

Urban Economics

Geographical Definitions and Data

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Outline for Today

1. Go Over Some Geographic Definitions Briefly
2. See Some Geographical Aggregation Levels
3. Geographical Definitions & Scavenger Hunt
4. Finding data on data.census.gov





Next Week

1. Agglomeration, Clusters, and Cities (cont.)
2. Practice Jigsaw
3. Greenstone, Hornbeck, & Moretti (2010)

Readings

- All the rest of the agglomeration readings (on canvas)



Urban Economics and Data



The Importance of Data

- To understand the economics of urban population, we will need data on them
- The data is based on the Census Bureau geographical unit

Census block

- Area bounded on all sides by visible features---streets, roads, streams, and railroad tracks---and by invisible boundaries---property lines and political boundaries. A block has between a few dozen to a few hundred people.

Block group

- Group of contiguous census blocks.

Census Blocks

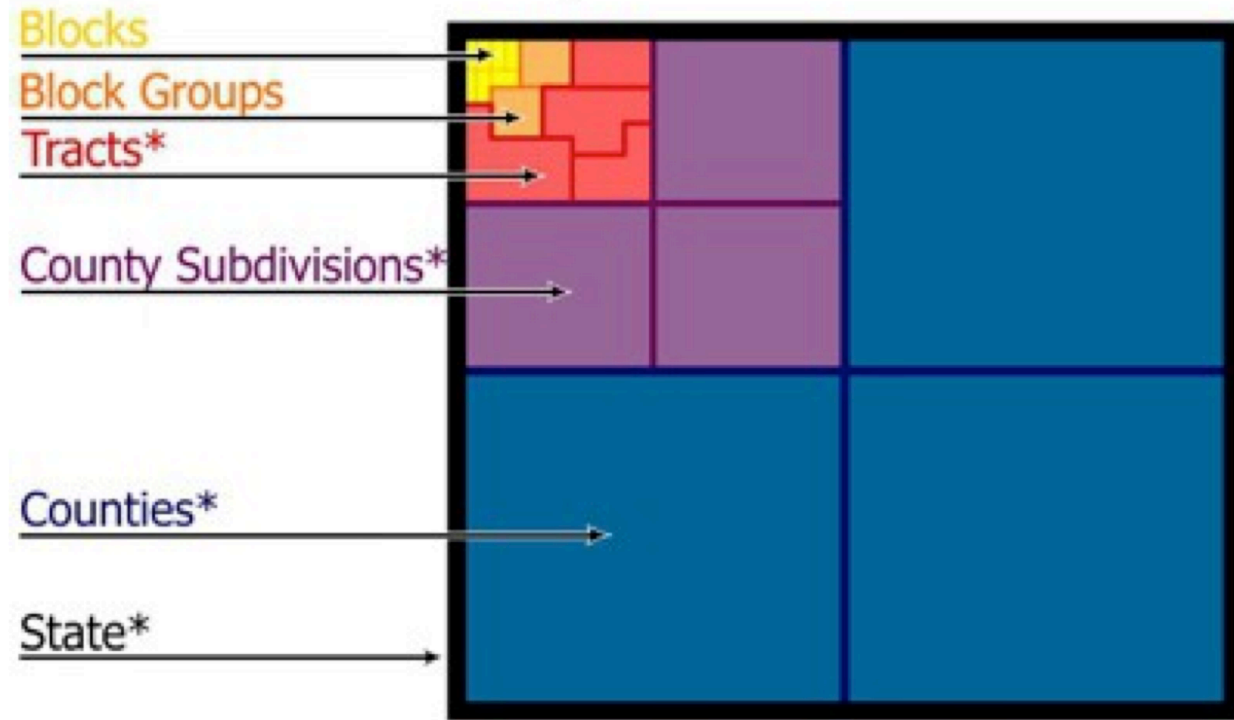


Census Tracts

Census tract

- Census tracts are small, relatively permanent geographic entities within counties (or the statistical equivalents of counties) delineated by a committee of local data users. Generally, census tracts have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents and boundaries that follow visible features.

Census Summary Levels:



*Included with Maptitude. Blocks and block groups available separately.

