

# **GEOG 432/832: Programming, Scripting, and Automation for GIS**

**Week 12.01: Formalizations of space and spatial relationships**

**Dr. Bitterman**

# Today's schedule

- Open discussion
- Slides and discussion - more lecture than normal
- For next class
- Open work time (if there is any)

# Open discussion

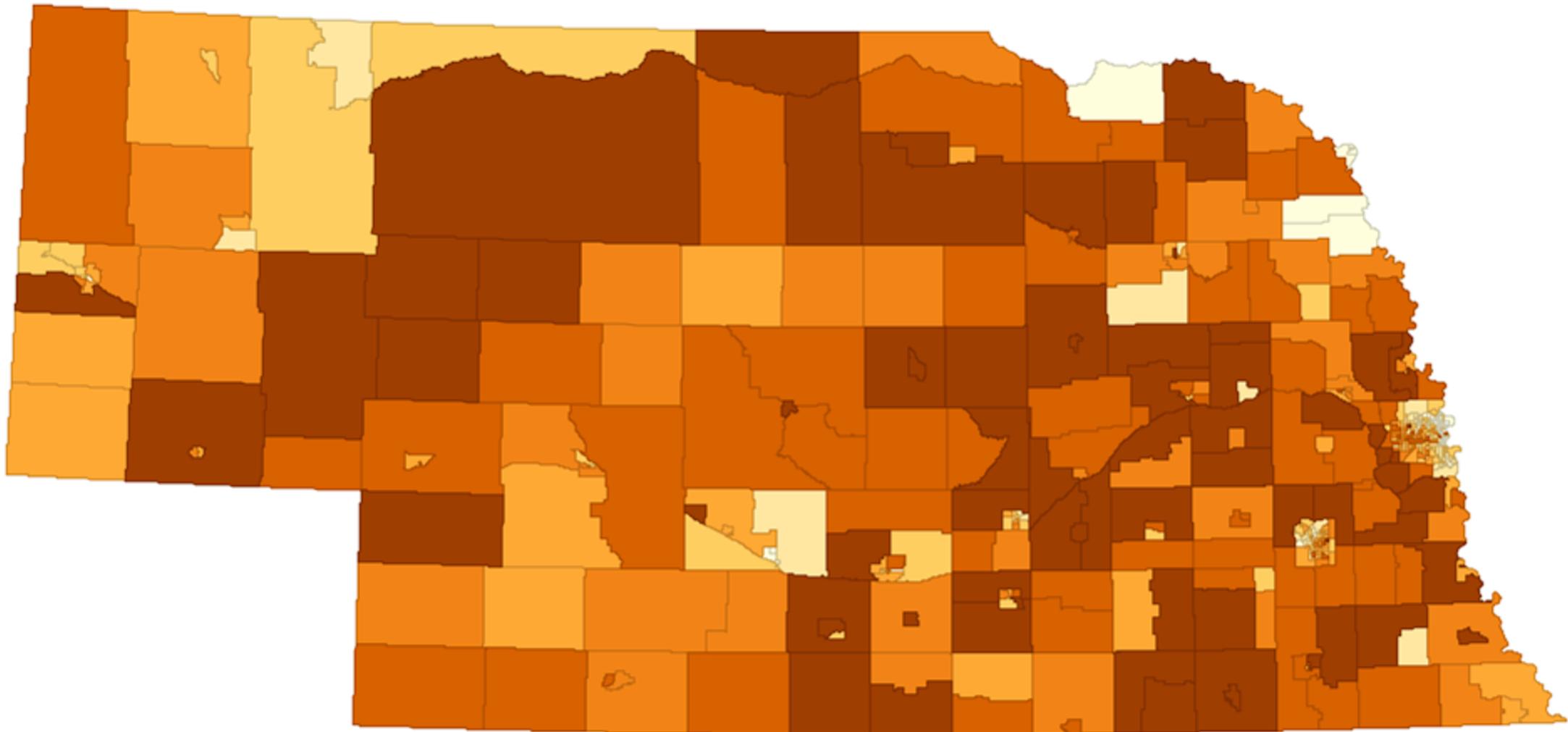
# Today is about formalization

- Why?
- But also, WHY???
- Formalizing spatial relationships is foundational
  - "Global" spatial autocorrelation
  - Local spatial autocorrelation metrics
  - Spatial clustering
  - Hot spots/cold spots

