FISCAL RESEARCH CENTER

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF GEORGIA III: LESBIAN AND GAY COUPLES

Gregory B. Lewis

**Fiscal Research Center
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA**

**FRC Report No. 124
March 2006**

GeorgiaState University | ANDREW YOUNG SCHOOL
OF POLICY STUDIES

Acknowledgments

From the Director

This report is one of a series that explores Georgia's fiscal, economic and demographic features. The demographic reports will consider many difference sub-populations. The well being of the state depends on the well being of its residents, so it is important to understand the economic and social conditions of population. The best way to do that is to consider each sub-population.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Using 2000 Census data, this paper examines same-sex couples as Georgia voters, taxpayers, parents, and citizens. This is one of a series of FRC reports focusing on the demographics of various subpopulations in Georgia.

Same-sex couples head 0.7 percent of Georgia households and lesbian, gay, and bisexuals (LGBs) comprise less than 3 percent of Georgia, making them a small voting bloc. The state legislature has not prohibited anti-gay discrimination, was among the last to pass hate crimes legislation, and was among the first to explicitly ban same-sex marriage, both by law and by constitutional amendment. LGBs create stronger voting blocs by living in the most liberal and gay-friendly portions of the state. Nearly half live in just five counties (compared to only one-fifth of the state's married couples). LGBs' residential concentration in Atlanta, Decatur, Athens, parts of Augusta and Savannah, and Fulton and DeKalb counties generally (especially inside the Perimeter and east of the downtown connector) has created enclaves that have elected a few openly gay officials and many gay-friendly ones, prohibited employment and housing discrimination, and recognized same-sex relationships in limited ways.

Socio-economic status makes male couples highly desirable as taxpayers. They have higher average household incomes than married couples (primarily because they typically have two full-time male workers). The mean household income of male couples was 4 percent higher than that of married couples in 1999 ($74,200 versus $71,700), while household incomes for lesbians and unmarried heterosexual couples lagged well behind ($60,700 and $47,300, respectively). Nearly half of male couples had two full-time, full-year workers, compared to 37-39 percent for other couples types. They pay high property taxes and above-average state income taxes. The mean value of homes owned by male couples is one-quarter higher than home value for married couples. Gay men's greater likelihood of living in Fulton-DeKalb, where home values are highest, explains much of the difference in property value. One average, gay male couples pay 29 percent more than married couples in property taxes, due both to the higher values of their homes and the higher

property tax rates in Fulton-DeKalb. They tend not to have children in public schools. Female couples are less obvious net gains for governments, though they probably pay more in taxes than unmarried male-female couples.

These high household incomes do not prove the absence of anti-gay employment discrimination, however. Men in male couples earn 16 percent less than equally educated married men of the same age and race working the same number of hours and weeks in the same occupations and the same locations, though only slightly less than comparable unmarried men with female partners. The 16 percent pay difference is smaller than that between apparently comparable black and white men, but at least as large as that between white and other minority men. Women in female couples earn more than apparently comparable wives and women in male-female couples, though discrimination in favor of lesbians seems an unlikely explanation.

Most same-sex couples do not have children, but a substantial minority does. Same-sex and different-sex couples with children tend to make similar sacrifices. One partner works longer hours to pay the bills. The other takes more time off to raise the kids. They move to the suburbs. They accept lower household incomes than couples without children. Indeed, same-sex couples with children typically face larger financial sacrifices than do married couples, both because income differences between couples with and without children are larger and because unmarried partners and their children typically do not qualify for health insurance and other benefits from the fully employed partner. Although same-sex couples are not as stable as married couples, differences are smaller among couples with children.

Introduction

Same-sex couples are 14 percent more likely than married couples to choose Georgia as home. The Peach State is home to 3.2 percent of all U.S. same-sex couples but only 2.9 percent of all households (Gates & Ost 2004). Gay male couples comprise a higher percentage of the population in only four states (California, Nevada, Florida, and New York). Atlanta, Decatur, and Fulton and DeKalb counties all have very high concentrations of same-sex couples for cities and counties of their sizes (Gates & Ost 2004). As voters and taxpayers, gay couples have an important presence in the public finances of the state, especially in the metro area.

This report examines a potential mismatch of policy and numbers, using data on same- and different-sex couples from the 2000 Census. The first section examines lesbian, gay, and bisexuals' (LGBs) residential patterns, then assesses their impact on policy relevant to LGBs. LGBs have little political power at the state level but are highly concentrated in the most socially and politically liberal areas of the state, making local political power a possibility. The second section focuses on financial issues, examining LGBs as taxpayers and wage-earners. Gay male couples have higher household incomes, pay higher income and property taxes, and probably consume fewer public services than married couples (presumably making them an attractive demographic for the state to target), despite earning substantially less than comparably educated, experienced, and hard-working husbands. Lesbian couples earn less and therefore pay less in taxes than married couples, but they earn and pay more than unmarried heterosexual couples. The third section focuses on the substantial minority of same-sex couples who are raising children, assessing both the adaptations they make and the challenges they face.

Census Data and Their Limitations

The 2000 Census provides basic data on all individuals in all U.S. households and more detailed information on individuals in a random 5 percent sample of households. In every household, the person who owns or rents the house or apartment is designated the householder and all others are identified by their relationships to the householder. The Census lists a wide array of possible relationships (e.g., spouse, child, sibling, parent, housemate, boarder), including "unmarried partner." Analysis is restricted to Georgians who live with a spouse, an unmarried partner of the same sex, or an unmarried partner of the opposite sex. The residential/voting analysis uses the complete enumeration; all remaining sections rely on the 5 percent Public Use Microsample.

Although the Census provides the best available data on lesbian and gay couples, most gay men (3 in 4) and lesbians (6 in 10) do not have partners, and the Census cannot distinguish them from single heterosexuals (Gates & Ost 2004, 13; Black et al. 2000). In addition, one-quarter of same-sex couples may not have classified themselves as unmarried partners on the Census, partly due to concerns about confidentiality or about whether "unmarried partners" appropriately described their relationships (Badgett & Rogers 2003; Gates & Ost 2004, 13). As wealthier and better-educated lesbians and gay men are more likely to be in couples (Carpenter 2003) and are probably more likely to classify themselves as unmarried partners if they are (Badgett & Rogers 2003), conclusions based on same-sex couples in the Census may substantially overstate educational levels and incomes, among other characteristics, relative to lesbians and gay men generally.

Same-Sex Couples as Voters

The relatively high number of same-sex couples in Georgia owes much to the "two Georgias." Georgia's 11,127 male-male couples (MMCs) and 10,073 female-female couples (FFCs) live predominantly in the first Georgia, especially its most urban areas. Atlanta has the ninth-highest concentration of gay and lesbian couples among cities of at least 500,000 population. Decatur has the seventh-highest concentration among cities or towns with at least 50 same-sex couples. DeKalb and Fulton counties have the 7th and 9th highest concentrations of gay male couples of any counties in the U.S. (San Francisco is number 1 for both counties and large cities, and Provincetown is first among cities with at least 50 same-sex couples; all rankings from Gates & Ost 2004).

Higher percentages of same-sex than married couples live in five of Georgia's ten largest counties (Table 1). Same-sex couples are two-and-one-half times as likely as married couples to reside in Fulton and DeKalb counties (35 percent vs. 14 percent), nearly twice as likely as married couples to live in Clarke county (home of the University of Georgia), and about 10 percent more likely than married couples to live in Clayton and Chatham (part of Atlanta's inner ring of suburbs and home to Savannah, respectively). These five counties house 42 percent of Georgia's same-sex couples and only 20 percent of its married couples. Same-sex couples disproportionately live inside the perimeter (I-285). Indeed, 15 percent live in the East Atlanta quadrant bounded by I-85 to the north, I-285 to the east, I-20 to the south, and the downtown connector to the west; in contrast, only 4 percent of all households and 2 percent of married couple households live in this quadrant (Figure 1).[1]

