



Census Tracts in Bossier Parish: Map Making is Both Science and Art

Brad Burkman

Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

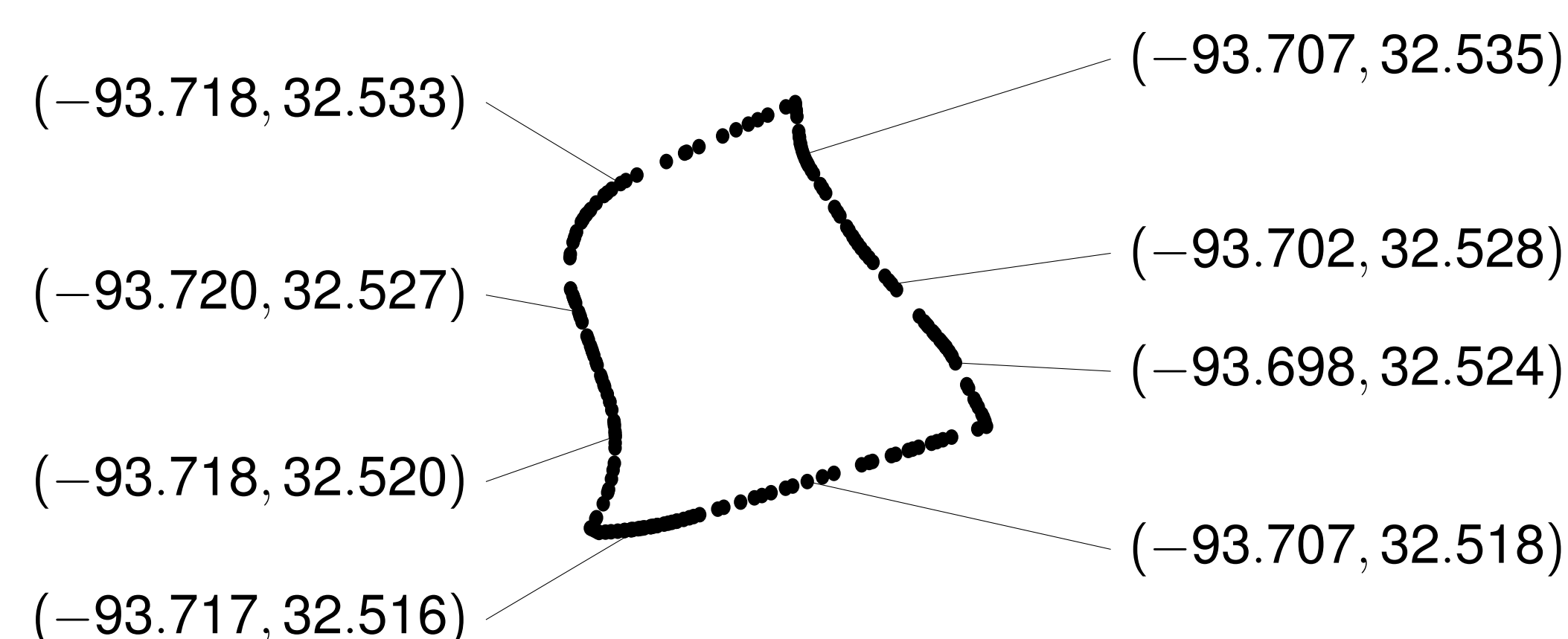
Steps in Making a Map: Science or Art?

Science
1 2 3 4 5
Art

- Decide what story you want your map to tell.
- Find some relevant data, and decide whether the data is accurate, up to date, and unbiased.
- Plot the points.
- Choose appropriate colors for the polygons.
- What do you want the colors to represent?
- How many colors do you need?
- Can most viewers easily tell the colors apart?
- Can a viewer with one of several common color blindnesses easily tell the colors apart?
- Is the color scheme aesthetically pleasing?
- Choose appropriate symbols (colors and sizes).
- Choose appropriate text (colors, fonts, and sizes).

