

Changes to the Household Relationship Data in the Current Population Survey

Jennifer M. Ortman

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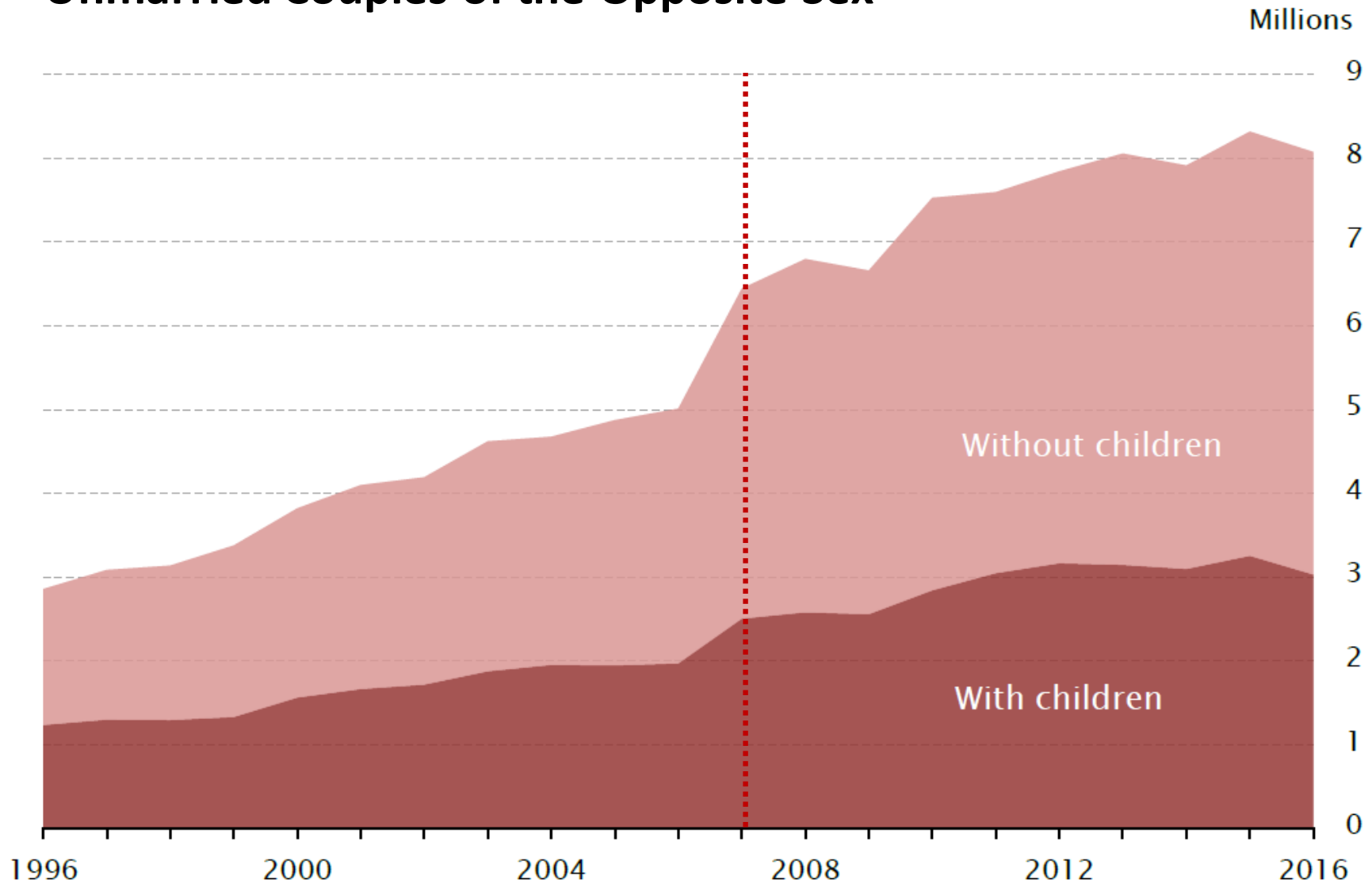
Overview

