

Thinking geographically about spaces, places, and districts

Ruth Buck and Garrett Dash Nelson
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The where question

Describing and explaining the location and distribution of human and environmental phenomena

Investigating how geography structures all sorts of other processes, from cultural power to legal sovereignty to historical identification

How individual and group lives are situated in places

Spectrum of evidentiary sources: remote sensing data to psychogeography

Geography as a overlying field of study (the “left eye of history”) with superimposition on sociology, anthropology, economics, urban studies, ecology, demography, biology, etc.

A brief overview of geographic thought

Environmental determinism

Cultural and historical geography, relationship with anthropology

Political geography and “geopolitics”

Cartography and geodesy as a technical science

The “nomothetic/ideographic” debate and geography as “mere description”

Regional geography and the beginnings of regional science

Quantitative revolution and spatial theory

The Marxist turn in urban and economic geography

Computer mapping and early GIS

Poststructuralism and the new cultural geography

New trends ...

Space

abstract, geometric sense of space as container in which features are placed; the “isotropic plane”; basis for “spatial relations” and “spatial science”

Place

uneven, qualitatively textured pattern of distinct places as created by political, social, cultural processes over time; “sense of place” and “placemaking”

Yi-Fu Tuan

“Place: An Experiential Perspective,” *Geographical Review* (1975)

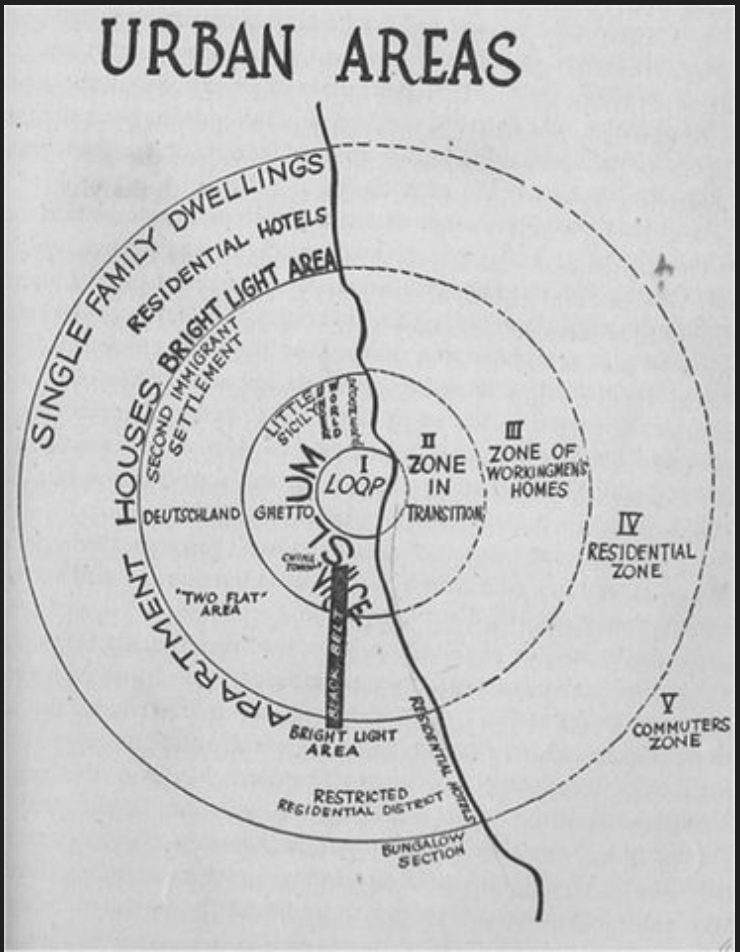
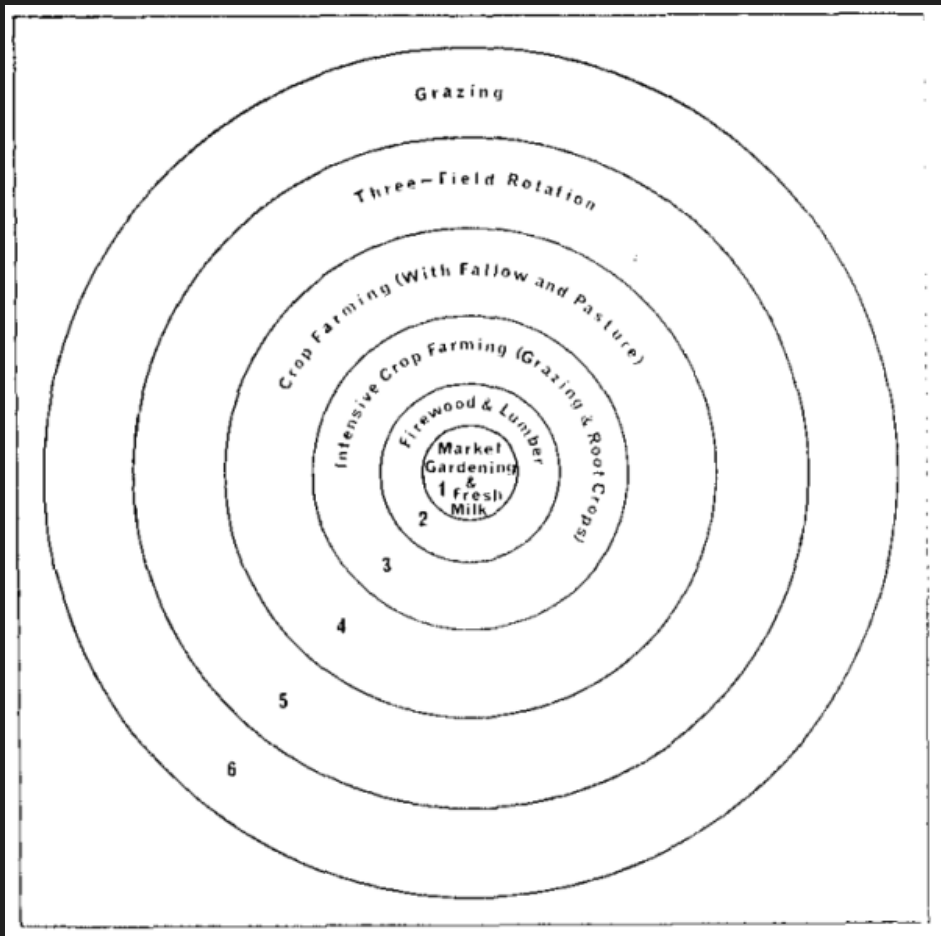
By common consent, cities are places, **worthy of proper names** and prominent labeling in school atlases; whereas the **neutral terms of space and area** apply to the emptier lands.

