



A M E R I C A N
A S S O C I A T I O N F O R
S I N G L E P E O P L E

Spectrum Institute, Research and Policy Division
P.O. Box 65756 • Los Angeles, CA 90065 • (323) 258-8955
Fax (323) 258-8099 • www.singlepeople.org • unmarried@earthlink.net

Demographics:

Marital Status and Households of Adults in Vermont and the USA, with Emphasis on Domestic Partners

Special Report to the Vermont Legislature

Presented to the
House Judiciary Committee
January 27, 2000

Special Report No. V-7

Demographics:

Marital Status and Households of Adults in Vermont and the USA, with Emphasis on Domestic Partners

The Nation:

Marital status and household demographics of the adult population in the United States have changed dramatically over the years. In the 1950s, the dominant household type was that of a breadwinner husband and homemaker wife with minor children at home. Today, that type of arrangement constitutes only 10% of the nation's households.

The United States Census Bureau reported in 1998 that only 56% of the adult population was married and living with their spouse. More than 19 million adults or about 10% of the adult population was divorced. The number of adults who have never married has more than doubled in the past two decades, growing from 21.4 million in 1970 to 45.9 million in 1997.

About 12 million households in the nation contain single-parent families, mostly headed by women but with a growing percentage headed by men. There were about 4.1 million opposite-sex unmarried couples, of which more than 35% had children under 15 years old living with them. Another 1.7 million households contained two unrelated adults of the same sex.

Vermont:

Vermont ranks number 22 among the states with respect to the percentage of men and women who are not married. About 42.3% of Vermont residents who are 15 years of age and older are unmarried. When only adults are considered, the percentage decreases to 40% being unmarried.

The number of marriages performed annually in Vermont dropped slightly between 1996 and 1998. The number of divorces rose a little.

Living arrangements in Vermont are quite diverse, although married-couple households remain the dominant type. About 23% of the state's households consist of a single adult living alone. More than 8% contain single-parent families. Another 8% of housing units include unrelated adults, some of whom are roommates while others are unmarried partners. Unmarried adult relatives live in another 4% of Vermont households. Married couples reside in some 56% of the state's housing units.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of gays and lesbians living in Vermont since sexual orientation is often considered such a private matter. It is also difficult to determine what percentage of the population is homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual in their sexual orientation since this status does not lend itself easily to objective quantification or labeling.

It is also hard to ascertain what percentage of a region's households contain domestic partners since most demographic data places those who are unmarried partners and those who are merely roommates in the same category.

However, estimates can be formulated when census data, employee-benefits enrollment information, and private polling results are analyzed and compared.

Projections:

Despite all of these difficulties, one conclusion is fairly certain. If Vermont becomes the only state to legalize same-sex marriage, it is probable that tens of thousands of same-sex couples from other states would travel to Vermont to marry. Such interstate travel would be stimulated by the presumed portability of their newly acquired marital status, thus enabling these couples to demand marital benefits and protections in their home states.

If the Legislature were to enact a comprehensive domestic partnership act instead, the incentive for unmarried couples to travel to Vermont would be greatly diminished. Since no other state has yet adopted a comprehensive domestic partnership act, it is highly questionable that other states would be required to recognize Vermont domestic partnerships as the equivalent of marriage within their own borders.

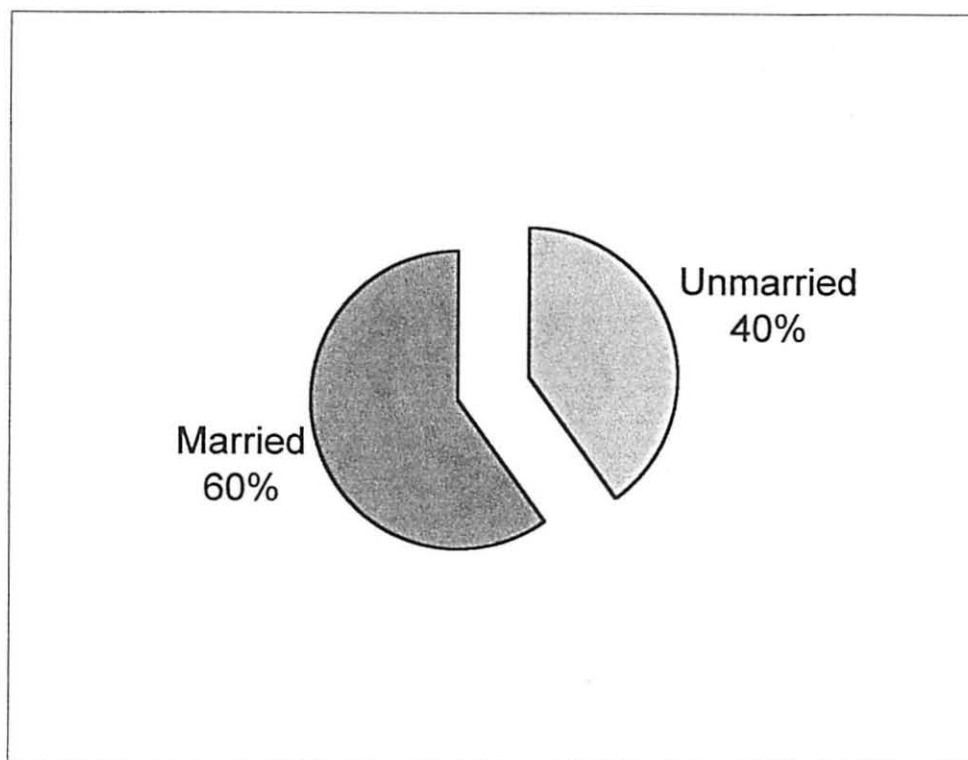
The question does arise, however, as to the number of unmarried couples who live in Vermont, including same-sex couples, who might register as domestic partners if a statewide registry system were created by the Legislature.

Based on a variety of demographic data, it would be fair to conclude that during the first year of operation perhaps as many as 1,000 or more same-sex couples might take advantage of such a system and that possibly 2,000 or more heterosexual couples (including some seniors) may do the same. However, due to their unfamiliarity with the new system and a feeling of uncertainty over the significance of the new legal status they would acquire, many of these couples may not immediately jump at the chance to register as domestic partners. Some may prefer to delay their final decision on the matter until they can see how the system operates in real life, letting others test the waters.

The number of registrants may tend to diminish considerably each year since couples who have registered would remain registered indefinitely. New registrants in subsequent years would probably include immigrants to the state, some visitors, divorcees who establish a new relationship, and young people who reach the age of 18.

Marital Status of Adults in Vermont

Marital Status	Number of Adults	Percent of Adults
Unmarried	167,000	40%
Married	252,000	60%
Total Adults	419,000	100%

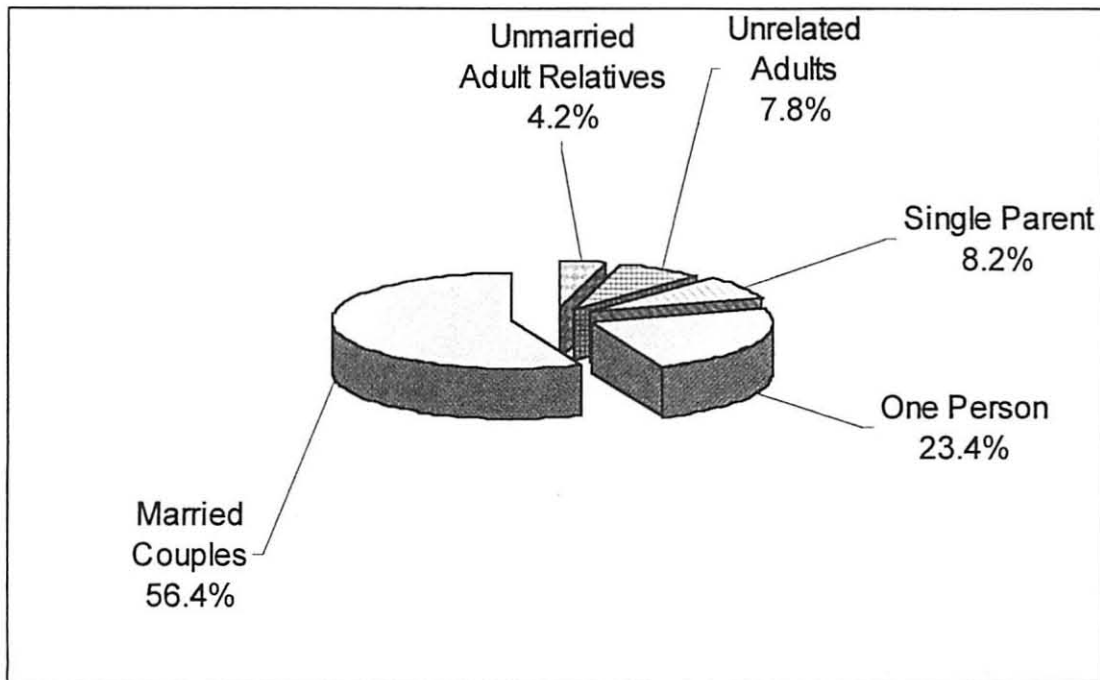


Note: Unmarried includes 100,000 never married, 30,000 widowed, and 37,000 divorced adults.
Married includes 7,000 adults who listed themselves as separated from their spouse.

Source: 1990 US Census Data / Database: C90STF1C
Prepared by: American Association for Single People
www.singlepeople.org

Marital Status and Living Arrangements in Vermont

Type of Household	Number of Households	Percent of Households
One-person	49,366	23.4%
Single-parent	17,259	8.2%
Unrelated adults*	16,389	7.8%
Unmarried relatives	8,731	4.2%
Married couples	118,905	56.4%
Total Households	210,650	100%



* Data is for those reporting as either "roommates" or "unmarried partners" including 1,512 adults who were 65 years of age or older.

Note: Some 25,000 households (12%) in the state contain one or more non-relatives.

Source: 1990 US Census Data / Database: C90STF1C
Prepared by: American Association for Single People
www.singlepeople.org

Estimating the Number of Domestic Partner Households in Vermont

Households with Unrelated Adults: (includes both roommates and unmarried partners)

Unrelated Households:	16,389 (100%)	x 2 = 32,778 adults
Opposite-Sex:	11,472 (70%)*	x 2 = 22,944 adults
Same-Sex:	4,916 (30%)*	x 2 = 9,832 adults

Source: 1990 US Census Data / Database: C90STF1C

* The Census Bureau does not give a statewide breakdown of the gender of the occupants of unrelated adult households. However, as a national average, about 70% of such households include adults of the opposite-sex.

Households with Unmarried Partners: (two adults reporting as "unmarried partners")

Partner Households:	12,313 (100%)	x 2 = 24,616 adults
Opposite-Sex:	11,943 (97%)*	x 2 = 23,886 adults
Same-Sex:	370 (3%)*	x 2 = 740 adults

Source: 1990 Decennial Census / Summary Tape File 4, PB 12)

Households with Domestic Partners: Total Households in Vermont: 210,650

National Data:	High	Average	Vermont dp's: high	average
Opposite-sex dp	2%	.6%	4,213	1,264
Same-sex dp	1%	.3%	2,106	632

Source: Analysis of National Surveys by Spectrum Institute

National data includes enrollment figures taken from surveys of employers who have domestic partner benefits programs. Enrollees must assume obligations in order to obtain benefits. Estimate of domestic partners in Vermont is calculated by multiplying the number of households in Vermont by this national data.