---

[1]All ten counties are in the Atlanta metropolitan area or contain Georgia's other major cities (Augusta, Athens, Macon, and Savannah). Other household types (unmarried heterosexual couples, people living alone, and unmarried people living with non-partner others) have residential distributions that are in-between married and same-sex couples – 41-42 percent live in the least urban counties, 22-24 percent live in Fulton-DeKalb, and 5-7 percent reside in the East Atlanta quadrant.
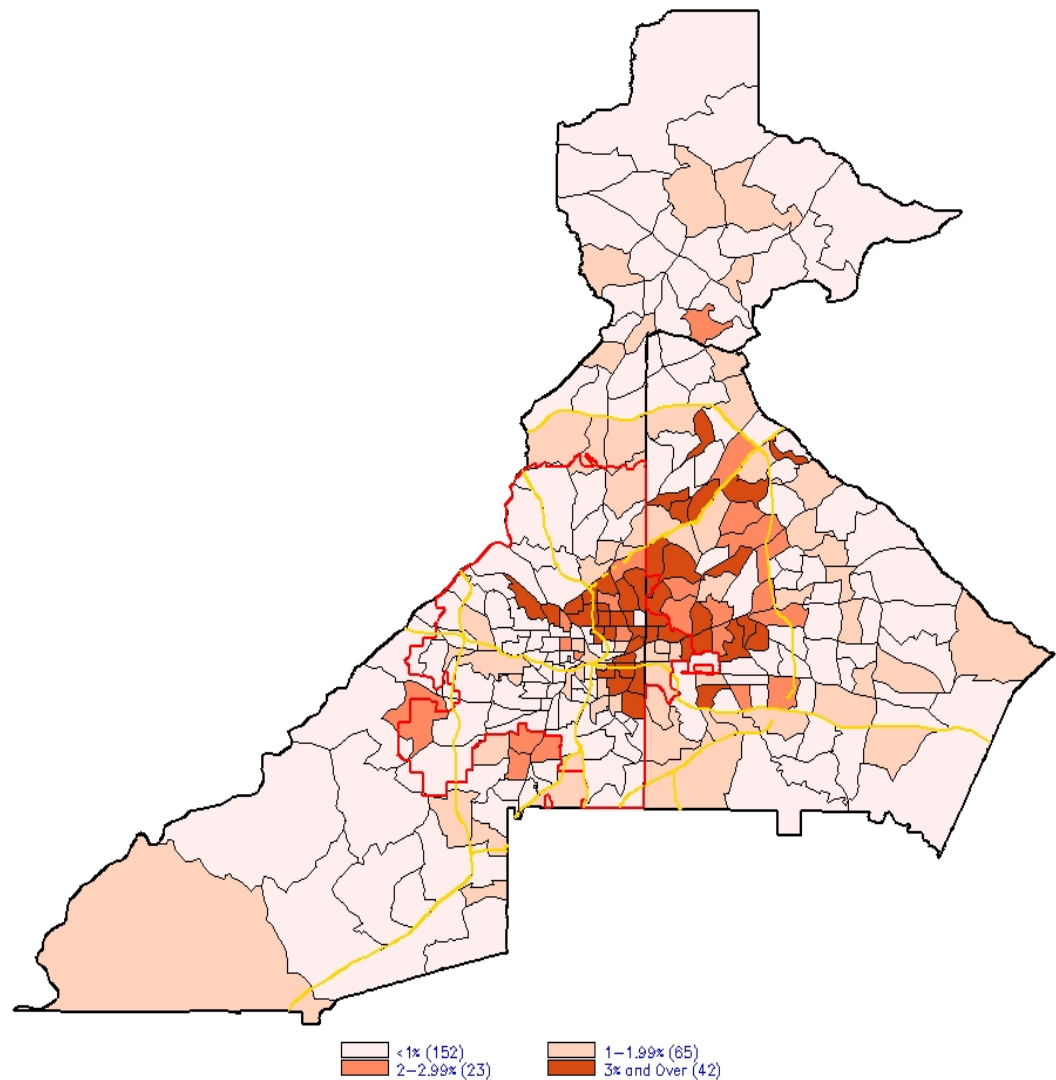
TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES BY COUNTY

	% of MMC	% of FFC	MMC as %	FFC as %	% of MFC	% of SM	% of SF	% of MWOP	% of FWOP	% of MC	% No on Amend
Fulton	22.6	12.0	.78	.38	12.0	15.5	13.9	14.0	13.1	7.8	39.7
DeKalb	19.1	15.3	.85	.62	10.2	9.2	9.6	12.2	10.5	6.5	40.1
Gwinnett	5.9	6.6	.33	.34	6.2	5.4	5.1	6.9	4.6	8.0	26.8
Cobb	5.8	6.8	.28	.30	7.5	7.6	7.3	8.3	6.1	8.0	30.2
Chatham	2.3	3.4	.29	.39	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.5	2.6	27.1
Clayton	2.0	3.6	.27	.44	3.9	2.7	2.4	3.3	3.7	2.4	22.9
Richmond	2.1	1.9	.31	.26	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.3	3.4	2.0	22.6
Hall	1.6	1.7	.38	.37	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.1	1.9	17.7
Clarke	1.2	1.8	.35	.46	1.5	1.7	1.6	3.2	1.8	0.8	48.0
Bibb	1.3	1.6	.24	.28	2.0	2.2	2.5	1.7	2.8	1.6	22.0

MMC = male–male couples. FFC = female-female couples. MFC = unmarried male-female couples. SM = single male, living alone. SF = single female, living alone. MWOP = single male, living with others. FWOP = single female, living with others. MC = married couples. % of = percentage of all households of this type that live in this county. MMC/FFC as % = percentage of county households that are of this type. % No on Amend = percentage of county votes against a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. For instance, 22.6% of MMCs and 12.0% of FFCs live in Fulton County, but MMCs represent only 0.78% of Fulton County households, and FFCs represent just 0.38%. In the 2004 referendum on the constitutional amendment, 39.7% of Fulton voters voted no.

FIGURE 1. SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE EAST ATLANTA QUADRANT OF FULTON AND DEKALB COUNTIES

Gay male couples are even more concentrated geographically than lesbian couples – 42 percent of MMCs and 27 percent of FFCs live in Fulton-DeKalb; and 19 percent of MMCs and 10 percent of FFCs live in the East Atlanta quadrant. Indeed, 14 percent of MMCs live in just 19 Census tracts, which house only 4 percent of FFCs and 1 percent of married couples. In contrast, it takes 35 tracts to capture 14 percent of FFCs and 70 tracts to capture 14 percent of married couples. Statewide, MMCs outnumber FFCs by 10 percent, but the ratios are 2:1 in Fulton and 1.4:1 in DeKalb. In 16 of the remaining 20 counties with the most same-sex couples, FFCs predominate. Richmond (Augusta) is the only other county in the top 20 where MMCs markedly outnumber FFCs.

Causes for the Concentration. Although LGBs are distributed almost randomly throughout the country at birth (Sherrill 1996), they tend to move to relatively gay-friendly areas as adults. In Georgia, Atlanta is one of those areas, and has been a magnet for LGBs from small towns throughout the South at least since World War II. There are many events and actions that explain the attractiveness of Atlanta. Despite a history of police crackdowns on gay bars and cruising areas, Atlanta's cosmopolitanism and its concentration of LGBs provided a freedom, social life, and potential for political organization impossible in their hometowns (Howard 1997). Atlanta had five gay bars by 1966, a gay pride march in 1970 (one year after Stonewall), a gay liberation organization in 1971, an openly gay political appointee in 1972, and two gay periodicals by 1974 (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004). In 1986 Atlanta became the second major city in the South (after Austin), and among the first 20 in the country, to pass a gay rights ordinance (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004, 410). In 1997, northeast Atlanta voters chose Georgia's first openly gay elected official; in 2001 voters citywide elected her city council president. Atlanta's gay pride parade remains the largest in the South and one of the largest in the country.

A survey of Atlanta metropolitan area residents (Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* 1991) confirms that those inside the Perimeter (I-285) are 6-12 percentage points more likely than those outside the Perimeter to support a wide range of gay rights policies – anti-discrimination laws, same-sex marriage, sodomy law repeal, and employment of gay elementary school teachers. The higher concentration of LGBs

inside the Perimeter contributes to this pattern,[2] but restricting the sample to the 91 percent who report never having had sex with a person of their same gender narrows the gap on gay rights issues by only about 2 percentage points. Heterosexuals inside the Perimeter were more likely than those outside to have a gay friend (48 percent vs. 42 percent), almost three times as likely to have a gay neighbor (29 percent vs. 11 percent), and even somewhat more likely to have a gay family member (16 percent vs. 12 percent). As having openly gay friends increases support for gay rights (e.g., Herek & Capitanio, 1996), the concentration of LGBs inside the Perimeter probably increased heterosexual support on these policies.

More importantly, LGBs choose to live in environments that are already more accepting. In 2004, Georgia voters overwhelmingly (76-24) approved a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. No county opposed the amendment, but the three large counties with the highest concentration of same-sex couples (Fulton, DeKalb, and Clarke) also had the largest minorities opposing it. Together they provided 33 percent of the votes against the amendment and only 15 percent of those for it. Chatham and Clayton counties had the 5th and 9th highest percentages voting against it. In a county-level analysis weighted by the number of votes, the percentage voting against the amendment was strongly positively correlated with the percentages of households composed of single male householders living with non-partner others (r=0.80), MMCs (r=0.73), and men living alone (r=0.60).

As same-sex couples head only 0.7 percent of Georgia households and less than 1.5 percent even in Fulton-DeKalb, LGBs made up a tiny minority of voters against the amendment even if we try to account for single LGBs. For instance, if everyone in DeKalb's 3,668 same-sex couples not only voted against the amendment but found three single LGBs to vote against it as well, that would still comprise only 27 percent of the 108,213 votes against the amendment in DeKalb. The concentration owes more to the gay-friendliness of the counties than the reverse.