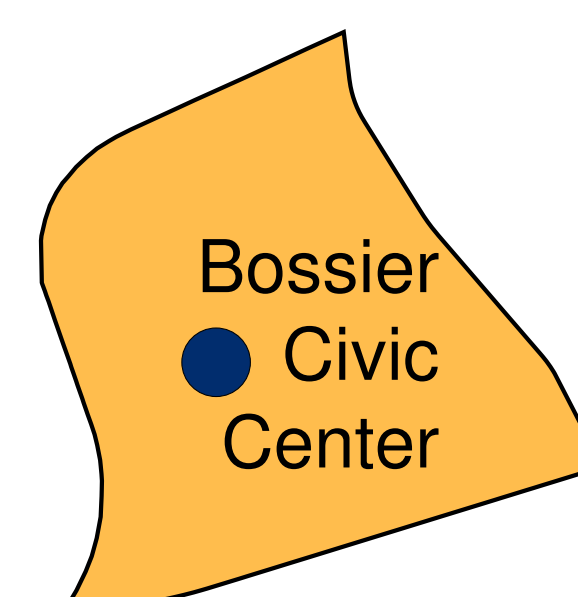
Plot Some Points (194 Vertices)

These maps show census tracts in Bossier Parish. A census tract is a geographic area with 1000-8000 people, and is the smallest area on which the Census Bureau publicly reports its data. The figure below is Census Tract 106.02, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, where you are today. The boundaries are defined as a polygon with vertices given as longitude and latitude.



Geography Challenge: Why are the longitudes (the x-values) negative?

Connect the Dots and Add Labels



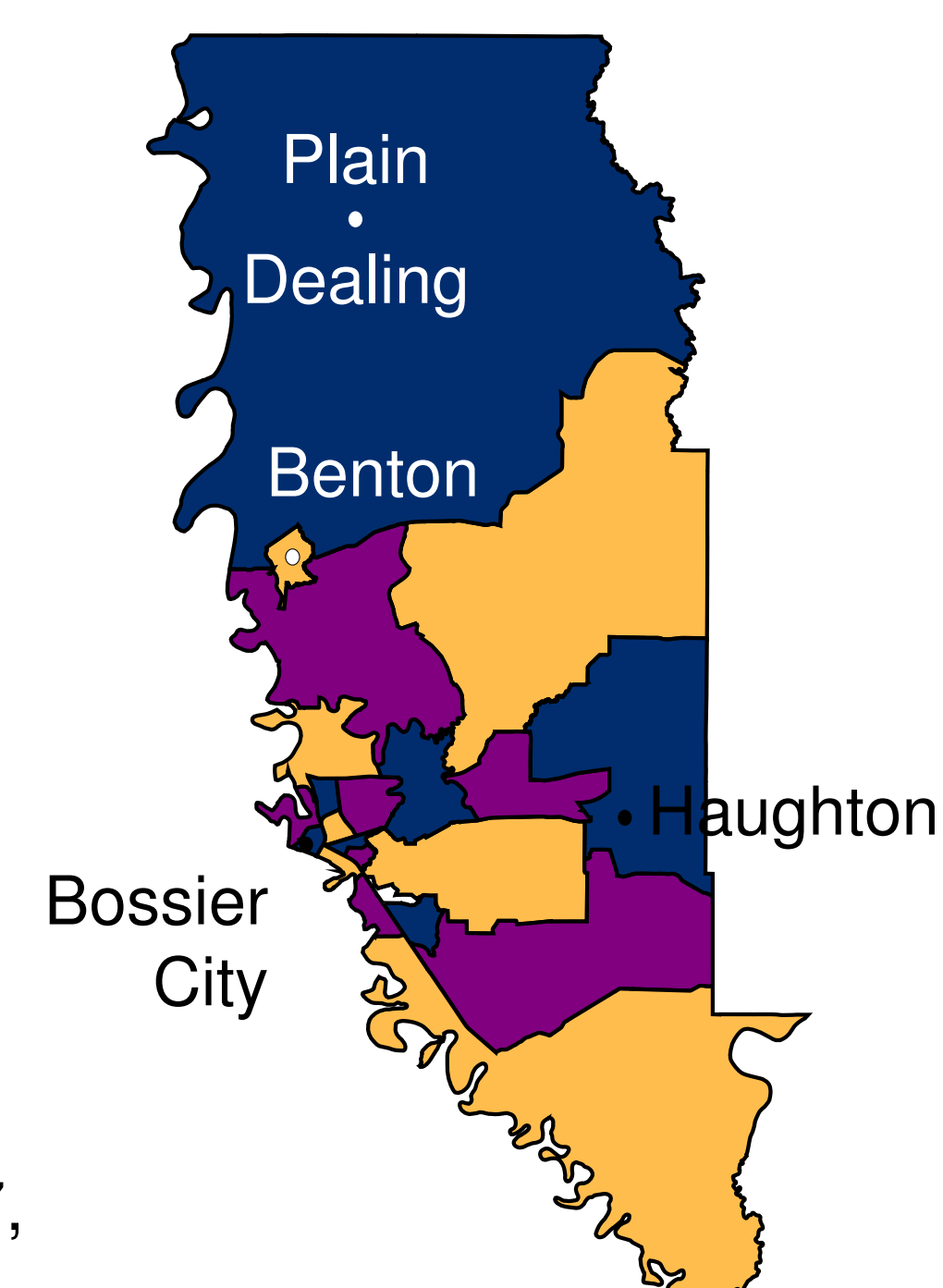
Data Sources

Demographic Data:

