

# Demographic Perspectives on Same-sex Couples

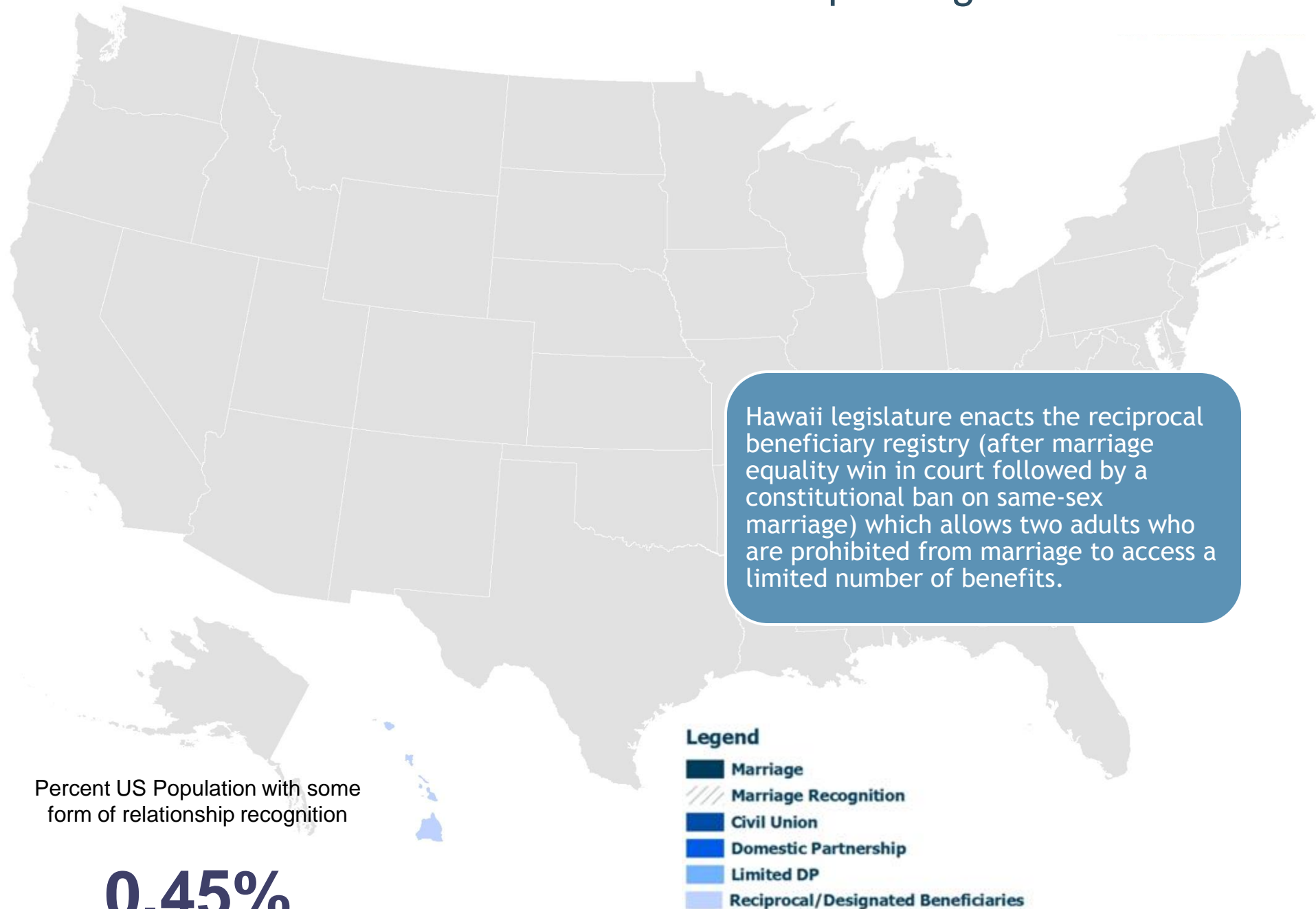
Gary J. Gates

*Williams Distinguished Scholar*

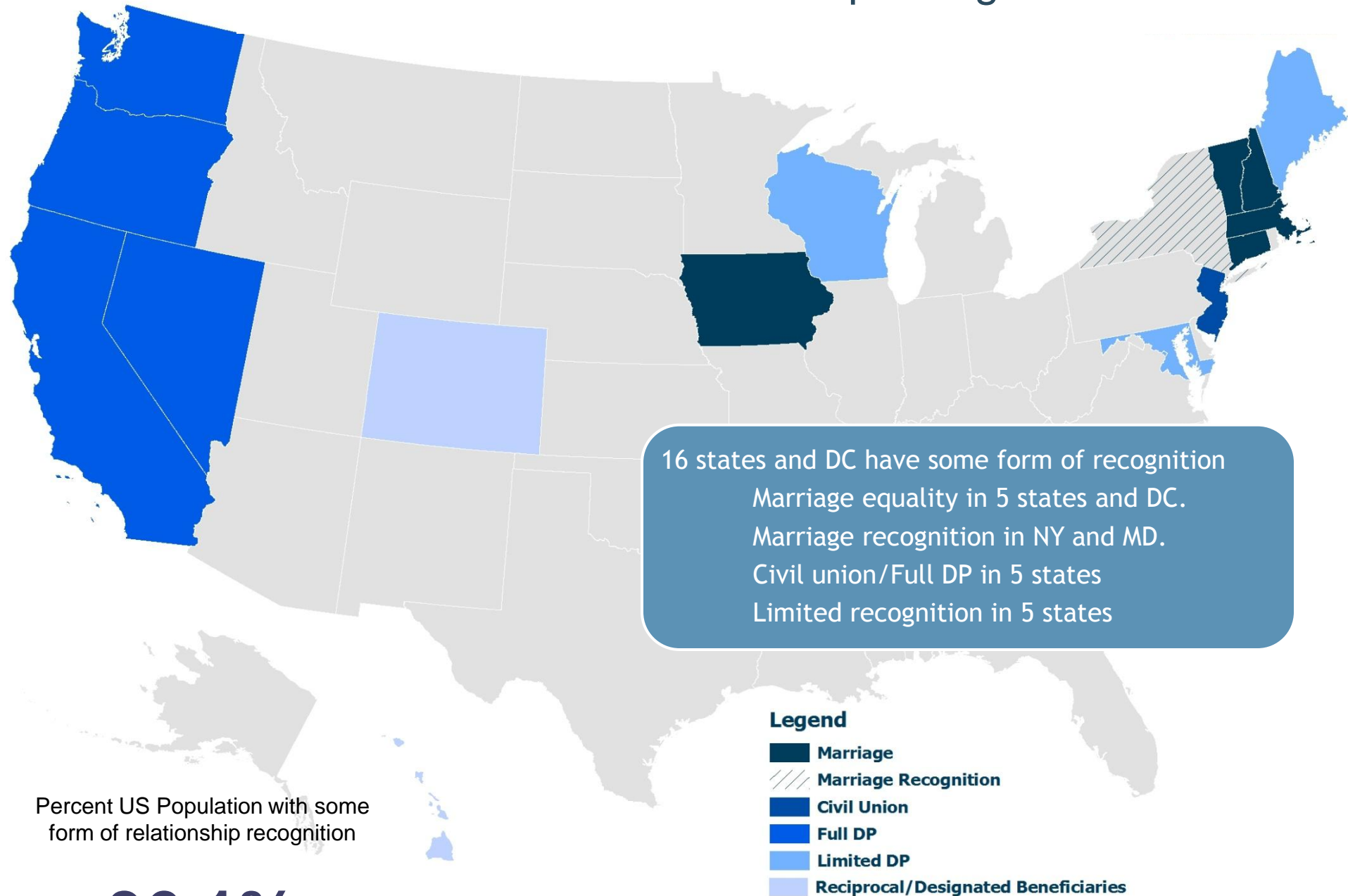


the  
**Williams**  
INSTITUTE

# Positive same-sex relationship recognition laws 1997



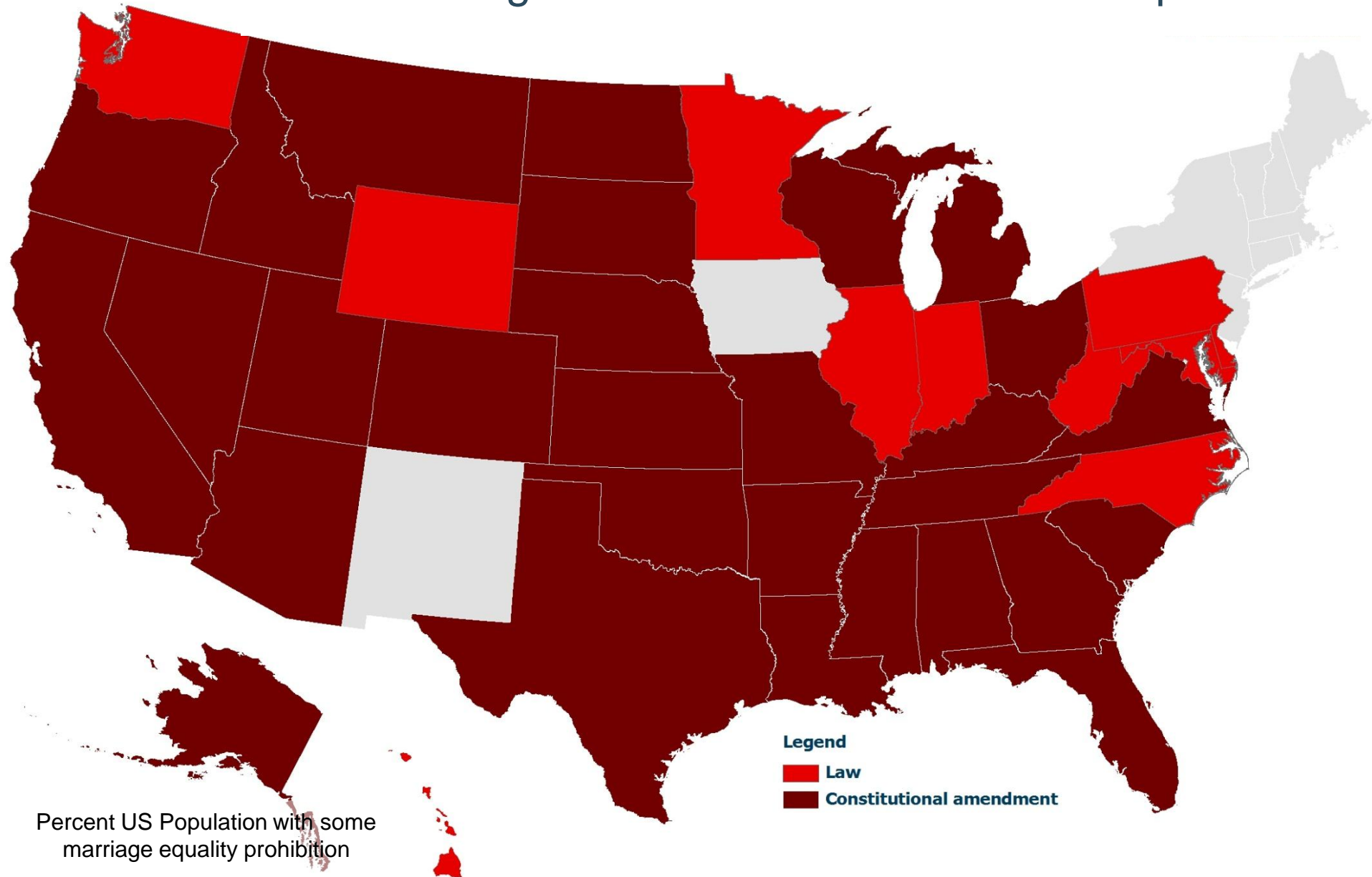
# Positive same-sex relationship recognition laws 2010



Percent US Population with some form of relationship recognition

**36.1%**

# Marriage restrictions for same-sex couples 2010



84.8%

# Possible legal statuses for same-sex couples (no federal recognition)

- Married
  - Live in state that permits marriage
  - Live in state that recognizes marriage from outside but does not permit marriage
- Civil Union
  - “Unioned” and live in state that recognizes union
  - Married outside of state and recognized as civil union
  - Domestic partnership outside of state and recognized as civil union
  - Civil union and live in state without formal recognition
- Registered Domestic Partnership (“equated” to marriage)
  - Partnered and live in state that recognizes partnership
  - Partnered/”Unioned” outside of state and live in state that recognizes partnership
  - Partnered and live in state without formal recognition
- Married outside of California after Prop 8 and live in California
  - By state law: not married, not in domestic partnership, rights/responsibilities of marriage
- Registered Domestic Partnership (limited)
- Reciprocal Beneficiary
- Designated Beneficiary

# Counting same-sex couples

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark ☒ ONE box.

