Understanding Statistical Geography

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Overview of Census Geography

Two main types of Census geography:

- Legal or Administrative
- Statistical
Basics of Legal or Administrative Geography

• Have a Highest Elected Officials
• Boundaries change at the will of the governing body
• New geographies can be formed by a new incorporation
Examples of Legal or Administrative Geography

• States
• American Indian Reservations
• Counties
• Places
• Congressional Districts
• School Districts
• Voting Districts
Basics of Statistical Geography

• No gaps and no overlaps
• Boundaries are created and maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau
• Are created and updated only for statistical purposes
• The U.S. Census Bureau is the geographical data steward for the U.S. Government
Examples of Statistical Geography

- State
- County
- Census Tract
- Census Block Group
- Census Block
- Census Designated Places (CDPs)
- Census County Divisions
Tribal Statistical Geographies

- Tribal Census Tracts (TCTs).
- Tribal block groups (TBGs).
- Census Designated Places (CDPs).
- Tribal Designated Statistical Areas (TDSAs).
- State Designated Tribal Statistical Areas (SDTSAs).
- Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas (OTSA s).
- Statistical tribal subdivisions.
Census Designated Places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical area</th>
<th>Primary purpose</th>
<th>Nationwide wall-to-wall coverage</th>
<th>Geography nests within</th>
<th>2020 Census population criteria</th>
<th>2020 Census housing unit criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census designated places (CDPs)</td>
<td>Place-level statistics for well-known, closely settled named localities that are not part of an incorporated place. Mix of residential and commercial areas.</td>
<td>No, CDPs capture distinct communities.</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Should have population during at least one entire season (at least 3 consecutive months) of the year.</td>
<td>Should have higher housing unit (or population) density than surrounding area. If less than 10 housing units, Census Bureau will ask for an explanation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Census County Divisions

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<tr>
<td><strong>Census county divisions (CCDs)</strong></td>
<td>Provide data for sub-county units that have stable boundaries and recognizable names. Usually represents one or more communities, economic centers, or major land uses.</td>
<td>Partial—CCDs and minor civil divisions (MCDs) together provide national coverage.</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCDs exist in 21 states.²
## Census Tracts

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>2020 Census housing unit criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard census tract</strong></td>
<td>Boundary continuity. Data comparability.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Optimum: 4,000</td>
<td>Optimum: 1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum: 1,200</td>
<td>Minimum: 480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum: 8,000</td>
<td>Maximum: 3,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Special use**           | Distinguish areas of little or no population that have a specific type of land use. Large water bodies. | No                               | County                 | Population Threshold = Little/None or must be within the standard census tract threshold. Area Measurement Thresholds:  
  - Within Urban Area = 1 sq. mile.  
  - Outside Urban Area = 10 sq. miles.  
  - Inland water body = 100 sq. miles.  
  - Water body not coextensive with a water only census tract = none. |
## Block Groups

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard block group</td>
<td>Form the geographic framework within which census blocks are numbered.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Census Tract</td>
<td>Minimum: 600 Maximum: 3,000</td>
<td>Minimum: 240 Maximum: 1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State within the Country
County within the State
County

State: 48
County: 453
Tract: 
Block Group: 
Block:
Tract within the County
Tract

State: 48
County: 453
Tract: 036000
Block Group: 
Block: 

United States Census Bureau
Block Group
Block within the Block Group

State: 48
County: 453
Tract: 036000
Block Group: 1
Block: 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Tract</th>
<th>Block Group</th>
<th>Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>036000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State within the Country

[Map of North America with Texas highlighted]

State: [ ]
County: [ ]
Tract: [ ]
Block Group: [ ]
Block: [ ]
County within the State

48

State  County  Tract  Block Group  Block
County

[Image of a map with a section highlighted]

[Diagram showing geographic identification codes: State 48, County 439, Tract, Block Group, Block]
Tract within the County

State: 48
County: 439
Tract: 48
Block Group: 439
Block: Blanks
Tract
Block within a Block Group
Tracts over Time

• First used in the 1910 census in some urban areas
• Full coverage in 1990
• Population Growth can require tract splits
• Maintain Comparability
  • Numbering
2000 Census
2010 Census
2020 Census
What is TIGER?
Digital Network of Lines
Live Demonstration
Thank you!

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