GAY PAY FOR STRAIGHT WORK:

Mechanisms Generating Disadvantage

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Drawing from the gender wage gap literature, we explore four possible causes of sexual minority earnings gaps: (1) variation in human capital and labor force participation, (2) occupational and industrial sorting, (3) differences in the institutional organization of the public and private sector, and (4) different returns to marriage and parenthood. Using the 2006 Census of Canada, we find that heterosexual men earn more than gay men, followed by lesbians and heterosexual women. Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions show that industry of employment, rather than occupation, disadvantages gay men, lesbians, and heterosexual women. High levels of educational attainment lead to employment in lucrative occupations, but sexual minorities earn significantly less than heterosexual men within these occupations. Wage gaps are reduced in the public sector for heterosexual women, gay men, and lesbians. Finally, we find that heterosexual women experience a motherhood penalty, heterosexual men experience a fatherhood premium, and both receive a premium for marriage; however, the presence of children and marriage have no effect on the earnings of either gay men or lesbians in conjugal relationships.

Keywords: *sexual minority pay gaps; earnings; gay; lesbian; employment; Canada*

Sexual orientation has only recently gained attention as a dimension of labor market stratification. Unlike the large body of literature dedicated to the labor market outcomes of men and women, scarce data has limited research on gay men and lesbians. The current literature has been largely concentrated in the field of labor economics, and shows that gay men usually earn less and lesbians earn more than their heterosexual counterparts (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2008; Badgett 1995, 2001; Berg and Lien 2002; Black et al. 2003; Carpenter 2008).[1] These studies typically focus on *a* particular source of wage inequality and interpret residual or unexplained wage gaps as discrimination. Although valuable, we argue that a more systematic approach is needed to highlight the *various* mechanisms through which wage inequality may operate for sexual minorities, as well as their relative importance in explaining wage gaps.

We draw on the gender wage gap literature to identify possible mechanisms generating sexual minority wage gaps. We combine these insights with theories of hegemonic masculinity and gendered beliefs to elucidate and interpret how sexual orientation interacts with gender in the production of labor market advantage/disadvantage. Our analysis centers on a number of research questions: First, are there differences in educational attainment and labor force participation between gay men and heterosexual men or lesbians and heterosexual women? How do average wages vary across educational attainment, gender, and sexual orientation? Second, are there differences in occupation between gay men and heterosexual men or lesbians and heterosexual women? Do average wages vary across occupations for these groups? Third, do sexual minorities work in different industries than heterosexual employees? Do average wages vary across industry, gender, and sexual orientation? Fourth, are observed pay gaps reduced in the public sector? Fifth, do gay men and lesbians experience different returns to parenthood and marriage than their heterosexual counterparts? Sixth, what is the relative impact of each of these factors on the overall wage gaps?

We find that heterosexual men earn more than gay men, followed by lesbians, and heterosexual women. Controlling for human capital and detailed occupation and industry reduces pay gaps in ordinary least squares models, but much remains unexplained. Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions reveal that industry of employment, rather than occupation, disadvantages gay men, lesbians, and heterosexual women. All wage gaps are reduced in the public sector for heterosexual women, gay men, and lesbians. Finally, we find that heterosexual women experience a motherhood penalty, heterosexual men experience a fatherhood premium, and both receive an additional premium for marriage greater than that for

those who are cohabiting but unmarried. The presence of children or marriage has no effect on the earnings of either gay men or lesbians in conjugal relationships.

Our study advances the literature on sexual minority wage gaps in a number of ways. First, we tackle the issue of occupational sorting by using the most highly disaggregated occupation categories in this literature to date. Second, we are one of the first studies to explore the role of industrial sector as a source of wage inequality, as well as whether sexual minority wage gaps are reduced in the North American public sector. Third, by using Canadian data we are able to make direct comparisons between married same-sex and opposite-sex couples. Fourth, we not only measure the lesbian wage *advantage* relative to heterosexual women but we also quantify and decompose the sources of wage inequality between lesbians and heterosexual men. In doing so, we call into question the standard comparison of lesbians to heterosexual women, which fails to estimate, even if recognized, the *disadvantage faced by all women relative to men* in the labor market.

SEXUAL MINORITY WAGE GAPS: MECHANISMS OF DISADVANTAGE/ADVANTAGE

In this study, we highlight mechanisms commonly identified as contributors to gender wage gaps to explain sexual minority wage gaps: variation in human capital and labor force participation, occupational and/or industrial sorting, public sector employment, and differences in rates and returns for marriage and parenthood. Other explanations, such as taste-based discrimination, are more difficult to isolate in population data but nevertheless remain a possible cause of wage disparities.

Human Capital and Labor Markets

Differences in human capital and/or in labor force participation have been a significant source of wage differentials between men and women. These differences may also explain wage gaps between sexual minorities and their heterosexual counterparts. Research shows that both coupled and single gay men and lesbians have higher levels of education than their heterosexual counterparts (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2008; Carpenter 2008). Gay men have been found to work fewer hours per week than heterosexual men, while lesbians tend to work more hours per week than heterosexual women (Carpenter 2008; Harris forthcoming; Mueller 2014).

Differences in labor force participation may relate to intrahousehold decision making. Coupled gay men may be able to work fewer weeks and/or hours because they have another male partner contributing to the household income. Conversely, lesbians may work more weeks and hours because their household income will not benefit from a male wage earner. Differences in human capital and labor market participation appear to positively affect the earnings of lesbian women but have countervailing effects on those of gay men. Another important factor that may adversely affect gay men's wages involves their underrepresentation in degrees/certificates less than bachelor's degrees, like apprenticeships in skilled trades—training that may require fewer years of formal schooling but lead to higher wages for heterosexual men (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2008; Carpenter 2008).

