DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Descriptive Finding

Partnership patterns and living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying US adults:
Estimates from a probability-based survey

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Contents

Partnership patterns and living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying US adults: Estimates from a probability-based survey

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Abstract

BACKGROUND
Most national surveys exclude sexual and gender identity (SOGI) measures or do not link them with household rosters and non-coresidential partnership questions, limiting demographic estimates of LGBTQ+ family life.

OBJECTIVE
We examine differences in relationship status and living arrangements between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying US adults. Specifically, we compare the shares of those who live with a spouse, live with an unmarried partner, have a non-coresidential partner, or have no partner. We also assess household size and composition, including living alone, coresidence with children and/or other family, and living with unrelated roommates.

METHODS
Data come from the 2021 American Marriage Survey, a probability-based survey of 2,806 US adults recruited through the AmeriSpeak panel of the National Opinion Research Center.

RESULTS
LGBTQ+ identifying adults were less likely than non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults to be in a coresidential marital relationship but were more likely to report an unmarried cohabiting partner, a non-coresidential partner, or no partner. They were also more likely to live alone or with unrelated roommates and less likely to live with children. Consequently, LGBTQ+ identifying adults tend to live in smaller households, which may heighten social isolation risk.

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CONCLUSIONS
Findings underscore the need for national surveys to integrate SOGI questions with detailed measures of relationships and living arrangements to capture diverse family structures and inform policies supporting LGBTQ+ well-being. Conventional surveys often disproportionately undercount LGBTQ+ relationships by excluding non-coresidential partners.

CONTRIBUTION
This analysis provides nationally representative estimates of relationship status and household composition, revealing distinct partnership patterns and living arrangements among LGBTQ+ identifying adults compared to non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults.

1. Introduction

Understanding the living arrangements and relationship statuses of LGBTQ+ identifying adults in the United States is essential for capturing the full diversity of contemporary families. Yet national estimates of the relationship status and living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying adults remain sparse. This gap stems largely from the fact that national surveys rarely collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) measures alongside detailed household rosters or questions about non-coresidential relationships (Compton and Julian 2025).

US survey data collection efforts have also often been shaped by heteronormative assumptions about families (Compton and Kaufman 2024; Fish, Reczek, and Ezra 2024). Scholars point to the persistence of the "charmed circle" of sexuality in survey measurement, which positions heterosexual, marital, and potentially procreative arrangements as normative (Westbrook, Budnick, and Saperstein 2022). Non-normative identities, relationships, and living arrangements, by contrast, are relegated to the realm of risk, where they are treated primarily as sources of vulnerability rather than as legitimate forms of social and familial life (Westbrook, Budnick, and Saperstein 2022).

Moreover, homonormativity frames LGBTQ+ inclusion as contingent on adherence to heterosexual family norms, such as all individuals following a presumed linear progression toward coresidential marriage and parenting (Allen and Mendez 2018). Although adoption of these norms may foster social acceptance for LGBTQ+ identifying people, it simultaneously reinforces cisheteronormative power structures and renders nonconforming individuals and families invisible within dominant social and institutional narratives (Duggan 2002; Halperin 2012; Rubin 2020). Expanding measurement frameworks to incorporate unmarried partners, non-coresidential partnerships, and nonbiological or nonlegal ties resists this assimilationist logic by disrupting the

privileging of coresidential marital relationships. In doing so, such approaches produce a more accurate and inclusive family life knowledge base that captures the full diversity of relational practices rather than relegating some of them to the margins (Compton and Kaufman 2024; Fish, Reczek, and Ezra 2024; Fish and Russell 2018; Lamont 2017).

At the same time, broader demographic changes among cisgender heterosexual identifying populations have prompted expansions in survey design that have incidentally improved the study of LGBTQ+ families (Baumle 2018). Although not explicitly intended to better encompass LGBTQ+ families, these changes have nonetheless "queered" (Fish and Russell 2018) demographic family measurement by rendering visible family forms long marginalized in traditional data collection practices. For example, the 1990 US decennial census first enabled the identification of same-sex cohabiting couples by introducing the "unmarried partner" category, a change motivated by rising different-sex cohabitation (Black et al. 2000; Phua and Kaufman 1999).