☒ Male ☐ Female

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative             |

3. What is this person's sex? Mark ☒ ONE box.

☒ Male ☐ Female

Unmarried partner option  
has been included on  
Census since 1990

Census Bureau treatment of same-sex  
spouses varies over time:

1990: sex of partner edited to create a  
different-sex married couple

2000-2007: "husband/wife" edited to  
become "unmarried partner"

2008+: public release of some information  
on same-sex spouses, new data processing  
procedures, microdata still altered with  
2000-2007 procedure

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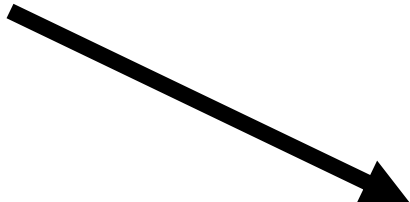
☐ Male ☒ Female

# Editing creates a false positive measurement problem

- Household roster—householder identifies another adult of the same sex as:

Unmarried Partner  Same-Sex Couple

Husband/Wife  Same-Sex Couple who use the terms husband or wife

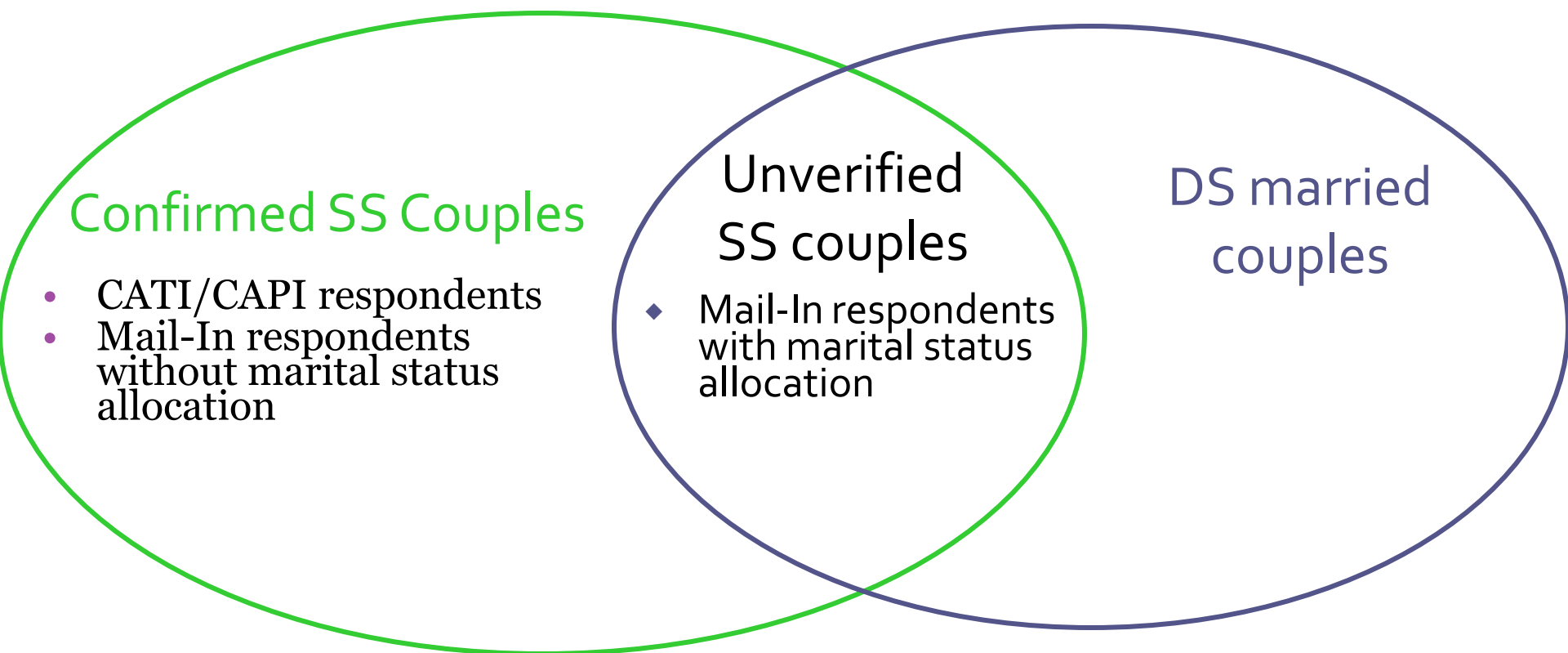
 Different-Sex Married Couple with a sex miscode

# New work examines American Community Survey

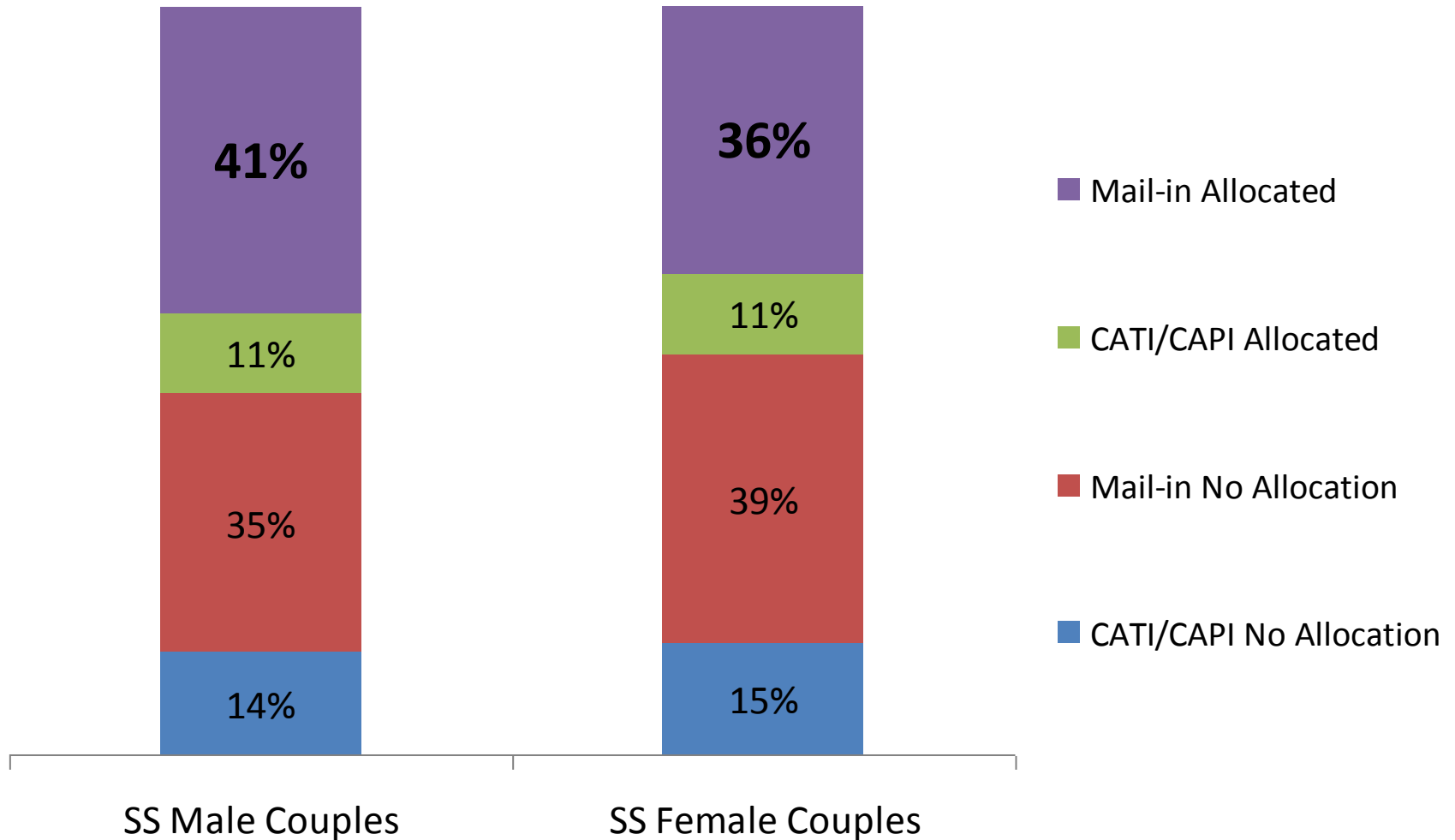
- Consider conceptual framework for assessing error
- Re-examine error using ACS
  - Estimate extent of error
    - Exploit CATI/CAPI feature that includes sex validation of spouses
- Offer guidance to researchers using public data samples
  - Different types of analyses require different methods to minimize effects of error



- ◆ Marital status allocation among SS couples provides evidence of original spousal designation
  - ◆ “Currently married” unmarried partners are hot-decked
- ◆ Sex of same-sex spouses verified among all CATI/CAPI respondents; no verification among mail-in respondents