# Tobler's first law of Geography

- Everything is related to everything else, but nearer things are more related than farther (or something like that)
- Formally, *spatial autocorrelation*

# Spatial autocorrelation of areal units (% white, 2010 Census)



# Relevant questions

- Which areas are important?
- Which areas are unusual?
- Are there “hotspots” of some phenomena?
- How much influence do neighbors have?
- How should we measure/ conceptualize “neighbors”?
- Implications of our choices?

# Spatial context matters

- For a statistical method to be explicitly spatial, it needs to contain some representation of the geography, or spatial context
- One of the most common ways is through *spatial weights matrices*

# Formalizing processes

- **(Geo)Visualization:** translating numbers into a (visual) language that the human brain “speaks better”
- **Spatial Weights Matrices:** translating geography into a (numerical) language that a computer “speaks better”

# Spatial weights matrices

Core element in several spatial analysis techniques:

- Spatial autocorrelation
- Spatial clustering / geodemographics
- Spatial regression

# Formalization

$W$  as a formal representation of space

# $W$ (the spatial weights matrix)

- $N \times N$  positive matrix that contains **spatial relations** between all the observations in the sample
- FORMALLY,  $w_{ij}$ ... the weight from zone  $i$  to zone  $j$
- Core concept in statistical analysis of areal data
- Two steps involved:
  - define which relationships between observations are to be given a nonzero weight, i.e., define spatial neighbors
  - assign weights to the neighbors

$w_{ii} = 0$  (by convention)

...**what is a neighbor?**

## How would you define a "neighbor"?

- Making the neighbors and weights is not easy as it seems to be
- Which states are near Nebraska?



# What IS a neighbor?

A neighbor is “somebody” who is:

- Next door → **Contiguity-based Ws**
- Close → **Distance-based Ws**
- In the same “place” as us → **Block weights**

# Spatial neighbors

## Contiguity-based neighbors

- Zone i and j are neighbors if zone i is contiguity or adjacent to zone j
- But what constitutes contiguity?

## Distance-based neighbors

- Zone i and j are neighbors if the distance between them are less than the threshold distance
- But what distance do we use?

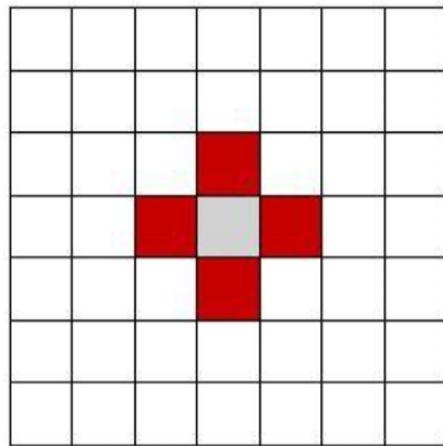
## Block weights

- Weights are assigned based on discretionary rules loosely related to geography
- Census blocks into Census tracts

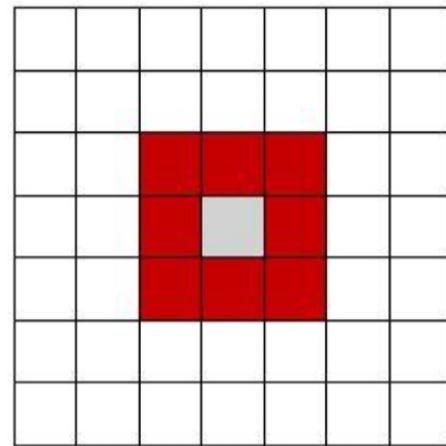
## Choice of W

- Should be based on and reflect the underlying channels of interaction for the question at hand. Examples:
  - Processes propagated by immediate contact (e.g. disease contagion) → Contiguity weights
  - Accessibility → Distance weights
  - Effects of county differences in laws → Block weights

