

Geographic Variations in Black-White Interracial Marital and Cohabiting Households and
Change Over Time

Chanell Washington
United States Census Bureau
Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division

Note: This paper is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and discussion of work in progress. Any views expressed are those of the author and not those of the U.S. Census Bureau. CBDRB-FY22-POP001-0147.

MOTIVATION

Since the landmark Supreme Court case of *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967, interracial marriage has been legal across the United States, and a high prevalence of these relationships is often argued to be indicative of greater racial tolerance and a breakdown of racial boundaries. As the U.S. becomes more racially and ethnically diverse (Jensen et al., 2021), the opportunity to form interracial relationships increases. Most Americans today are more supportive of interracial romantic relationships than in the past (Taylor et al., 2012), and the percentage of Americans agreeing that interracial marriage “is a good thing,” increased from 24 percent in 2010 to 39 percent in 2017 (Livingston and Brown, 2017). Despite these changing attitudes, however, most racial groups still tend to marry within their race (Mayol-García, Gurrentz, and Kreider, 2021). It should be noted, though, that there is a greater percentage of people intermarrying now than in the past. For example, in 2012-2016, 10.2 percent of married-couple households were interracial/interethnic, compared to 7.4 percent in 2000 (Rico, Kreider, and Anderson, 2018). A higher percentage of interracial couples cohabit rather than marry (Choi and Goldberg, 2020). This is not necessarily surprising, as some research has found that cohabiters tend to hold more nontraditional values, such as less commitment toward marriage and more support for divorce (Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Thomson and Colella, 1992). As such, there may be even greater support among cohabiters for engaging in interracial relationships. There may also be more social support, as research has found that some people are more supportive of interracial relationships the less “serious” they are (Fiebert et al., 2004; Herman and Campbell, 2012).

Although interracial relationships between non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites are relatively uncommon (especially those between Black women and White men), there is a great amount of geographic variation in the prevalence of these relationships (Livingston,

2017). Most studies that examine geographic variations, however, either do not distinguish between married couples and cohabiters, or only examine interracial marriage.

Research has found that the West has the highest percentage of interracial couples; indeed, of the metropolitan areas with the greatest percentage of newlyweds who were intermarried, eight of them were in the West (Livingston, 2017). However, there is a great deal of variation in the geographic distribution of interracial relationships, especially when examining different race combinations of interracial couples (Johnson and Kreider, 2013). A study by Johnson and Kreider (2013) used 2010 Census data to examine the geographic distribution of various types of interracial marriages. Results regarding marriages between Blacks and Whites showed that they were most prevalent in the South, primarily located in counties in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Another study (Rico et al., 2018) found that from 2000 to 2012-2016, 16 percent of counties in the U.S. experienced a significant increase in the percent of married-couple households headed by a Black-White couple. Both of these studies are limited, however, because they focus solely on marriage. Given how widespread cohabitation is, and the implications of it for relationship quality (Brown, Manning, and Payne, 2017) and child well-being (Manning, 2015), for example, it is important to understand the prevalence of interracial couples among cohabiters.

THE CURRENT STUDY

This study focuses on interracial relationships between non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites. I focus on these two groups because due to the long history of slavery, segregation, and discrimination in the United States, social boundaries between Blacks and Whites may be especially strong, even today. Additionally, there is some evidence that White adults (particularly White men) express less approval for romantic relationships with Black

adults than other racial groups (Herman and Campbell, 2012). This study seeks to answer several questions:

- 1) How is the share of interracial Black-White cohabiting and marital households geographically dispersed at the state and county level?
 - a. Do the geographic areas with a higher share of interracial married couples differ from those with a higher share of interracial cohabiting couples?
- 2) How have these geographic variations changed over time, specifically from 2007-2011 to 2017-2021?
- 3) What are the sociodemographic characteristics of these couples (e.g., age, educational attainment, household poverty status, and region of residence) over the two data periods?
 - a. Have these characteristics significantly changed from 2007-2011 to 2017-2021?

DATA AND METHODS

I use data from the 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an annual survey consisting of approximately 3.5 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico. The 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 5-year data include estimates representing data collected throughout the period, which allows for a more robust sample of smaller population groups and geographic areas. The sample includes householders (i.e., the respondent who owns or rents the home) who are in coresidential marital or cohabiting relationships. The ACS does not allow for identification of cohabiting couples that do not include the householder. Additionally, for county-level analyses, I only include counties containing a total population of at least the smallest congressional district for those data years, which results in a threshold of approximately 520,000 people in 2007-2011, and about 540,000

people in 2017-2021.¹ These restrictions resulted in 120 counties in 2007-2011, and 129 counties in 2017-2021.

I first identify and map the states and counties with the highest and lowest share of Black-White interracially coupled households, as a percentage of all coupled households.² I do this separately for married couple households and cohabiting couple households, and separately for 2007-2011 and 2017-2021. I then examine the sociodemographic characteristics of these couples for both 2007-2011 and 2017-2021. Age of the householder is measured as a categorical variable: 18-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, and 50+. Educational attainment is measured as a set of dummy variables: both partners have at least a bachelor's degree, one partner has at least a bachelor's degree, and neither partner has at least a bachelor's degree. Household poverty status is also measured as a dummy variable, with 0 indicating that the household was above the poverty level, and 1 indicating that the household was below the poverty level. Finally, region of residence is measured as a categorical variable: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.

RESULTS

Results at the state level reveal that of all households with a cohabiting householder in 2007-2011, 2.72 percent were Black-White households; in 2017-2021, this share increased to 2.85 percent.³ In both 2007-2011 and 2017-2021, there were more states with a significantly lower percentage of Black-White cohabiting couple households compared with the national average, than those with a significantly higher percentage. Additionally, these states were primarily located in the West and Northeast (Figures 1 and 2). In both periods, Utah and Montana were states that had among the lowest percentages of Black-White cohabiting couple

¹ This is a Census Bureau policy for sub-state analyses used in order to avoid disclosure.

² Households are only included in analyses if the householder is at least 18 years old.

³ In 2007-2011, there were 177,417 Black-White cohabiting households, compared to 236,075 in 2017-2021.

households (Tables 1 and 2). Of states with a significantly higher share of Black-White cohabiting couple households than the national average, most were in the South and Midwest. Delaware and Virginia had among the highest percentages of Black-White cohabiting couple households in both periods (Tables 1 and 2). Notably, in both periods, Texas was the only Southern state with a significantly lower percentage of Black-White cohabiting households, compared to the national average.

{Figure 1 about here}

{Figure 2 about here}

{Table 1 about here}

{Table 2 about here}

The national percentage of Black-White cohabiting couple households increased by 0.13 percentage points over the period. The vast majority of states did not have a percentage-point change that significantly differed from the percentage-point change for the nation as a whole. Five states, however, did experience a percentage point change that was significantly different from the national average. California, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Wyoming all experienced a significant decline in the percentage of households headed by a Black-White cohabiting couple compared to the national increase. West Virginia was the only state that experienced a significantly higher increase than the national average, at 2.52 percentage points (Figure 3).

{Figure 3 about here}

Although there were numerically more Black-White married couple households than Black-White cohabiting couple households, a greater percentage of cohabiting households were headed by a Black-White couple, compared to married couple households. In 2007-2011, 0.73 percent of married couple households were Black-White, and in 2017-2021, this estimate

increased to 0.93 percent of married couple households.⁴ Several states had a significantly lower percentage of Black-White married couple households, compared to the national average in both 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 (Figures 4 and 5). States that had among the lowest percentages of Black-White married couple households in both periods were Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and Utah, while Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Nevada, and Virginia had among the highest percentages in both periods.

{Figure 4 about here}

{Figure 5 about here}

{Table 4 about here}

{Table 5 about here}

The percentage of coupled households headed by a Black-White married couple increased by 0.20 percentage points for the nation as a whole. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia had percentage-point changes that significantly differed from the national average. Notably, all of the states that experienced an increase that was larger than the increase for the nation were in the South. The District of Columbia, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee all had larger increases than the national average. California, Colorado, Maine, New Jersey, Utah, and Washington also experienced an increase in the percentage of Black-White married-couple households, but their change was smaller than that of the national average. Idaho was the only state that experienced a decline in the percentage of Black-White married-couple households.

{Figure 6 about here}

{Table 6 about here}

⁴ In 2007-2011, there were 415,604 Black-White married households, compared to 553,540 in 2017-2021.

At the county level, the overall pattern of results was consistent with those at the state level. In both periods, most counties with a significantly higher percentage of Black-White cohabiting and married households than the national average were located in the South and Midwest (Figures 7 and 8). Regarding cohabiting households, Hamilton County, Ohio, had among the highest percentage of Black-White cohabiting couple households in 2007-2011, at 6.59 percent, followed by Jefferson County, Kentucky; New Castle County, Delaware; Franklin County, Ohio; and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. These were counties where there was a sizable non-Hispanic Black population – they all had a non-Hispanic Black population of at least 20 percent in that period.

In 2017-2021, Kent County, Michigan had among the highest percentage of Black-White cohabiting couple households, also at 6.59 percent.⁵ Delaware County, Pennsylvania; New Castle County, Delaware; Franklin County, Ohio; and Marion County, Indiana were the other counties with among the highest percentage of Black-White cohabiting couple households (Tables 7 and 8). Of the five counties with among the highest percentage of Black-White cohabiting couple households, Kent County had the smallest percentage of non-Hispanic Black residents.⁶ Additionally, about half of Kent County’s population was 35 or younger, and younger people are more likely to form interracial relationships compared to older people (Livingston and Brown, 2017). Conversely, Miami-Dade County, Florida; El Paso County, Texas; and Hidalgo County, Texas had among the lowest percentages of Black-White cohabiting couple households in both data years. El Paso and Hidalgo Counties had a non-Hispanic Black population of less

⁵ The percentage of Black-White married couple households for Hamilton County, Ohio was not significantly different from the percentage of these households in Kent County, Michigan.

