

Unmarried-Partner Households in the United States: Description and Trends 2000 to 2003

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This poster is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed on (statistical, methodological, technical, or operational) issues are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

What is an Unmarried-Partner Household?

- This poster uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) relationship question, “How is this person related to Person 1?” This identifies individuals who select “unmarried partner” as their relationship to the reference person.
- An “Unmarried partner,” also known as a domestic partner, is specifically defined as a person who shares a close personal relationship with the reference person.

Opposite-sex unmarried-partner households -- reference person and unmarried partner are different sexes.

Same-sex unmarried-partner households – reference person and unmarried partner are both male or female.

- This definition may undercount unmarried partner unions if unmarried partners live together but neither is the reference person.
- To show more reliable estimates for this small population, state and lower levels of geographic data were averaged over a four year period from 2000 to 2003.

Unmarried-Partner Households: How many were there in the U.S. in 2003?

- In 2003, it was estimated that 5.6 million U.S. households (5.1%) were unmarried-partner households.
- Relative to married-couple households (50.5% in 2003), unmarried-partner households were a small segment of U.S. households.

Opposite-sex unmarried-partner households grew in percentage from 4.3% of U.S. households in 2000 to 4.5% in 2003.

Same-sex unmarried-partner households were 0.6% of all households in both 2000 and 2003; 0.3% were male and 0.3% were female same-sex unmarried-partner households.

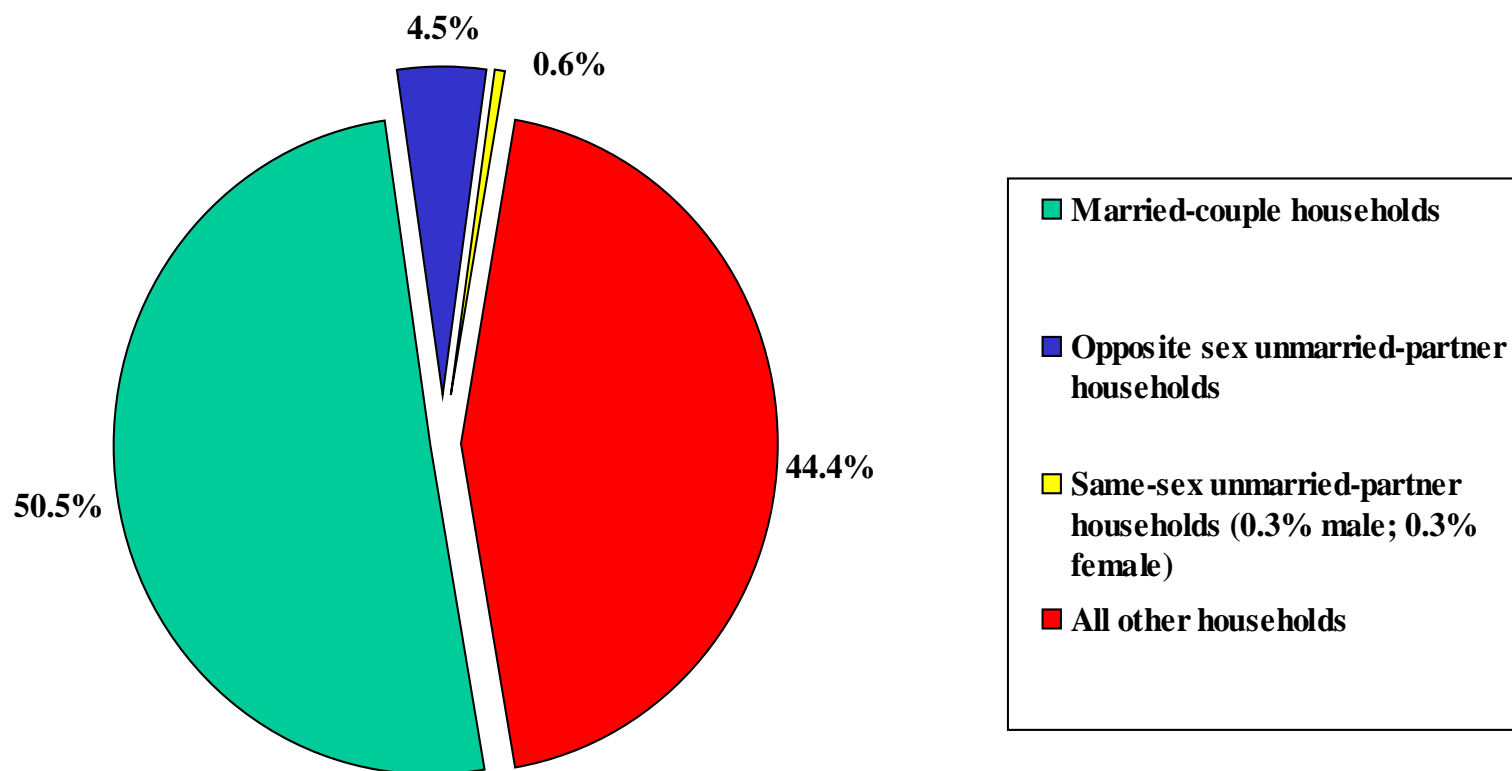
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000-2003

Number of Unmarried-Partner Households, 2000 to 2003

Type of Household	2000	2001	2002	2003
Opposite-sex	4,552,034	4,651,782	4,700,140	4,870,079
Same-sex	657,048	600,042	582,024	701,674

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000-2003

U.S. Households by Household Type: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Opposite-Sex Unmarried-Partner Households: Where were they located from 2000 to 2003?

- On average, from 2000 to 2003, states in Northern New England generally had higher percentages opposite-sex unmarried-partner households, including Maine (6.6%), New Hampshire (6.5%) and Vermont (6.3%). They were least likely to be found in Alabama and Utah (2.6% and 2.7% of all households, respectively).
- Opposite-sex unmarried-partner households were also more likely to be found in large metropolitan areas including Phoenix (5.7%) and San Diego (5.5%).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000-2003

Male Same-Sex Unmarried-Partner Households: Where were they located from 2000 to 2003?

- Male same-sex unmarried-partner households had the highest percentage in the District of Columbia (0.9%). At the other extreme, 13 states had 0.2% male same-sex unmarried-partner households (see map).
- Male same-sex unmarried-partner households were also more likely to be found in large metropolitan areas including San Francisco (1.1%) and Seattle (0.5%).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000-2003

Female Same-Sex Unmarried-Partner Households:

