

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

Same-sex couples

Tabulations from Census 2010 show that there are over 6,614 same-sex couples living in Puerto Rico. The majority of same-sex couples are female (70%).¹

Age

The average age of individuals in same-sex couples in Puerto Rico is nearly fourteen years younger than that of different-sex married couples—39.5 and 53.3 years old, respectively. Table 1 shows the percentages of adults in same-sex and different-sex married couples by age group. The lowest percentage of same-sex couples is in the 65 and over group (3%) while the lowest percentage of different-sex married couples is in the youngest age group of those under age 30 (5%).

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

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex married
<30	19%	5%
30-49	67%	37%
50-64	10%	33%
65+	3%	25%

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)

Race/ethnicity	Same-sex	Different-sex married
White	3%	0.9%
African-American	0%	0.1%
Latino/a	97%	98.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%	0.1%
Am. Indian/AK Native	0%	0%
Other	0%	0.1%

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.

¹ Gates, GJ, & Cooke, AM (2011). *Puerto Rico Census Snapshot: 2010*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Retrieved from: <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census2010Snapshot-PuertoRico1.pdf>

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.

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.

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