

**NWX-US DEPT OF COMMERCE**

**Moderator: Deborah Rivera-Nieves**  
**September 15, 2016**  
**12:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome. And thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference. At that time to ask a question please press Star and the number 1 on your phone and record your name at the prompt.

This call is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the call over to Mr. Steve Young with Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office's National Partnership Program. Thank you. You may begin.

Steve Young: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to today's webinar. I'm glad that you joined us. This webinar is titled Measuring Same Sex Couples' Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity on Census Bureau and Federal Surveys.

Again my name is Steve Young. I'm your host along with Megan Maury, national partner from the LGBTQ Taskforce. It formerly known as National and Gay/Lesbian Taskforce.

Before our webinar begins Megan is going to briefly comment on the value of this webinar as well as census data. And then I'm going to turn it over to our speaker who has done a great job in putting his presentation together. It's very informative and comprehensive. And I look forward to hearing it myself.

It's going to be (Tom Fowl) of the Census Bureau's Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division. And just before Megan begins I want to thank (Shirley) of the COMSO and her staff especially, Deborah Rivera-Nieves for their tireless efforts in providing technical assistance for this webinar.

And also Dr. Jennifer Ortman of the Social, Economic, Housing Statistics Division for agreeing to do this webinar and working very hard to provide a quality presentation. Megan?

Megan Maury: Thank you so much. And thanks to all of the census folks who have come together to make this happen. I'm really super excited about it. My name is Megan Maury. I work as, as Steve just said for the National LGBTQ Taskforce where I'm the director of our criminal and economic justice project.

But I'm also lucky enough to serve on the Census's National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations where we get to discuss things like how to improve demographic questions around race and ethnicity, how to better reach out to hard to count populations like people who are experiencing homelessness, the immigrant community and other folks who are a little bit harder to count.

And it is through that work that I am most excited to be here with you today. Data is really, really critical to the LGBTQ community and every other community.

In order to help us improve our advocacy, for example when the census first started collecting information on same sex couples quite a few years ago now, it helped us show that LGBTQ folks are living in every congressional district in the country.

So when we came to policy makers and said this is an issue that's important to our community we had sort of the data to back up that it was important to our community in every congressional district in the country.

And as Census and other federal statistical agencies continue to build out the number and type of surveys where they collect information on same sex couples, sexual orientation and gender identity.

We're able to create a richer picture around what our community looks like and why it's important for decision makers to be responsive to the needs of our community. But I think even more importantly than that it really helps us - all the data that we get from Census and from other statistical agencies helps us to design the right policy interventions for our community.

Our community is pretty varied across the country. But we also know that there are some patterns that we see in statistics that help us know how to create policy interventions that help those in our community who are most in need.

And finally I think one of the hidden values of data collection that we don't talk about quite as much is that it help - data collection actually helps combat isolation.

I remember the first time when I was a kid I went to an LGBT pride march and stepped out of the subway in New York City and saw literally thousands of LGBTQ folks and felt for the first time like I was part of a community.

Not everyone has the opportunity to go to those events when they're a young person and particularly for folks who are rural or less connected to the LGBT community. Seeing that there are people, LGBTQ folks in every congressional district all across the country really helps people to know that they're not alone.

So I'm excited for this webinar for a whole ton of reasons but mostly because I feel like we haven't had a lot of chances as a community to see a bunch of different types of data about our community (unintelligible) base.

So I'm so grateful to all the Census folks, including (Tom) our honored speaker today. Who - and I will leave it to you to dig into what everybody really wants to hear about. Thanks so much.

(Tom Fowl): Great. Thank you Megan. Appreciate that nice introduction. Hi everyone else. My name is (Tom Fowl) and I am a special assistant sociologist in the social characteristics area here at the Census Bureau.

Here with me today are Jennifer Ortman and Rose Kreider as well. Jennifer is in charge of the social characteristics area at the Bureau. And Rose oversees the office that produces our estimates of household relationships including same sex couple households.

So they'll be here with me throughout. And when we get to the Q&A portion they'll both be helping me field your questions. I'll be delivering the

presentation today which we've titled Measuring Same Sex Couples, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity on Census Bureau on Federal Surveys.

So let's go ahead and get started. Here's a brief overview of what we're going to be talking about today. First we're going to touch on the basics of how we measure household relationships here at the Census Bureau.

Then we're going to move on to a summary of how these measurements have changed in recent years, specifically with a focus on same sex couple households.

From there we're going to show you some recent statistics on same sex couples. And then we'll talk about how you as data users can find and access the relevant data.

Finally we'll close things out with a discussion of measuring sexual orientation and gender identity both in terms of what we're currently doing here at the Census and what we might be doing in the future.

So let's talk a little bit about measuring household relationships. We collect information in a variety of surveys. But today we're going to focus mainly on the Decennial Census, which is the big count that we do every ten years and also the American Community survey or the ACS.

The ACS is a yearly sample survey that compliments the decennial effort. These data are important because they provide information about families and trends and living arrangements for the US population.

And with the ACS and the decennial they provide these data down to a very small geographic level. Before we can measure household relationships we must first designate someone to reference everyone else in the household to.

We typically call this person this person the householder but sometimes that terminology can change depending on the survey. What you really need to know is that the householder is typically someone over the age of 15 who either owns or rents the housing unit.

Oftentimes this will be the person who we are actually speaking with when we're doing the actual survey interview but that's not always the case. Okay. So here we see that the identified householder or the reference person is an adult female.

We are now able to ask about other members of the home in relationship specifically to her. What we're really getting at here is how everyone in the home is related to this identified householder.

