Introduction to GIS in Political Science

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Monday August 24th, 1 pm to 4 pm, CSS 4.2.26 (the political science lunch room)

The topics covered will be:

(1) Politics in space: How everything has spatial referents
(2) Our units of analysis in space
(3) Types of GIS data
(4) An example of a GIS-assisted research project: From start to finish
(5) Your research: What is possible and could be relevant using GIS?
(6) Where to go from here?

Preparation:

I will ask of you that you firstly read the article I attached (it is only ten pages, and you can also find it here: http://bit.ly/1SPZbEm). Make sure you understand the four different types of GIS data, and play around with one of the digital maps below to find examples of the four different types of data.

AfricaMap: http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/
ChinaMap: http://worldmap.harvard.edu/chinamap/
EuropeMap: http://worldmap.harvard.edu/maps/europemap
Map of the Russian Empire: http://worldmap.harvard.edu/maps/russianempire
ChicagoMap: http://worldmap.harvard.edu/chicago/
Mapping Decline. St. Louis and the American City: http://worldmap.harvard.edu/mappingdecline/

Secondly, after reading the article I would like you to write down half a page on (1) geographical and spatial aspects of your own research (independent variables, dependent variables, control variables, causal relationships - or actors, factors, events, networks, etc. if you prefer to think of it like that) and (2) where your units of analysis (or actors or other objects you study) are situated in space, if or how they move around in space, and if or how they interact with other units of analysis (or actors or objects) in space. You can also draw it if that helps.

On the day:

Bring a computer and your piece of text with your thoughts on spatial aspects of your research.

You can send this piece of text to me beforehand (I'd love to hear about it!), or you can just keep it for yourself, but we'll use it in the module on your individual research projects, where I'll divide you up into groups of people working with spatially similar units of analysis (i.e. individuals, areas, organizations, networks).