

Measuring Same-Sex Couples, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity on Census Bureau and Federal Surveys

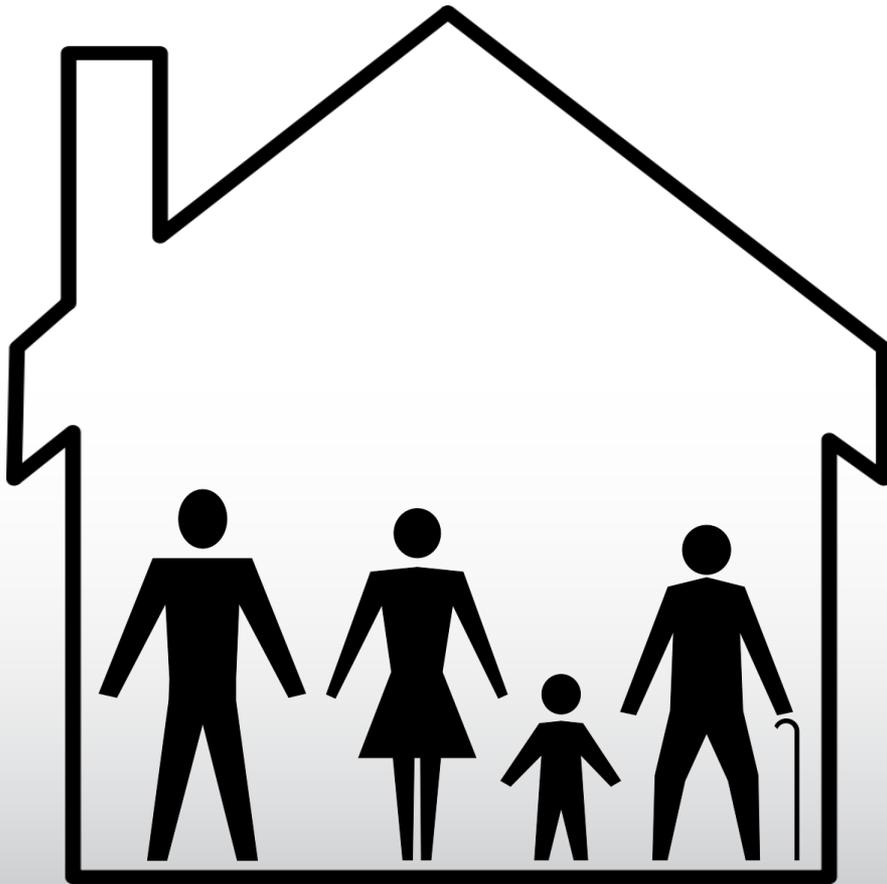
Webinar for the National LGBTQ Task Force

September 15, 2016

Introduction and presentation overview

- The basics of measuring household relationships
- How measuring household relationships has changed over time
- Statistics on same-sex couples
- Data access and availability
- Sexual orientation and gender identity

Measuring Household Relationships- The Basics



We collect information about the relationships of individuals living in households in the Decennial Census, American Community Survey, and other demographic surveys (e.g., Current Population Survey).

This data provides information about the composition of families and trends in living arrangements for the U.S. population.

Measuring Household Relationships- The Basics



1. Who owns or rents the home?

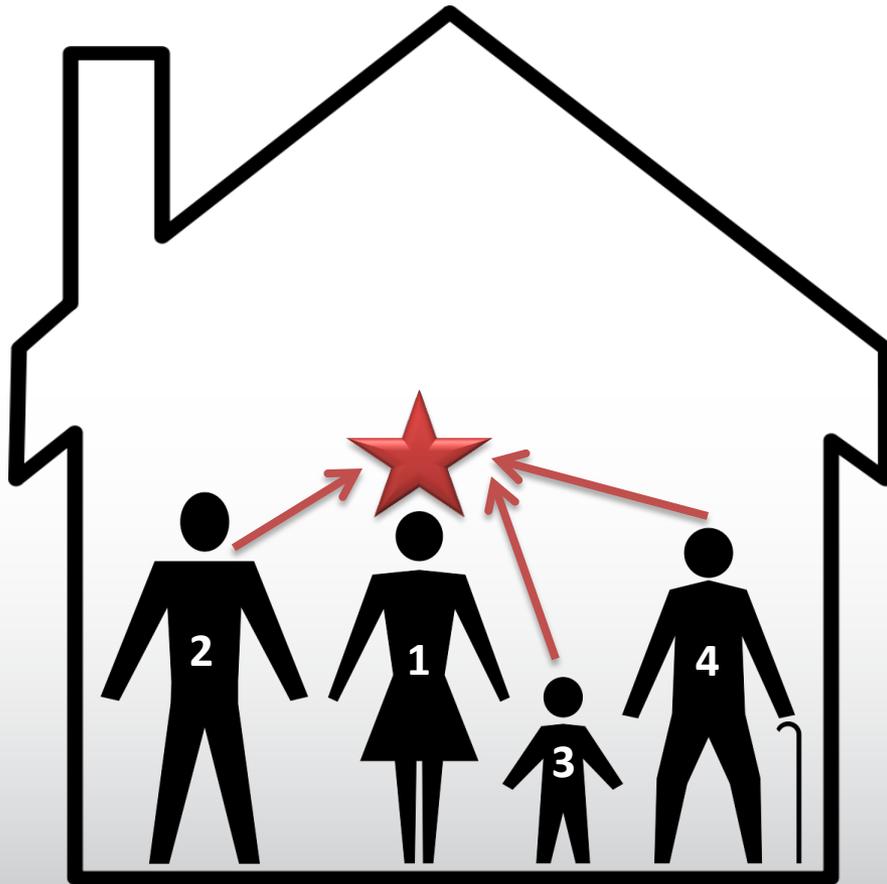
Measuring Household Relationships- The Basics



1. Who owns or rents the home?

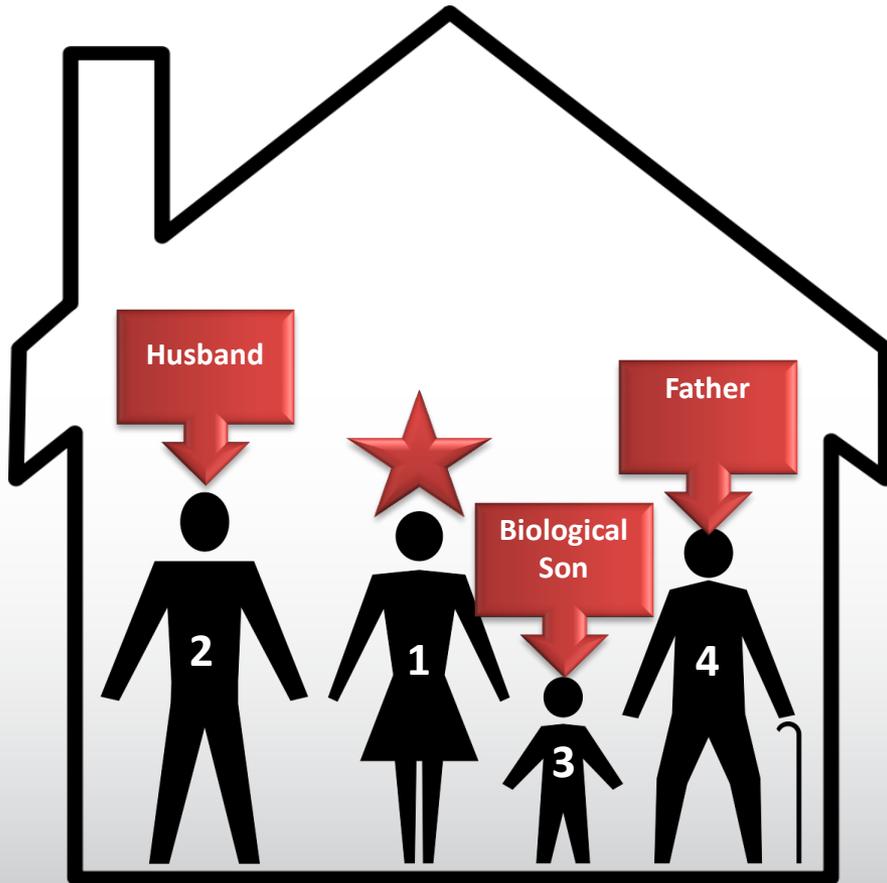
This person is the Householder (or head of household) and is the reference person for establishing household relationships.

