Trends in Popular Music Genres by US Region
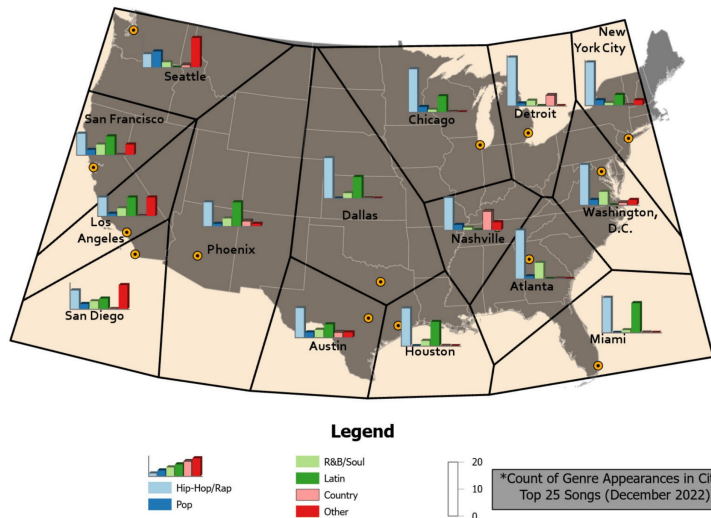
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Introduction

The global music charts normally provide a decent perspective on the taste of today's music listeners. However, popular tracks vary from country to country, city to city, and even person to person. This makes it hard to identify the listening habits of individuals across locations solely based on the current top hits. The purpose of this project is to determine how the geographic location of music listeners influences their preferred song genres.

Method

Data was obtained from Apple Music's Top 25 Lists[1] which rank the top 25 tracks in various cities around the world. An Excel sheet was created counting the number of times a genre appeared in each city's list, with genre being determined by Apple Music's given categorization. The "Other" genre constitutes any genre outside the primary five, mainly consisting of Christmas tracks and other themed songs. ArcGIS Pro was used to plot the charts for each city by geocoding the Excel sheet. Thiessen polygons were then created for each city to visualize the US region each city represents.

Results

Popular Song Genres Across the U.S.

Legend
Hip-Hop/Rap
Pop
R&B/Soul
Latin
Country
Other
20
10
0
*Count of Genre Appearances in City's Top 25 Songs (December 2022)

References

1. Apple Music Top 25 Playlists (https://music.apple.com/us/search?term=top%2025)
2. *The Geographic Flow of Music* by Conrad Lee and Pádraig Cunningham (https://arxiv.org/pdf/1204.2677.pdf)

Conclusions

Results were expected to show listening habits that match the culture and identity of its respective geographical region.[2] The available cities with Top 25 Lists allowed 15 distinct US regions to be created. Light blue was the most popular category for all regions except two, which shows that across the US Hip-Hop/Rap is generally the most listened genre regardless of region. Dark green (Latin) is sparse in the north but becomes more prevalent in southern regions, especially near Miami. This confirms our assumption since Latin listeners are more likely to be in the South due to proximity with Latin America. The Pink (Country) category is virtually non-existent in any region except Nashville, which is already known to be a hub for country music. An interesting pattern was Red being very prevalent in the western US, showing that this region adopts Christmas songs much earlier than the eastern US. Finally, Dark Blue and Light Green (Pop and R&B/Soul) were fairly uniform and minimal in their presence across the US which suggests that these genres don't particularly resonate with the culture of any region.

Acknowledgments