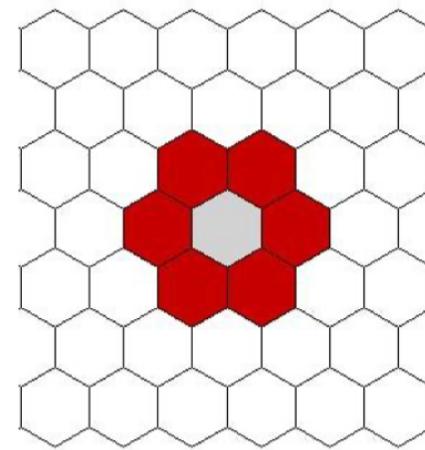
# Contiguity-based Spatial Neighbors



Rook



Queen

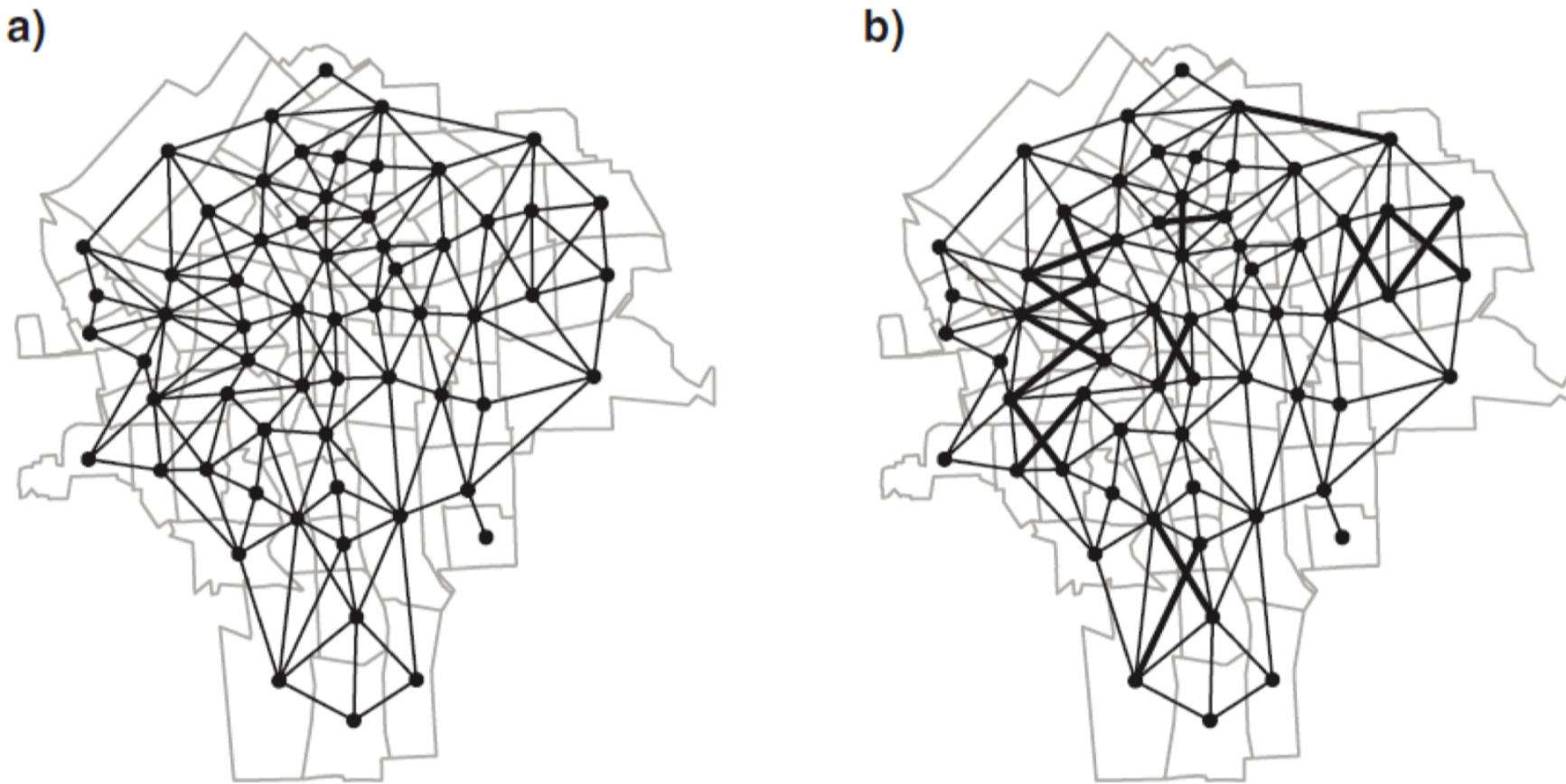


Hexagons



Irregular

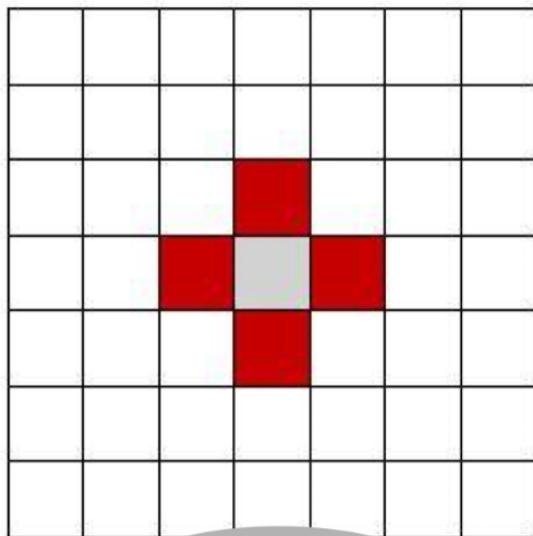