Building on insights from the decennial census's measurement of unmarried same-sex couples, Carpenter and Gates (2008) demonstrated the value of collecting sexual identity measures alongside partnership status. They showed that many gay and lesbian identifying adults were not in coresidential unions, either because they were in non-coresidential partnerships or were not partnered at all, and thus remained uncounted. Although US national data collection has since expanded measures of cohabiting unions in response to the continued rise of different-sex cohabitation (Manning et al. 2019) and some surveys, such as the National Health Interview Survey, have incorporated sexual identity measures alongside coresidential relationship measures (Badgett, Carpenter, and Sansone 2021), most surveys still omit relationships in which partners do not share a household (Brown, Manning, and Wu 2022; Julian, Manning, and Kamp Dush 2024; Russell et al. 2020). Prior descriptive research in the United States – though now dated – suggests that non-coresidential arrangements are more prevalent among LGBTQ+ individuals and remain systematically undercounted in most US probability-based data sources (Strohm et al. 2009).

This study uses the 2021 American Marriage Survey (AMS), a probability-based survey collected by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, to provide updated national estimates of partnership prevalence and living arrangements among LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults. The AMS is unique in that it collects information on household composition alongside information on relationship status, sexual identity, and gender identity, measures that are rarely incorporated together in probability-based data collections (Compton and Julian 2025). When used together, these measures enable estimates of the shares of LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults who have a coresidential spouse, an unmarried cohabiting partner, a non-coresidential partner, or no partner. They also allow for analyses of household size and living arrangements among LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying

adults, including solo living, and living with children, family members, or unrelated roommates. Together, these descriptive estimates provide new insight into the diversity of relationship statuses and living arrangements in the United States and offer a benchmark for future research as the US data infrastructure continues to improve in its capacity to study LGBTQ+ families.

2. Data and methods

We use data from the AMS collected in August 2021. The AMS sample was drawn from AmeriSpeak, NORC's probability-based panel of US adults aged 18 and older. The study was designed to understand contemporary attitudes toward marriage in the United States. Households were randomly selected with a known, non-zero probability from the NORC National Frame and other address-based sampling frames, covering approximately 97% of the US population (NORC 2024). Exclusions are due primarily to unlisted households and newly constructed dwellings. Data collection was conducted primarily online (95.4%) and by telephone (4.6%), and NORC oversampled LGBTQ+ identifying respondents. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

The AMS sample included 2,806 respondents. Approximately 3% of respondents were excluded from our analyses using Stata's subpopulation estimation. Specifically, we first excluded 39 respondents who were missing LGBTQ+ identification, 42 respondents who were missing relationship status, and an additional eight respondents who were missing household roster information, resulting in a final sample of 2,717 respondents, 536 of whom identify as LGBTQ+.

2.1 LGBTQ+ identification

LGBTQ+ identification was determined by combining responses to sexual identity and gender identity measures. For gender identity, respondents were given the options of "man," "woman," "trans man," "trans woman," "non-binary," and "a gender not listed here (please specify)." Those who identified as a trans man, a trans woman, or non-binary or provided a write-in response signaling a diverse gender identity were classified as LGBTQ+. For sexual identity, respondents were given the options of "heterosexual/straight," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," "asexual," and "other (please specify)." Those who reported that they were gay or lesbian, bisexual, or asexual or provided a write-in response signaling a diverse sexual identity were also classified as LGBTQ+.

Including write-in options for gender and sexual identity measures is particularly important for capturing younger cohorts, who may use different identity terminology (Julian, Manning, and Westrick-Payne 2024). Write-in responses for sexual identity were more common than for gender identity. Examples included "pansexual," "aceflux," "demisexual," "omnisexual," and "queer." Examples of gender identity write-in responses included "genderfluid" and "non-binary and trans."

