



## CENTER FOR STUDIES IN DEMOGRAPHY & ECOLOGY

# Six Views of New England: Mapping Perceptions of New England Speech

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### Background

- The New England dialect region consists of six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont (see Fig 1)
- Contemporary studies of the region demonstrate traditional features are dissipating (Kim et al. 2018; Stanford et al. 2012; 2014; Nagy 2001)
- Perceptual dialectology studies of the region have been limited to smaller sub-regions within New England (Fernandes, Routhier & Ravindranath, 2014; Babcock 2014; Hartley 2005).
- We are adapting the methodology from Preston's (1986) Five Visions of America to understand New Englanders' perceptions of and attitudes towards dialect diversity within the region.

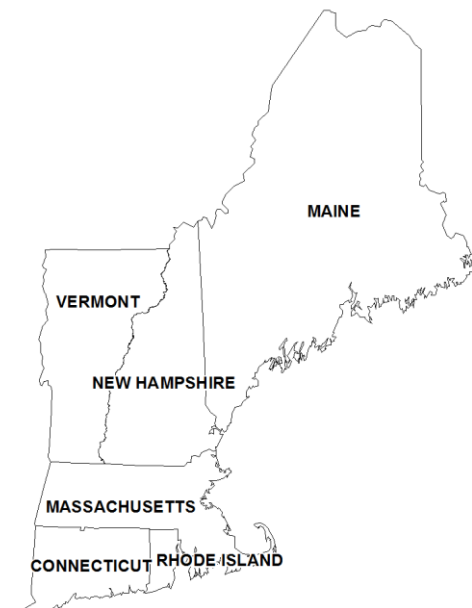


Figure 1: Map of six New England States

**RQs:** *Where do people identify distinct dialect regions in New England, and how do they evaluate these regions?*

### Folk Linguistics Online Mapping



- An open-source software based around the Leaflet JavaScript Library
- Allows researcher to collect perceptual dialectology data online with user-friendly interface
- Link to the Six Views survey can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ycuv2pxv>
- (Note: the survey is not viewable on cellphones or smaller tablets)



### Methods

#### Participants (n = 178)

- n by-state breakdown

Connecticut	30
Maine	28
Massachusetts	40
New Hampshire	28
Rhode Island	29
Vermont	23

#### Data Collection:

- Drew areas where they believed that people spoke differently and provided a label (name)
- Rated the regions they drew in terms of pleasantness, correctness, and similarity to their own way of speaking on a scale of 0 (least) – 5 (most).
- Asked to identify any stereotypes they had heard about these regions

#### Data Analysis

- Aggregated individual maps (Fig 2)
- Calculated frequency of overlap among regions drawn
- Divided scores of pleasant, correct, and similar into three parts (tertiles)
- Tertile breakdown for pleasant and correct scores:

	Lowest Tertile	Middle Tertile	Highest Tertile
Pleasantness	0-2.00	2.01-3.37	3.38-5.00
Correctness	0-1.96	1.97-3.34	3.35-5.00

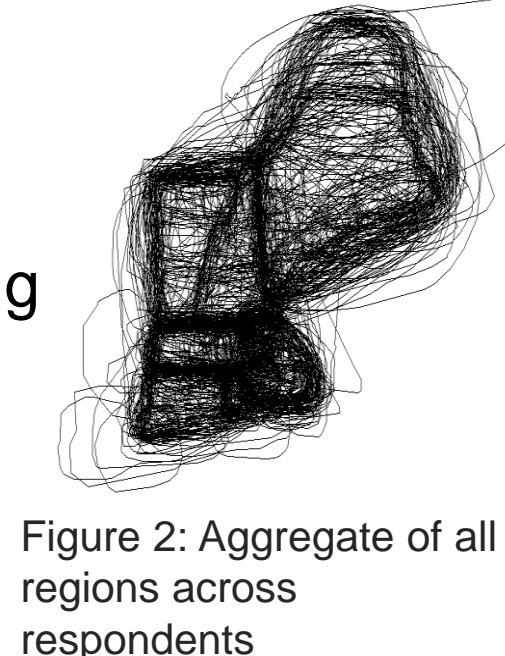
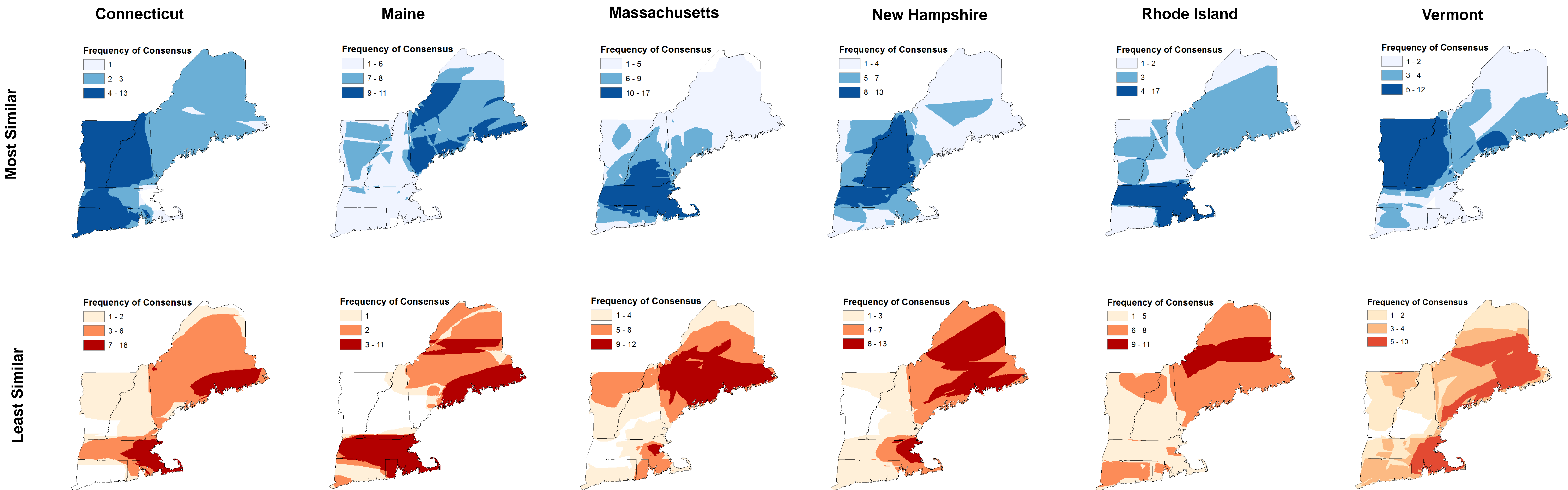