---

[2]Those inside the Perimeter were four times as likely as those outside to acknowledge having had same-sex sex (8.6 percent vs. 2.2 percent), though 5 percent of both groups refused to answer the question. Among those who acknowledged having had same-sex sex, over 90 percent of those outside (and less than half those inside) the Perimeter categorized themselves as heterosexual.

Consequences of the Concentration. Sherrill (1996) argues that LGBs are a despised minority with extremely limited power, unable to protect their political interests in most circumstances. Haider-Markel and Meier (1996) find that gay rights proponents have built their successes through traditional interest group politics, quietly lobbying sympathetic political elites without attracting public attention; opponents have responded by "expanding the scope of the conflict" (Schattschneider 1960), moving conflicts from legislatures to ballot boxes, where an unsympathetic public trumps a sympathetic elite. Lewis and Edelson (2000) and Lewis (2003) argue that gay rights advocates can rarely keep their political gains quiet or convince political elites to ignore public opinion. Instead, advocates have sought victories from courts (which have more protection from public opinion) and from legislatures in gay-friendly enclaves (where public opinion supports gay rights) – typically big cities, college towns, and a few liberal states. Opponents have expanded the scope of the conflict by moving the venue from courtrooms to legislatures and from sympathetic locales to larger, less sympathetic publics. For instance, in 1992 state ballot initiatives in Colorado (Amendment 2) and Oregon (Proposition 9) aimed to overturn local gay rights ordinances by allowing voters in the state as a whole to prohibit protections popular in large cities and university towns. Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 and is currently considering amending the U.S. Constitution to prevent a handful of the most liberal states from approving same-sex marriage or civil unions. Bailey (1999) argues that most gay politics is urban politics, and that LGBs comprise a large percentage of "white liberals" in most urban areas.

This general pattern holds for Georgia, where local jurisdictions that contain larger concentrations of LGBs have more policies that are pro-LGB, while the state as a whole has opposed such policies. Georgia ranks 39th of 50 states in public support for gay employment rights and 42nd in acceptance of homosexuality (Lewis 2003). Atlanta passed a gay rights ordinance in 1986; the state legislature has yet to consider a comparable law. Atlanta passed domestic partner benefits for city employees in 1993, but the state insurance commissioner blocked implementation of benefits until 2000. In 2004, Atlanta's mayor fined the Druid Hills Country Club for not giving

spousal benefits to partners of LGB club members and the city council voted to give preference in city contracts to firms that offered domestic partner benefits to their employees; the state legislature almost immediately blocked both moves. The state does not prohibit anti-gay discrimination in employment or housing. It outlawed sex for same-sex couples until the state supreme court ruled its sodomy law unconstitutional in 1998. Georgia was among the first states to explicitly ban same-sex marriage by law (in 1996) and by constitutional amendment (in 2004). In contrast, it was the 41st to pass a hate crimes law, one its state supreme court overturned as unconstitutionally vague; legislators had listed no specific grounds for considering a crime to be a hate crime, worried that explicitly listing sexual orientation might make homosexuals a protected class (Rankin 2004).

Conclusion. Nearly half of Georgia's same-sex couples live in just five counties, which house only one-fifth of the state's married couples. The geographic concentration provides a measure of local political power to LGBs, as these are the most liberal and gay-friendly portions of the state. These enclaves have elected a few openly gay officials and many gay-friendly officials, and several protect LGBs from employment and housing discrimination and recognize same-sex relationships in limited ways.

The City of Atlanta has advertised in national gay media to attract LGB tourist dollars, and the new Brand Atlanta Campaign stresses openness in the slogan. The Atlanta Police, an official liaison to the LGB community inside-the-Perimeter, will probably continue to pursue policies that consider LGB interests. In contrast, the state as a whole is unfriendly to the interests of its LGB citizens and has undercut protections provided by local governments. We can expect continuing division between the state and the state's most urban areas on gay rights policies. To date, that has not prevented the over-representation of LGBs in the state's population, possibly because the remainder of the South is even more hostile to LGB interests than is Georgia.[3]

---

[3]Lewis (2003) finds residents of the following states to be more likely than Georgians to condemn homosexual relations as "always wrong" (in order, from the most condemning): Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and North Carolina.

Same-Sex Couples as Taxpayers

Income and earnings differences between same- and different-sex couples are potentially double-edged swords. Some marketing research indicates that LGBs "are highly educated ... usually have no dependents, have high levels of disposable income" and are highly concentrated in metropolitan areas (Kahan & Mulryan, 1995:40; see also Kates, 1998; Prince, 2002). MMCs' higher household incomes (Klawitter & Flatt, 1998) and typically childless state may allow them to devote more time and money to leisure activities than heterosexual couples (Black et al., 2003; Berg & Lien, 2002) and to choose to live in more expensive, "high-amenity cities" (Black et al., 2002). Higher incomes, more expensive homes, more discretionary spending, and fewer children might make MMCs ideal Georgia taxpayers.

Such patterns would feed into a fairly widespread perception of a homosexual economic elite that undercuts claims that LGBs need protection from discrimination.[4] This perception is based largely on unrepresentatively wealthy samples of lesbians and gay men (Badgett, 2001), but more random samples also indicate that LGBs are more educated, more urban, and more likely to be childless than heterosexuals (Badgett, 1995; Black et al., 2000; Allegretto & Arthur, 2001; Berg & Lien, 2002). Although MMCs have higher-than-average household incomes, individual-level analyses suggest pay discrimination as high as 15 to 30 percent against gay men (Badgett, 1995; Klawitter & Flatt, 1998; Allegretto & Arthur, 2001; Clain & Leppel, 2001; Berg & Lien, 2002; Barrett, Pollack & Tilden, 2002; Black et al., 2003; Blandford, 2003; Carpenter, 2004, 2005; Comolli 2004a, 2004b). Many of these studies, however, also find that lesbians earn more than comparably educated straight women of the same age. Experimental analysis also indicates that employers are less likely to grant job interviews to lesbian and gay job applicants (Weichselbaumer, 2003).

---

[4]In the words of Colorado Republican Senator Bill Armstrong, "To equate the self-created miseries of pleasure-addicted gays – who sport average incomes of nearly $55,000 a year – with the innocent sufferings and crippling poverty of legitimate minority groups is an insult to those who've struggled to achieve true civil rights in America" (Wadsworth 1997).

Household Income. The mean household income of male couples was 4 percent higher than that of married couples in 1999 ($74,200 *versus* $71,700), while household incomes for lesbian and unmarried heterosexual couples lagged well behind ($60,700 and $47,300, respectively). Though the Census provides no direct information on federal or state income taxes, the same ranking of household types is likely to hold, unless couples differ substantially in the deductions they take. A primary explanation for this ranking is the number of male workers in the household: coupled men earned $22,000 a year more than coupled women, on average. Although the mean earnings of men in MMCs were $10,000 lower than those of husbands ($30,600 *versus* $40,600), they were $13,400 higher than those of wives ($17,200). Lesbian couples had higher household earnings than unmarried heterosexual couples because women in FFCs typically earned only $300 less than unmarried male partners but $9,000 more than unmarried female partners ($26,200 *versus* $26,500 and $17,200, respectively).

Work patterns, age, and educational differences further explain the differences. Nearly half (45 percent) of MMCs had two full-time, full-year workers,[5] compared to 37-39 percent for the other couple types. Looking at both partners combined, MMCs worked more weeks in 1999 and more hours per week (82 and 75, respectively) than FFCs (81 and 73), married couples (80 and 72), and unmarried heterosexual couples (78 and 72). Unmarried heterosexual partners also earned less because they tended to be younger, less educated, and more likely to be minority than those in married or same-sex couples.

Homeownership and Property Taxes. Couple types vary substantially in the property taxes they pay (both directly and as renters), due to difference in home-ownership, house value, and location (which influences property values, rents, and tax rates). Table 2 shows home-ownership rates, mean house values, mean property taxes, and mean monthly rents for each couple type for the state as a whole and for three sub-regions: Fulton-DeKalb (where many pay both county and city property

---

[5]Full-time workers worked at least 40 hours in a typical week in 1999, and full-year workers worked at least 48 weeks in 1999.

TABLE 2. HOUSING PATTERNS BY COUPLE TYPE AND SUB-REGION

	Married Couple	Unmarried Couples	Male Couples	Female Couples
Own Home (%)				
Georgia	83.1	44.6	67.5	69.8
Fulton-DeKalb	77.7	33.9	68.1	68.1
Inner Ring Suburbs	86.1	47.8	70.2	72.0
Rest of Georgia	82.8	46.5	65.6	69.4
Mean Home Value ($1,000s)				
Georgia	144	100	182	135
Fulton-DeKalb	250	175	275	206
Inner Ring Suburbs	161	117	176	144
Rest of Georgia	113	74	104	96
Mean Property Taxes ($)				
Georgia	1214	850	1564	1115
Fulton-DeKalb	2474	1656	2567	1808
Inner Ring Suburbs	1382	1043	1220	1202
Rest of Georgia	872	560	883	733
Mean Monthly Rent ($)				
Georgia	541	489	564	528
Fulton-DeKalb	721	650	779	670
Inner Ring Suburbs	666	609	619	605
Rest of Georgia	424	361	355	407

taxes), the remaining ten counties in the Atlanta metropolitan statistical area (the inner suburban ring), and the remainder of the state.