⁶ Kent County, Michigan’s non-Hispanic Black population was 9.1 percent in 2017-2021; Delaware County, Pennsylvania; New Castle County, Delaware; Franklin County, Ohio; and Marion County, Indiana all had a non-Hispanic Black population of at least 20 percent in 2017-2021.

than 5 percent in both data years, which likely explains the small percentage of Black-White cohabiting households in those counties.

{Figure 7 about here}

{Figure 8 about here}

{Table 7 about here}

{Table 8 about here}

Regarding Black-White married-couple households, three of the five counties with the highest percentage of these households were in the South or Midwest in 2007-2011 (refer to Figures 9 and 10). Marion County, Indiana had among the highest percentage of Black-White married-couple households, with 2.07 percent of coupled households headed by a Black-White couple in 2007-2011. Pierce County, Washington; Baltimore City, Maryland; El Paso County, Colorado; and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin were additional counties with among the highest percentage of Black-White married households. Marion, Baltimore, and Milwaukee Counties all had a sizable non-Hispanic Black population.⁷ Interestingly, Pierce and El Paso Counties both had a relatively small Black population (of less than 10 percent), but had among the highest percentage of Black-White married-couple households. This is likely explained by military bases being in both counties, and since members of the military fight alongside people of different races, they may be more likely to trust (and marry) people outside of their racial group (Fryer Jr., 2007).

In 2017-2021, the District of Columbia had the highest percentage of Black-White married couple households, at 2.42 percent, followed by Marion County, Indiana; Jackson County, Missouri; Anne Arundel County, Maryland; and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin (Tables

⁷ In 2007-2011, Marion County, Indiana; Baltimore City, Maryland; and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin all had a non-Hispanic Black population of more than 25 percent.

9 and 10). These were generally counties where there was a sizable Black population and where many residents were college-educated. Counties with among the lowest percentages of Black-White married households in 2007-2011 include Nassau County, New York; Jefferson County, Colorado; Salt Lake City, Utah; Ocean County, New Jersey; and Hidalgo County, Texas. With the exception of Nassau County, all of these counties had a Black population of less than 5 percent in 2007-2011.⁸ In 2017-2021, counties with among the lowest percentages of Black-White married-couple households were Santa Clara County, California; Miami-Dade County, Florida; Bergen County, New Jersey; Utah County, Utah; and Hidalgo County, Texas. Excluding Miami-Dade County, these were counties where non-Hispanic Black people constituted no more than 5 percent of the total population.

{Figure 9 about here}

{Figure 10 about here}

{Table 9 about here}

{Table 10 about here}

Turning to the sociodemographic characteristics of these couples, results reveal that educational attainment has increased for both cohabiting and married Black-White couples. On average, though, married couples are more educated than their cohabiting counterparts. In 2007-2011, 43.8 percent of Black-White married couples were couples in which at least one partner had a bachelor's degree or higher, but by 2017-2021, this estimate increased to 54.1 percent (Figure 11). Conversely, 56.2 percent of Black-White married couples were couples in which neither partner was college educated, but by 2017-2021, that estimate declined to 45.9 percent. Cohabiting couples were much less likely than married couples to be college educated. A

⁸ Nassau County, New York had a non-Hispanic Black population of 10.5 percent in 2007-2011.

plausible explanation for this finding is that cohabiting couples are typically younger than married couples, so many of them may not have reached the age where they could have earned a college degree. Additionally, many people want to be financially secure before marriage, and may delay marriage until they feel financially ready (Smock, Manning, and Porter, 2005). About 28.5 percent of Black-White cohabiting couples were couples where at least one partner was college educated in 2007-2011. This estimate grew to 38.0 percent in 2017-2021. While Black-White cohabiting couples have become more educated over this period, the majority are not college educated, as 62.0 percent of these couples were couples in which neither partner was college educated in 2017-2021.

{Figure 11 about here}

Regarding household poverty status, Black-White married couples are also less likely to be in poverty than cohabiters, although there was a decline in household poverty for both groups (Figure 12). In 2007-2011, 6.4 percent of married couples were in poverty, compared to about 4.8 percent in 2017-2021. Black-White cohabiters were more than four times as likely to be in poverty than married couples. In 2007-2011, 27.9 percent of Black-White cohabiting couples were in poverty, but by 2017-2021, that estimate declined to about 21.4 percent of cohabiters (about a 7-percentage-point decline). Thus, the change in household poverty has been more pronounced for cohabiters.

{Figure 12 about here}

The average age of married couples increased between the two periods (Figure 13). About 12 percent of Black-White married-couple households had a householder between ages 18 to 29 in 2007-2011, but by 2017-2021, only about 9 percent of these households were headed by someone in that age range. Roughly 31 percent of Black-White married-couple households had a

householder that was at least 50 years old in 2007-2011, compared to 38 percent in 2017-2021. Cohabiting couples, on the other hand, were much younger than married couples, though they also became older during this time period. Roughly 35 percent of cohabiting couple households had a householder between the ages of 18 to 29 in 2007-2011, compared to 28 percent in 2017-2021. Regarding households headed by older householders, about 17 percent had householders who were at least 50 years old in 2007-2011, and by 2017-2021, that percentage rose to 21 percent.

{Figure 13 about here}

Region of residence shows the same overall pattern for both married and cohabiting Black-White couples. In both periods, the largest share of these couples resided in the South (Figure 14). More than 40% of married and cohabiting couples resided in the South during the two periods. Additionally, the share of these couples residing in the South has increased for both groups. There was a 3.6-percentage-point increase in the share of Black-White married couple households in the South, compared to a 3.0-percentage-point increase among cohabiting couple households. Along with increases in the share of these couples residing in the South, there were significant declines in the percentage of Black-White married and cohabiting couples living in the West, as well as significantly lower shares of Black-White married couples residing in the Northeast.

{Figure 13 about here}

DISCUSSION

This study elucidates the geographic variations in Black-White interracial marriages and cohabitations, and how these variations have changed over time. As the United States continues to become more racially diverse, the opportunity for people to engage in interracial relationships

should increase. Results reveal that for both cohabitation and marriage, Black-White coupled households became slightly more common from 2007-2011 to 2017-2021, although they were still relatively rare. Additionally, a larger share of Black-White couples were cohabiting rather than married. Almost three percent of cohabiting couple households were headed by a Black-White cohabiting couple, compared to less than one percent of households headed by a Black-White married couple. That a larger share of Black-White coupled households was cohabiting is consistent with research showing that more adults have ever cohabited than married today (Graf, 2019). Although attitudes regarding interracial relationships are generally more positive than they were in the past (Taylor et al., 2012), Black-White couples may still face social barriers to marriage. Indeed, research has documented that White adults express greater approval for interracial relationships that entail less commitment (Livingston and Brown, 2017). Given that cohabitation is a less “serious” relationship than marriage and imposes a lower level of commitment (at least legally), White adults may be more inclined to cohabit with rather than marry Black adults.

That a larger share of households was cohabiting compared to married may also reflect the relatively precarious economic standing of Black adults. Many Americans, irrespective of race, believe that being financially stable is a prerequisite to marriage (Smock, Manning, and Porter, 2005), and given that Black adults, on average, have lower incomes than Whites (Shrider, Kollar, Chen, and Semega, 2021), the greater share of cohabiting households relative to married households may be at least partially attributable to cohabiting couples wanting to be more financially stable before marrying.

There was a lower share of Black-White married-couple households compared to cohabiting households, but consistent with results for cohabiters, most states with a significantly

higher percentage of Black-White married-couple households were located in the South and Midwest. Nevada was the only state not located in the South or Midwest that had a significantly higher percentage of Black-White married households in both periods, compared to the national average. This is likely because Nevada is one of the states that has gained the greatest number of Black people since 1995 (Frey, 2022). This finding, in conjunction with the migration of Black adults to Nevada, seems to point to greater marriage because of more opportunities for Blacks and Whites to intermingle and intermarry. That Black-White households were more common in the Midwest and South is likely because of where Black people are geographically situated. In both periods, roughly three-quarters of the non-Hispanic Black population resided in the South and Midwest.⁹

Despite the lower share of Black-White married-couple households compared to cohabiting households, the share of married households increased by 0.2 percentage points over the period. Unlike the results for cohabiters, though, several states had a percentage-point increase that was larger than the increase for the nation, and it is notable that all of these states were in the South: the District of Columbia, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Recently, there has been a growing trend of Black adults with high socioeconomic standing moving to the South (Frey, 2022). Given the relative affluence of these individuals, they may be more inclined to marry rather than cohabit (or view cohabitation as a step in the marriage process), which may explain the larger than average increases in Black-White married-couple households in the South. Furthermore, many of these Black individuals taking part in this migration to the South are college-educated (Frey, 2022), and being college-educated increases the odds of intermarrying (Qian, 1997; Qian and Lichter, 2011).

⁹ In 2007-2011, 57.2 percent of the non-Hispanic Black population lived in the South and 18.1 percent lived in the Midwest; in 2017-2021, those estimates were 58.5 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively.

County-level analyses reveal slightly more variation than state-level analyses, but results are largely consistent with results showing a higher share of Black-White coupled households being in the South and Midwest. For example, Hamilton County, Ohio and Kent County, Michigan had among the highest percentages of Black-White cohabiting couple households in 2007-2011 and 2017-2021, respectively. Regarding marriage, Marion County, Indiana had among the highest percentage of Black-White married couple households in 2007-2011, while the District of Columbia had among the highest percentages of Black-White married couple households in 2017-2021. Generally, these were counties with a sizable share of Black people, but this was not always the case. Pierce County, Washington and El Paso County, Colorado, for example, had a relatively small share of Black residents. However, these counties had among the highest share of Black-White married couple households in 2007-2011, which is possibly explained by the fact that these two counties house military bases, and service members may be especially likely to form interracial relationships (Fryer Jr., 2007).

Regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of Black-White couples, married couples were more likely to be college-educated, and less likely to experience household poverty than cohabiting couples. More than half of Black-White married couples were couples in which at least one partner was college-educated in 2017-2021, compared to about 38 percent of cohabiting couples. Conversely, about 46 percent of married couples were couples in which neither partner was college-educated, compared to roughly three-fifths of cohabiters. Additionally, only about 5 percent of married couples experienced household poverty, while more than one-fifth of cohabiters did in 2017-2021. These results are not surprising, as research has consistently found that married people tend to have a higher socioeconomic status than their cohabiting counterparts (Clarkberg, 1999; McLanahan and Percheski, 2008). Furthermore, qualitative studies have found

that many couples want to be financially stable before marrying (Gibson-Davis, Eden, and McLanahan, 2005; Smock, Manning, and Porter, 2005), so for the most economically vulnerable couples, cohabitation may act as an alternative to marriage until the economic bar to marriage is met.

Black-White married couples also tended to be older than their cohabiting counterparts. In 2017-2021, roughly 9 percent of married couples had a householder between ages 18 to 29, compared to more than one quarter of cohabiters. Conversely, almost two-fifths of married couples involved a householder who was at least 50 years old, compared to about one-fifth of cohabiting couples. This is in line with prior research showing that cohabiters are typically younger than married people (Hemez, 2018). In the past, marriage was often the first step of adulthood, but today, many Americans view it as one of the last steps of adulthood – it is what one does after finishing one’s education, finding a loving partner, and obtaining a stable job (Cherlin, 2004). Until those requirements are met, many couples decide to cohabit rather than marry, resulting in an older age at marriage.

Consistent with maps showing the geographic distribution of Black-White couples, the South was the region with the greatest share of these couples. In 2007-2011 and 2017-2021, more than two-fifths of cohabiting and married couples resided in the South. That a greater percentage of Black-White married and cohabiting households were in the South may reflect the overall location of the Black population, but it may also indicate that social boundaries between the two racial groups may be weaker in the South than other regions, or reflect a long history of the groups living in close proximity to each other.

LIMITATIONS/FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although the current study highlighted the geographic spread and sociodemographic

characteristics of Black-White coupled households over time, this study is not without its limitations. One limitation of this study is that ACS data are cross-sectional, so it is not possible to follow these couples over time. For cohabiting couples, their relationship may act as a stepping stone to marriage rather than a substitute for it, but it is not possible to examine this using the ACS. And for married couples, interracial unions have been found to have a higher probability of divorce (Bratter and King, 2008), so it is possible that some of the marriages of Black-White couples may dissolve. Indeed, interracial marriages involving Blacks have been found to be less stable than those involving other racial groups (Zhang and Van Hook, 2009). Future research would benefit from longitudinal data to examine the trajectories of interracial couples over time.

Additionally, while I focused on Black-White coupled households due to the historic social boundaries between the two groups, a next step would be to examine the geographic distribution of other types of married and cohabiting interracial couples. Rico, Kreider, and Anderson (2018) examined various combinations of interracial and interethnic couples, but they solely examined interracial marriages. Given the ubiquity of cohabitation in the United States, and given the higher likelihood of interracial couples to cohabit rather than marry, future research should incorporate cohabiting couples into research on interracial couples.

CONCLUSION

Overall, findings from this study indicate that while Black-White cohabitations and marriages have become more common over time, potentially indicating a weakening of racial barriers, they are still relatively rare, although cohabitation is the more common union. Additionally, these couples tend to be geographically concentrated in the South and Midwest. Furthermore, consistent with prior research, the sociodemographic characteristics of these

couples differ substantially, with married couples being older and experiencing better economic well-being than cohabiters.

REFERENCES

- Axinn, W.G., and Thornton, A. (1992). "The Relationship Between Cohabitation and Divorce: Selectivity or Causal Influence?" *Demography*, 29, 357-374.
- Bratter, J.L., and King, R.B. (2008). "'But will it last?': Marital Instability Along Interracial and Same-Race Couples." *Family Relations*, 57, 160-171.
- Brown, S.L., Manning, W.D., and Payne, K.K. (2017). "Relationship Quality Among Cohabiting Versus Married Couples." *Journal of Family Issues*, 38, 1730-1753.
- Cherlin, A.J. (2004). "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 848-861.
- Choi, K.H., and Goldberg, R.E. (2020). "The Social Significance of Interracial Cohabitation: Inferences Based on Fertility Behavior." *Demography*, 57, 1727-1751.
- Clarkberg, M. (1999). "The Price of Partnering: The Role of Economic Well-Being in Young Adults' First Union Experiences." *Social Forces*, 77, 945-968.
- Fiebert, M.S., Nugent, D., Hershberger, S.L., and Kasdan, M. (2004). "Dating and Commitment Choices as a Function of Ethnicity Among American College Students in California." *Psychological Reports*, 94, 1293-1300.
- Frey, W.H. (2022). "A New Great Migration Is Bringing Black Americans back to the South. Retrieved from [A 'New Great Migration' is bringing Black Americans back to the South \(brookings.edu\)](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-new-great-migration/2022/07/14/a-new-great-migration-is-bringing-black-americans-back-to-the-south/).
- Fryer Jr., R.G. (2007). "Guess Who's Been Coming to Dinner? Trends in Interracial Marriage over the 20th century." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21, 71-90.
- Gibson-Davis, C., Edin, K., and McLanahan, S. (2005). "High Hopes but Even Higher Expectations: The Retreat from Marriage Among Low-Income Couples." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 1301-1312.
- Graf, N. (2019). *Key findings on marriage and cohabitation in the U.S.* Pew Research Center. Retrieved from [Key findings on marriage and cohabitation in the U.S. | Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/2019/07/11/key-findings-on-marriage-and-cohabitation-in-the-u-s/).
- Hemez, P. (2018). "Young Adulthood: Cohabitation, Birth, and Marriage Experiences." *Family Profiles*, FP-18-22. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-22>.
- Herman, M.R., and Campbell, M.E. (2012). "I Wouldn't, but You Can: Attitudes Toward

- Interracial Relationships.” *Social Science Research*, 41, 343-358.
- Jensen, E., Jones, N., Rabe, M., Pratt, B., Medina, L., Orozco, K., and Spell, L. (2021). “2020 U.S. Population More Racially and Ethnically Diverse than Measured in 2010: The Chance that Two People Chosen at Random are of Different Race or Ethnicity Groups Has Increased Since 2010.” [America Counts: Stories Behind the Numbers](#).
- Johnson, T.D., and Kreider, R.M. (2013). “Mapping the Geographic Distribution of Interracial/Interethnic Married Couples in the United States: 2010.” *SEHSD Working Paper Number 2013-19*. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2013/demo/interracialmarriages-paa2013-final.pdf>.
- Livingston, G. (2017). “In U.S. Metro Areas, Huge Variation in Inter-marriage Rates.” Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/18/in-u-s-metro-areas-huge-variation-in-intermarriage-rates/>.
- Livingston, G., and Brown, A. (2017). “Inter-marriage in the U.S. 50 Years After *Loving v. Virginia*.” Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/05/19102233/Inter-marriage-May-2017-Full-Report.pdf>.
- Manning, W.D. (2015). “Cohabitation and Child Well-Being.” *The Future of Children*, 25, 51-66.
- Mayol-García, Y., Gurrentz, B., and Kreider, R.M. (2021). “Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2016.” *Current Population Reports*, P70-167, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington DC.
- McLanahan, S., and Percheski, C. (2008). “Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34, 257-276.
- Qian, Z. (1997). “Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage Between 1980 and 1990.” *Demography*, 34, 263-276.
- Qian, Z., and Lichter, D.T. (2011). “Changing Patterns of Interracial Marriage in a Multiracial Society.” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73, 1065-1084.
- Rico, B., Kreider, R.M., and Anderson, L. (2018). “Examining Change in the Percent of Married-Couple Households That Are Interracial and Interethnic: 2000 to 2012-2016.”

<https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2018/demo/SEHSD-WP2018-11.html>.

- Shrider, E.A., Kollar, M., Chen, F., and Semega, J. (2021). "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020." *Current Population Reports*, P60-273, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington DC.
- Smock, P.J., Manning, W.D., and Porter, M. (2005). "'Everything's there except money': How Money Shapes Decisions to Marry Among Cohabitators." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 680-696.
- Taylor, P., Wang, W., Parker, K., Passel, J.S., Patten, E., and Motel, S. (2012). "The Rise of Intermarriage: Rates, Characteristics Vary by Race and Gender." *Pew Research Center*.
- Thomson, E., and Colella, U. (1992). "Cohabitation and Marital stability: Quality or commitment?" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 54, 259-267.
- <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2021/demo/p70-167.html>
- Zhang, Y., and Van Hook, J. (2009). "Marital Dissolution Among Interracial Couples." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71, 95-107.