In this example person two is the householder's husband. Person three is the householder's biological son. And person four is the householder's father. Obviously households can be simpler, more complicated in terms of listing them in a survey.

But our approach the measuring relationships within any given home is pretty much the same. First we find a person to reference everyone in the home against. And then we reference them.

Okay. Next we use these reports to determine whether a household is a family or nonfamily household. The general rule of thumb that we use here is the rule of birth, marriage or adoption.

If anyone in the household is related via birth, marriage or adoption in the household is considered a family household. Obviously in this example the household is clearly a family household as two of the household members are related to the householder via birth and the other is related via marriage.

Okay. This is a pretty busy slide. Next we're going to talk a little bit about how measurements of household relationships have changed over time. Information about household relationships was first collected on the 1880 Census. So quite a while ago.

Obviously since then the categories have changed dramatically. You'll note here on the left-hand column that in 1880 we asked specifically about servants and borders, neither of which are terribly relevant in 2016 America.

But because the focus of this presentation is on measuring same sex couples we're going to skip ahead to 1990 because that's really the first date that I think will of most interest to everyone on the call.

In the next couple slides we're going to walk through the specifics a bit more. But what you really need to know is that in 1990 reported same sex marriages resulted in the editing of one of the individuals sex.

Whereas in both 2000 and 2010 the relationships that reported same sex marriages were edited to unmarried partnerships. And I think this will make a little bit more sense after the next few slides.

Okay. Keep in mind that the focus here is once again on same sex couples. In 1990 if a household recorded a same sex married couple the sex of one of those people was edited to reflect an opposite sex relationship.

This means that if you had an adult male householder and then another member of the household was reported to be that householder's spouse and was also reported to be a male, in the edited data we would have changed the sex of one of those individuals to female to reflect an opposite sex married couple arrangement.

This was the procedure as recently as 1990. Now in 2000 things changed a little bit. Here reports of same sex marriages were still edited but the sex of individuals were no longer what was changed.

Here same sex married couples were edited to same sex unmarried partners. So the spouse unmarried partner piece was now what was edited, not the sex of an individual.

And I think it's also worth noting that even in 1990 we did allow same sex unmarried partnerships to be reported. What we were editing was the same sex married arrangements.

Okay. In 2010 editing procedure was basically the same as it was 2000. Same sex married couples were once again edited to same sex unmarried partnerships with the sex of individuals remaining unchanged.

However in 2010 a separate tabulation was created to provide estimates of same sex married couples. And that tabulation has continued in subsequent years via the ACS.

And we're going to talk about that tabulation a little bit more going forward. Okay. As we've moved towards allowing and reporting same sex relationships we've also encountered some data quality challenges.



Here we're going to outline one of the statistical issues that we've come across. And the basics of the problem are as follows. It's a statistical issue where a low array of survey measurement error in a large group. In this case opposite sex married couples, decrease issues in the estimates of a smaller group.

And in this example we're going to say same sex married couples. Okay. We've tried to show the problem visually. On the left we have same sex married couples. And the right we have opposite sex married couples.

I'm not entirely sure this graphic does the ratio justice but the bottom line is that one group is much, much smaller than the other. Okay? Specifically let's say there are about 56 million opposite sex couples in the US compared to about 400,000 same sex couples.

If even a small proportion of opposite sex married couples misreport their response that error is going to be enough to create a significant overestimate of same sex couples.

Here we should also note that there are basically two ways that a household could misreport. One is an individual could have their sex misreported and the other is their relationship to the householder couple be misreported.

We have actually done some validation work with social records. And the main error seems to be coming from misreported sex. But the relationship component is also a potential source of error.

Regardless of where the error is coming from the point is that if even .05% as opposite sex couples misreport as same sex couples, the number of same sex couples is going to increase by nearly 280,000.

Again that's not a huge deal when your base estimate is in the 56 million range but when your base is more like 400,000 that array in the marriages inflated your estimate by about 70%.

And I think by even the most modest assessment that's a rather large statistical issue. So in an effort to improve our data quality in recent years we have begun testing potential improvements to our relationship question.

In recent years there have also been increasing need for reliable estimates of same sex couples from various federal agencies, specifically those that administer their programs based on marital status.

Since 2010 census staff have been participating in an OMB interagency group called measuring relationships and federal housing surveys. And here at the census we've also recently been talking with national stats offices in the UK, New Zealand and Canada all in an effort to learn some best practices.

Okay. As I already mentioned we've been testing a new question. So let's go ahead and take a look at it. In previous versions of the question we had two generic categories, one which read husband or wife and the other which read unmarried partner.

That's on the sort of top left-hand side of this slide. Since we're interested in improving our data quality specifically around same sex relationships, in the newer version of the question respondents can now choose one of four

categories, opposite sex spouse, same sex spouse, opposite sex unmarried partner and same sex unmarried partner.

That's what you see on the bottom right-side here. In addition to the expanded categories we've also placed them together at the top of the response options. So how is this new question performing?

Overall the percentage of people reporting a spouse or partner in their household does not seem to differ across the old and the new relationship questions. That's been true in both the 2014 census test and the 2015 national content test.

We don't have any weighted data yet from these tests. So we can't evaluate whether the estimate of same sex couples has actually improved. But these initial results indicate that at the very least the new question is performing as well as the old one.

We also know from focus groups and cognitive testing that respondents seem to like. And they do understand the expanded response options. Okay. Since testing and implementing new questions takes time we also wanted to find a quicker way to improve the question while we could, specifically with regards to the estimate of same sex couples.