Territory

not just a boundary polygon drawn on a map but a specific area subject to political jurisdiction; emerges historically both through the consolidation of power and the emergence of autonomous communities

Scale

not just “zooming in and out” on a map, but processes of structuring and complexity relationships that operate across different levels of geography



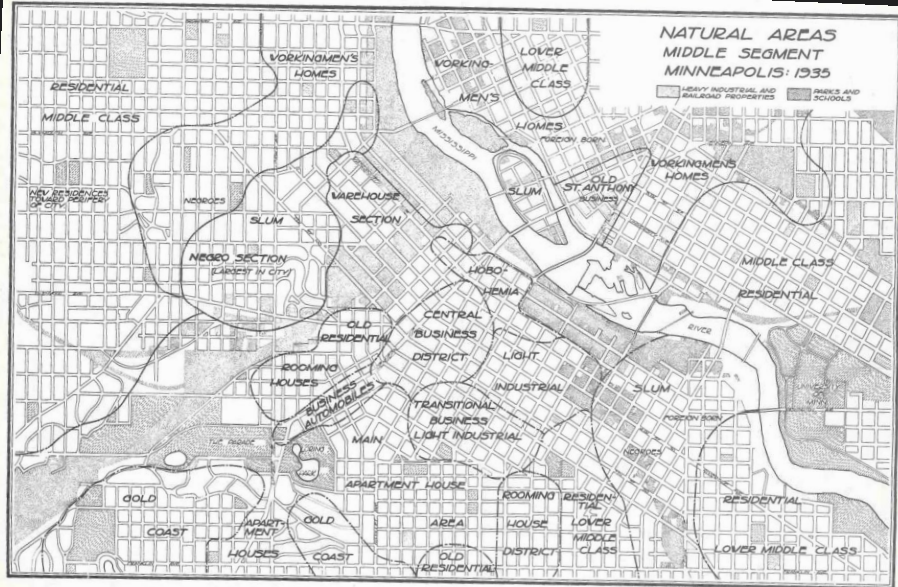
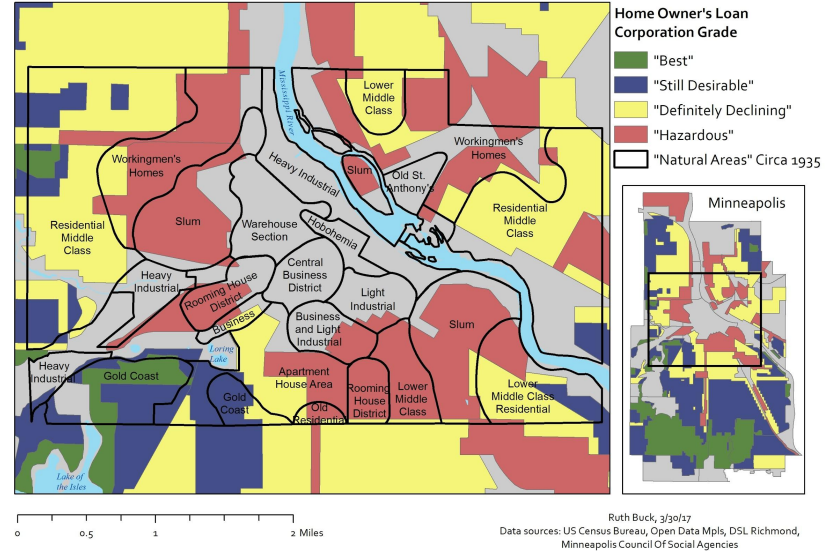
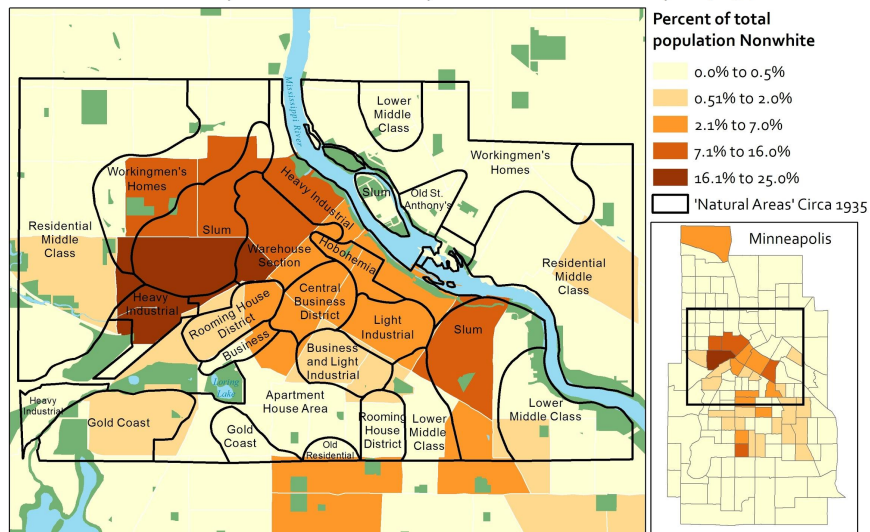