Households with Gay or Lesbian Partners

Total adults in Vermont:	419,000	419,000
Percent Gay/Lesbian:	x 4%*	x 2.3%*
Number of G/L Adults:	16,760	9,637
Percent in DP relations:	x 50%	x 50%
Individuals in DP relations:	8,380	4,148
Number of same-sex couples:	4,190	2,074

* Based on various national surveys taken in recent years. Data does not include bisexuals.

Comparing all of this data, there may be between 600 and 4,000 gay/lesbian couples in Vermont. The percent who would legally marry, as opposed to register as domestic partners or simply cohabit, is not known. Employment data suggests that more than 1,000 same-sex couples and more than 2,000 opposite-sex couples may register with the state as domestic partners if a statewide domestic partnership law were to be enacted.

UNMARRIED-PARTNER HOUSEHOLDS, BY STATE: 1990

STATES	TOTAL HHLDS	UNMARRIED-PARTNER HOUSEHOLDS						OTHER HHLDS
		Total	Opposite Sex	Same Sex				
				Total	% of unmarried partner hhlds.	Both male	Both female	
ALABAMA	1,506,009	27,628	26,559	1,069	3.87	386	683	1,478,381
ALASKA	189,700	11,667	11,402	265	2.27	130	135	178,033
ARIZONA	1,371,885	60,649	38,312	2,337	3.85	1,236	1,101	1,311,236
ARKANSAS	891,665	17,992	17,486	506	2.81	247	259	873,673
CALIFORNIA	10,399,700	495,273	458,621	36,602	7.39	23,275	13,327	9,904,477
COLORADO	1,285,119	50,515	48,445	2,070	4.10	1,069	1,001	1,234,604
CONNECTICUT	1,230,243	44,528	42,440	2,088	4.69	1,152	936	1,185,713
DELAWARE	247,163	10,130	9,918	212	2.09	136	76	237,033
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	249,034	11,709	9,496	2,213	18.90	1,750	463	237,325
FLORIDA	5,138,360	309,387	200,895	8,492	4.06	4,721	3,771	4,928,973
GEORGIA	2,366,575	69,870	66,268	3,502	5.01	2,063	1,439	2,296,705
HAWAII	356,748	15,473	14,871	602	3.89	378	224	341,275
IDAHO	361,432	10,230	10,052	178	1.74	79	99	351,202
ILLINOIS	4,197,720	134,868	128,668	6,200	4.61	3,736	2,484	4,062,832
INDIANA	2,064,246	67,714	65,779	1,935	2.86	1,006	929	1,996,532
IOWA	1,065,243	30,852	30,239	613	1.99	277	336	1,034,391
KANSAS	946,253	22,898	22,251	647	2.53	361	286	923,355
KENTUCKY	1,379,610	32,245	31,383	862	2.67	394	468	1,347,365
LOUISIANA	1,498,371	44,117	42,786	1,331	3.02	685	646	1,454,254
MAINE	465,729	23,371	22,557	814	3.48	251	563	442,338
MARYLAND	1,749,342	75,096	72,068	3,028	4.03	1,399	1,629	1,674,246
MASSACHUSETTS	2,244,406	78,828	73,634	5,194	6.59	2,523	2,671	2,165,578
MICHIGAN	3,424,122	124,069	120,700	3,369	2.73	1,617	1,772	3,300,033
MINNESOTA	1,648,825	59,817	56,765	3,052	5.10	1,442	1,610	1,589,008
MISSISSIPPI	910,574	20,932	20,259	673	3.22	237	436	889,642
MISSOURI	1,961,364	55,905	53,974	1,921	3.45	1,081	850	1,905,439
MONTANA	306,919	9,731	9,445	286	2.94	101	185	297,188
NEBRASKA	602,858	15,523	15,078	455	2.93	218	237	587,325
NEVADA	467,513	25,496	24,883	613	2.40	318	295	442,017
NEW HAMPSHIRE	411,387	19,684	19,026	658	3.34	210	448	391,703
NEW JERSEY	2,794,316	95,387	91,825	3,562	3.72	1,878	1,684	2,698,929
NEW MEXICO	543,825	24,530	23,680	850	3.47	300	550	519,295
NEW YORK	6,634,424	238,087	224,339	13,748	5.77	8,211	5,537	6,396,347
NORTH CAROLINA	2,517,098	67,425	65,449	1,976	2.93	803	1,173	2,449,673
NORTH DAKOTA	241,802	5,338	5,235	103	1.93	44	59	236,464
OHIO	4,089,312	120,309	116,332	3,777	3.14	1,943	1,834	3,969,003
OKLAHOMA	1,207,235	27,001	26,093	908	3.26	386	522	1,180,234
OREGON	1,105,362	50,246	47,983	2,263	4.50	881	1,382	1,055,116
PENNSYLVANIA	4,492,958	141,830	137,067	4,763	3.36	2,416	2,347	4,351,128
RHODE ISLAND	377,080	12,972	12,475	497	3.83	304	193	364,108
SOUTH CAROLINA	1,258,783	32,890	31,523	1,067	3.24	467	600	1,225,893
SOUTH DAKOTA	260,059	7,287	7,240	47	0.64	26	21	252,772
TENNESSEE	1,853,515	42,103	40,763	1,340	3.18	699	641	1,811,412
TEXAS	6,079,341	174,393	166,322	7,871	4.51	4,602	3,069	5,904,948
UTAH	537,196	11,466	11,065	401	3.50	244	157	525,730
VERMONT	210,633	12,313	11,943	370	3.00	149	221	198,320
VIRGINIA	2,294,722	70,963	67,896	3,067	4.32	1,791	1,276	2,223,759
WASHINGTON	1,875,508	86,772	82,428	4,344	5.01	2,353	1,991	1,788,736
WEST VIRGINIA	688,737	15,836	15,529	307	1.94	155	152	672,891
WISCONSIN	1,824,252	69,311	67,309	2,002	2.89	1,011	991	1,754,941
WYOMING	169,309	5,116	5,025	30	0.59	2	28	164,193
UNITED STATES-TOTAL	91,993,582	3,187,772	3,042,642	145,130	4.55	81,342	63,787	88,805,810

Source: 1990 Decennial Census - Summary Tape File 4, P812

file: hhh.wq1

7/13/93

cobrien

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NEWS

Economic & Statistics Administration



EMBARGOED UNTIL: 12:01 A.M. EDT, JULY 27, 1998 (MONDAY)

Public Information Office
301-457-3030/301-457-3670 (fax)
301-457-4067 (TDD)
e-mail: pio@census.gov

CB98-126

Terry Lugaila
301-457-2465

Nearly 70 Percent of Elderly Widows Live Alone,
According to U.S. Census Bureau

Almost half the women over 65 years of age in the United States in 1997 were widows. About 7 in 10 of these women lived alone, according to a report released today by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

The embargoed report and tabulations can be accessed at <http://census.gov/dcmd/www/embaro/embargo.html>. After the release time, the report, Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1997 (Update), and tables (PPL-90) can be accessed at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/ms-la.html>.

The report includes these other highlights:

- About 109.2 million adults, more than half the adult population (55.9 percent), were married and living with their spouse in 1997.
- Approximately 19.3 million adults, about 10 percent of the adult population, were divorced at the time of the survey.
- About 85 percent of children with a single parent lived with their mother. Of these, about 4 in 10 lived with mothers who had never married. Children who lived with a single father were more likely to be living with a divorced father (about 45.1 percent) than a never-married father (31.2 percent).
- There were about 4.1 million unmarried-couple households, of which more than 1 in 3 (35.6 percent) had children under 15 years of age present.
- Nearly 14 million people (34.5 percent) between 25 and 34 years old had never been married. More than half (54.2 percent) of the African Americans in this age group had never married.

Data are from the March 1997 Current Population Survey. As in all surveys, the data are subject to sampling variability and other sources of error.

Editor's Note: The Public Information Office now has a media-access server for embargoed news releases and data sets. It is available to accredited media representatives only. To gain access, please contact us for a username and password. The media-access server's Internet address is <http://www.census.gov/dcmd/www/embargo/embargo.html>. We would appreciate any comments you may have about the site.

The Census Bureau pre-eminent collector and provider of timely, relevant and quality data about the people and economy of the United States. In more than 100 surveys annually and 20 censuses a decade, evolving from the first census in 1790, the Census Bureau provides official information about America's people, businesses, industries and institutions.



AD-2. Unmarried-Couple Households, by Presence of Children: 1960 To Present

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
Internet Release date: July 27, 1998

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on Current Population Survey (CPS)
unless otherwise specified)

Year	Total	Without	With children
		children under 15 yrs.	under 15 yrs.
1997	4,130	2,660	1,470
1996	3,958	2,516	1,442
1995	3,668	2,349	1,319
1994	3,661	2,391	1,270
1993	3,510	2,274	1,236
1992	3,308	2,187	1,121
1991	3,039	2,077	962
1990	2,856	1,966	891
1989	2,764	1,906	858
1988	2,588	1,786	802
1987	2,334	1,614	720
1986	2,220	1,558	662
1985	1,983	1,380	603
1984	1,988	1,373	614
1983	1,891	1,366	525
1982	1,863	1,387	475
1981	1,808	1,305	502
1980	1,589	1,159	431
1979	1,346	985	360
1978	1,137	865	272
1977	957	754	204
1970 Census	523	327	196
1960 Census	439	242	197

Source of CPS data: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-506, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1997 (Update)," and earlier reports.