2.2 Relationship status and living arrangements

Relationship status was coded using responses to the relationship status question, which included the following options: "not in a relationship and not dating," "dating casually (one or more persons)," "in an exclusive relationship," "in multiple or open relationships (my partners know of my relationships)," "in multiple relationships (my partners may not know of each other)," and "other (please specify)." Respondents were classified as in a relationship if they indicated that they were dating casually, were in an exclusive relationship, or were in multiple or open relationships, or if they provided a write-in response that signaled they were partnered. Respondents were classified as not in a relationship if they reported not being in a relationship or dating or provided equivalent write-in responses indicating as much. Compton and Kaufman (2024) provide an analysis of the write-in responses to the AMS relationship status question.

Living arrangements were captured in a separate question asking who lived in the household. Response options included "live alone," "live with unrelated roommates," "live with spouse (married)," "live with child(ren)," "live with unmarried partner," and "live with other family members." Respondents could select all that applied. Because the relationship status question allowed respondents to indicate multiple partners but the household roster question did not ask how many of those partners were coresidential (only the overall household size was captured, through a separate measure), non-coresidential partnerships could be identified only indirectly. Specifically, this category included respondents who reported being in a relationship but did not report living with a spouse or an unmarried partner in the household roster.

Using information from the relationship status and living arrangements measures, we constructed four analytic measures of relationship status: coresidential married spouse; coresidential unmarried partner; no partner in the household but a partner living separately; not partnered. To measure other living arrangements, we assessed respondents' household sizes (ranging from one to six or more housemates) and whether they lived alone, with children, with other family members, or with unrelated roommates.

2.3 Analytic strategy

We began by estimating the prevalence of LGBTQ+ identification using data from the AMS. We benchmarked these estimates against other national probability-based surveys fielded during the same period that collected sexual and gender identity, including those from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS; Flores and Conron 2023) and Gallup (Table 1; Jones 2022a). Because no census-level measures of sexual and gender identity exist for the adult US population, triangulating prevalence estimates across multiple national probability-based surveys often provides an important benchmark for evaluating survey estimates (Gates 2014).
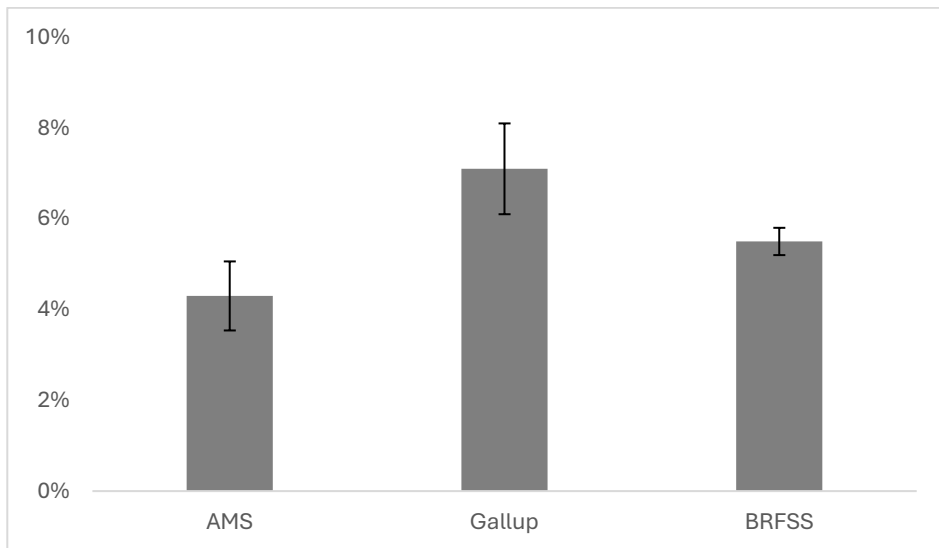
Next we examined relationship status among LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults across four categories: living with a married spouse; living with an unmarried partner; residing separately from a partner or spouse; having no partner (Table 2). Because these categories are not mutually exclusive (e.g., a small subset of respondents in polyamorous relationships report living with both a married spouse and an unmarried partner; Compton and Kaufman 2024), we modeled each relationship status as a separate binary outcome. Given that relationship patterns and living arrangements vary across the life course (Hemez and Washington 2024; Julian 2023) and that LGBTQ+ identifying adults are, on average, younger than their non-LGBTQ+ identifying counterparts (Jones 2025), we report both unadjusted and age-adjusted estimates. To adjust for age-related confounding and to allow the association between age and relationship status to vary by LGBTQ+ identification, we computed predicted group probabilities from logistic regression models, estimating each relationship status as a function of LGBTQ+ identification, age, and their interaction (Long and Mustillo 2018; Mize, Doan, and Long 2019). Predicted probabilities were evaluated at the population mean age of US adults (47.40). We used linear contrasts of predicted probabilities to compare LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults and to obtain corresponding p-values for group differences.