Measuring Household Relationships- The Basics



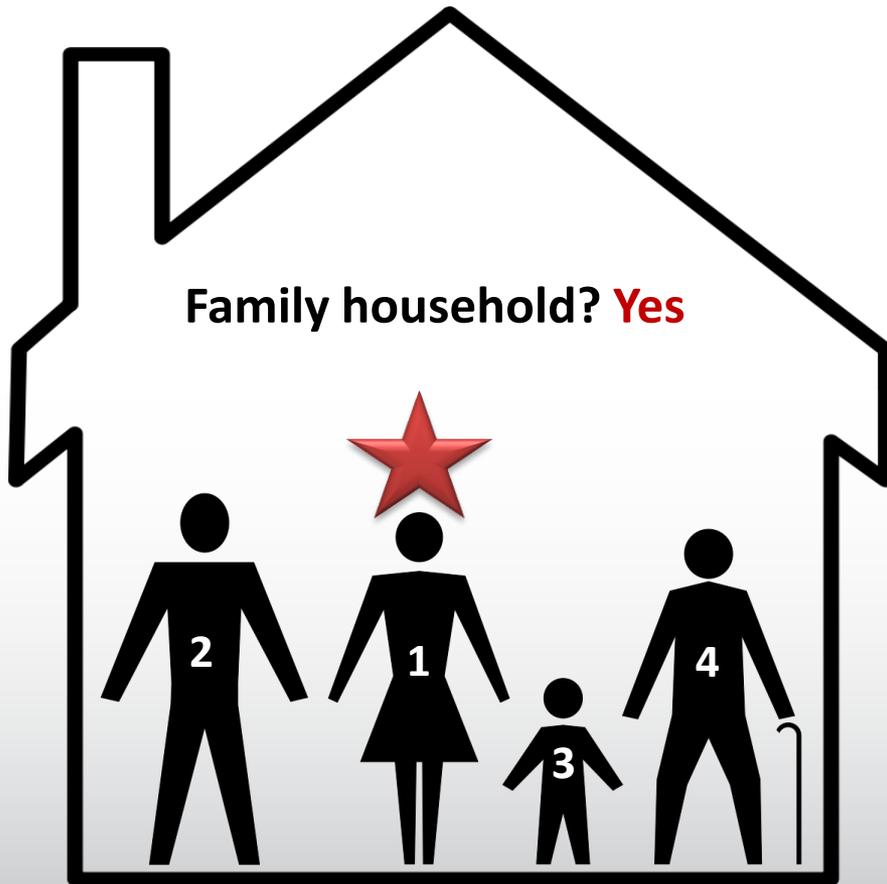
1. **Who owns or rents the home?**
This person is the Householder (or head of household) and is the reference person for establishing household relationships.
2. **How are the other household residents related to the Householder?**

Measuring Household Relationships- The Basics



1. **Who owns or rents the home?**
This person is the Householder (or head of household) and is the reference person for establishing household relationships.
2. **How are the other household residents related to the Householder?**
Person 2 is the Householder's Husband.
Person 3 is the Householder's Biological Son.
Person 4 is the Householder's Father.

Measuring Household Relationships- The Basics



1. Who owns or rents the home?

This person is the Householder (or head of household) and is the reference person for establishing household relationships.

2. How are the other household residents related to the Householder?

Person 2 is the Householder's Husband.
Person 3 is the Householder's Biological Son.
Person 4 is the Householder's Father.

3. Is this a family or non-family household?

Family households contain at least one person related to the Householder by birth, marriage or adoption.

Answer = Yes

- Person 2 is related by marriage
- Person 3 is related by birth
- Person 4 is related by birth

Changing Measurement of Coupled Households

1880 Census

- Relationship to the householder first appears on the Census:

Relationship of each person to the head of this family – whether wife, son, daughter, servant, boarder, or other

1990 Census

- Added the category unmarried partner
- If reported as same-sex:
 - Unmarried partners allowed
 - Married couples: Sex of one individual edited to reflect opposite-sex arrangement

Census 2000

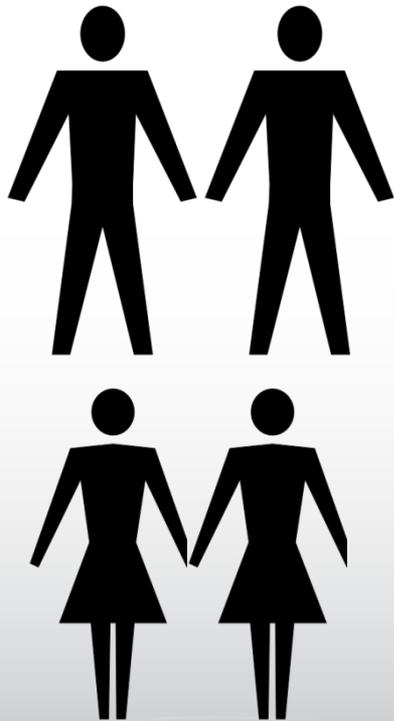
- If reported as same-sex:
 - Unmarried partners allowed
 - Married couples: Relationship edited to “same-sex unmarried partners”

2010 Census

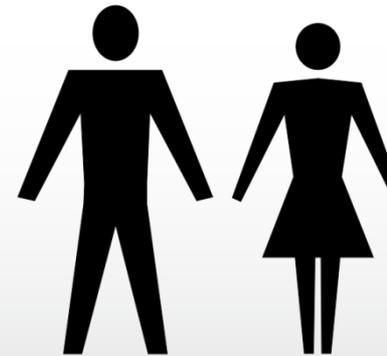
- First to show estimates of same-sex married couples in special report/tables
- Revised estimates released to address an error in the estimates

In **1990**, if reported as a same-sex married couple, the **sex of one individual was edited** to reflect opposite-sex arrangement.

Unedited response:
Same-sex married couple

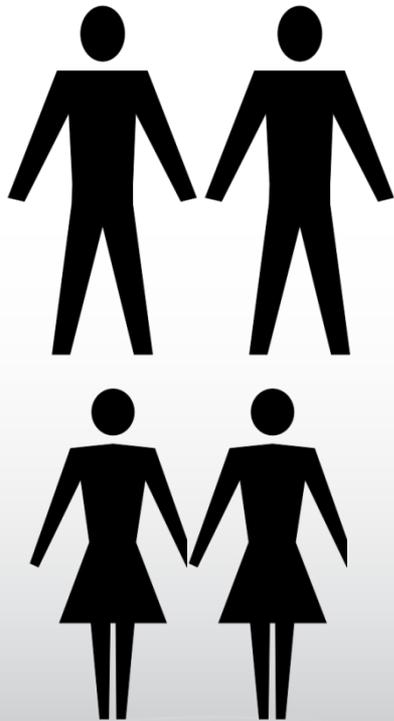


Edited response:
Opposite-sex married couple

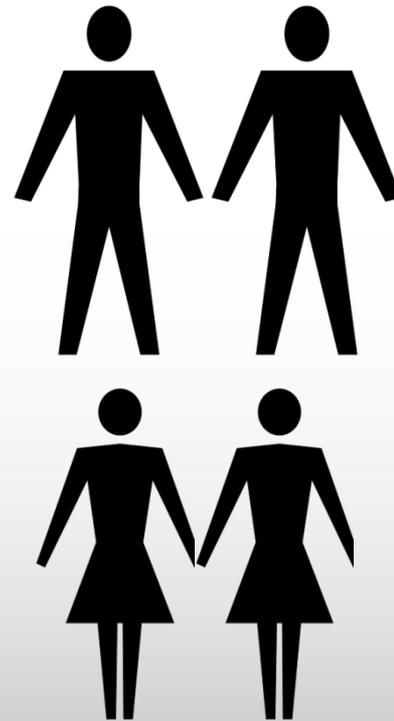


In **2000**, if reported as a same-sex married couple, the **relationship of the couple was edited** to reflect a same sex unmarried partnership.