# Error upper bound: ~40%

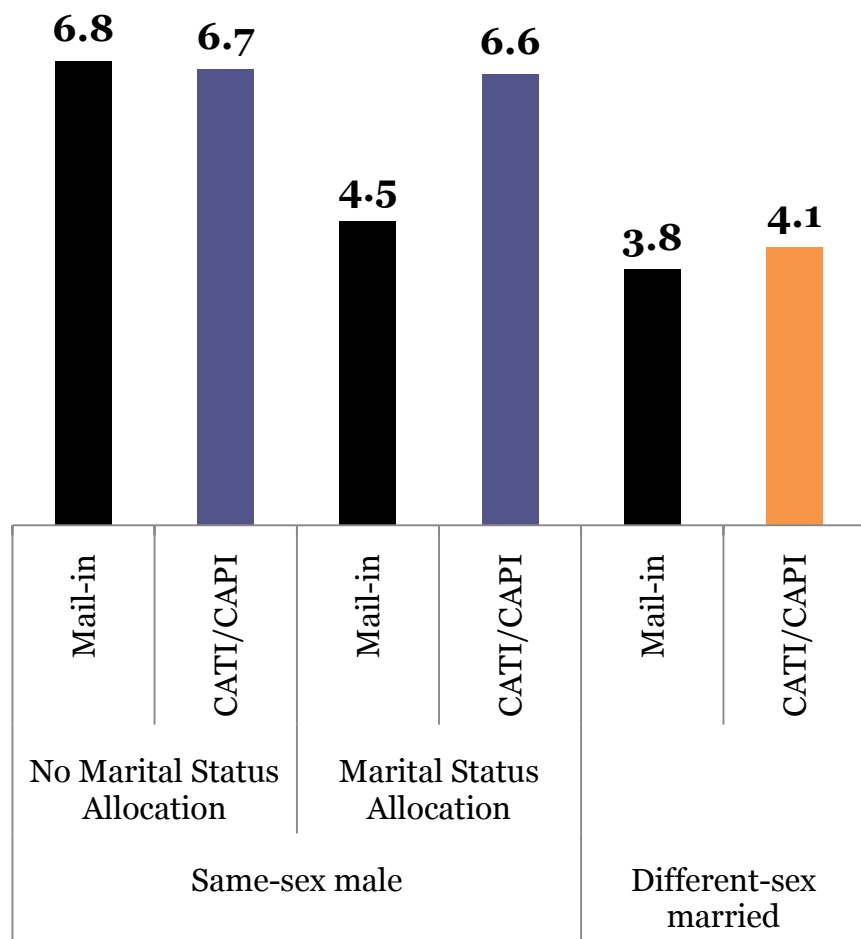


# Conceptual framework

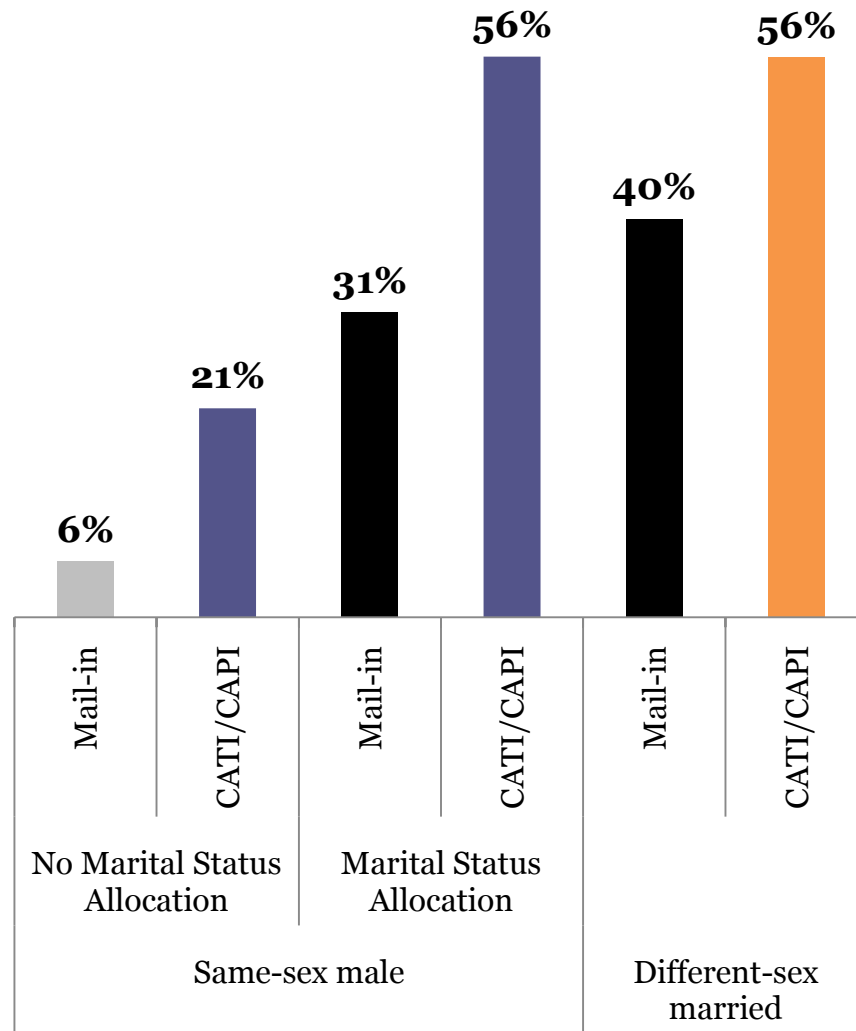
$$\bar{X}_{UnverifiedS} = e\bar{X}_{MarriedDS} + (1-e)\bar{X}_{ConfirmedS}$$

- $X$  requires two distinctive features
  1. Delineates SS and DS couples
  2. Does not differ between same-sex couples who use the term unmarried partner vs. husband/wife
- Example of problematic variable
  - DS couples more likely to have children than SS couples
  - But SS couples who use husband/wife more likely to have children than SS couples who use unmarried partner
  - Therefore child-rearing is not an appropriate variable to use because SS confirmed couples are not an adequate predictor for SS couples in the unverified sample

## Age difference between partners



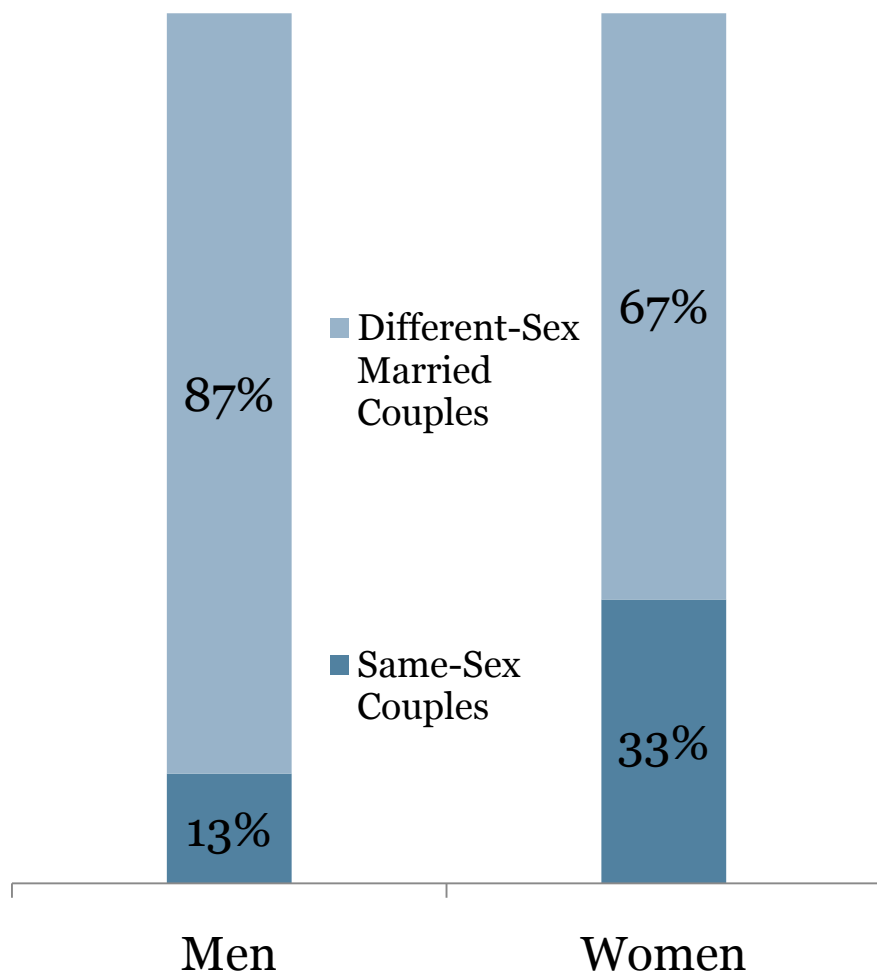
## Child rearing



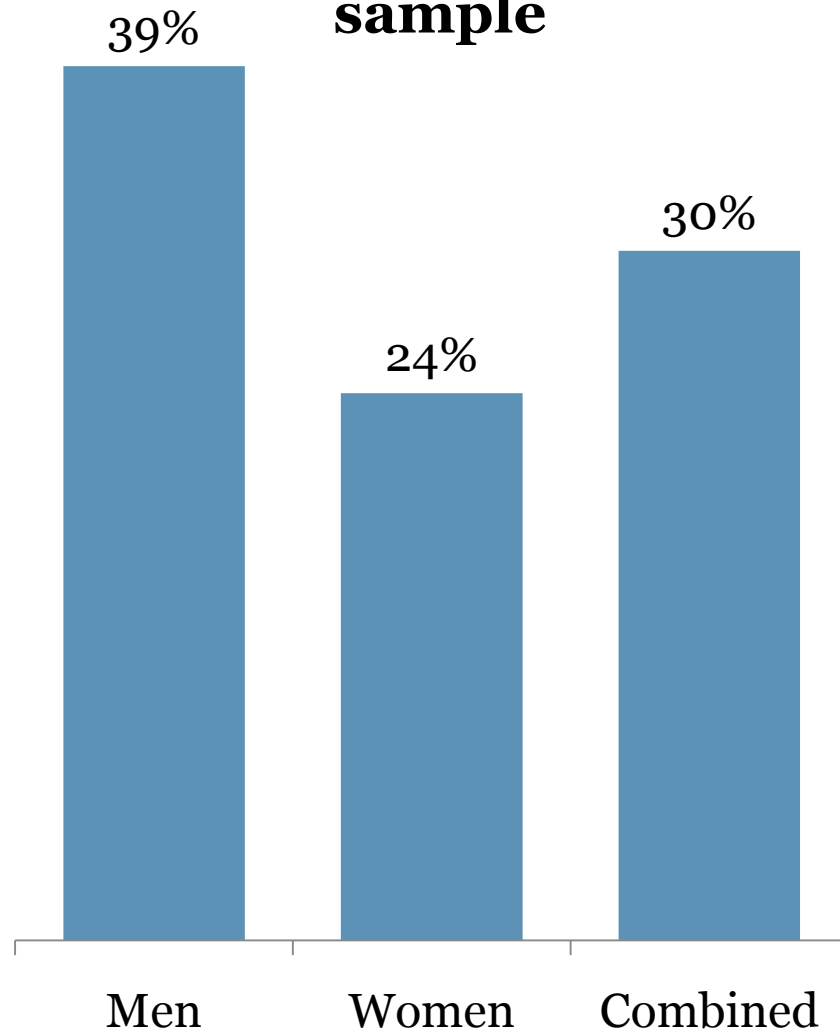
# Error estimation technique

- DiNardo, Fortin, Lemieux (1996) Semi-parametric reweighting procedure
  - Control for distributional differences in age and race/ethnicity among confirmed SS couples, DS married couples and unverified SS couples
  - Any remaining differences in  $X$  cannot be because of age or race/ethnicity differences between samples
  - Unlike probit analysis, DFL also allows for analysis of the distribution of  $X$

## Error within unverified sample

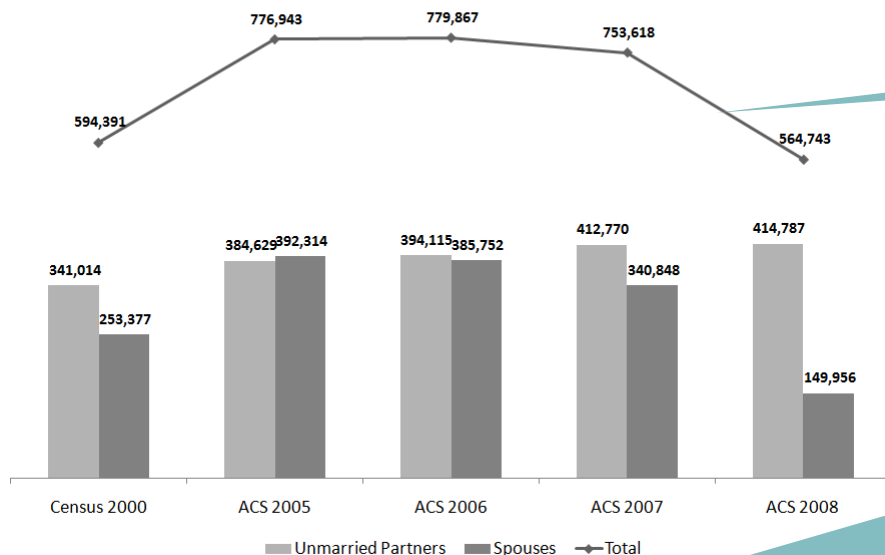


## Error within full sample



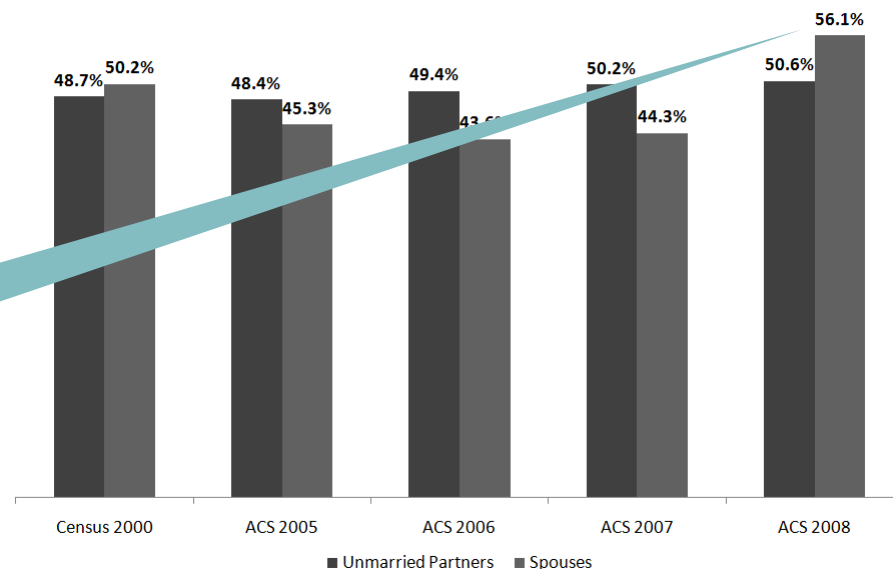
# Changes to ACS survey and processing procedures may improve sex miscoding