Source of 1960 and 1970 data: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, PC(2)-4B, "Persons by Family Characteristics," table 15.
1970 Census of Population, PC(2)-4B, "Persons by Family Characteristics," table 11.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Fertility and Family Statistics Branch
301-457-2465

Table B. Marital Status and Living Arrangements of Adults 18 Years Old and Over: March 1998

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics of adults	Age						
	18 years and over	18 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years over
MARITAL STATUS							
Males	95,009	12,633	19,526	22,055	27,271	7,992	5,533
Married, spouse present	55,303	1,240	9,840	14,230	20,173	6,147	3,674
Married, spouse absent	3,298	183	724	1,001	1,051	184	155
Unmarried	36,407	11,210	8,963	6,823	6,048	1,661	1,704
Never married	25,518	11,066	7,761	4,120	2,053	328	190
Widowed	2,567	-	30	94	425	707	1,311
Divorced	8,322	143	1,171	2,610	3,569	626	202
Females	102,403	12,568	19,828	22,407	29,041	9,882	8,677
Married, spouse present	55,259	2,315	11,428	14,951	19,005	5,181	2,380
Married, spouse absent	3,996	268	914	1,210	1,187	239	178
Unmarried	43,148	9,986	7,486	6,246	8,849	4,462	6,119
Never married	21,043	9,743	5,908	2,721	1,801	425	446
Widowed	11,027	17	90	304	2,223	3,155	5,239
Divorced	11,078	227	1,489	3,222	4,825	882	433
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS							
Males	95,009	12,633	19,526	22,055	27,271	7,992	5,533
Living with relative(s)	75,307	9,988	14,310	17,676	22,560	6,615	4,157
Family householder	45,704	1,286	7,889	11,726	16,663	5,088	3,051
Spouse of householder	12,452	311	2,515	3,405	4,288	1,200	733
Child of householder	12,708	7,399	2,845	1,760	682	22	-
Other, living with relatives	4,443	992	1,061	785	927	305	373
Not living with relatives	19,702	2,645	5,215	4,378	4,712	1,377	1,375
Nonfamily householder	14,122	1,326	3,325	3,208	3,780	1,203	1,280
Living alone	11,000	712	2,222	2,555	3,164	1,111	1,234
Sharing home with nonrelative	3,122	614	1,103	653	616	92	46
Other, not living with relatives	5,580	1,319	1,890	1,170	932	174	95
Females	102,403	12,568	19,828	22,407	29,041	9,882	8,677
Living with relative(s)	80,666	10,020	16,494	19,828	23,649	6,719	3,957
Family householder	25,053	1,609	5,749	7,146	7,418	1,900	1,231
Spouse of householder	41,830	1,564	8,316	11,277	14,672	4,161	1,840
Child of householder	8,917	5,974	1,680	782	477	21	3
Other, living with relatives	4,866	873	749	643	1,082	637	883
Not living with relatives	21,737	2,548	3,334	2,580	5,393	3,163	4,720
Nonfamily householder	17,504	1,068	2,070	1,863	4,758	3,080	4,664
Living alone	15,312	523	1,456	1,499	4,257	2,987	4,590
Sharing home with nonrelative	2,192	545	614	364	501	93	74
Other, not living with relatives	4,233	1,480	1,264	717	635	83	56

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**United States Census Bureau
National Data for 1998**

60% of adults are married
40% of adults are unmarried

Table 8. Households With Two Unrelated Adults, by Marital Status, Age, and Sex: March 1998

[Numbers in thousands. For meaning of symbols, see text]

Subject	Households with two unrelated adults	Age of householder					Marital status of householder				
		Under 25 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years and over	Never married	Married, spouse absent		Widowed	Divorced
								Separated	Other		
ALL HOUSEHOLDERS											
Total	5 911	1 183	2 190	1 196	1 059	283	3 516	268	137	253	1 738
Partner of opposite sex	4 238	776	1 618	857	797	188	2 270	210	111	179	1 466
No children under 15 years in household ..	2 716	452	883	509	695	177	1 439	110	77	158	932
Age of partner:											
Under 25 years	487	287	157	20	14	9	422	2	12	7	45
25 to 34 years	944	154	614	141	33	1	713	38	18	-	175
35 to 44 years	502	4	92	224	170	11	168	28	14	10	281
45 to 64 years	621	-	18	122	418	63	109	35	29	70	379
65 years and over	163	6	2	1	59	93	28	7	5	71	53
Marital status of partner:											
Never married	1 482	391	715	202	152	22	1 138	43	16	17	268
Married, spouse absent	198	13	43	55	63	24	34	16	54	13	81
Separated	117	9	25	40	39	5	30	16	-	6	65
Widowed	114	3	8	4	43	56	15	11	1	54	33
Divorced	922	45	117	248	438	74	251	40	7	73	551
With children under 15 years in household	1 520	325	735	348	102	11	831	100	34	21	534
Age of partner:											
Under 25 years	419	222	168	29	-	-	319	15	3	8	74
25 to 34 years	683	97	435	129	21	-	367	52	13	4	247
35 to 44 years	330	5	108	152	61	5	120	30	16	3	161
45 to 64 years	83	-	24	39	17	3	25	3	1	3	50
65 years and over	5	-	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	3	2
Marital status of partner:											
Never married	878	267	452	134	26	-	600	41	21	9	206
Married, spouse absent	134	13	60	47	11	3	64	30	10	3	27
Separated	99	10	42	35	10	3	41	28	7	2	22
Widowed	23	-	8	8	6	3	11	-	-	3	9
Divorced	485	45	215	162	58	5	156	29	2	6	292
Partner of same sex	1 674	407	571	339	263	95	1 245	58	26	74	271
No children under 15 years in household ..	1 508	387	484	301	243	93	1 165	41	25	72	205
Age of partner:											
Under 25 years	423	302	82	22	15	2	386	1	4	8	23
25 to 34 years	544	80	318	82	59	6	429	16	11	8	80
35 to 44 years	271	-	57	144	56	13	194	10	2	15	50
45 to 64 years	211	2	24	45	105	35	116	14	5	28	48
65 years and over	58	3	2	7	9	37	40	-	2	13	4
Marital status of partner:											
Never married	1 189	370	413	211	146	50	1 008	18	7	28	128
Married, spouse absent	80	13	15	13	30	9	26	17	13	8	15
Separated	54	8	8	9	25	4	18	16	2	6	13
Widowed	21	-	2	-	4	14	2	-	-	11	7
Divorced	218	4	53	76	64	21	128	7	4	24	56
With children under 15 years in household	167	20	68	38	19	2	81	17	2	2	66
Age of partner:											
Under 25 years	47	12	23	4	9	-	21	4	-	-	23
25 to 34 years	74	7	46	18	3	-	42	8	2	-	23
35 to 44 years	27	1	10	11	4	-	12	1	-	-	14
45 to 64 years	15	-	7	6	3	-	6	3	-	-	7
65 years and over	3	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	2	-
Marital status of partner:											
Never married	118	18	60	28	12	-	57	13	-	-	47
Married, spouse absent	10	2	8	-	-	-	6	3	2	-	-
Separated	9	1	8	-	-	-	6	3	-	-	-
Widowed	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-
Divorced	37	-	19	11	7	-	18	1	-	-	19

**United States Census Bureau
National Data for 1998**

5.9 million unmarried couple households in the nation
4.2 million opposite-sex households (71%)
1.7 million same-sex households (29%)

One-Third of Unmarried Partners Are Gay

May 1996

The Number News

Surveys often miss them and politicians dis them. But many unmarried-partner households look, act, and spend almost like dual-earner couples, America's most affluent household segment. And they are growing rapidly while married couples grow slowly.

The number of married couples in the U.S. increased just 2 percent between 1990 and 1994, to 54.3 million, according to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. But the number of householders who reported that the unrelated adult living with them was an "unmarried partner" increased 19 percent, to 5.3 million. Added together, the growth rate for married- and unmarried-partner households was a more respectable 3 percent. The total number of households increased 4 percent, to 97.1 million.

Of course, unmarried-partner households aren't exactly like married couples. For example, 1.7 million of these households (31 percent) are probably homosexual couples, because the householder reports being one of two partners of the same sex. Gay or straight, unmarried-partner households are likely to be young: 62 percent of same-sex unmarried partner householders are under age 35, compared with 60 percent for opposite-sex households. And in each case, the householder is most likely to live with a partner in the same age range. But only 22 percent of same-sex partners have ever been married, while 45 percent of opposite-sex partners have walked down the aisle at least once. And 8 percent of same-sex partners have children under age 15 living with them, compared with 35 percent of opposite-sex partners.

The number of opposite-sex unmarried-partners is growing rapidly, with a 28 percent increase between 1990 and 1994. One reason may be that declining incomes in the early 1990s made it harder for young couples to face the financial commitments of marriage. Same-sex unmarried-partner households are growing much more slowly, at just 4 percent. These unions may be less affected by economic hardship. In fact, the number of same-sex partners declined during the 1990-92 recession, then made up the difference by 1994.

One consequence of the unmarried-partner boom is an unprecedented rise in the median age at first marriage. One hundred years ago, half of American women were married by age 22, and half of men by age 26.1. This age gradually declined until 1956, when it bottomed out at 20.1 for women and 22.5 for men. It returned to 22 for women in 1980, then reached 23 for women in 1984. In 1990, the median age returned to 26.1 for men. In 1994, the median age at first marriage was 24.5 for women and 26.7 for men.

Young adults are waiting longer to get married, but they may not be waiting any longer to find a partner and make decisions as a couple. For more information, see *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1994*, Current Population Reports, Series P20-484, available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; telephone (202) 512-1800.

Ranking of States

Total Percentages of Unmarried Men and Women

State	% Unmarried	State	% Unmarried
1. California	48.1	26. Wisconsin	41.9
2. Massachusetts	47.5*	27. Minnesota	41.6
3. New York	46.7*	28. Washington	41.5
4. Illinois	46.7*	29. South Carolina	41.5
5. Rhode Island	46.0	30. Virginia	41.2
6. Connecticut	45.9	31. Missouri	41.0
7. Delaware	45.4	32. Tennessee	40.8
8. Georgia	45.3	33. Oregon	40.8
9. Hawaii	44.9	34. Texas	40.7
10. Arizona	44.3	35. Maine	40.7
11. Colorado	44.0	36. Iowa	40.5
12. Michigan	44.0	37. North Carolina	40.3
13. Florida	43.7	38. Arkansas	40.3
14. Nevada	43.7	39. New Hampshire	40.2
15. New Jersey	43.6	40. Kansas	40.2
16. Mississippi	43.6	41. Kentucky	40.0
17. Louisiana	43.5*	42. West Virginia	39.8
18. Maryland	43.5	43. Nebraska	39.7
19. Alabama	43.4	44. North Dakota	39.5
20. Alaska	43.4	45. South Dakota	39.5
21. Pennsylvania	43.0	46. Oklahoma	39.0
22. Vermont	42.9	47. Montana	38.9
23. Indiana	42.6	48. Utah	38.1
24. Ohio	42.5	49. Idaho	37.8
25. New Mexico	42.2	50. Wyoming	37.6

Data is based on the 1990 Census,
ST-1, "Marital Status for States."
Internet Release Date: July 27, 1998

* A majority of women in these
states are unmarried.



National

The Dallas Morning News

[Search](#) [Help](#) [Feedback](#) [Site Map](#) [Archive](#)

Related links

- [National index](#)
- [National Forum](#)

Elections:

- ['98 Elections Voters' Guide](#)
- [Politics index](#)

- [The Front Page](#)
- [In the News](#)
- [National](#)**
- [International](#)
- [Texas&Southwest](#)
- [Metropolitan](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Science/Tech](#)
- [Sports Day](#)
- [The Arts](#)
- [Lifestyles](#)
- [Guide](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Help/FAQ](#)
- [The Wire](#)
- [News to Use](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Classified ads](#)

Number of single dads swells

Trend may signal end to preferring women for custody

12/11/98

Washington Post

WASHINGTON - The number of single fathers with children at home has increased by 25 percent in the last three years, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Thursday.

Experts gave several reasons for the emerging trend. One is a rising tendency of men to seek custody, and for mothers and judges to agree, even when the couple has not been married. Another is the increased willingness of adoption agencies to consider single people, gay and heterosexual, as parents.

"It's quite amazing," said Lynne Casper, a Census Bureau demographer who co-wrote the new report. "It points to the fact that maybe the last bastion of the division of the sexes is breaking down."

In 1970, fathers accounted for only about one in 10 single parents. In 1998, it's one in six.

In the past three years, the number of single-parent families headed by fathers has grown from 1.7 million to 2.1 million. There are 9.8 million mothers in the single-parent role.

Overall, single-parent families have increased in number in the past three years and now account for 27 percent of all families with children, the report said.

Research has found that children raised by single parents - male or female - are more at risk for dropping out of school, getting into trouble with



the law or suffering emotional problems. Little research has been done on differences between children raised by single moms and single dads.

But statistics suggest that single fathers enjoy some important advantages over single mothers. They have higher incomes, on average. They are more likely to have someone else in the house helping with - or providing - child care, such as a mother, girlfriend or sister, census figures show.

Although it is tempting to view the fatherhood movement as one more chapter in the battle of the sexes, some say it will be good for women, too.

"The implications for mothers are huge," said James Levine, director of the Fatherhood Project at the Families and Work Institute in New York. "To the extent that we begin to recognize fathers as members of two-parent families, we're actually going to be helping mothers - helping them out of the double bind, where they are now expected to be in the workforce but also have major responsibility for the kids."

The new census figures also show that a rising share of single fathers taking care of their children have never married - 35 percent. (Among single mothers, it's already a majority.) Among fathers of children younger than 6, it's a majority. This reflects the growing rate of out-of-wedlock births, experts say, and to a lesser degree the rising number of single-parent adoptions.

- [Back to Top](#)
- [Discuss this issue in the National Discussion Forum](#)
- [Send a letter to the Editor about this story](#)
- [Back to National indexes](#)

Estimated United States Population:

As of June 1, 1998 270,079,000
 As of June 1, 1997 267,684,000

Data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, monthly estimates of the U.S. population. Totals include armed forces overseas.

Estimated World Population:

As of August 1998 5,933,000,000
 Annual growth 84,000,000

Extrapolated from the mid-1998 population on PRB's 1998 World Population Data Sheet.

Latest Provisional Statistics for the U.S.: December 1997

	12 months ending with December			
	Number		Rate	
	1997	1996	1997	1996
Live births	3,882,000	3,899,000	14.5	14.7
Fertility rate	—	—	65.0	65.4
Deaths	2,294,000	2,311,000	8.6	8.7
Infant deaths	27,000	28,100	7.0	7.2
Natural increase	1,588,000	1,588,000	5.9	6.0
Marriages	2,384,000	2,344,000	8.9	8.8
Divorces	1,163,000	1,150,000	4.3	4.3

Note: Fertility rate is given per 1,000 women ages 15-44; infant deaths per 1,000 live births; other rates per 1,000 population.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, vol. 46, no. 12 (1998).

VOL 26 NO. 9
 September 1998

Population Today is published 11 times a year by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB). Founded in 1929, PRB is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the dissemination of objective demographic information. The views and opinions of *Population Today's* contributors do not necessarily reflect those of PRB.

Demographic Editors:

Carl Haub and Kelvin Pollard
Assistant Editor: Rebecca Silvis
Director of Publications: Ellen Carnevale
Graphic Designer: Heather Lilley
Circulation Director: Jacki Majewski

Editorial and Circulation Offices:

Population Reference Bureau
 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 520
 Washington, DC 20009-5728
 Phone: (202) 483-1100; Fax: (202) 328-3937
 E-mail: poptoday@prb.org
 Web site: www.prb.org

Reprint Permission: Material from *Population Today* may be reproduced free of charge for classroom or noncommercial use; give credit to "Population Today, Population Reference Bureau" and send a copy of the publication in which the material appears to PRB. For other uses, write to Permissions at PRB.

Back Issues: Available in limited quantities, \$2 each.

Address Changes: Send current PRB address label and new address; allow eight weeks.

©1998 by Population Reference Bureau
 ISSN 0749-2448

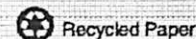
PRB Membership

In addition to *Population Today*, PRB members receive annually four in-depth *Population Bulletins*, and the *World Population Data Sheet*.

Individual	\$49
Educator*	39
Student/senior*	34
Library/nonprofit organizations	64
Other organizations	225

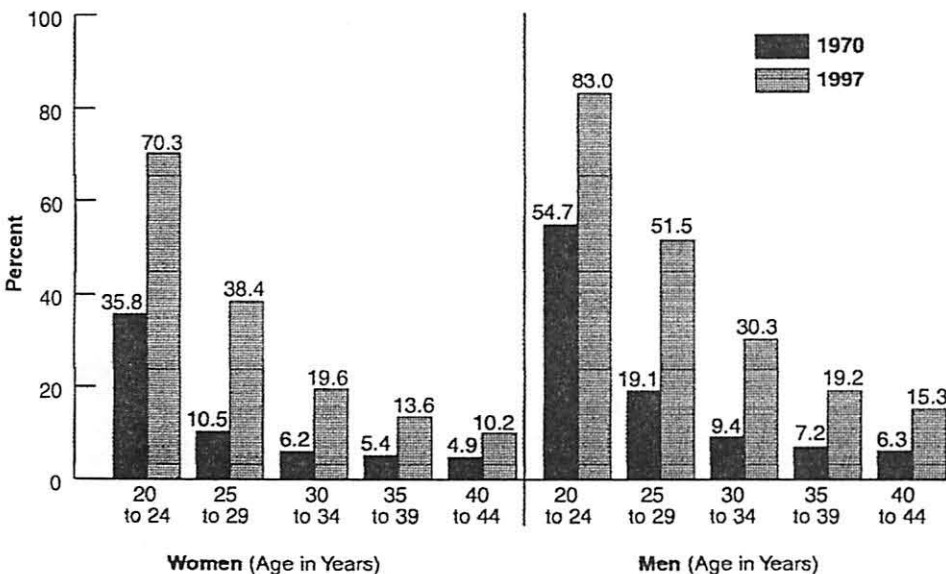
Note: Members with addresses outside the United States should add \$15 for international postage and handling.

* Educators, students, and seniors should send supporting documentation.



SPEAKING GRAPHICALLY

Percent of Adults Who Have Never Been Married, By Age and Sex, 1970 and 1997



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The number of adults who have never been married has more than doubled, from 21.4 million in 1970 to 45.9 million in 1997. The steepest increases in the proportion never married are for men and women in their late 20s and early 30s. For example, the proportion of women between the ages of 25 and 29 who have never married has more than tripled, from 10.5 percent in 1970 to 38.4 percent in 1997. For men in this age group, the percentage has more than doubled, from 19.1 percent to 51.5 percent.

Table 3. Provisional number of marriages and divorces: Each division and State, December 1997 and 1998, and cumulative figures, 1996-98

[By State of occurrence. Divorces include reported annulments]

Area	Marriages					Divorces				
	December		January -	December		December		January -	December	
	1996	1997	1998	1997	1996	1998	1997	1998	1997	1996
New England	6,027	5,816	90,362	100,134	95,694	3,961	3,689	44,016	43,522	38,168
Maine	535	575	10,494	10,832	10,213	527	619	5,132	4,549	4,551
New Hampshire	1,091	801	7,745	10,135	9,720	596	400	7,021	5,601	5,001
Vermont	356	306	5,853	6,096	5,923	185	262	2,559	2,779	2,490
Massachusetts	2,474	2,574	39,219	42,404	40,694	1,899	1,386	16,524	16,185	16,996
Rhode Island	355	405	7,515	8,075	7,828	252	284	3,165	3,162	3,228
Connecticut	1,216	1,155	19,936	22,592	21,426	402	738	9,815	11,246	10,530
Middle Atlantic	21,005	21,774	238,528	306,485	274,124	8,179	10,629	109,585	129,735	124,200
New York 1/	11,915	11,303	115,828	172,808	152,263	3,775	4,849	45,781	65,500	60,826
New Jersey	7,014	5,699	48,400	56,410	51,688	2,143	2,206	25,295	25,537	25,048
Pennsylvania	2,076	4,772	74,198	77,267	70,173	2,261	3,574	38,509	38,698	38,328
East North Central	22,174	23,021	305,852	315,506	327,558	12,368	13,118	143,138	142,928	141,098
Ohio	7,316	8,263	85,607	86,217	82,844	3,558	4,432	46,042	47,211	44,638
Indiana	2,875	2,643	34,566	31,949	49,198	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	5,590	6,642	84,533	94,808	90,178	3,808	4,024	40,549	40,007	40,442
Michigan	4,843	3,994	66,089	66,817	69,091	3,508	3,368	38,882	38,623	39,690
Wisconsin	1,450	1,479	35,057	35,715	36,247	1,494	1,296	17,665	17,087	17,328
West North Central	8,714	8,467	143,646	141,893	148,239	7,015	6,329	72,409	72,977	74,098
Minnesota	2,016	1,710	32,197	32,234	33,185	1,793	1,728	15,319	15,439	15,211
Iowa	1,228	1,085	23,540	22,120	23,832	714	737	9,546	9,807	9,896
Missouri	2,851	2,801	43,795	43,585	46,102	2,110	2,213	25,799	25,257	26,253
North Dakota	198	163	4,206	4,327	5,029	197	151	2,087	2,048	2,242
South Dakota	304	427	6,710	6,898	6,728	281	271	2,591	2,746	2,732
Nebraska	629	825	12,320	12,459	12,762	465	452	6,376	6,216	6,091
Kansas	1,388	1,458	20,878	20,370	20,801	1,475	777	10,891	11,464	11,673
South Atlantic	34,981	31,137	425,442	458,186	441,884	20,069	18,187	227,474	231,440	225,025
Delaware	290	316	5,028	5,365	5,198	247	183	3,373	2,940	3,347
Maryland	3,627	2,787	37,515	41,632	41,781	2,004	1,251	16,397	15,145	16,323
District of Columbia	423	259	2,372	3,757	3,360	153	180	1,096	1,180	1,444
Virginia	4,653	4,823	64,271	67,402	65,406	3,322	3,104	29,965	31,322	28,647
West Virginia	920	536	11,738	10,580	11,088	1,091	772	9,314	9,607	8,024
North Carolina	4,566	4,197	63,798	64,507	61,902	2,496	2,778	36,832	36,791	35,877
South Carolina	4,131	2,487	41,494	42,077	43,136	1,084	1,061	14,608	15,244	15,236
Georgia	4,189	4,016	59,783	61,915	60,092	3,050	2,353	35,753	36,259	35,909
Florida	12,172	11,716	139,463	160,951	149,941	6,622	6,505	80,138	82,952	80,218

Provisional Tables on Birth, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/datawh/statab/unpubd/nvsrtabl.htm>



- About NCHS
- News Releases and Fact Sheets
- What's New
- Publications and Information Products
- Coming Events
- Data Warehouse
- FASTATS A to Z
- NCHS Web Search
- How to...
- FASTATS
- and Other Sites
- Employment
- Frequently Asked Questions
- E-mail
- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Surveys and Data Collection Systems

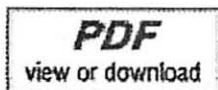
Provisional Tables On Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths

Detailed tables prepared by the Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics, include numbers and rates for births, deaths (including infant deaths), marriages, and divorces by State. For discussion of the nature, sources, and limitations of provisional data from the National Vital Statistics System, see the Technical notes of the associated monthly report from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/products/pubs/pubd/nvsr/nvsr.htm>

NOTE: All files are in **PDF** format and require the **Adobe Acrobat Reader (tm)** to view and download.