We then extended this approach to examine broader household characteristics, including household size, solo living, the presence of children, coresidence with family members, and living with unrelated roommates (Table 3). The same strategy was used, except that household size, a continuous outcome, was estimated using linear regression and was reported as a predicted mean rather than a predicted probability. All analyses were conducted in Stata 18 using the "svy" suite (StataCorp 2023). Estimates were also weighted using a NORC-provided probability weight designed to produce nationally representative estimates of the US adult population aged 18 and older. Taylor series linearization was used to calculate design-based standard errors (Groves et al. 2009).

3. Results

Figure 1 compares the prevalence of LGBTQ+ identification in the AMS sample with benchmark estimates from other national probability-based data sources, including Gallup's 2021 aggregated polls (Jones 2022a) and estimates from the 2020–2021 BRFSS, produced using multilevel regression and poststratification by the Williams Institute (Flores and Conron 2023). All estimates in the figure are presented with 95% confidence intervals. As Gates (2014) notes, point estimates of LGBTQ+ identity prevalence often differ across national surveys because of variation in survey design. Drawing on the AMS sample, 4.3% of adults identified as LGBTQ+, a figure that is modestly lower than the corresponding estimates from Gallup (7.1%; Jones 2022a) and BRFSS (5.5%; Flores and Conron 2023).

Figure 1:   LGBTQ+ identification benchmark across surveys

Notes: Estimates from AMS are weighted using a probability weight, and Taylor series linearization was used to calculate design-based standard errors; 2021 Gallup estimates are from Jones 2022, and 2020–2021 BRFSS estimates are from Flores and Conron 2023. Error bars reflect 95% confidence intervals.

Table 1 presents relationship status by LGBTQ+ identification, shown as both unadjusted and age-adjusted estimates, with 90% confidence intervals and corresponding p-values. Before age adjustment (Panel A), adults identifying as LGBTQ+ were substantially less likely than non-LGBTQ+ adults to have a coresidential spouse (24.59%

[CI: 20.96, 28.62] vs. 52.98% [CI: 50.74, 55.21]). In contrast, LGBTQ+ identifying adults were more likely to report a coresidential unmarried partner (19.01% [CI: 15.38, 23.25] vs. 10.22% [CI: 8.89, 11.72]), a non-coresidential partner (21.83% [CI: 17.58, 26.77] vs. 11.65% [CI: 10.30, 13.14]), or no partner at all (34.66% [CI: 29.87, 39.97] vs. 25.28% [CI: 23.21, 27.36]). After adjusting for age (Panel B), these differences remained largely unchanged in magnitude, indicating that LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults exhibit distinct relationship patterns across both estimation specifications.

Table 1: **Relationship status by LGBTQ+ identification, unadjusted (Panel A) and adjusted by age (Panel B), with 90% confidence intervals in brackets**

Panel A: Unadjusted

	LGBTQ+ (n = 536)	Non-LGBTQ+ (n = 2,175)	Difference	p-value
Coresidential married spouse	24.59% [20.96, 28.62]	52.98% [50.74, 55.21]	−28.39% [−32.83, −23.96]	0.00
Coresidential unmarried partner	19.01% [15.38, 23.25]	10.22% [8.89, 11.72]	8.79% [4.61, 12.96]	0.00
Non-coresidential partner	21.83% [17.58, 26.77]	11.65% [10.30, 13.14]	10.18% [5.37, 14.99]	0.00
Not partnered	34.66% [29.87, 39.77]	25.28% [23.31, 27.36]	9.37% [4.01, 14.73]	0.00

