

# **Tabulating Same-Sex Couples in Census Bureau Surveys**

by

**Martin O'Connell, Ph. D.**

**Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division**

**US Census Bureau**

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# Same-Sex Couples: Data Challenges

- **Changes in household composition**
  - **Issues with statistically small population sizes**
- **Changing geographical landscape**
  - **Some states performing same-sex marriages**
  - **And others not performing but recognizing**
  - **Majority doing neither**
- **Today's presentation addresses the following:**
  - **Tabular presentations for the ACS and Census 2010**
  - **Plans for future research**

## Census 2000 Editing Procedures

- **Pre-2000 rules, for same-sex spouses**
  - Relationship retained, sex of spouse edited to that opposite of the householder
    - Assumption was that sex responses were in error
- **For Census 2000 and all subsequent surveys**
  - Sex retained, relationship of spouse edited to unmarried partner
    - Assumption sex was reported correctly, partners expressing their living arrangements

# Census 2000 Found 253,377 Households Reporting They were Same-Sex Spouses- Who Were They?

1. Couples in domestic partnerships or in civil unions
2. Married in a church service not recognized by the state
3. “Socially defined marriages”—self-identification of relationship
  - Sociological not statistical issue
  - Why spouse and not partner?
4. Opposite-sex married couples who mismarked their gender on the Census form

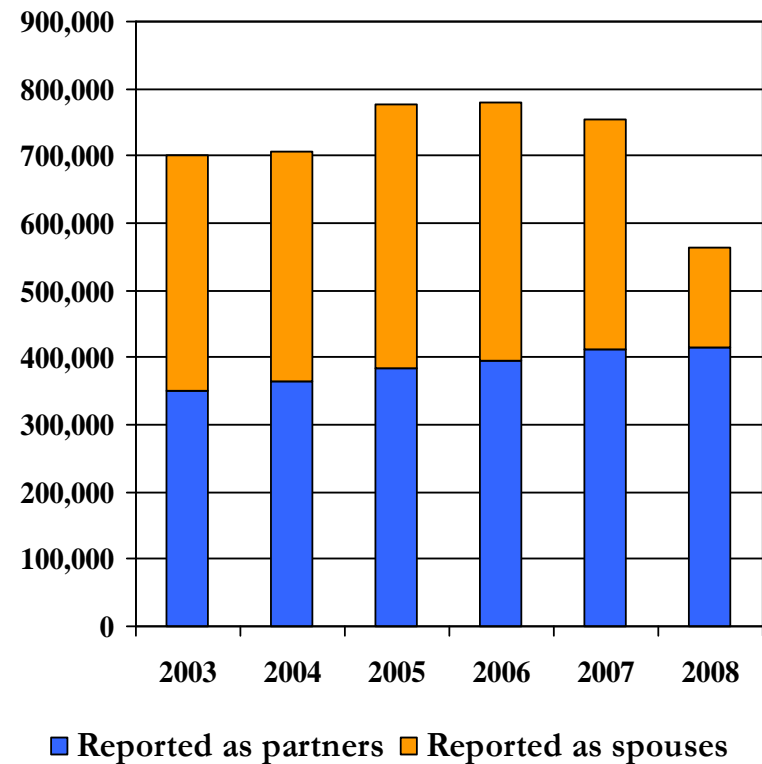
# Current ACS Relationship Question—

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

- Husband or wife**
- Biological son or daughter
- Adopted son or daughter
- Stepson or stepdaughter
- Brother or sister
- Father or mother
- Grandchild
- Parent-in-law
- Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
- Other relative
- Roomer or boarder
- Housemate or roommate
- Unmarried partner**
- Foster child
- Other nonrelative

# Estimates of Same-Sex Households by Editing Status: American Community Survey, 2003-2008

- Between 2003-2007:
  - 700 - 800,000 same-sex households
  - 350 - 400,000 same-sex spouses
  - 45%-50% of all same-sex couples reported as spouses
  - State marriages begin in 2004
- Between 2007-2008:
  - Format/processing changes
  - 2007-2008 decline of 190,000 reported spouses
  - Reported spouses 150,000 in 2008 are 27% of all same-sex couples