Married couples are the most likely to own their own homes (83 percent, compared to 70 percent of FFCs, 67 percent of MMCs, and only 45 percent of MFCs). The concentration of same-sex couples, especially MMCs, in Fulton-DeKalb distorts these differences to some extent, as home-ownership is 10 percentage points lower in these counties than in the inner suburban ring. Still, MMCs and FFCs are at least 10 percentage points less likely than married couples to own their own homes in each subregion.[6]

---

[6]A logit model indicates that FFCs, MMCs, and MFCs were all less likely to own their homes than married couples of the same age, education, and race, with the same household income, living in the same metropolitan area with the same number of children and other people in the household. (See Table 3 for the control variables included in the model.) Holding these characteristics at their means, expected differences in probabilities of owning were 4, 7, and 12 percentage points, respectively. This is after controlling for same-sex couple's higher probability of living in Fulton-DeKalb, which also lowered the probability of owning by 7 percentage points.

The mean value of homes owned by MMCs is one-quarter higher than home values for married couples. Gay men's greater likelihood of living in Fulton-DeKalb, where home values are highest, explains much of the difference in property value. Gay men's homes are worth 10 percent more than married couples' homes in Fulton-DeKalb, 9 percent more in the inner suburban counties, and 8 percent *less* in the remainder of Georgia. Lesbian couples' homes are worth only 6 percent less than married couples' overall, even though they are worth 15 percent less in each sub-region, again because FFCs are more likely to locate in Fulton-DeKalb.[7]

On average, gay male couples pay 29 percent more than married couples in property taxes, due both to the higher values of their homes and the higher property tax rates in Fulton-DeKalb. In the inner suburban ring and the remainder of Georgia, mean property taxes for MMCs are within 3 percent of those of married couples. In Fulton-DeKalb, where the average property tax bill is 50 percent higher than in the inner ring and three times as high as in the remainder of Georgia, MMCs pay 13 percent more than married couples, in line with the 10 percent higher value of their homes.[8] FFCs pay about 8 percent less in property taxes than married couples but nearly a third more than unmarried heterosexual couples – with differences due both to house values and locations.

MMC renters pay 4 percent higher monthly rents (and FFC renters pay 2 percent less) than married couple renters. The high rents in Fulton and DeKalb counties explain much of the difference. MMCs pay 8 percent more than married couples in Fulton-DeKalb, but 7 percent less in the inner ring of suburban counties and 16 percent less in the rest of Georgia. Rents paid by FFCs are within 10 percent

---

[7]Given that they owned homes, regression results suggest that the value of homes owned by same-sex couples did not differ significantly from those of married couples with comparable incomes, household size, locations, and demographics. Unmarried heterosexual partners, however, had home values nearly 20 percent lower.

[8]Regression analysis confirms that property value and location are the primary determinants of property taxes, though higher-income households appear to pay slightly more for equally valued properties in the same metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Controlling for value and MSA, as well as the demographics included in previous models, property taxes paid by same-sex couples did not differ significantly from those paid by married couples. Unmarried partners paid about 5 percent less, on average.

of those paid by married couples overall and in each sub-region.[9] Assuming that renters pay much of the property taxes on their homes, same-sex renters pay at least comparable property taxes as married renters.

Individual Earnings. The $10,000 difference between the mean earnings of married men and men in same-sex couples might result from differences in work effort and qualifications rather than discrimination. Table 3 presents the results of regressing the natural logarithm of 1999 earnings on whether the person is part of a same-sex, different-sex, or married couple, controlling for a variety of characteristics previously found to influence earnings.[10] The sample is restricted to full-time, full-year, coupled workers.   Separate models for men and women allow the effects of all variables to vary by gender. Coefficients can be interpreted as proportional changes in earnings from unit increases in the independent variables.

Men in MMCs earned 15.6 percent less than comparably educated husbands of the same age and race/ethnicity who lived in the same metropolitan area and worked comparable hours and weeks, but only 2.5 percent less than comparable men in unmarried heterosexual partnerships (a statistically insignificant difference).[11] In

---

[9]Regression models indicate that married couples paid 4-6 percent more in rents than comparable same-sex or unmarried couples, though differences from same-sex couples were not statistically significant. Models controlled for age, education, race, household income, location, and number of children and other people in the household.

[10]All models include education, age [as a proxy for work experience], hours and weeks worked in 1999, sex, race/ethnicity, number of related children in the home, and metropolitan area, plus citizenship status and for English-language proficiency for those whose native language is not English.

[11]Coefficients on control variables are generally consistent with previous research. Each additional week worked (beyond 48) raised expected earnings by 3 percent, and a 1 percent increase in hours worked per week (beyond 40) raised expected earnings by 0.5 percent. Expected earnings rise at a decreasing rate with age, peaking at about age 50.   Expected earnings rise with education (measured as a set of dummy variables, with less than 12 years of education as the reference group) in a nonlinear fashion – e.g., the professional degree pays better than the doctorate, at least for men. Racial and ethnic minorities earn less than comparably aged and educated whites, with the differences larger for men than women. Each additional child raises the expected earnings of men by about 2 percent but lowers the expected earnings of women by about 1 percent. English speaking ability mattered substantially for non-native speakers, with the effect stronger for men than women.   The absence of a significant earnings difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites among women may result from the fact that only 24 percent of Georgia Hispanics were born in this country and only 16 percent had English as their native language; language and citizenship differences capture most of the earnings differences. Workers with a disability earned about 6 percent less than those without.

TABLE 3. REGRESSION MODELS FOR NATURAL LOGARITHM OF EARNINGS

	Men	Women
Same-Sex Partner	-0.156**	0.073**
	(0.024)	(0.022)
Unmarried Different-Sex Partner	-0.131**	-0.037**
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Number of Related Children under 18 in Household	0.021**	-0.011**
	(0.002)	(0.003)
Weeks Worked in 1999	0.034**	0.031**
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Natural Logarithm of Hours Worked	0.443**	0.512**
	(0.014)	(0.022)
Age	0.060**	0.047**
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Age-Squared	-0.001**	-0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Hispanic	-0.055**	0.008
	(0.020)	(0.024)
African American	-0.237**	-0.108**
	(0.007)	(0.007)
American Indian	-0.143**	-0.157**
	(0.032)	(0.036)
Asian American	-0.146**	-0.052*
	(0.022)	(0.024)
Pacific Islander	0.011	-0.027
	(0.087)	(0.083)
Some Other Race	-0.070**	-0.042
	(0.023)	(0.031)
Level of Education		
12th Grade, No Diploma	0.084**	0.065**
	(0.016)	(0.021)
High School Graduate	0.177**	0.167**
	(0.009)	(0.012)
Some College, But Less Than 1 Year	0.248**	0.296**
	(0.012)	(0.015)
One+ Years of College, No Degree	0.311**	0.326**
	(0.010)	(0.013)
Associate Degree	0.348**	0.431**
	(0.013)	(0.015)
Bachelor's Degree	0.629**	0.646**
	(0.010)	(0.013)
Master's Degree	0.709**	0.776**
	(0.013)	(0.016)
Professional Degree	1.037**	0.932**
	(0.017)	(0.025)
Doctoral Degree	0.779**	0.914**
	(0.024)	(0.035)

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED). REGRESSION MODELS FOR NATURAL LOGARITHM OF EARNINGS

	Men	Women
Speaks English:		
Very Well	-0.049**	-0.037*
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Well	-0.178**	-0.139**
	(0.024)	(0.028)
Not Well	-0.228**	-0.132**
	(0.027)	(0.031)
Not at All	-0.237**	-0.159**
	(0.053)	(0.057)
U.S. Citizen By Naturalization	0.022	0.009
	(0.019)	(0.021)
Not a U.S. Citizen	-0.031	-0.091**
	(0.018)	(0.022)
Disabled	-0.051**	-0.047**
	(0.007)	(0.009)
Albany MSA	0.053*	0.073**
	(0.023)	(0.026)
Athens MSA	-0.015	0.026
	(0.019)	(0.021)
Atlanta MSA	0.222**	0.229**
	(0.006)	(0.006)
Augusta MSA	0.067**	0.032
	(0.014)	(0.017)
Chattanooga MSA	-0.010	0.020
	(0.019)	(0.022)
Columbus MSA	-0.015	0.055**
	(0.019)	(0.021)
Macon MSA	0.074**	0.110**
	(0.013)	(0.015)
Savannah MSA	0.126**	0.048*
	(0.017)	(0.020)
Constant	5.356**	5.230**
	(0.156)	(0.179)
Observations	56,838	32,285
R-Squared	0.30	0.30

Standard Errors in Parentheses
* Significant at 5%; ** Significant at 1%

contrast, women in FFCs earned 7 to 11 percent *more* than comparable wives and unmarried female partners who worked full-time, full-year jobs.