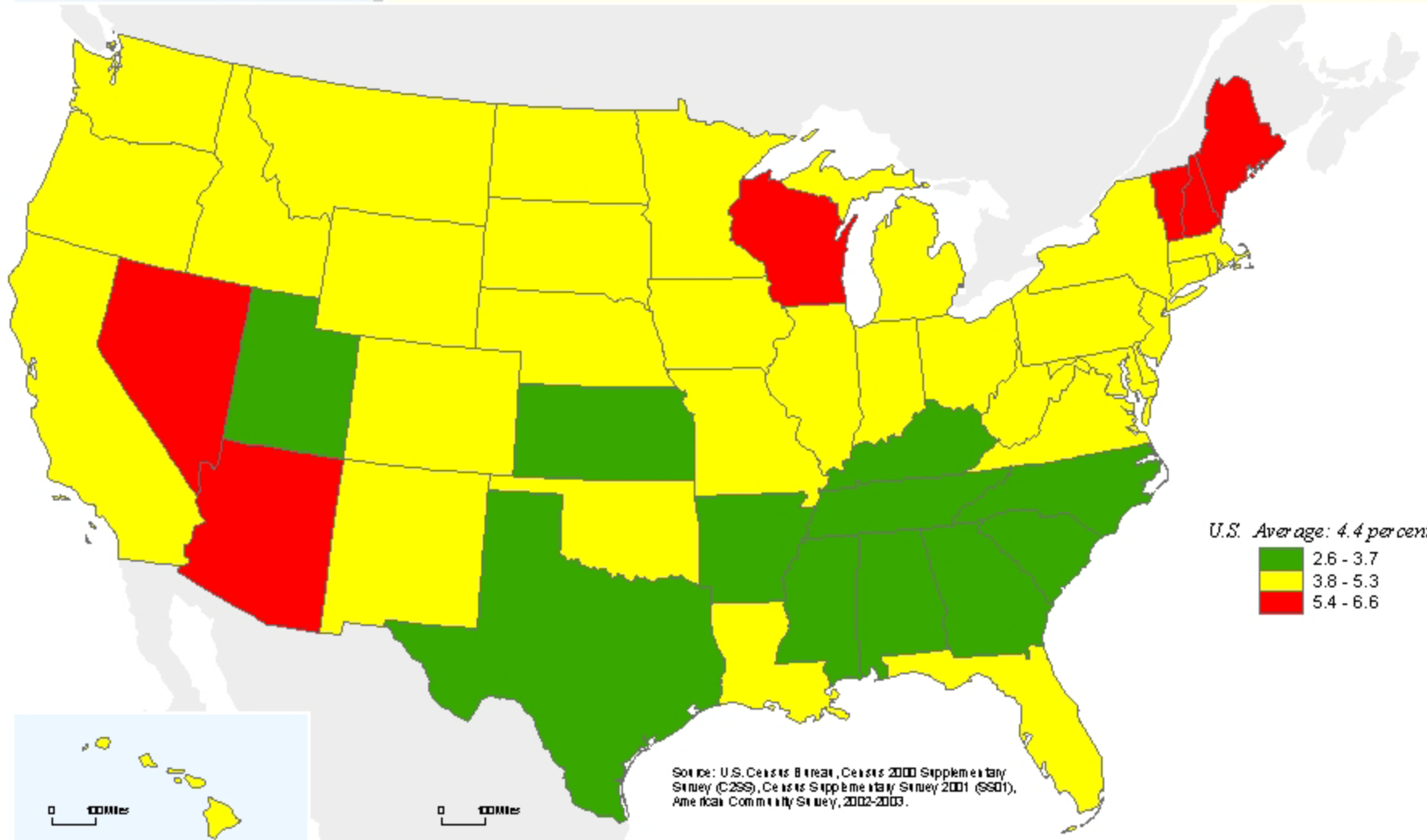
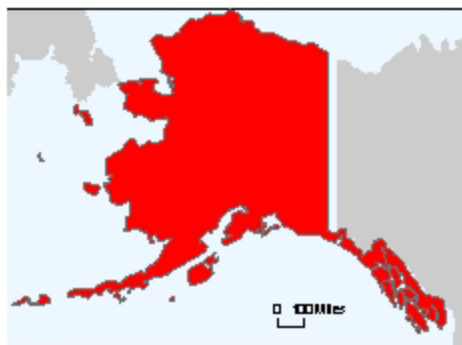
Where were they located from 2000 to 2003?

- In Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont and Washington 0.4% of households were female same-sex unmarried-partner households. Sixteen states had 0.2% female same-sex unmarried-partner households (see map).
- Female same-sex unmarried-partner households were also more likely to be found in large metropolitan areas including Seattle and Portland (0.5% for both).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000-2003

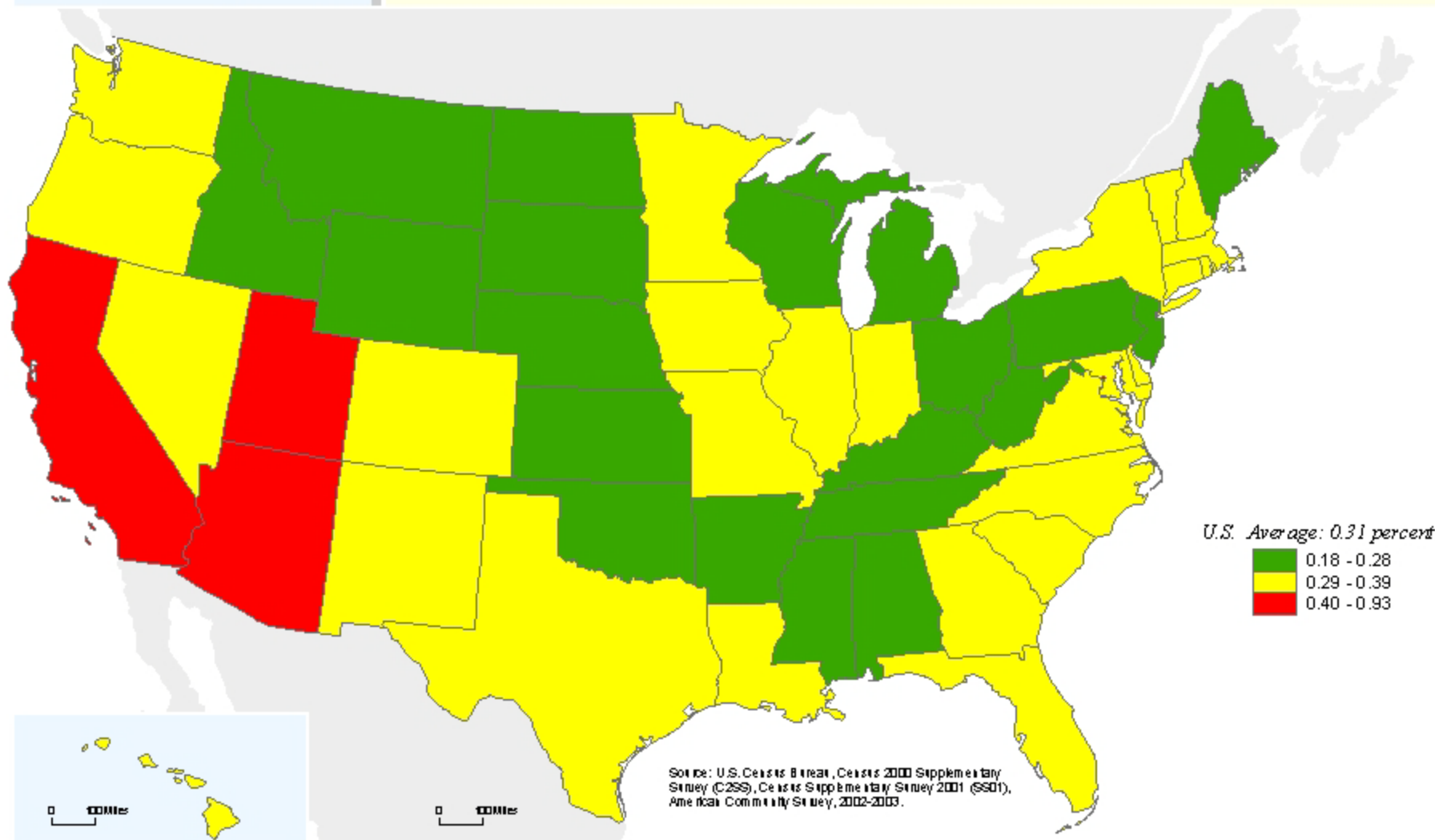
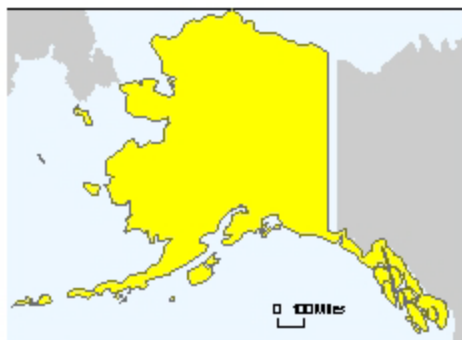
Opposite-Sex Unmarried-Partner Households in the United States, Average Annual Percent of All Households: 2000-2003

