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Author

Gates, Gary J.

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Same-sex and Different-sex Couples in the American Community Survey: 2005-2011



by Gary J. Gates

Executive Summary

This research brief summarizes the demographic characteristics of same-sex couples from 2005 through 2011 using the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and compares them to different-sex couples. The analyses highlight trends and changes in the demographic diversity of same-sex couples and assess the degree to which similar changes are occurring among different-sex couples.

Key findings include:

- The majority of the nearly 650,000 same-sex couples in the US are female (51%), a change from 2005 when the majority were male.
- As of 2011, about one in five same-sex couples are raising children under age 18. Among different-sex couples the proportion with children is 43.5%.
- About a quarter of individuals in same-sex couples are non-white and they are generally as racially and ethnically diverse as those in different-sex couples, though individuals in same-sex couples are less likely to be Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.
- Nearly one in ten men in same-sex couples are military veterans (9%) compared to about one in five men in different-sex couples (21%).
- Women in same-sex couples are four times more likely to be veterans than women in different-sex couples (5% v. 1%, respectively).
- About 13% of same-sex couples include a veteran and slightly less than 1% include a spouse or partner who has been on active duty in the last year.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are younger than those in different-sex couples by an average of approximately five years.
- The proportion of same-sex couples that include at least one senior aged 65 or older has risen from 7.5% in 2005 to nearly one in ten (9.7%) in 2011.
- Almost half of individuals in same-sex couples have a college degree (46%) compared to about a third of those in different-sex couples (32%).
- Individuals in same-sex couples have higher levels of labor force participation than those in different-sex couples. In 2011, 82% of individuals are in the labor force compared to 69% of those in different-sex couples.
- Among those in the labor force, more than 90% of individuals in both same-sex and different-sex couples are employed.
- For men in the labor force, the gap in personal income has narrowed between those in different-sex couples and those in same-sex couples. In 2005, men in different-sex couples had median annual personal income that was nearly \$4,000 higher than men in same-sex couples. By 2011, the gap had decreased to \$1,000.
- Among men who are not in the labor force, those in same-sex couples show a substantial economic disadvantage, with median annual personal income about \$9,000 below that of men in different-sex couples. However, the gap has narrowed from a \$14,000 difference in 2005.
- Among those in the labor force, women in same-sex couples report higher annual personal income than women in different-sex couples, though the gap has narrowed from about a \$10,000 difference in 2005 to an \$8,000 difference in 2011.
- About three-quarters of individuals in same-sex couples are employed in the private sector, 15% work in the public sector, and about one in ten are self-employed. These patterns are similar for those in different-sex couples.
- Same-sex couples are less likely than different-sex couples to have both spouses or partners covered by health insurance (76.5 v. 84%, respectively) and twice as likely to have only one spouse or partner insured (17% v. 8%, respectively).
- More than one in ten individuals in same-sex couples are disabled and approximately one in five same-sex couples include a disabled spouse or partner.

Introduction

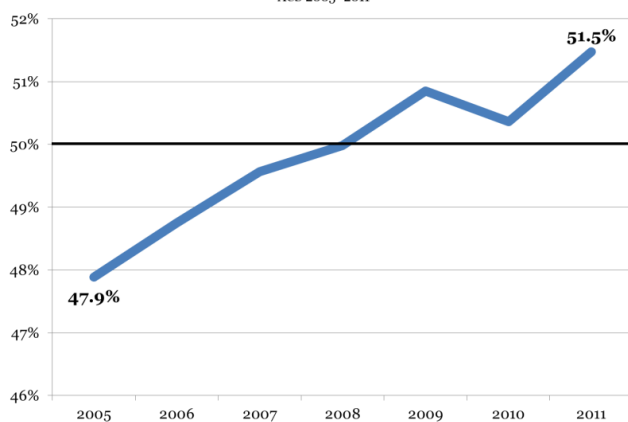
This research brief summarizes the demographic characteristics of same-sex couples from 2005 through 2011 using the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and compares them to different-sex couples. The analyses highlight trends and changes in the demographic diversity of same-sex couples and assess the degree to which similar changes are occurring among different-sex couples.

Analyses utilize the annual ACS Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS), which each represent approximately 1% of the US population. In each year, the data include more than 9,000 individuals in same-sex couples and approximately 1.3 million individuals in different-sex couples. In general, same-sex couples are compared to all different-sex couples, married and unmarried. However, Appendix tables include data separately describing married and unmarried different-sex couples. Unfortunately, the data do not allow for separate identification of spouses and unmarried partners among same-sex couples. Details of the data are described in the Methodology section.

Sex and Age

Tabulations from [Census 2010](#) suggest that there are nearly 650,000 same-sex couples in the US. Consistent with those tabulations, the 2011 ACS estimates show that 51% of same-sex couples are female. This constitutes a change over the last seven years. From 2005-2007, same-sex couples were majority male. They have been majority female since 2009 (see Figure 1).