**Same-sex spouses and unmarried partners**  
Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2005-2008



25% drop in total same-sex couples:  
all due to decrease in same-sex spouses

**% Female among Same-sex Spouses**  
Census and American Community Survey



Substantially more women  
among same-sex spouses

# 2010 Same-sex couple Survey

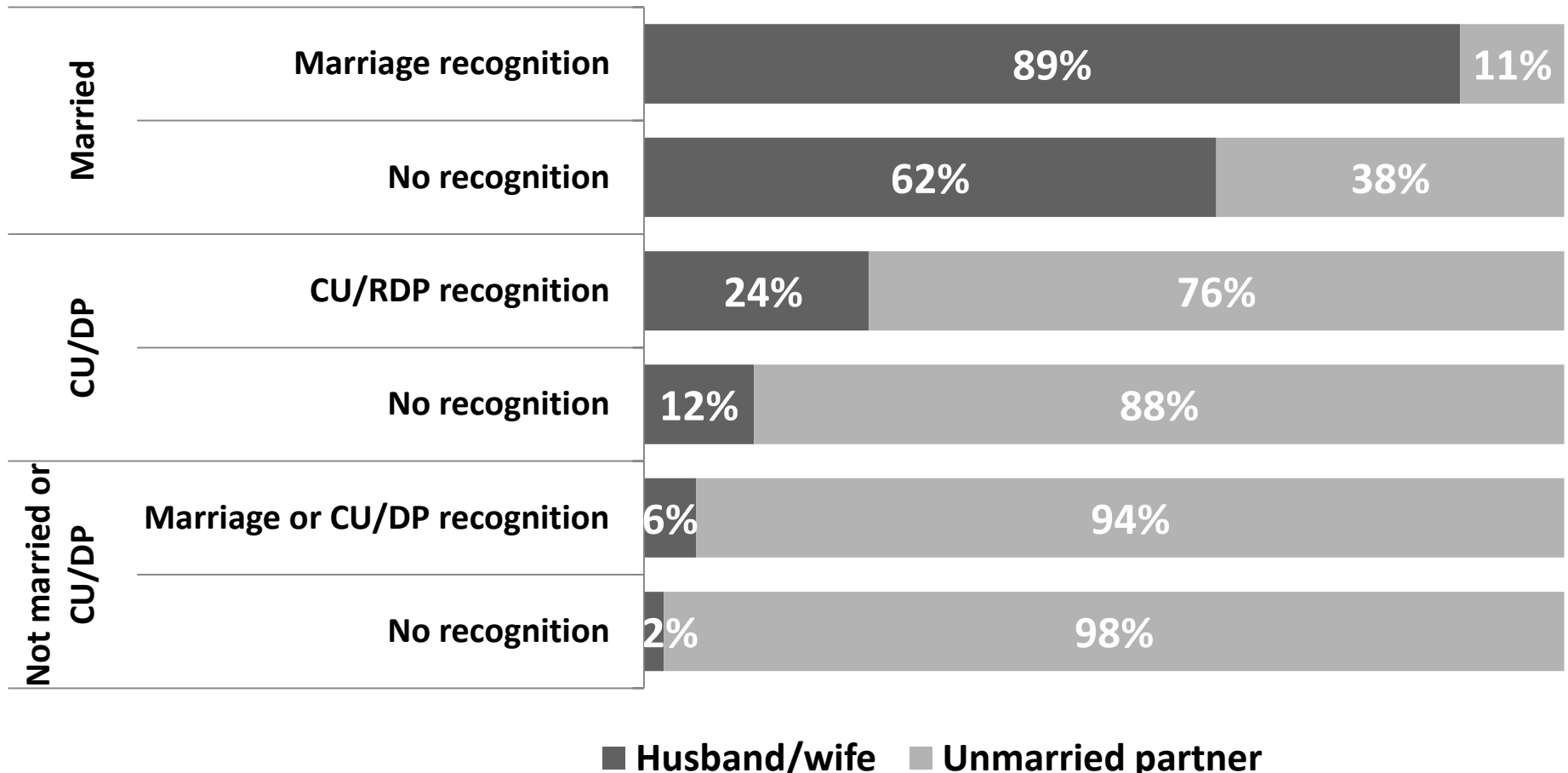
- Survey individuals from same-sex couples to assess
  - Census participation
  - Legal relationship status
  - Responses to household roster
  - Exposure to LGBT outreach
- Harris Interactive uses existing Harris Poll Online respondents
  - Access via email
  - Web-based survey
  - 602 individuals in same-sex couples
    - 197 non-white



# Measurement error insights

- Assume ACS UMP figure is correct
- Assume survey Spouse/UMP ratio is correct
- Back out
  - $SS\ couples = UMP_{ACS} / \%UMP_{Survey}$
  - Estimate “true” SS spouses and compare to ACS
- Using 2007 ACS figures
  - 33% of SS couples are DS miscodes
    - 38% among men/28% among women
- Using 2008 ACS figures
  - 10% of SS couples are DS miscodes
    - 9.7% among men/10.7% among women

# Complex legal situation affects Census/ACS responses



# Interpreting Census/ACS responses

**Table 2. Legal relationship status and state recognition by responses to Census relationship question.**

		Response to Census relationship question	
		Husband/wife (17% of total) n=85	Unmarried partner (83% of total) n=380
Legally married	Marriage recognized	49%	1%
	Marriage not recognized	22%	3%
CU/RDP	CU/RDP recognized	7%	5%
	CU/RDP not recognized	8%	12%
No legal relationship	Marriage recognized	3%	13%
	CU/RDP recognized	0%	2%
	No recognition	10%	64%
	Total	100%	100%

# Advice to researchers

- Trend analyses
  - 1990+: Exclude all couples with marital status allocation
    - Limits samples to “unmarried partner” couples who may be quite different from spousal SS couples
  - 2005+: Exclude all couples with marital status allocation except CATI/CAPI respondents
- Assessing traits of married same-sex couples
  - Do not interpret use of spouse as clear indication of legal marriage among SS couples
  - Use extreme caution as CATI/CAPI spousal couples are highly selected and biased

# By the numbers: 2008 GSS

**~ 9 million GLB or recent same-sex sexual activity (3.9%)**

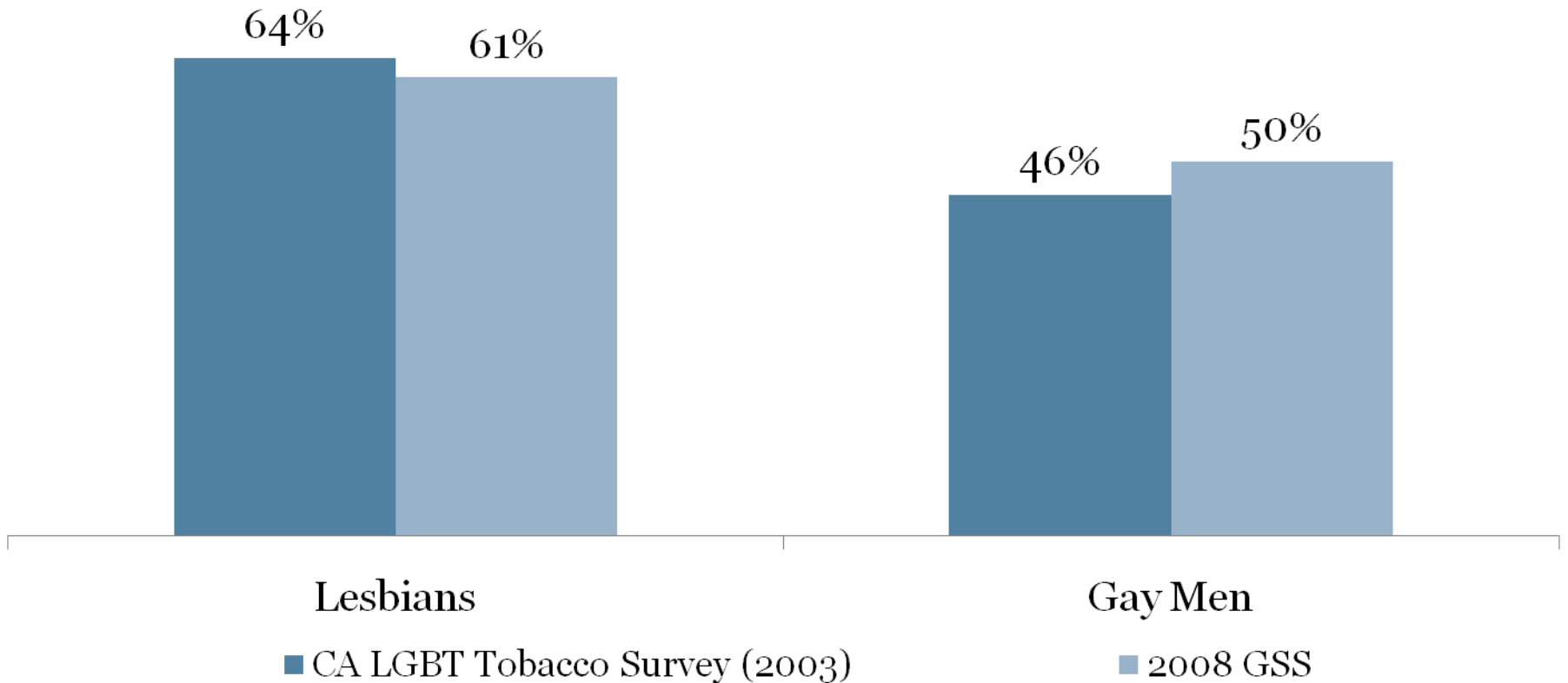


■ Gay/Lesbian (1.7%) ■ Bisexual (1.2%) ■ 5 yrs exclusive SS sex (0.6%) ■ 5 yrs SS & DS sex (0.4%)

# By the numbers: Same-sex couples

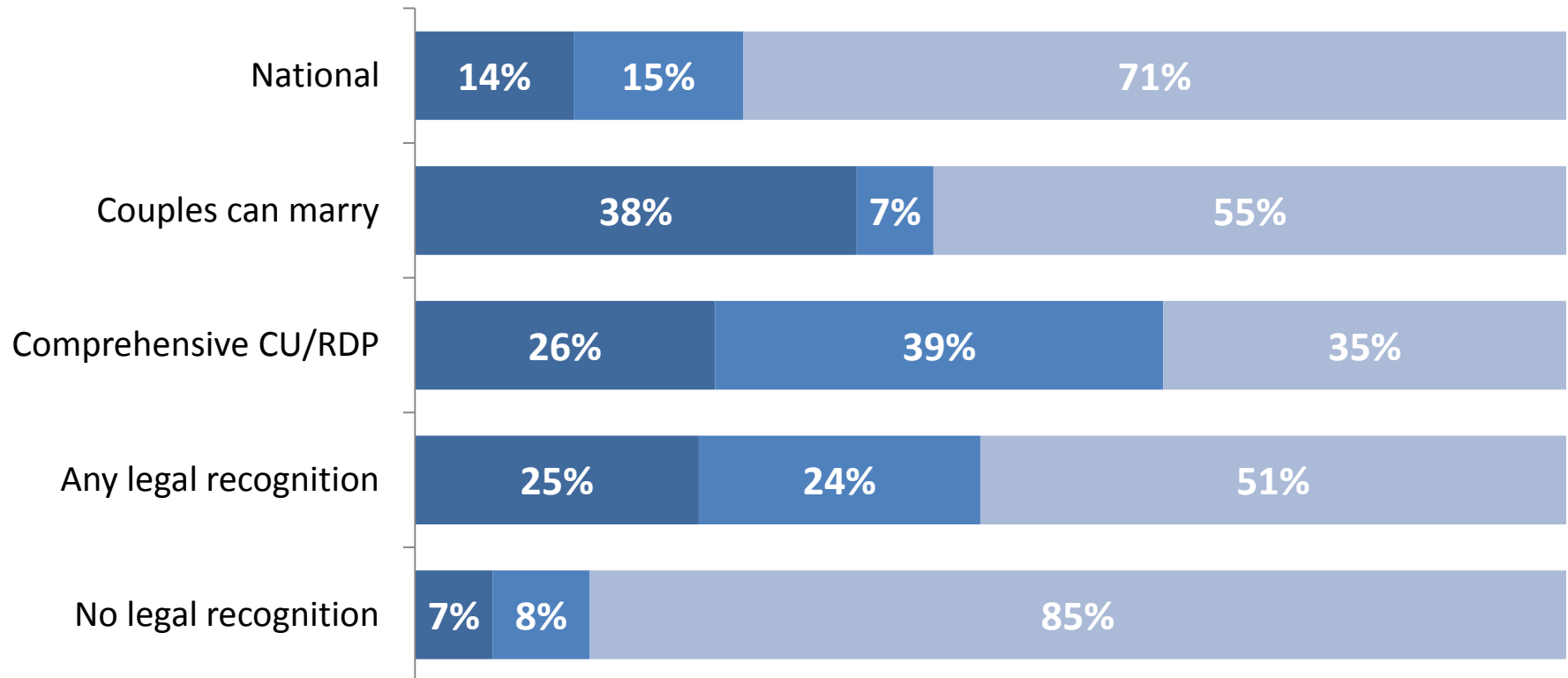
- 2008 ACS
  - 565,000 same-sex couples
    - 415,000 unmarried partners
    - 150,000 same-sex spouses (in all states)
- Relationship recognition in 2008 (SS couples)
  - Legal marriage (in US): ~35,000
  - Non-marital forms of legal recognition: ~80,000
- Relationship recognition in 2010 (SS couples)
  - Legal marriage (in US): ~40,000
  - Legal marriage (outside US): ~35,000
  - Non-marital forms of legal recognition: ~90,000