CHART 22

Redlining in Central Minneapolis, 1935 - 1940

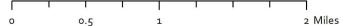


Percent of Population Nonwhite by Census Tract in Minneapolis, 1940

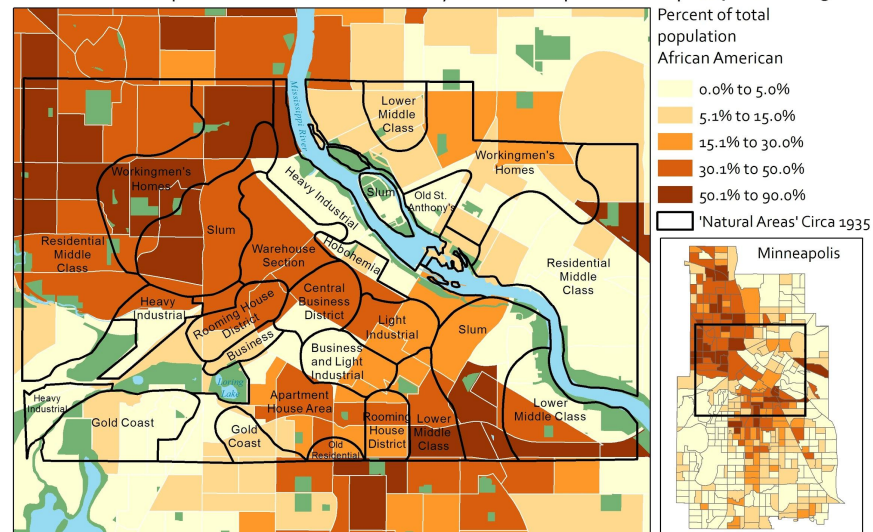


Ruth Buck, 4/25/2017

Data Sources: MNGeo, US Census Bureau, Open Data Minneapolis, and Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies

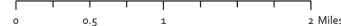


Percent of Population African American by Block Group in Minneapolis, 2011-2015



Ruth Buck, 2/20/2017

Data Sources: MNGeo, US Census Bureau, Open Data Minneapolis, and Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies



<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/42.3512/-71.1224&opacity=0.8&sort=221,222&city=boston-ma>

Key geographic questions about electoral districts

What are the reasons and justifications for categorizing political representation geographically in the first place?

What is the reciprocal relationship between geographic structure and political structure?

What would an approach to drawing “geographically” valid districts involve?

How to deal with the problem of variously sized fundamental units?

Carl Sauer

“Geography and the Gerrymander” *American Political Science Review* (1918)

The purpose of this article is to show the gerrymander to be a violation of the **geographic unity of regions** and to indicate the possibilities of equable representation by reorganizing **electoral districts on a geographic basis**.

A **region of geographic unity** is one in which conditions of life are in general similar because of similarity of environment.

Lingering assumptions about environmental determinism, despite Sauer's role in moving geography beyond that bias

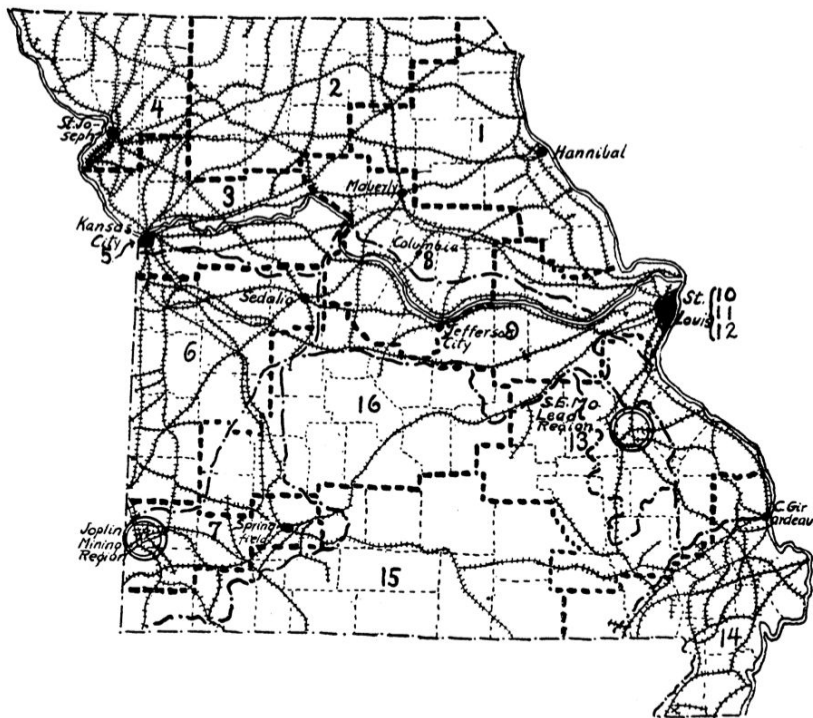


FIG. 4. GEOGRAPHIC REARRANGEMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS IN MISSOURI