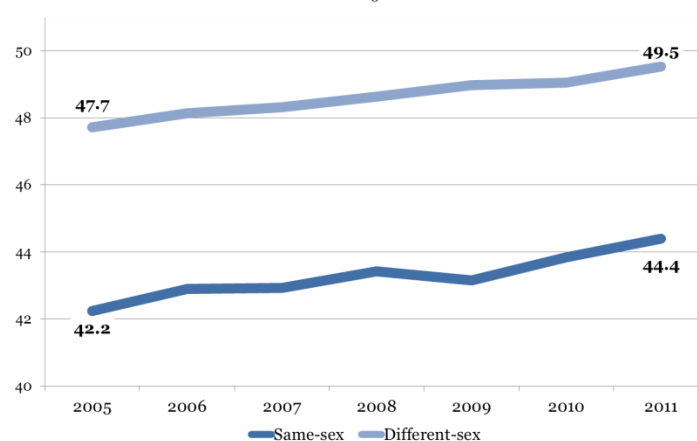
Figure 1. % Female among same-sex couples, by year
ACS 2005-2011



Individuals in same-sex couples are younger than those in their different-sex counterparts, though the average age of individuals in all couples has increased by about two years from

2005 to 2011. On average, individuals in same-sex couples are about 5 years younger than those in different-sex couples and the difference has decreased slightly over time (see Figure 2). In 2005, individuals in different-sex couples were, on average, 5.5 years older than those in different-sex couples (47.7 years old v. 42.2 years old, respectively). In 2011, the difference was 5.1 years (49.5 years old v. 44.4 years old).

Figure 2. Average age of individuals in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



As individuals in same-sex couples have gotten older, the percentage of seniors aged 65 and older in same-sex couples has grown from 4.9% in 2005 to 6.3% in 2011. The percentage of same-sex couples that include a senior has risen from 7.5% to 9.7% (see Appendix tables).

Race and Ethnicity

Approximately a quarter of individuals in both same-sex and different-sex couples are non-white. In 2005, the proportion of non-white individuals in couples was slightly higher among those in same-sex couples than those in different-sex couples (26.2% v. 25.0%, respectively; see Figure 3). In 2011, the non-white proportion was higher among individuals in different-sex couples (26.8% v. 23.9%, respectively).

The observed differences in the percentage of individuals who are non-white between those in same-sex and different-sex couples are largely due to a lower proportion of individuals in same-sex couples identifying as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. Since 2005, the proportion of African-American and Latino or Latina individuals has been very similar in both couple types. However, in most years, individuals in same-sex couples are only about half as likely as those in different-sex couples to identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific

Islander. For example, in 2011, the difference was 5.1% versus 2.6%, respectively (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. % Non-white among individuals in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011

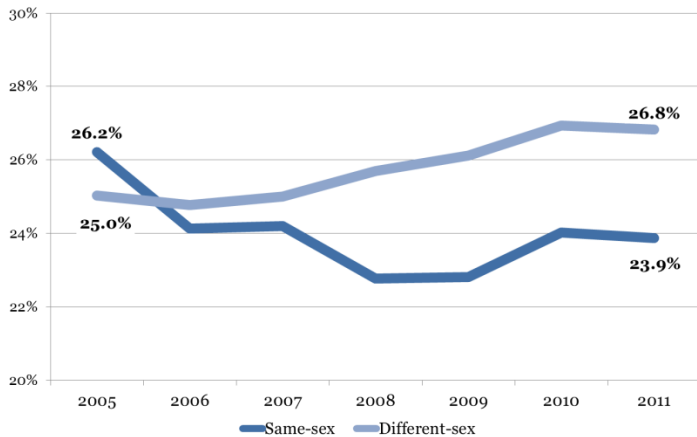
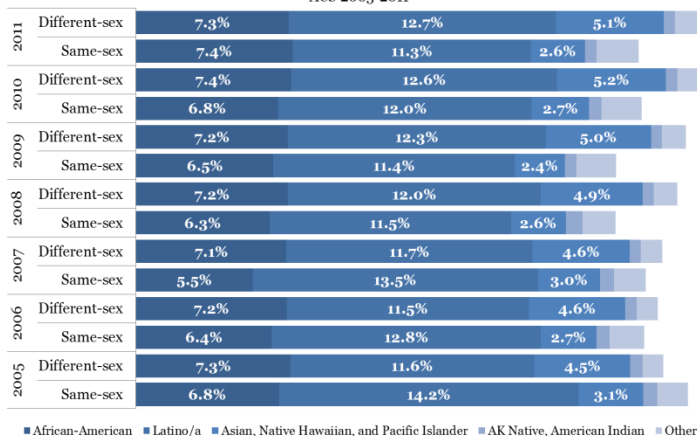


Figure 4. Race/ethnicity of non-white individuals in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



Education and Income

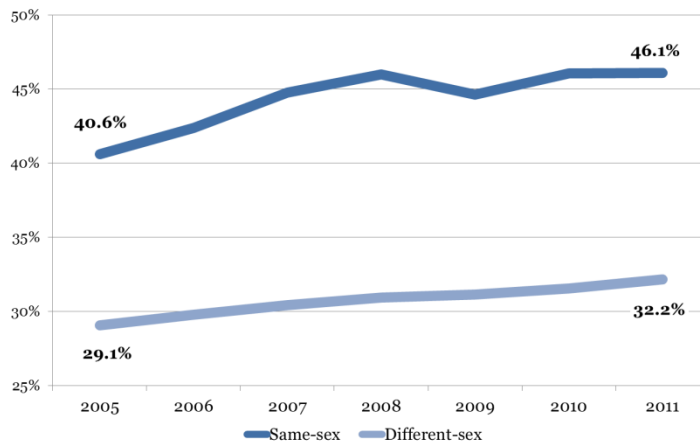
Individuals in same-sex couples have higher levels of education than those in different-sex couples. The percentage of those with a college degree has increased in both groups at similar rates. In 2011, more than 46% of those in same-sex couples report having a college degree compared to 32% of those in different-sex couples. Seven years prior, the figures were 41% versus 29%, respectively.

Individuals in same-sex couples have higher levels of labor force participation than those in different-sex couples, with little change in those levels between 2005 and 2011 (see Appendix tables). In 2011, 82% of individuals are in the

labor force compared to 69% of those in different-sex couples.