Types of Urban Populations

Urbanized area

- A densely settled territory of census block groups and surrounding census blocks that meet a minimum population density. The minimum population density is 1,000 people per square mile for the core block groups and 500 people per square mile for the surrounding blocks.

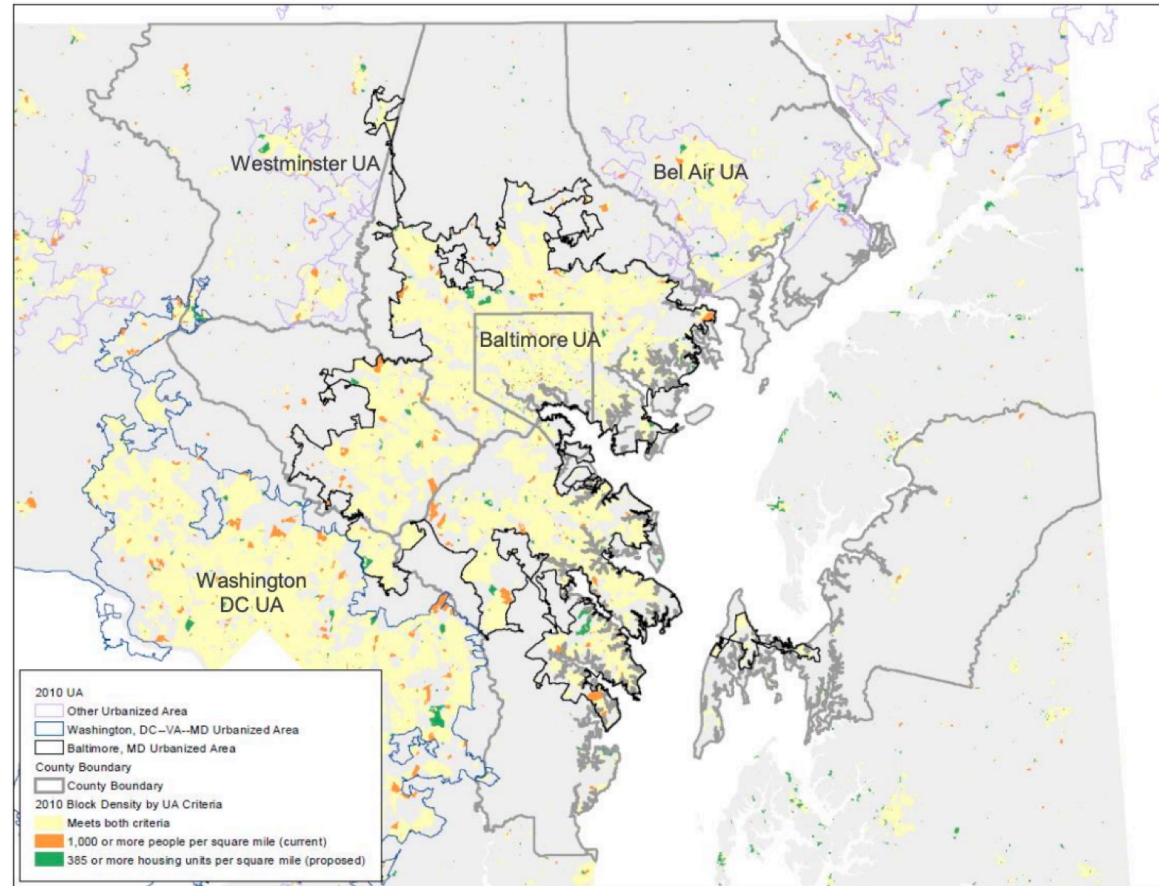
Urban cluster

- Is a scaled-down version of the urbanized area.

Urban population

- All the people living in urbanized areas and urban clusters.