# Example



**Fig. 9.3.** (a) Queen-style census tract contiguities, Syracuse; (b) Rook-style contiguity differences shown as thicker lines

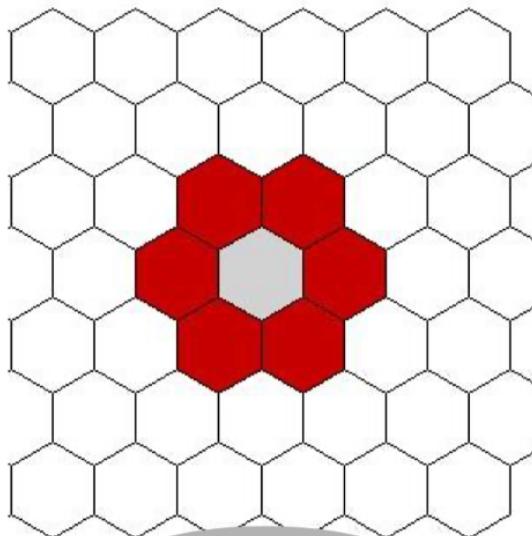
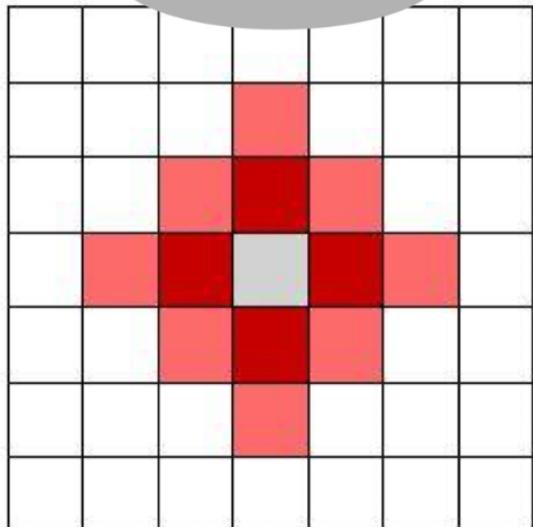
# Higher-order contiguity