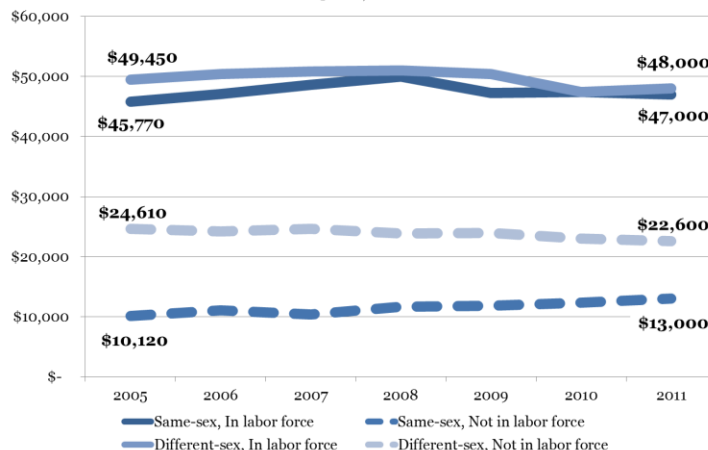
Among those in the labor force, there is very little difference between individuals in same-sex and different-sex couples with regard to levels of employment. For those in both couple types, more than 90% of those in the labor force are employed, a figure that has been true since 2005 (see Appendix tables).

Figure 5. % College degree among individuals in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



The gap in annual personal income between men in same-sex and different-sex couples has narrowed between 2005 and 2011. Among those in the labor force in 2005, men in different-sex couples report median annual personal income that exceeds that of men in same-sex couples by nearly \$4,000 (\$49,450 v. \$45,770, respectively; see Figure 6). In 2011, the gap narrowed to just \$1,000 (\$48,000 v. \$47,000, respectively).

Figure 6. Median personal income among men in couples, by labor force status, year, and couple type
ACS 2005-2011, in 2011 dollars



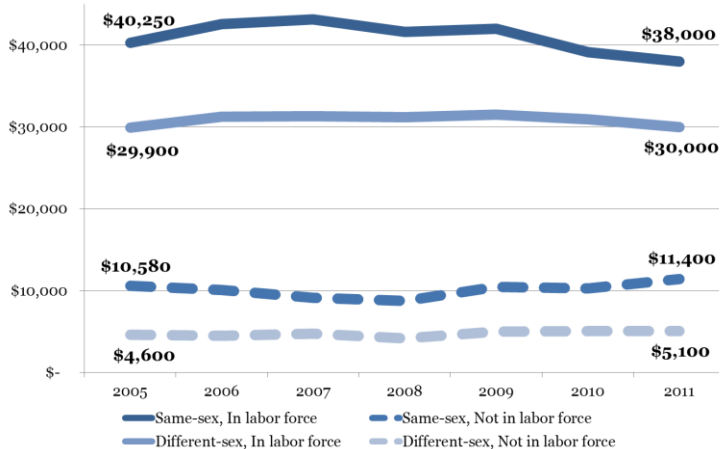
Among those not in the labor force, men in different-sex couples report substantially higher annual incomes than those in same-sex couples, but again, the gap has narrowed from more than \$14,000 in 2005 to approximately \$10,000 in 2011.

Given the relatively high levels of education among individuals in same-sex couples, the similarities in annual personal income among men in the labor force are somewhat anomalous and may offer evidence of disadvantage in the workforce for men in same-sex couples. With higher levels of education, it would be expected that they would have higher incomes compared to men in different-sex couples. The figures for those not in the labor force demonstrate clear disadvantage for men in same-sex couples.

Consistent with their education levels, women in same-sex couples generally report higher personal incomes than their different-sex counterparts, though the gap between the two has narrowed somewhat between 2005 and 2011.

Among women in the labor force, those in same-sex couples report median personal incomes of more than \$40,000 in 2005 compared to nearly \$30,000 among women in different-sex couples. This more than \$10,000 gap has declined to \$8,000 in 2011, when women in same-sex couples report median income of \$38,000 compared to \$30,000 for women in different-sex couples (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Median personal income among women in couples, by labor force status, year, and couple type
ACS 2005-2011, in 2011 dollars

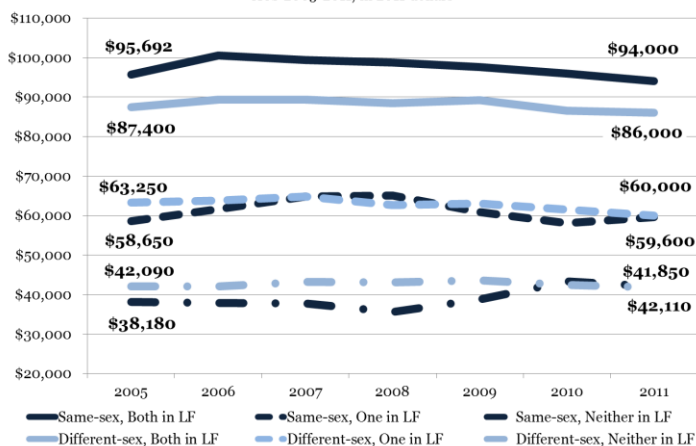


For women who are not in the labor force, there has been relatively little change from 2005 to 2011. In both years, women in same-sex couples report annual median income that is approximately \$6,000 higher than women in different-sex couples.

Individuals in same-sex and different-sex couples work in similar sectors of the economy. Approximately three-quarters of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, about 15% work in the public sector, and more than one in ten are self-employed. Individuals in different-sex couples show very similar patterns (see Appendix tables).

Median annual household income varies by labor force participation of spouses and partners in couples. Among couples where both individuals are in the labor force, same-sex couples report higher household incomes than their different-sex counterparts, with little change in the gap between 2005 and 2011 (see Figure 8). Among couples with one or no spouses or partners in the labor force, median household incomes are nearly identical for same-sex and different-sex couples.