Table 1. States with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Cohabiting* Couple Households with a Black-White Cohabiting Couple in **2007-2011**

| <i>State</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| Delaware | 4.93% |
| Maryland | 4.80% |
| Virginia | 4.69% |
| Kentucky | 4.34% |
| District of Columbia | 4.23% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Utah | 0.87% |
| New Mexico | 0.72% |
| Alaska | 0.68% |
| South Dakota | 0.67% |
| Montana | 0.51% |

Note: States shown are significantly different from the national average of 2.72%. However, states listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 2. States with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Cohabiting* Couple Households with a Black-White Cohabiting Couple in **2017-2021**

| <i>State</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| Delaware | 6.34% |
| Arkansas | 5.09% |
| West Virginia | 5.04% |
| South Carolina | 4.89% |
| Virginia | 4.86% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Maine | 0.90% |
| Utah | 0.81% |
| Vermont | 0.64% |
| Montana | 0.59% |
| Wyoming | 0.40% |

Note: States shown are significantly different from the national average of 2.85%. However, states listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 3. Percentage of Black-White Cohabiting Coupled Households in 2007-2011 and 2017-2021, by State

| <i>State</i> | 2007-2011 | | 2017-2021 | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Margin of Error</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Margin of Error</i> |
| Alabama | 3.97* | 0.76 | 3.25 | 0.54 |
| Alaska | 0.68* | 0.49 | 1.58* | 0.68 |
| Arizona | 2.17* | 0.42 | 1.91* | 0.34 |
| Arkansas | 3.79* | 0.71 | 5.09* | 1.16 |
| California | 1.74* | 0.12 | 1.53* | 0.10 |
| Colorado | 2.03* | 0.39 | 1.56* | 0.29 |
| Connecticut | 2.57 | 0.59 | 2.84 | 0.55 |
| Delaware | 4.93* | 1.36 | 6.34* | 1.87 |
| District of Columbia | 4.23* | 1.38 | 3.44 | 1.12 |
| Florida | 2.68 | 0.22 | 2.81 | 0.24 |
| Georgia | 3.55* | 0.45 | 4.10* | 0.48 |
| Hawaii | 0.95* | 0.45 | 0.91* | 0.74 |
| Idaho | 0.93* | 0.54 | 0.98* | 0.58 |
| Illinois | 2.71 | 0.27 | 3.18 | 0.33 |
| Indiana | 3.44* | 0.37 | 3.80* | 0.46 |
| Iowa | 2.77 | 0.56 | 2.52 | 0.43 |
| Kansas | 3.36* | 0.63 | 3.86* | 0.73 |
| Kentucky | 4.34* | 0.65 | 4.20* | 0.59 |
| Louisiana | 3.78* | 0.65 | 4.31* | 0.83 |
| Maine | 1.19* | 0.41 | 0.90* | 0.35 |
| Maryland | 4.80* | 0.57 | 4.58* | 0.54 |
| Massachusetts | 1.99* | 0.26 | 1.90* | 0.33 |
| Michigan | 3.04* | 0.31 | 3.58* | 0.37 |
| Minnesota | 2.99 | 0.42 | 2.67 | 0.41 |
| Mississippi | 2.68 | 0.70 | 3.84* | 0.83 |
| Missouri | 3.36* | 0.47 | 3.62* | 0.48 |
| Montana | 0.51* | 0.42 | 0.59* | 0.34 |
| Nebraska | 2.96 | 0.72 | 2.49 | 0.57 |
| Nevada | 2.82 | 0.60 | 2.59 | 0.51 |
| New Hampshire | 1.15* | 0.49 | 1.40* | 0.58 |
| New Jersey | 2.42* | 0.28 | 2.44* | 0.33 |
| New Mexico | 0.72* | 0.29 | 0.94* | 0.41 |
| New York | 2.17* | 0.20 | 2.49* | 0.23 |
| North Carolina | 3.77* | 0.47 | 4.54* | 0.50 |
| North Dakota | 1.20* | 0.66 | 2.13 | 0.99 |
| Ohio | 4.01* | 0.35 | 4.03* | 0.36 |
| Oklahoma | 2.62 | 0.51 | 3.36* | 0.48 |
| Oregon | 1.65* | 0.34 | 1.41* | 0.31 |
| Pennsylvania | 3.25* | 0.24 | 3.21* | 0.28 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| Rhode Island | 2.47 | 0.93 | 2.31 | 0.68 |
| South Carolina | 3.95* | 0.67 | 4.89* | 0.77 |
| South Dakota | 0.67* | 0.48 | 1.41* | 0.57 |
| Tennessee | 3.71* | 0.54 | 4.00* | 0.57 |
| Texas | 2.47* | 0.23 | 2.45* | 0.22 |
| Utah | 0.87* | 0.37 | 0.81* | 0.35 |
| Vermont | 0.96* | 0.47 | 0.64* | 0.29 |
| Virginia | 4.69* | 0.54 | 4.86* | 0.44 |
| Washington | 2.16* | 0.30 | 2.18* | 0.29 |
| West Virginia | 2.53 | 0.63 | 5.04* | 1.05 |
| Wisconsin | 2.69 | 0.28 | 2.28* | 0.39 |
| Wyoming | 1.17* | 0.80 | 0.40* | 0.27 |

*Indicates a significant difference from the national average at the 95% confidence level. The national average was 2.72% in 2007-2011 and 2.85% in 2017-2021.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

For more information about the ACS, refer to census.gov/acs.

Table 4. States with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Married* Couple Households with a Black-White Married Couple in **2007-2011**

| <i>State</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| District of Columbia | 1.49% |
| Maryland | 1.30% |
| Virginia | 1.23% |
| Delaware | 1.17% |
| Nevada | 1.14% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Utah | 0.30% |
| Idaho | 0.29% |
| North Dakota | 0.28% |
| Wyoming | 0.27% |
| Montana | 0.18% |

Note: States shown are significantly different from the national average of 0.73%. However, states listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 5. States with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of Married Couple Households with a Black-White Married Couple in *2017-2021*

| <i>State</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| District of Columbia | 2.42% |
| Maryland | 1.65% |
| Virginia | 1.59% |
| Delaware | 1.42% |
| Nevada | 1.37% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| North Dakota | 0.46% |
| Maine | 0.42% |
| Utah | 0.38% |
| Montana | 0.30% |
| Idaho | 0.18% |

Note: States shown are significantly different from the national average of 0.93%. However, states listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 6. Percentage of Black-White Married Coupled Households in 2007-2011 and 2017-2021, by State

| <i>State</i> | 2007-2011 | | 2017-2021 | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Margin of Error</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Margin of Error</i> |
| Alabama | 0.57* | 0.06 | 0.88 | 0.09 |
| Alaska | 0.96* | 0.23 | 1.19 | 0.29 |
| Arizona | 0.73 | 0.07 | 0.98 | 0.10 |
| Arkansas | 0.59* | 0.08 | 0.89 | 0.14 |
| California | 0.68* | 0.03 | 0.71* | 0.03 |
| Colorado | 0.77 | 0.07 | 0.84* | 0.08 |
| Connecticut | 0.92* | 0.59 | 1.07 | 0.15 |
| Delaware | 1.17* | 0.21 | 1.42* | 0.29 |
| District of Columbia | 1.49* | 0.39 | 2.42* | 0.50 |
| Florida | 0.83* | 0.04 | 1.01* | 0.05 |
| Georgia | 0.97* | 0.07 | 1.34* | 0.09 |
| Hawaii | 0.44* | 0.12 | 0.51* | 0.12 |
| Idaho | 0.29* | 0.09 | 0.18* | 0.06 |
| Illinois | 0.69 | 0.05 | 0.85* | 0.05 |
| Indiana | 0.81* | 0.07 | 1.05* | 0.09 |
| Iowa | 0.57* | 0.07 | 0.70* | 0.11 |
| Kansas | 0.83 | 0.11 | 1.07 | 0.14 |
| Kentucky | 0.80 | 0.09 | 1.17* | 0.10 |
| Louisiana | 0.70 | 0.09 | 1.01 | 0.13 |
| Maine | 0.39* | 0.11 | 0.42* | 0.11 |
| Maryland | 1.30* | 0.11 | 1.65* | 0.13 |
| Massachusetts | 0.69 | 0.07 | 0.84 | 0.09 |
| Michigan | 0.70 | 0.05 | 0.88 | 0.06 |
| Minnesota | 0.66* | 0.06 | 0.79* | 0.08 |
| Mississippi | 0.59* | 0.10 | 0.75* | 0.14 |
| Missouri | 0.79 | 0.07 | 1.08* | 0.09 |
| Montana | 0.18* | 0.06 | 0.30* | 0.13 |
| Nebraska | 0.60* | 0.10 | 0.97 | 0.14 |
| Nevada | 1.14* | 0.17 | 1.37* | 0.14 |
| New Hampshire | 0.47* | 0.10 | 0.60* | 0.13 |
| New Jersey | 0.63* | 0.04 | 0.74* | 0.06 |
| New Mexico | 0.47* | 0.10 | 0.54* | 0.11 |
| New York | 0.68* | 0.04 | 0.85* | 0.06 |
| North Carolina | 0.86* | 0.06 | 1.21* | 0.08 |
| North Dakota | 0.28* | 0.11 | 0.46* | 0.17 |
| Ohio | 0.84* | 0.05 | 1.08* | 0.06 |
| Oklahoma | 0.75 | 0.08 | 0.91 | 0.10 |
| Oregon | 0.55* | 0.06 | 0.72* | 0.11 |
| Pennsylvania | 0.70 | 0.04 | 0.91 | 0.06 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| Rhode Island | 0.68 | 0.18 | 0.83 | 0.21 |
| South Carolina | 0.72 | 0.08 | 1.13* | 0.10 |
| South Dakota | 0.40* | 0.13 | 0.49* | 0.12 |
| Tennessee | 0.72 | 0.06 | 1.11* | 0.11 |
| Texas | 0.65* | 0.03 | 0.87* | 0.05 |
| Utah | 0.30* | 0.07 | 0.38* | 0.07 |
| Vermont | 0.45* | 0.14 | 0.54* | 0.23 |
| Virginia | 1.23* | 0.07 | 1.59* | 0.08 |
| Washington | 0.86* | 0.06 | 0.93 | 0.07 |
| West Virginia | 0.66 | 0.11 | 0.77* | 0.14 |
| Wisconsin | 0.50* | 0.05 | 0.68* | 0.08 |
| Wyoming | 0.27* | 0.12 | 0.55* | 0.24 |

