

Family and Household Composition After the Great Recession: Variability by Economic Indicators in Metropolitan Statistical Areas

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FAMILY MEASURES AND THE GREAT RECESSION

- The Great Recession lasted from December 2007 through June 2009 (U.S. Department of Labor 2012). This poster looks at a decade of change, beginning in 2005 before the Great Recession, and ending in 2015 after the Great Recession.
- The marriage rate continued to decline during the Great Recession and cohabitation continued to increase (Cherlin et al. 2013).
- Four percent fewer divorces occurred in 2009-2011 than would be expected based upon 2008 data (Cohen 2014).
- The general fertility rate decreased by 9 percent from 2007 to 2011 (Cherlin et al. 2013).
- Since the end of the Great Recession, the economy has shown signs of a slow recovery (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2018).
- The unemployment rate at the end of 2015 was 5.0%, compared to 4.8% at the start of the Recession (U.S. Department of Labor 2016).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are differences in family and household composition at the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) level associated with change in economic well-being following the Great Recession?
- How did MSAs fare economically in 2015 compared to 2005?

DATA AND METHODS

- 2005 and 2015 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates (www.census.gov/acs)
- The top 100 most populous metropolitan statistical areas were chosen based on the 2015 Census Bureau Population Estimates.

Dependent Variables: Family and Household Composition

Family and household composition variables are measured at the MSA level and include measures of marital status, presence of young children in households, grandparents present in households and their responsibility for their grandchildren, and household size.

Independent Variable: Change in Economic Indicators from 2005-2015

- Economic well-being categories were created based on the change from 2005 to 2015 for five economic well-being variables: median household income (in 2015 dollars), percent of households in poverty, unemployment rate among the population aged 20-64, percent of households receiving food stamps, and percent of householders who are homeowners.
 - Each measure was evaluated at the 90% confidence level.
 - If a MSA improved on at least two of the economic measures, they were considered **improved**.
 - If a MSA declined on three or more of the economic measures or declined on two and were not statistically different on two economic measures, they were considered **declined**.
 - All other MSAs were considered **stagnant**.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

- Bivariate and full-control OLS linear regression models

RESULTS

Table 1. Significance and Direction of Effects of Economic Change Category of Metropolitan Statistical Areas from Bivariate OLS Regression Models Predicting Family Composition Variables (No Controls)

| Model | Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | |
|-------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Declined vs. Stagnant | Improved vs. Stagnant |
| 1 | Percent Currently Married | N.S. | ↑ |
| 2 | Percent Separated/Divorced | N.S. | N.S. |
| 3 | Percent Never Married | N.S. | N.S. |
| 4 | Percent of Householders Cohabiting | N.S. | N.S. |
| 5 | Percent of Householders with Child <5 | N.S. | ↑ |
| 6 | Percent of Population Over 30 Living with Grandchildren | N.S. | ↑ |
| 7 | Percent of Population Over 30 Responsible for Grandchildren | N.S. | N.S. |
| 8 | Percent One Person Households | N.S. | ↓ |
| 9 | Percent Female Householders with No Spouse Present | N.S. | ↓ |
| 10 | Average Household Size | N.S. | ↑ |

Significant at p<0.05; N.S. = Not significant
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates

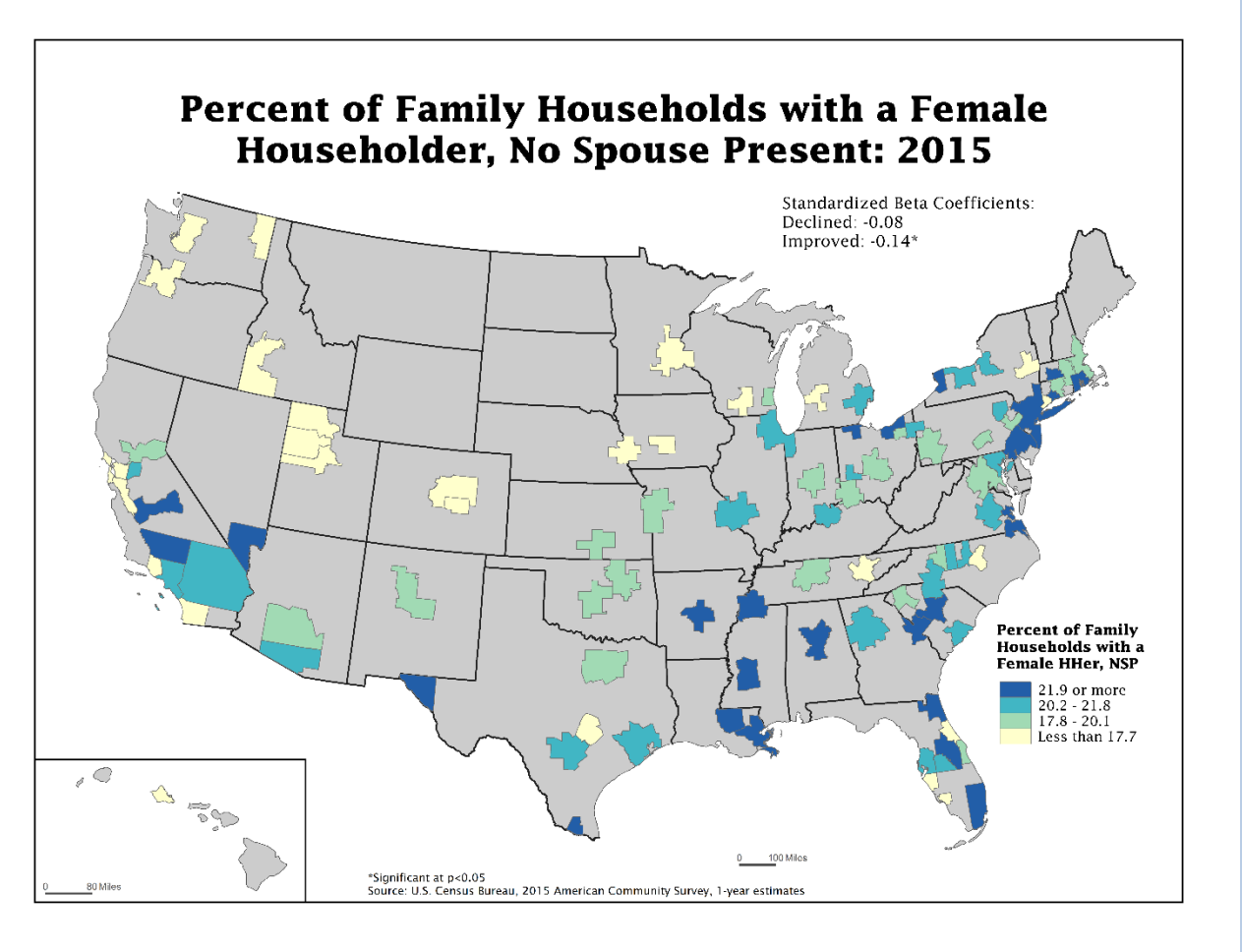
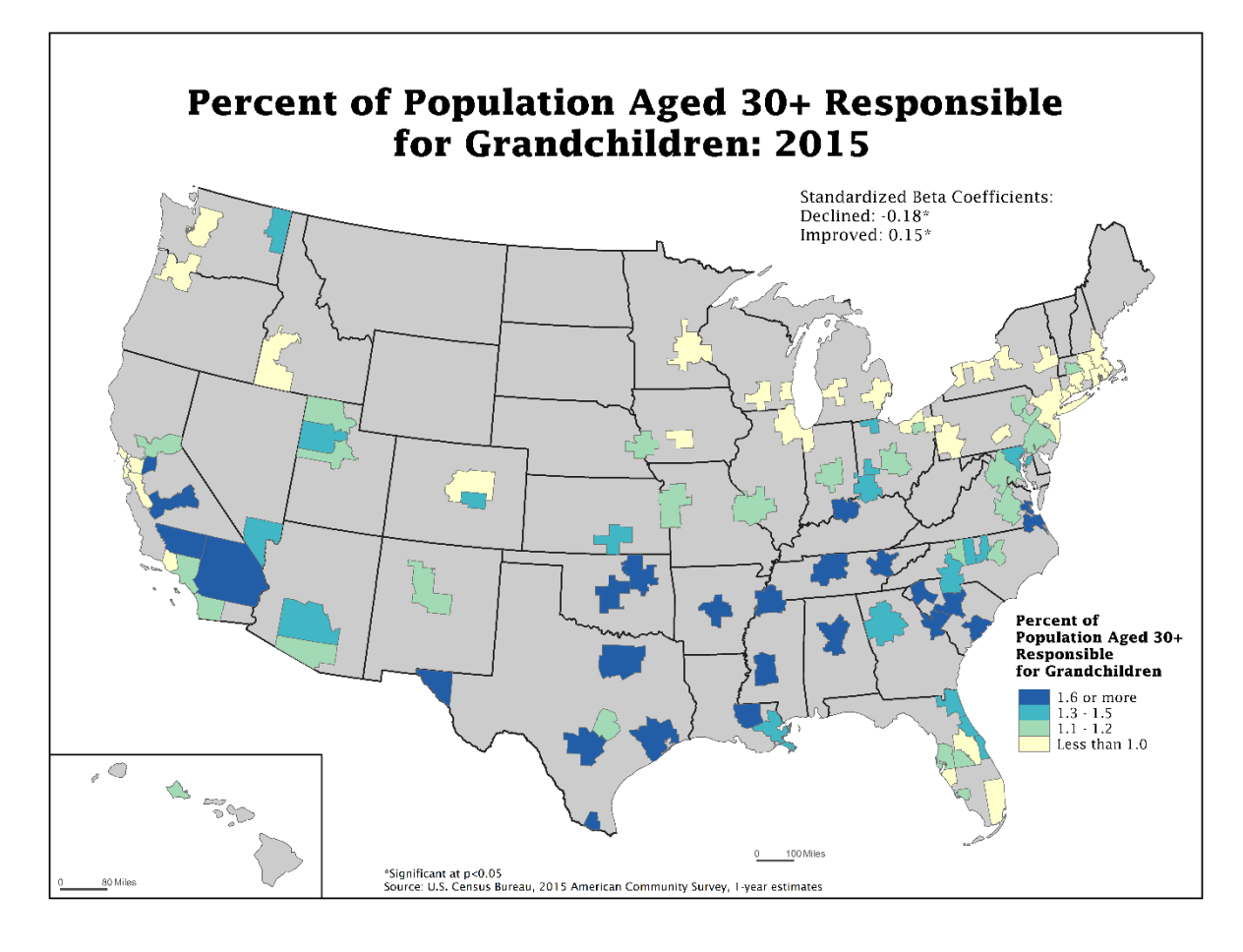
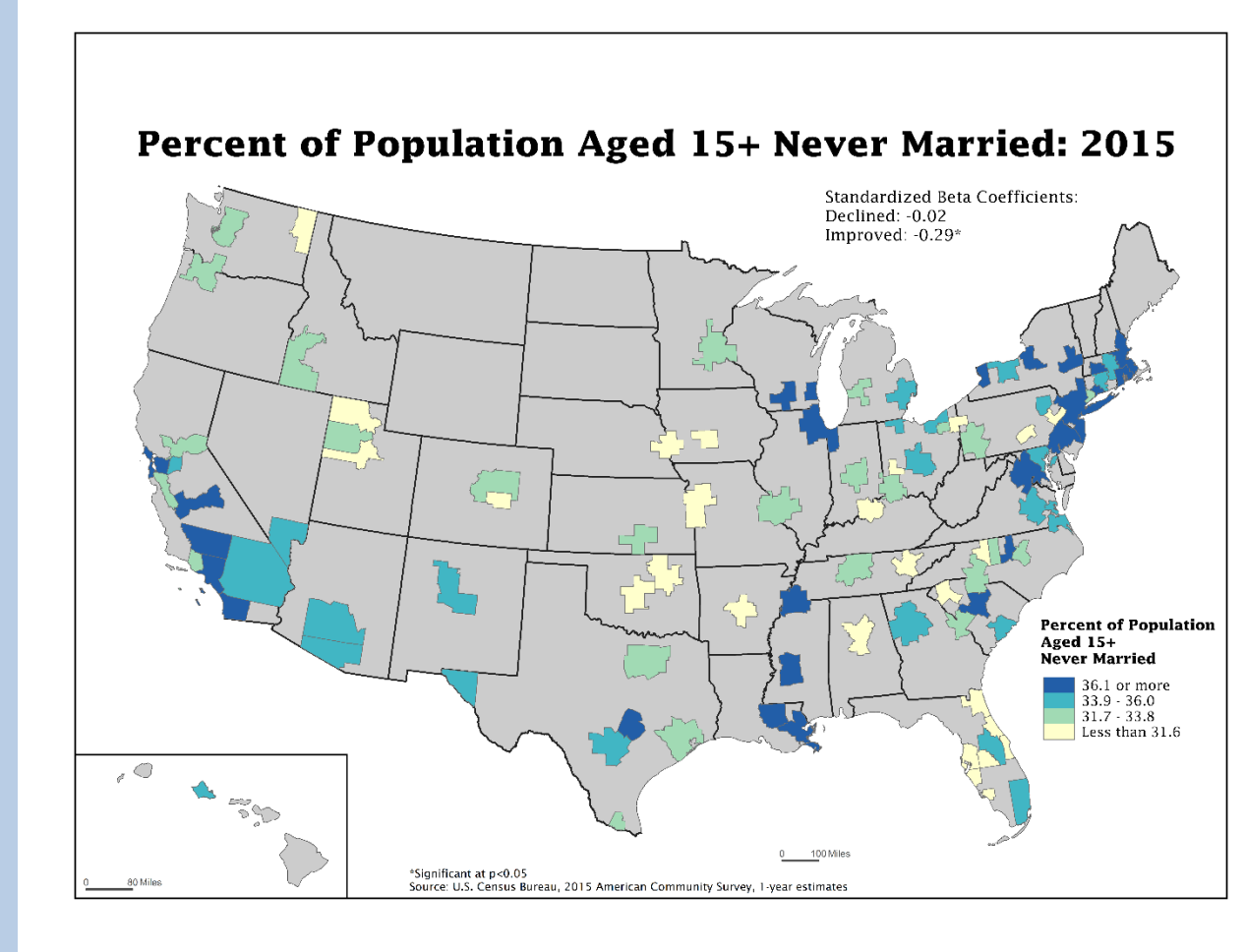
Table 2. Significance and Direction of Effects of Economic Change Category of Metropolitan Statistical Areas from OLS Regression Models Predicting Family Composition Variables (Full Set of Controls)