- Four changes to the CPS household relationship data
 - Direct cohabitation question
 - Changes to parent identification questions
 - Edit procedures for same-sex couples
 - Expansion of the “husband or wife” and “unmarried partner” categories

Recent Changes to CPS Household Relationship Data

- 2007
 - Added a direct cohabitation question
 - Added a second parent identification question

Figure 1. Unmarried Couples of the Opposite Sex

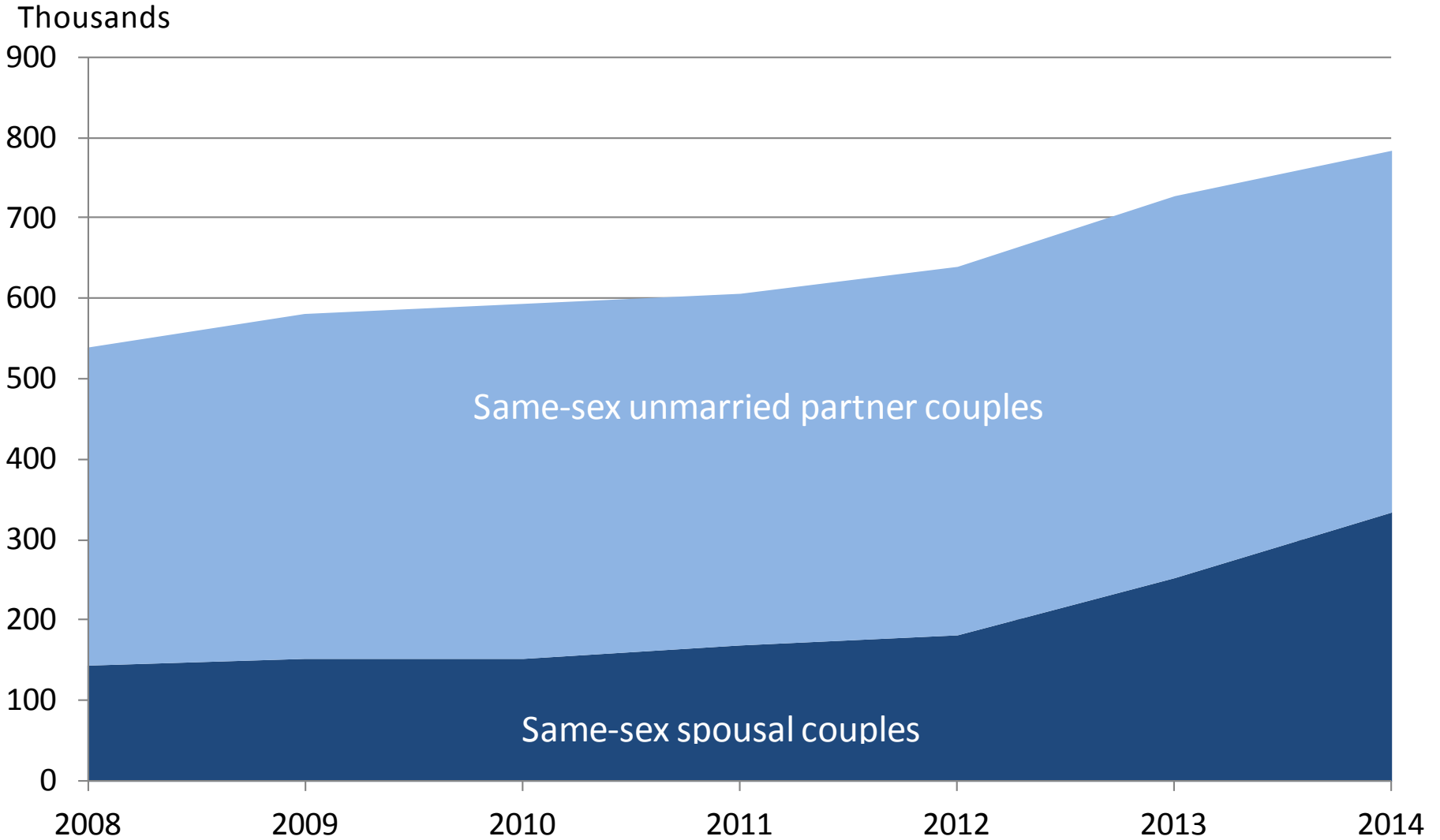


Recent Changes to CPS Household Relationship Data

- 2007
 - Added a direct cohabitation question
 - Added a second parent identification question
- 2010
 - Those reported as same-sex spouses now edited and shown as *same-sex unmarried partners*.
 - Previously, the sex of one was changed to show them as *opposite-sex married couples*.

Figure 2.

Estimates of Same-Sex Couple Households by Relationship

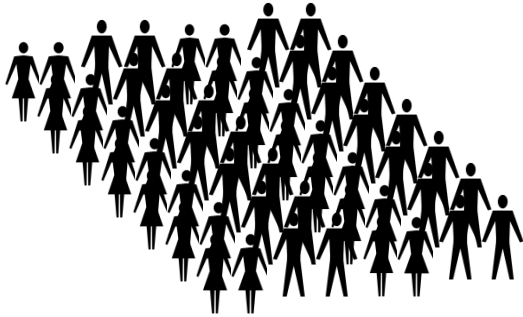


Data Quality Challenges

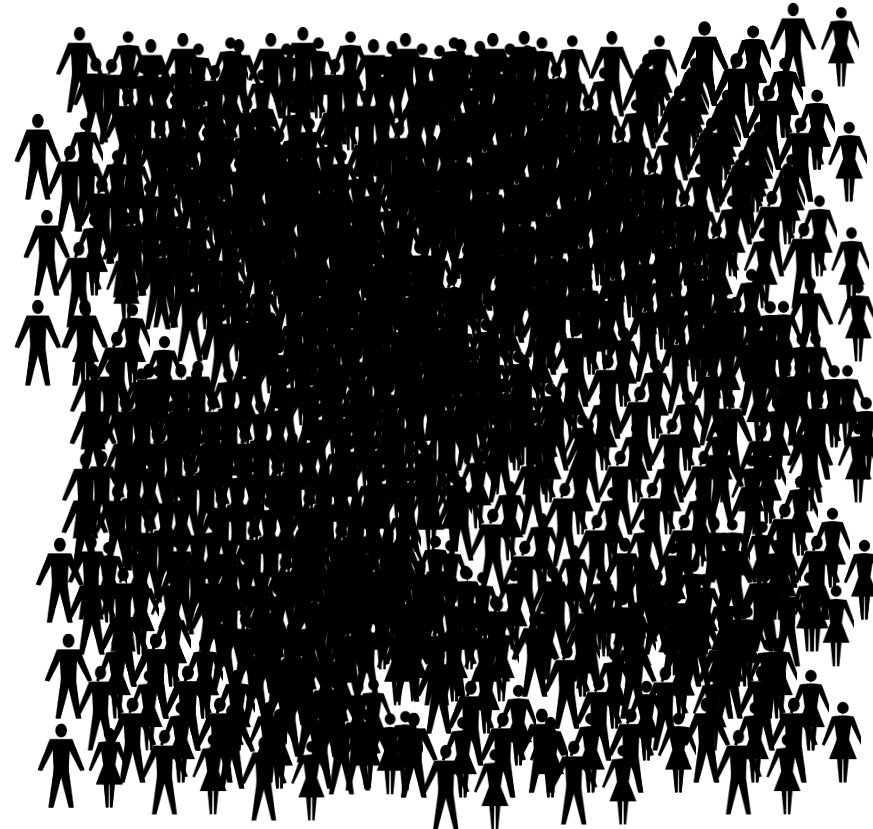
- A statistical problem: a low rate of random error in a large group (opposite-sex married couples) creates issues in the estimates of a small group (same-sex married couples)
 - There are some 56 million opposite-sex married couple households.
 - Only a small proportion mismark their response, but it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



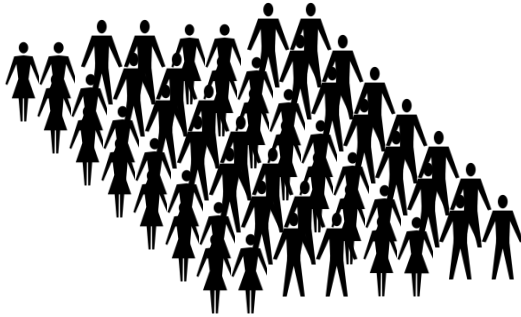
Opposite-sex married couples



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

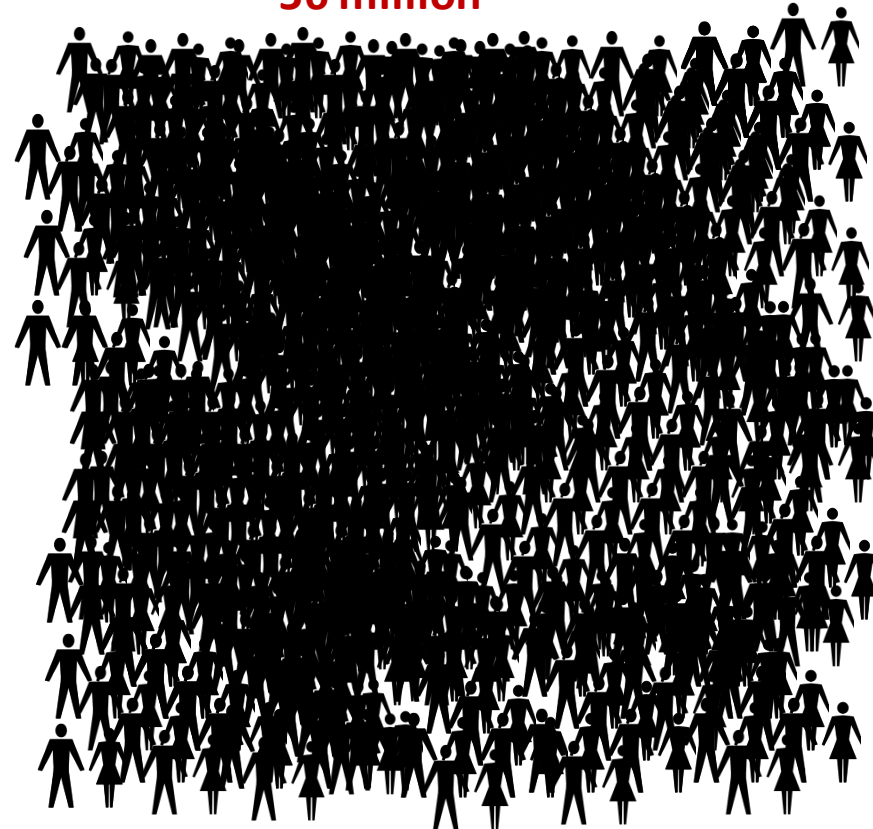
Same-sex married couples

400,000



Opposite-sex married couples

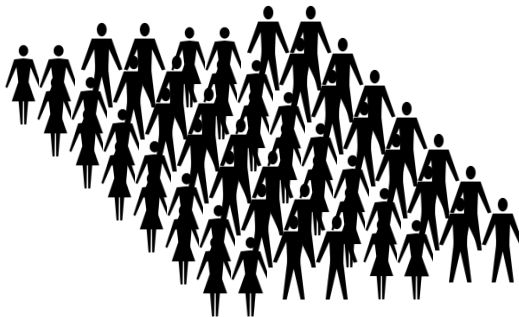
56 million



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.

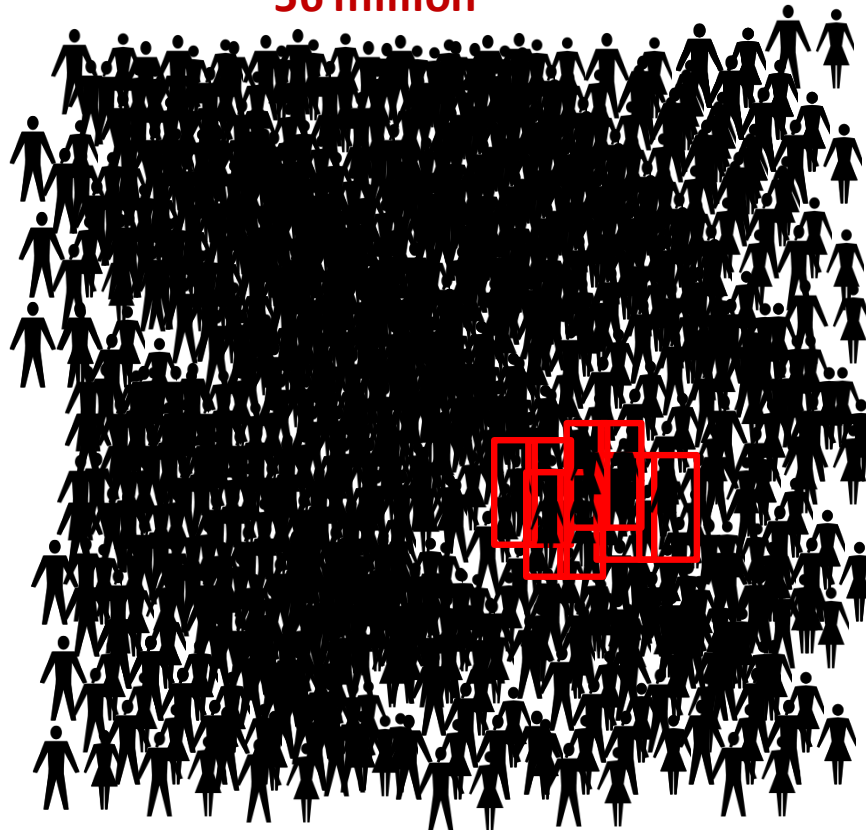
Same-sex married couples

400,000



Opposite-sex married couples

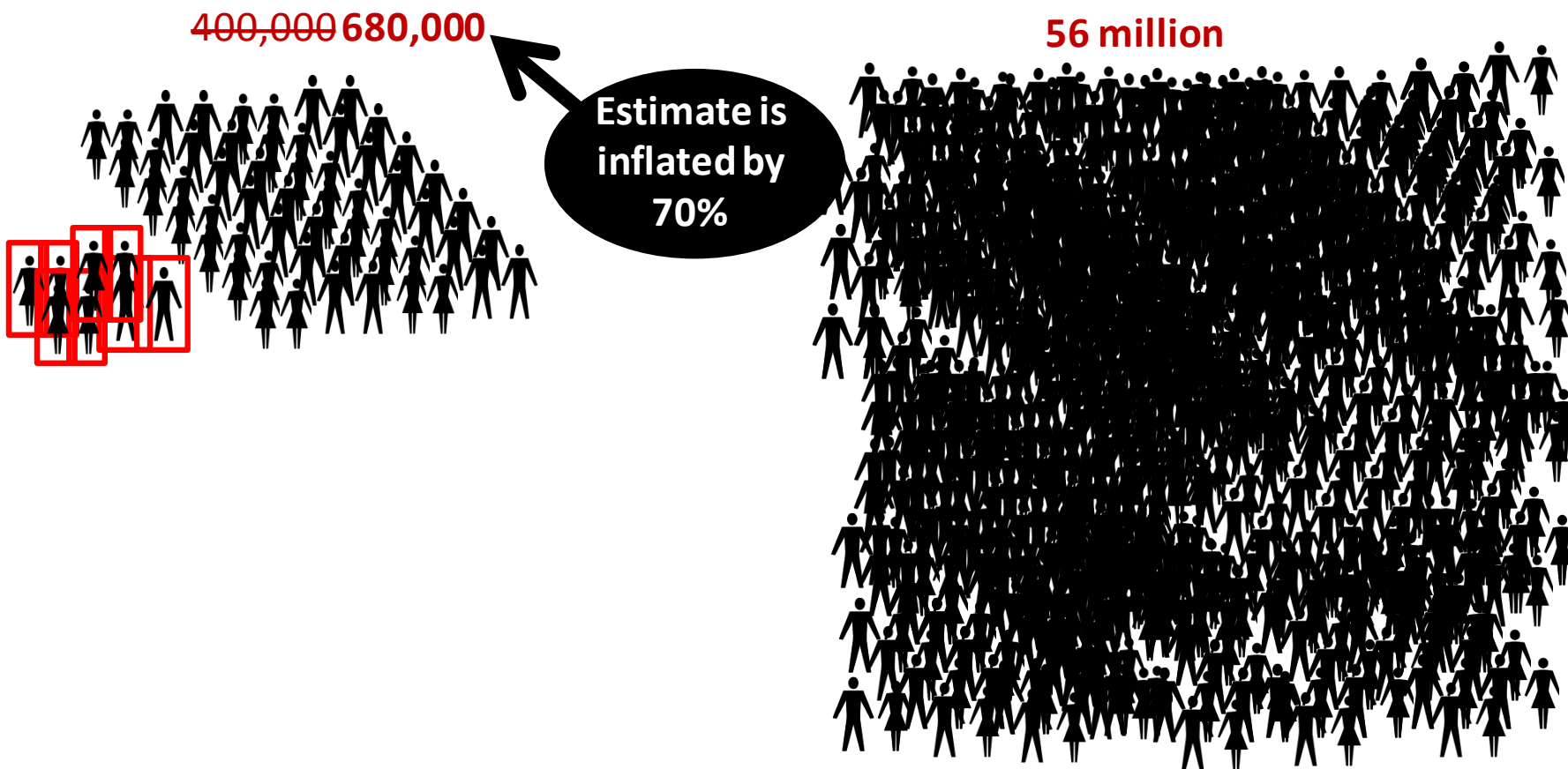
56 million



If 0.5% 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



Recent Changes to CPS Household Relationship Data

- 2007
 - Added a direct cohabitation question
 - Added a second parent identification question
- 2010
 - Those reported as same-sex spouses now edited and shown as *same-sex unmarried partners*.
 - Previously, the sex of one was changed to show them as *opposite-sex married couples*).
- 2017
 - Added separate opposite-sex and same-sex categories for the spouse and unmarried partner categories

Revising the Relationship Categories

How (are / is) (name/you) related to (reference person's name/you)?

Current Categories

Spouse (Husband/Wife)
Unmarried Partner

Child
Grandchild
Parent (Mother/Father)
Brother/Sister
Other relative (Aunt, Cousin, Nephew,
Mother-in-law, etc.)
Foster Child
Housemate/Roommate
Roomer/Boarder
Other nonrelative

Revised Categories (2017 ASEC)

Opposite-sex Spouse (Husband/Wife)
Opposite-sex Unmarried Partner
Same-sex Spouse (Husband/Wife)
Same-sex Unmarried Partner

Child
Grandchild
Parent (Mother/Father)
Brother/Sister
Other relative (Aunt, Cousin, Nephew,
Mother-in-law, etc.)
Foster Child
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Edit Changes

- Now accept the stated relationship of those who report as same-sex married couples
 - Data will now include same-sex unmarried partners and same-sex married couples
 - Subsequent processing referencing husbands and wives must be updated to recognize same-sex spouses
- Parent identification questions are now gender neutral – parent 1 and parent 2
 - In past these categories represented “mother” and “father”

Implications for Family Measures

- No changes are proposed for the Census Bureau's definition of family:
 - *A family is a group of two persons or more (one of whom is the householder) residing together and related by birth, marriage or adoption.*
- Married-couple families will now include same-sex married couples
- The family units used to present characteristics of families (e.g., economic characteristics) are being evaluated

Timing

- The revised relationship categories will be fully implemented for the 2017 ASEC
- The new edits are planned for full implementation in the 2018 ASEC

Contact Information

Fertility and Family Statistics Branch

301-763-2416

Current Population Survey

<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>