Figure 2: Aggregate of all regions across respondents

- Calculated frequency of overlap for each tertile individually
- Converted frequency counts to raster files for visualization.
- Darker shades indicate increased consensus among participants

### By-State Results—Similarity



### Results – Pleasantness & Correctness

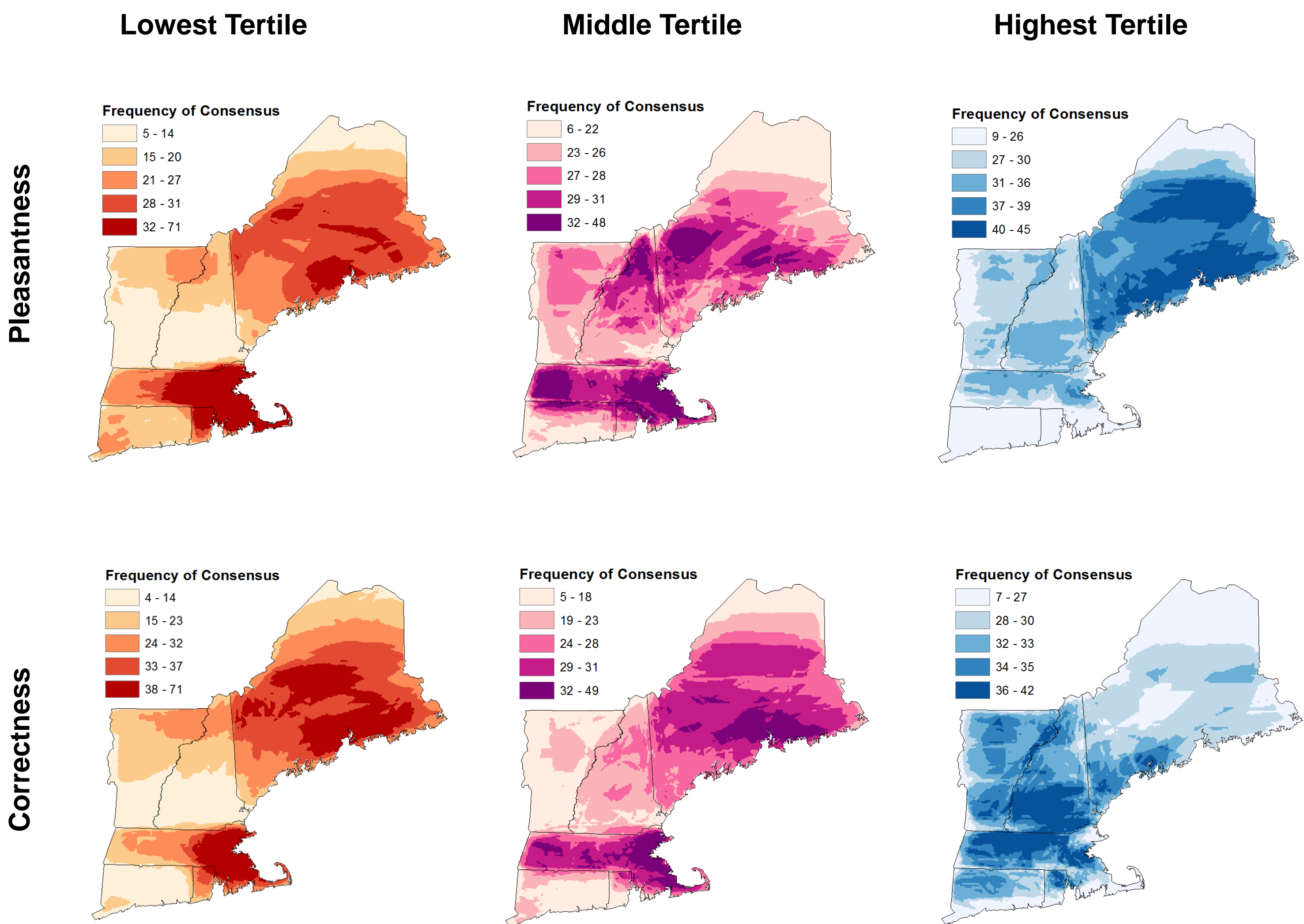


Figure 3: Aggregate of all regions given an evaluative rating

### Discussion & Future Work

*New Englanders have nuanced views :*

- Aggregation highlights salient dialect regions for New Englanders.
- Subsetting gives us a window to explore heterogeneous evaluations of these regions.
- Boston is most-frequently identified by participants, regardless of state, but evaluated differently.

*This method of analysis:*

- Highlights the variation that would be lost through aggregate means of scores.
- Facilitates visualization of variation by leveraging processing power of GIS applications.

*Future work :*

- Examine variation in attitudes towards dialect differences in New England, focusing on the relationship between sociodemographic factors and evaluations.
- Compare our method to other methods in Perceptual Dialectology research.