Urbanized Area Map



Evolution of Metropolitan Area Definitions

- 1949: Standard Metropolitan Area (SMA)
- 1959: Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA)
- 1983: Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
- 1990: Metropolitan Area (MA) encompasses MSAs, CMSAs, PMSAs
- 2000: Shift to Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs)

Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA)

Metropolitan Statistical Area

- Urbanized area with 50,000+ population

Micropolitan Statistical Area

- Urban cluster with 10,000 to 50,000 population

Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA)

Metropolitan Statistical Area

- Urbanized area with 50,000+ population

Micropolitan Statistical Area

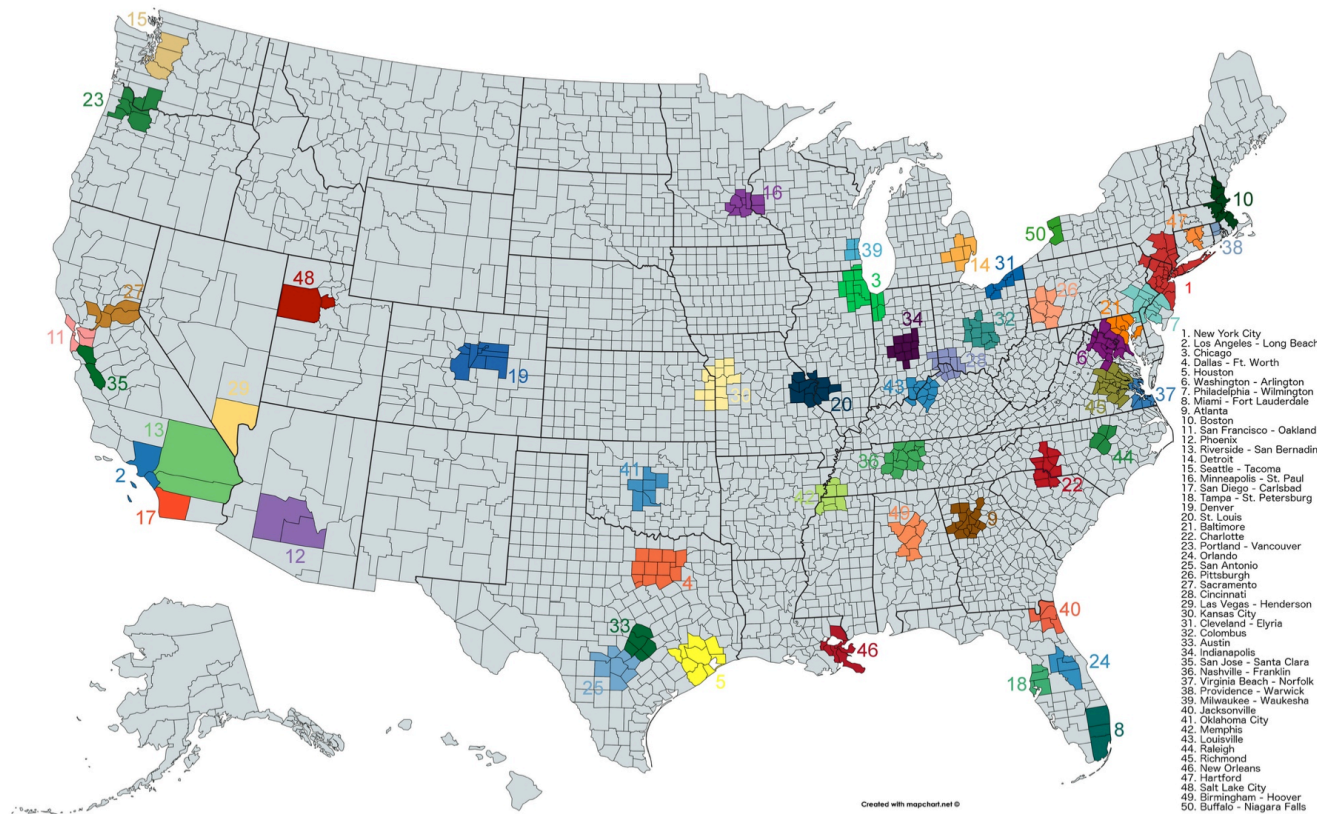
- Urban cluster with 10,000 to 50,000 population

- Building blocks: Counties
- As of July 2023, there are 387 metropolitan statistical areas and 538 micropolitan statistical areas in the United States
- 93% of U.S. population in CBSAs (83% Metropolitan, 10% Micropolitan)