Figure 8. Median household income among couples, by labor force status, year, and couple type
ACS 2005-2011, in 2011 dollars



Perhaps as a result of the recession, couples with both spouses or partners in the labor force report lower annual household incomes in 2011 than in 2005. For same-sex couples, median household income declined from nearly \$95,700 to \$94,000. Different-sex couples report a decline from \$87,400 to \$86,000.

Among couples with one spouse or partner in the labor force, same-sex couple median

household income declined from \$63,250 in 2005 to \$60,000 in 2011. Comparable different-sex couples report a modest increase from \$58,650 to \$59,600.

Same-sex couples with neither spouse or partner in the labor force report virtually no change in median household income, \$42,090 to \$41,850. Comparable different-sex couples report a modest increase from \$38,180 to \$42,110.

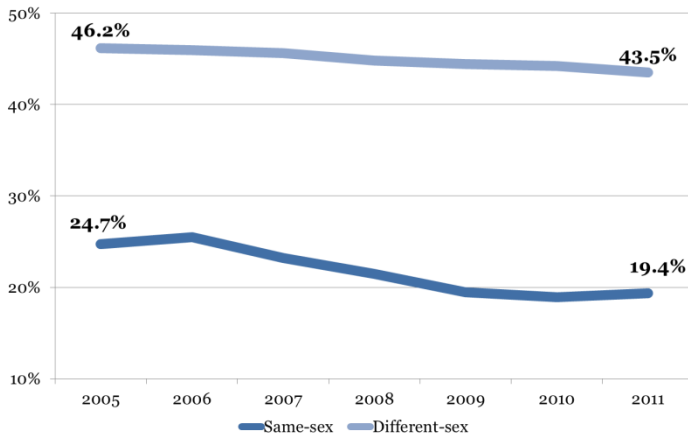
Child rearing

The percentage of same-sex couples raising children under age 18 declined from 2005 to 2011 but increased slightly between 2010 and 2011. The percentage of different-sex couples raising children also declined in that period.

The percentage of same-sex couples raising children declined from nearly one in four in 2005 (24.7%) to about one in five (19.4%) in 2011 (see Figure 9). The figure declined in each year since 2006 but increased very slightly from 18.9% to 19.4% between 2010 and 2011 (see Appendix tables).

The proportion of different-sex couples raising children declined from 46.2% in 2005 to 43.5% in 2011.

Figure 9. % Couples children under age 18 in the home, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



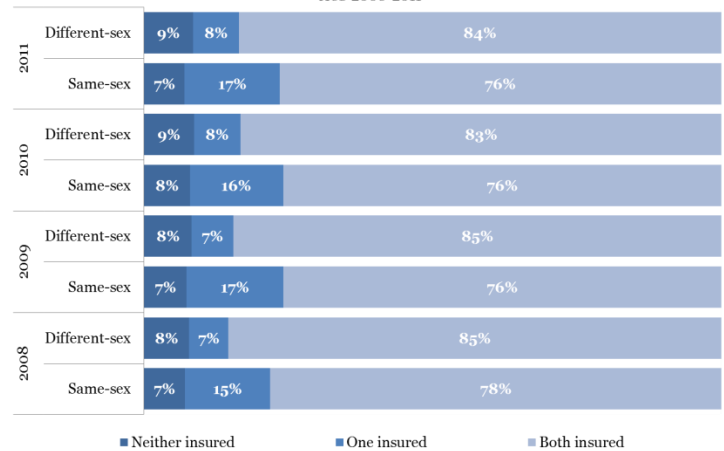
Health insurance and disability

Data on health insurance coverage are only available beginning in 2008. They show that same-sex couples are about as likely as different-sex couples to have neither spouse or partner covered by health insurance. However, different-sex couples are more likely to have both partners or spouses covered (see Figure 10).

In every year since 2008, same-sex couples are twice as likely as their different-sex counterparts to have only one spouse or partner insured. For example, this applied to 17% of same-sex couples, compared to 8% of different-sex couples, in 2011.

In that same year, 84% of different-sex couples report having health insurance for both spouses or partners, compared to 76% of same-sex couples.

Figure 10. Health insurance coverage among individuals in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2008-2011



Approximately one in ten individuals in same-sex and different-sex couples are disabled. Nearly one in five couples (both same-sex and different-sex) include at least one partner who reports having a disability.

Military service

Men in different-sex couples are more than twice as likely as men in same-sex couples to report having served in the military, though the gap between the two groups has declined between 2005 and 2011.

In 2005, 10.5% of men in same-sex couples reported being a veteran compared to nearly 25% of men in different-sex couples, a gap of nearly 15% (see Figure 11). By 2011, the gap had declined modestly with veterans comprising 9% of men in same-sex couples and 21% of men in different-sex couples.

Women in same-sex couples are substantially more likely than women in different-sex couples to report having served in the military. The proportion of female veterans has declined more

among same-sex couples than among different-sex couples.

In 2005, nearly 7% of women in same-sex couples were veterans compared to 5% in 2011 (see Figure 12). The same figures for women in different-sex couples have not changed much, moving from 1.4% in 2005 to 1.3% in 2011.