# Cohabitation common among lesbians and gay men



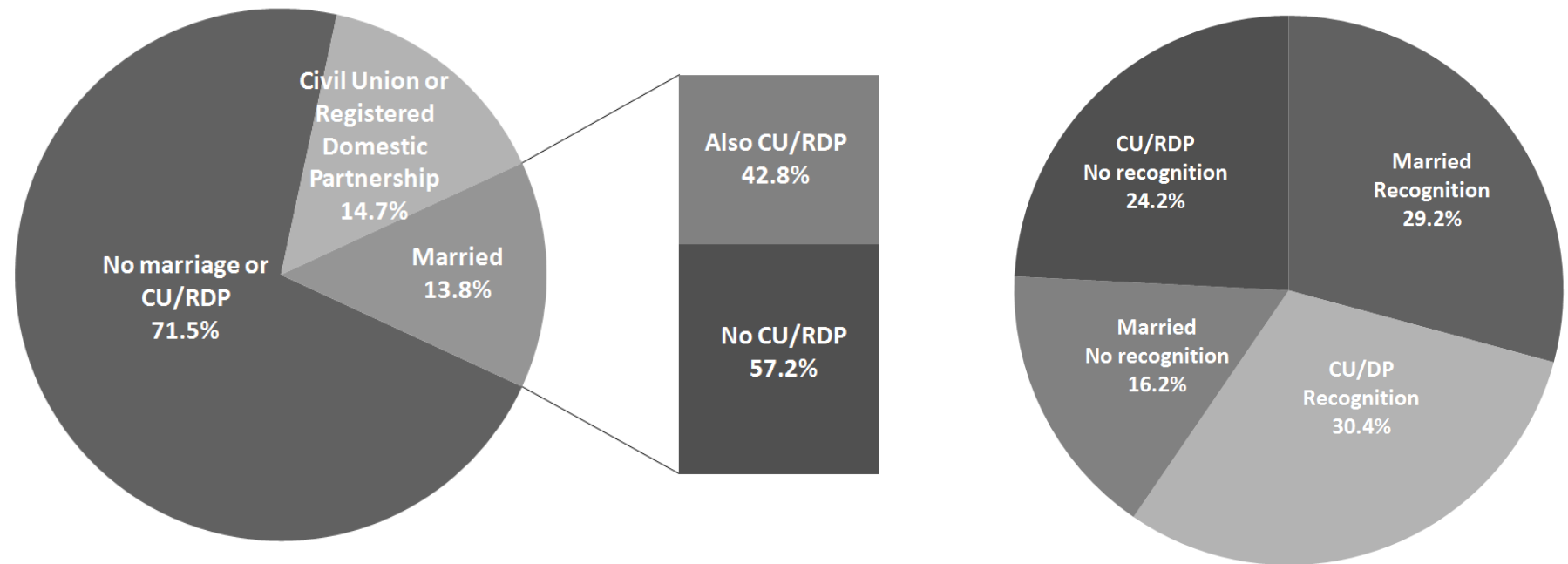
# Proportion SS couples in legal relationships varies by state recognition

■ Married ■ CU/RDP ■ No legal relationship





# Many married couples had CU/RDP; 40% or legal relationships not recognized

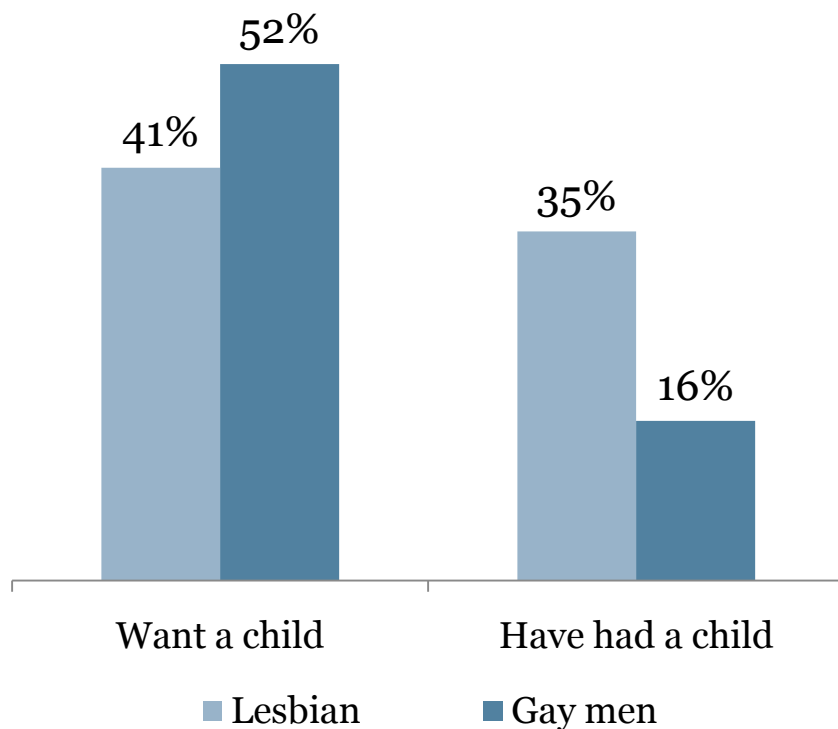


# Evidence of selection into partnership

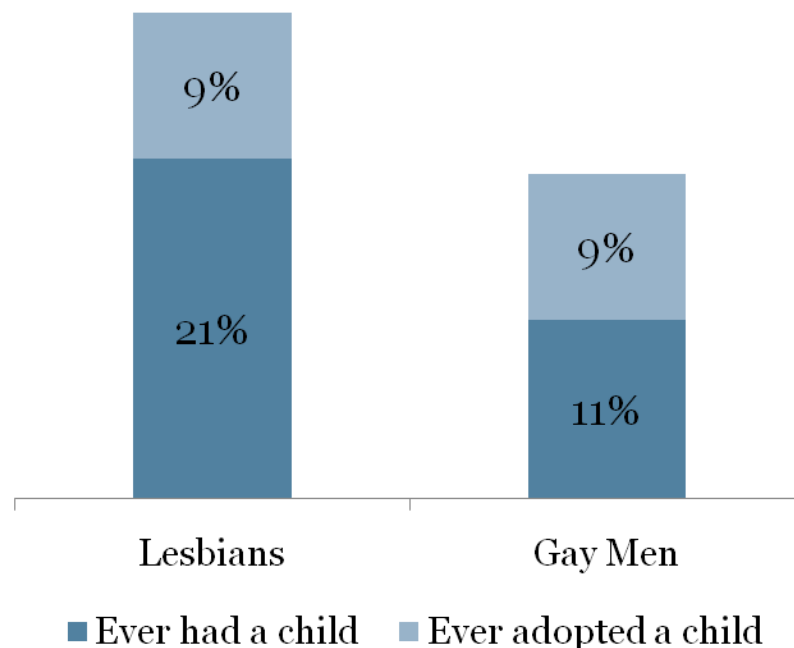
- Same-sex couples in registered partnership relative to unregistered cohabs
  - Older
  - Higher education
  - Longer duration relationships
  - More white
  - More likely to have been previously married
- Women only
  - More likely to be raising children
- Sex differences
  - Women more likely to partner/register
  - Men report longer duration relationships

# Many gay/lesbian people have had or want to have children

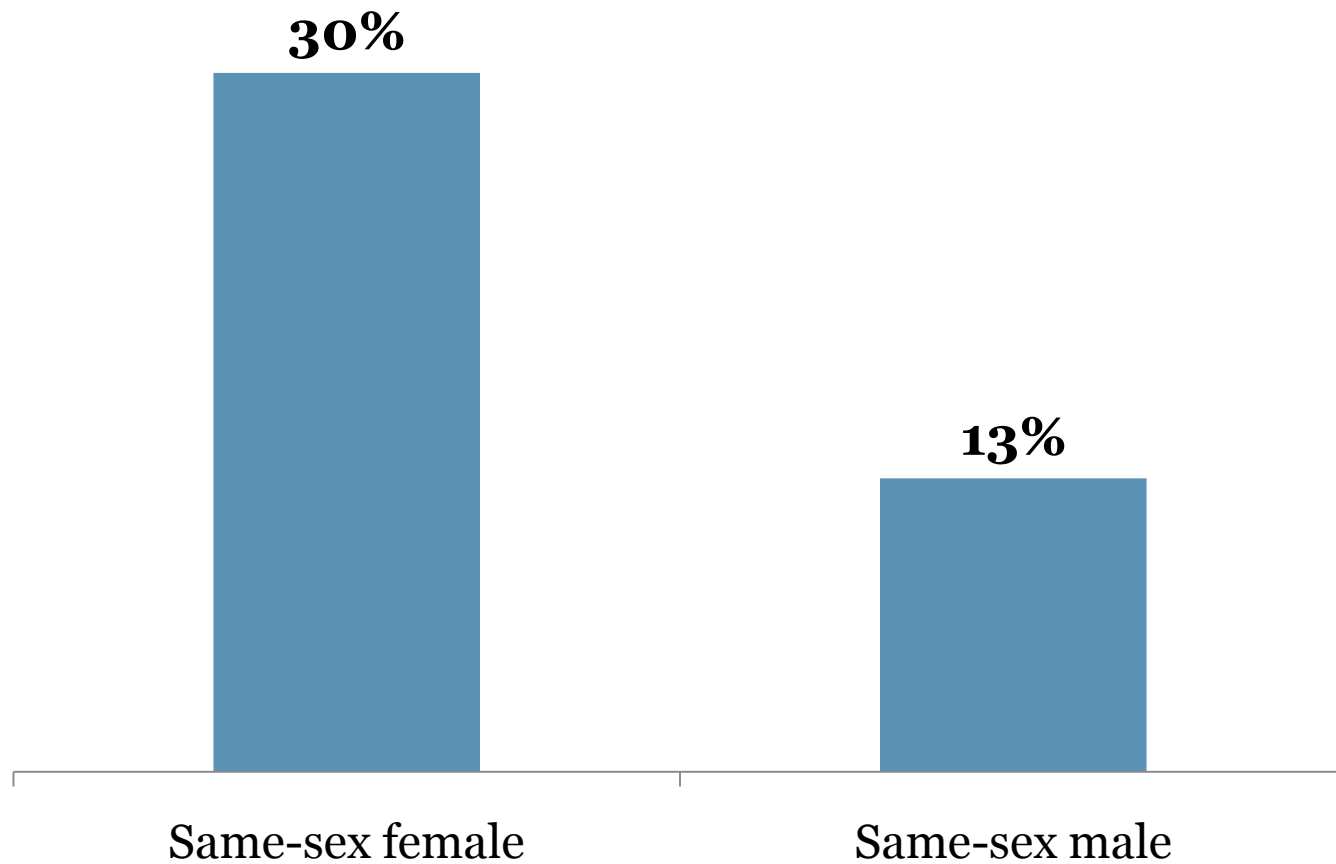
**Men and women, age 18-44  
NSFG, 2002**