1<sup>st</sup> order  
Nearest neighbor

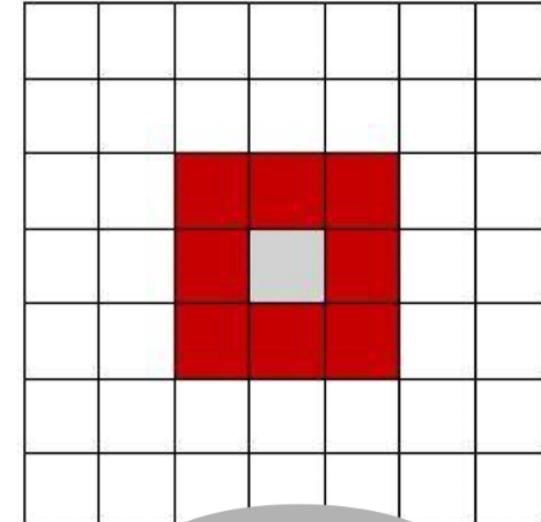


rook

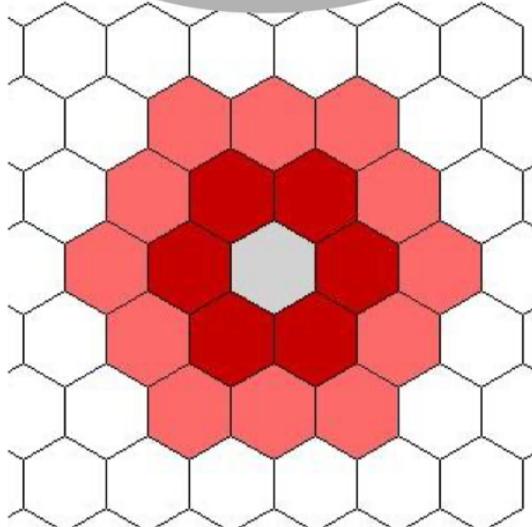
2<sup>nd</sup> order  
Nearest neighbor



hexagon



queen



# Distance-based neighbors

- How do we measure distance between polygons?
- Distance metrics
  - 2D Cartesian distance (projected data)
  - 3D spherical distance/great-circle distance (lat/long data)
- *But where do we measure from?*
- *Any implications of our choices?*