*Indicates a significant difference from the national average at the 95% confidence level. The national average was 0.73% in 2007-2011 and 0.93% in 2017-2021.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 7. Counties with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Cohabiting* Couple Households with a Black-White Cohabiting Couple in **2007-2011**

| <i>County</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| Hamilton County, Ohio | 6.59% |
| Jefferson County, Kentucky | 6.52% |
| New Castle County, Delaware | 6.15% |
| Franklin County, Ohio | 5.96% |
| Mecklenburg County, North Carolina | 5.50% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Orange County, California | 1.07% |
| Kern County, California | 1.04% |
| Miami-Dade County, Florida | 0.87% |
| El Paso County, Texas | 0.77% |
| Hidalgo County, Texas | 0.00% |

Note: Counties shown are significantly different from the national average of 2.72% of coupled households. However, counties listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 8. Counties with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Cohabiting* Couple Households with a Black-White Cohabiting Couple in **2017-2021**

| <i>County</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| Kent County, Michigan | 6.59% |
| Delaware County, Pennsylvania | 6.05% |
| New Castle County, Delaware | 5.98% |
| Franklin County, Ohio | 5.93% |
| Marion County, Indiana | 5.83% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Jefferson County, Colorado | 0.83% |
| Fresno County, California | 0.68% |
| Miami-Dade County, Florida | 0.46% |
| El Paso County, Texas | 0.28% |
| Hidalgo County, Texas | 0.00% |

Note: Counties shown are significantly different from the national average of 2.85% of coupled households. However, counties listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 9. Counties with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Married* Couple Households with a Black-White Married Couple in **2007-2011**

| <i>County</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| Marion County, Indiana | 2.07% |
| Pierce County, Washington | 1.90% |
| Baltimore City, Maryland | 1.74% |
| El Paso County, Colorado | 1.73% |
| Milwaukee County, Wisconsin | 1.69% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Nassau County, New York | 0.43% |
| Jefferson County, Colorado | 0.37% |
| Salt Lake City, Utah | 0.36% |
| Ocean County, New Jersey | 0.30% |
| Hidalgo County, Texas | 0.06% |

Note: Counties shown are significantly different from the national average of 0.73% of coupled households. However, counties listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

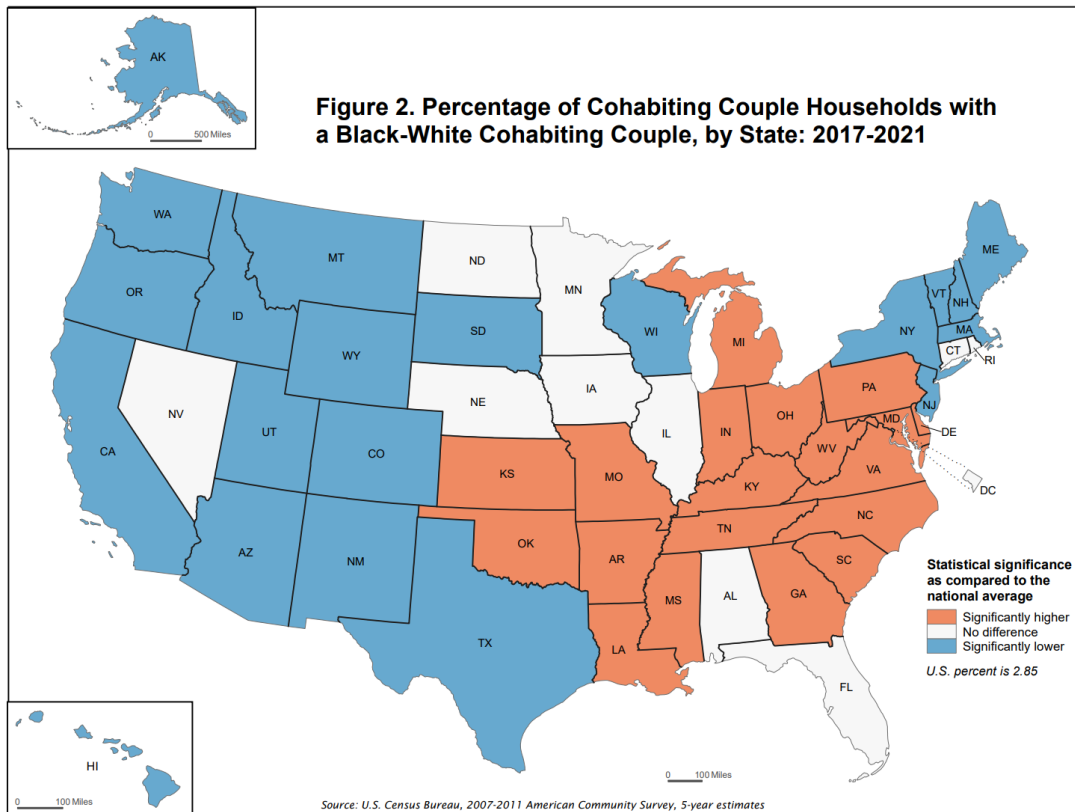
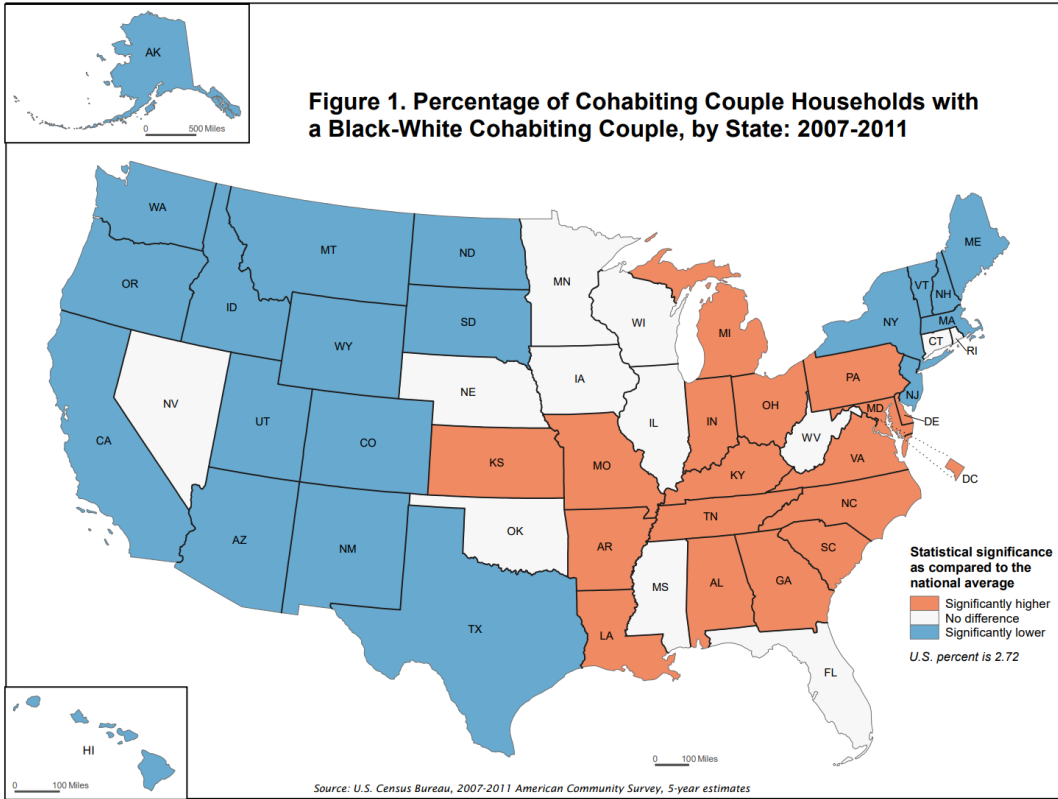
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