Unedited response:
Same-sex married couple

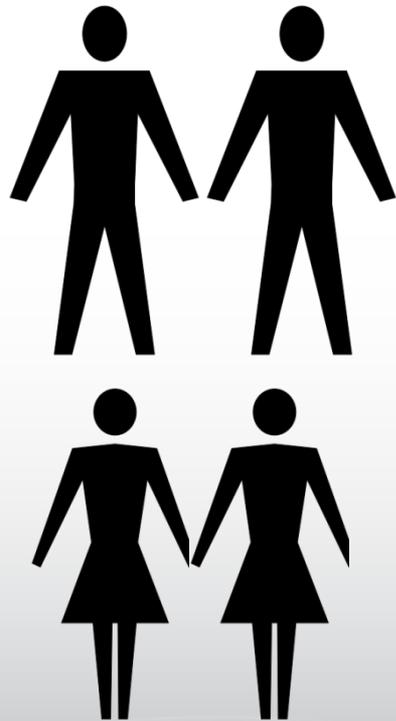


Edited response:
Same-sex unmarried partners

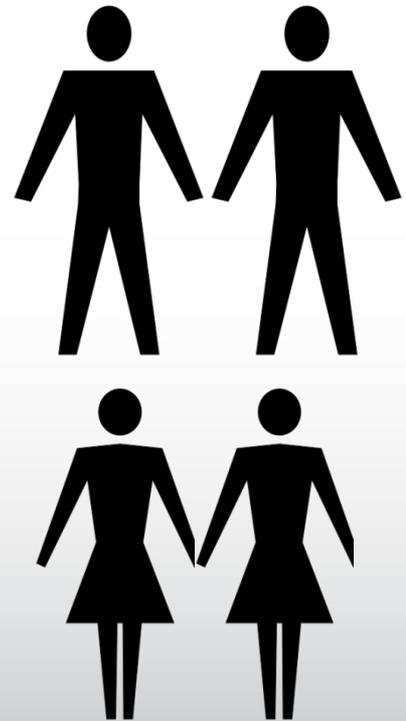


In 2010, estimates of same-sex married couples were published in special report/tables.

Unedited response:
Same-sex married couple



Edited response:
Same-sex unmarried partners



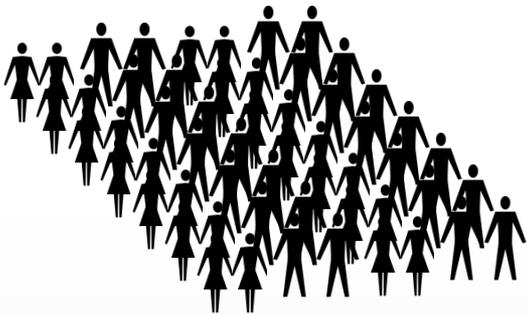
A separate tabulation was created to provide estimates of same-sex married couples in 2010.

Data Quality Challenges

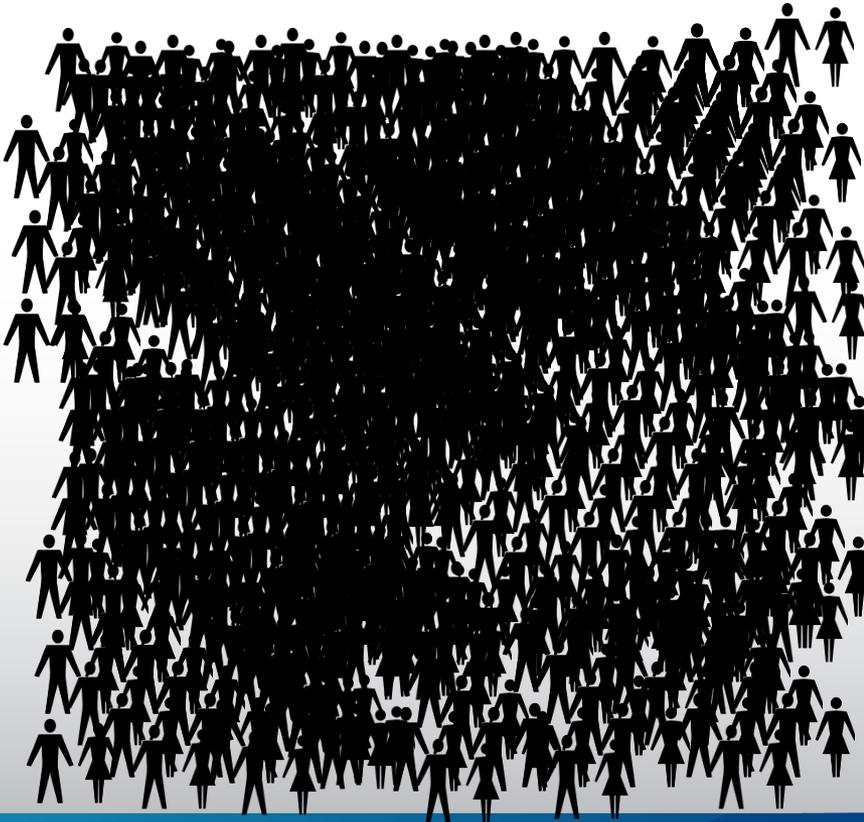
- A statistical problem: a low rate of random error in a large group (opposite-sex married couples) creates issues in the estimates of a small group (same-sex married couples)
 - There are some 56 million opposite-sex married couple households.
 - Only a small proportion mismark their response, but it is enough to create significant error in the estimate of same-sex married couples.

A statistical problem: a low rate of random error in a large group (opposite-sex married couples) creates issues in the estimates of a small group (same-sex married couples)

Same-sex married couples



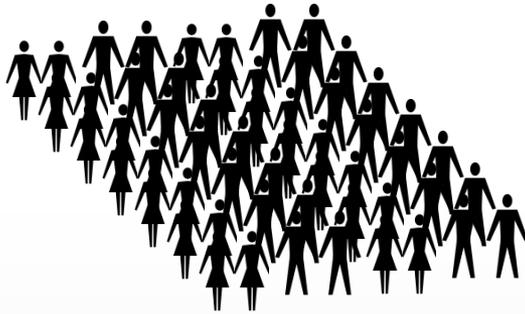
Opposite-sex married couples



There are some **56 million opposite-sex married couple** households and around **400,000 same-sex married couple** households.

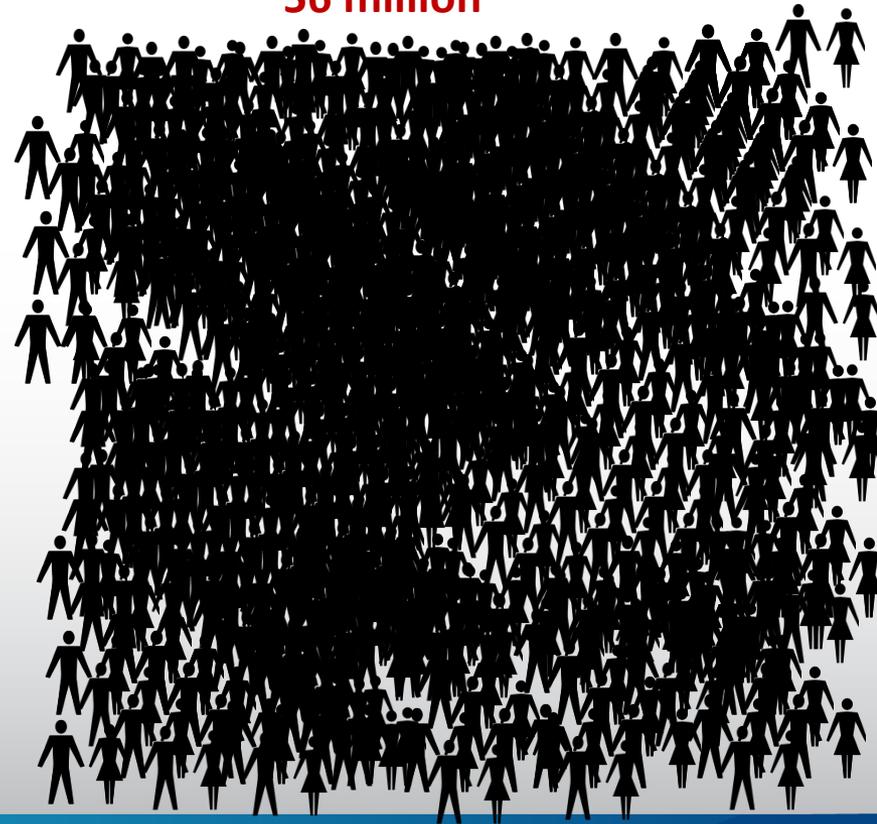
Same-sex married couples

400,000



Opposite-sex married couples

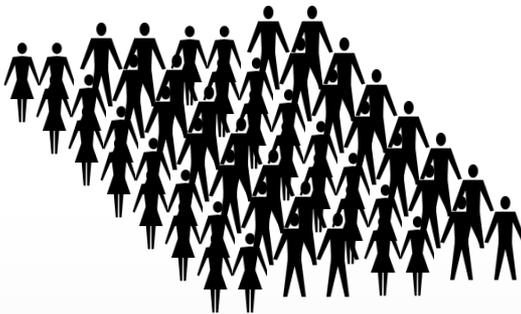
56 million



A small proportion of **opposite-sex married couples** mismark their response, which is enough to create significant error in the estimate of same-sex married couples.