# Distance-based neighbors (k-nearest)

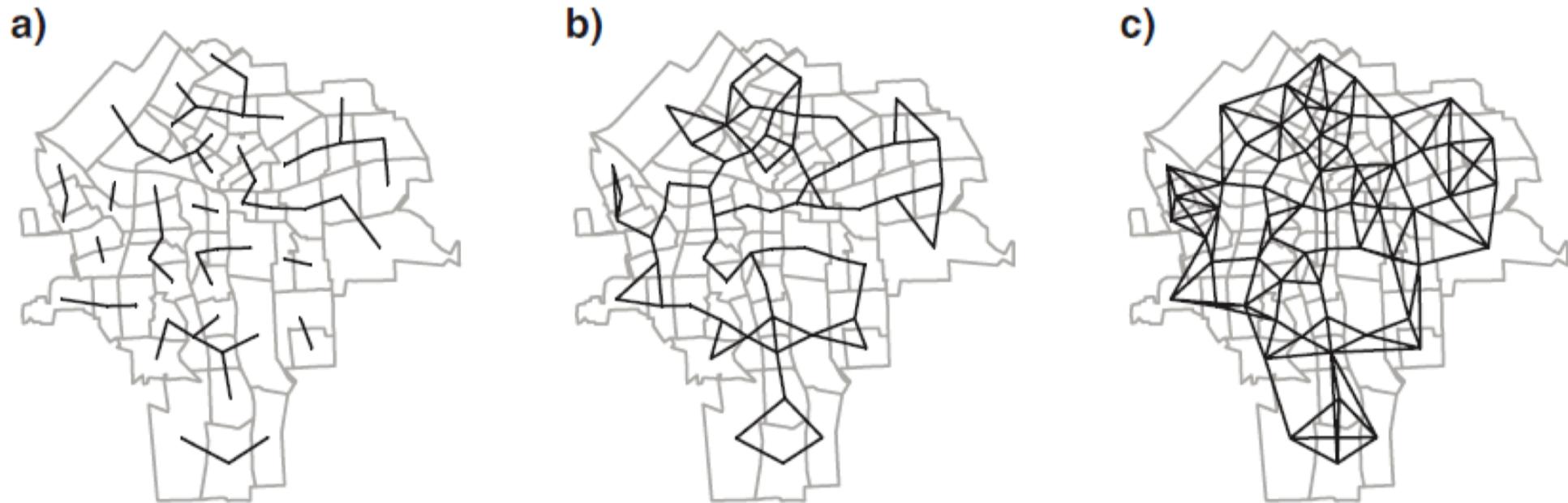
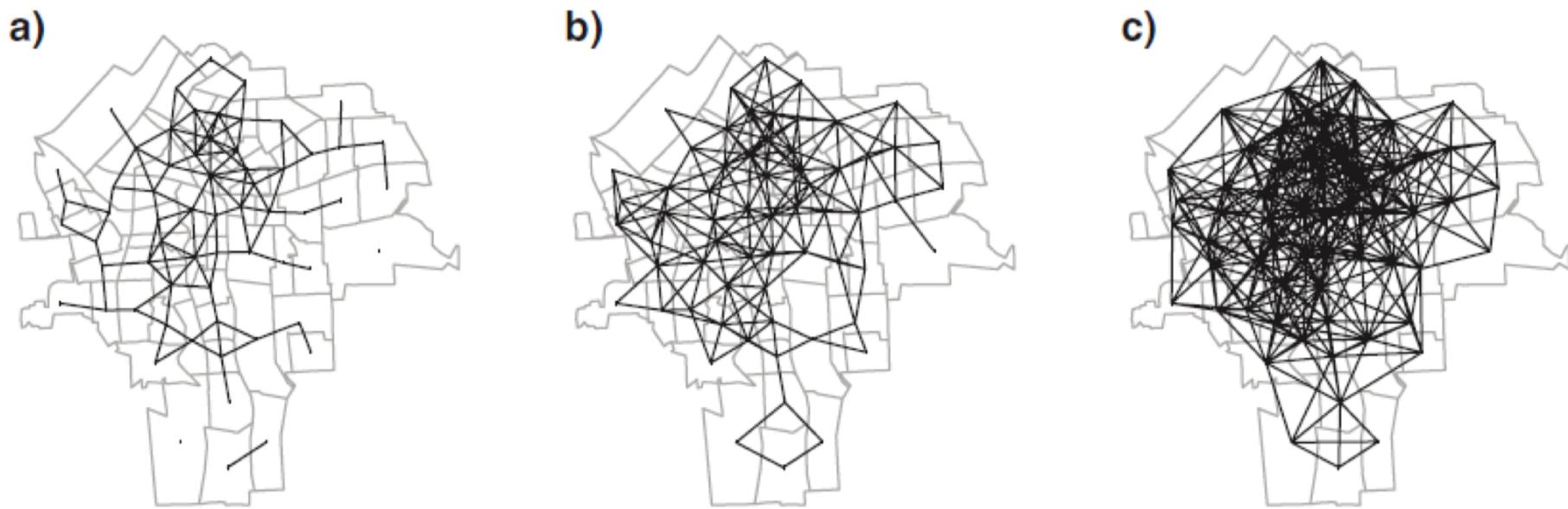