Figure 11. % Veterans among men in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011

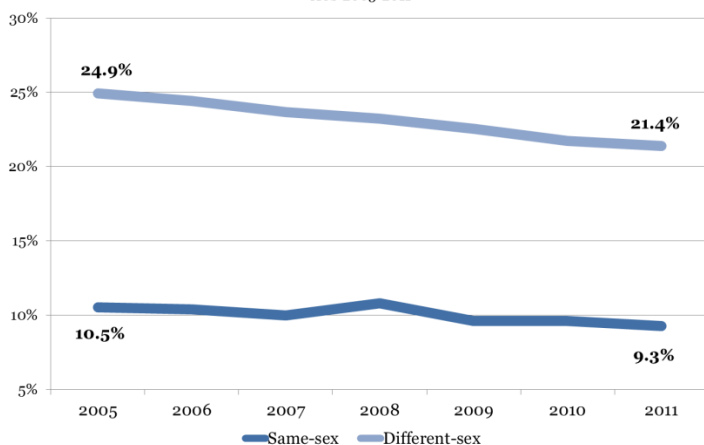
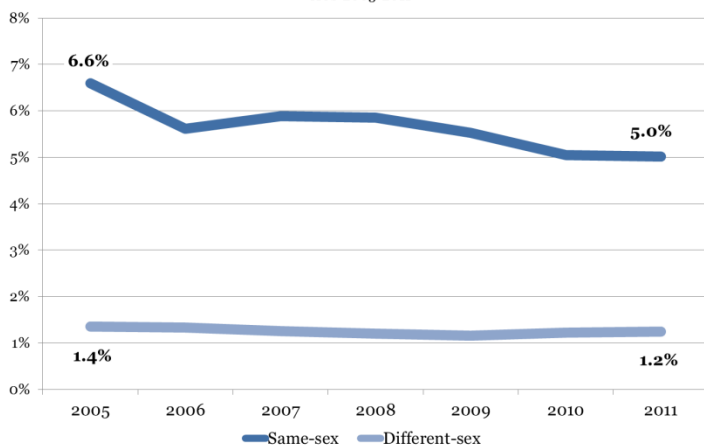


Figure 12. % Veterans among women in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



The portion of same-sex couples that include a veteran has declined from 16% in 2005 to 13% in 2011. Similarly, the decline among different-sex couples was from 26% to 22% (see Figure 13).

While the proportion of different-sex couples that include a spouse or partner who was on active duty in the military within the last year has modestly declined from 1.3% in 2005 to 1.1% in 2011, there has been little change among same-sex couples. In 2005, 0.6% of same-sex

couples included a spouse or partner on active duty compared to 0.7% in 2011 (see Figure 14).

Figure 13. % Couples that include a veteran, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011

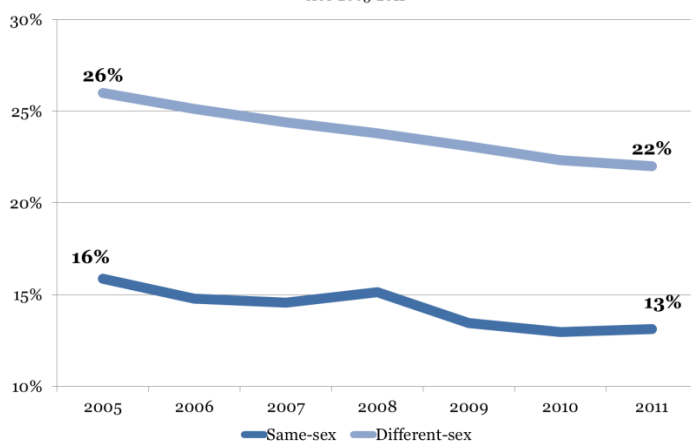
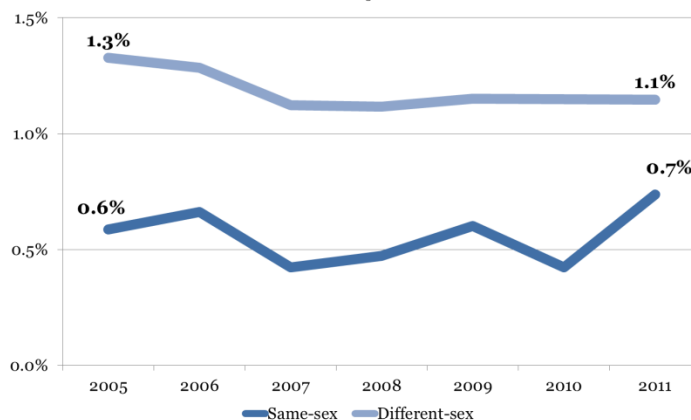


Figure 14. % Couples that include a spouse or partner on active duty in the last year, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



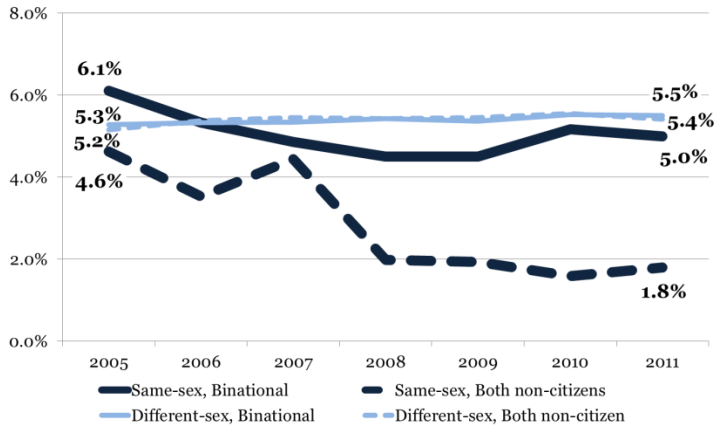
Citizenship status

From 2005 through 2011, same-sex couples have been about as likely as their different-sex counterparts to be binational: one spouse or partner is a US citizen and the other is not. Among both couple types, the percentage who are binational only varies from between 5% and 6% over that time period (see Figure 14). In 2011, 5% of same-sex couples indicate that they are binational compared to 5.5% of different-sex couples.