Although individual characteristics do not fully explain the pay differences, LGBs' decisions to work in nontraditional occupations for their gender potentially could (Badgett, 2001; Blandford, 2003). Because occupations that primarily employ men typically pay more than those that primarily employ women, lesbians might be choosing higher-paying jobs and gay men might be choosing lower-paying jobs than comparable heterosexuals of their sex.

Table 4 confirms that LGBs are more likely than heterosexuals to choose nontraditional occupations. Men in MMCs are significantly more likely than married men to work in education, arts and entertainment, healthcare, food preparation and service, building and grounds maintenance, personal care and services, and office and administrative support.[12] In contrast, men in MMCs are under-represented in management, protective services, construction and extraction, installation maintenance & repair, production, and transportation and material moving – in all of which men outnumber women. Women in FFCs are over-represented (relative to married women) in many male-dominated occupations – management, computers and mathematics, protective services, construction and extraction, installation, maintenance, & repair, and transportation and material moving. They are under-represented in more typically female occupations: education, healthcare practitioners and support, personal care and services, and office and administrative support.

If these non-traditional occupational choices were a major cause of gay-straight pay differences, controlling for occupational differences would shrink the regression coefficients on *Same-Sex Partner* in Table 3 – the "unexplained" pay differences between comparable workers in same-sex and married couples. Adding 22 dummy variables for occupation to the regression models had almost no impact on pay differences between different couple types, however Nontraditional occupational choices are not the explanation.

---

[12]Women clearly outnumber men in all of these occupations, except that building and grounds maintenance and arts and entertainment are both fairly evenly balanced.

TABLE 4. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS, BY GENDER AND COUPLE TYPE

	Men			Women			Total
	Married	Gay	Unmarried	Lesbian	Married	Unmarried	
Management	13.80	11.39	6.75	9.56	7.57	6.08	10.56
Business and Financial Operations	4.07	4.83	1.98	4.39	5.06	3.88	4.42
Computer and Mathematics	2.85	3.76	2.56	2.14	1.35	1.09	2.14
Architecture and Engineering	3.04	1.93	1.75	0.90	0.45	0.40	1.77
Life/Physical Sciences	0.90	0.75	0.47	1.80	0.58	0.67	0.74
Community and Social Services	1.42	1.40	0.35	1.57	1.64	0.87	1.46
Legal Occupations	0.97	1.07	0.33	1.35	0.85	0.65	0.89
Education/Training/Libraries	2.39	3.97	1.18	5.85	11.33	3.33	6.24
Arts/Design/Entertain/Sports	1.30	3.54	1.47	1.91	1.67	1.92	1.51
Healthcare Practitioners	2.24	4.83	0.97	4.72	7.13	4.04	4.38
Healthcare Support	0.19	1.18	0.31	1.69	2.79	3.84	1.45
Protective Services	3.47	1.07	2.31	2.47	0.70	1.47	2.15
Food Preparation and Services	1.07	3.33	3.55	4.27	4.30	9.80	2.88
Building and Grounds Maintenance	3.03	3.97	4.89	4.05	2.74	4.93	3.05
Personal Care and Services	0.41	2.69	0.49	2.02	3.72	3.33	1.96
Sales and Related Occupations	10.50	10.96	8.03	12.04	11.26	14.32	10.88
Office/Administrative Support	5.92	11.49	5.92	17.10	25.34	21.64	14.89
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	1.01	1.07	1.46	0.56	0.33	0.59	0.72
Construction and Extraction	10.31	7.63	18.11	3.71	0.41	0.89	5.97
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	8.97	3.87	8.07	3.49	0.49	0.67	4.95
Production Occupations	11.23	7.95	14.22	7.76	7.90	12.12	9.90
Transportation	10.12	6.87	14.44	6.41	2.30	3.39	6.65
Military Specific	0.78	0.43	0.39	0.22	0.08	0.08	0.44
Sample Size	68,613	931	5,153	889	60,258	4,950	140,794

Although men in MMCs earn substantially less than comparable husbands, they earn nearly as much as comparable unmarried men with female partners, suggesting marital status rather sexual orientation could explain the pay disparity with married men. Economists have proposed two major non-discriminatory explanations for the long-standing findings that married men earn markedly more than unmarried men. First, marriage may make men more productive. Becker (1991) theorizes that economically rational wives tend to specialize in home production (e.g., cooking, cleaning, raising children), allowing their husbands to specialize in market labor, increasing their productivity relative to single men, who must devote more effort to home production. More generally, marriage and children may force men to settle down and take their careers more seriously, and wives may contribute more directly to their husbands' careers.

Second, productive workers may be more attractive husbands. In choosing mates, women may consider characteristics that economists would ideally include in their earnings models; omission of these unmeasured advantages could lead to the "unexplained" pay differences. Married men's pay advantage is still legitimate; on average, they are more productive than single men, but they would have been more productive even if they had remained single. A robust research literature offers conflicting evidence (e.g., Korenmann & Neumark 1991, Loh 1996, Cornwell & Rupert 1997, Gray 1997, Ginther & Zavodny 2001, Stratton 2002, Antonovics & Town 2004, Krashnisky 2004), leaving open the possibility that employers discriminate in favor of husbands, feeling that they deserve more pay due to their needs or their fulfillment of societal expectations.

Selection effects might explain why men in unmarried heterosexual couples make less than apparently comparable husbands (e.g., a willingness to make formal long-term commitments might be one of the unmeasured characteristics that both wives and employers value) but they seem less likely to explain why coupled gay men earn less, unless gay men almost universally lack those unmeasured productivity characteristics. Though different factors might attract wives than male partners, the much higher marriage rate for male heterosexuals than coupling rate for gay men suggests that marriage is a much less selective criterion.

Men in unmarried heterosexual couples might not get the same productivity advantages that husbands do, as the absence of a formal long-term commitment may make their partners less willing to specialize in home production. This problem should be more severe for men in MMCs, as neither partner will have the sex role socialization to make him willing to specialize in home production.[13] Note, however, that when the sample is restricted to men whose wives or partners have full-time jobs, arguing against home specialization by the partner, men in MMCs and MFCs still make 12 percent and 11 percent less, respectively, than comparable husbands. Specialization cannot explain much of the pay gap

One interesting bit of evidence against the discrimination hypothesis, however, is that the gay male pay disadvantage is larger and the lesbian pay advantage is smaller when the sample is restricted to Fulton-DeKalb (23 percent and 0 percent, respectively).[14] Although working in Atlanta has a monetary payoff for all couple types, LGBs appear to benefit less than do heterosexuals. As we would expect Atlanta employers to be less likely than others to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, this larger pay gap (for men) seems to argue that other factors are at work. This also supports the suggestion that LGBs choose Atlanta for nonfinancial reasons.

Conclusion. MMCs appear to be highly desirable local government taxpayers. Their household incomes are higher than other couple types, they live in areas with high property taxes, their property taxes are as high as others with similar incomes in the same area, and (as noted in the next section) they are less likely to have children in local public schools. They probably also pay above-average state income taxes, as they are likely to have fewer deductions. FFCs are less obvious net gains for governments, though they probably pay more in taxes than MFCs.

Do Georgia employers discriminatorily under-pay coupled gay men and lesbians relative to equally qualified coupled heterosexuals of the same sex? The evidence is not clear. Men in MMCs earn 16 percent less than equally educated

---

[13]Though MMCs are less likely than other couples to have children in the home, and should therefore need less home production, stereotypes suggest that gay men's standards (e.g., meticulous cleanliness and gourmet cooking) could overwhelm that advantage.

[14]Regression results available from author.

married men of the same age and race working the same number of hours and weeks in the same occupations and living in the same metropolitan area – but only slightly less than comparable unmarried men with female partners. The MMC-husband pay difference is smaller than that between apparently comparable black and white men, but it is at least as large as pay differences between white and other minority men. Productivity differences could explain these pay differences – if having a wife increases a man's productivity 16 percent more than having a male partner does, or if having a wife reflects unmeasured productive abilities far more than having a male partner does. Women in FFCs earn more than apparently comparable wives and women in MFCs. Discrimination in favor of lesbians seems an unlikely explanation.

Same-Sex Couples as Parents

Children are an important issue in the debate over same-sex marriage. Many opponents argue that same-sex couples cannot procreate and should not be allowed to raise children – that they lack the stability and values to raise children well. Proponents argue that same-sex couples need legal recognition to protect families that already exist. This section examines the number of same-sex couples raising children, the stability of their partnerships, and the adaptations they make to raise children.