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error,
or sample design, see www.census.gov)



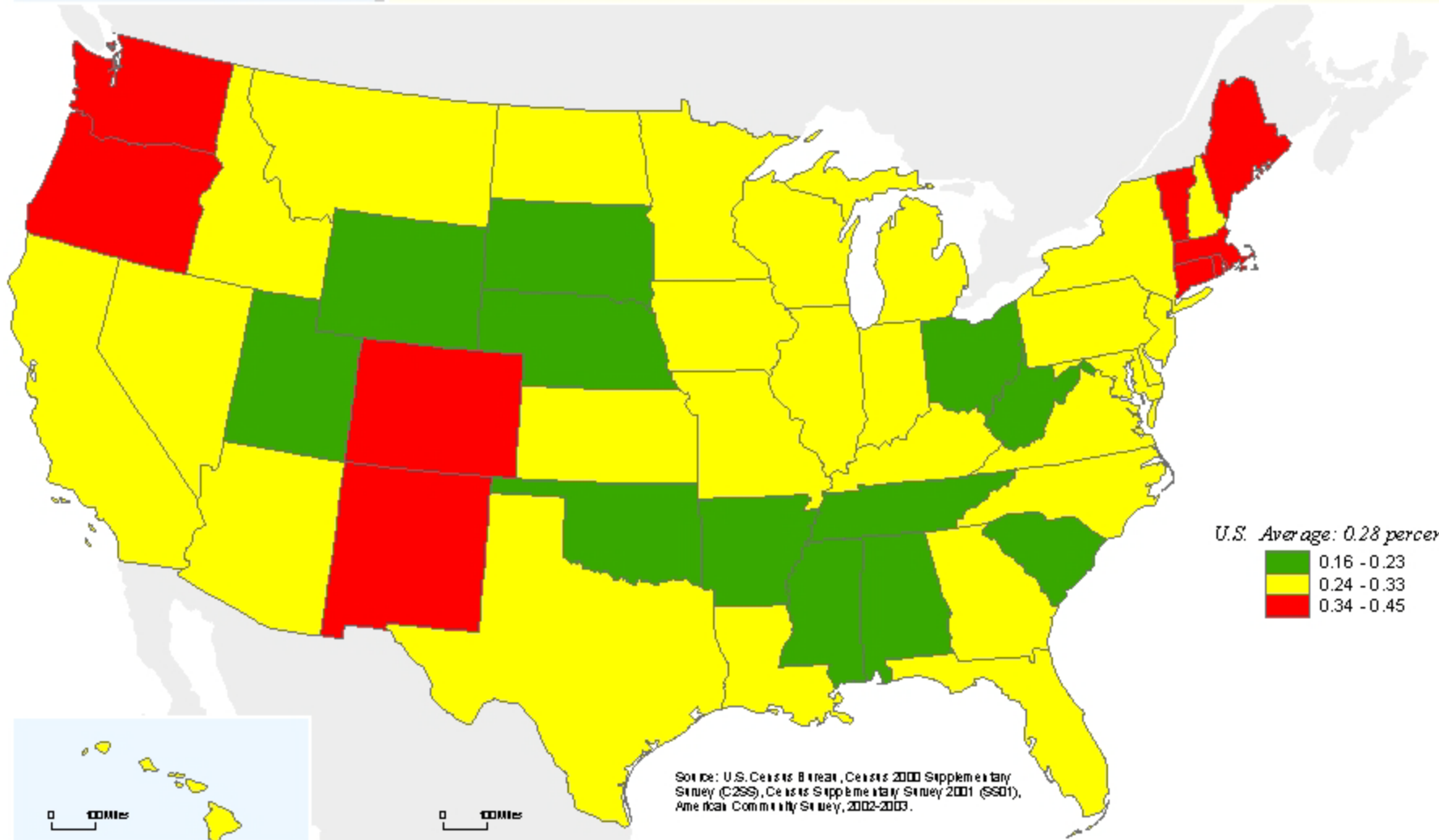
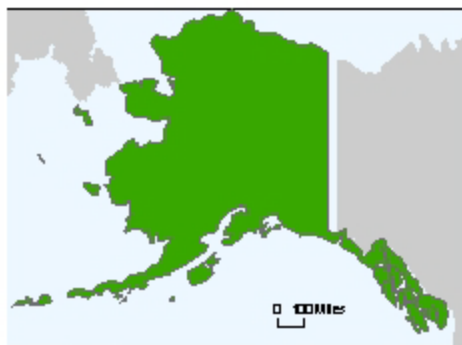
Male Same-Sex Unmarried-Partner Households in the United States, Average Annual Percent of All Households: 2000-2003

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error,
non-response, and other details, see www.census.gov.)



Female Same-Sex Unmarried-Partner Households in the United States, Average Annual Percent of All Households: 2000-2003

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error,
or sample size, and details, see www.census.gov.)



