way to know for sure why a business owner chooses to name his or her business “Dixie Mini Storage,” but other measures face similar problems. For example, a person might give a socially desirable answer to a survey question, rather than answering truthfully.

We include not only businesses that start with the words “Dixie,” “Southern” and “American,” but also businesses that have the words anywhere in their title. Although this departs from the strictest replication of Reed’s analysis, it is within the spirit of what Reed was trying to accomplish. If “Dixie” is important as the first word in a business, it is important as the second, third or fourth word as well.

We think the “2 Chicks from Dixie” gift shop in Jackson, Mississippi belongs in our dataset just as much as “Dixie Cremation Service” in Montgomery, Alabama.

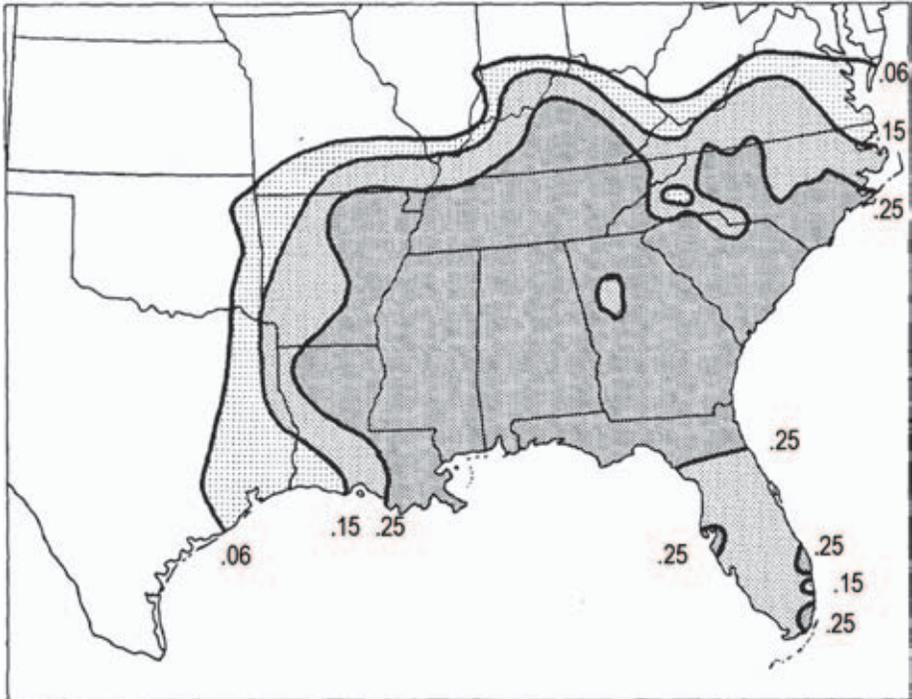
Reed also makes a judgment call about whether “Southern” in the title modifies a state or region. Because we have no way to know the intent of the business owner, we include these entries in our analysis. Given the lack of such specific knowledge of intent, we believe the most responsible course of action is to include all entries with “Southern” and avoid judgment calls which might cause us to bias the sample in one way or another. It is important to emphasize that we use the same procedures when collecting the “American” data. Because we estimate both the numerator and the denominator using an identical procedure, the relative proportions should be comparable across both our data collection and Reed’s data collection.

Finally, we did not include entries for the grocery store chain Winn-Dixie in our dataset. Reed did not include Winn-Dixie perhaps because the stores are distributed unevenly across the country and the South. For example, in the company’s corporate headquarters of Jacksonville, Florida, 87 percent of “Dixie” listings are Winn-Dixie stores. In Miami, Florida, hardly the epicenter of the Old South, 60 percent of the “Dixie” listings are Winn-Dixie. Clearly, this one large player would distort the concepts we are trying to measure in our study.²

After replicating Reed’s work, we extend his analysis by investigating the correlates of regional identification for the 100 cities in Reed’s original sample. We model D and S scores in 1976, 1988, 1998 and 2008³ as a function of three independent variables: educational achievement, the relative size of the black population and population density. Because studies demonstrate that more educated people are less likely to support the Confederate flag (Cooper and Knotts 2006; Reingold and Wike 1998), we expect that cities where people are more educated will have lower D and S scores. Previous studies have also demonstrated that people in less densely populated areas may be more supportive of traditional symbols of the Old South, such as the Confederate flag (Cooper and Knotts 2006). Consequently, we expect that areas with less population density will have higher D and S scores.

Areas with the highest black populations are often located in the Deep South which is where we would expect the highest D and S scores. There is also literature suggesting that racial context has a particularly strong impact on the social and political attitudes and actions of whites, although the direction of this relationship is more difficult to discern. Racial threat theory demonstrates that in areas with higher concentrations of blacks, whites are less likely to support busing (Giles 1977), more likely to vote for David Duke (Giles and Buckner 1993), and more likely to hold a host of conservative racial attitudes (Taylor 1998). These studies make us think that whites in areas with high black populations will be more likely to embrace traditional Southern labels. Another line of thinking suggests that racial context will make it less likely for businesses to be named “Dixie.” Whites may depend on a black customer base and the economic costs of a name like “Dixie” may be too high. Given these cross pressures, it is difficult to predict how the black

Figure 1. John Shelton Reed's Map of the Proportion of "Dixie" to "American" Entries in Phone Books, 1976



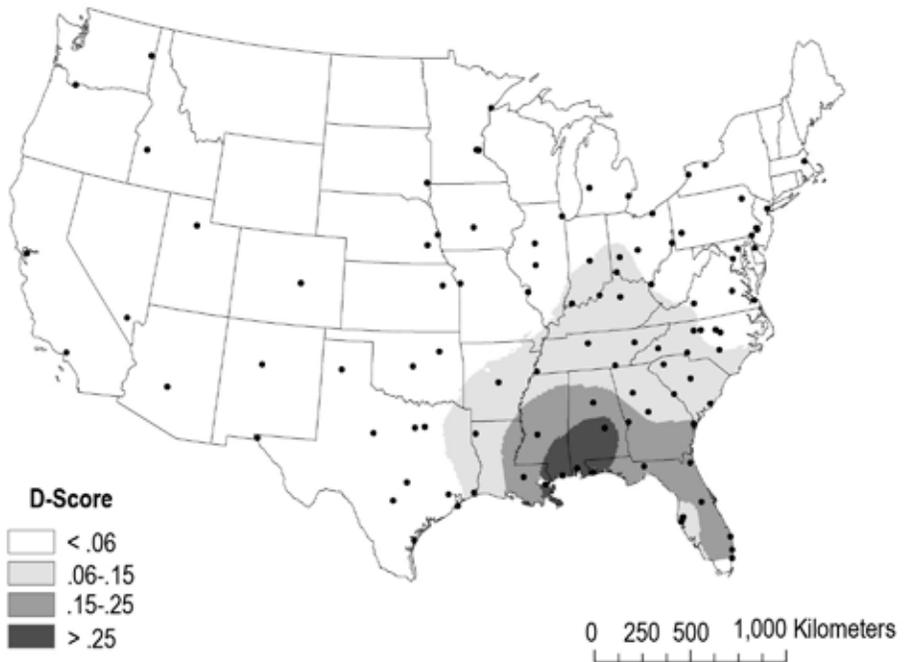
Note: Reed, John Shelton. 1976. "The Heart of Dixie: An Essay in Folk Geography." *Social Forces* 54(4):925-39.

population variable will affect naming patterns. This point is well-summarized by Alderman and Beavers (1999:202) who note that Southern blacks "take very complicated and contradictory positions within the South's geography of naming, positions that do not always find expression on our maps."

Identification with the Old and New South

To begin our analysis we replicate Reed's original study, calculating the D and S score for all 100 cities in his sample. A complete listing of D and S scores appears in the Appendix. Following previous work (Reed 1976; Reed, Kohls and Hanchette 1990) we also map D and S scores.