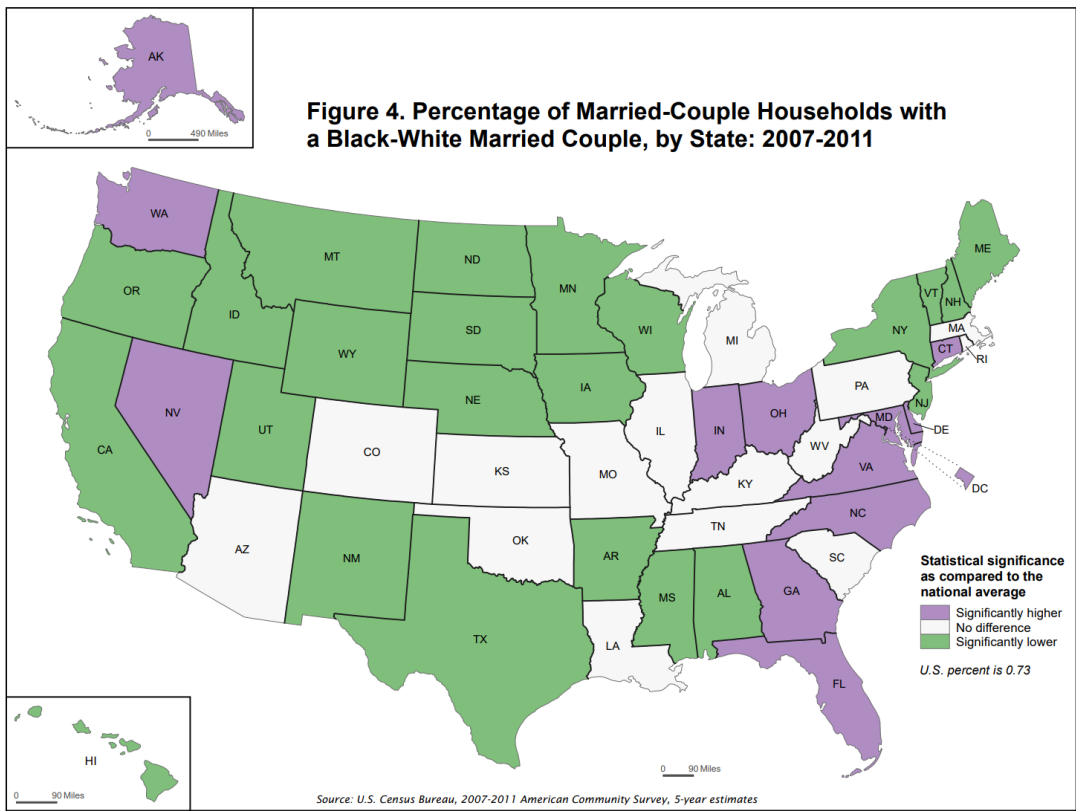
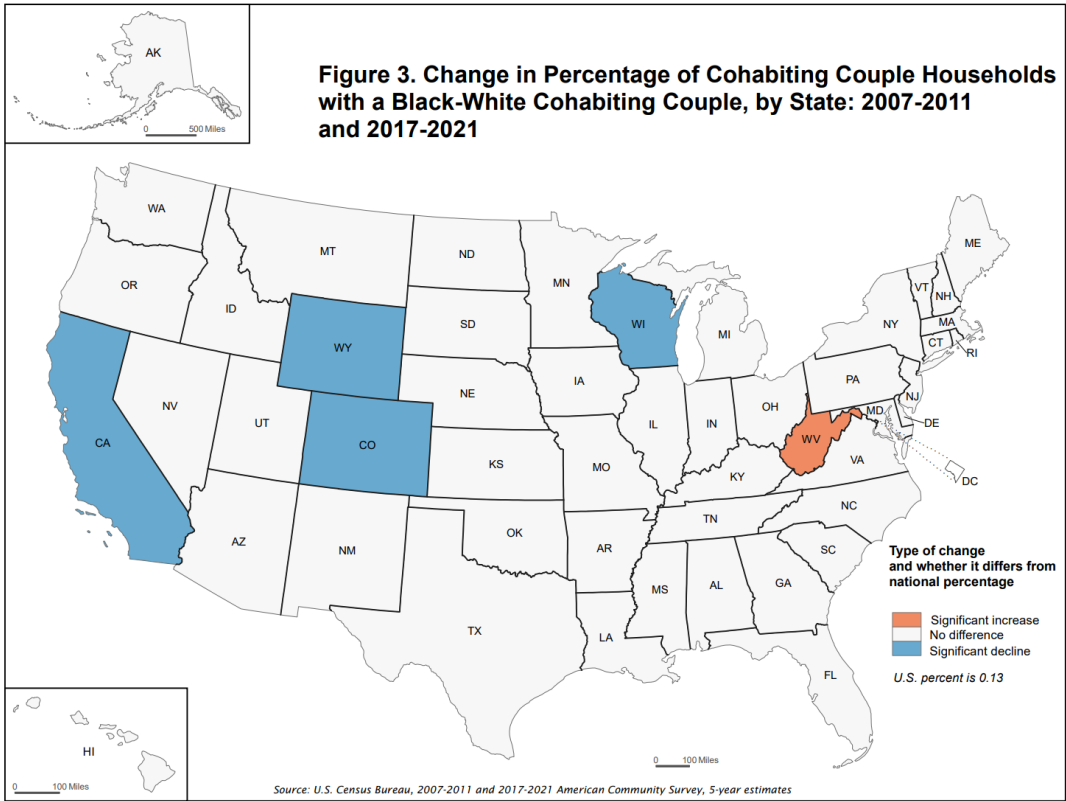
Table 10. Counties with Among the Highest and Lowest Percentages of *Married* Couple Households with a Black-White Married Couple in *2017-2021*

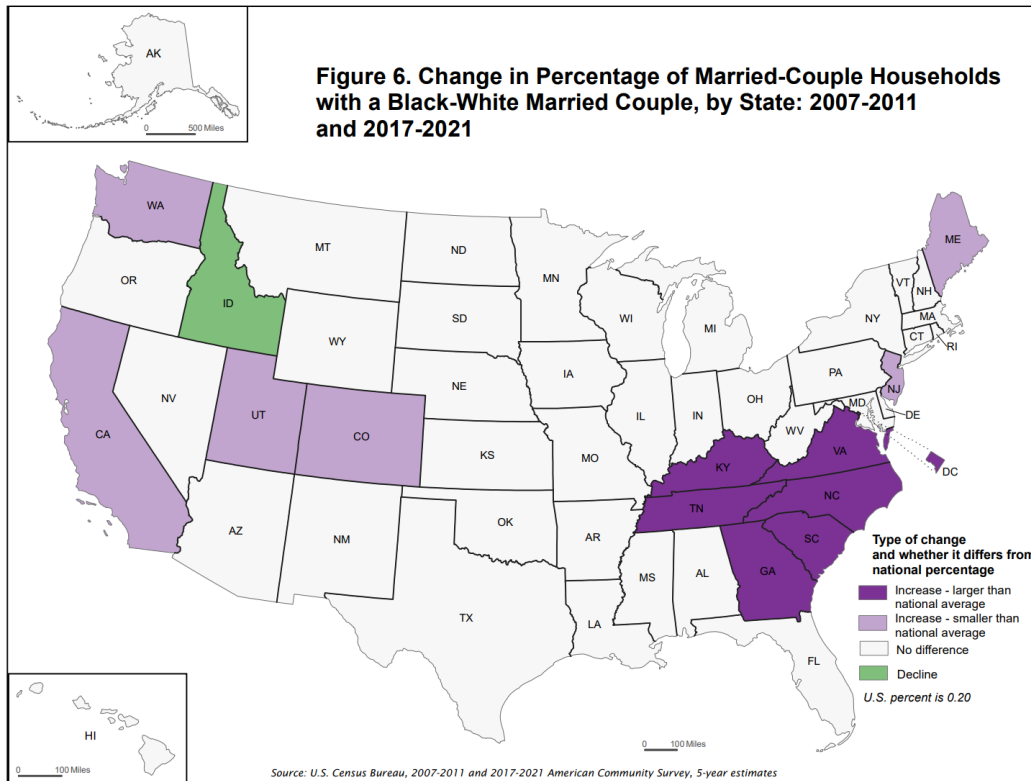
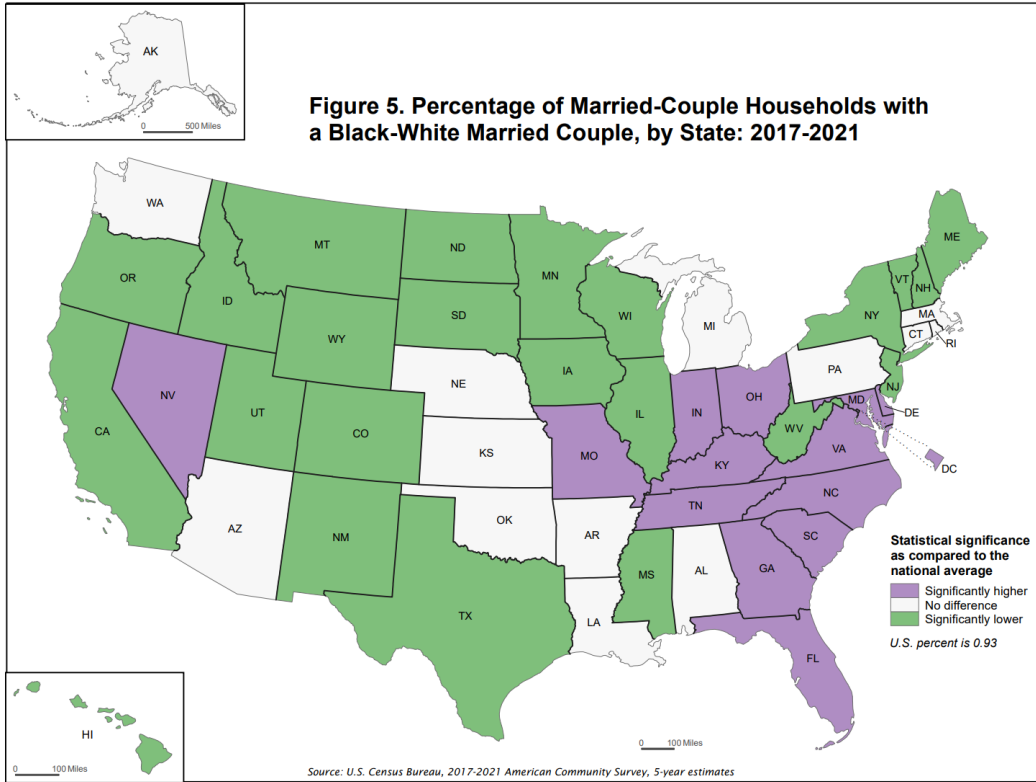
| <i>County</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Highest</i> | |
| District of Columbia | 2.42% |
| Marion County, Indiana | 2.28% |
| Jackson County, Missouri | 2.25% |
| Anne Arundel County, Maryland | 2.15% |
| Milwaukee County, Wisconsin | 2.08% |
| <i>Lowest</i> | |
| Santa Clara County, California | 0.37% |
| Miami-Dade County, Florida | 0.33% |
| Bergen County, New Jersey | 0.33% |
| Utah County, Utah | 0.26% |
| Hidalgo County, Texas | 0.03% |