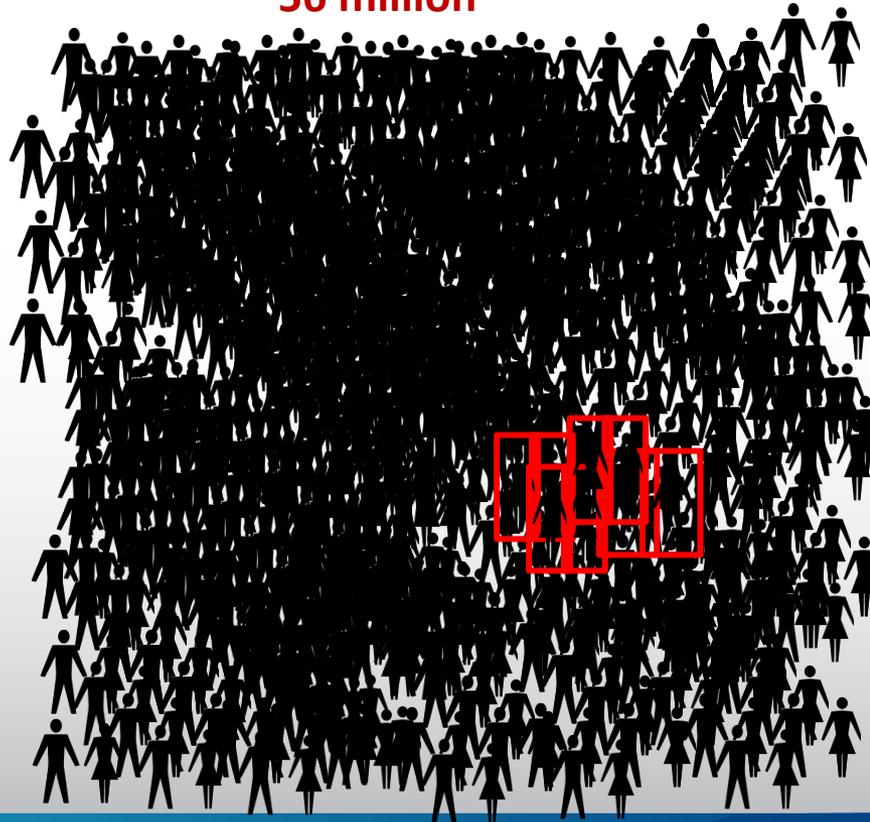
Same-sex married couples

400,000



Opposite-sex married couples

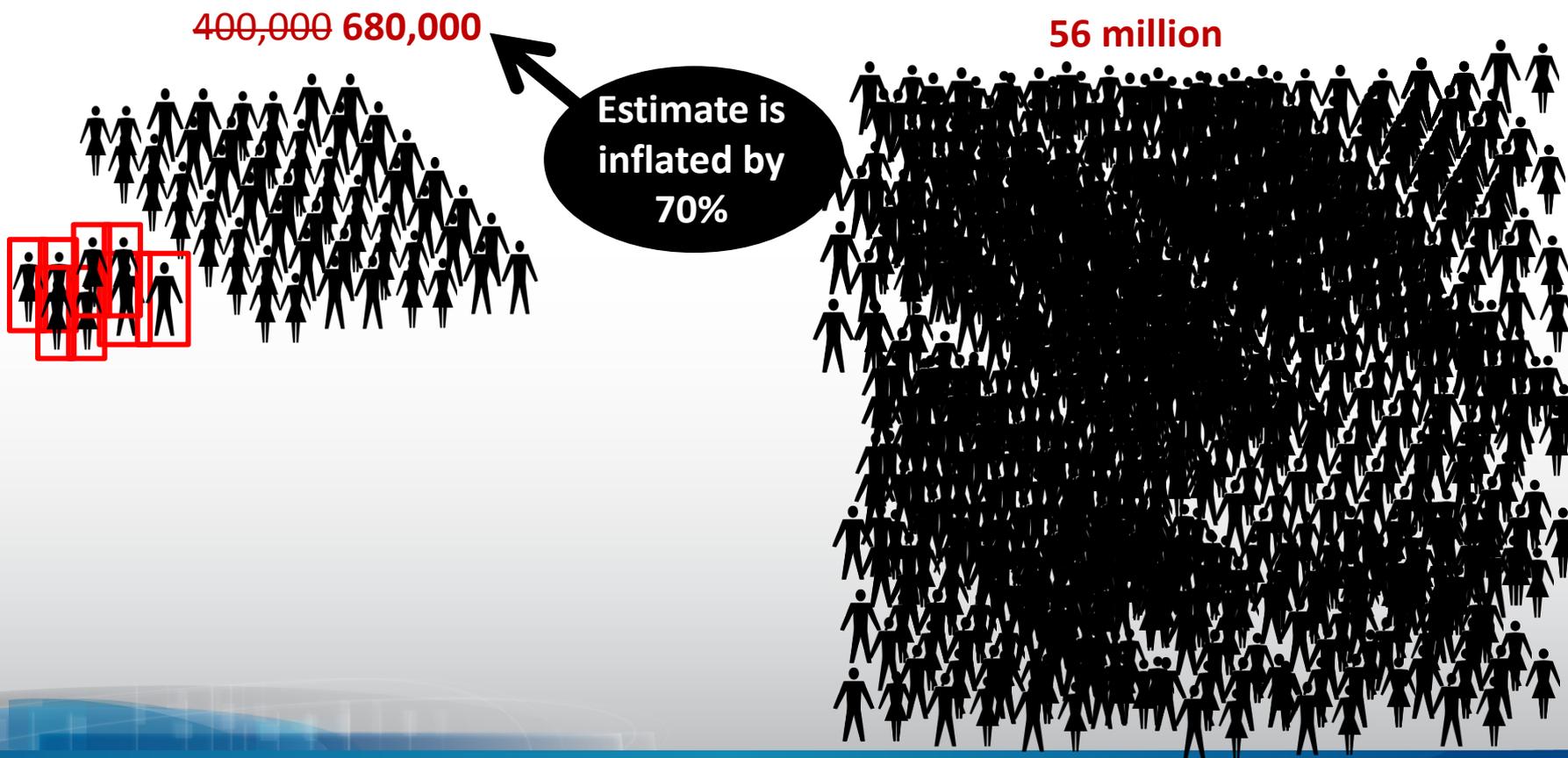
56 million



If 0.05% of opposite-sex couples misreported sex for one of the spouses, the number of same-sex married couples is increased by 280,000.

Same-sex married couples

Opposite-sex married couples



RELATIONSHIP QUESTION TESTING

- Increased need for estimates of same-sex married couples among federal agencies
- Since 2010, Census has participated in the OMB-led interagency group (*Measuring Relationships in Federal Household Surveys*), along with some 20 other agencies
- Census has also been in conversation with the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Canada, who already use very similar questions

Revising the Relationship Question

Version 1 2010 relationship response categories

Version 2 New relationship response categories

2. How is this person related to Person 1? Mark ONE box.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister | <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative |

← 2010 version

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census questionnaire.