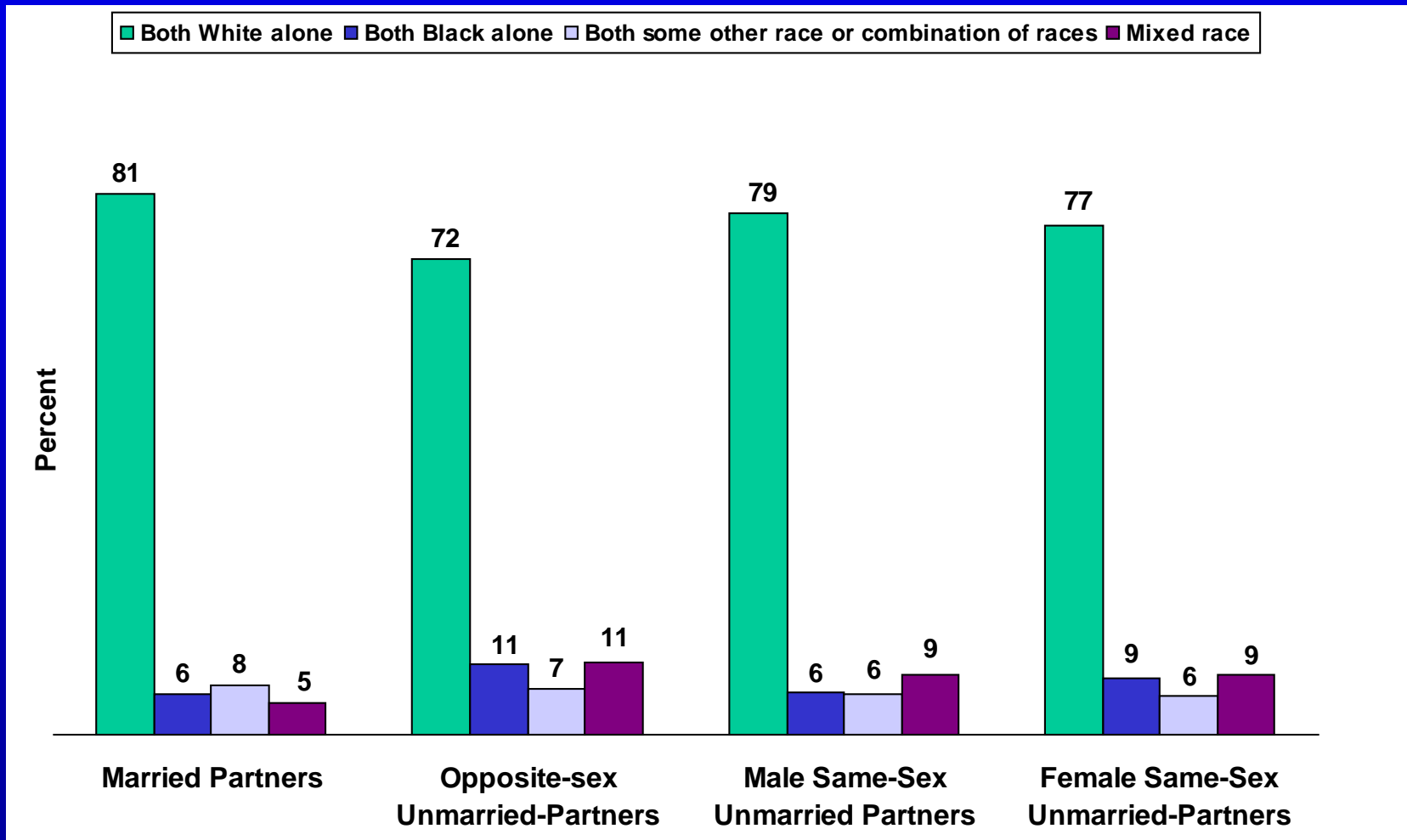
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary
Survey (C2SS), Census Supplementary Survey 2001 (SS01),
American Community Survey, 2002-2003.

Unmarried-Partner Households: How similar were partners in 2003?

- Opposite-sex unmarried partners in the same household were slightly more diverse by race (11% were different races) and much younger than married and same-sex partners (32% with both partners under age 30).
- Male and female same-sex partners tended to be more educated than those who were either married or opposite-sex unmarried partners (25% and 26%, respectively, where both had a BA or more).
- Opposite-sex unmarried partners were more likely to be never married (46%), compared to male same-sex partners (43%) and female same-sex partners (34%).

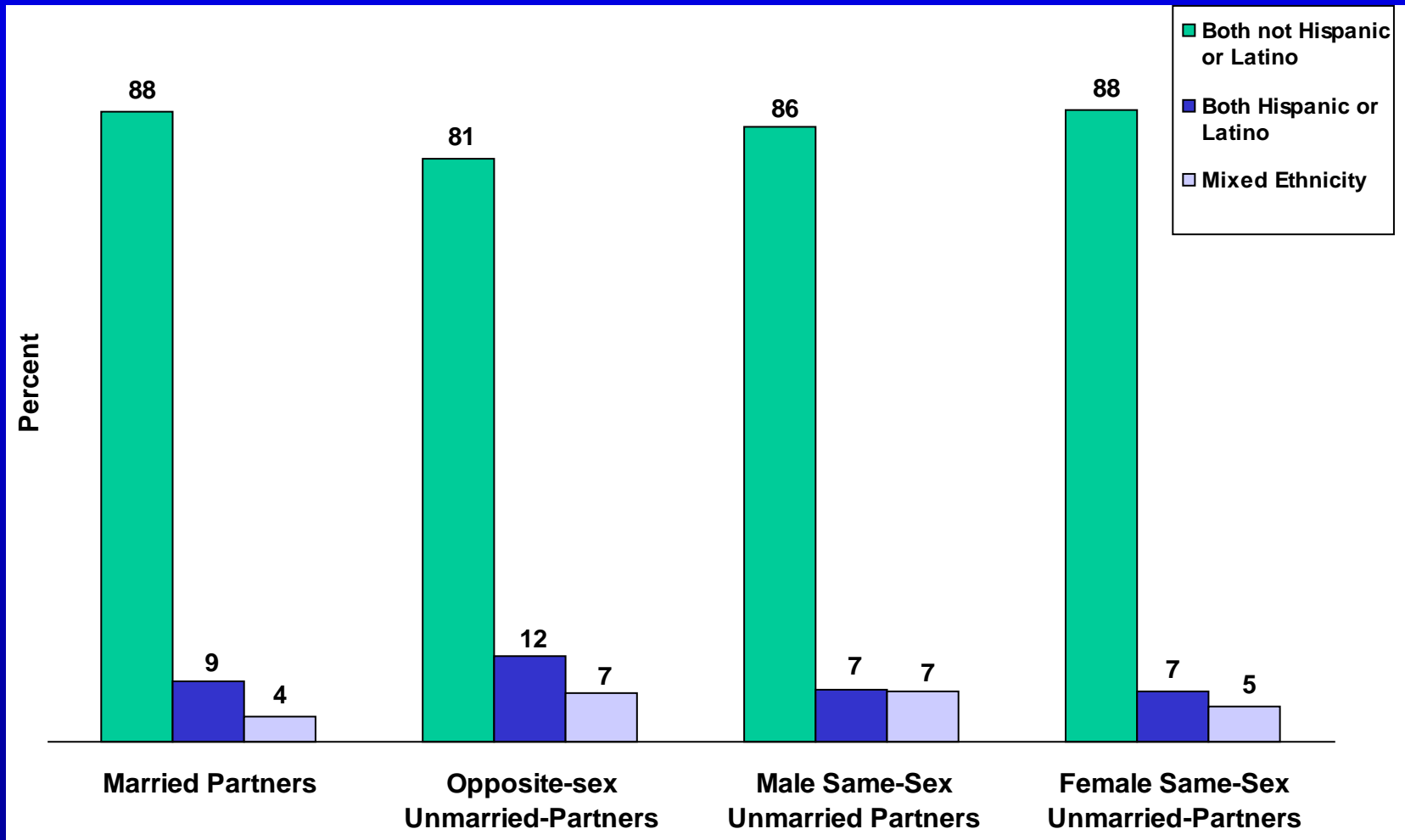
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried Partners by Race: 2003