Different-sex couples are much more likely to include two non-citizens than are same-sex couples and the portion of same-sex couples where both spouses or partners are non-citizens has declined since 2005. In 2005, about 5% of both same-sex and different couples indicated

that both spouses or partners were non-citizens. In 2011, the figure remained at just above 5% for different-sex couples but was less than 2% for same-sex couples.

Figure 15. Citizenship status of spouses and partners in couples, by year and couple type
ACS 2005-2011



Appendix Table. Same-sex couples								
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Female		47.9%	48.8%	49.6%	50.0%	50.9%	50.4%	51.5%
Average age		42.2	42.9	42.9	43.4	43.2	43.8	44.4
Age	<30	17.2%	15.1%	14.6%	15.0%	16.3%	15.9%	15.0%
	30-49	57.0%	57.6%	58.5%	55.7%	54.2%	52.4%	50.4%
	50-64	21.0%	22.3%	22.4%	24.0%	24.5%	25.2%	28.3%
	65+	4.9%	5.0%	4.6%	5.3%	5.0%	6.5%	6.3%
Neither spouse/partner aged 65+		92.5%	92.4%	92.7%	92.0%	92.4%	90.0%	90.3%
One spouse/partner aged 65+, one <age 65		5.1%	5.0%	5.2%	5.5%	5.2%	6.9%	6.7%
Both spouses/partners aged 65+		2.4%	2.6%	2.1%	2.6%	2.4%	3.1%	3.0%
Race/ethnicity	White	73.8%	75.9%	75.8%	77.2%	77.2%	76.0%	76.1%
	African-American	6.8%	6.4%	5.5%	6.3%	6.5%	6.8%	7.4%
	Latino/a	14.2%	12.8%	13.5%	11.5%	11.4%	12.0%	11.3%
	Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	3.1%	2.7%	3.0%	2.6%	2.4%	2.7%	2.6%
	AK Native/American Indian	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
	Other	1.5%	1.7%	1.5%	1.6%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%
Children under age 18 in the home		24.7%	25.5%	23.2%	21.5%	19.4%	18.9%	19.4%
College degree		40.6%	42.4%	44.8%	46.0%	44.6%	46.1%	46.1%
In the labor force		80.6%	82.0%	82.9%	84.1%	83.3%	82.7%	81.7%
Employed among those in the labor force		94.3%	95.6%	95.9%	96.2%	93.3%	92.4%	92.7%
Median annual personal income	Men in labor force	45,770	47,040	48,600	49,920	47,250	47,380	47,000
	Men not in labor force	10,120	11,088	10,368	11,648	11,865	12,360	13,000
	Women in labor force	40,250	42,560	43,092	41,600	42,000	39,140	38,000
	Women not in labor force	10,580	10,080	9,115	8,736	10,500	10,300	11,400
Median annual household income	Both in labor force	95,692	100,576	99,360	98,800	97,650	95,996	94,000
	One in labor force	58,650	61,600	64,800	65,114	60,900	58,092	59,600
	Neither in labor force	38,180	37,856	37,800	35,568	38,745	43,363	42,110
Industry sector	Private	73.3%	73.3%	73.2%	73.4%	73.4%	73.2%	73.9%
	Public	14.6%	14.6%	15.2%	15.6%	15.8%	15.8%	15.0%
	Self-employed	11.5%	11.6%	11.2%	10.7%	10.3%	10.5%	10.5%

Health insurance	Neither insured	Not available			7.1%	7.4%	7.9%	7.0%
	One insured				14.7%	16.8%	16.2%	16.5%
	Both insured				78.1%	75.9%	75.9%	76.5%
Disabled		12.7%	12.5%	11.7%	10.1%	9.4%	9.8%	10.9%
At least one spouse/partner is disabled		21.3%	20.5%	19.8%	16.9%	15.8%	16.7%	18.1%
Veteran	Men	10.5%	10.4%	10.0%	10.8%	9.6%	9.6%	9.3%
	Women	6.6%	5.6%	5.9%	5.9%	5.5%	5.0%	5.0%
At least one spouse/partner a veteran		15.9%	14.8%	14.6%	15.1%	13.4%	13.0%	13.1%
At least one spouse/partner on active duty in the last year		0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%
Binational: One partner/spouse a US citizen and one a non-citizen		6.1%	5.3%	4.9%	4.5%	4.5%	5.2%	5.0%
Both partners non-citizens		4.6%	3.5%	4.4%	2.0%	1.9%	1.6%	1.8%
Different-sex couples								
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Female		50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Average age		47.7	48.1	48.3	48.6	49.0	49.1	49.5
Age	<30	11.7%	11.1%	11.0%	10.6%	10.3%	10.3%	9.7%
	30-49	45.9%	45.3%	44.5%	43.6%	42.8%	42.5%	41.6%
	50-64	27.4%	28.2%	28.8%	29.7%	30.3%	30.5%	31.3%
	65+	15.1%	15.4%	15.6%	16.0%	16.5%	16.7%	17.4%
Neither spouse/partner aged 65+		82.0%	81.9%	81.6%	81.0%	80.4%	80.2%	79.3%
One spouse/partner aged 65+, one <age 65		5.5%	5.5%	5.6%	5.9%	6.1%	6.2%	6.4%
Both spouses/partners aged 65+		12.6%	12.7%	12.8%	13.1%	13.5%	13.6%	14.2%
Race/ethnicity	White	75.0%	75.2%	75.0%	74.3%	73.9%	73.1%	73.2%
	African-American	7.3%	7.2%	7.1%	7.2%	7.2%	7.4%	7.3%
	Latino/a	11.6%	11.5%	11.7%	12.0%	12.3%	12.6%	12.7%
	Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	4.5%	4.6%	4.6%	4.9%	5.0%	5.2%	5.1%
	AK Native/American Indian	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
	Other	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%
Children under age 18 in the home		46.2%	46.0%	45.6%	44.8%	44.4%	44.2%	43.5%
College degree		29.1%	29.8%	30.4%	30.9%	31.1%	31.5%	32.2%