Births and Deaths

Provisional Births and Deaths by State



47M21 Table 1. Provisional Births and Deaths by State, 1996-1998

20 KB (This table can be viewed only with Adobe Acrobat 3.0.)



Vol 47, No. 17

The Real Golden Girls:
The Prevalence and Policy Treatment
of Midlife and Older People
Living in Nontraditional Households

By

Deborah Chalfie

A publication of the
Women's Initiative

Office of Special Activities
American Association of Retired Persons
601 E Street, NW • Washington, DC 20049

© 1995, American Association of Retired Persons
Reprint with permission only.

Executive Summary

The Golden Girls is a popular television situation comedy, now in syndication, about four midlife and older women who share a home with each other. More than that, they share their lives with each other; they consider themselves to be a family. Like the rest of the population, the number of midlife and older people living in what may be considered "nontraditional" households (households composed of unrelated persons, nonlinear relatives, and skipped generations) has grown substantially over last 25 years, and this growth is expected to continue as the baby boom generation ages.

Although midlife and older people choose to live in nontraditional households for most of the same reasons as younger people (companionship, to reduce living expenses, to share life with a partner, or to care for extended family members), circumstances associated with aging can provide an additional impetus for nontraditional living arrangements. And these age-related circumstances — widowhood or a late-life divorce, the onset of disability or frailty, and the fixed, reduced income that accompanies retirement — are ones that more heavily impact women. Older women are far more likely to live alone and in poverty than older men and thus have the most to gain by considering nontraditional living arrangements.

The benefits of living with others can include reduced living expenses, reduced isolation and loneliness, increased safety and security, assistance with household chores, and health-related care when illness or disability occurs. For the individual, this can mean a higher quality of life and an enhanced ability to stay independent longer — to "age in place" instead of living in a nursing care facility. For the rest of society, this can mean less money spent on expensive long-term care services and facilities, reduced demand for social services and public benefits, more efficient use and better maintenance of housing stock, and the intangible benefits of having older people residing and involved in the community.

Because nontraditional households are increasing in number and offer one strategy for better addressing the needs of an aging population (especially older women), the AARP Women's Initiative conducted a year-long research project to document the incidence of midlife and older people living in "nontraditional" households and how they are treated under public policy. Although the Women's Initiative was most interested in the living arrangements of midlife and older women, whose situation is highlighted in this report, the study examined both women and men. The units of analysis are midlife (age 45-64) and older (age 65 and up) *persons*, and *households* containing at least one midlife or older person, which are referred to as *midlife and older nontraditional households*.

3. Roommates and Unmarried Partners

According to published reports about the decennial census, there were a total of 3,187,772 unmarried partner households in the U.S. in 1990.⁶⁵ Of these, 95 percent (3,042,642) were opposite-sex partner households and 5 percent were same-sex partner households (145,130), of which 56 percent were all-male and 44 percent all-female.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, these figures are not broken out by age, and there are no figures reported for housemates/roommates, even though these data were collected.

Published reports of more recent data from the Current Population Survey are broken out by age. But because partners and roommates are combined into one response category in that survey, CPS researchers can only estimate the number of cohabiting couples, which they have chosen to do by deeming as "partners" any household consisting of two unrelated adults (with or without children), even though many of them may in fact be roommates, boarders, or live-in employees. Using this method, the 1993 CPS found an estimated total of 5,019,000 unmarried partner households of all ages.⁶⁷ In 14 percent (702,000) of these partner households,

⁶⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, 1990 CP-2-1, *Social and Economic Characteristics: United States*, Table 16, p. 16 (November 1993).

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ Arlene Saluter, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-478, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1993*, Table 8, p. 71 (May 1994).

the householder was between 45 and 64 years old, and in 5 percent (254,000) the householder was 65 or older.⁶⁸

CPS researchers believe that this "proxy" method has provided reasonably accurate estimates, at least of opposite-sex partner households.⁶⁹ Published CPS reports estimated there were 3,510,00 (70 percent) opposite-sex partner households in 1993⁷⁰ (a seven-fold increase since 1970⁷¹), a number close to the 3,042,642 opposite-sex partner households found in the 1990 Census. It should be noted, however, that by using this method, the CPS finds substantially more same-sex partner households than the Census did. The 1993 CPS reports there are 1,509,000 same-sex partner households,⁷² whereas the 1990 Census found only 145,130 same-sex partner households. It is likely that the 1990 Census undercounts gay and lesbian partner households. It is also likely that the CPS's "proxy" method exaggerates them, and that the real number is somewhere in between.

NUMBER OF ROOMMATES AND UNMARRIED PARTNERS

Consistent with the findings reported for the other types of nontraditional households, the following statistical estimates of midlife and older partners and roommates are based on the unpublished 1992 CPS data. As noted earlier in the discussion of methodology, however, the CPS does not differentiate between partners and roommates; they are combined into one response category. Separate partner and roommate estimates were obtained, therefore, by applying differentiated percentages found in the 1990 Census to the total number of midlife and older partner/roommates found in the CPS.

Accordingly, over a million and a half (1,609,589) midlife and older persons live in 969,786 partner/roommate households. This number represents about 17 percent of all midlife and older persons who live in nontraditional households, but only 2 percent of all midlife and older persons as a group. An estimated 55 percent (885,274) live with a partner (in 543,080 households), 44 percent (708,219) live with roommates (in 417,008 households), and one percent (16,096) live with both partners and roommates. (See Table 6.) Most (72 percent, or 702,224) midlife and older partner/roommate households contain only two persons.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *See, id.*, pp. vii-viii.

⁷⁰ *Id.*, Table 8, p. 71.

⁷¹ *Id.*, Table D, p. ix.

⁷² *Id.*, Table 8, p. 71.

Table 6
 Estimate of Midlife and Older (45+)
 Partners and Roommates

(N=1,609,589 persons)

	Percentages
Partners	55%
Same-sex	7
Women	52
Men	48
Opposite-sex	93
Roommate	44%
Same-sex	49
Women	56
Men	44
Opposite-sex	51
Both	1%

Source: Unpublished data, 1992 Current Population Survey

Of those midlife and older people who live with roommates, roughly half (51 percent, or 361,192) have roommates of the opposite sex and half (49 percent, or 347,027) have roommates of the same sex. Of the latter, an estimated 193,151 are midlife and older women living with women roommates, like the *Golden Girls* on television.

Partner households are overwhelmingly composed of opposite-sex partners. Of those midlife and older people who live with partners, 93 percent (823,305) live with partners of the opposite sex and 7 percent (61,969) live with partners of the same sex. Of the midlife and older persons with same-sex partners, a little more than half (52 percent, or 32,192) are women with women partners and 48 percent (29,777) are men with men partners.

AGE

The vast majority of midlife and older persons living in partner/roommate households are midlife aged. (See Table 7.) More than half (54 percent, or 864,011) are age 45-54 and another 25 percent (405,415) are age 55-64; the rest, 21 percent (340,163) are 65 or older. The average age of midlife and older persons in partner/roommate households is 56 (the median age is 53), making them the youngest household type among midlife and older nontraditional households.

Table 7
Demographic Characteristics of Midlife and Older (45+)
Partners/Roommates
(N=1,609,589 persons)

Characteristic	Percentage
Sex	
Women	42%
Men	58
Age	
45-64	79
45-54	54
55-64	25
65+	21
Mean Age	56
Marital Status	
Married	4
Separated	7
Divorced	51
Widowed	15
Never married	23
Race/Ethnicity	
White	78
Black	19
Asian/Pacific Islander	2
American Indian	1
Hispanic*	7
Education	
Less than high school	26
High school diploma	36
Some college	18
College degree+	20
Poverty Status	
Below poverty level	20
Near-poor (100-149% of poverty level)	13
At or above 150% of poverty level	68
Median household income	\$38,099

* People of Hispanic origin can be of any race, therefore percentages do not total 100%.

Source: Unpublished data, 1992 Current Population Survey

Midlife and older partner/roommate households are the least likely type of nontraditional household to contain children under age 18, yet 15 percent (146,853) of them do.

SEX

Few midlife and older women (2 percent) and men (3 percent) live with a partner or roommates. Fifty-eight percent (936,972) of the 45+ persons in partner/roommate households are men and 42 percent (672,618) are women. Moreover, three-fourths of all midlife and older partner/roommate households are mixed-sex households, 11 percent (110,461) are all-female, and 14 percent (131,594) are all-male.

MARITAL STATUS

The vast majority of midlife and older persons living in partner/roommate households are either divorced (51 percent) or never married (23 percent). Fifteen percent are widowed. Further, divorced and widowed men 45 and older are far more likely than divorced and widowed women this age to live with a partner or roommate. Sixteen percent (492,703) of all divorced men 45 and older live in a partner/roommate household, compared to only 7 percent (323,148) of all divorced midlife and older women. Similarly, 4 percent of all widowed men 45+ and one percent of all widowed women 45+ live with a partner or roommate. Eleven percent (232,602) of all midlife and older never-married men and 7 percent (135,051) of all midlife and older never-married women live with a partner or roommate.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Midlife and older partner/roommate households are most likely to be white: 78 percent of these households are all-white, 15 percent are all-black, and 5 percent contain a mix of races; 5 percent are all-Hispanic. Of those midlife and older persons who live in nontraditional households, equal proportions (about 18 percent) of whites, blacks, and American Indians live with a partner or roommate. Persons of Hispanic and Asian descent, on the other hand, are noticeably less likely to live with a partner or roommate.

EDUCATION

Midlife and older persons in partner/roommate households are the best-educated of all types of nontraditional households studied, and they are as well-educated as their counterparts in traditional households. Twenty percent (325,501) of

midlife and older partners/roommates have a college degree or higher and another 18 percent (291,266) have at least some college. Only 26 percent (418,436) did not finish high school.

INCOME

Consistent with their higher levels of education, partner/roommate households are fairly well-off financially. Their income distribution approximates that of midlife and older traditional households; only extended family households appear better off. Midlife and older partner/roommates have a median household income of more than \$38,000. Still, one-fifth (20 percent, or 315,035) of midlife and older partner/roommates are poor, and another 13 percent (202,931) are near-poor.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Compared to traditional households, midlife and older partner/roommate households are significantly more likely to be located in the West and significantly less likely to be located in the South or Midwest. For instance, 29 percent of midlife and older partner/roommate households are in the West, compared to only 20 percent of traditional households. In addition, midlife and older partner/roommate households are significantly less likely than other kinds of nontraditional households to be found in small towns. Only 18 percent of all midlife and older partner/roommate households are located in areas with populations under 100,000.

4. Miscellaneous Midlife and Older Nontraditional Households

The category of miscellaneous nontraditional households includes all of the midlife and older nontraditional households that don't fit into any of the other categories. Because all relationships are identified in reference to the householder, it is difficult to know the precise types of living arrangements represented in this category. However, it is safe to assume that it encompasses service-based arrangements such as live-in attendants or household services exchanged for rent-free living quarters, rentals of rooms (or possibly accessory apartments) to tenants, and an assortment of other kinds of households.⁷³

⁷³ Excluded are "group quarters" and institutional living arrangements such as nursing homes, prisons, dormitories, and hotels, which are excluded from the Current Population Survey. See, text accompanying notes 42-43, *supra*.