# Current ACS Tabulations for Unmarried Partners Nation, State, County, Place

B11009. UNMARRIED-PARTNER HOUSEHOLDS BY SEX OF PARTNER				
Universe- Households				
Data Set: 2008 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates				
	<b>Maryland</b>		<b>Baltimore city, Maryland</b>	
	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Total:	2,092,692	7,904	238,454	4,088
Unmarried-partner households:	110,674	5,104	16,910	2,335
Male householder and male partner	3,873	904	954	462
Male householder and female partner	48,865	3,896	4,989	1,487
Female householder and female partner	5,488	1,168	724	337
Female householder and male partner	52,448	3,958	10,243	1,714
All other households	1,982,018	8,828	221,544	4,261
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey				

Note: Same-sex unmarried partner includes both reports as spouses and unmarried partners.

# New Tabulations in the American Community Survey

- For reported spouses and unmarried partners by sex of couple- data for the Nation since 2005:
  - Age, Race, Hispanic Origin
  - Interracial couple
  - Education and Employment status of couple
  - Presence of children in the household
  - Household Income
  - Tenure of household (own/rent)
- Most recent tables from the 2008 ACS

[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/files/ssex-tables-2008.xls](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/files/ssex-tables-2008.xls)

# Health Related Items Available on the ACS

- **Types of health insurance**
  - Medicare, Medicaid, VA, TRICARE, military health care
- **Disability Items – self-identified**
  - Difficulty in hearing or seeing
  - Physical, mental, emotional conditions related to memory or decision making
  - Walking, climbing stairs, dressing or bathing
- **Veterans status**
  - Period of service
  - VA service-connected disability rating

# Census 2010 Proposed Unmarried Partners Table- Shown to Track Level in SF1 and by Race and Ethnic Origin in SF2

UNMARRIED-PARTNER HOUSEHOLDS BY SEX OF PARTNERS				
BY PRESENCE OF OWN CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS				
Universe: Households				
Total:				
	Unmarried-partner households:			
	Male householder and male partner:			
		With own children under 18 years		
		No own children under 18 years		
	Male householder and female partner:			
		With own children under 18 years		
		No own children under 18 years		
	Female householder and female partner:			
		With own children under 18 years		
		No own children under 18 years		
	Female householder and male partner:			
		With own children under 18 years		
		No own children under 18 years		
	All other households			

Note: Same-sex unmarried partner includes both reports as spouses and unmarried partners.

# 2010 Census Proposed Table for Same-Sex Partners- Nation and States

SAME-SEX UNMARRIED PARTNER OR SPOUSE HOUSEHOLDS BY SEX OF HOUSEHOLDER									
BY PRESENCE OF OWN CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS									
Universe: Households with partner or spouse the same sex as the householder									
Total:									
	Male householder:								
		Same-sex unmarried partner:							
			With own children under 18 years						
			No own children under 18 years						
		Reported same-sex spouse:							
			With own children under 18 years						
			No own children under 18 years						
	Female householder:								
		Same-sex unmarried partner:							
			With own children under 18 years						
			No own children under 18 years						
		Reported same-sex spouse:							
			With own children under 18 years						
			No own children under 18 years						

# Future Research Plans- Government Wide Involvement

- **OMB establishes Interagency Working Group on Measuring Relationships in Federal Household Surveys**
  - Identify approaches to define/measure types of relationships
  - Coordinate empirical research across agencies
  - Make recommendations to OMB on questions to implement in major household surveys
  - Consideration of following issues:
    - Federal law
    - Federal agencies planning and implementation of programs
    - Derived measure-- poverty rates, vital statistics rates
    - Uses by state and non-federal agencies

# Census Bureau Research Plans- Conducts Focus Groups

- **Goals of focus groups (January-March 2010):**
  - Terminology-- how do couples identify themselves?
  - How are current marital status and relationship items being interpreted?
  - Legal, social responses?
  - Develop alternative questions for cognitive testing
- **Selection criteria:**
  - 17 groups in 7 cities: 14 same-sex, 3 opposite-sex
  - Metro and rural areas
  - Spanish speaking groups
  - Couples legally married, recognized partnerships, unmarried
  - Variations by age, education, duration of cohabitation, children