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Stage finishes - Mapping the locations and results of Tour de France (1903-2016)

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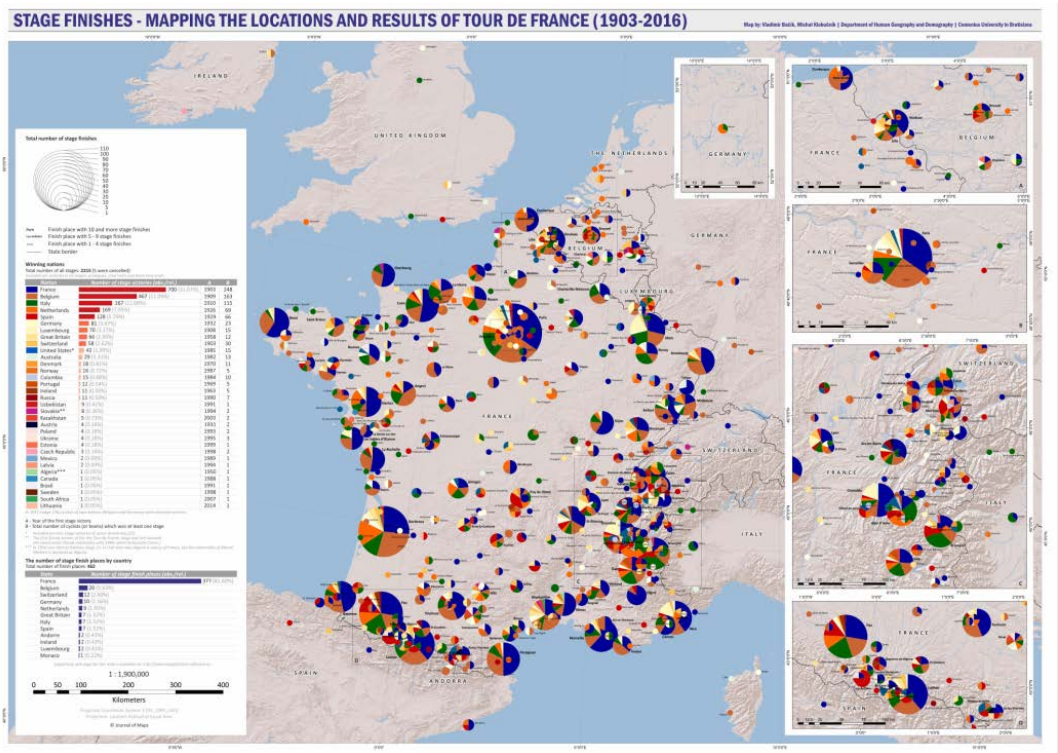
Abstract

The aim of this paper is to illustrate the history of one of the world's greatest multi-stage bicycle races, the Tour de France, by mapping all the finish places of the stages from the first race in 1903 to the present. There have been many finish places in the itinerary of the Tour de France in its 103 editions. On the one hand, there is a long list of places that the Tour de France has visited just once in its whole history, but on the other, there are also several places that different editions include fairly regularly. Since the Tour de France is one of the most watched sports events on the planet, spatial variability is a good means for promoting the different regions of France and the surrounding countries where individual stages have been held. The organisation of individual editions does not depend on the existence of purpose-built sports stadiums but makes use of the existing infrastructure and settlement structure that have developed over long periods. By showing the finish places, we are able to capture not only the frequency of the inclusion of the places in the race, but also show the success of cyclists from different countries at each stage finish and thus identify the countries that have historically been most successful at winning stages. The present paper presents a new perspective on the history of the most watched multi-stage bicycle race in the world.

Main map example