High Cost of Living Is Pushing Florida Seniors to Share a Roof

By Jonathan P. Decker

In a tiny one-bedroom apartment just a block away from the beach, octogenarians Martin Silverman and Paula Clark plan to live their remaining years together.

He does the food shopping and runs the errands. She does the cooking and cleans their rooms crammed with momentos from previous lives in the Northeast.

The couple met four years ago at a Miami Beach senior center and soon decided to share a roof.

"It wasn't love or anything like that," says Mrs. Clark, a widow who was married more than 50 years to the same man. "Our relationship is strictly platonic. We moved in out of simple economics: It's cheaper to live with a roommate."

The phenomenon of seniors living together may conjure up images of the "Golden Girls," the popular 1980s television sit-com. But it's not just women or couples sharing quarters. Half of all couples living together are "golden guys," according to one study.

Unmarried couples older than 45 are the fastest growing type of household both in Florida and across the nation, says a new report from the US Census Bureau. If Medicare reforms boost premiums, tighter personal finances may accelerate the trend of seniors sharing quarters, notes one researcher.

Already, their numbers have quadrupled since 1980 to 1.2 million people nationwide.

In Florida, where nearly 1 in 4 people is over age 60, about 50,000 seniors have chosen to spend their golden years together. "It's a major cultural phenomenon, and it could drastically transform elderly care in the future," says Larry Polivka, director of the Florida Policy Center on Aging at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

"As more older people live together and care for one another, it may even reduce the need for nursing homes."

Nationally, most seniors sharing quarters live in the South. And south Florida, in particular, with its large elderly population, has become a proving ground for this type of living arrangement.

Some seniors do it to save money. Others do it for platonic companionship. Still others give the same reason that some of their children and grandchildren use: They love each other, but are not quite ready for marriage.

But even those who want a legal union often say they can't afford it.

Glenn Daniels and Lynn Martell have lived together in Hallandale for the past three years. They have wrestled with the moral challenges of what they call "living in sin."

(continued on next page)

Each divorced, the two have considered marriage, but so far have discarded the option. It's not for a lack of commitment, but rather a reduction in income.

"We live mostly on welfare and disability payments," says Mr. Daniels, who used to own an appliance-repair business in the Midwest. "Under the federal guidelines, if we were to get married, our payments would be reduced."

"Marriage, no matter how much I believe in it as an institution, is just not economically feasible."

But even those who choose to live together and remain unmarried often face legal and financial challenges.

While many insurance companies and employers have begun to make their plans available to same-sex couples, no plans exist for the "elderly senior roommate" demographic group.

Couples like Daniels and Mrs. Martell also don't have the right to decide medical treatment for each other at most hospitals because of the lack of a lineal or matrimonial relationship. For that same reason, they are often denied medical visitation rights in some circumstances.

"It's also not clear whether federal housing and discrimination laws cover them," says Joyce Winslow, a spokeswoman for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in Washington. Elderly couples who want to purchase a home together, for example, often run into obstacles.

"Mortgage lenders tend to shun group homes, and there's very little that can be done about it legally," says Ms. Winslow at the AARP.

With unmarried elderly couples growing in numbers daily and with baby boomers fast approaching their golden years, the AARP has taken up their cause.

A study on the subject was recently completed for the national elderly group, and its findings have been made available to federal, state, and local governments.

One of the AARP findings is that while many people may think of a couple like Daniels and Martell when discussing elderly roommates, "golden guys" actually make up 50 percent of these nontraditional households.

"For elderly males living as roommates, the medical care problems are magnified," Winslow says. "Very few hospitals will allow one best friend to make an important medical decision for another friend."

While the government, insurance companies, and hospitals decide what legal status should be given to unmarried couples older than 45, this fast growing demographic group shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, the pace may quicken.

"In Florida, where the proposed changes to Medicare would affect nearly 1 of 5 residents, more seniors will be forced to live together out of economic necessity," says Mr. Polivka. "The higher premiums and deductibles for recipients that are envisioned by Congress may make living alone a hardship for many retirees."

* * *

2.3% of U.S. Men in Survey Report Homosexual Acts

By **BOYCE RENSBERGER**
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—A comprehensive new survey of the sexual behaviors and attitudes of American men in their 20s and 30s has found that just 2.3%—far less than the 10% figure usually cited—say they have ever had sex with another man, and that 1.1% report being exclusively homosexual.

The figures in the federally funded study, released Wednesday by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, are far less than the 10% homosexuality figure commonly attributed to the landmark Kinsey report published in 1948.

The new survey also found:

- The median number of female sex partners the men said they had ever had was 7.3. Slightly more than 23% said they have had 20 or more partners, and 28% said they had one, two or three. Only 4.6% said they had never had vaginal intercourse.

- Three-quarters of the men agree with the statement that using a condom "shows you are a caring person," whereas 15% say it "makes your partner think you have AIDS."

Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1993

- About one-quarter of the men said they had used a condom in the four weeks before the interview. Black men were more likely to report using condoms (38%) than were white men (25%).

The findings, published in the journal *Family Planning Perspectives*, are among hundreds obtained in one of the largest studies of male sexual behavior ever undertaken.

The researchers got a \$1.8-million grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to conduct the survey in an effort to find ways to encourage condom use and stop the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Although the survey's finding of homosexual behavior among 1% to 2% of respondents is at variance with the popularly repeated figure of 10%, it agrees with several previous surveys in this country, Britain and France.

Robert Bray, a spokesman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said nobody really knows how many homosexuals there are, but he challenged the study's figures as too low. Bray said many gay men are reluctant to identify themselves as homosexual to interviewers.

Among other findings from the survey:

- Although the median number of female sex partners was 7.3 for all men in this age group, it was lowest among married men (5.3) and highest among the formerly married (14.7). Among men who have never married, who tend to be younger, it was 8.1.

- The men surveyed reported having vaginal intercourse an average of about once a week; but 22.5% say they have such sex 10 or more times a week.

The Delicate Business of Conducting Sex Surveys

■ **Honesty: Contradictions** between the results of a new poll and earlier studies prove at least one thing—we don't always tell the truth about our most intimate moments.

By LYNN SMITH
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Ever since the 1953 Kinsey Report, conventional wisdom has held that 10% of the U.S. population is gay. Forty years later, the Janus Report stated that 22% of American men had had a homosexual experience, but last week the Alan Guttmacher Institute reported that figure is only 2.3%.

Likewise, the public has heard conflicting reports on infidelity, the practice of safe sex and the prevalence of rape.

Does anyone really know the truth? Knowledge about sexual behavior has become an urgent matter in the United States, with widespread concern over AIDS, abortion and teen-age pregnancy. But while sex surveys have become more common, sophisticated and accurate than ever before, the art of turning intimate acts into scientific data remains . . . delicate.

Today researchers can ask difficult personal questions that would have been unthinkable in years past, such as "Have you had anal intercourse? With men? With women?" But they acknowledge such questions can also skew a survey by either repelling or attracting participants, or embarrassing people into fudging.

"You always wonder: Are you getting over-reporting, or under-reporting?" said Kristin A. Moore, executive director of Child Trends, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization. With the exception of questions regarding abortion, which can be independently verified, "you don't have a way to tell."

Scientifically valid studies of sexual behavior, with samples that represent all groups, did not begin until the mid-1980s. So far, there have been only a half-dozen "good studies," said Tom Smith, director of the General Social Survey at the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center. The General Social Survey has been tracking trends in American society since 1972.

Pioneer sex researcher Alfred Kinsey published "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" in 1948 and "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female" in 1953 based on face-to-face interviews with 5,300 men and 5,940 women, all Anglos, in the United States and Canada chosen by "quota sampling and opportunistic collection."

The "Janus Report on Sexual Behavior," conducted between 1988 and 1992 by sex counselor Samuel Janus and his wife Cynthia, a physician, used written questionnaires and 125 interviews with 2,765 men and women, chosen to approximate a cross section of the United States.

In 1991, the Alan Guttmacher Institute's National Survey of Men studied 3,321 men, ages 20-39, in a population-based, nationally representative survey.

Today's researchers believe their numbers are more reliable than Kinsey's, or those that appear in men's and women's magazines, because they try to systematically account for geographical, ethnic, social and economic variables. Most of the current research on sexual behavior involves face-to-face interviews—and interviewers are trained extensively. And even though the sex researchers have only a fraction of the experience of, say, unemployment researchers in refining their questions, they're working on improvements.

One of the major hurdles they encounter is honesty.

When people understand the medical or public health reasons for a sex survey, most of them respond honestly, researchers said. But some do not.

By checking reports from hospitals and clinics, researchers know women under-report their abortions by as much as 50%, Smith said. Most assume the women are afraid the interviewer will think less of them if they admit to having had one or more abortions. Other researchers speculate the women are afraid word will leak out to their friends or family. Some wonder if the women don't even want to remember it themselves.

Homosexuality is also thought to be under-reported, but no one knows by how much.

Researchers suspect single men may over-report how often they use condoms because they want the interviewer to think they are socially responsible, Smith said.

Other researchers believe some men tend to exaggerate or "round up" the number of their sexual experiences.

If you ask men and women about sexual partners, men report more than women, said Kathryn London, a demographer with the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Md. "Theoretically, the number of partners should average out."

But Smith said his research shows the opposite. He asked groups of husbands and groups of wives how often they had sex, and the wives said they had sex more often than the husbands.

Particularly troublesome to social scientists are questions of infidelity, rape and sexual harassment, Smith said.

It has been widely reported that one in three women have been raped. Smith said official crime statistics of 2 to 4% are "clearly way low," but one-in-three has not been scientifically established.

Not only might different people have different definitions of sexual encounters, but their answers vary widely depending on how the question is asked or who is asking, researchers said.

One reason Kinsey's 10% on gays figure is off, Smith said, is that the question was limiting. Kinsey researchers asked whether men were exclusively homosexual for three or four years as an adult. "He has another figure, which is only 4%, when asking if they were exclusively homosexual" over their lifetime, Smith said. "He has other numbers, which are higher, in the 30s, asking whether they ever had any homosexual experience at all."

The Janus Report asked, "Did you ever have a homosexual experience?" Smith said. "Who knows what people have in their minds? If you're a straight guy and a homosexual made a pass at you in a bar, do you count that?"

Since adultery is technically illegal in many states and opinion polls show 75% of people say it's always wrong, Smith said, "We would never ask, 'Have you been unfaithful?'" Instead, he said, researchers ask for the number of sex partners in the last year, then later cross check for marital partners. If the number of partners exceeds one, they can chalk up one infidelity without having to ask.

In an effort to encourage people to talk more frankly and truthfully about their sexual behavior, researchers are experimenting with a variety of techniques.

Interviewers are often trained to put people at ease, assure participants of confidentiality and ask questions in a "value-neutral" way, said John O.G. Billy, senior research scientist at Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers in Seattle, which conducted Guttmacher's National Survey of Men.