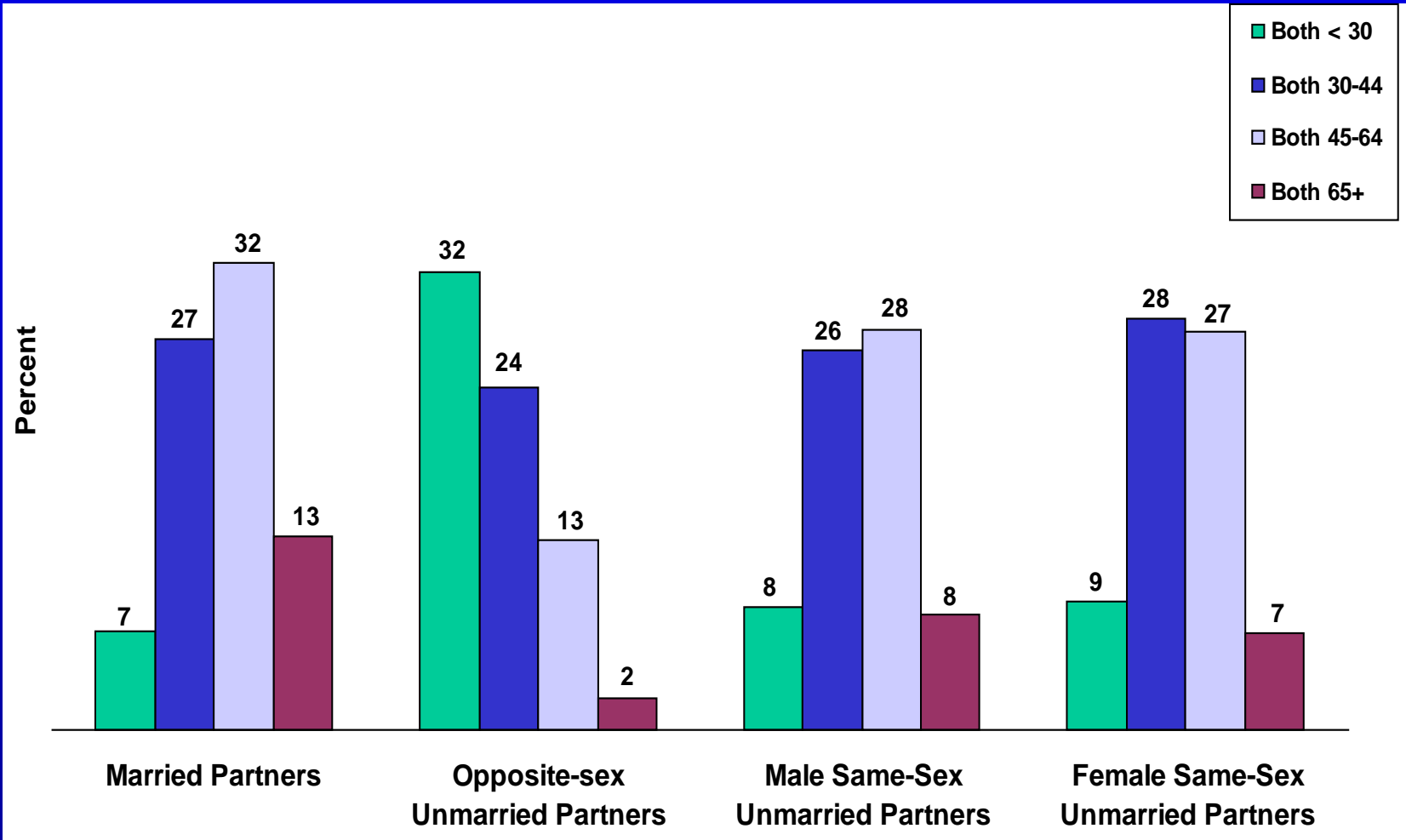
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried Partners by Hispanic or Latino Origin: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

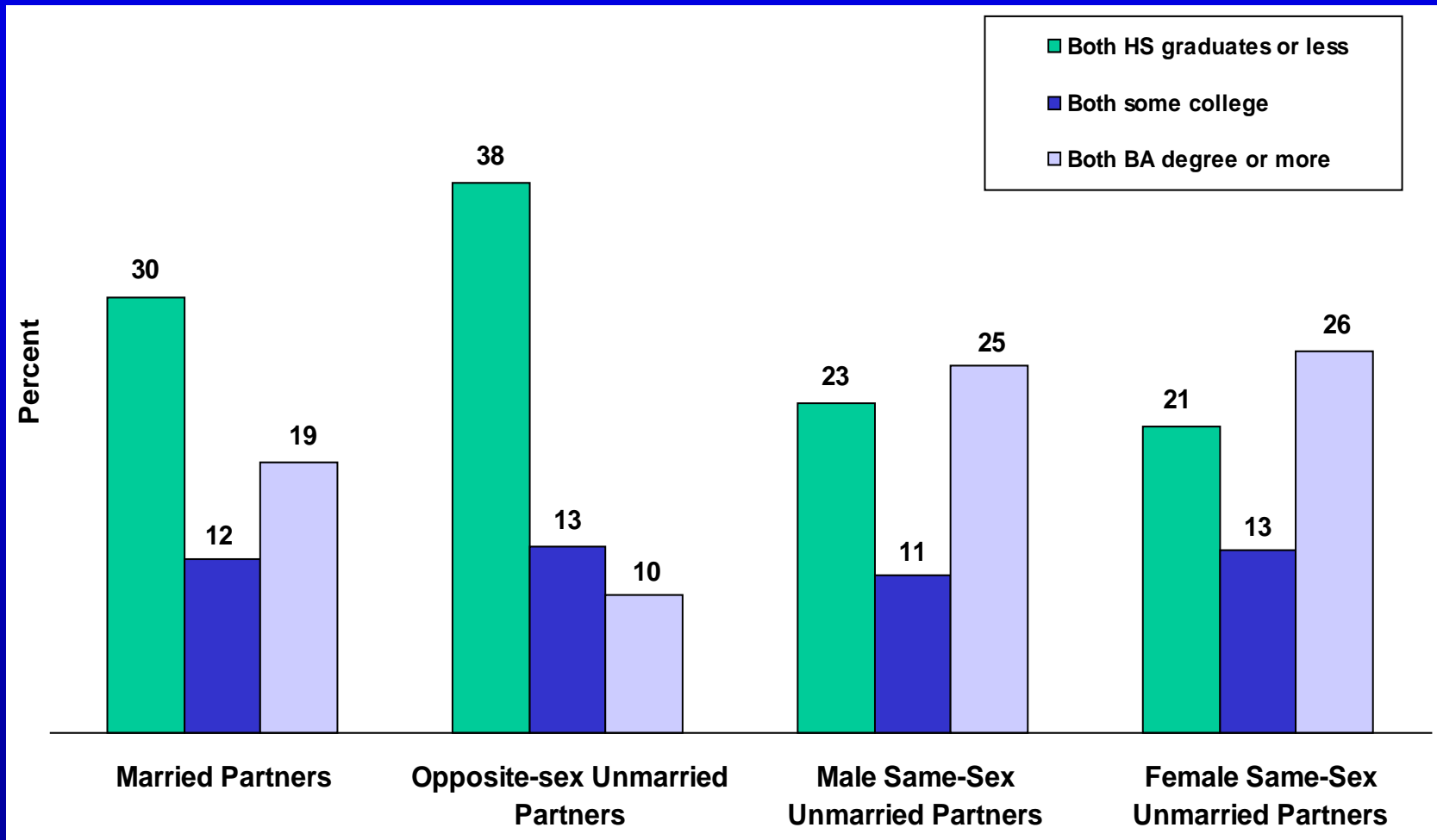
Unmarried Partners by Age: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Note: Does not add to 100%; Mixed age categories not included.