Panel B: Adjusted by Age

	LGBTQ+ (n = 536)	Non-LGBTQ+ (n = 2,175)	Difference	p-value
Coresidential married spouse	27.02% [23.16, 30.88]	52.91% [50.69, 55.13]	−25.89% [−30.34, −21.43]	0.00
Coresidential unmarried partner	15.93% [12.58, 19.29]	8.87% [7.65, 10.09]	7.06% [3.49, 10.63]	0.00
Non-coresidential partner	18.64% [14.77, 22.51]	11.57% [10.20, 12.95]	7.07% [2.96, 11.18]	0.01
Not partnered	36.83% [32.15, 41.50]	25.17% [23.05, 27.30]	11.66% [6.52, 16.79]	0.00

Data source: AMS 2021.
Notes: Estimates are weighted using a probability weight. Age-adjusted estimates represent predicted values evaluated at the population mean age of US adults (47.40). Taylor series linearization was used to calculate design-based standard errors.

Table 2 presents estimates of living arrangements by LGBTQ+ identification, also shown as unadjusted and age-adjusted estimates, with 90% confidence intervals and corresponding p-values. In the unadjusted estimates (Panel A), the mean household size among adults identifying as LGBTQ+ was smaller than that of non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults (2.81 [CI: 2.65, 2.98] vs. 3.07 [CI: 2.99, 3.15]). A larger share of LGBTQ+

identifying adults lived alone (25.05% [CI: 21.08, 29.49] vs. 19.65% [CI: 18.04, 21.38]) or with unrelated roommates (6.42% [CI: 4.65, 8.81] vs. 2.88% [CI: 2.11, 3.91]), while a smaller share lived with children (17.79% [CI: 14.29, 21.92] vs. 25.68% [CI: 23.77, 27.68]). LGBTQ+ identifying adults were also more likely to live with other family members (22.36% [CI: 17.72, 27.81] vs. 13.28% [CI: 11.54, 15.22]). In the age-adjusted estimates (Panel B), these patterns were largely similar, except for living with other family members, for which the difference reversed and narrowed in magnitude (10.26% [CI: 4.41, 16.10] among LGBTQ+ identifying adults vs. 9.39% [CI: 7.84, 10.94] among non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults).

Table 2: **Living arrangements by LGBTQ+ identification unadjusted and adjusted by age, with 90% confidence intervals in brackets**

Panel A: Unadjusted

	LGBTQ+ (n = 536)	Non-LGBTQ+ (n = 2,181)	Difference	p-value
Household size	2.81 [2.65, 2.98]	3.07 [2.99, 3.15]	−0.25 [−0.44, −.07]	0.02
Lives alone	25.05% [21.08, 29.49]	19.65 [18.04, 21.38]	5.40% [0.87, 9.92]	0.05
Lives with child(ren)	17.79% [14.29, 21.92]	25.68% [23.77, 27.68]	7.89% [−12.17, −3.61]	0.00
Lives with other family member(s)	22.36% [17.72, 27.81]	13.28% [11.54, 15.22]	9.08% [3.71, 14.46]	0.01
Lives with unrelated roommate(s)	6.42% [4.65, 8.81]	2.88% [2.11, 3.91]	3.54% [1.31, 5.78]	0.01

Panel B: Adjusted by Age

	LGBTQ+ (n = 536)	Non-LGBTQ+ (n = 2,181)	Difference	p-value
Household size	2.48 [2.37, 2.59]	3.09 [3.02, 3.15]	−0.60 [−0.73, −0.48]	0.00
Lives alone	29.61% [24.97, 34.26]	17.30% [15.38, 19.21]	12.32% [7.29, 17.34]	0.00
Lives with child(ren)	15.73% [12.08, 19.37]	24.44% [22.55, 26.34]	−8.72% [−12.83, −4.61]	0.00
Lives with other family member(s)	10.26% [4.41, 16.10]	9.39% [7.84, 10.94]	0.87% [−5.18, 6.91]	0.81
Lives with unrelated roommate(s)	6.36% [4.30, 8.43]	2.00% [1.27, 2.74]	4.36% [2.16, 6.55]	0.00

Data source: AMS 2021.
Notes: Estimates are weighted using a probability weight. Age-adjusted estimates represent predicted values evaluated at the population mean age of US adults (47.40). Taylor series linearization was used to calculate design-based standard errors.