Los Angeles Times

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 21, 1993

"You try not to convey the message that it's wrong or right to do this in any way. Mostly you ask them very matter of factly, 'Have you ever engaged in anal intercourse?'" Some interviewers are trained to avoid body language that would indicate disapproval.

Sometimes definitions of the terms oral, anal or vaginal intercourse are placed on cards in front of the respondents to ensure everyone is talking about the same thing.

The National Survey of Men used women to conduct the standard face-to-face interviews. At least one study indicated people are more willing to divulge personal sexual behavior to women than to men, but researchers are unsure of how talking to women affected the reliability of the men's answers.

Occasionally, frauds pose as researchers for prurient reasons, but genuine researchers say they take confidentiality seriously. For instance, Moore said she once had a professor who was willing to risk jail rather than divulge the identity of a sex survey participant. In that case, a student interviewer had been killed and police wondered if the murderer might be someone she met while conducting the survey. The professor refused to divulge her records, but was never called to court since the killer was found elsewhere.

Researchers sometimes use lap-top computers or self-completion forms so that people can answer the questions alone. They can mail the survey back to an office where it is opened by someone who knows nothing about the respondent. "They are just asked numbers: three partners, five times a week, whatever," Smith said. "That is well demonstrated to greatly improve accuracy and truthfulness. [Still], it doesn't guarantee everyone tells you the truth."

Researchers said the worst surveys are those conducted by men's and women's magazines, although their figures may be picked up in the general press. Those surveys are inherently biased by the readership and the voluntary nature of the participants. "In case of sexual behavior samples, you get a profile much more sexually active and adventurous than the average citizen," Smith said.

In some cases, the biases are "enormous," Smith said. Consider the 1976 Hite Report, which concluded that 75% of married women were unfaithful to their husbands. Author Shere Hite did not use a representative sample; she mailed out 100,000 surveys and about 4,000 were returned, a rate well below that of a well-conducted study. "No other study gives a number anywhere near [the 75%]," Smith said. The highest number is 50% even in other "bad studies," he said.

Researchers believe their sex studies are becoming increasingly accurate because they are starting to obtain similar results with similar methods.

For instance, although the National Survey of Men's findings surprised many (and angered some), they were supported by four previous recent studies in Europe and the U.S. Smith said. His own figures show there are very few "lifetime homosexuals," he said.

These new studies suggest that 93% of the 98% of the adult population that has had sexual experience is exclusively heterosexual, 6% is bisexual, and 1% is exclusively homosexual, he said.



your Document



Out of the closet.

SUMMARY

The gay market is becoming more visible and more diverse. Gays and lesbians are leaving city enclaves for the suburbs, gay men differ from lesbian women, and older homosexuals differ from the younger generation. But thanks to the strong ties gay and lesbian consumers maintain via word-of-mouth networks and specialized media, it's still easy to reach this affluent and loyal market.

The gay and lesbian market is an untapped goldmine. Because gays are highly educated and usually have no dependents, they have high levels of disposable income. Geographic concentration and a strong word-of-mouth network make them easy to reach. And because these consumers are disenfranchised from mainstream society, they are open to overtures from marketers.

Relatively little is known about how gay and lesbian consumers react to marketing and advertising targeted specifically to them. Research directors at large corporations will not find the standard off-the-shelf research products they normally use to evaluate potential markets, nor will they find the usual infrastructure in the research community that can direct them in formulating their own projects. In other words, merely recognizing this market does not guarantee success with it.

It's useful to see the gay and lesbian market as similar to an immigrant market. Like immigrants, homosexuals are birds of a feather. They stick together, support each other, and vote for each other. Like immigrants, they often start their own businesses because they find it difficult to find appropriate employment within the mainstream community. Like immigrants, they are proud of their distinctiveness but fear being branded as different. In addition, gay men and lesbian women exhibit all the characteristics of an immigrant tribe. They have distinctive mores and fashions, language, signs, symbols, gathering places, and enclaves. If gays are like immigrants, marketers who study them must think like anthropologists. It helps to begin by considering nine basic questions:

1. How big is the market?

Over the past three decades, researchers guided by ingenuity and personal agendas have offered wildly varied estimates of the numbers of gay men and lesbian women in the United States. Working in the 1940s and 1950s, Dr. Alfred Kinsey estimated that 10 percent of men and 5 percent of women were homosexual, equating to almost 19 million Americans today. However, his work has been largely discredited in the past few years.

More recent estimates range from about 4 percent to 6 percent of the adult population. In 1985, Griffitt and Hatfield, authors of *Human Sexual Behavior*, placed their estimates at 7 percent of men and 4 percent of women, or about 14 million Americans. The Advocate, a national gay magazine, places the number at 10 million self-identified homosexuals nationwide, or 4 percent of adults. In 1994, the Yankelovich MONITOR estimated the gay population at about 6 percent, and Tom Smith of the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago classifies 5 to 6 percent of the adult population as homosexual or bisexual.

Many estimates of the homosexual population are largely based on self-identification through survey questions that explicitly ask about sexual orientation. Others are based on the assumption that certain behaviors, such as subscribing to gay publications or making charitable contributions to gay organizations, are indicators of homosexuality.

2. Why is self-identification a problem?

The problem of self-identification is not unique to those investigating the gay market, but it's still an important issue. Quite simply, how does one ask the question, and what does one assume about the accuracy of the response? People are not always willing to share personal information, especially when it is gathered over the telephone by a stranger.

To counteract this negative bias, researchers are developing and refining batteries of behavioral and geographical indicators to more efficiently and effectively identify gay consumers. For instance, analyses of ticket sales for the gay-themed play *Angels in America* and other gay mailing lists point to gay neighborhoods in the New York area. Not surprisingly, both types of sources reveal large gay populations in well-known areas of Manhattan like the West Village and Chelsea. Interestingly, above-average numbers also appear in less well-known gay areas, such as the Upper West Side and even certain neighborhoods on the Upper East Side. Such methods aren't foolproof, of course, but they can at least serve the purpose of corroborating each other's nonrobust results.

3. What media do gays use and what do they buy?

Currently, no body of research exists to provide indices of product or media usage in the homosexual community. However, Simmons Market Research Bureau has linked readership of gay publications with purchase behavior. Readers of gay magazines and newspapers are more likely than average to buy many discretionary items, from sparkling water to consumer electronics and health-club memberships.

This upscale profile indicates a level of affluence borne out by linking readership with demographic characteristics. Seven percent of readers of gay publications have doctoral degrees, compared with less than 1 percent of the general population. Median household income for this group was \$51,300 in 1992, compared with \$30,050 for all U.S. households. This figure may actually underestimate the spending power of gay men, because only one-third live with a partner. Many are in single-person households, which makes their income level all the more impressive. The evidence suggests that gay men have a great deal of discretionary income, especially for travel. The drawback to measuring consumer behavior through gay publications is that lesbian women don't tend to read them.

4. How do the markets differ for gay men and lesbian women?

Describing the "gay" market as a whole overlooks profound distinctions between gay men and lesbian women. Not only are their purchasing patterns quite different, their attitudes and psychology have culminated in vastly divergent lifestyles. Lesbian women tend to concentrate in more rural areas, while gay men are much more likely to be urban. Even in well-known gay towns such as New York City and San Francisco, lesbians occupy distinct neighborhoods outside of known gay "ghettos." In New York, a voter analysis showed strong representation of lesbians in the Park Slope area of Brooklyn. In San Francisco, lesbians congregate in suburban areas like Oakland.

Geographic distinctions are merely the tip of the iceberg. Each of these markets contains a host of submarkets defined by demographic, attitudinal, and ideological factors. It is not enough to identify the "gay market," because the market is not monolithic. Astute marketers will search for the niches within the

market that are most receptive to their product or service.

5. Is there a generation gap within the gay community?

As in any other market, generational differences affect everything from attitudes and values to spending and purchasing patterns. For example, gay men and lesbian women who grew up in more socially constrained times may not react the same way younger people do toward targeted advertising messages. Their social networks and media preferences may also differ significantly from younger generations who are more comfortable with being "out."

6. Is the gay market growing?

Although few reliable data exist, all signs point to the conclusion that this market is growing. It is clear that greater social permissiveness, growing out of the aggressive gay pride movement, has created an increase in "gayness" as more and more men and women come out of the closet and assert their homosexuality. The market is also increasing as homosexual Americans, especially lesbian women, openly develop families, conceive or adopt children, and build quasi-traditional households as they stake their claim to legitimacy on the American scene.

7. Don't gay communities exist only in the biggest cities?

New York and San Francisco are not the only places to find gay men and lesbian women. The people living in these oldest and most established homosexual communities are the cornerstone of the national gay movement, but they represent a shrinking share of the national market. Burgeoning gay neighborhoods in cities like Minneapolis, Cincinnati, and St. Louis are manifestations of the growing importance of gay consumers in smaller cities.

Just as second- and third-generation immigrants leave their ethnic neighborhoods to forge lives in mainstream America, research shows a shift of gay and lesbian households to suburbs like Royal Oak, Michigan, outside of Detroit, and the District of Columbia suburb of Takoma Park, Maryland. According to economist Randall Gross of the Washington, D.C. firm Hammer, Siler and George, gay men and lesbian women are moving out of traditional gay "ghettos," as increasing tolerance if not actual approval makes it easier for them to achieve the same American dream house that nongays prize.

The problem that diffusion poses for marketers is that the gay population may become less readily accessible, partly because suburban residents may be less open about their lifestyles than those who live in close-knit and supportive city enclaves.

8. Will I encounter problems with homo-phobia?

Homophobia is a fact of life. Do not underestimate the resistance you will encounter when you propose a research project about the gay community. There is no reason to believe that homophobia is any less present in the corporate and research communities than it is in the U.S. at large. The bigger the company, the more likely it will be to harbor homophobia somewhere along the line.

As more and more gay people come out, the average consumer is increasingly likely to personally know a gay man or lesbian woman. In fact, there are certain areas in which straight people look to gay men and lesbian women as trend setters and opinion leaders. Even so, marketers have to be careful that their gay marketing efforts do not alienate their straight customers.

Sometimes even the profit motive cannot make a dent in deeply entrenched fears and aversions. In this case, the only hope is that competitors will enter the market first, sweetening the way. Of course, the risk is that the first in will reap the greatest profit and those who jump on the bandwagon will not fare as well with this loyal market.

9. Why bother with the gay market?

Obviously, because it's there. But also because gay men and lesbian women show their gratitude to marketers who have the courage to serve them. In return for what they see as acceptance and respect, gay consumers will go out of their way to patronize these companies. Furthermore, they will actively spread the word through an amazingly efficient network that circulates not only through word of mouth, but through 200 electronic bulletin boards and 105 local and national publications dedicated to America's gay and lesbian population. They will enthusiastically endorse with their pocketbooks the first advertisers to take the leap.

TAKING IT FURTHER

The authors are New York City-based consultants who specialize in reaching gay and lesbian consumers. Contact them at Hazel Kahan Research, (212) 779-7686; and Mulryan/ Nash Advertising, (212) 633-6139. Packaged Facts, a New York City research firm, has released a new study that compiles existing information on gay and lesbian consumers. The study includes estimates of the total population, household income projections, and case studies on reaching the gay market; for more information, contact Jan Stenza at (212) 627-3228. Yankelovich Partners of Norwalk, Connecticut, also has a new report that contains demographic and attitudinal information about gay consumers, based on its MONITOR surveys. For more information, contact Rex Briggs at (203) 846-0100.