2017 American
Community Survey,
US Census Bureau

Map Coordinates:

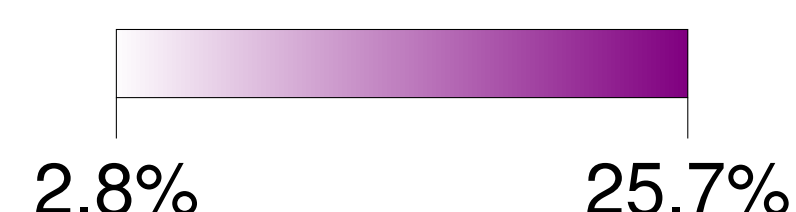
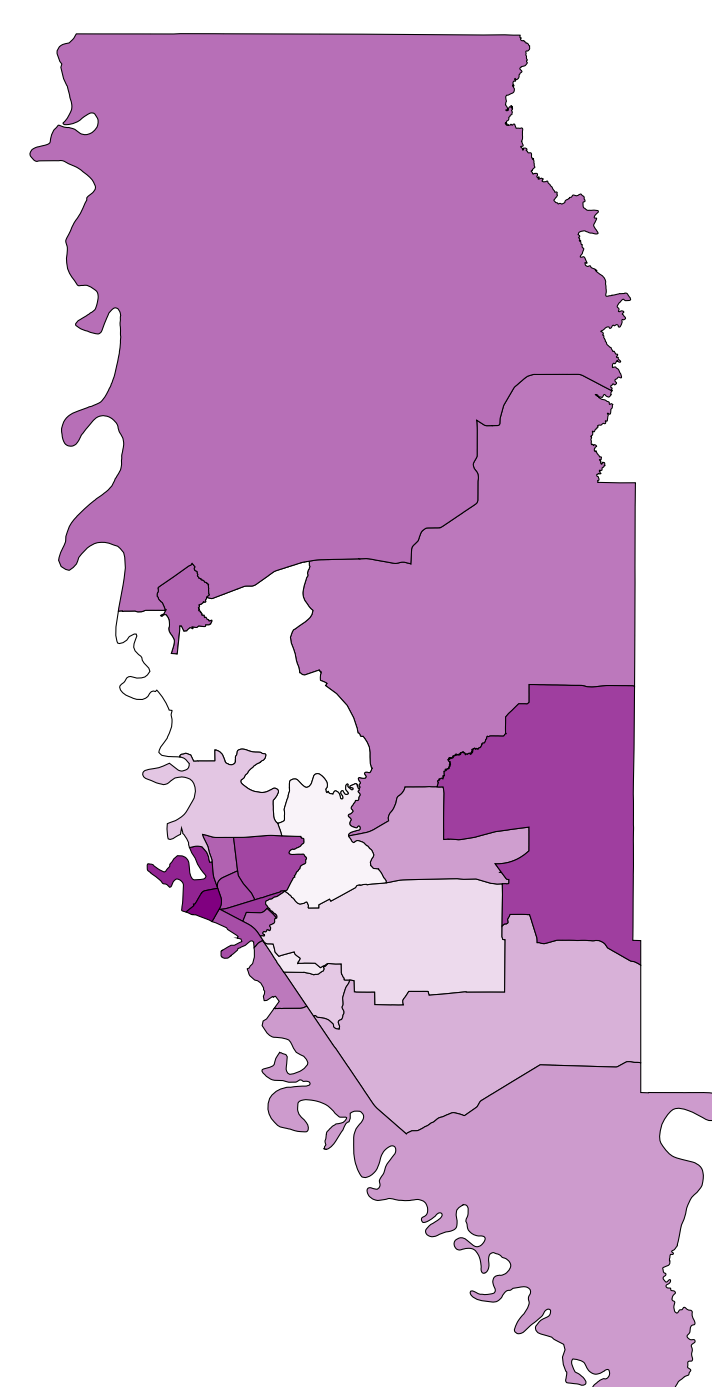
TIGER/Line Shapefile, 2017,
U.S. Census Bureau



What Stories do These Maps Tell ?