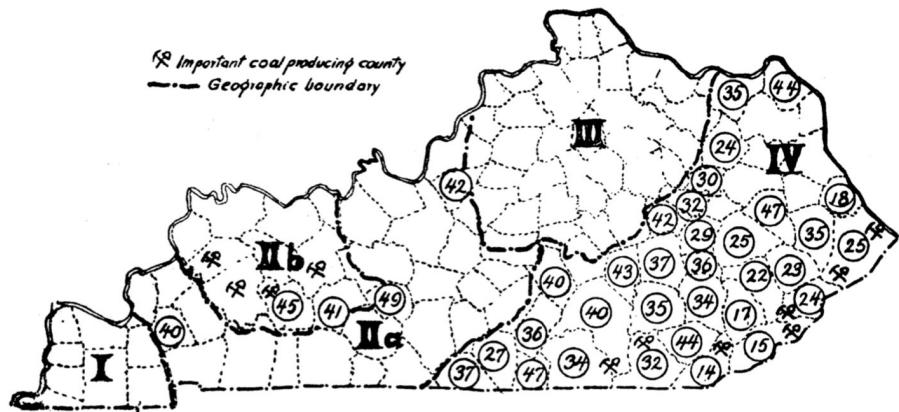


FIG. 5. GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS OF KENTUCKY

I, "Purchase" or Mississippi Lowlands; IIa and IIb, upland areas of western Kentucky, predominatingly limestone hills, IIb being "Coal Measures" area; III, Blue-Grass Lowlands; IV, "Mountains" of Kentucky, in reality a much dissected plateau. The circles indicate counties with less than 50 per cent of their total surface improved land, the numbers showing the percentage improved.

William Bunge

“Gerrymandering, geography, and grouping” *Geographical Review* (1966)

... the grouping of locations into an antigerrymandered state touches on some of the **deepest and most fundamental problems in regional geography.**

KM.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
A											
B	125										
C	240	165									
D	325	225	160								
E	475	400	260	185							
F	520	485	325	205	145						
G	605	530	395	335	155	260					
H	600	520	400	305	275	160	130				
I	655	545	500	350	280	155	285	175			
J	750	640	530	460	285	340	135	200	310		
K	752	625	540	430	300	260	240	160	135	225	

FIG. 4—Matrix of distances between the centers of British regions at the scale of eleven.