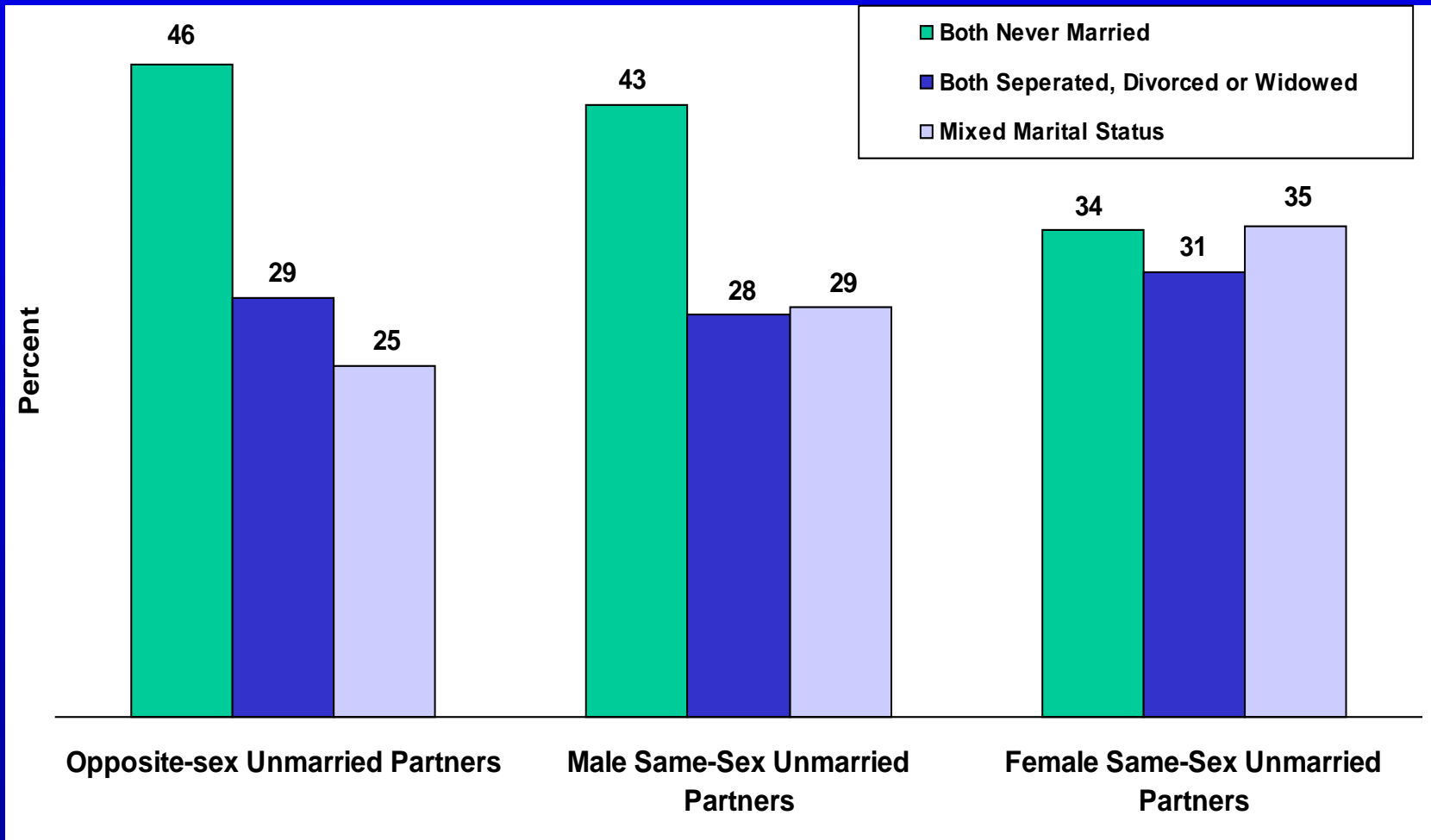
Unmarried Partners by Education: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Note: Does not add to 100%; mixed education categories not included.

Unmarried Partners by Marital Status: 2003



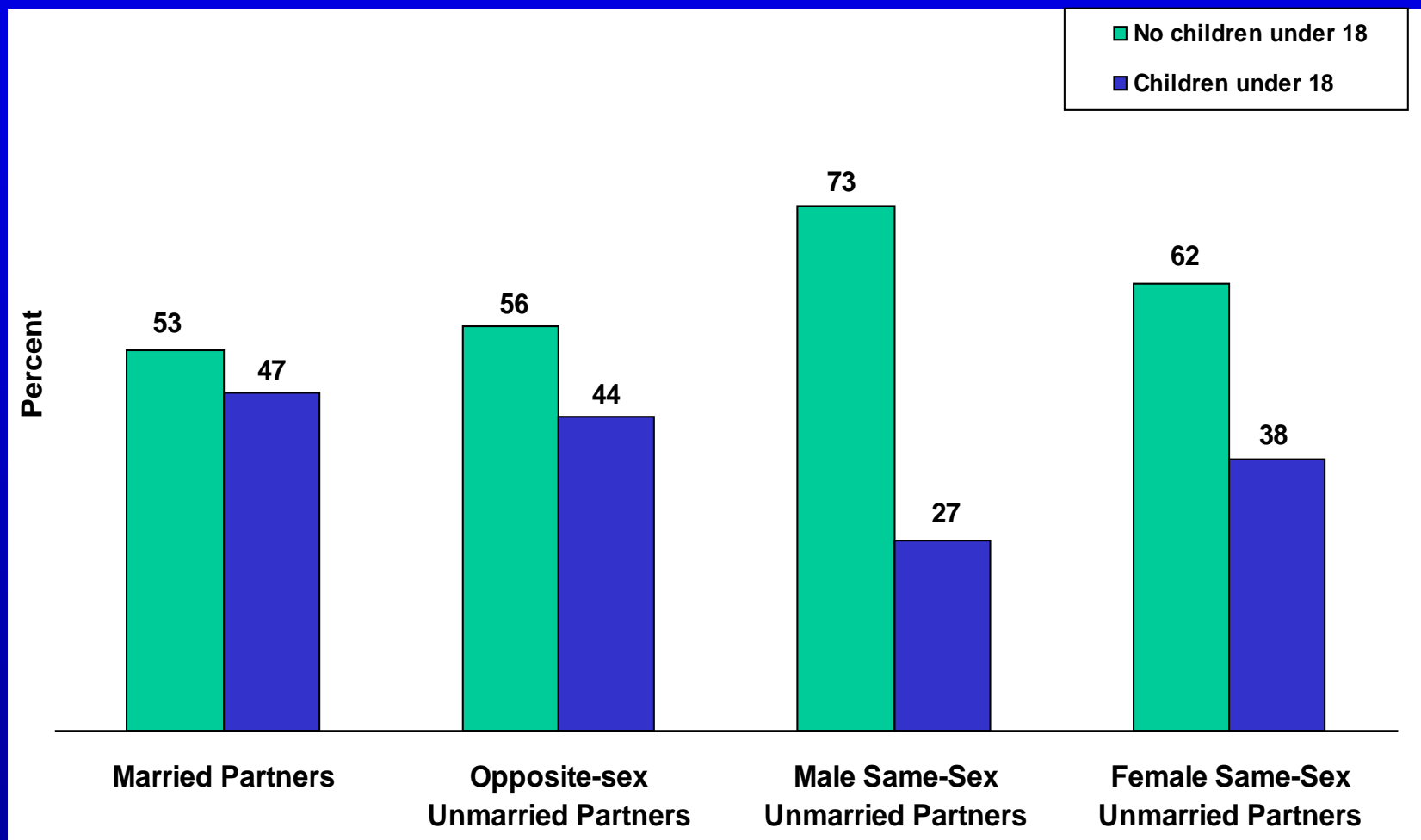
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried-Partner Households: To what extent did they include children in 2003?