**Men and women, age 18+  
GSS, 2008**



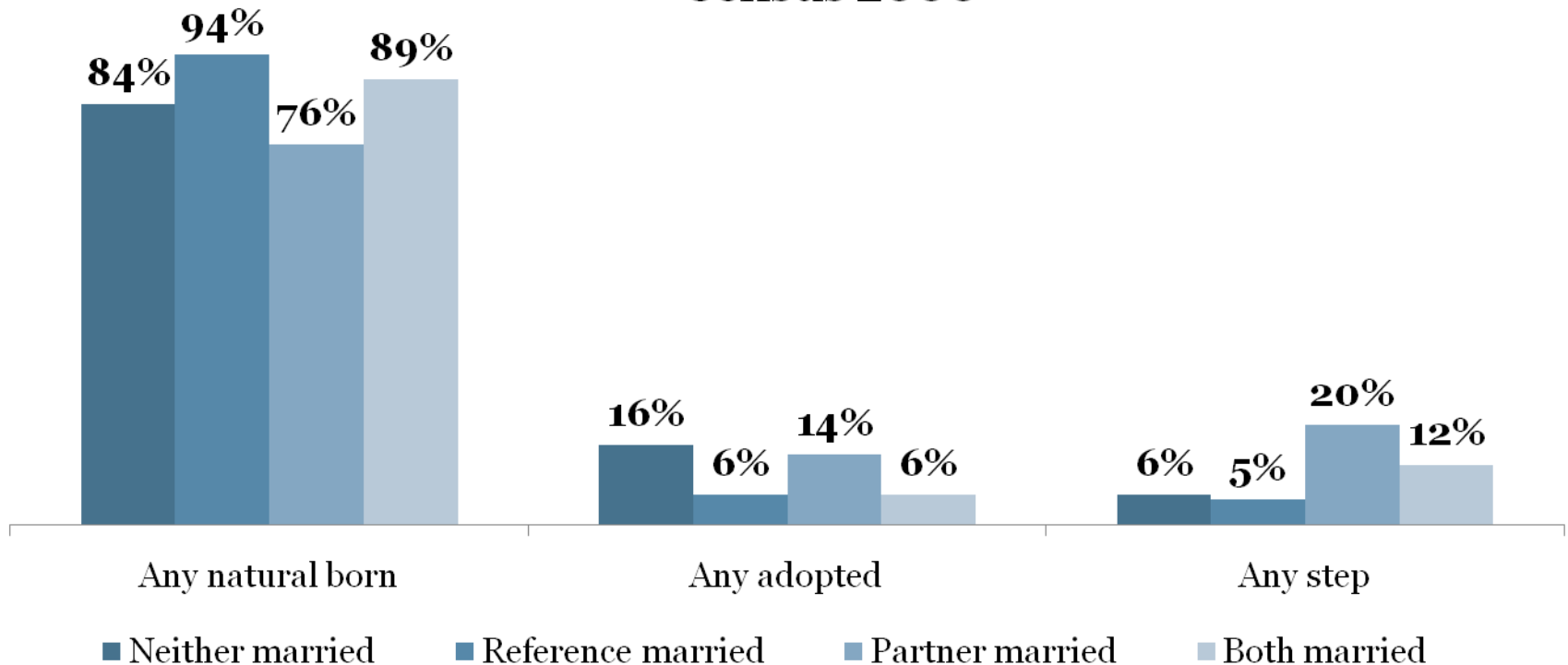
# Same-sex couples raising children



Source: Author calculations from American Community Survey PUMS (2008)

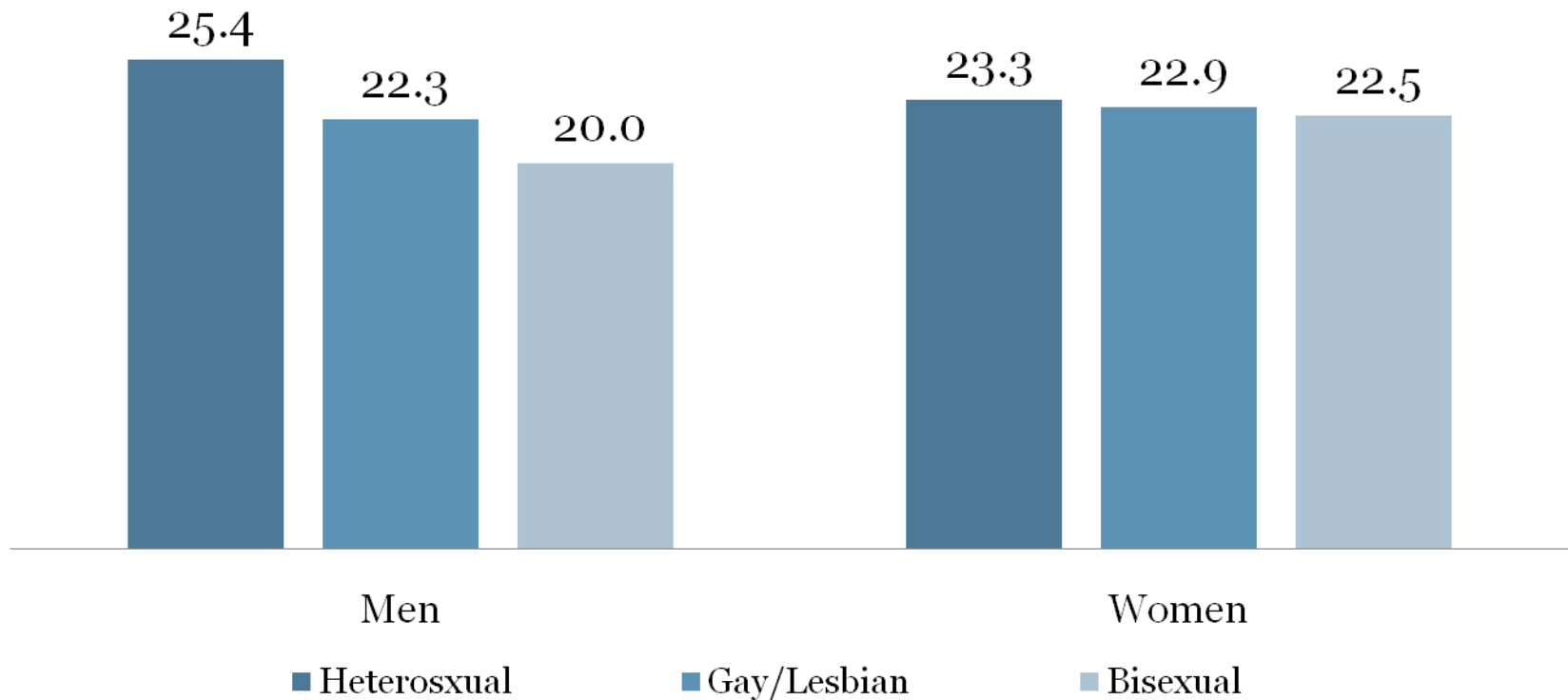
# Many children of SS couples are likely from prior relationships

**Nature of child rearing, by previous marital status  
Census 2000**



# GLB people have their first child earlier than heterosexuals

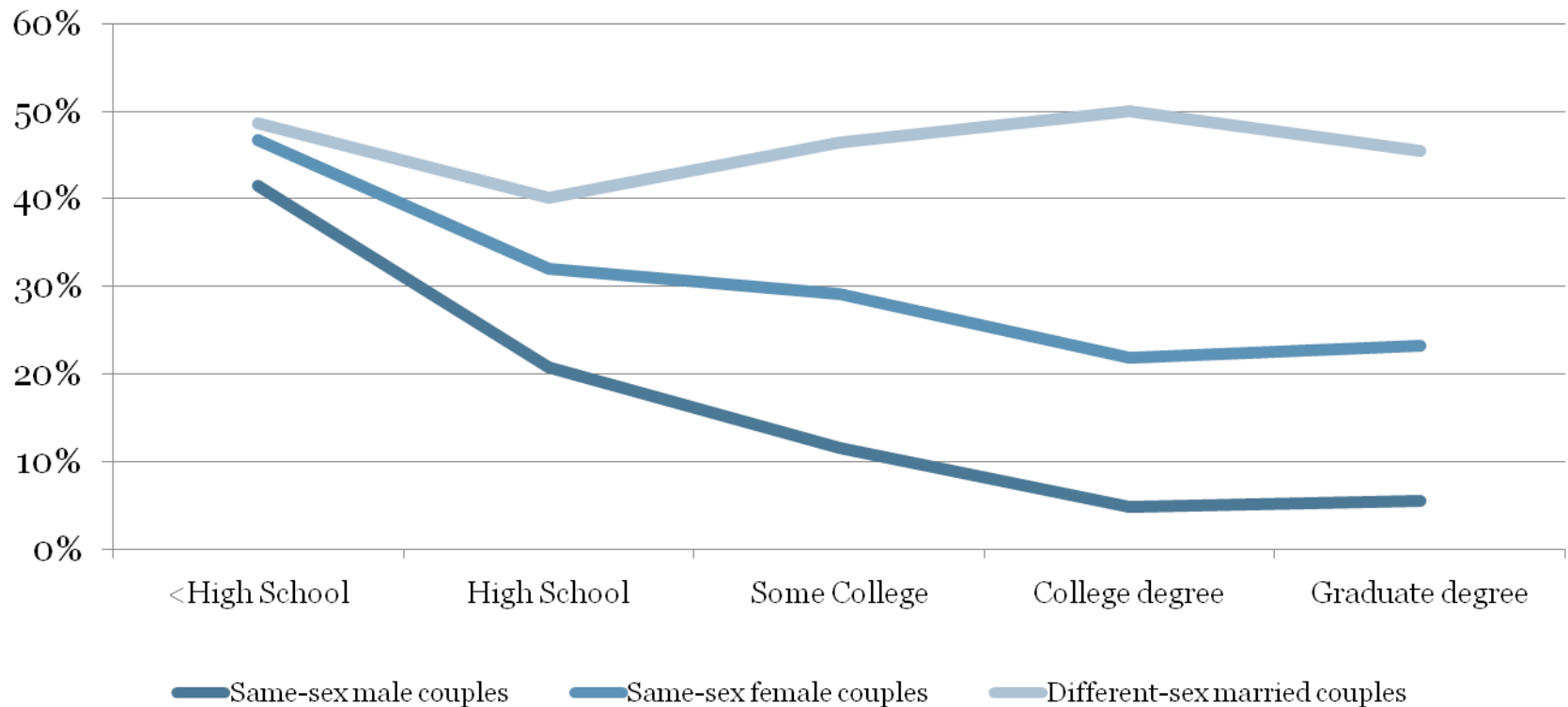
**Age when fathered/gave birth to first child**