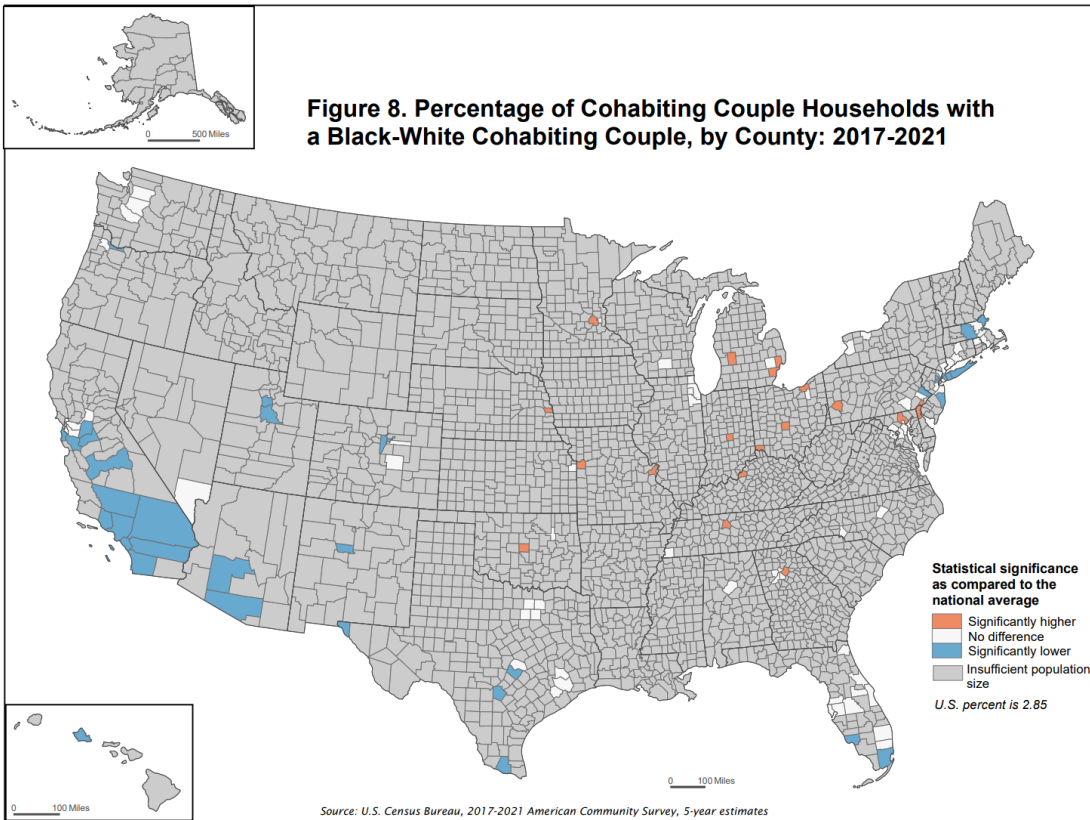
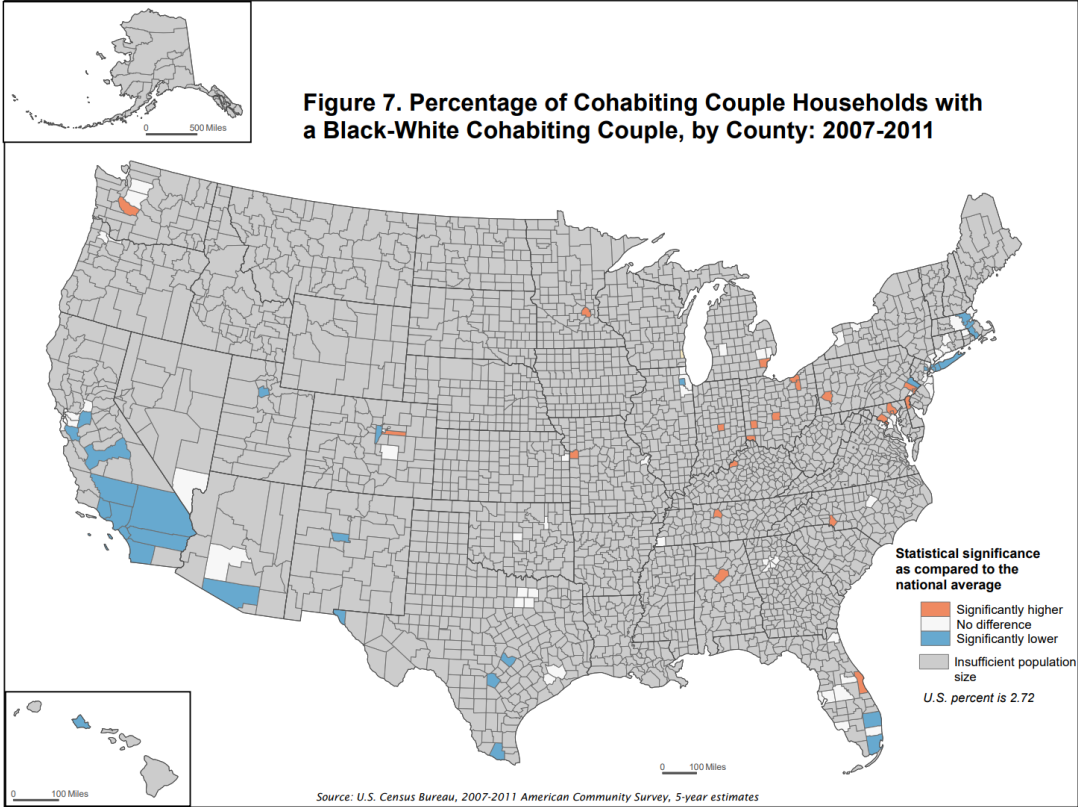
Note: Counties shown are significantly different from the national average of 0.93% of coupled households. However, counties listed in table may not differ significantly from one another.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.









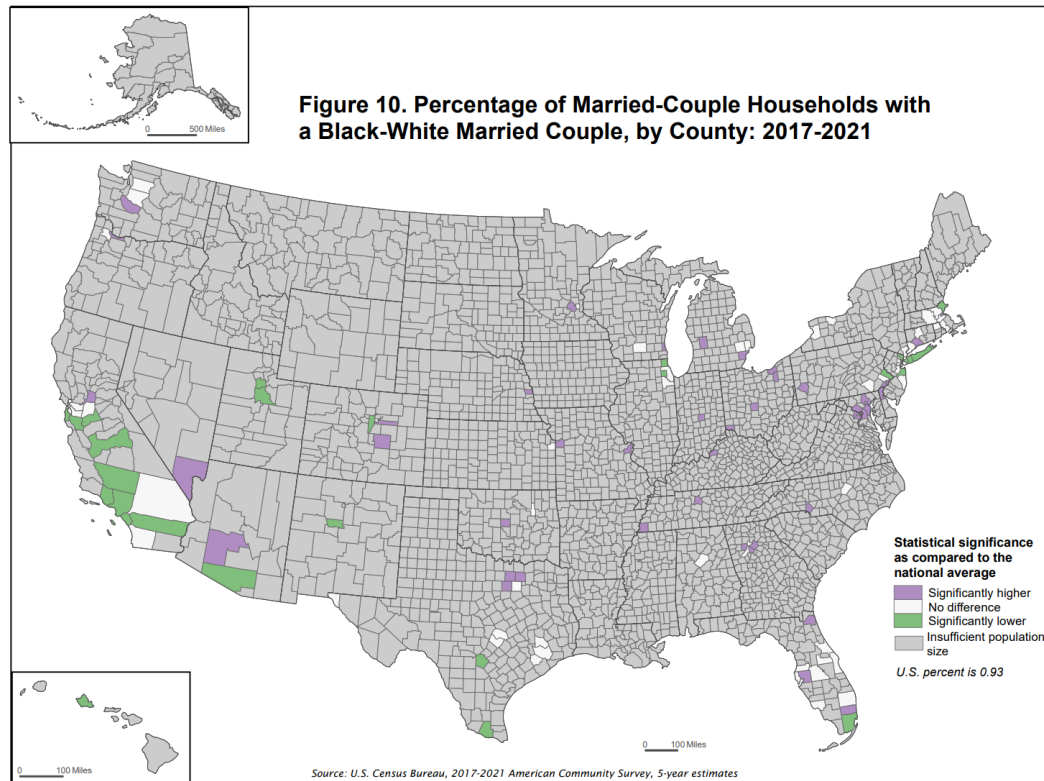
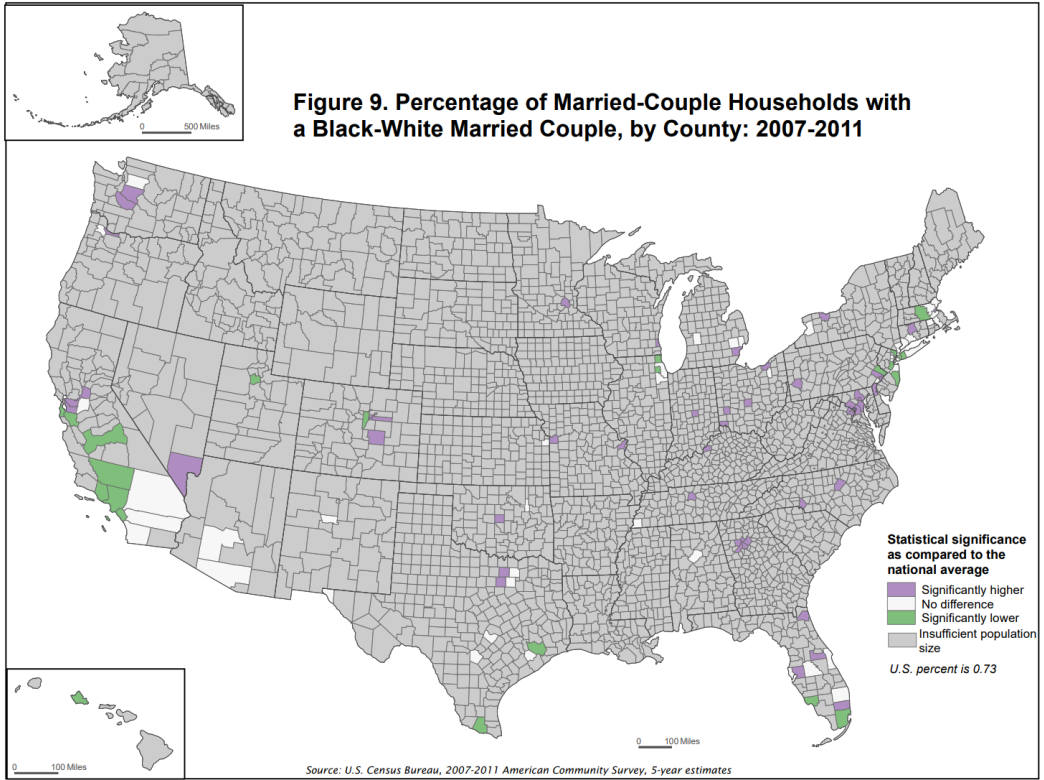
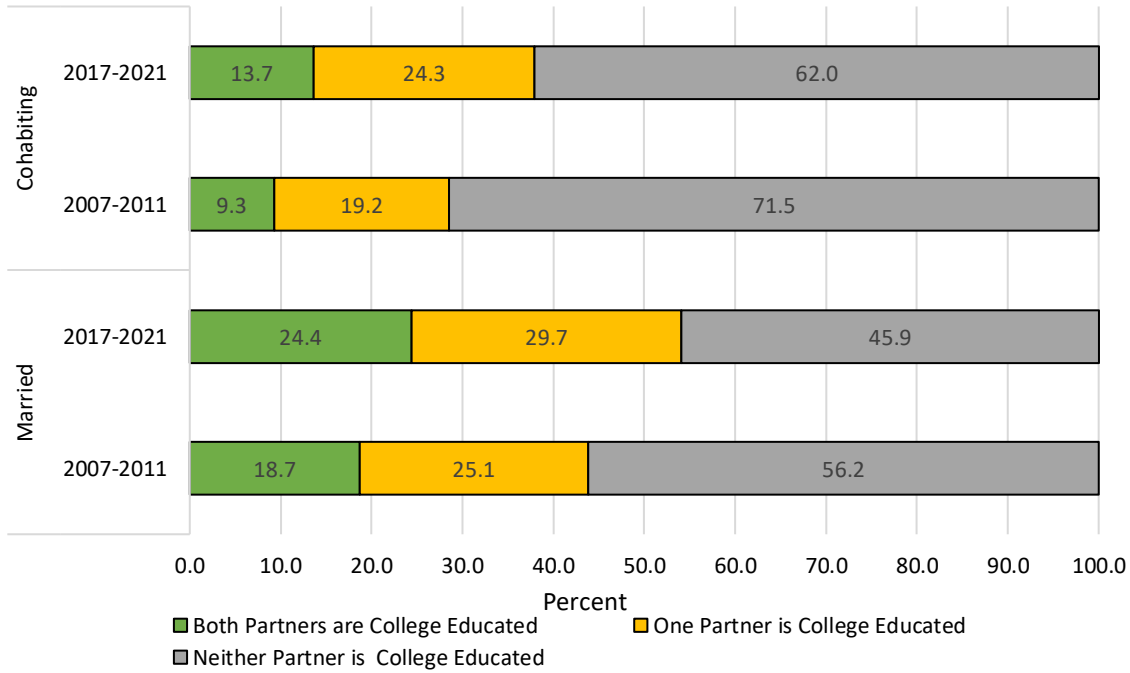


