Background

Many of the influential theoretical approaches to crime make an assumption that the conditions that exist in any neighborhood have a significant impact on crime rates. In order to fruitfully engage these theories, you'll need to know how to obtain neighborhood data. The most common source of this data is the U.S. Census Bureau. There is a number of ways to gather this data. This lab is designed to help you find and download data that would be useful as you seek to evaluate crime patterns.

Local Sources – The Geography Server

The Geography Department's data server (T drive) is especially useful for finding the data you need for any project. There are a large number of folders containing data on the server. What follows is a short guide to some of the more useful data folders for students in Forensic Geography, with special attention to those folders that are more cryptically titled:

- casil - California State Information Library: Has lots of boundary files for lots of things in California, including some census data.
- esri data- Data supplied by ESRI, the company that builds ArcMap. The beauty of these files is that, at least in terms of census data, they have already joined many of the more popular data sets to the map files in .shp format. Loads of other data, like schools, parks, etc. as well.
- miscellaneous – some tract information for previous decades and some blockgroup maps and landuse maps. Search around in the folders.
- parcels – landuse by ownership parcels
- tiger – empty files (no data) downloaded directly from the census bureau website.
- usa – older ESRI files

US Census Bureau– The American Fact Finder

The US Census bureau keeps serves an enormous amount of data that would be useful in this course.

The main census web page , http://www.census.gov/ allows you to access to a variety of data products and maps. It really verges on overkill, especially since they change the layout frequently.

Click on the Data tab to drop down a menu of several data download options. The most common way to download data is to use the American FactFinder. It is probably the best choice for downloading data. (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml)

Tiger Files

The US Census also serves up map files that you can download and use. It's quite a resource.

http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/

Task

Your task is to download from the American FactFinder the following data. You will send to your instructor a copy of the file in Excel format as proof that you are capable of using this common data tool.

1. Go to the American FactFinder web site.
2. Click on the "Geographies" box on the left side of the page. A subordinate window, like a large dialog box will appear.
3. Click on "Census Tract" in the options under Geographic Type.
4. Now select "Within State" from the Geography Filter Options to open a list of states.
5. Click on California, to activate a list of counties within California.
6. Click on the box to the left of the words "All Census Tracts within Amador County"

7. Your selection will load and be visible in the Your Selections box in the upper left of the page.
8. Now, click on the Topics box on the left. A new subordinate window will appear.
9. Select Housing, but note the other options, and explore these when you can.
10. Select from the Housing Characteristics "Year Householder Moved Into Unit" (42).
11. A search results window will appear, indicating that there are 42 variables for this characteristic for the census tracts in this county.
12. Select variable B25129 "TENURE BY YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT BY UNITS IN STRUCTURE". This table will tell us how long, on average, people in these census tracts have been living in these housing structures and how many years they have lived in each type of

housing units. This is a useful crime geography statistic because it will give us a sense of the density of housing (lots of single family homes or apartment complexes) and residential stability (have folks lived in this area a long time or are they 'just passing through').

13. Click on the variable itself (or select view from the options at the top of the table)
14. Examine the table. You should see that for tract 1.01, there are 2,016 housing units (give or take 186) and that 1,934 of them are owned by their occupants, 82 are renters, 68 of the renters moved in since 2005…etc.
15. Click on the download button at the top of the table and select from the options in the download window that appears (see below). Click OK. Click Download.
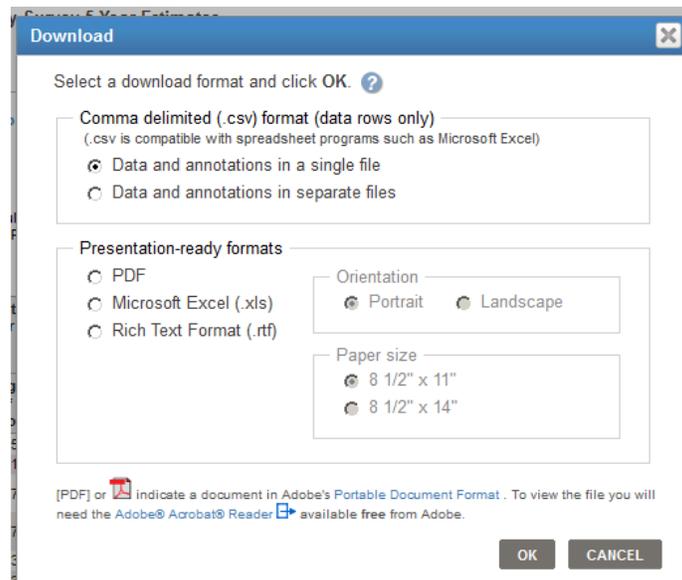
16. Save the file to a drive where you can find it…like your desktop.
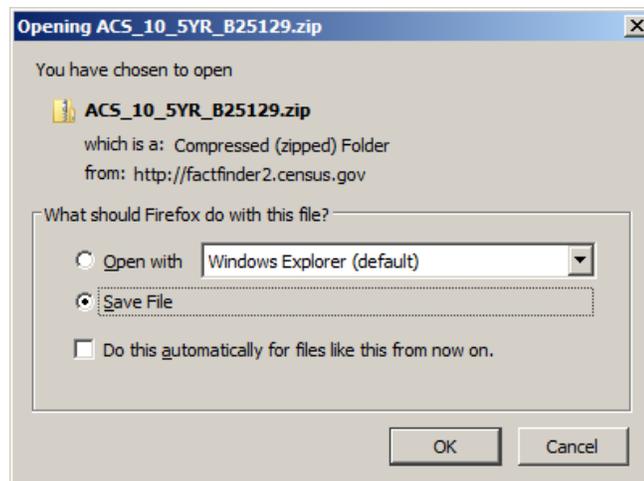
17. Find the file and double click on this zipped (compressed folder). You'll be able to look into the contents of the zipped folder. Double click on the CSV file. Excel should open it.   It should look like the file in the image below.

18. Save it with YOUR NAME in the file name and send it as an attachment to your instructor's email.
19. Keep a copy for yourself, perhaps as part of your portfolio of competencies, or to use in an exercise later in the semester.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	
				VD01	VD01	VD02	VD
1				Total:	Total:	Total:	To
2						Owner oc	Ov
3							
4							
5							
6	GEO.id	GEO.id2	GEO.display-label	HD01	HD02	HD01	HE
7	Id	Id2	Geography	Estimate	Margin of	Estimate	M;
8	1400000US06005000101	6005000101	Census Tract 1.01, Amador County, California	2016	186	1934	
9	1400000US06005000102	6005000102	Census Tract 1.02, Amador County, California	822	157	643	
10	1400000US06005000200	6005000200	Census Tract 2, Amador County, California	2064	179	1690	
11	1400000US06005000301	6005000301	Census Tract 3.01, Amador County, California	721	62	563	
12	1400000US06005000303	6005000303	Census Tract 3.03, Amador County, California	2132	253	1427	
13	1400000US06005000304	6005000304	Census Tract 3.04, Amador County, California	1455	170	1138	
14	1400000US06005000401	6005000401	Census Tract 4.01, Amador County, California	2027	157	1291	
15	1400000US06005000402	6005000402	Census Tract 4.02, Amador County, California	2186	133	1830	
16	1400000US06005000500	6005000500	Census Tract 5, Amador County, California	1292	177	856	
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