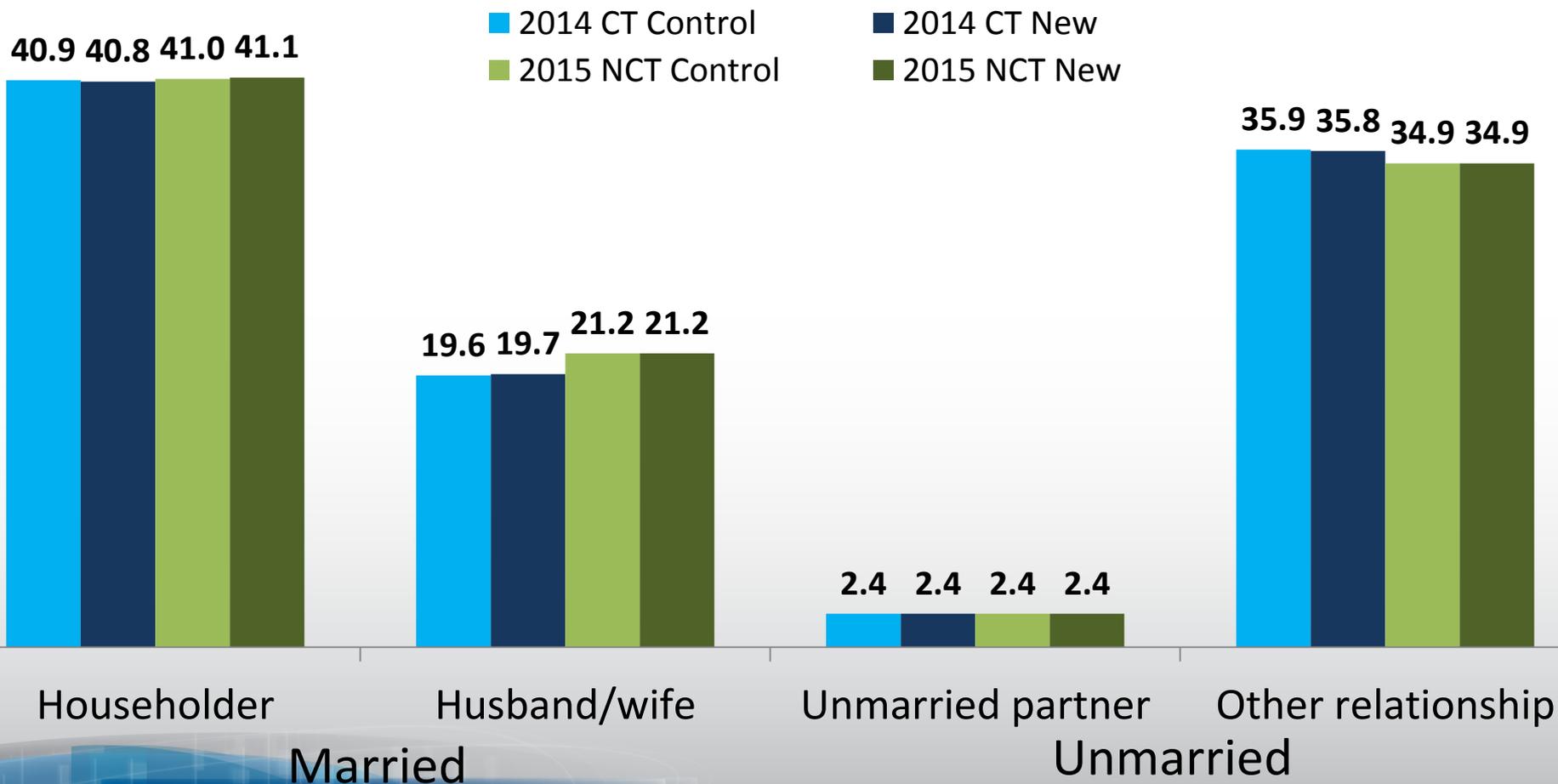
Proposed new version

How is this person related to Person 1? Mark (X) ONE box.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex unmarried partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex husband/wife/spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex unmarried partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother | |

Distributions by relationship to householder do not differ when using the control and new relationship categories.

Percent in relationship category



Married

Unmarried

Source: 2014 Census Test and 2015 National Content Test

Automated consistency check

- Designed to preempt the misreporting error discussed earlier
- Applies when reported sex of individuals does not match reported couple relationships
- Check implemented in different ways depending on the survey



2015 National Content Test

[Instructions](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Save and Log Out](#)

Please confirm that your answers are correct. Resident 2 is recorded as Householder's opposite-sex husband/wife /spouse. Is that correct?

- Yes
- No

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

NOTE: This slide shows the automated check that was added to the instrument. It asks the respondent to confirm their answers if there is an inconsistency between the reported sex of the two individuals and their reported relationship.



Householder is recorded as female. Is that correct?

- Yes
- No

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

NOTE: This slide shows the automated check that was added to the instrument. It asks the respondent to confirm their answers if there is an inconsistency between the reported sex of the two individuals and their reported relationship.

Consistency Check Improves Data Quality

- Percent of opposite-sex married couples who likely misreported sex:
 - No check: 0.5% (~280,000 households)
 - With check: 0.03% (~16,800 households)
- The difference of 263,200 is substantial because we are estimating a population that is perhaps less than 500,000

Data Quality: Lessons Learned from Testing and Check

- **Explicitly state categories** on relationship item in addition to reporting of sex
- **Self-response is more accurate** than interviewers, and move towards web administration will be helpful
- **Continue automated checks** for cases where reported relationship and sex for couples are inconsistent

Data Access and Availability

- Survey of Income and Program Participation
- Current Population Survey
- Decennial Census and American Community Survey

SIPP

- Added unmarried partner category in 1996
- Data about same sex couples are available at the national level from 1996 to the present in the raw SIPP data.
- Due to small sample size these data are not shown in published tabulations on the Census website.
- <http://www.census.gov/sipp/>

CPS

- Added unmarried partner category in 1995
- Data about same sex couples are available in the raw CPS data
- New question categories fully implemented in 2017
- <http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.htm>
|
- <http://dataferrett.census.gov/>

ACS

- Table package shows same sex married couples and unmarried partners by various demographics
 - Age, race, Hispanic origin, educational attainment, employment status, presence of children, household income, and tenure status
- Data users can find published tables on census.gov or create their own calculation with microdata or in Data Ferret
 - <http://www.census.gov/hhes/samesex/index.html>
 - <http://dataferrett.census.gov/>
- Same-sex married couple estimates are not found in American Factfinder

Same Sex Couples

- [Main](#)
- [About](#)
- [Data](#)
- [Related Sites](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Quick Links

- [ACS Data on Same Sex Couples](#)
- [CPS Data on Same Sex Couples](#)
- [SIPP Data on Same Sex Couples](#)
- [Decennial Census Data on Same Sex Couples](#)
- [AHS Data on Same Sex Couples](#)

Same Sex Couples Main

All Census Bureau demographic surveys collect information about same sex couples. The level of detail collected varies, as well as the availability of other characteristics of the partners. For more information about the main surveys and the unique aspects of each data source visit the [Data section](#).

Latest Releases

- [Improving Measurement of Same-Sex Couple Households in Census Bureau Surveys](#) [PDF - 443k]
- [Measuring Same-Sex Couples: The What and Who of Misreporting on Relationship and Sex](#) [PDF - 401k]
- [Characteristics of Same-Sex Couple Households: 2014](#) [XLSX - 37k]

Related Sites

- [Families and Living Arrangements](#)
- [DataFerret](#)
- [Random Samplings Blog](#)

Contact Us

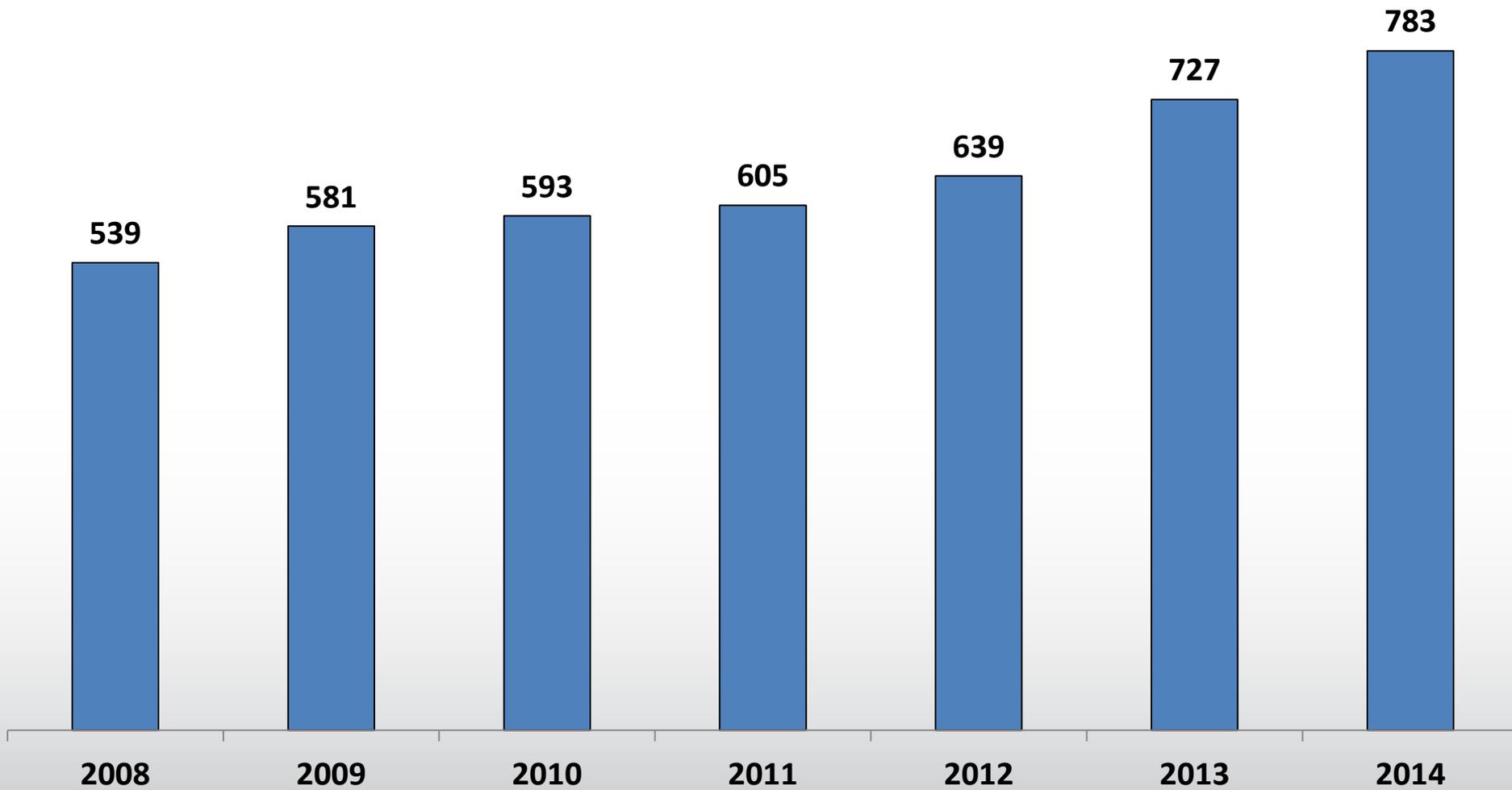
For assistance, please contact the Census Call Center at 1-800-923-8282 (toll free) or visit [ask.census.gov](#) for further information.

