

Urban Economics

Geographical Definitions and Data

Hussain Hadah (he/him)
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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 [Census.com](#)
5. Finding data on [data.census.gov](#)





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.
- These data are based on three *Census* geographical units:

Census Blocks



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.

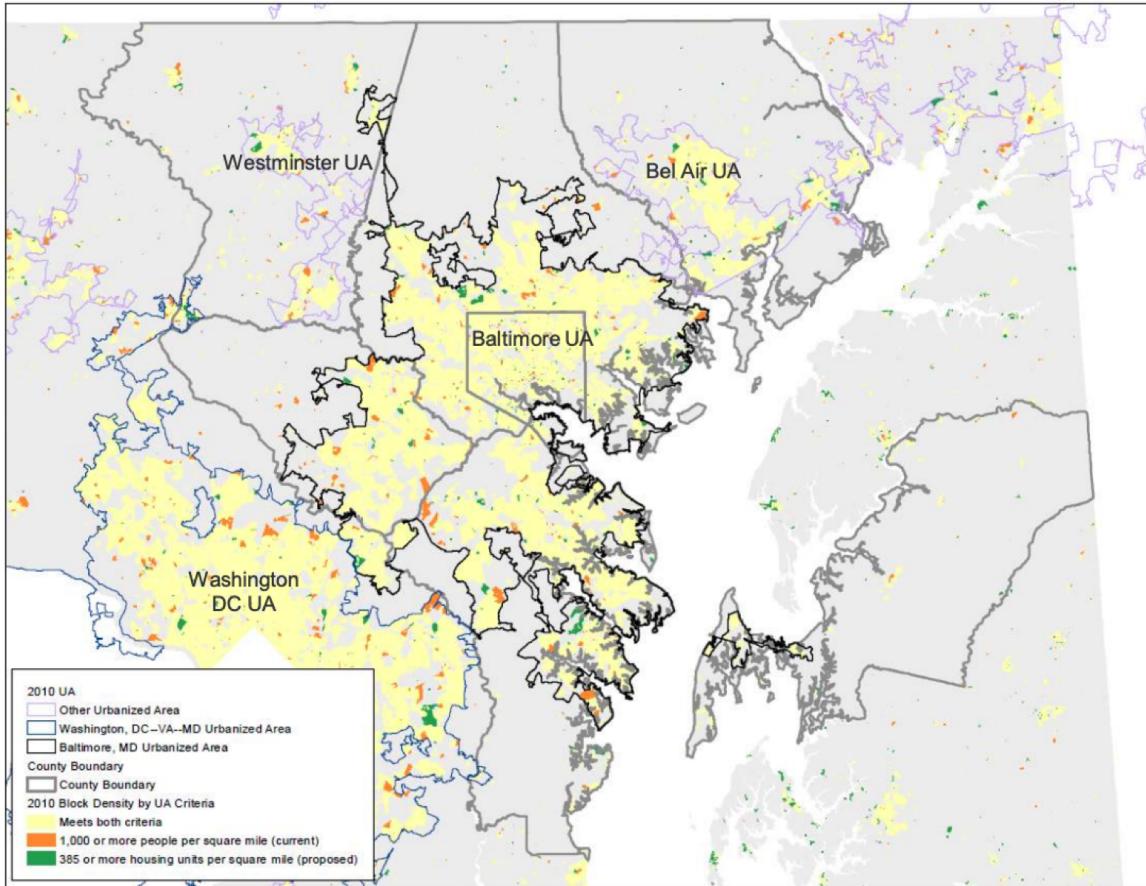
Urban cluster

- 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

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- Building blocks: Counties
- 361 Metropolitan and 559 Micropolitan areas (as of 2000)
- 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)