For comparison purposes, Figure 1 presents Reed's (1976) original map of D scores and Figure 2 is our map of D scores in 2008. To produce our map, we began with the data collection procedure described above. We then used an ordinary krigging method to interpolate the data in between points (Issaks and Srivastava 1990) and, using Arc GIS 9.3, placed each location into one of the four ranges used by Reed (1976).

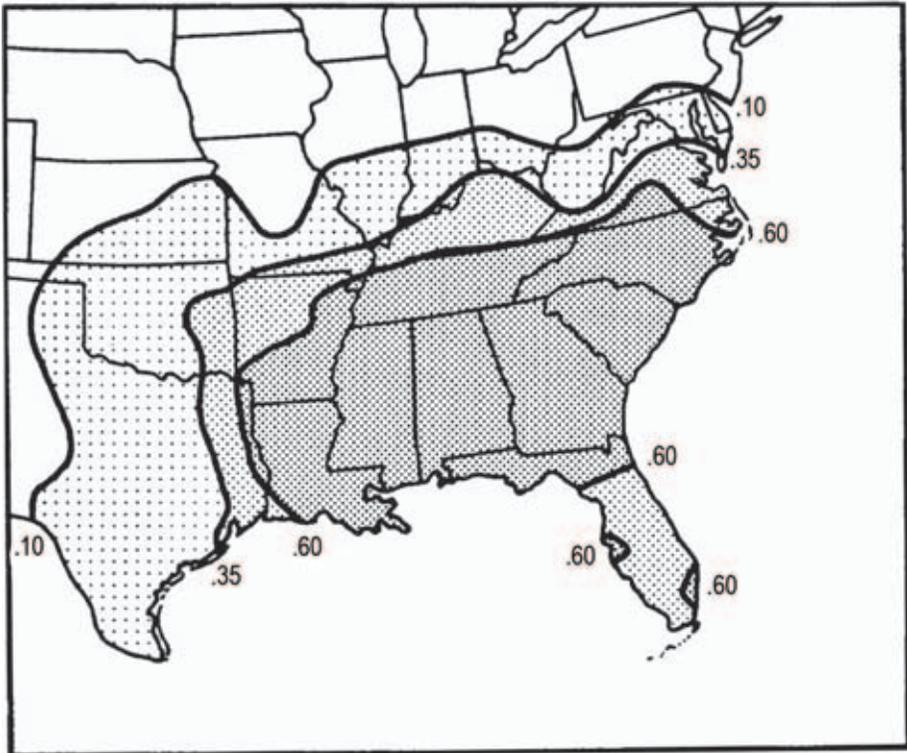
Figure 2. Map of the Proportion of “Dixie” to “American” Entries in Phone Books, 2008

Note: Created using Arc GIS 9.3 and an ordinary kriging method.

Comparing the two D-score maps shows quite a few changes in naming patterns from 1976 through 2008. Figure 1 shows a core region with a D score greater than .25 that coincides with most common definitions of the South. Even in 1976, southern Florida, metropolitan Atlanta, western North Carolina, Texas and most of Virginia appeared less southern than the core South. Figure 2 shows that the prevalence of D score has dropped considerably across the South, although there are still pockets of strength. In particular, southern Alabama and southern Mississippi still have a large number of establishments using the name “Dixie.” D scores ranging from greater than .15 to .25 extend through parts of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and southern Georgia. The third layer includes parts of the aforementioned states, as well as Kentucky, Tennessee, and areas of North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Arkansas. Most of Virginia, as well as the majority of eastern North Carolina appear in the lowest category of less than .06.