- In 2003, while households with the highest percentage of children under 18 living with them were married-couple households (47.1%), significant percentages of unmarried-partner households had children living in them, too.
- Opposite-sex unmarried-partner households were most likely to have children under 18 living with them (43.8%). But 37.8% of female same-sex unmarried-partner households and 26.5% of male same-sex unmarried-partner households had children under 18 living with them as well.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried-Partner Households by Presence of Children in the Household: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

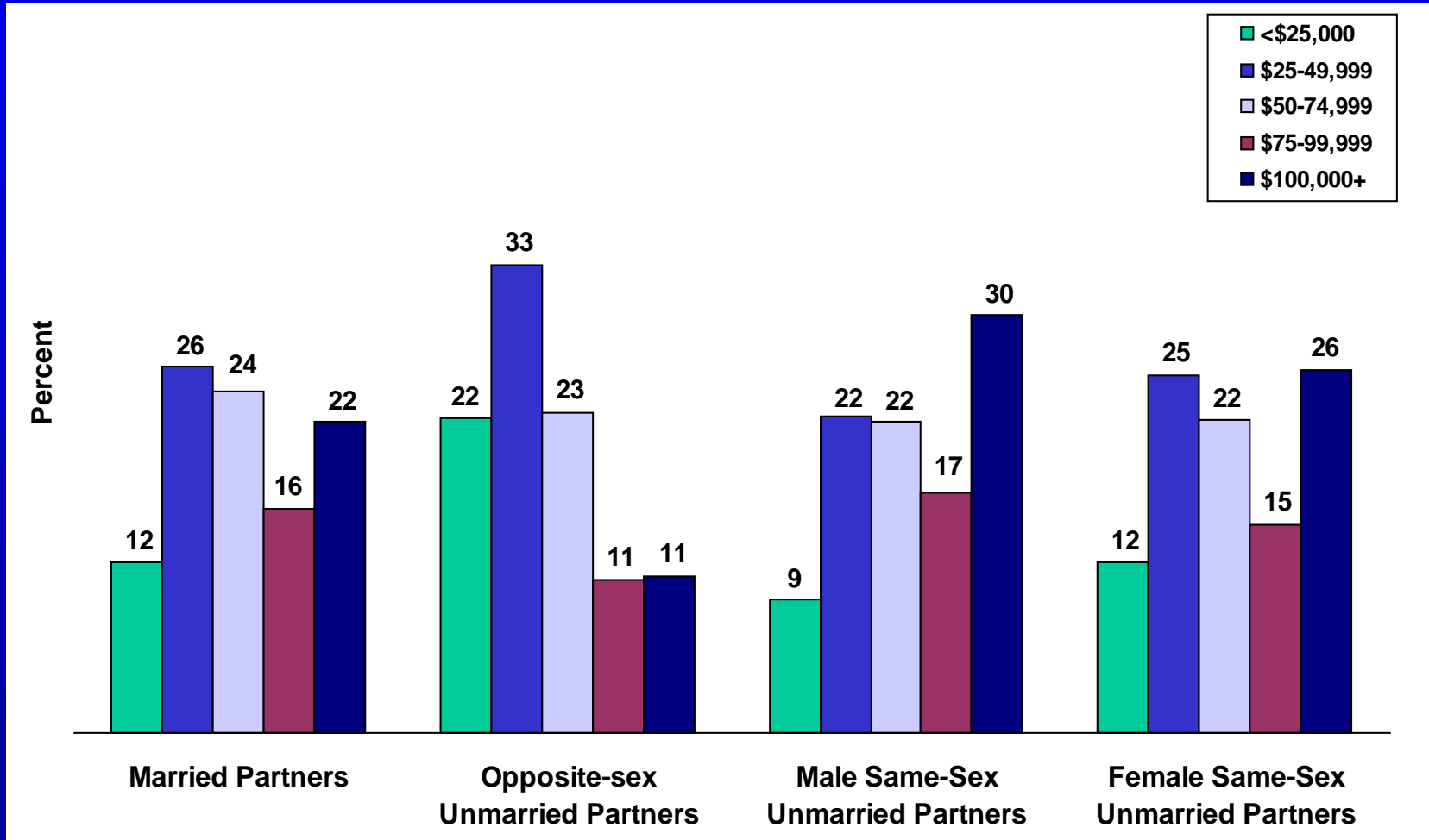
Unmarried-Partner Households:

What was their economic standing in 2003?

- Opposite-sex unmarried partners had the lowest proportion of annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more (22%) while male same-sex unmarried partners were highest (47%), followed by female same-sex partners (41%) and married partners (38%).
- Opposite-sex unmarried partners were least likely to be homeowners (44.3%) . Married couples (82%) and same-sex unmarried partners (76% for males and 71% for females) had higher rates of homeownership, compared with opposite-sex unmarried partners (44%).
- Married couples were least likely to be in households with incomes at or below poverty level (4.8%), while opposite-sex unmarried partners were most likely (23.4%).

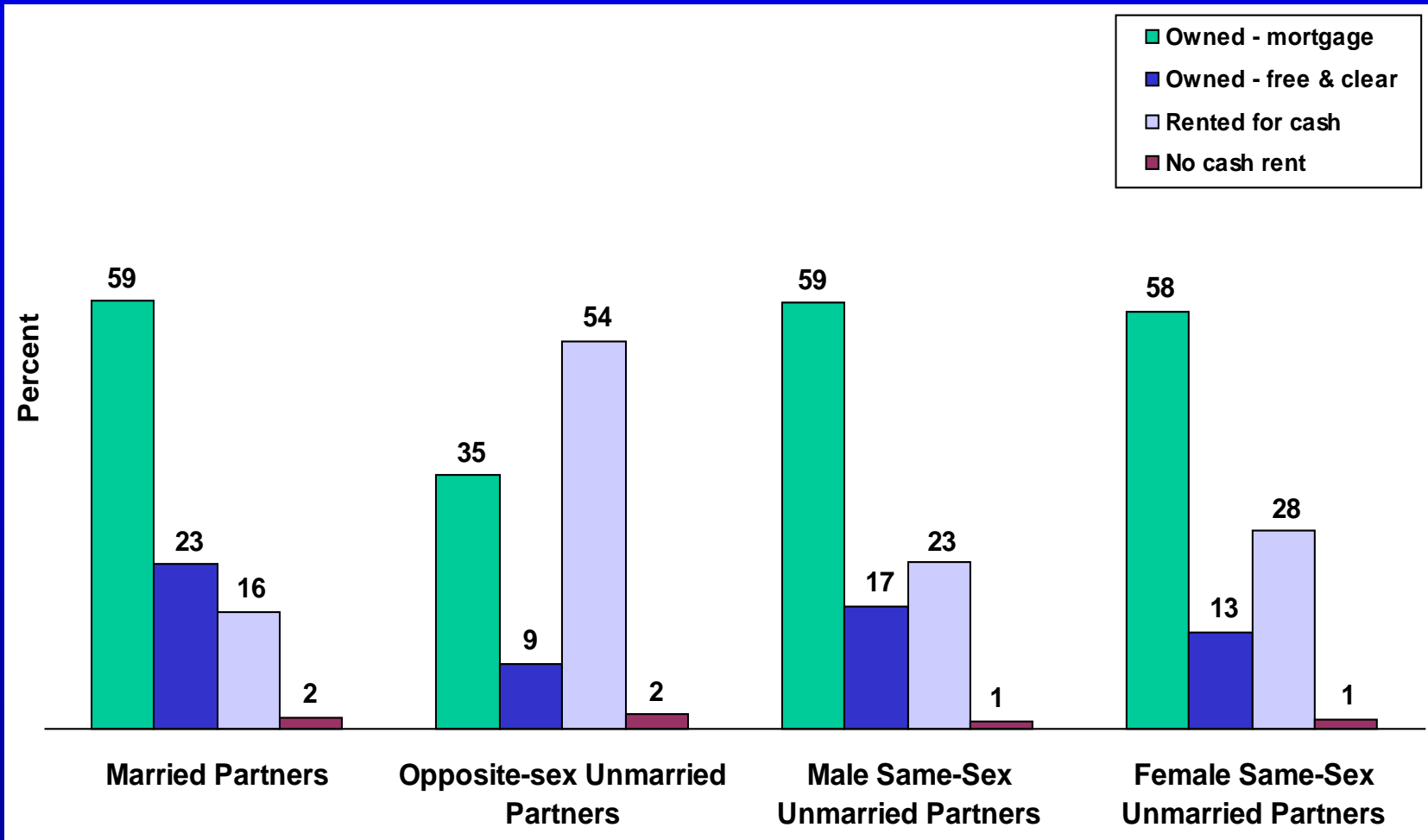
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried-Partner Households by Income: 2003