Same-sex couples are less likely to have children than heterosexual couples, but a substantial minority are raising them. Same-sex couples comprise 1.2 percent of couples in the 5 percent Public Use Microsample and are raising 0.9 percent of the children being raised by couples. Two-fifths (41 percent) of FFCs and 28 percent of MMCs have related children in their homes, compared to 44 percent of MFCs and 50 percent of married couples. The mean number of related children for couples who have children is slightly higher for same-sex couples (2.0 for MMCs and 1.9 for FFCs) than for both married and unmarried heterosexual couples (1.8). The relatively small differences in the percentages across couple types result partly from the number of older married couples whose children have left home. Restricting couples to those with at least one partner under 50 increases the percentage with children by 20 percentage points (to 70 percent) for married couples, but only by 6 percentage points for FFCs, 5 points for MMCs, and 3 points for MFCs.[15]

Couple Stability. The Census offers only a few clues to couple stability. One indicator that the couple has been together at least five years is that neither partner has moved in that period. This is true for 55 percent of married couples, 37 percent of lesbian couples, 33 percent of gay male couples, and 17 percent of unmarried

---

[15]A logit model suggests that lesbian couples were equally likely to be raising children as unmarried heterosexual couples of the same age, race, and level of education and 13-15 percentage points more likely to be doing so than gay male couples. Married couples were substantially more likely than lesbian couples to have children, but the size of the difference appears to vary by race, about 22-27 percentage points for whites and about 17-22 percentage points for blacks and Hispanics.

heterosexual couples.[16] A clear indicator that the couple has *not* been together five years is that the partners have had different types of mobility in the past five years (none, a move within the state, a move from another state, or a move from another country). This is true for 7 percent of married couples, 18 percent of lesbian couples, 26 percent of gay male couples, and 28 percent of unmarried heterosexual couples.[17] The remainder have had the same type of mobility but may or may not have moved together. Among couples who had lived in their house for five years, married householders[18] had typically lived in the same house longer than unmarried householders. The percentage living there at least 30 years was 12 percent for married, 11 percent for lesbian, 6 percent for gay male, and 5 percent for unmarried heterosexual householders. The percentages who had lived there at least 20 years are 29 percent, 25 percent, 20 percent, and 13 percent, in the same order. Thus, the bulk of the evidence supports stereotypes that married couples have been together the longest, followed by FFCs, MMCs, and unmarried heterosexual partners.

Among couples raising children, the differences are smaller. The percentages who had not moved in the past five years did not differ significantly between married couples (44 percent) and same-sex couples (40 percent for MMCs and 37 percent for FFCs), though only 17 percent of unmarried heterosexual couples with children had not moved over that period. The percentage of married couples with children who had the same mobility patterns (92 percent) was somewhat higher than for MMCs (85 percent), FFCs (83 percent), and MFCs (75 percent) with children.[19] Among couples

---

[16]A logit model that controls for age, education, race, and the presence of children suggests that lesbian couples are 25-30 percentage points less likely to have both been immobile for five years than married couples, but 4-7 percentage points more likely than gay male couples and 8-17 percentage points more likely than unmarried heterosexual partners to have been so, for couples in their 30s to 50s.

[17]A logit model that controls for age, education, race, and the presence of children suggests that lesbians are 11-15 percentage points more likely to have had a different mobility pattern than their partner than are married people, but 6-10 percentage points less likely to have done so than both gay male couples and unmarried heterosexual partners.

[18]The Census does not ask how long other members of the household have lived there.

[19]In a logit model restricted to couples with children, in which at least one partner was under 50, same-sex couples were significantly *more* likely than unmarried heterosexuals to have been in the same house for five years but were significantly *less* likely than married couples to have had the same mobility patterns. Other differences were not statistically significant.

with children who had been in their current home at least five years, married and same-sex couples were equally likely to have lived there at least twenty years.

Same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples tend to have characteristics that predict less stability than those of married couples. Unmarried partners tend to be younger and to differ from each other more than spouses in terms of age, education, and race (Jepsen & Jepsen, 2002). Men in MMCs were 5.0 years younger than married men, though 6.5 years older than men in MFCs. Similarly, women in FFCs were 4.3 years younger than married women, but 7.0 years older than women in MFCs. The ages of partners were highly correlated for all couple types, with the correlation strongest for married couples (*r*=.93) and weakest for MFCs (*r*=.80). Average age differences were largest for MFCs and MMCs (5.4 and 5.3 years, respectively) and smallest for married couples (4.0 years).[20]

Husbands and men in MMCs were equally educated but had 0.8 year more education than men in MFCs. Women in FFCs had 0.2 year more education than wives and 0.8 year more education than women in MFCs. In one-third of couples of all types both partners had the same number of years of education. Three-quarters of heterosexual couples had educational levels within two years of each other; the percentage was slightly higher for FFCs (79 percent) and lower for MMCs (70 percent). The mean difference in educational levels between partners was largest for gay men (2.0 years) and smallest for MFCs (1.7 years).

Whites and blacks comprised 77 percent and 18 percent of all Georgians in couples, respectively, but whites were over-represented among married couples (78 percent) and under-represented among same-sex and opposite-sex unmarried couples (69 percent and 57 percent, respectively). In contrast, blacks comprised 37 percent of unmarried heterosexual partners and 26 percent of same-sex partners but only 17 percent of spouses. Gay male couples were the most likely to cross racial or ethnic lines – 10 percent of those in MMCs had partners of a different race or ethnicity, compared to 8 percent of those in MFCs, 6 percent of those in FFCs, and 3 percent of

---

[20]On average, husbands were 2.4 years older than their wives, while unmarried men were 2.2 years older than the women they lived with, but the pairing of older men with younger women was more universal in married couples (67 percent vs. 61 percent) and the reverse less common (21 percent vs. 29 percent).

married people. To some extent this reflects racial differences across couple types: whites were the most likely to have same-race partners in each couple type.[21] The pattern largely holds up even within races, however. Among whites, 7 percent of those in both MMCs and MFCs lived with partners of a different race or ethnicity, compared to only 2 percent of married people and 4 percent of those in FFCs. Among blacks, 9 percent of gay men, 5 percent of those in MFCs, 4 percent of lesbians, and 3 percent of married people lived with someone of a different race or ethnicity.

Adaptations to Having Children. The responsibility of raising children frequently leads to a greater division of labor within the household – one partner takes greater responsibility for raising the children and the other specializes more in market labor to support the family financially. For instance, Georgia couples where both partners were 21 to 59 years old were more likely to have both partners working full time if they were childless than if they had children (56 percent *versus* 48 percent). Likewise, 29 percent of couples with children had one partner who was not in the labor force, compared to 25 percent in couples without.

Same-sex and heterosexual couples appear to make similar accommodations to children. Married couples with children were 8 percentage points less likely to have two full-time workers than childless married couples. The differences were 7 and 9 percentage points for unmarried heterosexual and lesbian couples, respectively, and were actually largest (14 percentage points) for gay male couples. Surprisingly, same-sex couples with children appeared slightly more likely than heterosexual couples to follow the "traditional family" model of one full-time worker and one partner outside the labor force – a pattern that holds for 27 percent of MMCs and FFCs, 25 percent of married couples, and 21 percent of unmarried couples with children.

---

[21]The exception was that white women in different-sex unmarried partnerships were more likely than both black women and white men to have partners of a different race. Inter-racial coupling varied by sex between blacks and whites in MFCs: 9 percent of white women and only 5 percent of white men crossed racial lines, as did 8 percent of black men and only 2 percent of black women.

On the other hand, the mean difference between the earnings of husbands and wives is $8,800 larger for couples with children than for those without ($36,100 *versus* $27,300). The gaps between the earning of partners are only $1,900 larger for FFCs (and $400 for MMCs) with than without children.[22] Children may increase labor market specialization most for married couples.

Same-sex couples with children are also more likely to live in the suburbs than their childless peers. Same-sex couples without children are three times as likely as married couples without children to live in Fulton-DeKalb (37 percent *versus* 12 percent) and four times as likely to live in the East Atlanta quadrant (31 percent *versus* 8 percent). Same-sex couples *with* children have residential patterns more like married couples with children than like childless gay couples: 16 percent live in Fulton-DeKalb and 12 percent in the East Atlanta quadrant, only 4 to 5 percentage points higher than for married couples with children.

Conclusion. Though same-sex couples, especially MMCs, are less likely than married couples to have children, many do so. Same-sex and different-sex couples adapt similarly to the joys and burdens of raising children. They move to the suburbs. One partner works part time or leaves the labor force. The pay difference between the partners grows, possibly widening the power difference as well. Though same-sex couples with children appear less stable than married couples with children (perhaps because the couples have more differences between the partners, perhaps because their relationships have less legitimacy and weaker support structures), stability differences are smaller than among childless couples (perhaps because children encourage stability, perhaps because more stable couples are more likely to seek children).

They also make financial sacrifices. Couples where at least one partner was under 50 had lower household earnings if they had children. Differences in mean household earnings between couples with and without children were substantially larger for MMCs ($22,600), FFCs ($14,700), and MFCs ($14,000) than for married couples ($2,100). Legal recognition for same-sex couples and domestic partner

---

[22]Among MFCs, the earnings difference between partners is actually $3,400 larger for those without than for those with children ($19,800 *versus* $16,400).

benefits (especially health insurance) for unmarried partners and their children could increase the financial and emotional stability of same-sex couples.