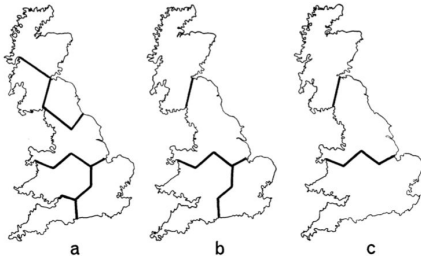
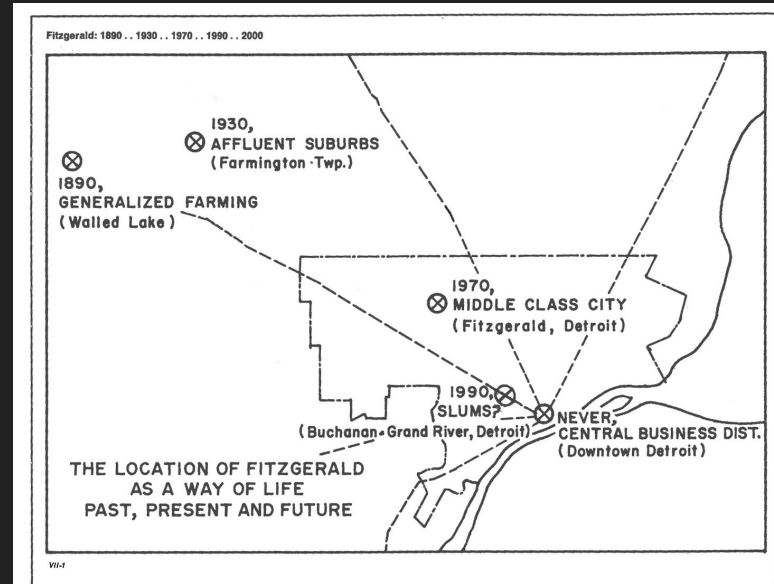
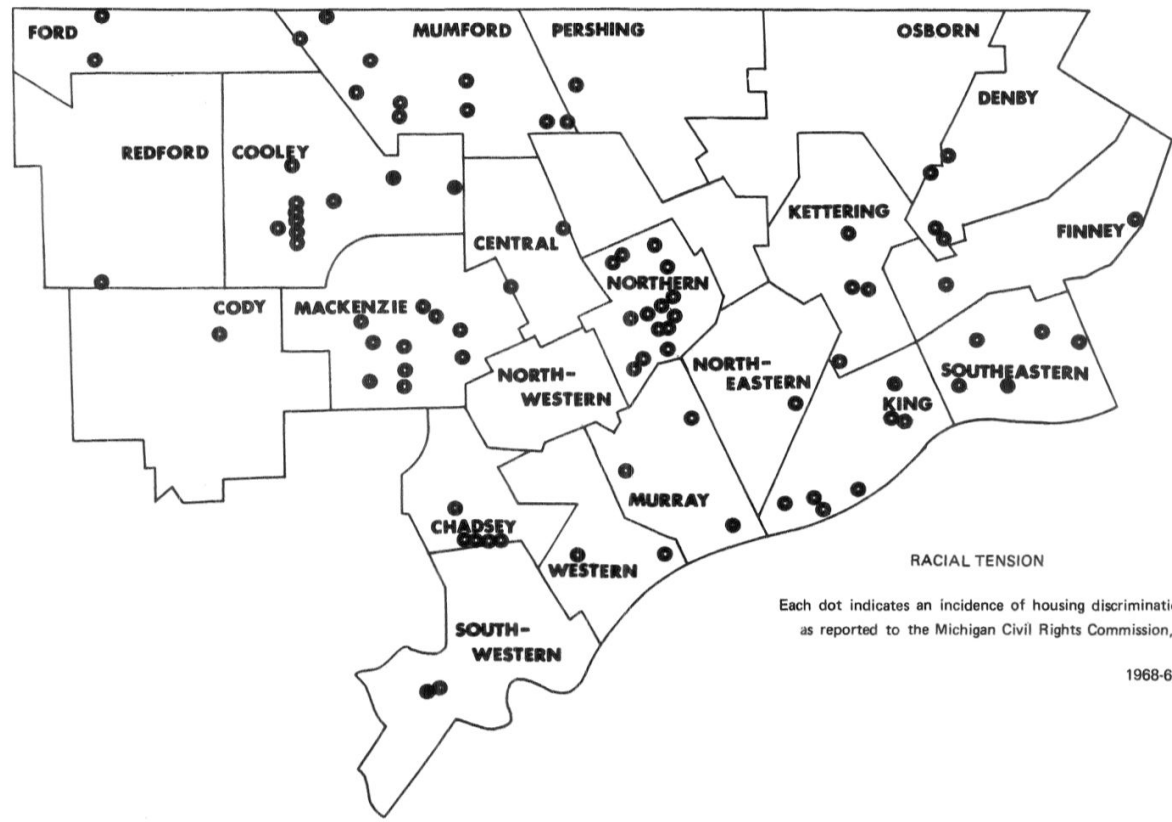


FIG. 5—Successive combinations of British regions.

*Empirical and
mathematical
optimism of spatial
science*

*But by the 1970s,
Bunge advocated for a
more synthetic and
political approach*





RACIAL TENSION

Each dot indicates an incidence of housing discrimination as reported to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission,

1968-69.

Graham Gudgin and Peter Taylor

“The Myth of Non-Partisan Cartography” *Urban Studies* (1976)

“Non-partisan agencies do not necessarily guarantee non-partisan effects”

“... the myth of non-partisan cartography hides the real issues of democratic representation”

Richard L. Morrill

“Redistricting, region, and representation” *Political Geography Quarterly* (1987)

... one of the three bases for representation in our culture is territorial—not of arbitrary aggregations of geography for the purpose of conducting elections, but as meaningful entities which have legitimate collective interests that arise from citizens identifying themselves with real places and areas.

In the American system, representation is dual—territorial and partisan—with an ancient tradition of representation of named places to which people are attached.

Note that the very conceptual basis for the US Senate is the equivalent representational status of distinct political territories.

Benjamin Forest

“The territorial politics of representation” *SAGE Handbook of Political Geography* (2007)

The territorial organization of states means that questions of political representation, and democratic political representation in particular, involves disputes, decisions, and struggles over the the relationship between representation and territory. Consequently, questions about representation are fundamentally geographic questions.

Geography treats where people are not as an abstract question of generically bounded spatial containers, but rather as both the evidence of social patterns and a causal explanation for these same patterns