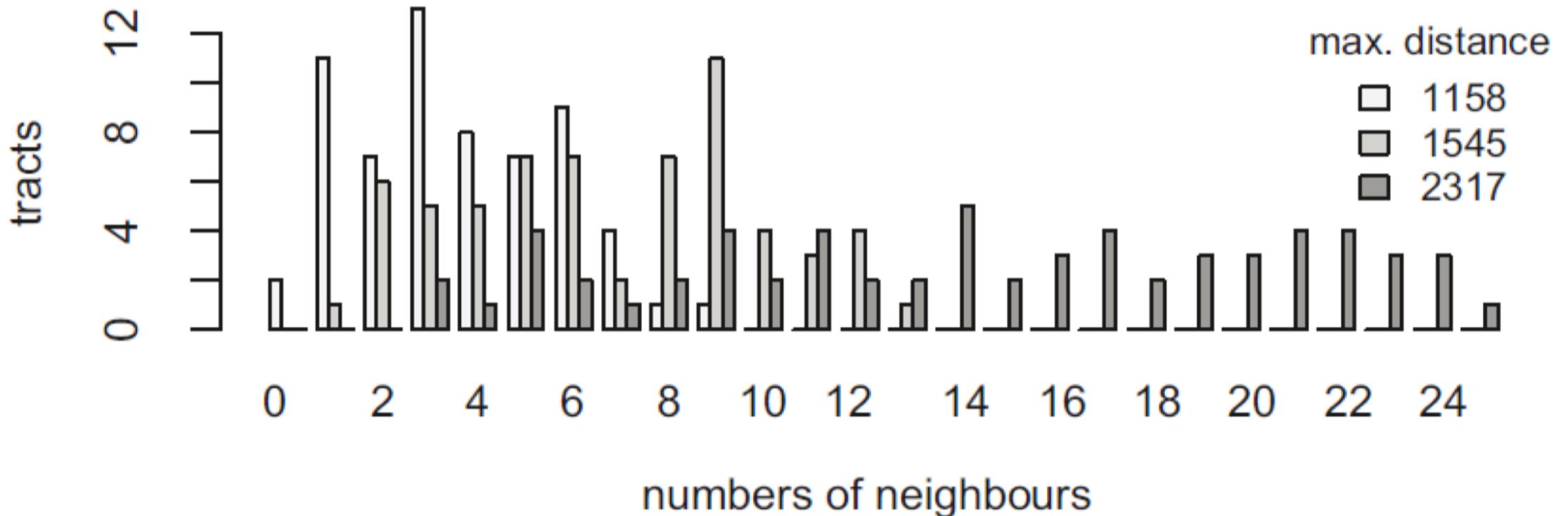
Fig. 9.5. (a)  $k = 1$  neighbours; (b)  $k = 2$  neighbours; (c)  $k = 4$  neighbours