Same-Sex Couples as Georgia Citizens

Same-sex couples head fewer than 1 percent of Georgia households. Even quadrupling that number to correct for under-counting of couples and for the majority of lesbians and gay men who are not in couples, LGBs make up less than 3 percent of Georgia voters. Their geographic concentration within small, politically progressive areas – Atlanta, Decatur, Fulton and DeKalb counties, the East Atlanta quadrant, college towns (Athens) and parts of other cities (Augusta and Savannah) – has political and financial implications.

These relatively socially liberal locales both attract same-sex couples and respond to their interests (e.g., several have passed nondiscrimination ordinances and domestic partners benefits for their employees). When the scope of the political conflict is expanded from these local governments to the state level (Schattschneider 1960, Haider-Markel and Meier 1996), however LGBs have little leverage. In the legislative fight over the constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage and civil unions, only Democratic legislators from these locales voiced opposition. In the referendum, LGB interests were defeated 3 to 1.

Fulton and DeKalb counties have higher salaries, home values, rents, and property taxes than the rest of the state. Geographic concentration in Fulton-DeKalb helps explain why MMCs have higher household incomes, pay higher rents, have more expensive houses, and pay higher property taxes than married couples, and why FFCs have higher incomes and taxes than MFCs. The combination of concentration in high-cost, high-tax counties and the lower likelihood of having children in public schools probably makes same-sex couples net contributors to Georgia governments, on average.

MMCs' household income advantage exists because of the typical presence of two full-time male workers, even though men in male couples tend to earn 16 percent less than comparably aged and educated husbands working similar hours and weeks in the same locales. Differences between husbands and men in MMCs in hours and weeks of work, education, age, race, location, occupation, and partners who work full time cannot explain these pay differences, lending weight to the charge of discrimination. LGBs' political weakness statewide makes passage of a law

prohibiting anti-gay employment discrimination highly unlikely, but such a law might have little impact in any case (Klawitter & Flatt 1998). Indeed, the LGB pay disadvantage is larger in Atlanta, which has a gay rights ordinance, than in the rest of the state.

Although most same-sex couples do not have children, substantial minorities do. Those that do, tend to be making similar sacrifices to those made by different-sex couples: one partner works longer hours to pay the bills, the other takes more time off to raise the kids, they accept a lower household income and move to the suburbs. Without domestic partners benefits (allowing unmarried partners and their children to receive health insurance and other benefits from the fully employed partner), same-sex couples with children typically face larger financial sacrifices than do married couples. Same-sex couples are not as stable as married couples. Although they do not have to cope with "men are from Mars, women are from Venus" differences (Gray 1992), they are more likely than married couples to be dealing with age, education, and race differences, and to be facing the state's continuing efforts to prohibit legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

References

Allegretto, Sylvia A., and Michelle M. Arthur (2001). "An Empirical Analysis of Homosexual/Heterosexual Male Earnings Differentials: Unmarried and Unequal?" *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 54(3): 631-46.

Antonovics, Kate, and Robert Town (2004). "Are All the Good Men Married? Uncovering the Sources of the Marital Wage Premium." *American Economic Review* 94(2): 317-21.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (1991). *Metro Gay Poll*. June. N=1017. Machine-readable data accessed from Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina: http://cgi.irss.unc.edu/tempdocs/ 13:23:38:1.htm.

Badgett, M.V. Lee (1995). "The Wage Effects of Sexual Orientation Discrimination." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 48: 726-39.

Badgett, M.V. Lee (2001). *Money, Myths, and Change : The Economic Lives of Lesbians and Gay Men*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Badgett, M.V. Lee, and Marc A. Rogers (2003). *Left Out of the Count: Missing Same-Sex Couples in Census 2000*. Amherst, MA: Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies.

Bailey, Robert W. (1999). *Gay Politics, Urban Politics: Identity and Economics in the Urban Setting*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barrett, Donald C., Lance M. Pollack, and Mary L. Tilden (2002). "Teenage Sexual Orientation, Adult Openness, and Status Attainment in Gay Males." *Sociological Perspectives* 45(2): 163-82.

Becker, Gary S. (1991) *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Berg, Nathan, and Donald Lien. (2002). "Measuring the Effect of Sexual Orientation on Income: Evidence of Discrimination?" *Contemporary Economic Policy* 20: 394-414.

Black, Dan A., Gary Gates, Lowell J. Taylor, and Seth G. Sanders (2000). "Demographics of the Gay and Lesbian Population in the United States: Evidence from Available Systematic Data Sources." *Demography*, 37: 139-54.

Black, Dan A., Gary Gates, Lowell J. Taylor, and Seth G. Sanders (2002). "Why Do Gay Men Live in San Francisco?" *Journal of Urban Economics*. 51: 54-76.

Black, Dan A., Hoda R. Makar, Lowell J. Taylor, and Seth G. Sanders (2003). "The Effects of Sexual Orientation on Earnings." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 56: 449-69.

Blandford, John M. (2003). "The Nexus of Sexual Orientation and Gender in the Determination of Earnings." *Industrial & Labor Relations Review* 56: 622-42.

Carpenter, Christopher (2003). "Sexual Orientation and Body Weight: Evidence from Multiple Surveys." *Gender Issues* 21(3): 60-74.

Carpenter, Christopher (2004). "New Evidence on Gay and Lesbian Household Incomes." *Contemporary Economic Policy* 22(1): 78-94.

Carpenter, Christopher (2005). "Self-Reported Sexual Orientation and Earnings: Evidence from California." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 58(2): 258-73.

Clain, Suzanne Heller, and Karen Leppel. (2001). "An Investigation into Sexual Orientation Discrimination as an Explanation for Wage Differences." *Applied Economics* 33(1): 37-47.

Comolli, Renzo (2004a). "Earnings Differentials with Endogenous Disclosure of Sexual Orientation." Unpublished manuscript.

Comolli, Renzo (2004b). "Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals' Wage Differentials in the U.S." Unpublished manuscript.

Cornwell, Christopher, and Peter Rupert (1997). "Unobservable Individual Effects, Marriage and the Earnings of Young Men." *Economic Inquiry* 21(2): 285-94.

Fleischmann, Arnold, and Jason Hardman (2004). "Hitting Below the Bible Belt: Development of the Gay Rights Movement in Atlanta." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26(4): 407-26.

Gates, Gary J., and Jason Ost (2004). *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

Ginther, Donna K., and Madeline Zavodny (2001). "Is the Marriage Premium Due to Selection? The Effects of Shotgun Weddings on the Return to Marriage." *Journal of Population Economics* 14(2): 313-28.

Gray, Jeffrey (1997). "The Fall in Men's Return to Marriage: Declining Productivity Effects or Changing Selection?" *Journal of Human Resources* 32(3): 481-504.

Gray, John (1992). *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in your Relationships*. New York: HarperCollins.

Haider-Markel, Donald P. and Kenneth J. Meier (1996). "The Politics of Gay and Lesbian Rights: Expanding the Scope of the Conflict." *Journal of Politics*. 58(2): 332-49.

Herek, Gregory M., and John P. Capitanio (1996). "'Some of My Best Friends': Intergroup Contact, Concealable Stigma, and Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Gay Men and Lesbians." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 22: 412-24.

Howard, John (ed.) (1997). *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*. New York: New York University Press.

Jepsen, Lisa K., and Christopher A. Jepsen (2002). "An Empirical Analysis of the Matching Patterns of Same-Sex and Opposite-Sex Couples." *Demography* 39(3): 435-53.

Kahan, Hazel, and David Mulryan (1995). "Out of the Closet." *American Demographics* 17: 40-45.

Kates, Steven M. (1998). *Twenty Million New Customers! Understanding Gay Men's Consumer Behavior*. New York: Haworth Press.

Klawitter, Marieka M. and Victor Flatt. (1998). "The Effects of State and Local Antidiscrimination Policies for Sexual Orientation." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 17: 658-86.

Korenmann, Sanders, and David Neumark. (1991). "Does Marriage Really Make Men More Productive?" *Journal of Human Resources* 26(2): 282-307.

Krashnisky, Harry A. (2004). "Do Marital Status and Computer Usage Really Change the Wage Structure?" J*ournal of Human Resources* 39(3): 774-91.

Lewis, Gregory B. (2003). "Contentious and Consensus Gay Rights Issues: Public Opinion and State Laws on Discrimination and Same-Sex Marriage." Annual meeting, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, DC, November.

Lewis, Gregory B., and Jonathan L. Edelson (2000). "DOMA and ENDA: Congress Votes on Gay Rights." In Craig A. Rimmerman, Kenneth D. Wald, and Clyde Wilcox, (eds.), *The Politics of Gay Rights.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 193-216.

Loh, Eng Seng (1996). "Productivity Differences and the Marriage Wage Premium for White Males." *Journal of Human Resources* 31(3): 568-89.

Prince, C.J. (2002). "Rolling Out the Red Carpet for Gay Consumers." *Advocate* 857: 27-29.

Rankin, Bill (2004). "Ruling Overturns State Hate Crime Law." *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (October 26): 1A.

Schattschneider, E. E. (1960). *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Sherrill, Kenneth (1996). "The Political Power of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals." *P.S.: Political Science & Politics* 29(3): 469-73.