2015 table package will be released this fall

Same Sex Couples-By the Numbers

- Historical trends going back to 2008
- Distributions source 2014 ACS tables
- 2015 tables will be available this fall
- Estimates are from a survey and are subject to sampling error.
- <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.2014.html>
- Estimates of same sex couples do not equal estimates of the LGBTQ population

Figure 1. Estimates of Same-Sex Couple Households in the United States: 2008 to 2014

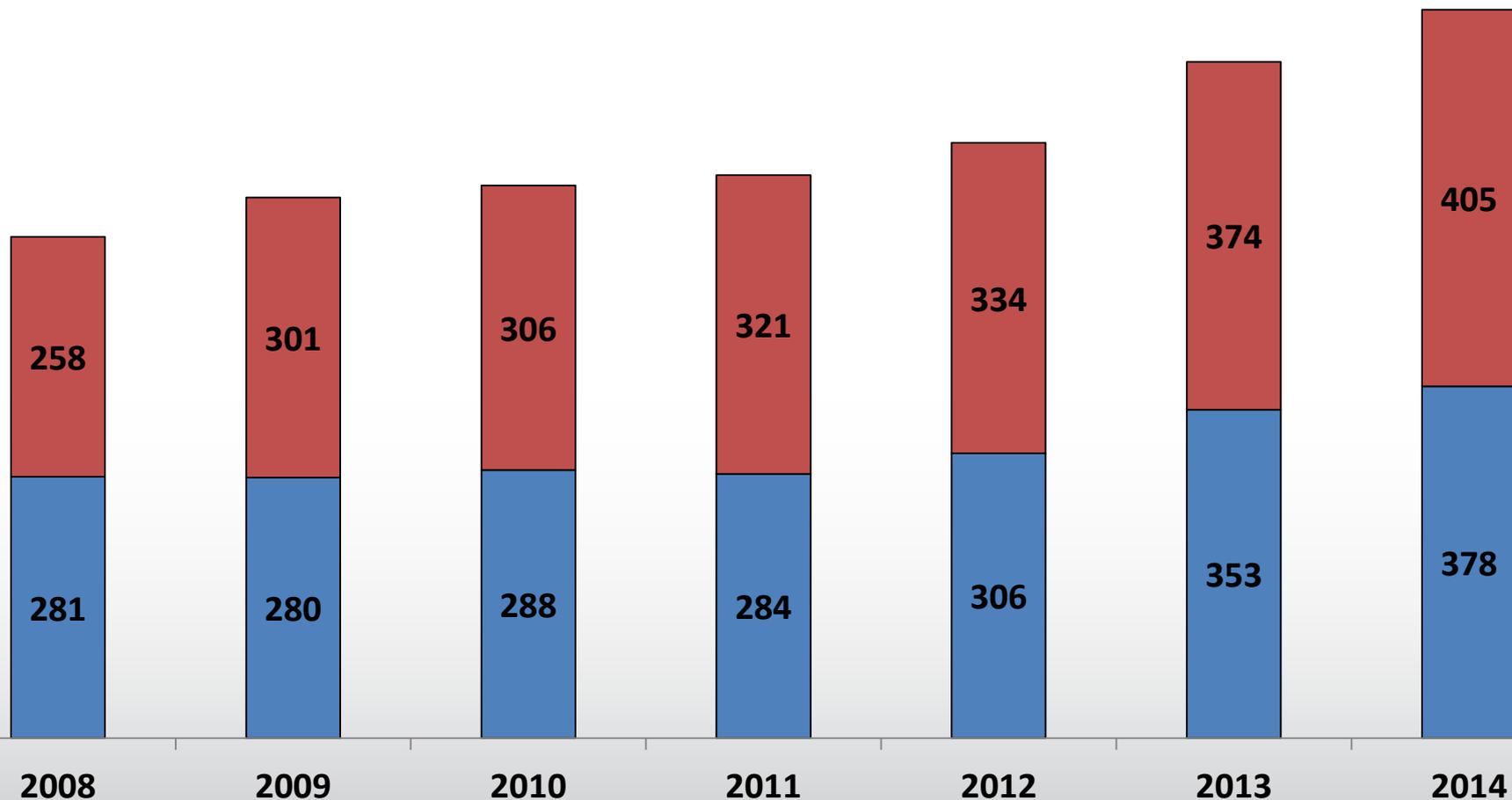


Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2014.