So we have implemented an automated consistency check. Again this is designed to preempt the misreporting error that we've been discussing. And it applies to any cases where reported sex does not match reported couple relationships.

So it's worth noting that the check is being implemented in different ways for different data sets and I think that's something we can talk about more probably in the Q&A.

Let's go ahead and take a look at an example. I think that might be helpful. Let's say that in the 2015 National Content Test Mary reported as John's opposite sex spouse. But then both Mary and John were reported as female.

This is the first screen you would get in the check sequence. And you can see that it says please confirm that your answers are correct. Resident two is recorded as householder's opposite sex husband/wife/spouse. Is that correct?

So again this is a situation where we have a report of an opposite sex married couple but then we also have reports of two females. So obviously those are conflicting responses.

Okay. In this instance let's go ahead and say that the respondent confirmed that the report of an opposite sex married couple was correct. Yes. Mary and John are in fact married. The respondent would then get this screen which asks them to confirm that the householder who is named John is in fact female.

So what we're really doing here is checking respondents on two different levels, first on the reports of relationships and then on reports of sex. Okay. Here's a slide that shows the overall impact of this automated check.

Remember that based on the example we referenced before we think we were inflating same sex couples by somewhere in the ballpark of 280,000 households. But with the check we actually think that we've reduced these misreports to about 17,000.

This represents the data quality improvement of about 263,000 couples. And since the number that we're trying to estimate is likely in the ballpark of 500,000 that difference is obviously pretty significant.

Okay. So after all this testing and checking we've arrived at some pretty clear lessons learned. Respondents seem to like the explicitly stated relationship categories. And the preliminary evidence is that the new question is at the very least performing as well as the old one.

We've also found some evidence that self-reports are more accurate than interviews. So moving towards Web administration is going to be helpful we think. This is based mainly around results of the recent content test.

And it's something that we definitely need to keep looking into but we do have some indication that self-response might be more accurate. And finally we're using the automatic check wherever we can. Specifically when reports of sex and relationships are not consistent.

We do plan on including the check in upcoming ACS. And we hope to do that as soon as 2019. Okay. Next we're going to talk a little bit about data access and availability.

First we're going to touch on the survey of income and program participation or SIPP. Then we're going to move to the CPS or the Current Population Survey. And finally we'll wrap up by talking about the Decennial Census and American Communities Survey.

Okay. First with SIPP we first added an unmarried partner category beginning in 1996. So data about same sex couples are available at the national level going back that far using the raw SIPP data file.

Due to small sample sizes in the SIPP these data are not shown in published tabulations on our Web site. But users who are interested in exploring SIPP and what it has to offer can do so at the following Web address.

Moving on to CPS we first added an unmarried partner category in 1995. Data users can once again get estimates of same sex couples using the raw CPS data file.

And CPS is also currently implementing the new question that we just discussed. And that process looks to be fully operational by 2017. In addition to the raw data file we've also included a couple links here for users who want to explore the CPS data a little bit further.

The first is called CPS Table Creator. And the second is called Data Ferret both of which are fairly intuitive drag and drop data mining applications that are available via our Web site.

Okay. Now let's turn to the ACS. Using ACS data we produce a table package every year that shows same sex married couples and same sex unmarried partnerships by a variety of demographics.

Users can find these published tables at the link that we provided here or, once again, you can always into Data Ferret and play around with the data yourself. You all should also know that same sex married couple estimates are not currently found in American Fact Finder.

American Fact Finder is the primary CS data presentation application. And since 2013 same sex married couples are included with all married couples as a total in some tables that are on AFS.

But they are not currently shown separately in any of these tables. The only product we have that will allow you to see those same sex couples broken is the special table package that we've mentioned here.

Here's just a simple screen grab of the main same sex couples page. You'll see in the middle we have links to our most recent releases. This includes the most recent 24 version of the tables that we've been talking about.

In the left-hand corner we also have links to the specific data sources. And from there you can explore what we have by survey in a little bit more detail. Oh and the 2015 table package with the most recent ACS estimates is hopefully going to be released this fall.

Okay. Next we're going to talk a little bit about outcomes. Here we're going to show you some historical trends going back specifically to 2008. Everything we're about to show sources the ACS special table package that we've been talking about in the previous sections.

And we also want to mention that our updated tables with 2015 data - I guess I already mentioned that. Those are going to be coming up this fall. As always when talking about outcomes we need to mention that these are data from a survey and they're therefore subject to sampling error.

For anyone who's interested, here's a link to the ACS statistical accuracy document. This is also probably a really good time to mention that these

estimates of same sex couples are in no way meant to stand in for estimates of the LGBTQ population as a whole.

These are very specific sets of estimates with very, very carefully defined parameters. And anyone who's using them as a proxy for a larger group of people we just think that that's ill advised.

Okay. So with that in mind let's take a look at figure one. This figure simply shows us our estimate of total same sex couple households from 2008 to data year 2014. We have not statistically tested any of these estimates, but you can see that in 2008 we had about 539,000 reported same sex households.

And by 2014 we had an estimate of about 783,000 households. Okay. So next we're going to show exactly the same graphic. But here we've broken down the numbers by the sex of the couple.

The red bars represent female/female couples while the blue bars represent male/male couples. So in 2014 we show about 405,000 female couples and about 378,000 male couples.

And again these are directly sourced to the table package that we've been talking about. It's available on our Web site. What we're really just trying to show you here is what some of the distributions from that table package look like.