Stratton, Leslie (2002). "Examining the Wage Differential for Married and Cohabiting Men." *Economic Inquiry* 49(2): 199-212.

Wadsworth, Nancy D. (1997). "Reconciliation Politics: Conservative Evangelicals and the New Race Discourse." *Politics & Society* 25(3): 341-76.

Weichselbaumer, Doris. (2003). "Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Hiring." *Labour Economics* 10: 629-42.

About the Author

Gregory B. Lewis is Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University and Director of the Joint Doctoral Program in Public Policy of Georgia State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology. His research focuses on the effects of race, sex, sexual orientation, and other personal and organizational characteristics on the careers of public employees and on public opinion of and toward Lesbian and Gay Americans.

About The Fiscal Research Center

The Fiscal Research Center provides nonpartisan research, technical assistance, and education in the evaluation and design of state and local fiscal and economic policy, including both tax and expenditure issues. The Center's mission is to promote development of sound public policy and public understanding of issues of concern to state and local governments.

The Fiscal Research Center (FRC) was established in 1995 in order to provide a stronger research foundation for setting fiscal policy for state and local governments and for better-informed decision making. The FRC, one of several prominent policy research centers and academic departments housed in the School of Policy Studies, has a full-time staff and affiliated faculty from throughout Georgia State University and elsewhere who lead the research efforts in many organized projects.

The FRC maintains a position of neutrality on public policy issues in order to safeguard the academic freedom of authors. Thus, interpretations or conclusions in FRC publications should be understood to be solely those of the author.

FISCAL RESEARCH CENTER STAFF

David L. Sjoquist, Director and Professor of Economics
Peter Bluestone, Research Associate
Margo Doers, Administrative Coordinator
Jaiwan M. Harris, Business Manager
Kenneth J. Heaghney, State Fiscal Economist
John W. Matthews, Senior Research Associate
Lakshmi Pandey, Senior Research Associate
Edward Sennoga, Research Associate
William J. Smith, Senior Research Associate
Dorie Taylor, Assistant Director
Arthur D. Turner, Microcomputer Software Technical Specialist
Sally Wallace, Associate Director and Associate Professor of Economics
Laura A. Wheeler, Senior Research Associate
Tumika Williams, Staff Assistant

ASSOCIATED GSU FACULTY
James Alm, Chair and Professor of Economics
Roy W. Bahl, Dean and Professor of Economics
Carolyn Bourdeaux, Assistant Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Robert Eger, Assistant Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Martin F. Grace, Professor of Risk Management and Insurance
Shiferaw Gurmu, Associate Professor of Economics
Douglas Krupka, Assistant Professor of Economics
Gregory B. Lewis, Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Jorge L. Martinez-Vazquez, Professor of Economics
Theodore H. Poister, Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies
David P. Richardson, Professor of Risk Management and Insurance
Michael J. Rushton, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Bruce A. Seaman, Associate Professor of Economics
Geoffrey K. Turnbull, Professor of Economics
Mary Beth Walker, Associate Professor of Economics
Katherine G. Willoughby, Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies

PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATES
David Boldt, State University of West Georgia
Gary Cornia, Brigham Young University
Kelly D. Edmiston, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City
Alan Essig, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
Dagney G. Faulk, Indiana University Southeast
Catherine Freeman, U.S. Department of Education
Richard R. Hawkins, University of West Florida
Julie Hotchkiss, Atlanta Federal Reserve Bank
Mary Mathewes Kassis, State University of West Georgia
Julia E. Melkers, University of Illinois-Chicago
Jack Morton, Morton Consulting Group
Ross H. Rubenstein, Syracuse University
Benjamin P. Scafidi, Georgia College and State University
Jeanie J. Thomas, Consultant
Kathleen Thomas, Mississippi State University
Thomas L. Weyandt, Atlanta Regional Commission

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT
Kailou Wang
Qian Xue

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

(All publications listed are available at http://frc.aysps.gsu.edu or call the Fiscal Research Center at 404/651-2782, or fax us at 404/651-2737.)

The Demographics of Georgia III: Lesbian and Gay Couples (**Gregory B. Lewis**). Using 2000 Census data, this report compares the residential patterns, household incomes, house values, property taxes, and parenting patterns of Georgia's same-sex and different-sex couples. FRC Report/Brief 124 (March 2006)

Analysis of Georgia's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Reserves (**Edward Sennoga**). This report analyses several aspects of Georgia's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, including the structure and the appropriate target level for the Trust Fund balance for the state of Georgia. FRC Report/Brief 123 (March 2006)

The Demographics of Georgia IV: Hispanic Immigration Economic Policy Issues (**Felix Rioja, Neven Valev, and Amanda Wilsker**). This report analyzes the economic policy issues in education, health care, the labor market, financial services and the fiscal impact arising from the large increase in Hispanic immigration in Georgia. FRC Report/Brief 122 (March 2006)

Georgia's Taxes Per Capita and Per $1,000 of Income: Comparisons and Trends (**Peter Bluestone**). This report analyzes the trends in Georgia's taxes per capita and taxes per $1,000 of personal income for the period 1981 – 2002. FRC Report/Brief 121 (February 2006)

The Demographics of Georgia I: Population in the State of Georgia: Trends and Projections to 2030 (**Glenwood Ross**). This report explores trends in Georgia population dynamics and projects population growth to the year 2030. FRC Report/Brief 120 (February 2006)

An Examination of Georgia's Premium Tax. (**Martin F. Grace**). This brief analyzes the effects of changing the structure the insurance premium tax on tax revenues in Georgia. FRC Brief 119 (February 2006)

The Fair Tax and Its Effect on Georgia. (**Laura Wheeler, Sally Wallace and Lakshmi Pandey**). This brief analyzes the impacts of a national retail sales tax on Georgians. FRC Brief 118 (December 2005)

A Tax Limitation for Georgia? (**David L. Sjoquist**). This brief examines the need for a tax limitation in Georgia and the issues of design of tax or expenditure limitations. FRC Brief 117 (December 2005)

Georgia's Aging Population: What to Expect and How to Cope (**Glenn Landers, Clare S. Richie, David Sjoquist, Sally Wallace, and Angelino Viceisza**). This report analyzes the impacts of Georgia's aging population on state finances. FRC Report/Brief 116 (December 2005)

Potential Effect of Eliminating the State Corporate Income Tax on State Economic Activity (**Laura Wheeler**). This report analyzes the effects to state employment and investment of eliminating the state corporate income tax. FRC Report/Brief 115 (October 2005)

Financing an Increased State Role in Funding K-12 Education: An Analysis of Issues and Options (**Peter Bluestone, John Matthews, David L. Sjoquist, William J. Smith, Sally Wallace, and Laura Wheeler**). This report presents an analysis of replacing school property tax with alternative state revenue sources. FRC Report 114 (October 2005)

Neighborhood Dynamics and Price Effects of Superfund Site Clean-Up (**Douglas Noonan, Douglas Krupka and Brett Baden**). This report uses census data to analyze the price effects of superfund site clean-up, inclusive of both direct price effects and indirect effects through clean-up's effect on neighborhood demographic transitions and reinvestment in the housing stock. FRC Report/Brief 113 (October 2005)

Perfect Competition, Spatial Competition, and Tax Incidence in the Retail Gasoline Market (**James Alm, Edward Sennoga and Mark Skidmore**). This report uses monthly gas price data for all 50 U.S. states over the period 1984-1999 to examine the incidence of state gasoline excise taxes. FRC Report/Brief 112 (September 2005)

The Research and Development Tax Credit for Georgia (**Laura Wheeler**). This report describes the existing Georgia State R&D tax credit and explores the implications of modifying its current design. FRC Report/Brief 111 (September 2005)

Cooperation on Competition: The Multistate Tax Commission and State Corporate Tax Uniformity (**W. Bartley Hildreth, Matthew N. Murray and David L. Sjoquist**). This report explores how interstate uniformity of state corporate income taxes has varied over time, the role played by the MTC, and how likely it is that uniformity will be achieved. FRC Report 110 (August 2005)

Tax Revenue Volatility and a State-Wide Education Sales Tax (**John Matthews**). This brief examines issues of revenue source stability raised by proposals to shift K-12 education costs from local property taxes to a state-wide sales tax. FRC Brief 109 (June 2005)

Accountability for Economic Development Incentives in Georgia (**Jeanie Thomas**). This report identifies Georgia's major economic development incentives and other forms of public finance support and calls for a comprehensive evaluation of public expenditures in this area. FRC Report/Brief 108 (July 2005)

(All publications listed are available at http://frc.aysps.gsu.edu or call the Fiscal Research Center at 404/651-2782, or fax us at 404/651-2737.)

The Demographics of Georgia III: Lesbian and Gay Couples

Publisher(s): Fiscal Research Center of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies

Author(s): Gregory B. Lewis

Date Published: 2006-03-01

Rights: Copyright 2006 Fiscal Research Center of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies

Subject(s): Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Trans; Housing and Homelessness; Parenting and Families