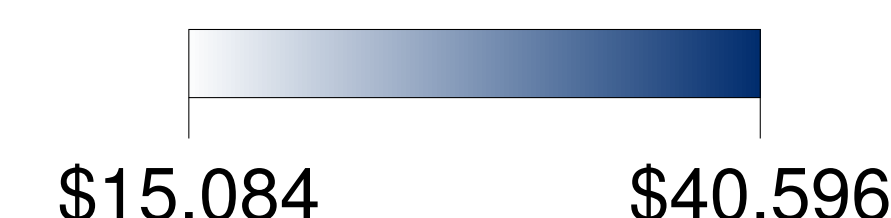
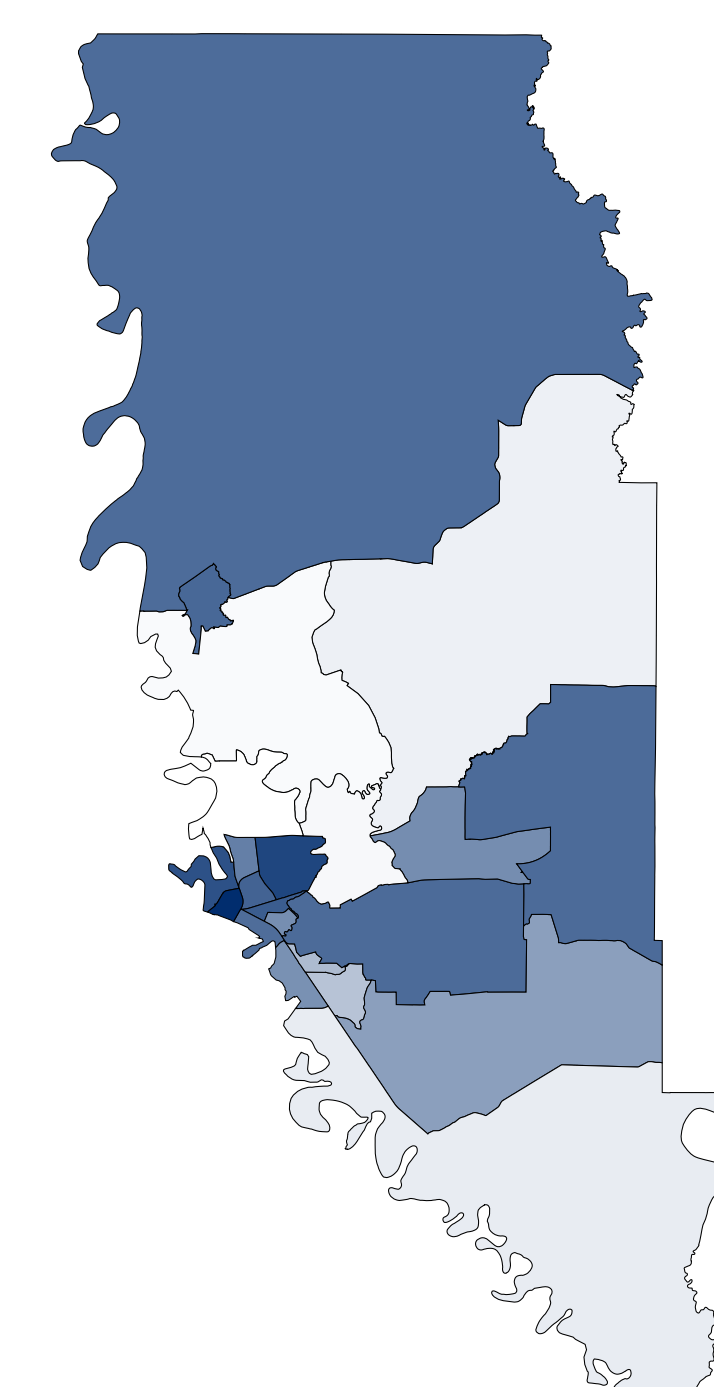
Education

Percentage of adults over
25 who graduated from
college



Income

Average household in-
come



Make Your Map, Tell Your Story

Option 1: Color by Numbers

- Decide which story you want to tell.
 - Population Density
 - Immigrants
 - Median Age
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian and Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Hispanic or Latino Origin
 - Speak Language Other than English at Home
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Median Income
- Get a map, data sheet, and colored pencils.
- Decide how you will use color.
 - How many colors?
 - Which colors?
 - What does each color represent?
 - If using shading, what does the scale represent?
- Choose symbols and text labels.

Option 2: Draw Your Own Map

- Decide which story you want to tell.
- Get a blank sheet and colored pencils.
- Draw your neighborhood, yard, house floor plan,
- Decide how you will use color. [See above.]
- Choose symbols and text labels.

Contact Us

Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts
Natchitoches, Louisiana
admissions@lsmsa.edu