

**SAME-SEX MARRIAGES: A CROSS-CULTURAL  
ANALYSIS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The political, ethical, and cultural debate over same-sex marriages has caused national divide and controversy in the United States of America. As Republicans defend their perceptions of “traditional” marriage and Democrats support “separate but equal” civil unions, the United States as a whole has portrayed the desperate need to learn from history and other cultures. Throughout history and cross-culturally, evidence of same-sex marriages have been documented all over the world. In Africa, Azande men married other males, Gikuyu women married other women, and same-sex marriages also occurred amongst the Nuer. In Asia, the older samurai formed “marriages” with younger apprentices, some men of China’s Fujian province married each other, and Chinese women who participated in the Marriage Resistance Movement also married each other. In Europe, same-sex marriages were performed in the Christian Church as well as in England’s gay subculture. In the Americas, indigenous populations with alternative gender roles practiced same-sex marriages, Black women of New York City during the Harlem Renaissance married other women, and women participated in same-sex “Boston Marriages.”

In the studies reviewed, researchers and scholars documented the diversity and complexity of same-sex marriage patterns in various cultures. In an effort to explore the existence of an institution that has been obscured, denied, and forgotten, this study was designed to examine selected examples of same-sex marriages along with the theoretical perspectives of their derivation. The purpose is not only to provide cross-cultural examples of same-sex marriages, but to give readers new insight into accepted same-sex

practices so they can question their own prejudices, current discriminatory policies, and encourage social change towards equality.