Comparisons between the S-score maps present a much different picture. Figure 3 displays Reed’s (1976) map of S scores and Figure 4 includes our map of S scores from 2008. Although they were created more than 30 years apart, both maps look strikingly similar. The highest concentration of “Southern” to “American” entries in 1976 is similar to the highest concentration in 2008. The only exception is that eastern North Carolina, southern Virginia and northern Tennessee have moved to

Figure 3. John Shelton Reed's Map of the Proportion of "Southern" to "American" Entries in Phone Books, 1976

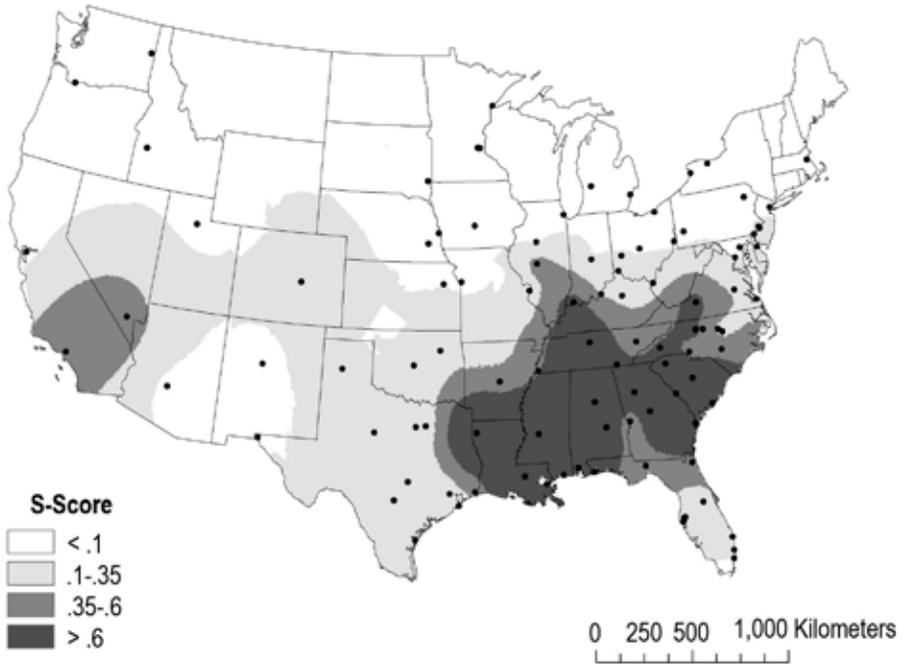


Note: Reed, John Shelton. 1976. "The Heart of Dixie: An Essay in Folk Geography." *Social Forces* 54(4):925-39.

the second highest category. In both 1976 and 2008, the category with the second highest proportion of "Southern" to "American" listings forms a band around the core South that includes parts of southern Virginia, portions of Kentucky, most of Arkansas, southern Illinois, East Texas, and central and northern Florida.⁴

Our descriptive statistics confirm that the prevalence of the word "Dixie" has dropped dramatically over the past 30 years. The mean D score in 1976 was .17, and it dropped to .09 in 1988 and .07 in 1998. The drop has continued with a mean D score of .05 in 2008. The standard deviation has become much more compact (from .20 to .12 to .08 to .07), suggesting that cities are more similar than they used to be. Further, about half of the cities in Reed's original sample had a D score of .20 or greater compared to about 4 percent in 2008. By examining specific cities, we see that the top three D scores in 1976 were Macon, Biloxi-Gulfport and Augusta; the top three D-score cities in 1988 were Columbus, Macon and Jackson; in 1998, the top cities were Montgomery, New Orleans and Tallahassee. By 2008, the top three cities were Biloxi-Gulfport, Louisville and Montgomery.

Figure 4. Map of the Proportion of “Southern” to “American” Entries in Phone Books, 2008



Note: Created using Arc GIS 9.3 and an ordinary kriging method.

The maps and descriptive statistics show a dramatic decline in the use of the word “Dixie,” suggesting that the Old South is shrinking. The question remains whether the proportions are shifting at similar rates across cities, or whether some cities are experiencing more dramatic shifts than others. Comparing correlation coefficients between D scores over time, we find that cities with lower D scores in previous years are in general, more likely to have lower D scores at later time periods, although this pattern fades as the time between measures grows. For example, the correlation between the D score in 1976 and the D score in 1988 is .88. The D scores in 1988 and 2008 are correlated at .67, and the D scores in 1998 and 2008 are correlated at .66. Not surprisingly, the fit between 1976 and 2008 is somewhat lower at .62.