| Model | Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | |
|-------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Declined vs. Stagnant | Improved vs. Stagnant |
| 1 | Percent Currently Married | N.S. | N.S. |
| 2 | Percent Separated/Divorced | N.S. | N.S. |
| 3 | Percent Never Married | N.S. | ↓ |
| 4 | Percent of Householders Cohabiting | N.S. | N.S. |
| 5 | Percent of Householders with Child <5 | N.S. | N.S. |
| 6 | Percent of Population Over 30 Living with Grandchildren | N.S. | N.S. |
| 7 | Percent of Population Over 30 Responsible for Grandchildren | ↓ | ↑ |
| 8 | Percent One Person Households | N.S. | N.S. |
| 9 | Percent Female Householders with No Spouse Present | N.S. | ↓ |
| 10 | Average Household Size | N.S. | N.S. |

Significant at p<0.05; N.S. = Not significant
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates
Controls: median age of householders, percent less than high school, percent some college, percent Bachelor's degree or higher, percent male, percent non-Hispanic black, percent non-Hispanic other minority, and percent Hispanic

- In bivariate models, family composition is not related to change in economic well-being from 2005-2015 for MSAs that declined vs. were stagnant.
- Percent currently married, householders with a child <5, percent aged 30 or older living with grandchildren, and average household size are all positively associated with MSAs improving from 2005-2015 vs. remaining stagnant in the bivariate model.
- Percent one person households and percent of family households with female householders and no spouse present are negatively associated with MSAs improving from 2005-2015 vs. remaining stagnant in the bivariate model.
- In the full models, percent of population aged 30 or older responsible for grandchildren is negatively associated with MSAs declining from 2005-2015 vs. remaining stagnant, but positively associated with MSAs improving from 2005-2015 vs. remaining stagnant.
- Percent never married and percent of family households with a female householder, no spouse present are negatively associated with MSAs improving from 2005-2015 vs. remaining stagnant in the full models.

MAPS OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS



- Percent never married is negatively correlated with MSA's economic well-being improving from 2005-2015 vs. remaining stagnant

- Percent of households with grandparents responsible for grandchildren is negatively correlated with MSA's economic well-being declining vs. remaining stagnant from 2005-2015, but positively associated with MSA's well-being improving vs. remaining stagnant.

- Percent of family households with a female householder and no spouse present is negatively correlated with MSA's economic well-being improving vs. remaining stagnant from 2005-2015.

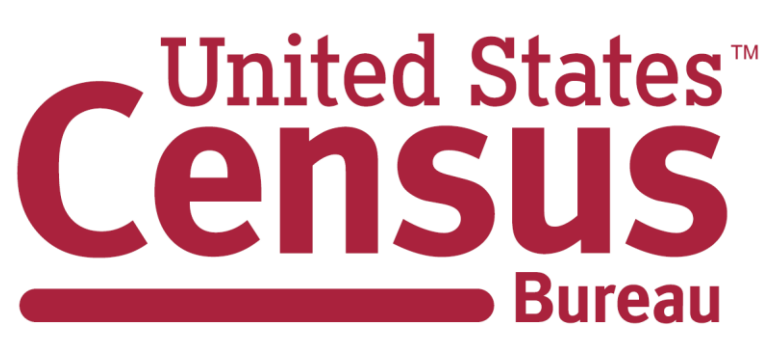
SUMMARY

- In bivariate models, family and household composition is related to changes in economic well-being between 2005 and 2015 for MSAs that improved vs. were stagnant, but is not related for MSAs that declined vs. were stagnant.
- Once demographic controls are added, only percent of population aged over 30 responsible for grandchildren (for both MSAs that declined vs. were stagnant and MSAs that improved vs. were stagnant), percent never married, and percent of family households with a female householder and no spouse present (for MSAs that improved vs. were stagnant) are related to changes in economic well-being from 2005 to 2015.

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Notes:
1) Hurricane Katrina hit two of the largest MSAs at the end of August, 2005: New Orleans-Metairie, LA and Baton Rouge, LA, which may have affected the last five months of data collection for 2005.
2) Alaska does not have any Metropolitan Statistical Areas that are among the 100 most populous.



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