The gender segregation of occupations has played a significant role in the persistence of gender pay gaps. Although there has been gender integration in many occupations over the last few decades, women continue to be overrepresented in occupations at the lower end of the wage distribution (England 2010). Occupational sorting may also play an important role in explaining sexual minority wage gaps. Research has found that those who report same-sex or both-sex sexual orientations are more likely to work in gender-atypical occupations than heterosexuals (Ueno, Roach, and Peña-Talamantes 2013). In the same way that heterosexual women sort out of highly masculine occupations, sexual minorities may perceive highly masculine occupations as less tolerant. Conversely, gay men may be unwillingly excluded from particular occupations that emphasize gender-typical attributes for men, such as assertiveness and decision making (Tilcsik 2011). In Canada, for instance, gay men are underrepresented in trades, manufacturing, and utility occupations relative to heterosexual men; however, accounting for occupation does not eliminate their earnings gap (Carpenter 2008). In the United States, gay men tend to do better in occupations that are of mixed gender but face no additional penalties in high-male-density occupations (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2008). Our study contributes to this literature by accounting for more detailed occupational categories than has been done previously. We further build on existing research by assessing the role of industrial sorting in producing sexual orientation wage gaps, the first study to fully investigate this issue. Gender pay gap research has shown that women are often concentrated in low-paying industries within occupations (Blau 1977). Our objective is to explore the individual effects of occupational and industrial sorting in explaining sexual orientation wage gaps. This is important because gay men or lesbian women may be sorting into certain industries that provide different returns for specific occupations.

Sector of employment may shape pay disparities between sexual minority and heterosexual employees. A sizable body of literature finds a wage premium for employment in the Canadian public sector (Mueller 2002; Zweimüller and Winter-Ebmer 1994), at least partially attributable to higher rates of unionization (Robinson and Tomes 1984; Simpson 1985). Public sector employment is often characterized by an institutional environment comprising regulated employment practices, more firmly entrenched equity legislation in terms of hiring and promotion, and centralized wage determination practices—practices that may limit the differential valuation of sexual minorities (Baker and Fortin 2004; Hou and Coulombe 2010; Mandel and Semyonov 2014). Conversely, the institutional environment of the North American private sector may contribute to greater wage inequalities for minorities. Promotions and reward structures tend to be more heavily performance-based, placing discretion in the hands of bosses and/or peers who may be biased when evaluating the "worth" of an employee or coworker. Roth (2006) argues that the fraternity culture in some of the most highly paid occupations in business and finance creates barriers for women's advancement by influencing how women are judged in performance evaluations. Research has also linked performance pay to greater wage inequality in general (Lemieux, MacLeod, and Parent 2009).

These two different institutional environments are associated with distinct wage gaps for women and other minorities. Hou and Coulombe (2010), for example, find that wage gaps for Canadian visible minorities are concentrated in the private sector and reduced in the public sector. Studies in Sweden and France have found that sexual minorities have smaller wage gaps in the public sector (Ahmed, Andersson, and Hammarstedt 2013; Laurent and Mihoubi 2012). Using the 2000 U.S. Census, Klawitter (2011) found that coupled gay men working in the private sector earned less than married heterosexual men but experienced no wage disadvantage in the public or nonprofit sectors. Similarly, lesbians earned more than married heterosexual women working in both the private and nonprofit sector but had no earnings advantage in the public sector. We predict that similar mechanisms will attenuate wage gaps for sexual minorities employed in the Canadian public sector.

Family Formation

Heterosexual men receive a premium for being married over being single or cohabiting (Ahituv and Lerman 2007; Chun and Lee 2001). One explanation is that men change their labour market activity after marriage

in ways that increase their earnings (Ahituv and Lerman 2007; Killewald and Gough 2013). Marriage may also signal a host of desirable attributes, such as stability and responsibility, to an employer. This may lead to preferential treatment of married employees. Early research on whether marriage confers a similar wage advantage to women was less clear (Hill 1979; Waite 1995); however, more recent studies find that marriage does provide a wage premium for childless women (Budig and England 2001; Killewald and Gough 2013).

Differences in the partnership premium between gay men and heterosexual men may be an important source of disadvantage. If heterosexual men continue to be economically rewarded for marriage and gay men are not, this could further contribute to gay men's earnings disadvantage. Using the 1990 U.S. Census, Allegretto and Arthur (2001) find that being unmarried is the primary source of gay men's lower wages. Subsequent studies have also found a heterosexual male marriage premium but no partnership premium for gay men (Booth and Frank 2008; Zavodny 2008).

The current evidence points toward the heterosexual male marriage premium as a source of gay men's wage disadvantage (Allegretto and Arthur 2001; Zavodny 2008). Unfortunately, previous studies have had to compare *partnered* gay men to single, married, or cohabiting heterosexual men. Until recently, no comparisons were possible between married same-sex and married opposite-sex couples. This may be important if marriage does not signal to employers the same positive attributes as it does for heterosexuals. We hope to overcome these challenges by using the 2006 Census of Canada, which includes cohabiting and married same-sex couples at the national level, in contrast to the United States, where the legality of same-sex marriage varies from state to state. With the absence of qualitative evidence suggesting that the motivation to marry differs between sexual minorities and heterosexuals, we assume same- and opposite-sex couples choose to marry for similar reasons, for instance, to solidify a loving relationship (Kurdek 2004; MacIntosh, Elke, and Andruff 2010). We also suspect that the characteristics of those who choose to marry will be similar. However, given the long history of marriage inequality and social intolerance toward same-sex couples, positive selection into marriage for gay men and lesbians may be more pronounced, with only the most committed or those in longer-term relationships choosing to marry. Throughout this article we use the term "marriage premium" to refer to any wage advantage provided for marriage over cohabitation, as our study is limited to married and cohabiting couples. We note that this is distinct from most research comparing those who are married and/or cohabiting to those who are single.