Figure 2. Estimates of Same-Sex Couple Households by Sex of Couple: 2008 to 2014

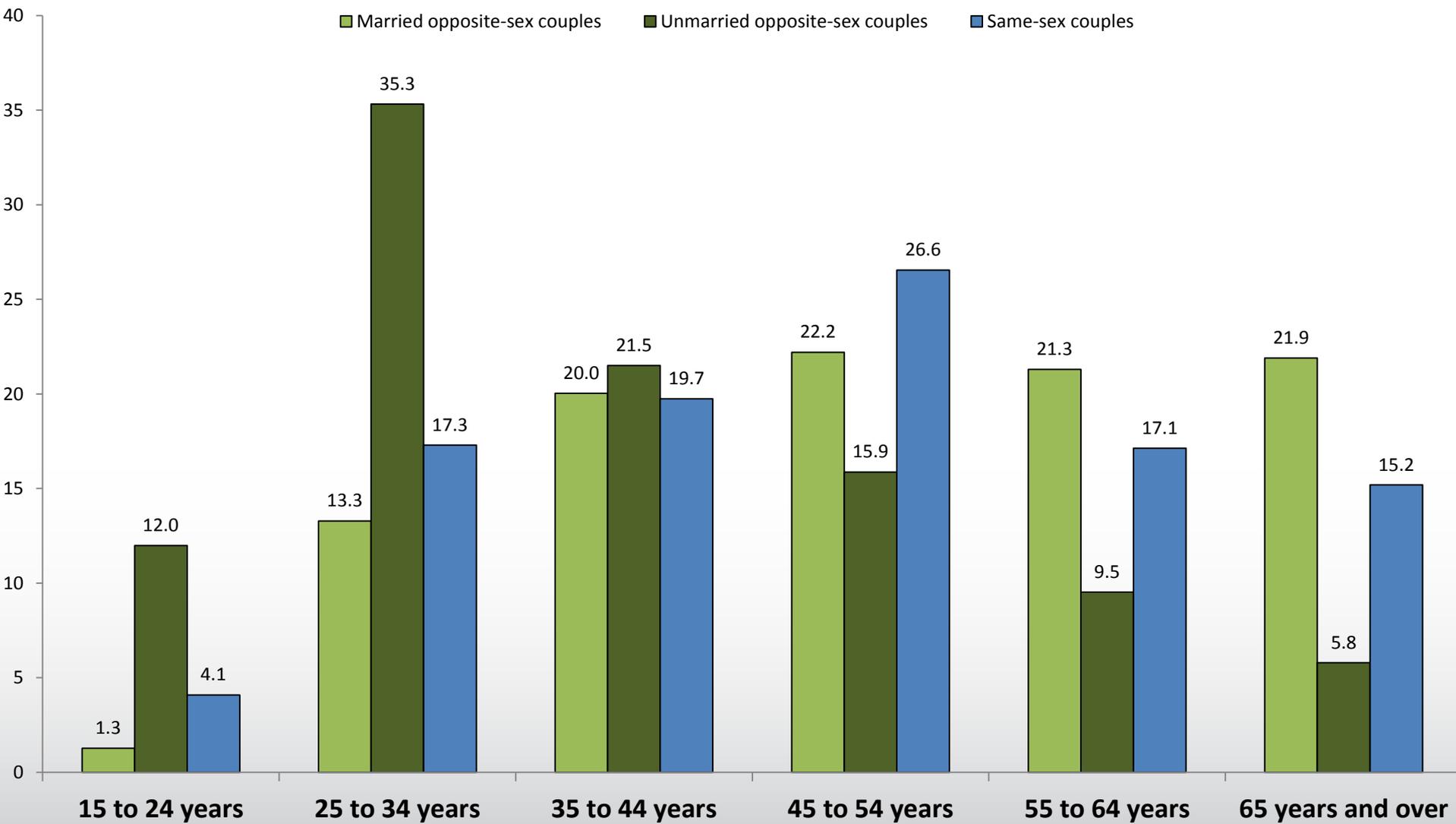
Male-male Female-female



Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2014.

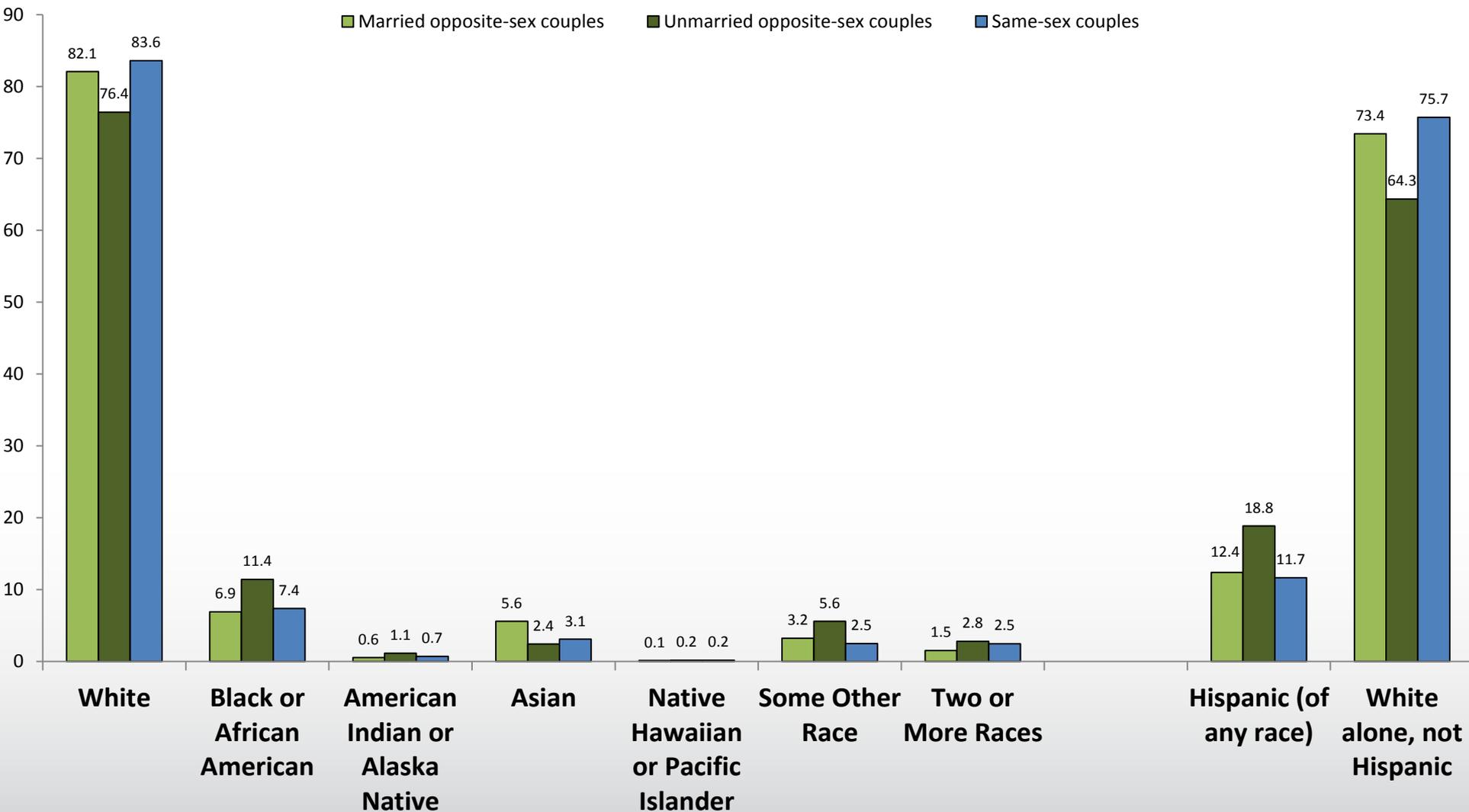
Figure 3. Distribution of Couples by Age of Householder: 2014



Percent of couples

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014.

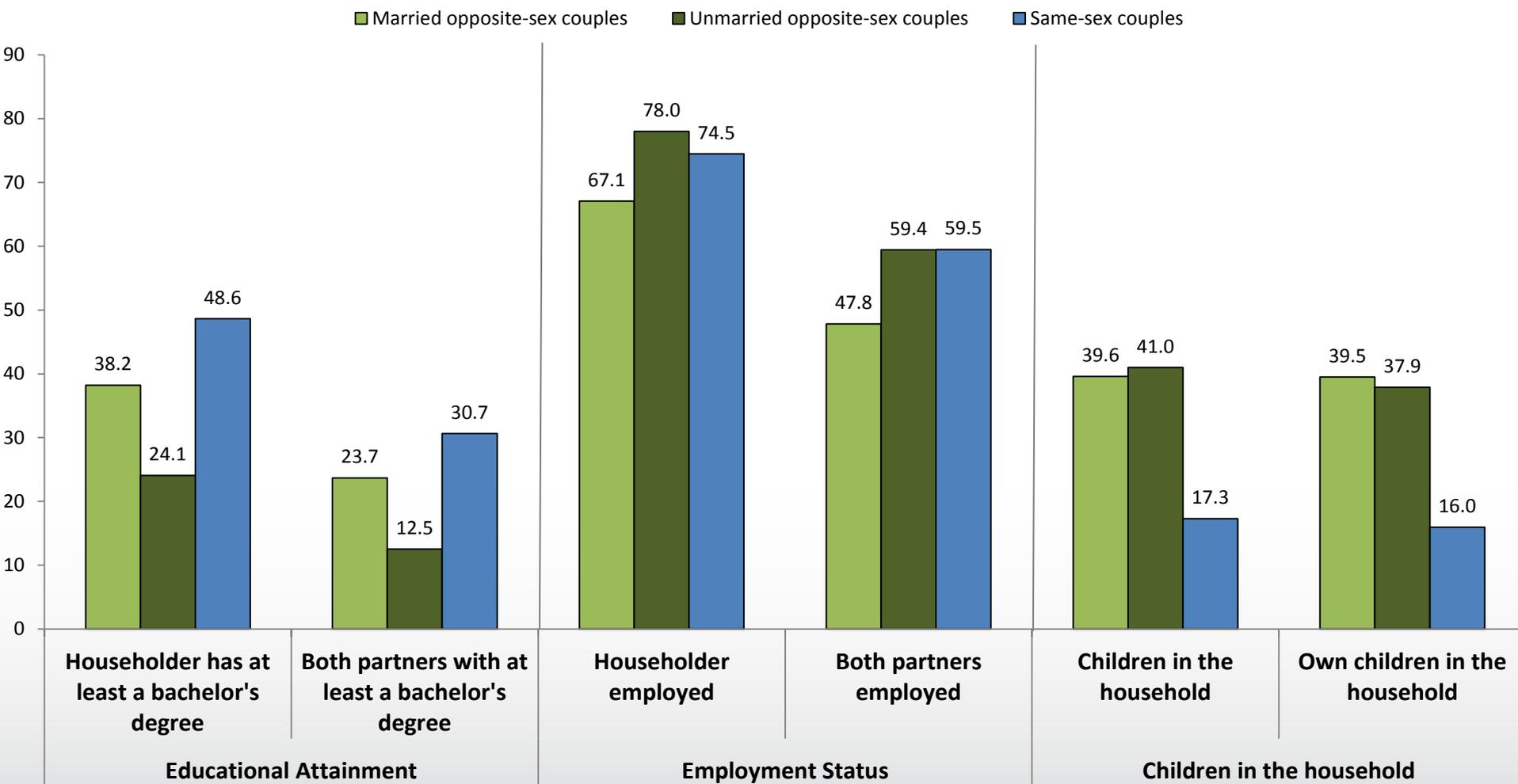
Figure 4. Distribution of Couples by Race and Hispanic Origin of Householder: 2014



Percent of couples. Unless otherwise specified, race is alone.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014.

