Same-sex Couples in Puerto Rico: A demographic summary

by Gary J. Gates
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Introduction
This research brief offers analyses of data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) to describe the characteristics of same-sex couples and their families in Puerto Rico compared to their different-sex married counterparts.

Same-sex couples are identified in the ACS when an adult in the household is identified as either the “husband/wife” or “unmarried partner” of the person who filled out the survey, referred to as the householder, and both partners or spouses are of the same sex. These analyses combine ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files from 2010, 2011, and 2012, yielding sample sizes of:

- 59 same-sex couples
- 21 children under age 18 being raised by same-sex couples
- 16,426 different-sex married couples
- 10,015 children under age 18 being raised by different-sex married couples

Table 1. Individuals in couples, by age (2010-2012 ACS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Same-sex</th>
<th>Different-sex married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/ethnicity
In Puerto Rico, nearly all individuals in same-sex and different-sex married couples identify as Latino/a. Table 2 shows that, in Puerto Rico, 97% of individuals in same-sex couples and 98.8% of individuals in different-sex married couples are Latino/a.

Table 2. Individuals in couples, by race/ethnicity (2010-2012 ACS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Same-sex</th>
<th>Different-sex married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian/AK Native</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Same-sex couples with children
15% of same-sex couples in Puerto Rico are raising children under age 18 in their homes. 718 same-sex-couple households in Puerto Rico are raising 1,269 children.

Over two-thirds (71%) of children being raised by same-sex couples in Puerto Rico are biological children, 11% are stepchildren, 9% are grandchildren, and 3% are foster children. This implies that same-sex couples in Puerto Rico are raising an estimated 899 biological children, 136 stepchildren, 114 grandchildren, and 38 foster children. An additional 7% of children being raised by same-sex couples in Puerto Rico are identified as other non-relatives.

Same-sex couples with children are nearly 9 times more likely to be fostering a child than different-sex married couples with children in Puerto Rico. An estimated 5.7% of same-sex couples with children have a foster child, compared to 0.6% of different-sex married couples with children. Additionally, approximately 3% of the children of same-sex couples in Puerto Rico are fostered, compared to 1% of the children of different-sex married couples.

While these Census Bureau data do not identify any same-sex couples with adopted children in Puerto Rico, only 1% of the children of different-sex married couples are adopted.

**Race/ethnicity**

Nearly one in seven individuals in same-sex couples who are Latino/a (14%) are raising a child under age 18, compared to 35% of their White counterparts.

**Income**

The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under age 18 in the home is 8% less than the median annual household income of different-sex married couples raising children (33,337 versus 36,367).

This may in part be because, compared to different-sex married couples raising children, same-sex couples with children include a higher portion of female couples, who tend to have lower earnings than different-sex married couples.

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**About the author**

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

**About the Institute**

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

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