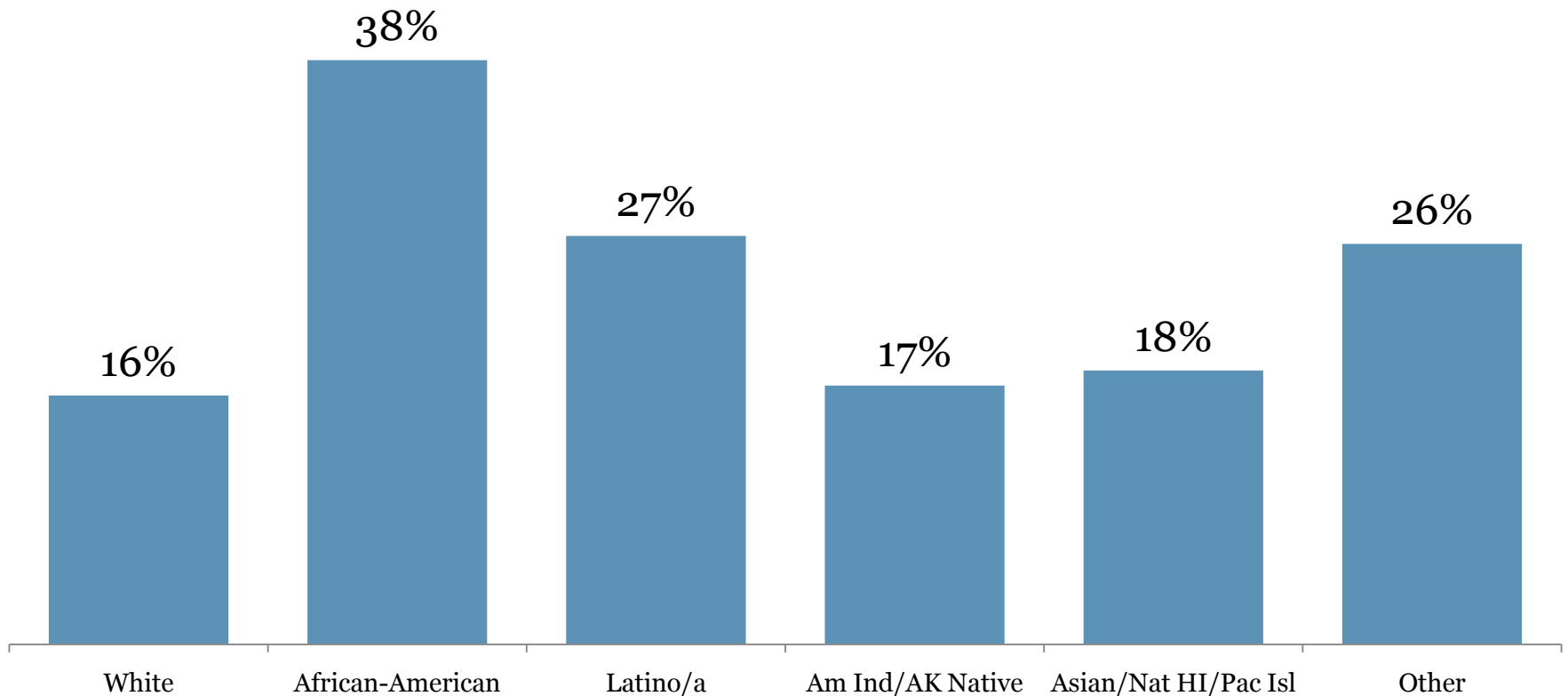
Source: Author calculations from General Social Survey, 2008

# Child-rearing inversely associated with education in same-sex couples

**% Raising children, by educational attainment**



# Child-rearing higher among racial/ethnic minorities

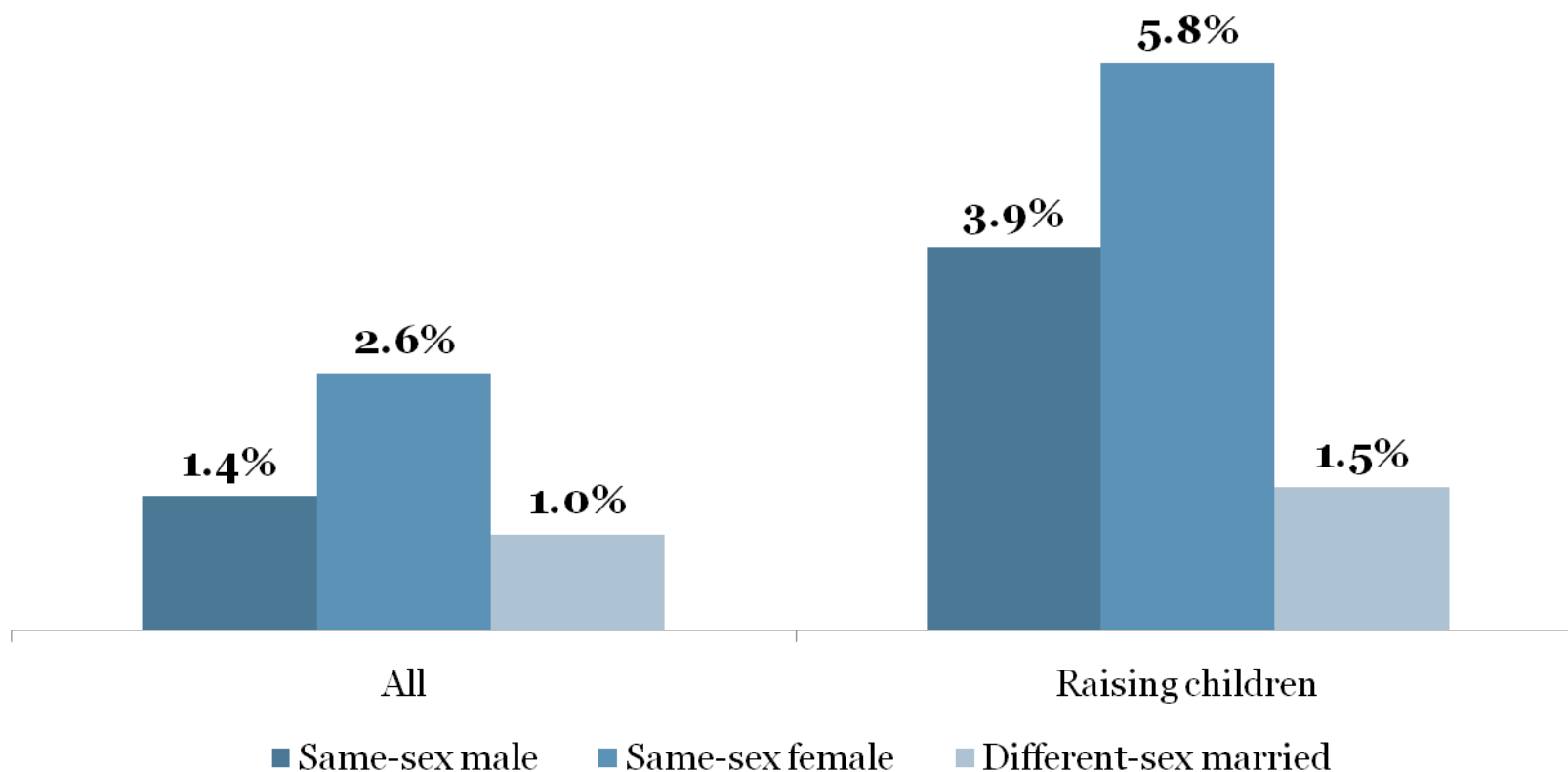


Source: Author calculations from American Community Survey, 2008



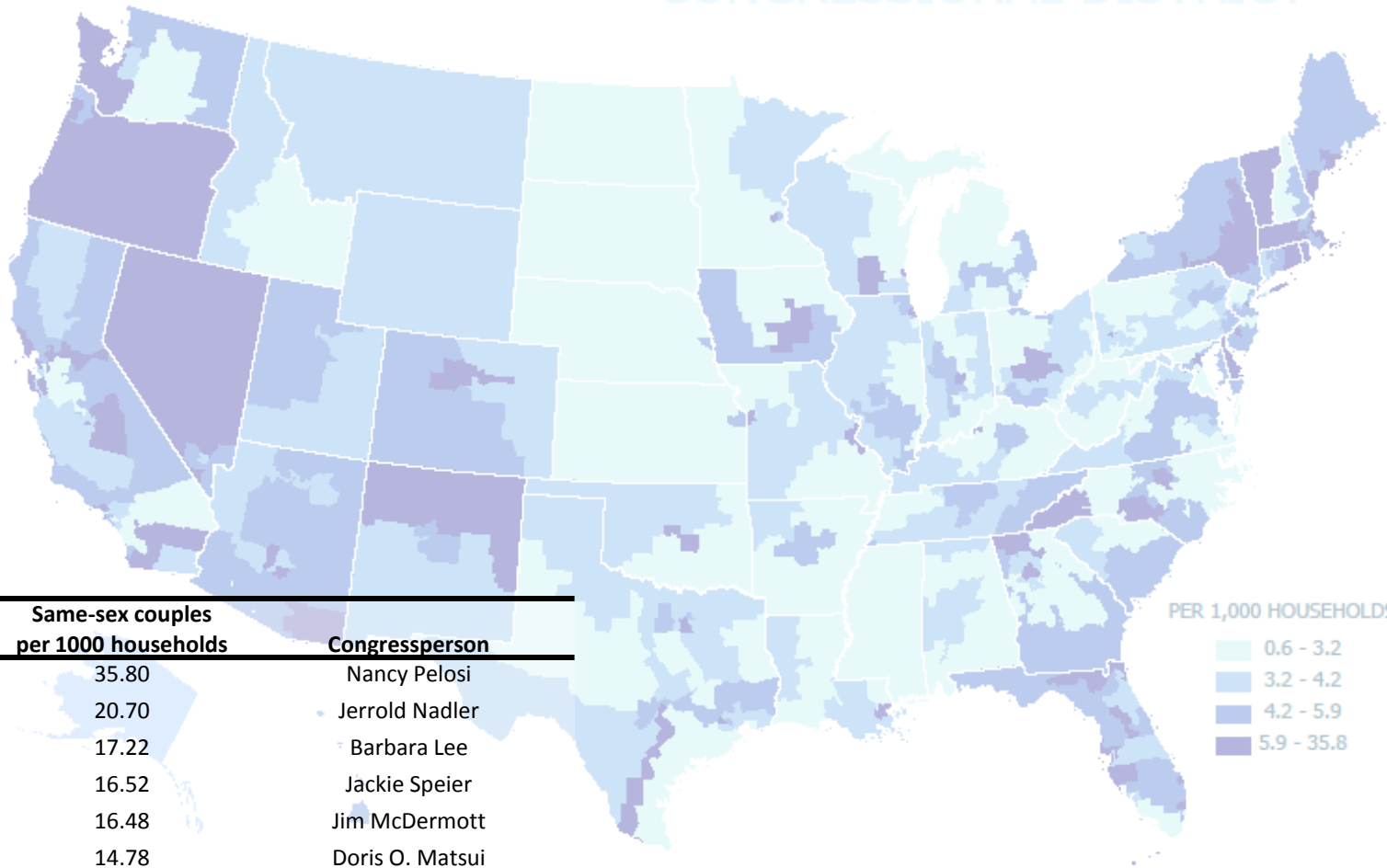
# Many same-sex couples are economically disadvantaged