In the labor force		68.8%	69.8%	69.7%	70.9%	70.4%	70.1%	69.4%
Employed among those in the labor force		95.7%	96.3%	96.3%	96.3%	93.5%	92.8%	93.5%
Median annual personal income	Men in labor force	49,450	50,400	50,760	50,960	50,400	47,380	48,000
	Men not in labor force	24,610	24,192	24,624	23,837	23,961	22,969	22,600
	Women in labor force	29,900	31,248	31,320	31,200	31,500	30,900	30,000
	Women not in labor force	4,600	4,480	4,752	4,160	5,040	5,047	5,100
Median annual household income	Both in labor force	87,400	89,376	89,370	88,400	89,250	86,520	86,000
	One in labor force	63,250	63,840	64,800	62,608	63,000	61,491	60,000
	Neither in labor force	42,090	42,056	43,200	43,056	43,575	42,436	41,850
Industry sector	Private	70.8%	70.7%	70.7%	71.1%	71.1%	71.0%	71.0%
	Public	16.0%	16.0%	16.1%	16.2%	16.2%	16.5%	16.6%
	Self-employed	12.5%	12.7%	12.7%	12.2%	12.1%	11.8%	11.7%
Health insurance	Neither insured	Not available			7.8%	8.2%	8.6%	8.5%
	One insured				6.8%	7.2%	8.1%	7.9%
	Both insured				85.4%	84.5%	83.3%	83.5%
Disabled		13.7%	13.5%	13.4%	11.5%	11.5%	11.3%	11.5%
At least one spouse/partner is disabled		22.0%	21.6%	21.5%	18.9%	18.8%	18.5%	18.8%
Veteran	Men	24.9%	24.4%	23.7%	23.2%	22.5%	21.7%	21.4%
	Women	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
At least one spouse/partner a veteran		1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%
At least one spouse/partner on active duty in the last year		5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%
Binational: One partner/spouse a US citizen and one a non-citizen		5.2%	5.4%	5.5%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%	5.4%
Both partners non-citizens		1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%
Different-sex married couples								
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Female		50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Average age		48.8	49.2	49.4	49.8	50.2	50.3	50.8
Age	<30	9.2%	8.6%	8.4%	7.9%	7.6%	7.5%	7.0%
	30-49	45.9%	45.3%	44.5%	43.5%	42.6%	42.2%	41.2%
	50-64	28.7%	29.6%	30.3%	31.3%	31.9%	32.2%	32.9%
	65+	16.1%	16.5%	16.8%	17.3%	17.8%	18.1%	18.9%

Neither spouse/partner aged 65+		80.7%	80.6%	80.3%	79.6%	78.9%	78.6%	77.7%
One spouse/partner aged 65+, one <age 65		5.7%	5.7%	5.9%	6.2%	6.4%	6.5%	6.8%
Both spouses/partners aged 65+		13.5%	13.6%	13.8%	14.2%	14.6%	14.9%	15.5%
Race/ethnicity	White	75.8%	75.9%	75.8%	75.2%	74.8%	74.1%	74.2%
	African-American	6.9%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.8%	6.7%
	Latino/a	11.2%	11.1%	11.2%	11.5%	11.7%	11.9%	12.0%
	Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%	5.1%	5.3%	5.5%	5.4%
	AK Native/American Indian	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
	Other	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%
Children under age 18 in the home		46.4%	46.2%	45.8%	45.0%	44.5%	44.3%	43.5%
College degree		30.1%	31.0%	31.6%	32.1%	32.4%	32.9%	33.5%
In the labor force		67.7%	68.6%	68.6%	69.7%	69.2%	68.8%	68.1%
Employed among those in the labor force		96.2%	96.7%	96.7%	96.7%	94.1%	93.5%	94.2%
Median annual personal income	Men in labor force	\$51,750	\$53,760	\$54,000	\$52,000	\$52,500	\$51,500	\$50,000
	Men not in labor force	\$25,300	\$24,864	\$25,488	\$24,752	\$25,095	\$23,999	\$23,600
	Women in labor force	\$31,050	\$31,360	\$32,400	\$31,200	\$31,500	\$30,900	\$31,000
	Women not in labor force	\$4,600	\$4,480	\$4,763	\$4,264	\$5,040	\$5,150	\$5,200
Median annual household income	Both in labor force	\$90,850	\$91,840	\$92,642	\$92,352	\$92,799	\$90,640	\$90,000
	One in labor force	\$65,550	\$66,752	\$65,880	\$65,520	\$66,150	\$63,757	\$62,600
	Neither in labor force	\$42,550	\$42,560	\$43,826	\$43,680	\$44,174	\$43,260	\$42,500
Industry sector	Private	69.7%	69.6%	69.5%	69.9%	69.8%	69.7%	69.7%
	Public	16.7%	16.7%	16.8%	16.9%	17.0%	17.3%	17.4%
	Self-employed	13.0%	13.1%	13.2%	12.6%	12.6%	12.3%	12.2%
Health insurance	Neither insured	Not available			7.0%	7.4%	7.7%	7.6%
	One insured				4.5%	4.8%	5.5%	5.5%
	Both insured				88.5%	87.9%	86.8%	86.9%
Disabled		13.8%	13.7%	13.6%	11.7%	11.7%	11.5%	11.7%
At least one spouse/partner is disabled		22.3%	21.8%	21.7%	19.2%	19.1%	18.9%	19.2%
Veteran	Men	25.9%	25.4%	24.7%	24.3%	23.6%	22.8%	22.4%
	Women	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%