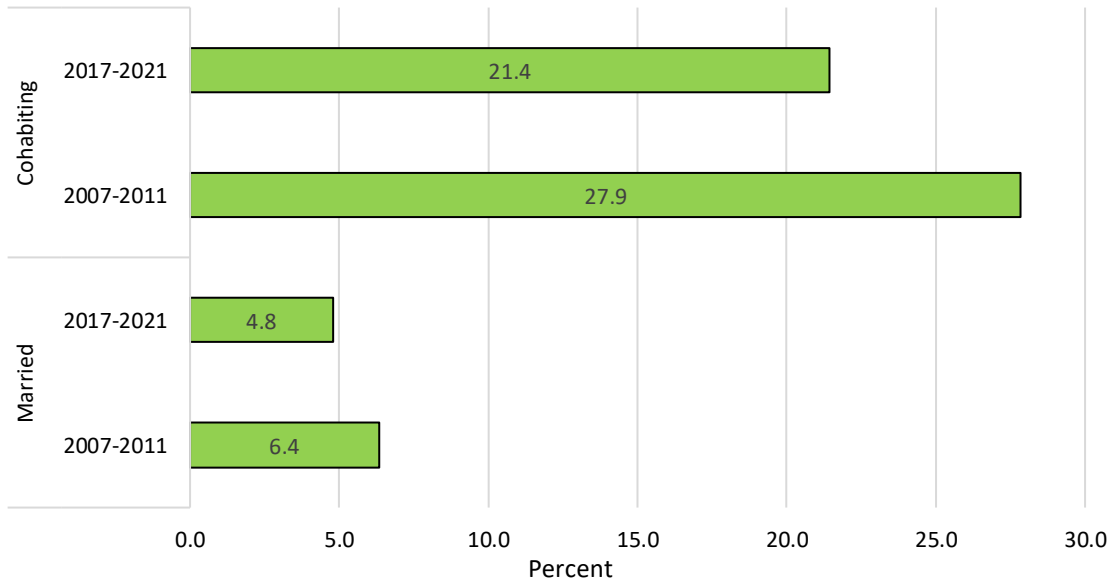
Figure 11. Educational Attainment of Black-White Coupled Households Over Time: 2007-2011 and 2017-2021



Note: Only includes households in which the householder is at least 18 years old.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

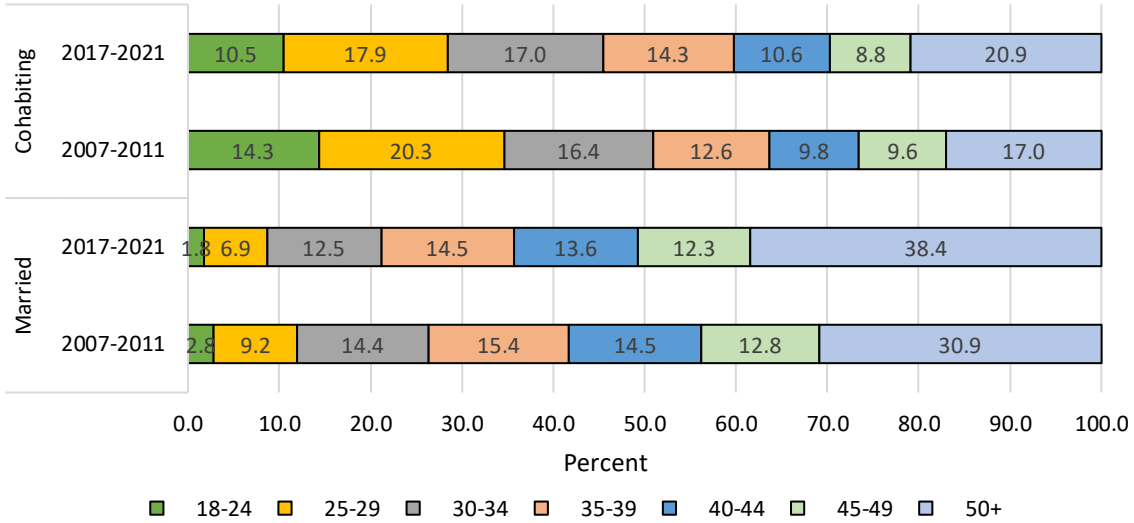
Figure 12. Household Poverty of Black-White Coupled Households Over Time: 2007-2011 and 2017-2021



Note: Only includes households in which the householder is at least 18 years old.

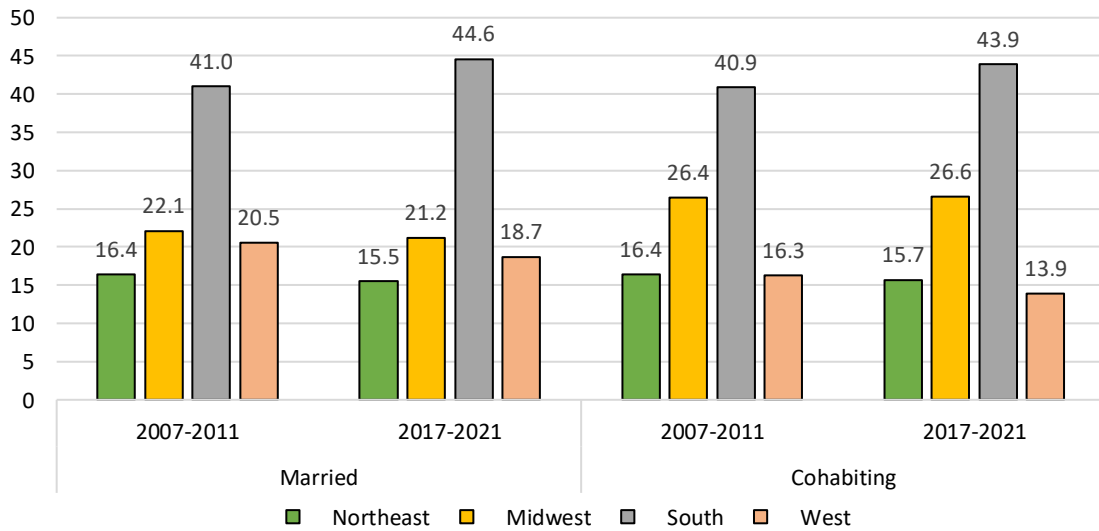
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Figure 13. Age of Householder in Black-White Coupled Households Over Time: 2007-2011 and 2017-2021



Note: Only includes households in which the householder is at least 18 years old.
 U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Figure 14. Region of Residence of Black-White Married Couple Households Over Time: 2007-2011 and 2017-2021



Note: Only includes households in which the householder is at least 18 years old.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.