What Happened to the Marriage Alternatives?

Same-sex Couples in the U.S and the Distinctiveness of Marriage

Online Only

Appendix Table 1: Coefficients from a Poisson regression predicting the log count of same-sex domestic partnerships registered in California, by month, with three different gender-name thresholds, yielding the same substantive results

	50% name threshold		90% name threshold		95% name threshold, as in the paper	
Predictor	Coefficient	Z-score	Coefficient	Z-score	Coefficient	Z-score
Trend over time	-0.0067	-56.0***	-0.0069	-55.5***	-0.0070	55.3***
Dummy variable for January, 2000 (first month of DP availability)	1.37	39.0***	1.38	38.0***	1.38	37.4***
Expanded DP rights (starting November, 2001)	0.79	45.6***	0.80	44.4***	0.80	44.0***
Effect of Hollingsworth v. Perry (starting July, 2013)	-0.83	-40.9***	-0.85	-39.8***	-0.86	-39.2***

Source: California Domestic Partnership database, same-sex couples identified probabilistically by first names' comparison to the SSA name-by-gender database. N of months=250; N of observed same-sex domestic partnerships=54,049 in the first regression with 50% gender name threshold; N=49,741 in the 90% threshold case, and N=48,307 in the 95% threshold case.
*** P<0.001, two tailed tests.

Appendix Table 2: Education and age by marital status and sexual identity, HCMST 2017 and 2022 data

2022:	Different-sex couples Married	Different-sex partners, not married	Heterosexual Singles	Same-sex couples, Married	Same-sex couples, not married	Gay and lesbian Singles
Pct partners with BA	41.5	35.8	27.8	62.1	46.4	45.6
Relationship duration (years)	29.4	9.5	N/A	15.4	12.7	N/A
Mean age of both partners	55.0	42.0	47.0	45.4	42.8	44.4
Unweighted N	1,016	229	298	45	47	61
2017 (current partners in 2017)						
Pct partners with BA	37.6	25.9	21.6	51.6	39.7	32.5
Relationship duration (years)	26.5	6.5	N/A	16.9	8.9	N/A
Mean age of partners	51.9	37.9	44.5	47.6	40.3	43.6
Unweighted N	2,004	634	500	75	143	87

Source: weighted HCMST data. Note: As HCMST is a panel study, the average age of all subjects is roughly 5 years older in 2022 (minimum age approximately 23) compared to HCMST 2017 (minimum age 18). Of the straight HCMST subjects in 2017, 2004/(2004+634+500)=63.9% were married. Of the gay and lesbian subjects in 2017, 24.6% were married. In 2022, 65.8% of the straight subjects and 29.4% of gay and lesbian subjects were married. Bisexual singles and singles with other sexual identities are not shown in the table. Averages of age and percentage with BA include both partners in couples, and include subject only for unpartnered subjects. Unmarried couples include cohabiting and non-cohabiting couples. The definition of couplehood here is much broader than in the ACS because in the HCMST couples are identifiable regardless of cohabitation, whereas in ACS only coresidential couples are identifiable. In this table the number of HCMST 2022 subjects married to same-sex partners is 45, whereas in Table 2 in the paper the number is 44 because one subject did not answer the marriage and domestic partnership preference question.

Appendix Table 3: Subject Education unrelated to attitudes towards marriage and domestic partnership. Subjects with same-sex partners from HCMST 2022

	Subject without BA degree	Subject with BA degree
Prefers to be married	23	38
Prefers to be in a domestic partnership	7	13
Prefers neither	4	6
N	34	57