4. Discussion

Our descriptive findings reveal distinct patterns in relationship status and living arrangements among LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying US adults, based on data from a probability-based survey. Even after adjusting for age, a smaller share of LGBTQ+ identifying individuals were in coresidential marital relationships compared to those not identifying as LGBTQ+. Although marriage equality has undoubtedly expanded access to and the uptake of same-sex marriage (Carpenter 2020; Hays and Minkin 2025; Sears, Cisneros, and Mallory 2025), coresidential marriage remains a less common arrangement among LGBTQ+ identifying adults. Our estimates are consistent with findings from Gallup, the National Health Interview Survey, and the National Couples' Health and Time Study, which collectively indicate that adults who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely than non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults to be in unmarried cohabiting partnerships (Jones 2022b; Julian, Manning, and Kamp Dush 2024). Moreover, LGBTQ+ identifying adults were more likely to report having a non-coresidential partner, echoing patterns documented among gay and lesbian identifying adults two decades ago (Strohm et al. 2009), and were also more likely to report having no partner at all, either within or outside the household.

Regarding living arrangements, consistent with prior research (Wilson and Bouton 2024), LGBTQ+ identifying individuals were less likely to live with children. At the same time, they were more likely to live with unrelated roommates, potentially reflecting the importance of "families of choice" (Weston 1991), which often complement rather than replace biolegal ties (Hull and Ortyl 2019). This may also reflect LGBTQ+ identifying adults' higher likelihood of living in urban environments (Jones 2025) and their lower likelihood of being homeowners (Visalli et al. 2024). LGBTQ+ identifying adults were also more likely to live alone and in smaller households, patterns that raise concerns about social isolation and loneliness in later life (Kim and Fredriksen-Goldsen 2016), with implications for health and mortality (Poulain, Dal, and Herm 2020; Umberson and Donnelly 2023). By contrast, differences in the likelihood of living with family members were largely attributable to age composition: LGBTQ+ identifying adults tend to be younger on average (Jones 2025), in a life stage in which coresidence with family members, particularly parents, is more common (Hemez and Washington 2024).

Several limitations warrant consideration. First, although the study oversampled adults who identify as LGBTQ, the sample size was insufficient to support within-group analyses. Larger samples are needed to capture heterogeneity across sexual and gender identities. Second, although we adjusted for age, other demographic characteristics, such as race/ethnicity and educational attainment, may also shape relationship status and living arrangements, and they should be examined in future research with greater statistical

power. Third, our cross-sectional estimates likely understate the prevalence of certain arrangements when they are highly transitory; longitudinal data would better capture their incidence (Strohm et al. 2009). Fourth, due to sample size constraints, we aggregated respondents with non-coresidential partners into a single category. This category is likely highly heterogeneous, encompassing dating relationships, exclusive and nonexclusive partnerships, relationships that may eventually transition to coresidential unions, and more durable non-coresidential arrangements (Brown, Manning, and Wu 2022; Carpenter and Gates 2008; Strohm et al. 2009).

Fifth, our estimates of non-coresidential relationships relied on an indirect approach that identified respondents who reported being in a partnership but did not report living with a partner. This approach likely underestimates the number of non-coresidential partnerships, as some individuals may have both a coresidential and non-coresidential partner. Relatedly, the AMS data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have influenced some individuals' living arrangements. Finally, although we provide estimates of coresidential and non-coresidential partnerships among non-LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+ identifying adults, as well as their respective living arrangements, we do not provide estimates for non-partner non-coresidential social connections. This is important because although LGBTQ+ identifying adults have smaller household sizes and are more likely to live alone, they likely maintain meaningful social connections outside the household.