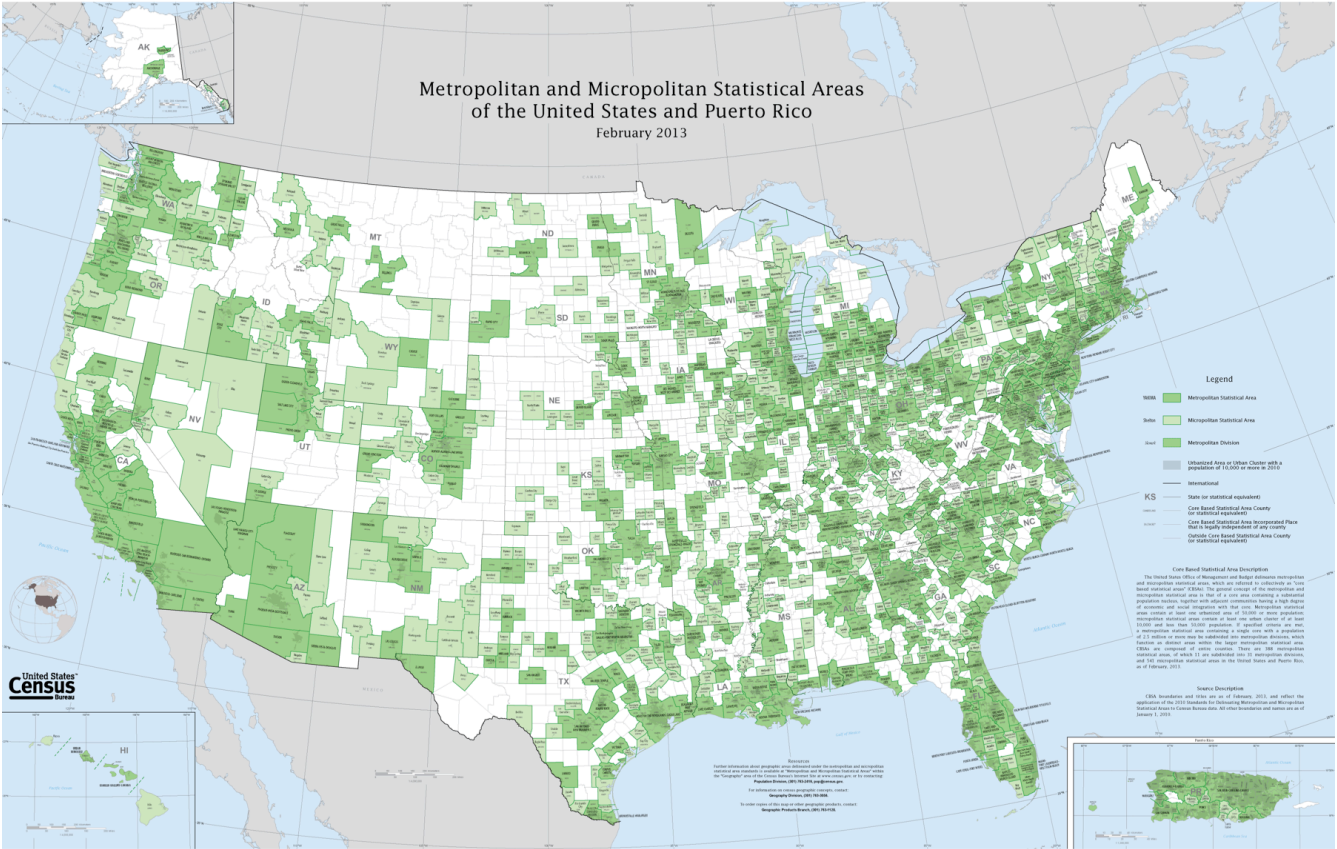
Principal Cities in CBSAs

- Largest municipality is the principal city
- Additional cities qualify based on population and employment
- CBSA names include up to three principal cities and the states they extend into
- This format breaks down the information into digestible parts, suitable for presentation slides