# Distance-based neighbors (threshold distance)



**Fig. 9.6.** (a) Neighbours within 1,158 m; (b) neighbours within 1,545 m; (c) neighbours within 2,317 m

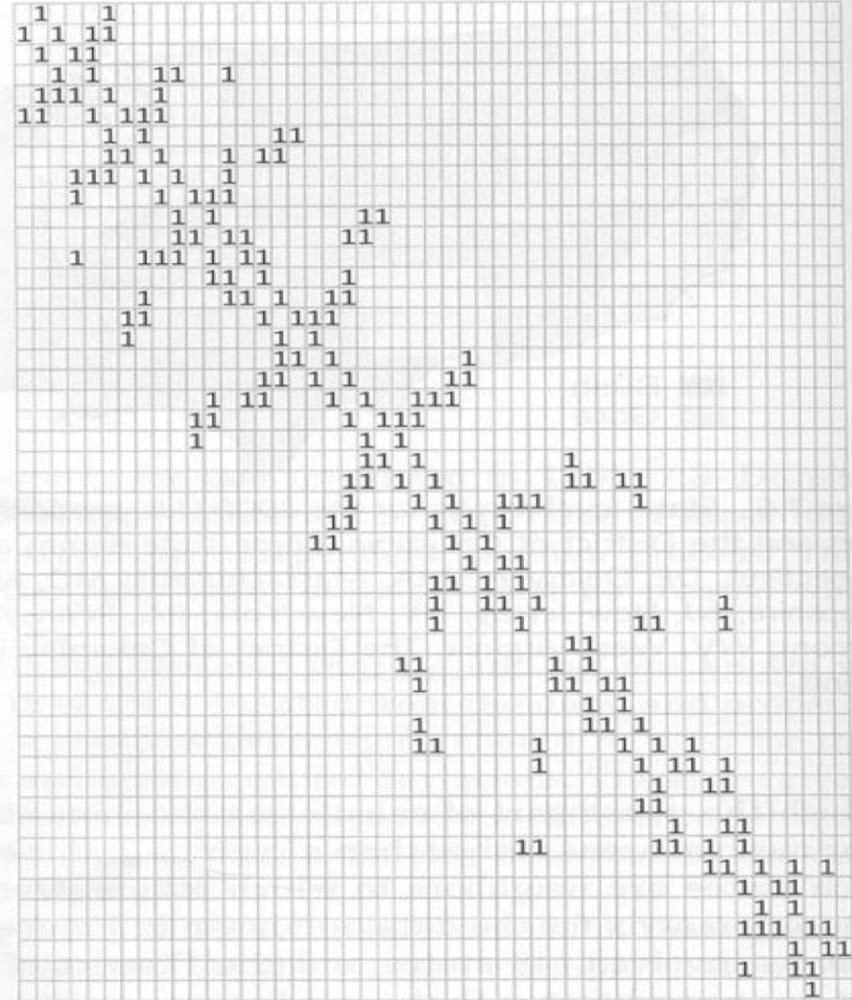
# Connectivity histogram



# A simple spatial weights matrix

1 if adjacent,  
2 if not

1 Washington  
2 Oregon  
3 California  
4 Arizona  
5 Nevada  
6 Idaho  
7 Montana  
8 Wyoming  
9 Utah  
10 New Mexico  
11 Texas  
12 Oklahoma  
13 Colorado  
14 Kansas  
15 Nebraska  
16 South Dakota  
17 North Dakota  
18 Minnesota  
19 Iowa  
20 Missouri  
21 Arkansas  
22 Louisiana  
23 Mississippi  
24 Tennessee  
25 Kentucky  
26 Illinois  
27 Wisconsin  
28 Michigan  
29 Indiana  
30 Ohio  
31 West Virginia  
32 Florida  
33 Alabama  
34 Georgia  
35 South Carolina  
36 North Carolina  
37 Virginia  
38 Maryland  
39 Delaware  
40 District of Columbia  
41 New Jersey  
42 Pennsylvania  
43 New York  
44 Connecticut  
45 Rhode Island  
46 Massachusetts  
47 New Hampshire  
48 Vermont  
49 Maine



# Decay functions of distance

- Most common choice is the inverse (reciprocal) of the distance between locations i and j
- Other functions also used
  - inverse of squared distance
  - Or negative exponential

# Standardization

- In some applications (e.g. spatial autocorrelation) it is common to standardize  $W$
- The most widely used standardization is row-based: divide every element by the sum of the row

## For next class

- Readings are linked/posted on Canvas... BE SURE TO DO IT THIS WEEK