A closer examination of S scores over time suggests that S and D are measuring different concepts. The S score means are much closer than they were for the D scores. The mean S scores in 1976 was .38, compared to .36 in 1988, and .35 in 2008. Further, there are still some cities that frequently use the word “Southern,” including nine cities where businesses are more likely to refer to themselves as “Southern” than “American” (an S score of greater than 1). Comparatively, there

were four cities in 1976 with S scores greater than 1.0 and 10 cities in 1988. Turning to specific cities, Macon, Augusta and Biloxi-Gulfport had the highest S scores in 1976, and Columbus, Biloxi-Gulfport and Savannah had the highest S scores in 1988. By 2008, the cities with the largest S scores were Shreveport, Baton Rouge and Birmingham. The correlation between the S score in 1976 and the S score in 1988 is .91. Scores in 1988 and 2008 are correlated at .79, and the fit between 1976 and 2008 is .82.

In sum, the picture that emerges from the analysis of “Southern” entries is much different than the pattern we saw for “Dixie.” Businesses are not moving away from “Southern” like they are from “Dixie.” Nostalgia for the Old South appears to be declining, but it is still possible to express regional identity without harkening back to the days of the Confederacy. At least for business owners, the word “Southern” is still fairly mainstream. Our data, therefore, do not reveal a decline of regional identity *per se*, as much as a decline of identification with the Old South.

To provide further evidence of the growing differences between D and S, we computed a series of correlation coefficients between D and S scores for each time period. This analysis reveals that the relationship between these concepts was once fairly strong. In 1976, the correlation was .84 and in 1988 the correlation was .87. Today, the relationship between D and S scores is a much lower .59. This finding suggests that these concepts were more similar in the past and that “Dixie” and “Southern” have increasingly different meanings in 2008.

Explaining Identification with the Old and New South

To extend earlier work, we model Reed’s D and S scores in 1976, Reed, Kohls, and Hanchette’s D and S scores from 1988, Alderman and Beavers’ D scores from 1998, and our D and S scores from 2008. Table 1 presents the Ordinary Least Squares regression results for seven models. The unit of analysis is the city, and we obtained the independent variables from the most recent U.S. Census prior to data collection. Therefore, we used data from the 1970 U.S. Census for the 1976 models, the 1980 U.S. Census for the 1988 models, the 1990 U.S. Census for the 1998 models, and the 2000 U.S. Census for the 2008 models. Each of the columns includes values for the unstandardized regression coefficients and the corresponding t-ratios. Recall that we expect educational attainment and population density will be negatively associated with the dependent variables across time. We are more agnostic, however, about the expected effects of the relative size of the black population. Racial threat theory would suggest a positive relationship, while rational economic interests would suggest a negative relationship.

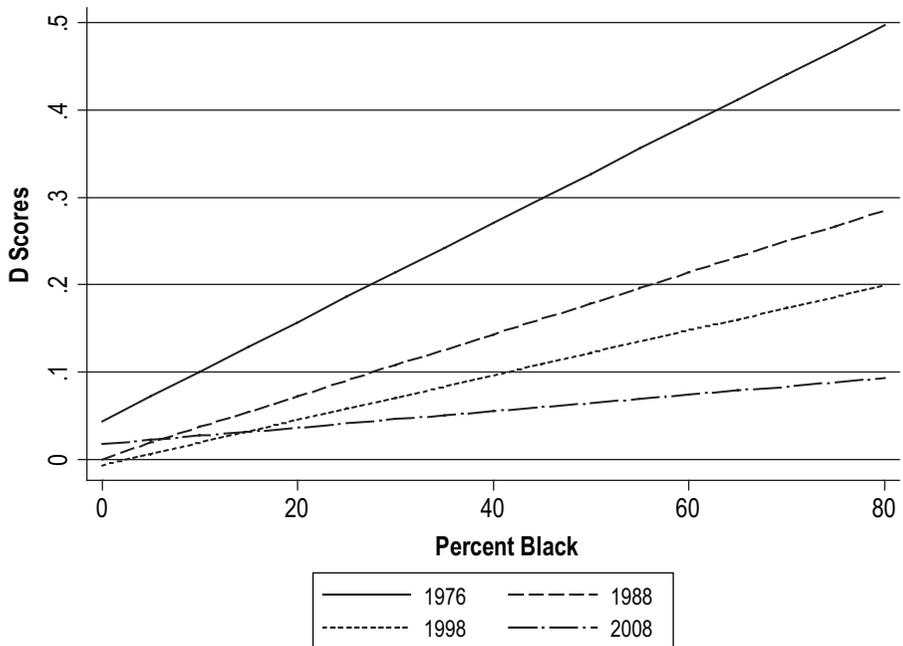
Modeling Reed’s D and S scores from 1976, we find that cities with higher black populations during this time period also had higher D and S scores. Cities with higher percentages of college-educated people have higher S scores, but education did not have an impact on the D score. Population density was not significantly related to either D or S scores in 1976.