Despite these limitations, our study makes several important contributions. Few national datasets integrate measures of sexual and gender identity with household rosters and questions about non-coresidential partnerships, leaving persistent gaps in our understanding of contemporary family life. In an era of increasing family diversity (Sassler and Lichter 2020; Smock and Schwartz 2020) and rising LGBTQ+ identification across birth cohorts (Jones 2025), these omissions hinder accurate portrayals of US families in terms of both partnership prevalence and living arrangements. By incorporating both household roster measures and non-coresidential partnership questions into a probability-based survey with sexual and gender identity questions, we demonstrate that conventional survey designs undercount intimate relationships by excluding non-coresidential partners and, in doing so, disproportionately obscure the prevalence of LGBTQ+ partnerships (Strohm et al. 2009). In addition, we provide a descriptive portrait of the distinct living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying adults, including a smaller average household size, a higher likelihood of living alone, a greater prevalence of living with unrelated roommates, and a lower likelihood of residing with a child. These estimates can serve as benchmarks as the data infrastructure continues to evolve.

Together, these patterns point to several implications for survey measurement. Probability-based surveys that seek to understand contemporary family life should

routinely collect SOGI data alongside household rosters that use inclusive terminology to capture the living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying adults. Partnership measures should also explicitly identify relationships that exist outside the household rather than limiting identification to coresidential ties. Because the language used to describe non-coresidential partnerships and household relationships can be biased, additional measurement testing is needed to establish best practices for accurately capturing these relationships.

The approaches presented in the current study represent one of several efforts to advance these measurement strategies, and we urge continued development in this area with other survey samples and methodologies. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (Bates, Chin, and Becker 2022) have articulated best practices for measuring SOGI. Policy initiatives such as H.R. 4176 (the LGBTQ+ Data Inclusion Act, introduced in the 117th Congress) and guidance issued by the Office of the Chief Statistician of the United States during the Biden administration have also emphasized the integration of SOGI questions into federal data sources. However, comparable guidance for the inclusive measurement of LGBTQ+ family life in routine probability-based data collection remains markedly underdeveloped.

One of the most promising opportunities for more systematically understanding the living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying adults in the United States would be the proposed incorporation of SOGI questions into the American Community Survey (Julian, Manning, and Westrick-Payne 2024), which already records each household member's relationship to the householder (Black et al. 2000). Incorporating SOGI measures into the Survey of Income and Program Participation, which includes a full household relationship matrix that identifies how all household members are related to one another, would be even more advantageous. Likewise, data sources that measure sexual identity and coresidential partnership status, such as the National Health Interview Survey (Badgett, Carpenter, and Sansone 2021), would be strengthened by the inclusion of measures capturing non-coresidential partners, who often provide important forms of social and health-related support (Hu and Coulter 2025; Strohm et al. 2009). Moreover, an important consideration in this work is the continued investigation of how LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults may differ in their classification of household roster relationships, such as families of choice.

Definitions of families and households, along with the measurement of SOGI, are deeply embedded in public policy, shaping eligibility, access to benefits, and resource allocation (Berger and Carlson 2020; Movement Advancement Project 2023). Policies governing assisted reproductive technologies (ART), surrogacy, and parental leave, for example, often result in differential access for LGBTQ+ identifying individuals and families (Kaufman et al. 2022). Because household ties and intimate partnerships shape health, caregiving, and economic security (Badgett, Carpenter, and Sansone 2021; Fortes

de Lena and Boertien forthcoming; Thomas, Liu, and Umberson 2017; Umberson and Donnelly 2023; Umberson and Thomeer 2020), probability-based surveys should include SOGI measures alongside inclusive household and partnership data. Such data not only inform policies and advocacy efforts that promote the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ families (Nguyen et al. 2025) but also allow researchers to document the full diversity of contemporary family forms and relational arrangements in the United States. Indeed, without accurate population-level estimates of partnership prevalence and household composition, efforts to reduce health disparities, advance family equity, and represent the range of family experiences will remain limited.

5. Acknowledgments

Contributions
CJ: Conceptualization, formal analysis, visualization, writing original draft.
DC: Funding acquisition, survey design, writing, reviewing, and editing.
GK: Funding acquisition, survey design, writing, reviewing, and editing

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