Okay. Here we're showing the distribution couples by the age of the householder. I think. Yes. Okay. Sorry. I got tripped up for a second. Note that for the next couple of figures we're showing household level estimates by the value of the identified householder.



Here we're also looking at three separate subpopulations. The light green bars here are married opposite sex couples. The dark green bars are unmarried opposite sex couples. And the blue bars represent all same sex couples together.

So the basic way that you would read this figure is you would say that 26.6% of all same sex couple households had a householder between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age.

Okay. Here's the breakdown in 2014 by race and Hispanic origin. Note that the race categories here are showing single race responses for the most part, meaning white alone, black alone, Asian alone, etcetera.

There is a two or more race category that shows everyone who reported more than one race. And on the far right we have a Hispanic category and that shows Hispanics of any race.

Next to that we do show a combination breakdown for those who are white alone and not Hispanic. So the basic way that you would read this figure is that you could say that 75.7% of all single sex couple household had a householder who is white alone and not Hispanic.

Okay. This next graphic shows the distributions by a series of selected characteristics. If we work left to right we have educational attainment, specifically the percentage where the householder reported a bachelor's degree.

And then next to that we had the percentage where both partners in the home reported a bachelor's degree. In the middle we have employment status with

the same basic display concept. One line shows householders being employed. The other shows both partners being employed.

And on the far right we have presence of children in the household. One of the lines shows presence of any children. And the other line shows the presence of the householder's own children.

Okay. And this final graphic shows household income brackets ranging from a low of less than 35,000 to a high of over 100,000. And on the far right side we show home tenure. Specifically those who own their home and those who rent.

Once again these graphics are not meant to be exhaustive. They're simply designed to show you a little bit about what we have in our table package. And some of what interested data users might be able to do on their own.

Okay. So in this final section we're going to switch gears a little bit and move on to something somewhat different. Here in the United States there's obviously increasing interest in collecting information about sexual orientation and gender identity in addition to the other demographic characteristics that we ask about.

So for the rest of this presentation I'm going to go ahead and use the acronym SOGI when talking about sexual orientation and gender identity, just so it's clear what I'm talking about.

I've already mentioned this earlier but we do want to highlight the common misconception that the same sex data that we've been discussing up to this point represents a comprehensive measurement of the LGBTQ population.

The bottom line is they simply do not. While related, the concepts of same sex couples and SOGI are not the same thing. And we think it's really important to note that up front for data users.

Okay. This is probably a pretty good time to mention that when we talk about SOGI we're talking about two different yet related terms. The first is sexual orientation which comprises the sexual identity of an individual along with the sexual attraction and sexual behavior.

And the second is gender identity which comprises transgender identity, gender expression and the concordance between sex assigned at birth and a person's current sex.

Please note that these definitions are taken from the charter of the OMB led federal interagency working group. And we're going to talk more about that group here in a minute.

Okay. This next slide summarizes some of the Census Bureau's activities on the topic up to this date. In the National Health Interview Survey the Census has been asking questions for the National Center for Health Statistics since 2013.

And the National Crime Victimization Survey, the Census asks questions for the Bureau of Justice statistics. And beginning this year questions are being asked about both sexual orientation and gender identity.

And currently in the current population survey in the CPS which the Census Bureau fields for the Department of Labor. The Census is beginning to cognitively test SOGI questions this month.

Okay. As mentioned a few slides previously the Census Bureau is also participating in an OMB sponsored working groups. The product of which is going to be three different research papers on various SOGI topics.

In addition Census staff are sponsoring a research practicum at the University of Maryland and Michigan's JPSSM program. The main focus of that practicum is to better understand how proxy responses will impact gathering SOGI data.

And finally the census is currently soliciting feedback from federal agencies on content needs for both the 2020 census and the 2019 ACS. One additional point, here at the Bureau we've also formed a team of subject matter experts to participate in this OMB group and other SOGI related activities as they arise.

The team will ensure the agency is prepared to implement SOGI questions on our surveys should we be tasked with doing so. And the team is led by Jennifer Ortman who's in the room with me.

And in addition to myself it's also going to include (Amy Smith)'s as senior researchers on the relevant topics. Okay. I thought it would perhaps be useful to include this slide. It shows the process by which content is added to the ACS.

The main point here is that it's a really careful process. It's one that's very measured. And it involves four main steps. The first is that federal agencies officially request content followed by an interagency committee providing recommendations to OMB on request additions.

Following that cognitive testing of questions is done and we do that both in English and in Spanish. And that's followed up by field testing in various

modes of data collection. And finally there is an interagency process that includes the Census, the Department of Commerce and other groups.

And that process reports up to OMB and ultimately OMB is the one who makes the final determination about whether or not the new content is justified. So yes. The main point of this slide is that there is a process in place and it's a really careful one.

Okay. So this next slide shows a little bit more about the deadlines and process with regards to 2020 Census. This is a pretty dense slide but the main is that the Census need to propose any new subjects to Congress by March of 2017.

And then if those subjects are approved new questions are due to Congress by March 2018. So we're obviously already very much eyeing these deadlines. And I think one additional point worth making is that in order for content to be added to the Decennial Census there has to be a clearly demonstrated legislative or programmatic need for the estimates.

There are many other departments and agencies within the federal statistical system that have implemented SOGI questions or planning to do so in the future, those currently collecting data are included here on the left. And those planning or testing questions for the future are included on the right.

Please note that this is - this list is under development. It shouldn't be considered complete. It's not intended to illustrate anything other than the range of work being done within the federal statistical system.

There are also some non-federal SOGI data sources. And this slide attempts to summarize those. Again this is a draft list. It's not necessarily exhaustive but it does provide a sense of who is currently collecting information on SOGI.