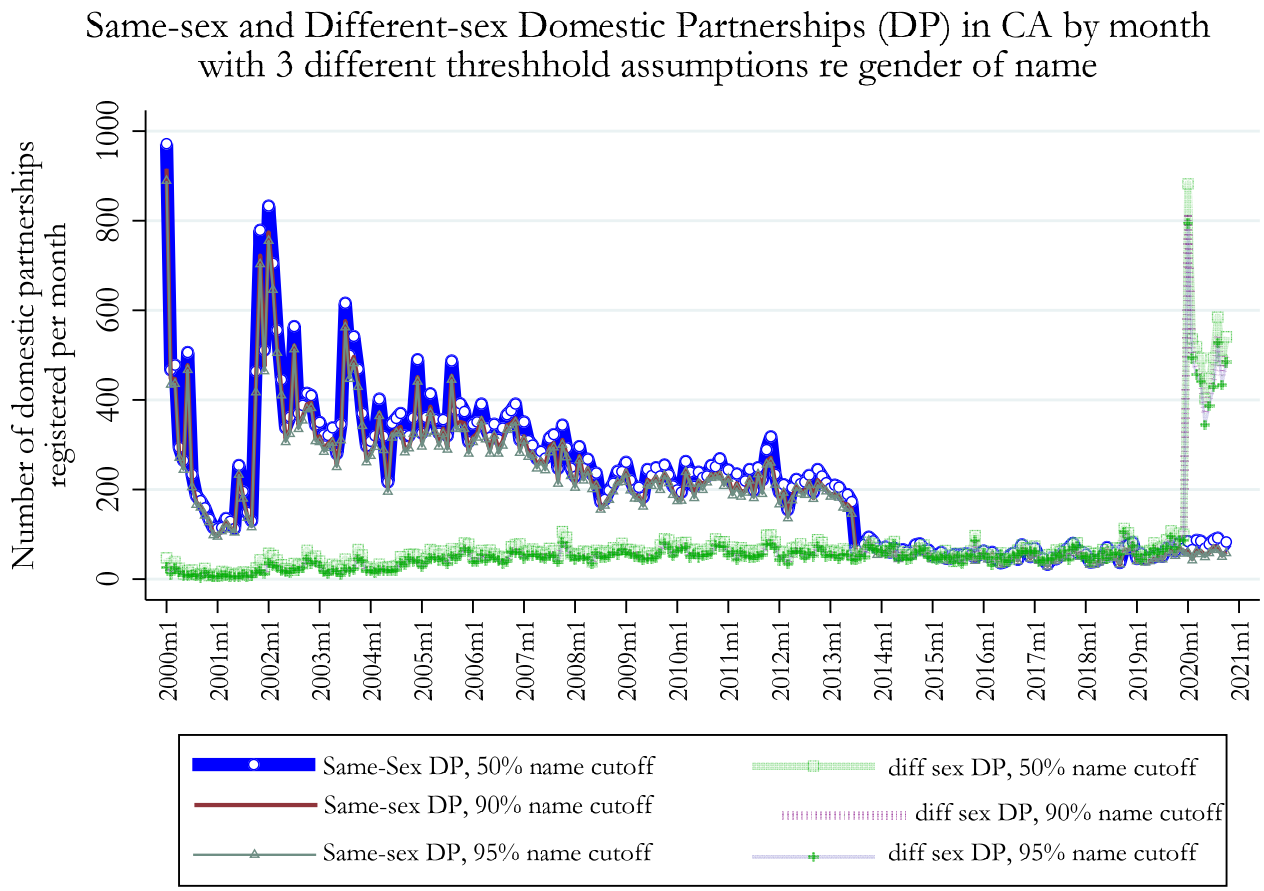
Source: subjects with same-sex partners from HCMST 2022, N=91. Chisquare test for association between BA degree and relationship formalization preference: 0.081 on df, P=0.96.

Appendix Table 4: Age and education for same-sex and different-sex couples, ACS data 2013-2023

		Different-sex married, Couples	Different-sex unmarried cohabiters	Same-sex married couples	Same-sex unmarried cohabiters
2013	Partners' mean age	51.1	38.3	50.8	44.9
	Partners' mean education (yrs)	13.8	13.1	13.7	14.8
	N of couples (millions)	57.2M	6.5M	0.3M	0.5M
2014	Partners' mean age	51.3	38.6	50.4	44.1
	Partners' mean education	13.9	13.2	14.1	14.7
	N of couples	57.5M	6.7M	0.4M	0.5M
2015	Partners' mean age	51.6	38.7	50.0	43.5
	Partners' mean education	13.9	13.2	14.4	14.6
	N of couples	58.9M	6.9M	0.5M	0.4M
2016	Partners' mean age	51.8	39.0	49.8	43.1
	Partners' mean education	13.9	13.3	14.5	14.5
	N of couples	58.1M	6.8M	0.5M	0.4M
2017	Partners' mean age	51.9	39.2	49.0	43.3
	Partners' mean education	14.0	13.4	14.5	14.6
	N of couples	58.9M	6.8M	0.6M	0.4M
2018	Partners' mean age	52.1	39.4	49.0	42.3
	Partners' mean education	14.1	13.4	14.5	14.6
	N of couples	59.3M	7.3M	0.7M	0.4M
2019	Partners' mean age	52.3	39.9	47.2	41.7
	Partners' mean education	14.1	13.5	14.6	14.6
	N of couples	59.5M	7.7M	0.7M	0.4M
2020	Partners' mean age	52.5	39.9	47.5	41.1
	Partners' mean education	14.1	13.6	14.8	14.6
	N of couples	61.3M	8.5M	0.7M	0.5M
2021	Partners' mean age	52.5	39.6	47.8	41.4
	Partners' mean education	14.1	13.5	14.7	14.7
	N of couples	61.4M	8.9M	0.8M	0.5M
2022	Partners' mean age	52.6	39.5	47.4	40.2
	Partners' mean education	14.2	13.5	14.7	14.7
	N of couples	62.0M	8.9M	0.8M	0.5M
2023	Partners' mean age	52.8	39.7	47.7	40.6
	Partners' mean education	14.2	13.6	14.7	14.7
	N of couples	62.4M	9.0M	0.9M	0.5M

Source: Weighted ACS data, for both partners. N is the weighted N of couples in the US. All couples are cohabiting couples (since only coresidential couples are identifiable in the ACS).

Also note: 2019 was the first year the ACS offered the categories of “same-sex spouse” or “same-sex unmarried partner” as options for residents’ relationship to the head of household, increasing the accuracy of identifying those populations in ACS. Previously, same-sex couples were identifiable through combinations of relationship to head of household and gender.



Appendix Figure 1: Different threshold criteria for gender of names hardly matters, because most people have names that are highly gendered.

Note: in the 50% cutoff threshold, gender is assigned to a name if the name in Social Security Administration (SSA) database is at least 50% male, or at least 50% female. In the 90% cutoff threshold, names are only assigned a gender if the people with that name in the SSA database are at least 90% male, or at least 90% female. In the 95% cutoff threshold, names are only assigned if the name in the SSA database is 95% male or 95% female. At 90% certainty for names, we lose 8% of the same-sex couples from the database. At 95% certainty, we lose 10.6% of the same-sex couples.