A large body of literature shows that parenthood is associated with a wage penalty for women (Budig and England 2001; Budig and Hodges 2010; Waldfogel 1997) and a wage premium for men (Hodges and Budig 2010; Killewald 2013). Fatherhood often increases men's work intensity, especially when their wives' employment is interrupted (Lundberg and Rose 2000, 2002). For women, it has been argued that the presence of children decreases labor force engagement and is associated with a loss of labor market productivity and the specialization of domestic duties (Becker [1981] 1991).

The decision for same-sex couples, especially gay men, to have children requires a greater degree of planning than it does for heterosexuals, because gay men and lesbians typically require alternative techniques to have children, such as adoption, surrogacy, or artificial insemination, methods that can be costly and may be limited to only the most financially secure. At the same time, parenthood may not impact earnings in the same way for same- and opposite-sex couples. Same-sex couples tend to be more egalitarian in their division of housekeeping and child care responsibilities (Goldberg, Smith, and Perry-Jenkins 2012; Kurdek 2007). For gay men, this may decrease, rather than increase, *both* partners' labor intensity. Gay men are much less likely to have children than are heterosexual men, which employers may view as a signal of instability. Alternatively, employers may assume that lesbians are less likely to have children than heterosexual women and are, therefore, a "safer" investment in the way of training and promotions. Using U.S. Census data, Baumle (2009) found that lesbian women received a motherhood advantage of approximately 20 percent, which explained almost 35 percent of their wage gain over heterosexual women. Given these findings, there is reason to suspect that differences in rates and returns to motherhood and fatherhood will play a role in explaining sexual minority wage gaps.

Discrimination

The final explanation offers that sexual minorities experience differential treatment in terms of hiring, wages, and promotions. This taste-based discrimination approach argues that employers privilege heterosexual employees in the distribution of labor market rewards because they, or their customers, have some preference for working with heterosexual employees (Badgett 1995, 2001; Becker 1971 [1957]). Audit studies lend support for this conclusion and generally find that gay men receive fewer interview offers than heterosexual men (Adam 1981; Tilcsik 2011). Another part of the discrimination hypothesis is the pay "advantage"

observed for lesbian women, relative to heterosexual women. It is possible that employers and customers do not mind working with lesbians but dislike working with gay men. Studies on attitudes and perceptions of sexual minorities seem to support this claim. For example, evidence shows that homophobia and biphobia are felt more strongly toward gay and bisexual men compared to lesbian and bisexual women (Eliason 2000; Herek 1991; Kite and Whitley 1996).

With the exception of audit studies, existing research has been able to highlight only *possible* labor market discrimination. This is because unobserved heterogeneity continues to be a possible explanation for unexplained wage differentials in statistical models (Rodgers 2006, 34). While it remains common practice to interpret unexplained wage gaps as discrimination, we instead focus on quantifying some of the mechanisms that explain the variation in wages by gender and sexual orientation.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

Theories of hegemonic masculinity argue that society is characterized by a sexual division of labor that gives supremacy across a variety of institutional domains to a certain form of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Ridgeway and Correll 2004). In North American society, this hegemonic form of masculinity is associated with competence, authority, and heterosexuality—the ideal "male breadwinner" is a stably employed, married, heterosexual man with children (Hodges and Budig 2010). Indeed, much of the research cited above combines to show that this particular form of masculinity is rewarded above all else in the labor market, subordinating not only women and femininity, but also men who fail to live up to its ideals. Schilt and Westbrook (2009) show that an individual's failure to uphold a dichotomy in which sex, gender identity, and sexuality align often results in discrimination or even violence, and this is particularly true for men who take on feminine characteristics. Within this framework, gay men will have productive capacities devalued in the labor market because they don't display hegemonic masculinity. Alternatively, lesbians may be more valuable than heterosexual women because their gender performance is perceived as less feminine and closer to the unencumbered male ideal.

The devaluation of failed masculinity in the labor market is part of a process that unfolds across various stages of the life course and in multiple organizational domains, like schools and workplaces. Gay men and lesbian women make choices and face constraints within each domain,

often in the context of failed displays of hegemonic masculinity. As a result, sexual minorities may potentially be more open to making gender nonconforming choices when choosing fields of study, levels of educational attainment, occupations, or industries. They may also be constrained by intolerance, discrimination, and structural barriers. We argue that the institutional domains in which gay men and lesbians make decisions and/or experience constraints that influence labor market outcomes are gendered. Sexual orientation intersects with gender in various ways, particularly because nonheterosexuality is inconsistent with hegemonic gendered beliefs. Our analysis aims to clarify the processes that constitute hegemonic masculinity by highlighting how sexual orientation and gender interact in the process of labor market stratification.

A major challenge to studying the labor market outcomes of sexual minorities is a dearth of reliable earnings data accompanying information on a person's sexual orientation. How to measure sexual orientation is another challenge.[2] Health surveys sometimes include questions on sexual behaviors, but seldom ask detailed questions about labor force participation or individual earnings. In some countries, it is possible to deduce sexual orientation from relationship status in the census. In this case, sexual orientation is defined by one's relationship with a member of the same or opposite sex. A limitation to this approach is that information is lost on those who are single or bisexual. On the upside, census data provide relatively high quality human capital, employment, and earnings information on a large sample of coupled gay men and lesbians. With the absence of sexual orientation questions on many population-based surveys, the couple approach has become common practice (Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2008; Baumle 2009; Klawitter 2011). Focusing on couples also isolates a group who are less likely to conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace in order to receive spousal or partnership benefits. Concealment is an issue if one is suggesting that discriminatory attitudes towards sexual minorities contribute to a portion of unexplained wage gaps.