Table 1: OLS Regression Models Predicting The Ratio of 'Dixie' to 'American' Entries and 'Southern' to 'American' Entries in City Phone Books.

	1976		1988		1998		2008	
	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S
% Black	.006*** (4.49)	.013*** (6.12)	.004*** (6.03)	.014*** (7.89)	.003*** (7.38)	.011*** (6.27)	.001*** (2.98)	.010*** (6.27)
% College Educated	.006 (1.29)	.024*** (3.21)	.001 (.50)	.011** (2.07)	.001 (1.52)	.004 (.93)	-.001 (-.95)	.004 (.93)
Population Density	-.013 (-.36)	-.038 (-.63)	-.017*** (-4.99)	-.064*** (-6.21)	-.012*** (-5.64)	-.006*** (-3.09)	-.006*** (-3.09)	-.055*** (-5.50)
Constant	-.171 (-3.3)	-.171 (-1.49)	.047 (1.14)	.016 (.12)	.005 (.20)	.059** (2.26)	.059** (2.26)	.165 (1.30)
Adjusted R ²	.16	.29	.33	.47	.42	.14	.14	.38
F	7.09***	14.66***	17.03***	29.62***	24.66***	6.20**	6.20**	21.04***
N	99	99	98	98	99	100	100	100

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients. Numbers in parentheses are t-ratios.
 *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01 two-tailed test

Figure 5. The Influence of Black Density on D Scores



Note: D Scores are computed as the number of Dixie entries divided by the number of American entries in city phone directories.

Modeling Alderman and Beavers' 1998 D scores presents similar results to our 1988 D-score model. Once again, cities with higher black concentrations had higher D scores, and cities with higher population densities had lower D scores. For the 2008 models, percent black is once again a statistically significant predictor of both D and S scores. Similar to the 1988 and 1998 models, population density is again negative and significant for the D-score and S-score models. College education, however, is not significant in the 2008 models. Together, these findings point to the overwhelming importance of race in predicting identification with the South. Consistent with racial threat theory, cities with higher concentrations of blacks are likely to have more businesses names that identify with both the Old and the New South.

To gain a better sense of the relationship between the D score and the black density variable over time, we generated predicted values of D scores in 1976, 1988, 1998 and 2008 at each level of black density, while holding all other variables at their sample means (King, Tomz and Wittenberg 2000; Tomz, Wittenberg and King 2003). These results, presented in Figure 5, demonstrate the substantive significance of racial context at each of the four time periods. In a city with a relatively high proportion of blacks (around 80 percent), the predicted D score is almost .5 in 1976, compared with about .3 in 1988, .2 in 1998, and .09 in

2008.⁵ In all, Figure 5 suggests that although race continues to be important, racial context does not have the same influence that it once did. In cities with few blacks, there have never been high D scores, and although there has been a drop in D scores in these cities, it is not substantial. In cities with higher black density, however, the drop in D scores has been considerable.

Discussion

Our study replicates and extends Reed's classic research on regional identification. This replication provides evidence of the continued de-Confederatization of the American South. We demonstrate that collective identity with the Old South is declining, as the use of "Dixie" has decreased precipitously across the United States. Growing African Americanization in the South may be one factor contributing to this decline. Not only is there increased competition for potential names, but the political and economic consequences of connecting to the Old South are greater than ever. In today's society, most businesses cannot afford to name a business "Dixie" and risk alienating much of the population. As John Shelton Reed noted in 2004, "If you're a businessperson, why do you want a name that's going to raise anybody's hackles?" (Associated Press 2004)

Despite widespread de-Confederatization, we find that use of the word "Southern" has stayed fairly constant over time. Today, more than at any other point in time, there is a clear difference between a business owner naming her business "Dixie" and naming it "Southern." As a result of this growing difference, we suggest another trend not offered by Alderman and Beavers (1999). The preservation of "Southern" place names points to a re-southernization—the creation, preservation and reaffirmation of place-naming references to the South (but not necessarily to the Old Confederacy). This trend may be fueled in part by the increasing popularity of the "Southern" brand. In recent years, the South has developed considerable brand identity and is frequently marketed to those who tour and relocate to the region. The quintessential example is Atlanta, a city with a large black population and substantial in-migration from the North that promotes itself as the "Capital of the New South." Another factor contributing to re-southernization may be the in-migration of blacks, a group that displays an increasing affinity for the region (Cobb 2005). Whatever the reason for this re-southernization, it is clear that the modern South is one where southern business-owners have learned to express regional pride without harkening back to the negative stereotypes associated with the Old South.

Our study also extends Reed's work by explaining variation in place naming across 100 cities at four different time periods and presenting a more nuanced interpretation of the decline in regional identity. In the mid 1970s, following the aftermath of the civil rights movement and amidst an era of busing, our results demonstrate that racial context was the only significant predictor of place names connected to the Old South. Contrary to our expectations, college education and

population density were not factors in explaining the variation in D scores in 1976. Cities with higher levels of education and a more cosmopolitan orientation did not have significantly different levels of regional identification in 1976.

In 1988, 1998 and 2008, racial context remained important. However, economic pressures and a growing sensitivity to the black customer base likely led to a decrease in these types of business names—particularly in areas with high black concentrations. Our expectations about the effects of population density were confirmed. Density emerged as a significant predictor of regional identification, demonstrating that it was likely less acceptable to name a business “Dixie” in more cosmopolitan areas.

Going forward, we believe that D and S scores provide an unobtrusive and easily replicable means of measuring the South. Advances in technology mean that future work should move beyond Reed’s 100 cities and focus on small towns and rural areas of the South. Future studies could also explore uses of “Dixie” and “Southern” at the state-wide level. Rather than relying on whether the state is located in the Old Confederacy, future scholars should consider employing continuous measures of regional identity, such as D and S scores, to provide a more nuanced understanding of the South. Similar techniques could also be applied to study the increased prevalence of black naming in the South (Dwyer and Alderman 2008) and the growing study of regional identity in nation states across the world (Paasi 2003).

The study of regional identity has changed considerably since Reed’s seminal work. Studying the politics of naming can still provide keen insights on regional identity, but scholars should consider supplementing previously used techniques. To truly understand the politics of naming, future researchers should also consider surveying and interviewing business owners. Talking to the proprietors and patrons of “2 Chicks from Dixie” will go a long way to better understanding this evolving American region.

Notes

1. We performed all searches at <http://www.whitepages.com/>.
2. Other than increasing the D score disproportionately, keeping Winn-Dixie in the dataset makes virtually no difference in the results of our multivariate models.
3. Reed included complete lists of D and S scores in his 1976 and 1990 articles, and Alderman and Beavers provided a complete list of D scores in their 1999 article.
4. The darker shade around Los Angeles and Las Vegas likely signals identification to the Southern California region.
5. We also modeled the difference between the 1976 D score and the 2008 D score and the 1976 S score and 2008 S score using the true difference method (Firebaugh and Beck 1994). In the change in D score model, the only significant predictor is the D score for 1976. In the change in S score model, there were two significant predictors: the S score in 1976 and the change in population density.