Several excellent publications serve gay and lesbian readers. The monthly magazine out offers a good sense of what's important to gays and lesbians, and it also has some research available on its readers. For a media kit, contact Will Guilliams at (212) 334-9119. The Windy City Times, based in Chicago, is one of the oldest and largest weekly newspapers for gays; for reader research and more information, contact Jeff McCourt at (312) 935-1789. One of the best newspapers devoted to lesbian issues is Sappho's Isle, based on Long Island, New York. Contact Jean Sidebottom at (516) 747-5417.

PHOTO (COLOR): GAYS OUT OF THE CLOSET

MAP: East Side, West Side . . .

Source: Mulryan/Nash, New York, NY

MAP: . . . All Around the Town

Source: Jerry Lee Kramer, University of Minnesota

Hazel Kahan and David Mulryan Hazel Kahan is owner of HKR, a New York City-based woman-owned research firm working on several gay and lesbian marketing projects. David Mulryan is principal of Mulryan/Nash, an advertising agency in Manhattan that specializes in reaching the gay market.

Copyright 1995 by American Demographics, Inc. Text may not be copied without the express written permission of American Demographics, Inc.

Kahan, Hazel-Mulryan, David, Out of the closet., Vol. 17, American Demographics, 05-01-1995, pp 40.

[stop](#) [Document Help](#) | [Help Index](#) | [Customer Service](#)



your Document



Study fuels homosexuality debate // Results point to gray areas in definitions

Almost 10% of American men and 6.4% of women have had sex with someone of the same gender at least once in their lives, says a new study.

These numbers, much higher than those in other recent academic surveys, are likely to fuel new debate over how common homosexuality is and how it should be defined.

"It all depends on what your definition of homosexuality is," says Randall Sell, co-author of the study to be presented at the American Statistical Association meetings in Toronto this week. "Using different measures, you come up with different results."

While a few studies ask people whether they consider themselves to be homosexual, most surveys ask about homosexual experiences.

The results often depend on the way the question is worded. Last year, Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers asked about sexual experiences, but only during the past 10 years. The centers found only 2.3% of men had ever had a homosexual experience, prompting headlines that said homosexuality is rarer than believed.

But even studies that ask about sexual experiences over a lifetime can yield different results. A study by the National Opinion Research Center said only 5.2% of men and 4% of women had ever had a homosexual experience.

The new study of 1,834 men and women ages 16 to 50 is based on a 1988 Louis Harris survey that measured homosexuality in several ways, examining attraction to members of the same sex as well as physical encounters.

Among the findings:

-- Only 4.1% of men and 2.3% of women reported having only homosexual sex. Another 3.6% of men and 2.9% of women said they had sexual contact with someone of their same sex rarely, while 1.9% of men and 1.2% of women reported having such contact "fairly often."

-- More than 18% of men and over 17% of women said they had either had sex with someone of the same gender or had felt attracted to someone of the same gender - or both.

-- Almost 9% of men and 11% of women said they'd been attracted to someone of the same sex but never acted on those feelings.

-- One in 10 men and women said they had not had sex with anyone in the past five years.

The size of the gay and lesbian population has been controversial since the 1948 Kinsey study, which yielded a range of numbers - not the often misquoted estimate that 10% of Americans are homosexual.

With the rise of the gay rights movement and the emergence of AIDS, the estimates took on new importance.

The new study is unusual because it attempts to measure homosexual feelings as well as behavior. The approach makes sense, many experts say.

"People have this assumption that there are two clearly defined groups in the population, homosexuals and heterosexuals," says University of Chicago sociologist Stuart Michaels, but "people can be in lots of places on the spectrum."

Agrees NORC researcher Tom Smith: "Sexual orientation is clearly

a continuum . . . for some people it can change over time."

The study's estimate of people who feel attracted to members of the same sex may be too broad. It could include someone who felt a fleeting homosexual attraction and someone with lifelong desires.

"The proportion of persons who are exclusively homosexual throughout their whole lives is quite small in all these studies," Michaels says.

The degree of anonymity provided to survey respondents may also have an impact since social stigmas against homosexuality are strong, says National Gay and Lesbian Task Force spokeswoman Robin Kane.

"Regardless of whether the number is 2% or 20% . . . the issue for us is trying to end discrimination for however many gay and lesbian men and women there are in this country."

Sexual behavior examined


Having had both opposite-sex and same-sex partners is a more common sexual experience than having had only same-sex partners, according to a new study of men and women ages 16 to 50. Also one in 10 Americans reports having had no sexual partners within the past five years.

Sexual experience in the past 5 years

	Men	Women
Same- <u>sex</u> partners only	0.8%	0.3%
Same- and opposite- <u>sex</u> partners	5.4%	3.3%
Opposite- <u>sex</u> partners only	83.9%	86.0%
No sexual partners	9.9%	10.4%
Homosexual experience, attraction since age 15		
	Men	Women
Attraction but no same- <u>sex</u> partners	8.7%	11.0%
Same- <u>sex</u> partners only rarely	3.6%	2.9%
Same- <u>sex</u> partners often	1.9%	1.2%
Same- <u>sex</u> partners exclusively	4.1%	2.3%
Total	18.3%	17.4%

Copyright 1994, USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co., Inc.

Usdansky, Margaret L., Study fuels homosexuality debate // Results point to gray areas in definitions., USA TODAY, 08-17-1994, pp 08.

 [Document Help](#) | [Help Index](#) | [Customer Service](#)



your Document

Go to Best Part Go! begin new Research

Get ALL the Facts: Poll Gays, Too

Get ALL the Facts: Poll Gays, Too

By Gabriel Rotello. Gabriel Rotello is a columnist for The Advocate, a news magazine for the national gay and lesbian community.

HERE'S AN INFALLIBLE prediction about campaign '96: Sure as death and taxes, the American people will be polled to within an inch of our lives and then continuously swamped by an avalanche of data describing every aspect of our collective mood.

Polls will dissect the black vote, the Jewish vote, the Christian vote, the gender gap, the urban vote, the farm vote, the yuppie vote, the angry vote, the happy vote and practically every other vote imaginable. If a candidate goes up or down half a point, trust me, you'll hear about it.

I even predict more of those scary instant polls during TV debates, where people press buttons registering their reaction to every sound bite and we the viewers get to feel the very pulse of the nation throbbing in the electronic ozone. And, of course, there will be polls telling us how we feel about so many polls.

But here's another prediction: Virtually no pollster will waste a nanosecond of computer time analyzing what is arguably one of the most important, cohesive and politically potent slices of today's electorate: the homosexual vote. Pollsters who routinely ask people their religion, their race, their ethnicity, their income and a slew of other highly personal questions will politely ignore sexual orientation.

Although lesbians and gay men have come out of the closet in droves over the last decade and become a potent political force, to most pollsters it's still unthinkable to ask and unspeakable to tell. When pressed, they will argue that the gay vote is too small or too dispersed, that few people vote their sexual orientation, that it's too embarrassing or difficult to ask, that the result might be skewed, or any number of excuses.

But just how ridiculous those excuses have become was made clear by a major new study. It seems that during the '92 and '94 elections, the big TV networks commissioned two national exit polls by the respected firm Voter Research and Surveys, and for the first time ever the firm asked whether people were homosexual. Of the 15,488 people polled, 3.2 percent said they were. Because the respondents were also asked dozens of other questions, the polls provided the first detailed snapshot of the gay electorate.

Problem is, the networks neglected to do anything with the data. It simply languished in their files until it was dug out this year by researcher John D'Emilio of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, who analyzed it and released a study shattering myths about gays and opinion polls.

One myth is that the gay population is too small to poll. In fact, what D'Emilio calls the "self identified gay vote" is about twice the size of the Asian vote, slightly bigger than the farm vote, equal to the Latino vote and only a bit smaller than the Jewish vote. And 3.2 percent is a rock bottom figure, since many gay people would probably not identify themselves to a stranger on the street.

Another myth is that gays are dispersed throughout society, which means their diluted vote could never swing an election. In fact, gay voters are heavily concentrated in urban areas. In cities of between a quarter and half a million, 8.5 percent of voters self identify as gay and in the biggest cities the percentage is into the low teens. According to demographers, political clout is magnified in direct proportion to geographic concentration. In this case, that concentration is especially significant since, as D'Emilio shows, the 11 states where gay voters are the most numerous account for 49 percent of the electoral vote.

Then there's the myth that only the most radical gays vote based on their sexual orientation. In fact, in '92 and '94, few groups voted as cohesively as gays, who stick together like glue whenever social issues dominate a campaign.

As to the question of whether the self-identified gay vote is representative of all homosexuals, the answer is probably not any more than the "Christian vote" is representative of all Christians. What it does represent is a bloc of voters that is often decisively swayed by issues pertaining to its group identity. A pollster couldn't ask more of a group than that.

If the VRS survey shows that gays can easily be included in polls, fairness dictates they should be. After all, politicians routinely make major decisions based on polls, so to be counted out is to be stripped of power. You'd think the only folks who would want to do that to gays are homophobes like Jesse Helms, not the nation's TV networks and new organizations. Here's hoping these results wake them up.

Copyright 1996, Newsday Inc.

Gabriel Rotello, Get ALL the Facts: Poll Gays, Too., Newsday, 05-15-1996, pp A39.

[Help](#) | [Document Help](#) | [Help Index](#) | [Customer Service](#)

Subject: *M*: HRC Poll on Marriage and same-sex couples

Date: Thu, 19 Sep 1996 17:25:27 -0700

From: Ron Buckmire <ron@abacus.oxy.edu>

To: marriage@abacus.oxy.edu

CC: ggbb@abacus.oxy.edu

(excerpt)

An HRC-sponsored poll of 354 gay and lesbians:

A majority of those who identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual say they live now or have lived with a partner in a serious relationship, according to the poll. Nearly half say they are involved in a long-term monogamous relationship and 22 percent say they have children living in their homes, the Human Rights Campaign reported Wednesday.

Just 45 percent ranked same-sex marriage as an important issue for national gay organizations to be pursuing, compared with 81 percent for a nondiscrimination law and 80 percent for more funds to fight AIDS.

RON BUCKMIRE, Ph.D. <http://www.math.oxy.edu/~ron/>
Mathematics Department, Occidental College, 1600 Campus Road, L.A., CA 90041
buckmire@oxy.edu || +1 213 259 2536 (vox) || +1 213 259 2958 (fax)
Check out the <A HREF="<http://www.qrd.org/QRD/>">Queer Resources Directory

* To subscribe to MARRIAGE, send mail to: majordomo@abacus.oxy.edu *
* In the mail message, enter ONLY the words: subscribe marriage *
* To unsubscribe to MARRIAGE, send mail to: majordomo@abacus.oxy.edu *
* In the mail message, enter ONLY the words: unsubscribe marriage *
* Words in the Subject: line are NOT processed! *
* There is a MARRIAGE-DIGEST list also available *