METHODS

We use the 20 percent sample of the 2006 Census of Canada, which provides cross-sectional individual demographic and labor market characteristics.[3] Canada presents an informative case for studying the labor market experiences of sexual minorities. In 2003 Canadian provinces began recognizing same-sex marriage, culminating in the federal legalization of

same-sex marriage on July 20, 2005—making Canada the fourth country in the world to federally legalize same-sex marriage.[4] In addition to federal protections, all provincial human rights charters and laws prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in private housing and labor markets. As a result of this legal setting, the 2006 Census of Canada provides data on married and cohabiting same-sex couples across the nation—one of the first in the world to do so.

Our sample is limited to employed individuals in conjugal relationships between the ages of 25 and 64. We exclude the visible minority, immigrant, and aboriginal populations from our sample to limit other sources of wage disadvantage.[5] We also omit those residing in the sparsely populated northern territories, because the labor markets in these areas are markedly different from the rest of Canada.

Our dependent variable is the natural logarithm of gross annual wages and salaries from 2005. Those with annual earnings less than $1,000 have been excluded. We account for human capital and labor force participation with highest degree or certificate obtained, full-time/part-time status, and weeks worked. The Canadian Census does not include a direct measure of years of labor market experience. Instead, we use the Mincer proxy entered as a quartic function (Lemieux 2006). The Mincer proxy represents the maximum years of work experience based on one's age and years of schooling.[6,7] Information on respondent's field of study comes from the Canadian Classification of Instructional Programs and is available for individuals with more than a high school education. Occupation is coded using the National Occupational Classification for Statistics major groups. Industry is coded using the North American Industry Classification System at the sector level.[8] We further classify industries into those in the public and private sectors following Hou and Coulombe (2010). All models also control for age (grouped), presence of children in the household, marital status, urban/rural status, and province of residence.

Our analysis starts by descriptively exploring whether sexual minorities are accumulating different amounts of human capital, working more or less hours and weeks per year, or sorting into different occupations or industries than their heterosexual counterparts. Although multicollinearity does not allow us to simultaneously control for field of study and occupation in our models, we do explore differences in mean earnings by field of study for those with bachelor's degrees and those with degrees above the bachelor level. Mean earnings are then compared across occupation and industry sector to see if earnings differences are concentrated in specific occupations. We test whether differences in mean earnings by occupation,

industry, and private/public sector employment are statistically different from those of heterosexual men. In keeping with standard practice, we also test whether mean differences between lesbians and heterosexual women are statistically significant. These significance tests are reported in the far right column of each table.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) models were used to estimate wage gaps in the private and public sector by sexual orientation. We ran three separate models comparing gay men, lesbian, and heterosexual women to heterosexual men. We also ran separate models comparing lesbians to heterosexual women. To investigate the role played by marriage and parenthood, we ran separate OLS models for gay men, lesbians, and heterosexual women and men, providing the marital status and presence of children coefficients from the fully specified models.

We proceeded to break down the sources of pay differentials using Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions (Blinder 1973; Oaxaca 1973). Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions separate the difference in mean wages between groups into a portion attributable to compositional differences in characteristics between two groups, and a portion due to differences in returns to these characteristics (Jann 2008). We first estimated models with only standard demographic, human capital, and labor force engagement characteristics, followed by a fully specified model that included occupation and industry controls. This nested modeling technique allowed us to explore the separate effect of occupational and industrial sorting on wage gaps.

LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES

Our first research question asks whether there are differences in educational attainment and labor force participation between coupled gay men and heterosexual men or lesbians and heterosexual women. Our sample description is available in the Online Appendix, Table A (see http://gas.sagepub.com/content/by/supplemental-data). Consistent with the existing literature, gay men and lesbians in our sample were more highly educated than their heterosexual counterparts. For example, 40 percent of gay men and 38 percent of lesbians had degrees at the bachelor level or higher, compared to only 20 percent of heterosexual men and 24 percent of heterosexual women. There were also differences in labor force participation. Gay men were less likely to work full time but they worked more weeks on average than heterosexual men. Lesbians were more likely than heterosexual women to work full time and they also worked more weeks per year.

Consistent with having higher levels of education, both gay men and lesbians had fewer years of potential experience. This table also revealed that gay men and lesbians in our sample are somewhat younger; more likely to reside in urban areas; concentrated in Québec, Ontario, and British Columbia; and less likely to be married or have children.

We also explore the distribution and mean earnings by field of study for those with bachelor's degrees and greater than bachelor's degrees (Online Appendix Table B). Our findings are consistent with the body of literature showing that women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields (Blickenstaff 2005). Gay men also sort out of these fields but to a much lesser extent than women. Lesbians have greater numbers in humanities and social and behavioral sciences and law.

Table 1 addresses our second research question, which aims to uncover whether there are observable differences in occupational distribution between gay men and lesbians and their heterosexual counterparts and if wage gaps vary across these occupations. We provide the distribution and mean earnings by occupation for each of our sexual minority groups. Consistent with previous literature, gay men do appear to sort into somewhat different occupations than heterosexual men. There is less variation in the occupational distribution of lesbians relative to heterosexual women. Despite the greater proportion of gay men in a few lower-paid occupational groups, such as sales and service occupations, they do not appear to be sorting out of highly paid occupations.

To further explore this, we rank occupations according to heterosexual men's earnings and compare the distribution and mean earnings by gender and sexual orientation (Online Appendix Table C). These results indicate that gay men are overrepresented in not only the top five highest-paid occupations but also the top 15 highest-paid occupations. Similarly, lesbians are overrepresented in the highest-paid occupations relative to heterosexual women. Wage gaps for gay men and lesbians relative to heterosexual men are largest in these highest-paid occupations, while lesbians experience a wage advantage over heterosexual women in these same occupations.[9] Taken together, these results reveal that occupational sorting does not explain gay men's earnings disadvantage. Gay men are sorting into highly-paid occupations but wages within these occupations are significantly less. Relative to heterosexual women, lesbians are both sorting into more highly-paid occupations and paid more within those occupations.

