

# Same sex marriages and sociological perspectives

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Same Sex Marriages and Sociological Perspectives Introduction Same sex marriages that are even recognized as gay marriages are marriages that take place between two couples belonging to similar gender. These forms of marriages have been recognized as illegal for several years, but in recent times several nations have assigned legal status to this form of marriage. Alone in United States, different states have different rules regarding these marriages and even certain states have accepted its legitimacy. In this writing, similar sex marriages will be discussed under the light of three different sociological perspectives including: symbolic interactions, functionalism and conflict theory. Body Functionalists pay heavy amount of emphasis on the importance of institutions and believe that these institutions have certain functions to serve (Shepard 94). They regard marriage as an institution that can only take place between two individuals from opposite genders and the functions associated with this institution includes: reproduction, and bringing up of children. This means that functionalists strongly condemn relationships that take place between people from similar sex and may regard them as illegal and deviant as such marriages fail to fulfill the functions that have been associated with a family. Certain functionalists hold the perspective that rivalry that is taking place between couples of same sex and opposite sex is disturbing the harmony of the society. But on the other hand functionalists such as Durkheim assert that deviant behavior within the society has its own purpose or function to serve. For example: the movement that has taken place for the rights of same sex couples has made the society rethink how they are treated by the society and has resulted in unity between different same sex couples. Due to this, same sex couples have been motivated to think about the benefits they

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can offer to the society and they are fighting for their rights based on these benefits. These benefits may include: decline in divorce rates, decline in HIV and others. The conflict theorists are of the idea that different sections of the society are in a conflict and those sections that have higher status within the society are maltreating those who have the lower status (Shepard 94). They may even view the issue of same sex marriage as fight for power and higher status between those who support it and those who are against it. On one side of the struggle are the couples of same sex relationship who want to be recognized as legally married couples and enjoy the benefits associated with the status. This struggle is not new and the couples of the same sex marriage gained advantage in this struggle as early as 1973 when same sex relationships were stopped being recognized as a mental disorder. The same sex couples and supporters of such relationships are at a war against the government and are trying to obtain their rights. Such movements are even supported by organizations as well as common individual. According to the conflict perspective, businesses are supporting such relationships in order to benefit from the conflict between the legal system and the same sex couples. They are benefiting as they are being able to create a better image of themselves in the minds of the same sex couples and their supporters. The symbolic interactionist theorists pay emphasis to the meaning that is attached to symbols such as the meanings attached to the symbol of same sex couples. Meanings of a particular symbol are learned by individuals from their peers and other members of the society (Shepard 94). Currently the meaning associated with the word gay is stupid and the term gay is used as slang for example: phrases such as " you are so gay" is used to refer to an individual's stupid activities. Similarly, symbolic interactionists even deal

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with the labeling theory, they assert that when an individual or a group is provided a label, they tend to conform to that particular label and that label becomes their master status. This is why opposite sex couples have labeled same sex couples as gay and lesbian and these statuses have been assigned to them based on what activities they perform in bed. Symbolic interactionists even deal with self concept and they state that self concept is formed through the interactions that take place between individuals. Since huge number of people have a negative attitude towards gay individuals, these people may have a negative self concept and their relationship status.

Conclusion Functionalists believe that same sex marriages are deviant and anti-social, while the conflict theorists see same sex marriage debate as a struggle between those who oppose it and support it and the symbolic interactionists view the terms gay and lesbian as labels associated with people who have intimate relationships with people who belong to their own gender.

Works Cited Shepard, Jon M.. Sociology. 10th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010. Print.