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Appendix. List of D and S Scores Ordered by City

City	State	D Score	S Score	City	State	D Score	S Score
Birmingham	AL	.057	1.264	Charlotte	NC	.052	.501
Mobile	AL	.105	1.049	Durham	NC	.009	.311
Montgomery	AL	.236	.873	Fayetteville	NC	.019	.533
Little Rock	AR	.069	.397	Greensboro	NC	.032	.511
Phoenix	AZ	.002	.029	Raleigh	NC	.014	.250
Los Angeles	CA	.003	.543	Winston-Salem	NC	.047	.709
San Francisco	CA	.002	.022	Lincoln	NE	.047	.019
Colorado Springs	CO	.003	.189	Omaha	NE	.008	.020
Washington	DC	.002	.038	Camden	NJ	.063	.375
Dover	DE	.024	.119	Newark	NJ	.023	.038
Wilmington	DE	.000	.040	Albuquerque	NM	.005	.059
Fort Lauderdale	FL	.053	.187	Las Vegas	NV	.004	.502
Jacksonville	FL	.034	.507	Buffalo	NY	.005	.046
Miami	FL	.049	.145	Rochester	NY	.006	.052
Orlando	FL	.048	.235	Cincinnati	OH	.008	.168
Pensacola	FL	.070	.692	Cleveland	OH	.005	.040
St Petersburg	FL	.026	.265	Columbus	OH	.002	.088
Tallahassee	FL	.021	.535	Dayton	OH	.206	.127
Tampa	FL	.025	.224	Oklahoma City	OK	.015	.132
West Palm Beach	FL	.132	.291	Tulsa	OK	.006	.188
Atlanta	GA	.033	.761	Portland	OR	.007	.010
Augusta	GA	.095	1.189	Philadelphia	PA	.001	.041
Columbus	GA	.038	.355	Pittsburgh	PA	.003	.041
Macon	GA	.011	.859	Scranton	PA	.000	.016
Savannah	GA	.198	1.147	Charleston	SC	.071	1.141
Des Moines	IA	.007	.033	Columbia	SC	.038	.759
Boise	ID	.008	.025	Greenville	SC	.147	.750
Chicago	IL	.002	.028	Sioux Falls	SD	.012	.036
Peoria	IL	.012	.024	Chattanooga	TN	.100	.688

Springfield	IL	.045	.573	Knoxville	TN	.161	.402
Evansville	IN	.035	.757	Memphis	TN	.121	.553
Indianapolis	IN	.010	.088	Nashville	TN	.059	.917
Topeka	KS	.000	.109	Abilene	TX	.033	.262
Lexington	KY	.056	.282	Amarillo	TX	.010	.133
Louisville	KY	.256	.313	Austin	TX	.010	.103
Baton Rouge	LA	.032	1.335	Corpus Christi	TX	.030	.295
New Orleans	LA	.139	1.023	Dallas	TX	.014	.160
Shreveport	LA	.158	1.425	El Paso	TX	.000	.052
Boston	MA	.004	.018	Fort Worth	TX	.016	.079
Baltimore	MD	.006	.120	Galveston	TX	.032	.355
Detroit	MI	.011	.060	Houston	TX	.032	.215
Grand Rapids	MI	.006	.053	Port Author	TX	.050	.300
Duluth	MN	.017	.000	San Antonio	TX	.033	.095
Minneapolis	MN	.009	.015	Salt Lake City	UT	.007	.037
St Paul	MN	.008	.035	Norfolk	VA	.038	.312
Kansas City	MO	.002	.066	Richmond	VA	.050	.341
St Louis	MO	.002	.105	Roanoke	VA	.076	.772
Biloxi-Gulf-Port	MS	.391	1.261	Spokane	WA	.005	.009
Jackson	MS	.174	.902	Huntington	WV	.023	.182
Asheville	NC	.047	.688	Wheeling	WV	.000	.048