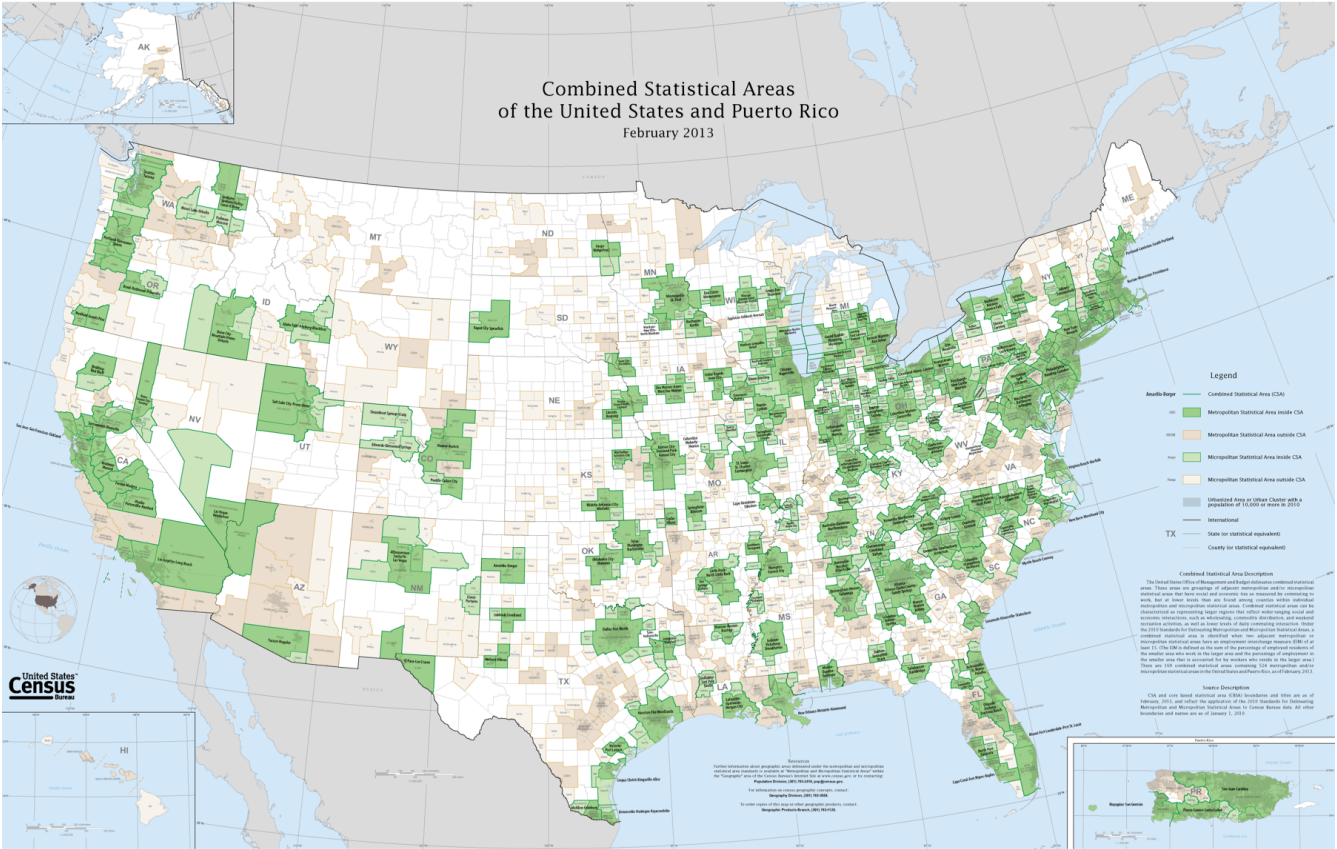
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)



Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)



CBSA



Scavenger Hunt



Scavenger Hunt

- You will form groups with others in the classroom. Aim for groups of 2 or 3 people with at least one laptop.
 - If in person, I prefer that you submit the scavenger hunt answers using Canvas
 - If you don't have a laptop with you then I can print the questions for you and you can complete it on paper
 - Let me know if you need this option
 - If using a printed copy, I'd prefer that you upload your answers to Canvas later instead of handing in the printed copy
- You are very welcome to move outside of the classroom. The entire rest of the class is dedicated to doing this activity, so you do not need to return. You may decide that it's better to work outside or in a different location. You can email me with any questions you have as I'll be monitoring my email during the activity.

Data Sources

- Watch the video on Census data
- Complete the scavenger hunt