Of course as members of this taskforce we understand that you guys - you all might know additional data sources. So if you do we'd - we'd really value hearing from you on that.

Okay. I want to thank everyone for listening so attentively. That concludes what I have for you in terms of the planned presentation. We can open it up to questions though. Again I have Rose Kreider and Jennifer Ortman here.

Megan I'm not sure if you want to kick off or we can just open up the phone lines or however that works.

Megan Maury: Yes. (Tom) I just have one or two tiny little questions for you. So first I feel like the point - the point you make about the statistics you showed and what we kind of know about same sex couple households not necessarily being reflective of what the entire LGTBQ community looks like is hugely important.

And when you look - when folks look at some of those other data sources they're going to see that there's some conflict between for example the racial and ethnic identity of folks who are counted as same sex couples in the ACS compared to what we're seeing in some surveys outside of those more, you know, so all these things like couple data sources.

So I just wanted to bring that back around because I think folks sometimes get confused when they look at the census numbers and because they think of that as kind of like the ultimate source of data. But we're only capturing

information about one slice of the LGBTQ community when we're talking about same sex couples.

(Tom Fowl): Right. That's a really good point to reiterate. And, you know, I tried to make it a few times but I don't think it can be...

Megan Maury: Totally.

(Tom Fowl): You know?

Megan Maury: Yes.

(Tom Fowl): It's really important that people recognize what our data are and what they are not.

Megan Maury: Yes.

(Tom Fowl): So I think that's a really important point to echo again.

Megan Maury: And then I have a nerd question for you. And my apologies for not being a researcher. I probably already know the answer to this question. But you talked a little bit on Slide 42 and the slides after that about the different surveys that are currently collecting SOGI data.

And the testing that's being done for questions to be added to other surveys. Could you just talk for a moment about why if a question's been tested for one survey it still needs to get tested on another survey instead of just being able to kind of toss it in the mix?

(Tom Fowl): Well maybe I'll punt that one to Jennifer here.

Jennifer Ortman: Yes.

Megan Maury: Sure.

Jennifer Ortman: So Megan that is a fantastic question. Thank you for asking it. Because I think not everybody might be aware of why we would continue testing question.

So I think what I would do at a high level is to say the testing - we wouldn't necessarily be repeating the same exact type of testing. So in the situation - because in the two surveys that Tom described the National Health Interview Survey and the National Crime Victimization Survey.

So the National Health Interview Survey, they just added a question about sexual orientation. They don't have a question about gender identity. So they certainly did quite a bit of testing.

We start with a cognitive testing process with smaller groups of people. We do focus groups and then we expand to field testing. And they go back through an OMB process to get final approvals to change or add content.

So when the National Crimes Victimization Survey went to add their question they were certainly able to benefit from some of the research that had already taken place on the sexual orientation questions for the National Health Interview Survey.

The sexual orientation questions are also used on other surveys by other federal agencies. So we don't try to reinvent the wheel every time but we do have to evaluate in the context of the survey we're adding content to.



So depending on the survey we may be reaching out to a different segment of the population. We have some surveys, the American Community Survey is intended to reach all age groups for example. But we have other surveys that might be focused just on the adult population.

So it might be just those 16 and older and those 18 and older. So there's subtle difference between surveys that require us to evaluate in the context of that survey and the population we're trying to reach and sample, that that content is being asked appropriately so that we get that high quality data that the Census Bureau prides itself on providing to our data users.

Megan Maury: That makes a ton of sense. And I wonder - I feel like in my mind I feel like there are sets of, you know, race and ethnicity questions that are - that have become more standardized over time. And I know we're even still changing those now. You know, Census is adding a new category into the race and ethnicity fields.

So it's even - even in that set of questions that all feel like are a little bit more standardized there's still changes happening. But do you feel like there's a - at some point in the horizon where there will be a more standardized question that won't have to go through quite as much testing.

Jennifer Ortman: Well in terms of the race question or any other question, I don't think we would ever say there will be a standardized way that we will forever ask the question. The race question is certainly a good example.

But even with the relationship data that we collect that (Tom) was describing we started collecting that data back in 1880. But the categories have changed over time.

So while we certainly value as survey researchers having that long series so you can look over a very long period of time and see how the population has changed, it's really important that we make sure that our questions and the response categories that we provide are socially salient.

So the race question is a fantastic example of that. We've never asked the race question the same exact way on any two Census forms.

Megan Maury: Wow.

Jennifer Ortman: Even between 2000 and 2010 there were some small, subtle changes. And then we don't know for sure what's going to happen in 2020. But we would expect there would be at least a few changes.

We're excited to see what happens with that question but we should know in a couple years what the recommendations will be. But it really is important that we stay current. Adding the category of unmarried couples to the Census and survey forms is an example for the relationship data.

Really that was a growing segment of the population. And it was important that we be able to measure it.

Megan Maury: Yes. Sure. That makes a lot of sense. Cool. And then I think my last question is if you could talk a little bit about how - as you talked a little bit about the fact that the same sex couple files are available on the Web site.

On that sort of ancillary Web site. That's not the standard, you know, the piece that people are more - a little bit more familiar with, the American Fact Finder.

Do you know if Census has plans to move that - those files into the American Fact Finder so they're a little bit easier? I know that's what young folks use in schools and that kind of stuff when they're looking stuff up.

Jennifer Ortman: It's as if we had talked and we hadn't talked before this. You're...

((Crosstalk))

Jennifer Ortman: So data. The way we get data out to the public. So as we note here our same sex couple tables are on a separate Web site. They are not tables in American Fact Finder which is the main vehicle for releasing data from the American Community Survey.

But the interesting thing that you - you may have heard us talk about a little bit at this point is we are actually getting ready to take American Fact Finder offline. And before anybody panics or freaks out about that the data are not going away.

But the Census Bureau has been engaged for a few years now in trying to develop a means of disseminating our data in a much more streamlined fashion to make it a better process and a better experience for our customers for our data users to get the data.

So they are working on an enterprise solution, a beta tool will be out later this month. So for those of you who are data users, we hope you'll go check it out and give us some feedback so that when that tool becomes our main vehicle for getting the data out that you'll have given us input to make that the best tool it can be.

So at that point our hope that is all Census Bureau data or most of it will be coming through that tool. So because Fact Finder is going to be offline. I don't have a date for that. It won't be immediate. But it will be in the not too distant future.

For that reason we're not planning to put the same sex couple data into fact finder but we would expect that it would be integrated along with the other data the Census Bureau provides in our new tool.

Megan Maury: That's fantastic.

Jennifer Ortman: And Rose has something to add.

Rose Kreider: I just wanted to clarify that we do have a table on American Fact Finder that provides you just purely the estimates of same sex couple households by whether they are male/male or female/female in American Fact Finder.

It's just that it's not crossed by characteristics. And that's what we have.

((Crosstalk))

Rose Kreider: ... tables. It's kind of an issue with American Fact Finder. We try the main - one of the main points of American Community Survey is that we can get data down to a small geographic level. And once you do that with a really small groups it's problematic at smaller geography - at smaller geographies when you're trying to cross a small group by characteristics at the same time.

So we just (sheerly) provide the number of those households in American Fact Finder. But then characteristics and some of those other details are done in that special table package.

Megan Maury: That makes a ton of sense. Great. Well I don't want to steal all the time from people who might want to ask questions but if there aren't a lot of questions I'll come back and ask some more.

(Tom Fowl): Sure. Sounds good.

Coordinator: To ask a question from the phone please press star and the number 1. Please unmute your phone and record your name at the prompt. Again that is star 1 to ask a question from the phone.

One moment while any questions come through. Our first question comes from (Tara Golden). Your line is open.

(Tara Golden): Hey. I had a question about the slide pertaining to revising the relationship question. And it tied to, I guess, new things that you're offering of same sex married couple, same sex unmarried couples.

I wondered just in line with staying current. What about those who are unidentified, who have unidentified genders and who don't identify with male or female? Is there not some way to incorporate those folks as well?

I know a lot of people in that situation who are married and they would not qualify under any one of these boxes.

(Tom Fowl): I mean I think the short answer for the ACS in the Decennial is no. But we did mention this OMB working group that we're a part of. And I think that's a certainly a component. It's part of some of the discussions just how do we, you know, make the questions as inclusive as possible.

But, again, the short answer in terms of like this new relationship question testing that we're, there's just - there's nothing currently being implemented or tested.

(Tara Golden): Well I would make that suggestion. Because I think there is definitely a significant portion of the population that does not fit into any of these. And so, you know, I feel like we miss out on actual, you know, important data by excluding those folks who can't select any of these boxes.

So this is a...

(Tom Fowl): It's a really point and one that we'll take for sure.

(Tara Golden): Okay. Thank you.

(Tom Fowl): Thank you.

Coordinator: The next question comes from (Kim). Your line is open.

(Kim): Hi. I was just wondering if - are there data available on same sex couples at a smaller geography than the nation?

Rose Kreider: At the state level in that special table package on the same sex couples part of our Web site. We do show estimates at state level.

(Kim): Okay. And they're like percentage estimates or numbers.

((Crosstalk))

Rose Kreider: I'm trying to remember without looking at it.

(Tom Fowl): Yes.

(Kim): I'm sorry.

(Tom Fowl): Isn't it both?

Rose Kreider: It may be both.

(Kim): Okay.

((Crosstalk))

Rose Kreider: ...a number and then a percent of all the couples in the - the same sex couples that are reported as married. We're trying to go and look at the tables.

(Kim): Okay.

(Tom Fowl): Yes. Let me see. I'm sorry. I should have had it pulled up for you. I apologize.

Rose Kreider: We have so many tables in our minds.

(Tom Fowl): Yes.

Rose Kreider: It's hard to remember...

(Tom Fowl): Well and then the...

Rose Kreider: ...exactly what's there.

(Tom Fowl): The one table that Rose mentioned is in American Fact Finder.

Rose Kreider: That is just the numbers...

((Crosstalk))

(Tom Fowl): Yes. That's just the...

Rose Kreider: That is going down to.

(Tom Fowl): ...number table. But you can drill all the way down to really geographies with that.

Rose Kreider: Yes. Yes.

(Tom Fowl): But it's a pretty - it's a very, very basic table. And it's just a number.

(Kim): So with those because of the small sample size or even the small demographic of them do you have suppression rules into effect? And are they displayed with confidence (bounds)?

Jennifer Ortman: Yes.

(Tom Fowl): Yes.

Jennifer Ortman: Yes.

(Tom Fowl): Yes to both. Yes.

(Kim): Okay. And then can I have one more question?



(Tom Fowl): Of course.

(Kim): You talked about SOGI but I didn't catch that you had any data available on SOGI.

(Tom Fowl): This comes back to right now we're in the process of really just looking at it as a potential topic.

(Kim): Okay. So right now there's not really a good data source or...

Jennifer Ortman: Yes. There's no Census Bureau surveys that collect this data. We're collecting it on surveys at the Census Bureau fields for other agencies. So the Census Bureau in addition to those surveys that we conduct as well as Decennial Census we go out in the field and collect data for several other federal agencies.

So the examples (Tom) talked about were the National Health Interview Survey that's sponsored by the National Center for Health Statistics and the National Crime Victimization Survey.

But we're staying part of the conversation and as part of our work to add those questions to those surveys but as well if it happens that we are tasked with adding that to our surveys we want to be prepared.

(Kim): Okay. So there's not currently a good place to get population estimates on - with SOGI.

Jennifer Ortman: I think - so I think it would be fair to say we don't have the strength of like the American Community Survey that goes out to 3-1/2 million households a

year. But certainly surveys like the National Health Interview Survey and National Crime Victimization they are providing some information.

They don't have the sample size. And they're focused a little different but we don't yet have that kind of national strong...

(Kim): Okay.

Jennifer Ortman: ...sample size.

Megan Maury: Right. And there's not published data from NCVS, the National Crime and Victimization Survey yet because the questions were just added this year. The same with CPS.

We won't have that data for a little bit. This is Megan by the way.

(Tom Fowl): Yes.

Megan Maury: But there - but there are some great reports that have come out from some of our partner organizations like the Williams Institute and the Center for American Progress that integrate that information from the National Health Interview Survey.

So that's a little bit more accessible I think for those of us that aren't - you sound like you know a lot words, research related words. And so you probably have even more access than I do.

But I know that some of those reports are really, really fantastic. So that is one place you can go. And then (Tom) did mention that there are some surveys that are outside of the government.

And those provide some - some have a better kind of view of what - like the Gallup Poll for example has a...

(Kim): Oh you're right.

Megan Maury: ...has a more inclusive national estimate. Although we're - I'm sure there's still some issues around who they're collecting data from and that kind of stuff and whether or not people feel comfortable answering that question within the context of that survey or all of those concerns you'd normally have in any survey that's asking personal questions I think are applicable.

But the Gallup one definitely is both accessible and out there and has national data.

(Kim): Okay. Great.

(Tom Fowl): Hey. I also wanted to mention I looked up the state table and what we have at the state level is we have an estimate for each state of total same sex households. And that's just a number with a standard error attached to it.

(Kim): Okay.

(Tom Fowl): And we have another column that's the percent of all same sex households who are same sex spouses. So basically the percentage of all same sex households who are married.

(Kim): Okay.

(Tom Fowl): And that's a percent with a corresponding standard error. So one estimate, one percentage.

(Kim): Great. Thank you.

(Tom Fowl): Thank you.

Coordinator: I show no further questions at this time. That is star 1 to ask a question.

Megan Maury: Well, while we're waiting (unintelligible) I would love if any of you know as part of your work on that interagency working group on - I forget what it was, the total huge title was, a long title.

As you're doing this research around the various different pieces of this - these research questions, what do you feel like we have to look forward to? Where do you feel like there's data coming that will provide a richer picture of the community?

I know the CPS asks all sorts of questions. Can any of you speak to the kinds of like kind of cross tabs we'll be able to see once those - that data is available to people?

Jennifer Ortman: Well Megan this is (Jennifer). So the - it will really be a matter of what surveys we see this content added to. So if we - for example if we see that questions on sexual orientation and gender identity are introduced in the current population survey that certainly, that will give us a sense in terms of employment workforce, income, poverty.

That would give us the opportunity to see some of those characteristics for that population. I would expect primarily at a national level for the current population survey.

((Crosstalk))

Jennifer Ortman: Oh go ahead.

Megan Maury: Go ahead. Do you know how big the current population survey is? You all mentioned that ACS goes out to 3.5 million households. Is CPS similarly as gargantuan?

Jennifer Ortman: No it is not. So the CPS is a little - it's slightly fewer than 100,000. So it's a much...

Megan Maury: Got you.

Jennifer Ortman: The CPS is a monthly survey. So it goes out. Respondents are pulled into the survey for a few months. Then they're out. And then we follow-up with them again.

So something we do with the CPS that's different than the ACS, the American Community Survey, is that in addition to being asked basic questions on demographics and that sort of thing.

Each month we do - we have different supplements that are asked. For example, this week on Tuesday we released our official Income Poverty and Health Insurance Estimates from the current population survey's annual social and economic supplement.

That is the supplement that we conduct in March of each year. So that's something very interesting about the CPS that in addition to basic information each month they'll focus on a different topic.

So another topic that's a popular discussion, popular in the media right, voting. So in November the Current Population Survey will be asking people about rather or not they voted in the most recent election.

Megan Maury: Yes. That's so exciting. Particularly because of what we know about disparities in the community around poverty, around access to health insurance, around access to voting rights.

I think those supplements will really help us develop a richer picture if SOGI gets added to that CPS survey. That's so exciting.

Jennifer Ortman: Absolutely.

(Tom Fowl): Well I'll just chime in too. This is (Tom) again. And I actually work with the voting data in CPS quite a bit. And I'll just reiterate that with the CPS really at best you're probably going to get state level estimates.

Megan Maury: Right.

(Tom Fowl): That's about as far down as you're able to go. And I even see with the voting data sometimes depending on the size of the state and the group that we're looking at if we're looking at race and Hispanic origin. Sometimes again depending on the group and depending on the state those numbers are sometimes accompanied by rather large margins of error.

Megan Maury: Sure but even if we had national data it would be still exciting for me as a...

(Tom Fowl): Of course.

Megan Maury: ...as a nerd.

(Tom Fowl): Yes. That's a little CPS caveat that I always give.

Megan Maury: I appreciate that. Any other - I don't want to keep talking if there's any other questions on the phone but...

Coordinator: I show no questions at this time.

Megan Maury: Wonderful. Well I definitely wanted to just make sure I had a moment to thank you all. I know you did a lot of work to pull this all together. And I know that you're continuing to do a lot of work to make sure that the questions that are asked about the LGBTQ community are the right questions.

And that we're getting the kind of data to do that advocacy and to figure out what policy interventions make the most sense for us. So I just wanted to again reiterate my thanks to all of you. I really appreciate all the work that you do.

(Tom Fowl): Oh it's our pleasure. And you'll now see an evaluation form that's been put up there so you guys can go and flunk me if you want.

Coordinator: Excuse me. We do have a couple of questions. Did you still want to take questions?

Megan Maury: Oh great.

Coordinator: Okay. We have - this is from Chris. Your line is open.

Chris Duarte: Hi. This is Chris Duarte. I live in a rural area in Arizona. I run a consulting firm called Linking Dreams Consulting where for the last 10, 15 years or so I've been designing LGBT programs and implementing them. And helping LGBT programs and organizations boost revenue and be more sustainable and that kind of thing.

Predominantly in rural communities because that's really where - in my area that's really where it's needed. My question goes to about collecting rural data. We're really starting to really collect our own.

I created a coalition in my county that's starting to collect that data now. But what are some of the trends that you've seen or some of the things that are missing?

How do you see that rural data collection is different than it is from the, you know, general what we've seen over the last 12 years as far as data collection for LGBT in metropolis areas and big cities?

(Tom Fowl): Megan are you aware of anything at the Williams Institute that touches on rural data? Because here at the Bureau we don't presently have anything that gets that granular.

Megan Maury: Yes. Not off the top of my head quite yet. I know that the taskforce where I work years and years ago did a breakdown on the same sex couple data that got down to the congressional district level. And it gives you some more information.



I'm happy to share that with you. I know we didn't put my email up there but I will tell you all that it's M Maury, which is M-M-A-U-R-Y @thetaskforce.org. And you can, of course, find me by going onto our Web site [www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org) and searching for Megan and you'll find me and my contact info.

But we're happy to share that with you. But there is vastly less data on the rural populations because of these sample size issues that make it a little bit more difficult.

We do know that the National Center for Transgender Equality has just completed a national survey of the trans population that is going to have pretty rich data. They've got quite a lot of respondents.

But so that may end up having more information about what sort of like issues look like in the rural communities. But I can't say for sure yet because they haven't released the data yet.

(Tom Fowl): Okay. I just wanted to mention to you. Through chat it came through, a question about getting access to the slides. Those are going to be emailed to the group within probably a week.

So you all will have access to the slides that we just went through. I'm sorry. Did I cut off a question?

Coordinator: The next person in queue is (Kim). Your line is open.

(Kim): Hi. This is (Kim) again. I just wanted to mention that the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System Survey that's conducted by the CDC, it's a state done survey but it's conducted at the national level.

I'm not sure - there is a question on sexual orientation that's asked. And I know we have it available in Utah back through 2011.

(Tom Fowl): Okay.

(Kim): I was just asking our coordinator and she was saying that - it says that it's an optional module. So I think the CDC develops the questions. And then the states have the options of whether or not to ask.

(Tom Fowl): Oh.

(Kim): But that may be another potential data source.

(Tom Fowl): Oh yes. Great. Great. Thank you for mentioning that.

(Kim): Yes. Sure.

Coordinator: No questions...

((Crosstalk))

Megan Maury: And (Tom) when that - when the next report comes out from the interagency LGBT working group is that - or the next reports, will those include more information about the surveys that do and don't collect sexual orientation data and gender identity...

(Tom Fowl): One of them will focus entirely on current measures.

Rose Kreider: It's out.

(Tom Fowl): Oh that's out I'm sorry. That one's actually already out, so.

Megan Maury: Oh great.

Jennifer Ortman: If anybody is interested in the working groups' reports they're being released on the - I apologize. I don't remember what the acronym stands for. But it's FCSM. That's Federal - I think it's the Federal Committee on Statistical something. I'm so sorry.

(Tom Fowl): Method.

Jennifer Ortman: Method. There we go.

(Tom Fowl): (Unintelligible) methods.

Jennifer Ortman: We worked it out. Federal Committee on Statistical Methods, FCSM. If you go to the FCSM Web site or if you run an internet search for FCSM SOGI, S-O-G-I you'll find that report.

So the first paper that we released in on current measures. And it documents to the best of our ability to find them all of our current measures being asked on federal surveys and with a few non-federal surveys included as well.

The second paper which should be coming out we're hoping within the next few weeks will be on evaluations to date of those measures, looking at the work that's been done to evaluate how well those measures are performing and how good the data are that we're getting.

And then the third paper which will be coming out a little bit after that will be focused more on research efforts and kind of more forward thinking.

Megan Maury: Great.

Coordinator: No further questions in the queue at this time.

(Tom Fowl): Okay. Well thanks again everybody for joining us. I think that wraps it up Megan. Unless you have anything to close out with?

Megan Maury: No. Thanks to all of you so much.

(Tom Fowl): Of course. Okay. We'll talk to you all later.

Megan Maury: Thanks. Bye.

Coordinator: That concludes today's call. Thank you for participating. You may disconnect at this time. Speakers please allow a moment of silence for post conference.

END