At least one spouse/partner a veteran		27.0%	26.1%	25.4%	24.8%	24.1%	23.4%	23.0%
At least one spouse/partner on active duty in the last year		1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Binational: One partner/spouse a US citizen and one a non-citizen		5.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%	5.4%	5.6%	5.5%
Both partners non-citizens		5.0%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.2%	5.3%	5.2%
Different-sex unmarried couples								
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Female		50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Average age		36.5	36.9	36.9	37.1	37.4	37.6	38.0
Age	<30	38.3%	37.3%	37.4%	37.3%	36.4%	35.6%	33.7%
	30-49	45.1%	45.3%	44.8%	44.1%	44.4%	44.7%	45.9%
	50-64	13.1%	13.7%	14.1%	14.7%	15.1%	15.5%	16.1%
	65+	3.6%	3.6%	3.7%	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%
Neither spouse/partner aged 65+		95.0%	95.0%	94.9%	94.7%	94.3%	94.2%	94.0%
One spouse/partner aged 65+, one <age 65		2.7%	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%	3.2%	3.2%	3.3%
Both spouses/partners aged 65+		2.2%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%
Race/ethnicity	White	66.3%	67.7%	67.0%	65.7%	64.9%	63.5%	63.9%
	African-American	12.4%	11.6%	11.8%	11.8%	11.8%	12.4%	11.9%
	Latino/a	16.2%	16.0%	16.4%	17.4%	18.0%	18.8%	18.9%
	Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	2.3%	2.1%	2.2%	2.4%	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%
	AK Native/American Indian	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%
	Other	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%
Children under age 18 in the home		43.9%	44.0%	43.7%	42.8%	43.8%	43.8%	44.1%
College degree		17.4%	17.4%	18.1%	19.0%	18.7%	19.1%	19.6%
In the labor force		80.8%	82.0%	81.6%	82.8%	82.2%	81.5%	80.9%
Employed among those in the labor force		91.3%	92.5%	92.4%	92.7%	88.4%	87.4%	88.3%
Median annual personal income	Men in labor force	\$32,200	\$33,600	\$32,400	\$31,512	\$31,500	\$29,664	\$30,000
	Men not in labor force	\$12,650	\$12,096	\$11,880	\$10,712	\$10,920	\$10,300	\$10,000
	Women in labor force	\$25,300	\$25,760	\$25,920	\$26,000	\$25,200	\$24,720	\$24,000
	Women not in labor force	\$5,405	\$4,592	\$4,320	\$3,380	\$3,780	\$3,708	\$3,600

Median annual household income	Both in labor force	\$63,250	\$64,848	\$64,800	\$63,544	\$63,000	\$60,152	\$59,300
	One in labor force	\$37,950	\$39,200	\$38,880	\$36,608	\$35,700	\$35,020	\$33,700
	Neither in labor force	\$30,015	\$28,448	\$27,864	\$26,832	\$27,195	\$24,617	\$24,800
Industry sector	Private	81.4%	80.9%	81.3%	81.3%	81.3%	81.0%	81.0%
	Public	9.7%	9.8%	9.8%	10.1%	10.1%	10.2%	10.2%
	Self-employed	8.3%	8.6%	8.4%	8.0%	7.9%	7.9%	7.8%
Health insurance	Neither insured				15.7%	16.8%	17.0%	16.9%
	One insured				29.2%	30.7%	31.0%	29.8%
	Both insured				55.1%	52.5%	52.1%	53.2%
Disabled		12.0%	11.7%	11.8%	9.6%	9.4%	9.4%	9.6%
At least one spouse/partner is disabled		19.7%	19.2%	19.3%	15.9%	15.9%	15.7%	15.9%
Veteran	Men	14.2%	14.0%	13.4%	12.8%	12.7%	12.1%	12.0%
	Women	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%
At least one spouse/partner a veteran		15.3%	14.9%	14.4%	13.6%	13.4%	13.0%	12.8%
At least one spouse/partner on active duty in the last year		0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
Binational: One partner/spouse a US citizen and one a non-citizen		5.2%	5.0%	4.9%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%
Both partners non-citizens		6.5%	6.6%	6.8%	7.1%	7.4%	7.7%	7.6%

Methodology

The analyses use the annual Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) from the American Community Survey, 2005 through 2011. Couples are defined as such when a householder (Person 1 on the survey form) identifies another individual age 16 or older as his or her “husband/wife” or “unmarried partner.”

Same-sex couple data are adjusted to account for measurement error whereby some different-sex couples, particularly married couples, miscode the sex of one partner and appear to be a same-sex couple (see [Gates and Cooke, 2011](#); [O’Connell and Feliz, 2011](#)). The adjustment procedure, described in [Carpenter and Gates \(2008\)](#), attempts to delete same-sex couples that are most likely to be different-sex couples who miscoded their sex. In doing so, the resulting sample likely under-represents actual same-sex couples who consider themselves to be spouses, as some of these couples are removed in order to eliminate most of the miscoded different-sex couples.

About the author

Gary J. Gates, PhD is the Williams Distinguished Scholar and a national expert in the demographic, geographic, and economic characteristics of the LGBT population.

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The Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy at UCLA School of Law advances law and public policy through rigorous, independent research and scholarship, and disseminates its work through a variety of education programs and media to judges, legislators, lawyers, other policymakers and the public. These studies can be accessed at the Williams Institute website.

For more information

The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law

Box 951476

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1476

(310)267-4382

williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute