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


Note: Prior to 2007, marked by the red dashed line in the figure, unmarried partners were counted only if one of the partners was the householder.
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

Thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008 to 2015.
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).
There are some **56 million opposite-sex married couple households** and around **400,000 same-sex married couple households**.
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: 400,000
- Opposite-sex married couples: 680,000

56 million

Estimate is inflated by 70%
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)*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Current Categories</strong></th>
<th><strong>Revised Categories (2017 ASEC)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse (Husband/Wife)</td>
<td>Opposite-sex Spouse (Husband/Wife)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried Partner</td>
<td>Opposite-sex Unmarried Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
<td>Grandchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent (Mother/Father)</td>
<td>Parent (Mother/Father)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother/Sister</td>
<td>Brother/Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relative (Aunt, Cousin, Nephew, Mother-in-law, etc.)</td>
<td>Other relative (Aunt, Cousin, Nephew, Mother-in-law, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Child</td>
<td>Foster Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housemate/Roommate</td>
<td>Housemate/Roommate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roomer/Boarder</td>
<td>Roomer/Boarder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other nonrelative</td>
<td>Other nonrelative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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