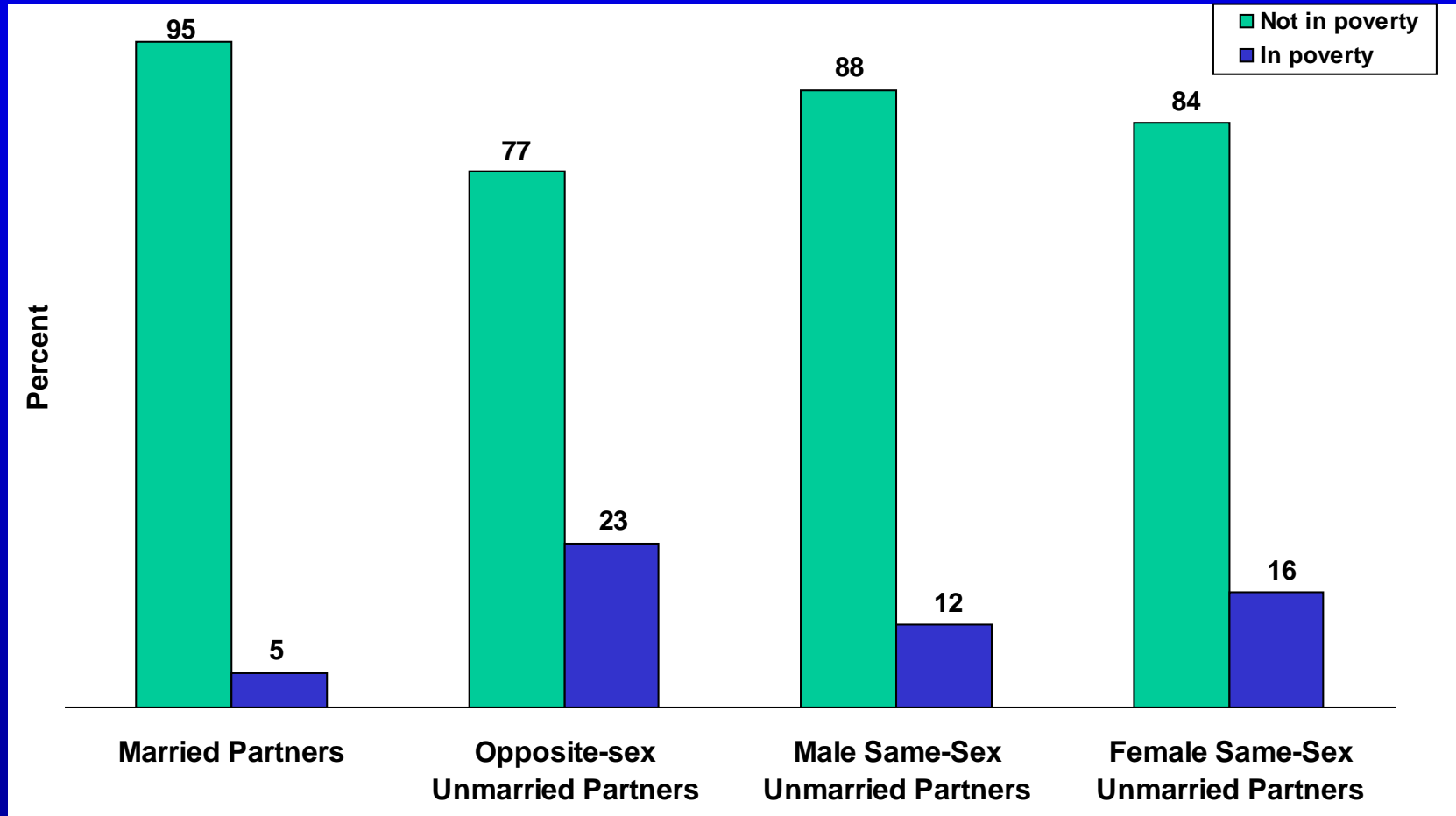
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried-Partner Households by Homeownership: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried-Partner Households by Poverty Status: 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003

Unmarried-Partner Households: Conclusions

- Opposite-sex unmarried-partner households looked very similar to married-couple households except on age-related indicators like income and education.
- Same-sex unmarried-partner households looked very similar to married-couple households except they had slightly more education and were less likely to have children in the household.
- Opposite-sex unmarried partners may look more like younger married couples while same-sex unmarried partners may look more like older married couples. These age differences may influence socio-economic differences among unmarried-partner households.

American Community Survey Data: Overview

The American Community Survey (ACS) has been designed to replace the long-form of the decennial census. Unlike census data which are collected every decade, ACS data are collected annually.

The ACS data used in this poster were collected from a national sample ranging from 700,000 to 900,000 households from 2000 to 2003. This poster is based on an analysis of national 2003 data, and state and city-level data averaged over 2000 to 2003 for unmarried-partner households and individuals in those households.

American Community Survey Data: Highlights

- Large sample size and 3- and 5-year averaging permits description of smaller populations like opposite- and same-sex unmarried-partner households.
- Annual data collection allows analysis of shifts in unmarried-partner households.
- Information can be used to describe changes in the ways Americans are forming households between censuses.
- In 2005, the ACS will sample 3 million households across all geographic areas of the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

American Community Survey Data: Limitations

- At present, ACS may be limited for certain populations within smaller geographies.
- Making generalizations for small populations like same-sex unmarried partners for specific years should be done with caution. Use 3- or 5-year moving averages.
- Because of the sample expansion beginning in 2005, the ACS will be subject to less sampling variability when analyzing unmarried partner data in the future.
 - For more information about the source and accuracy of the data go to the following website:
<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/index.htm>

For more information, please contact Jane Dye at:

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**or call the
Fertility and Family Statistics Branch at
(301) 763-2416**