Tables 2 addresses our third research question, which asks whether there are observable differences in industry distribution between gay men and lesbians and their heterosexual counterparts and if wage gaps vary across these industries. We find the largest differences between gay men and heterosexual

TABLE 1: Occupation (NOC-S 2006) and Mean Earnings by Sexual Orientation

Occupation	Heterosexual Men		Gay Men		Heterosexual Women		Lesbian Women		
	%	$	%	$	%	$	%	$	
All occupations		61,636		53,320***		35,663***		45,597***	***
Senior management	2.10	182,553	2.30	120,782***	0.75	94,306***	1.39	74,468***	***
Specialist managers	4.54	94,448	5.55	88,114	2.66	66,041***	3.10	74,001***	*
Managers in retail trade, food and accommodation	2.81	61,045	4.61	46,779**	2.41	33,544***	2.57	40,950***	***
Other managers	5.06	100,447	5.03	81,936***	2.77	64,124***	4.6	65,738***	
Professionals in business and finance	2.32	106,572	4.92	66,006***	3.04	54,818***	2.78	61,690***	
Finance and insurance administration	0.57	62,462	1.15	51,099*	2.19	35,263***	1.07	42,248***	
Secretaries	0.05	62,606	0.31	45,038*	5.22	28,763***	1.28	32,005***	
Administrative and regulatory	1.31	64,345	2.83	52,335***	4.12	41,488***	3.21	43,350***	
Clerical supervisors	0.67	55,564	0.94	50,515	0.92	43,948***	1.07	42,672**	
Clerical	4.98	44,609	9.53	38,047***	17.00	30,659***	10.91	34,529***	***
Professionals in natural and applied sciences	5.31	81,640	5.65	77,040	1.56	57,710***	3.32	62,014***	
Technical, related to natural and applied sciences	5.35	59,999	3.25	50,872***	1.36	41,787***	2.57	47,078***	
Professionals in health	0.41	100,673	1.26	82,292*	1.19	53,154***	1.28	68,129***	
Nurse supervisors and registered nurses	0.26	58,774	1.88	54,570	4.91	49,359***	3.10	56,826	***
Technical and related, in health	0.62	54,970	1.26	55,167	2.65	37,965***	2.14	41,839***	
Assisting, in support of health services	0.33	32,612	1.26	31,465	3.04	24,846***	1.82	28,572*	*
Judges, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, ministers, program officers	1.93	75,694	4.50	67,726***	2.95	50,901***	6.63	53,087***	
Teachers and professors	3.75	59,043	8.69	56,285*	8.04	45,602***	11.02	53,813***	***

(continued)

573

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

Occupation	Heterosexual Men		Gay Men		Heterosexual Women		Lesbian Women		
	%	$	%	$	%	$	%	$	
Paralegals, social services workers, education and religion, n.e.c	0.54	39,932	1.78	39,040	3.51	28,164***	3.96	34,021***	***
Professionals in art and culture	0.64	56,686	2.72	56,785	1.07	42,058***	2.25	46,417***	
Technical, in art, culture, recreation and sport	0.86	46,619	2.83	37,308***	1.23	27,927***	1.82	35,256***	*
Sales and service supervisors	0.63	45,631	0.73	37,727**	0.89	25,976***	0.64	32,796***	*
Wholesale, technical, insurance, real estate sales	2.78	71,857	1.99	55,452***	1.80	43,627***	1.60	49,732***	
Retail salespersons and clerks	2.52	47,853	3.35	28,938***	4.02	19,923***	2.35	26,902***	***
Cashiers	0.09	27,660	0.42	26,410	2.00	15,081***	0.64	18,480***	
Chefs and cooks	0.60	29,603	1.88	27,813	1.11	16,969***	1.39	27,103	***
Food and beverage service	0.22	22,187	1.99	20,015	1.45	13,512***	0.53	20,129	
Protective services	3.63	60,975	1.15	43,031***	0.77	42,236***	4.17	57,894	***
Travel and accommodation	0.45	36,387	2.41	39,491	0.84	27,927***	0.75	35,998	*
Child care and home support workers	0.19	29,606	0.42	31,170	2.75	18,500***	1.50	25,364	
Sales and services, n.e.c.	3.50	32,578	5.03	25,729***	5.58	17,708***	4.17	24,087***	***
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	29.38	48,222	5.03	39,606***	1.97	25,366***	5.56	38,780***	***
Occupations unique to primary industry	3.55	46,051	0.73	23,521***	0.84	18,746***	0.64	25,096***	*
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	8.06	50,813	2.62	38,678***	3.35	26,175***	4.17	38,677***	***

Note: *P ≤ .05; **P ≤ .01; ***P ≤ .001. Asterisks indicate mean earnings are statistically different from those of heterosexual men. The final column presents significance tests for lesbians relative to heterosexual women. NOC-S = National Occupational Classification for Statistics; n.e.c. = not elsewhere classified.

TABLE 2: Industry (NAICS-2002) and Mean Earnings by Sexual Orientation

Industry	Heterosexual Men		Gay Men		Heterosexual Women		Lesbian Women		
	%	$	%	$	%	$	%	$	
All private sector industries	83.43	61,641	73.85	51,424***	71.28	32,630***	66.67	41,326***	***
All public sector industries	16.57	61,607	26.15	58,673**	28.72	43,189***	33.33	54,142***	***
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	2.52	38,606	0.42	25,849***	1.15	21,548***	0.32	35,112	
Mining and oil and gas extraction	3.17	100,763	0.52	141,820	0.64	63,850***	0.43	78,337**	
Utilities	1.99	80,666	0.94	78,441	0.59	55,003***	0.64	63,722*	
Construction	9.46	51,160	1.26	36,620***	1.72	33,777***	1.18	40,627**	
Manufacturing	19.80	60,877	7.44	53,811**	7.41	35,662***	7.73	43,645***	***
Wholesale trade	6.77	67,640	3.67	67,197	3.27	41,300***	2.90	39,991***	
Retail trade	7.59	47,564	9.43	39,674**	11.34	23,859***	7.40	32,688***	***
Transportation and warehousing	7.97	53,316	4.93	49,431*	3.04	32,631***	4.51	43,706***	***
Information and cultural industries	2.62	74,700	5.56	64,067**	2.47	45,517***	3.86	49,502***	
Finance, insurance, and management of companies and enterprise	3.24	129,697	7.02	73,321***	6.94	44,424***	4.08	53,382***	**
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.37	62,265	1.15	53,123	1.30	35,690***	0.86	37,096***	
Professional, scientific, and technical services	5.22	79,840	7.23	63,616***	5.38	42,144***	5.90	51,783***	***

(continued)

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

Industry	Heterosexual Men		Gay Men		Heterosexual Women		Lesbian Women		
	%	$	%	$	%	$	%	$	
Administration and support, waste management, and remediation services	2.88	41,357	3.67	36,400	2.78	26,170***	4.08	33,167***	**
Education services	5.83	56,513	11.22	54,516	13.52	39,991***	15.56	52,503***	***
Health care and social assistance	3.28	53,365	11.01	51,421	20.72	35,989***	17.6	44,887***	***
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.32	42,442	2.31	42,255	1.43	27,612***	2.04	35,277**	**
Accommodation and food services	1.71	34,544	6.29	26,840***	4.74	17,326***	3.65	27,102***	***
Other services (except public administration)	3.67	46,772	5.35	43,581	3.86	27,028***	5.15	39,130***	***
Public administration	9.59	65,130	10.59	62,167*	7.69	47,040***	12.12	55,669***	***

Note: $P \leq$ * .05; **$P \leq$ .01; ***$P \leq$ .001. Asterisks indicate mean earnings are statistically different from those of heterosexual men. The final column presents significance tests for lesbians relative to heterosexual women. NAICS = North American Industry Classification System.

TABLE 3:   OLS Estimates of Wage Gaps by Sexual Orientation and Industry Sector

	Heterosexual Men vs.:						Heterosexual Women vs.:	
	Gay Men		Lesbian Women		Heterosexual Women		Lesbian Women	
	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public
Wage	−0.074***	0.007	−0.133***	−0.027*	−0.351***	−0.135***	0.091***	0.050***
gap	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.013)
R^2	0.462	0.545	0.462	0.545	0.575	0.597	0.565	0.580
N	496,770	100,720	496,370	101,005	897,455	263,660	407,325	165,745

Note: *$P \leq .05$; **$P \leq .01$; ***$P \leq .001$. All models were corrected for heteroskedasticity. Standard errors are in parentheses. Models control for age, marital status, presence of children in household, province, rural residence, education, weeks worked, part-time status, occupation, and industry. Sample includes nonvisible minority, native-born employees with earnings above $1,000, and in married or common-law relationships. OLS = ordinary least squares.

men. Most notably, there is a significant underrepresentation of gay men in construction and manufacturing. The differences between lesbians and heterosexual women are small but there are fewer lesbians in the retail trade and more in public administration. We also rank industries according to heterosexual men's earnings and report these findings in Online Appendix, Table D. Again, gay men are overrepresented in the top five highest-paid industries, but when we move to the top 10 they are underrepresented. Gay men also had the greatest proportion in the lowest-paid industries. Although there are slightly fewer lesbians in the top five highest-paid industries, the proportion of lesbians in the top 10 highest-paid industries is greater than that of heterosexual women. Overall, these findings indicate that industrial sorting, as well as lower within-industry earnings, disadvantage gay men relative to heterosexual men. Industrial sorting, as well as greater earnings within industries, advantages lesbians relative to heterosexual women.

Our fourth research question asks whether pay gaps are smaller in the public sector (Table 3). OLS models show that the earnings gap for gay men disappears in the public sector and is reduced to less than three percent for lesbians, relative to heterosexual men. For heterosexual women, the size of the pay gap is also reduced significantly but does not disappear. Comparing heterosexual women to lesbians, we see that the gap is slightly smaller in the public sector than in the private. These results indicate that earnings disadvantages for all groups relative to heterosexual men are concentrated in the private sector.

TABLE 4:   OLS Estimates of Presence of Children and Marital Status

Family Characteristics	Heterosexual Men	Gay Men	Heterosexual Women	Lesbian Women
Have children	0.046***	0.101	−0.045***	−0.046
	(0.002)	(0.054)	(0.002)	(0.034)
Married	0.072***	0.046	0.015***	−0.009
	(0.002)	(0.031)	(0.002)	(0.025)
R^2	0.469	0.559	0.583	0.565

Note: *$P \leq .05$; **$P \leq .01$; ***$P \leq .001$. All models corrected for heteroskedasticity. Standard errors in parentheses. See notes to Table 3 for model and sample specification. OLS = ordinary least squares.

Our fifth research question examines whether gay men and lesbians experience different returns to parenthood and marriage than their heterosexual counterparts. For this analysis, we run separate models for each of our four groups controlling for all variables and focusing on the independent effect of marital status and the presence of children. Because of space considerations, we report the marriage and presence of children coefficients only (Table 4). These results show that heterosexual men benefit not only from fatherhood but also an independent marriage premium above that of cohabitation. Heterosexual women suffer a motherhood penalty but have a small benefit from marriage above cohabitation. Gay men receive no premium for marriage or fatherhood.

Our final research question concerns evaluating the relative impact of each of these factors on the overall wage gaps. Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions (Table 5) indicate that compositional differences in factors determining pay between sexual minorities and heterosexual men do little to explain observed wage gaps. For gay men, this is because a relatively favorable occupational and educational position is offset by a disadvantage in industrial sector. Differences in age and the presence of children disadvantage gay men in Model 1 but not after controls for industry and occupation are added in Model 2. Interestingly, industrial characteristics are more important than occupational sorting in explaining wage gaps. Still, roughly 75 percent of the wage gap between gay and heterosexual men remains unexplained in the fully specified model.

For lesbians relative to heterosexual men, lower levels of labor force engagement and working in lower-paid industrial sectors counterbalance favorable human capital accumulation in education. The wage gap is

TABLE 5: Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition of Log Annual Wage Gap

Decomposition	Gay Men		Heterosexual Men vs.: Lesbian Women		Heterosexual Women		Heterosexual Women vs.: Lesbian Women	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Total log annual wage gap	-0.131***	-0.131***	-0.248***	-0.248***	-0.574***	-0.574***	0.326***	0.326***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Attributable to differences in characteristics	-0.013	-0.033	0.054*	0.008	-0.177***	-0.189***	0.243***	0.272***
	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.023)	(0.022)
Age	-0.031**	-0.015	-0.015	-0.001	-0.022***	-0.010***	-0.004	-0.002
	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Common-law	-0.032	-0.030	0.000	0.005	0.000***	0.000***	0.000	0.005
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Child in household	-0.083*	-0.062	0.022	0.022	0.001***	0.001***	0.021	0.021
	(0.036)	(0.033)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Province	0.002	0.006	0.005*	0.005*	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.006*
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Rural	0.009	0.008*	0.004	0.003	0.000***	0.000***	0.004	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Education	0.088***	0.053***	0.079***	0.051***	0.018***	0.009***	0.060***	0.040***
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Experience	-0.047*	-0.015	0.026	-0.001	-0.021***	-0.005***	0.024*	0.008
	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.010)	(0.010)

(continued)

579

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

Decomposition	Heterosexual Men vs.:				Heterosexual Women vs.:			
	Gay Men		Lesbian Women		Heterosexual Women		Lesbian Women	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Labor force engagement	−0.014*	−0.011	−0.066***	−0.061***	−0.196***	−0.175***	0.133***	0.123***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Occupation		0.057***		0.014		0.019***		0.054***
		(0.013)		(0.013)		(0.002)		(0.007)
Industry		−0.055***		−0.030*		−0.039***		0.012**
		(0.013)		(0.012)		(0.001)		(0.004)
Attributable to differences in returns to characteristics	−0.118**	−0.098*	−0.302***	−0.256***	−0.397***	−0.385***	0.084***	0.054*
	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.024)	(0.022)
N	597,495		597,380		1,161,115		573,070	

Note: *$P \leq .05$; **$P \leq .01$; ***$P \leq .001$. Standard errors are in parentheses. Model 1 controls age (ref.: 30–34 years old), marital status (ref.: married), presence of children (ref.: no child), province (ref.: Ontario), rural residence (ref.: urban), education (ref.: high school certificate), labor force engagement (weeks worked and part-time/full-time [ref.: full-time]). Model 2 further controls occupation (ref.: retail sales person and sales clerk) and industry (ref.: health care and social assistance). Annual wage gaps calculated as the same-sex log annual wage minus the heterosexual log annual wage. See notes to Table 3 for sample specification.

overwhelmingly generated by differences in returns to characteristics for lesbians. The lesbian "advantage" over heterosexual women, on the other hand, is largely attributable to differences in characteristics such as level of education, labor force participation, and industry and occupation. Lesbians work in higher-paying occupations and industries, have higher levels of educational attainment, and work more than heterosexual women. Heterosexual women fare the worst relative to heterosexual men in terms of mean wage differentials; however, given our distinct subsample a larger gender pay gap should be anticipated.[10] While roughly one fourth of the differences were attributable to different composition in labor market determinants between heterosexual women and heterosexual men, mostly the result of lower labor force engagement, 67 percent of the gap remains unexplained.

CONCLUSION

Our results find a hierarchy of earnings in which heterosexual men earn the most, followed by gay men, lesbians, and, finally, heterosexual women. Sexual orientation is nested within gender. Women earn less than men. Gay men earn less than heterosexual men and lesbians earn more than heterosexual women.

Gender is a primary dimension of labor market stratification. When gay men and lesbians make decisions, whether by choice or constraint, they are made within a gendered institutional framework that places value on masculinity. We found that the decisions gay men and lesbians make have countervailing impacts on their earnings. Higher levels of educational attainment, relative to their heterosexual counterparts, advantage both gay men and lesbians. At present there is little research as to why sexual minorities invest in higher levels of education. Ueno, Roach, and Peña-Talamantes (2013) suggest that lower rates of marriage and parenthood may increase the need for sexual minorities to make greater investments in human capital to gain financial independence. Similarly, gay men and lesbians may be spared the heteronormative pressures of marriage and parenthood, giving them more freedom to invest in education. In the past, closeted gay men and lesbians may have used investments in higher education as a way of delaying heteronormative life events, such as getting married or having children. Sexual minorities may also expect more liberal attitudes and greater tolerance in occupations requiring higher levels of education.

Higher levels of education allow gay men and lesbians to sort into some of the most highly paid occupational groups; however, within these occupations they earn significantly less than heterosexual men. When heterosexual women are employed in these highly paid occupations they also earn far less than heterosexual men, gay men, and lesbians. Labor force engagement, measured in number of weeks worked and full-time or part-time employment, disadvantages all women relative to men but far less for lesbians. Lesbians are more likely to work full time than heterosexual women, which is a significant source of their earnings advantage. Gay men are also less likely to work full time than heterosexual men. These labor supply differences may be explained by intra-household decision making. Coupled gay men may work less because there are two men contributing to household income, whereas the absence of a male in the lesbian couple requires more work hours.

While educational attainment allows sexual minorities to sort into highly paid occupations, industrial sorting has the opposite effect. This is one of the first studies to explore the role of industrial sorting in explaining sexual minority wage gaps. We found that industrial characteristics are a significant source of wage disadvantage for gay men, lesbians, and heterosexual women, relative to heterosexual men. For lesbians, industrial characteristics provide a slight advantage relative to heterosexual women. These results reveal that higher levels of educational attainment for gay men and lesbians open doors for employment in lucrative occupations; however, these occupations seem to be clustered in less high-paying industries. For gay men, one explanation is their underrepresentation in manufacturing, which does not typically require university education but tends to provide earnings that are relatively higher than industries requiring similar education levels.

Our finding that wage gaps are eliminated in the public sector is consistent with research showing that wage gaps are smaller for women and other minorities employed in the public sector, and may be attributable to employment practices that more fully incorporate equity legislation as well as centralized wage determination. Although we are unable to untangle the particular mechanisms contributing to larger wage gaps in the private sector, previous research has suggested that the discretionary nature of performance pay may play a role (Heywood and Parent 2012; Lemieux, MacLeod, and Parent 2009).

The finding that lesbian mothers are spared the motherhood penalty provides another possible explanation for their wage advantage relative to heterosexual women. Marriage does not provide a statistically significant wage premium for lesbians. Heterosexual men not only receive a

fatherhood premium but also an additional premium for marriage. Gay men receive neither. One explanation may be that same-sex marriage does not yet signal the same desirable attributes as heterosexual marriage to prospective employers. Differences in returns to marriage and parenthood are two mechanisms that may help explain the wage hierarchy nested within gender; however, caution should be exercised when interpreting these findings. Although the results were not statistically significant, coefficients were relatively large. This is the first study to make direct comparisons between married same-sex and opposite-sex couples.

The findings from this study highlight the interaction of gender and sexual orientation in the labor market. Hegemonic cultural beliefs give supremacy to heterosexual masculinity (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). We find that sexual orientation is nested within the hierarchy of earnings by gender. Gay men earn less than heterosexual men but still more than all women. Gay men's gender nonconformity, by virtue of their sexual orientation, may also involve choices that contribute to their lower earnings. We find that this is the case for industrial characteristics, but most other characteristics of gay men actually increase their earnings. Given that the vast majority of gay men's wage disadvantage is unexplained, other factors are at play. Women earn less than men. Heterosexual women earn a little less than lesbians. Whereas the majority of gay men's wage disadvantage remained unexplained, the lesbian wage advantage relative to heterosexual women was almost entirely explained by differences in characteristics. Lesbians appear to choose education, occupations, and industries that increase their earnings.

We avoid interpreting unexplained wage gaps as discrimination. Our focus has been on specific mechanisms and their role in generating wage differentials between sexual minorities and heterosexuals, but we acknowledge qualitative evidence from audit studies, attitudinal research, and court cases that shows discrimination contributes to wage differentials. More research is needed to elucidate how gay men and lesbians make decisions about education and labor force engagement and requires careful consideration of how much these "choices" are driven by different preferences rather than constraints. These processes remain elusive in our data, but constitute pressing areas for future research. Another meaningful direction for future research will be to explore whether sexual minorities differ significantly from heterosexuals in their selection into or motivation to marry.

In this article, we present a sociological account of labor market stratification by sexual orientation. We argue that understanding gay men's and lesbian women's labor market experiences requires acknowledging

multiple, and already gendered, institutional domains that contribute to pay differences, including the family, the workplace, and the education system. Hegemonic gender beliefs place highest value on one form of heterosexual masculinity, and thus not only play a role in all women's disadvantage but also the disadvantage faced by gay men. Lesbians may experience some advantage by straying from heterosexual femininity, but they are nevertheless disadvantaged relative to all men, including gay men. Sexual orientation and gender interact in the labor market to produce a nested hierarchy of disadvantage.

NOTES

1. There are few exceptions, which appear to be driven by unique data. For instance, Carpenter (2005) found no wage disadvantage for gay men in the California Health Interview Survey. Mueller (2014) found no significant earnings difference between gay and heterosexual men in the Canadian General Social Survey, which may be the result of small sample sizes in the GSS.

2. See the Williams Institute's "Best Practices for Asking Questions about Sexual Orientation on Surveys" (2009).

3. We omit more recent data due to data quality concerns; in 2011 the National Household Survey, a sample survey that had high variability in response rates across geographic areas, replaced the long-form census.

4. Only Alberta, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island had not recognized same-sex marriage by 2005.

5. Visible minority refers to individuals that are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color and who are not aboriginal. Including visible minorities in our sample did not change our findings. Interaction terms between sexual orientation and visible minority status were not statistically significant.

6. A "years of schooling" variable was not included in the 2006 Census; therefore, we constructed this variable using the number of years of schooling for specific diploma obtained (see Hou and Coulombe 2010).

7. One limitation of the Mincer proxy is its inability to account for periods of part-time employment and/or absence from the labor market. This may be a source of bias for heterosexual women, who will have more absences from the labor market for childbearing than all men and lesbians. We expect little bias in the estimates for gay men since they have few children, and most caretaking responsibilities fall to women in heterosexual couples.

8. Because of low cell counts for sexual minorities, we aggregate a few occupation and industry categories.

9. Results from unconditional quantile regressions find larger wage gaps at the 90th quantile of the wage distribution for gay men and lesbians relative to heterosexual men (Online Appendix Table E).

10. Our gender wage gap is larger than that found in other studies as a result of our sample selection and comparison groups: we compare heterosexual women to heterosexual men in couples, exclude lesbians (who tend to earn more than heterosexual women) and gay men (who tend to earn less than heterosexual men).

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