## Receipt of public assistance

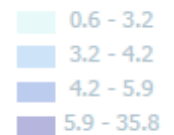


# SAME-SEX COUPLES 2008

BY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

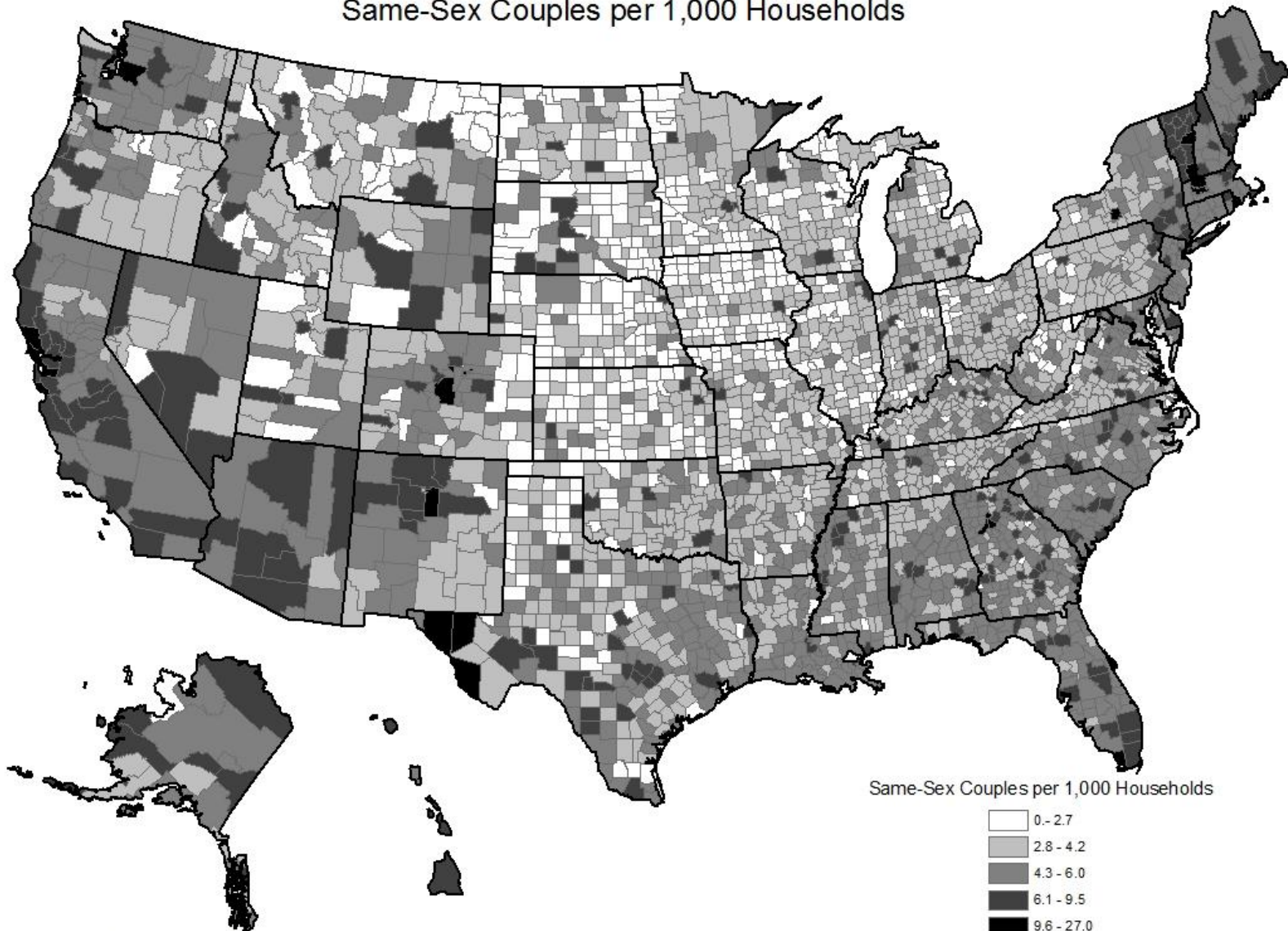


PER 1,000 HOUSEHOLDS



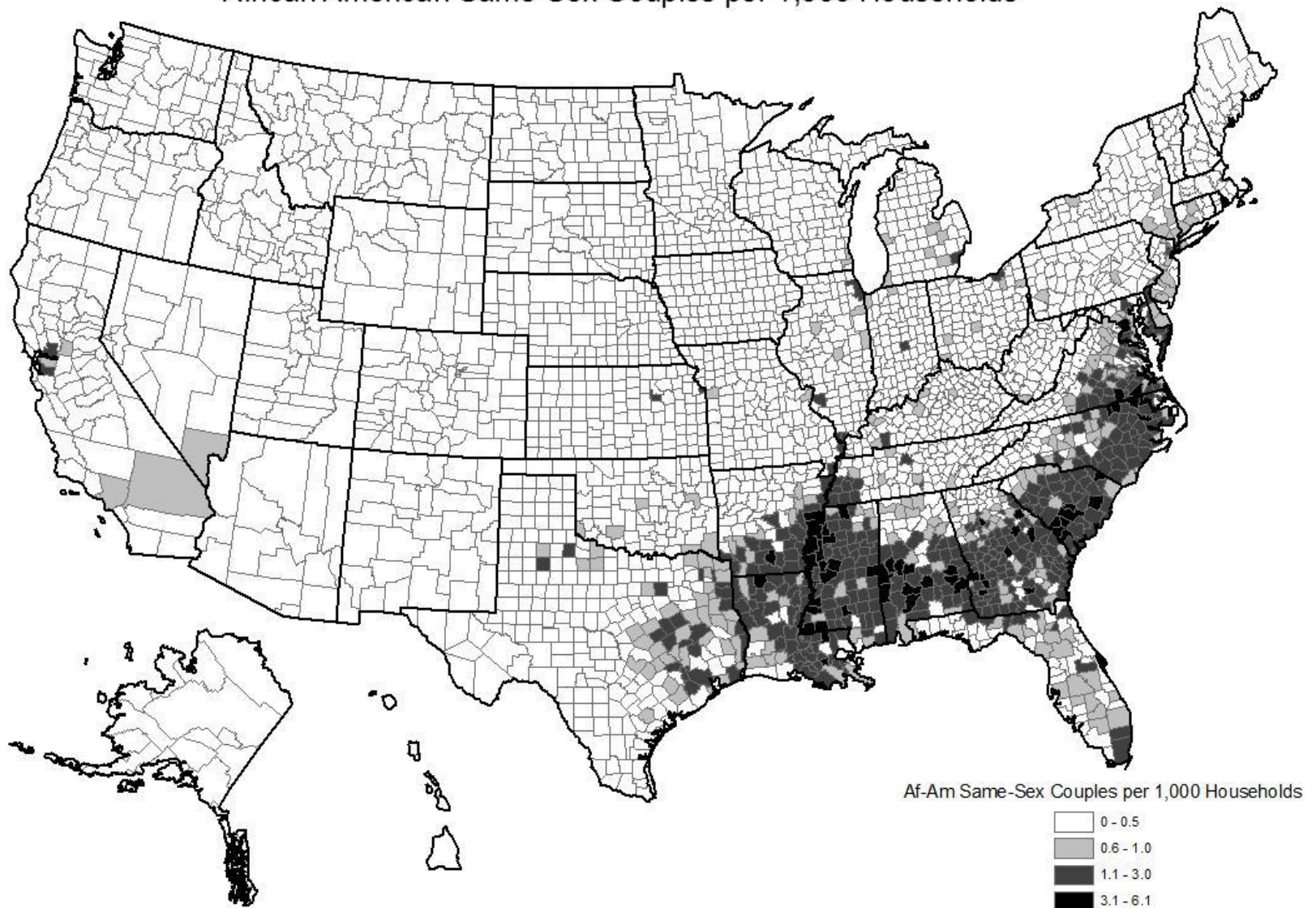
District (110 <sup>th</sup> Congress)	Same-sex couples per 1000 households	Congressperson
California-8	35.80	Nancy Pelosi
New York-8	20.70	Jerrold Nadler
California-9	17.22	Barbara Lee
California-12	16.52	Jackie Speier
Washington-7	16.48	Jim McDermott
California-5	14.78	Doris O. Matsui
Georgia-5	14.63	John Lewis
California-45	14.23	Mary Bono Mack
District of Columbia	14.12	Eleanor Holmes Norton
California-53	13.82	Susan A. Davis

## Same-Sex Couples per 1,000 Households



Source: Census 2000

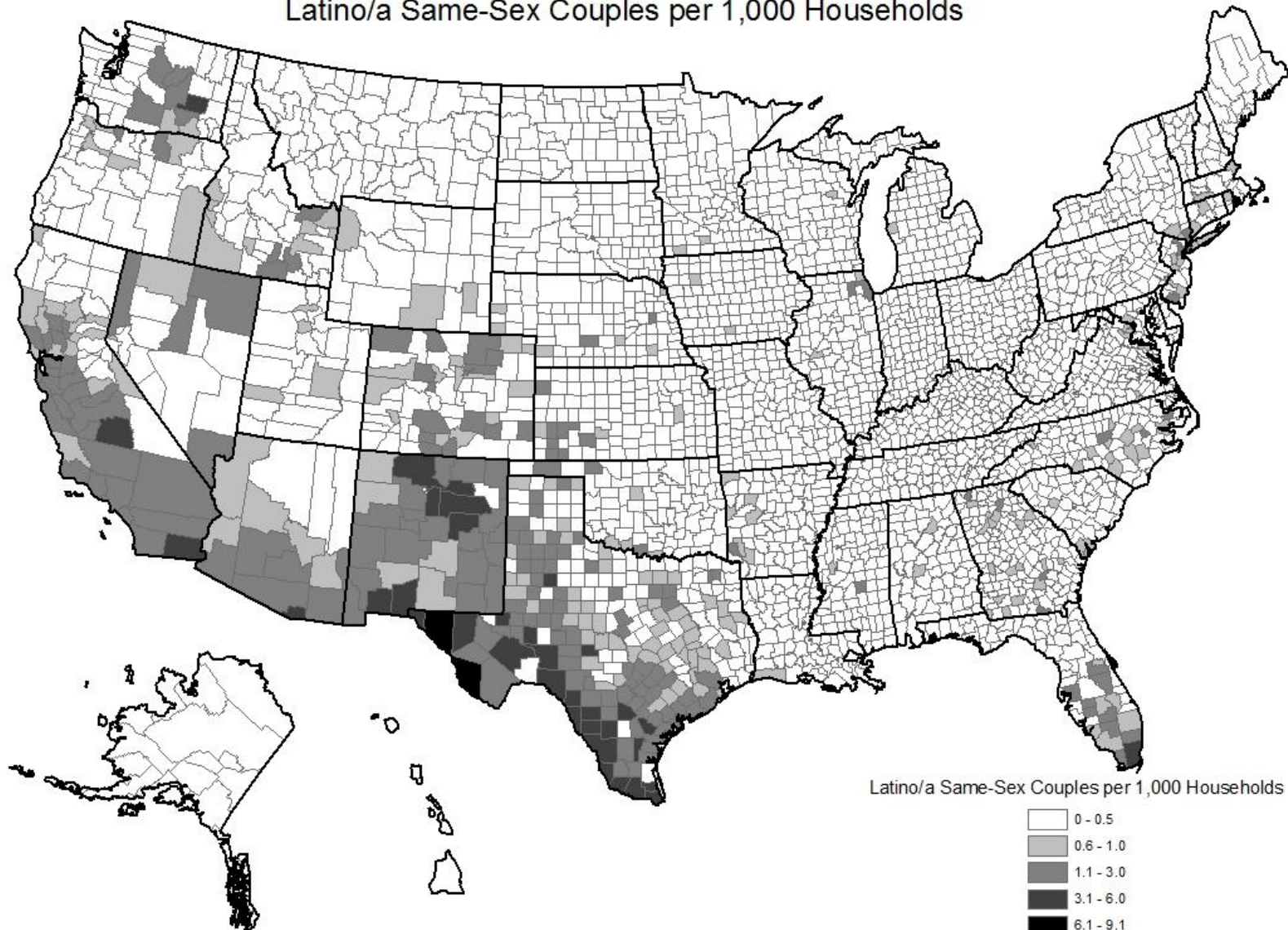
## African American Same-Sex Couples per 1,000 Households



Source: Census 2000



## Latino/a Same-Sex Couples per 1,000 Households



Source: Census 2000

# Probability samples are rare

- No government survey routinely asks sexual orientation/gender identity of a probability sample of adults
  - More common in health surveys
- Same-sex couples via household relationships
  - Census/ACS
    - Perhaps the most widely used data source to study LGBT demographics
  - CPS, SIPP
    - Small sample sizes limit analytical possibilities

# Why ask?

- Families

- LGBT people form committed relationships
- LGBT people are raising children and many more want to raise children
- Child-rearing highest among LGBT racial/ethnic minorities

- Health Disparities

- Mental and physical health differ by sexual orientation
- People in same-sex couples more likely to be uninsured

# Why ask? Policy issues

- Employment and earnings/discrimination
  - Gay men earn less than heterosexual men
  - Lesbians earn more than heterosexual women
- Youth and education
  - LGBT young people face pressure and prejudice in schools and from peers
  - Rates of many risk behaviors, such as suicide attempts, are more common among LGBT youth



# Why ask? Policy issues

- Business operations
  - Competitive compensation packages include domestic partner coverage
    - How many people will sign up?
    - How large will the tax impact be for employer and employees?
  - Inform diversity training and workplace climate policy
  - LGBT market assessments tend to rely on convenience samples
    - Overestimates of size and affluence of the LGBT market

# Why ask? Because we can

- Questions can be constructed with conceptual clarity regarding distinct dimensions of sexuality
  - Sexual identity
  - Sexual behavior
  - Desire or sexual attraction
- Good survey design can minimize biases resulting from geographic, cultural, and age differences
- Extensive knowledge of validity and reliability of sexual orientation questions
  - Comparable to other socio-demographic measures