Figure 5. Distribution of Couples by Other Selected Characteristics: 2014



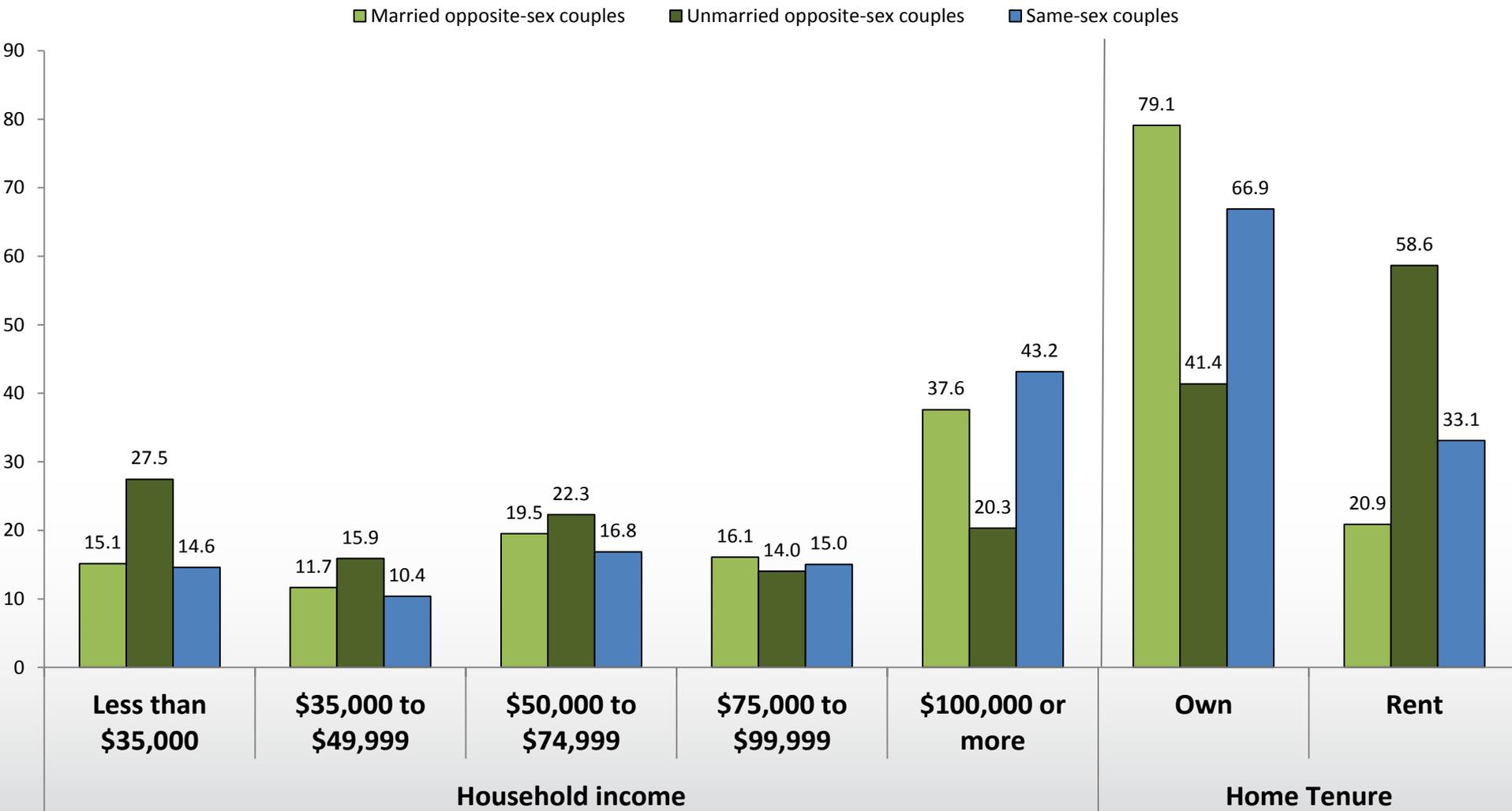
Percent of couples

Children in the household includes own children and nonrelatives of the householder under 18 years.

Employment status includes those employed or in the Armed forces.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014.

Figure 6. Distribution of Couples by Income and Tenure: 2014



Percent of couples

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014.

Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) on Census Bureau and Federal Surveys

SOGI and Same Sex Couples

- Common misconception that same-sex couple data represent a comprehensive measure of the LGBT population
- Two concepts are related, but not the same

Defining the SOGI Terms

- **Sexual orientation** comprises sexual identity, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior.
- **Gender identity** comprises transgender identity, gender expression (i.e., masculinity vs. femininity), and the concordance between sex assigned at birth and current sex.

Source: Charter of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

SOGI Activities on Surveys Fielded by the Census Bureau

- **National Health Interview Survey**
 - Census fields for the National Center for Health Statistics
 - Added questions on sexual orientation in 2013
- **National Crime Victimization Survey**
 - Census fields for the Bureau of Justice Statistics
 - Added questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2016
- **Current Population Survey**
 - Census fields for the Bureau of Labor Statistics
 - Has started cognitive testing of sexual orientation and gender identity with a focus on proxy response

Census Bureau SOGI Activities

- Census is participating in OMB's Interagency Federal Interagency Working Group on Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
 - Two of three working papers are posted to the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology's website:
https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/files/2014/04/WorkingGroupPaper1_CurrentMeasures_08-16.pdf
https://sites.usa.gov/fcsm/files/2014/04/Evaluations_of_SOGI_Questions_20160923.pdf
- Census staff are sponsoring the Joint Program in Survey Methodology's 2016 Practicum: Optimizing Self and Proxy Response to Survey Questions on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Feedback solicited from federal agencies on content needs for the 2020 Census and ACS

Census Bureau SOGI Activities

- The Census Bureau has formed a team of subject matter experts to participate in the OMB group and other SOGI-related activities.
- This team will ensure the agency is prepared to implement SOGI questions on our surveys should we be tasked with doing so.
 - The team is led by Jennifer Ortman, and includes Thom File and Amy Smith, who are senior researchers on the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Process for Content Additions to the ACS

Federal agencies request content, specifying frequency and geographic precision needed, and consideration of other sources

Interagency committees provide recommendations to OMB on the requested changes. OMB provides approval prior to beginning any testing, and a topical subcommittee is formed.

Conduct cognitive testing in English and Spanish, followed by field testing in all modes of collection

Census provides empirical test results, Federal agency submits a final recommendation to OMB and Census, interagency committees provide input, Economic Statistics Administration (ESA) and Department of Commerce (DOC) provide input during review of the OMB clearance package, and OMB makes a final decision

Subjects & Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and ACS

- Title 13 requires that Census deliver to Congress:
 - Subjects proposed by March 31, 2017
 - Questions proposed by March 31, 2018
- Develop documentation using 2014 ACS Content Review Uses provided by federal agencies
- Census letter to federal agency heads (April 2016)
 - Updates to known uses by June 30, 2016
 - Needs for new content by June 30, 2016
- There must be a demonstrated legislative or programmatic need for content to be added to the Census and/or ACS

Federal SOGI Data Sources

Currently collecting data:

- Department of Labor
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Center for Health Statistics
- Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- National Institutes of Health and Federal Drug Administration
- Department of Housing and Urban Development

Planning and/or testing:

- Department of Education
- Veterans Affairs
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Non-Federal SOGI Data Sources

- General Social Survey (NORC)
- Gallup Daily Tracking Survey
- California Health Interview Survey (UCLA)
- Canada:
 - Canadian Community Health Survey
 - General Social Survey on Victimization

Contact Information

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