Université de Montréal

The Government of Homosexuality in Contemporary Society: A Sociological Analysis

par

Kathy D'Ovidio

Département de sociologie

Faculté des arts et des sciences

Mémoire présenté à la Faculté des études supérieures

en vue de l'obtention du grade de

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Ce mémoire intitulé:

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présenté par

Kathy D'Ovidio

a été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:

Mona-Josée GAGNON   présidente du jury

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Université de Montréal

Abstract

Many factors have contributed to the current changes that sexual expression has undertaken in western societies. The present study has incorporated a Foucaultian historical perspective to help understand the social processes that manage homosexuality in contemporary society while considering some of the concomitant factors that have helped influence changes in attitude. Changes in our conceptualization of sexuality were explored within the context of the social structure of the family. A careful examination and investigation of the social processes underlying the management of sexuality using a Foucaultian perspective was presented. The utility of this perspective was exemplified as both a useful tool of analysis and contextual framework for understanding the processes involved in changing perceptions, visibility and acceptance of an alternative lifestyle, homosexuality. More specifically, Foucault's basics tenets and theoretical constructs (e.g., his conceptualization of homosexuality as deviance, and the role of knowledge and discourse), and how they all operate within his notion of governmentality as a form of management of sexuality were addressed. This conceptualization was then applied to the current homosexual lifestyle.

The analyses were designed to move away from questions that seek to answer *why* there has been change in our acceptance of homosexuality as to *how* this process has occurred. The concomitant factors influencing this change were reviewed. Lessons acquired from a historical and sociological perspective of sexuality revealed that the issues concerning homosexuals are being managed and changed only when they affect the prevailing social order.

An analysis of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* helped conceptualize how we perceive morality, how we came to understand the issues of moderation and excess, and how that is linked to the development of a social order. Government structures designed to meet the ever-changing social, medical and psychological needs of its constituents were examined. Nevertheless, these structures are constantly evolving, and are influenced by a number of external factors.

Given the emerging conceptualization of the family, a Foucaultian perspective was found to be a useful model in understanding the management of homosexuality within the context of the changing perceptions and construct of contemporary forms of the family. These forms of the family were explored by analyzing the power, constraints and the role of the family, and the socialization of the family in western society. Homosexuality remains targeted by forms of governmentality that aim for their incorporation in an essentially heterosexual structure. Despite the *progress* that the homosexual movement has experienced, the repressive ordering of the homosexual lifestyle remains. While society has altered the forms of the repression of the homosexual lifestyle, it most certainly has not eliminated it. The continual debate as to whether or not the homosexual community is stronger, more resilient, and better, can be as never ending as the debate between essentialist and constructivist theorists who argue about whether homosexuality is an innate or socially constructed phenomenon. Nevertheless, there is an acute need to be aware of the social processes that allows for the construction and maintenance of debates and structural ambiguities, which ultimately allows forms of repression to exist. By applying Foucault's perspective of governmentality and his theoretical constructs of knowledge and discourse, it became evident that homosexuality has been historically, and is currently, being managed within this heterosexual framework.

Sommaire

La gestion de l'homosexualité dans la société contemporaine: une analyse sociologique

Plusieurs facteurs ont contribué aux changements que l'on observe dans l'expression des comportements sexuels au sein des sociétés occidentales contemporaines. L'inquiétude croissante face au sida et au virus HIV ont joué un rôle majeur dans la sensibilisation des pouvoirs publics face à l'existence de la communauté homosexuelle. Les pressions exercées en faveur de la légalisation des mariages homosexuels ou l'adoption d'enfants par des parents de même sexe ont également contribué à accroître la visibilité du groupe homosexuel et à remettre en cause la structure sociale de la famille. Les médias, sous diverses formes, ont également contribué largement à la représentation de l'homosexualité dans l'imaginaire occidental. Ce mémoire explore les processus sociaux qui gèrent l'expression de l'homosexualité dans la société occidentale. La fin du 20e siècle a été marquée par des changements remarquables dans « l'évolution » de l'acceptation générale de l'homosexualité comme choix de vie alternatif légitime. Nous abordons pour étudier ce processus de changement un point de vue historique foucaldien et examinons différents facteurs concomitants qui ont influencé cette évolution des attitudes. Ce processus de changement est exploré dans le contexte de la structure sociale familiale. Cette approche devrait éclairer le mécanisme de changement dans la gestion de l'homosexualité dans la société passée et présente.

Dans ce mémoire, le débat opposant les théories essentialistes et constructivistes sur l'origine de l'homosexualité a été traité schématiquement. L'importance de

l'émergence des théories constructivistes, vers la fin des années 70, a été mise en relief afin d'illustrer la nécessité d'établir une distinction claire entre les actes sociaux en soi et la signification culturelle rattachée à ces actes. Nous dressons une revue de la littérature sociologique concernant la gestion de l'homosexualité dans les sociétés contemporaines occidentales. Bien que certaines études tendent à prouver qu'il y a eu des changements positifs concernant ce problème, la revue de littérature jette aussi un éclairage sur certains facteurs qui ont eu pour effet de freiner ou d'inhiber ces changements. De ce conflit perçu entre changements positifs et négatifs, il en est résulté une ambiguïté qui a amené naturellement à considérer la question de la gestion de l'homosexualité dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines.Un examen attentif des processus sociaux sous-jacents à la gestion de l'homosexualité, utilisant une perspective foucaldien, est présentée. En plus de s'avérer un puissant outil d'analyse, cette perspective fournit un cadre contextuel qui sera utile pour la compréhension des processus impliqués dans les changements dans la perception, la visibilité et l'acceptation des styles de vie alternatifs qui ont cours dans les sociétés contemporaines. Nous détaillons sommairement la pensée de Foucault sur la conceptualisation de la sexualité et nous discutons de la pertinence de ses arguments et de leurs implications concernant la famille contemporaine. Plus spécifiquement, les principes fondamentaux et les constructions théoriques de Foucault (par exemple, son concept d'homosexualité comme déviance, le rôle de la connaissance et du discours, etc.) et la façon dont ils se combinent avec sa notion de "gouvernementalité" comme moyen de contrôle de la sexualité apparaissent comme étant primordiaux pour la compréhension de la sexualité. Nous avons alors appliqué ce paradigme au style de vie homosexuel actuel.

En général, ce mémoire cherche à répondre à certains questions importantes concernant la croissance de l'acceptabilité et l'acceptation de l'homosexualité dans la société occidentale. Ce qui nous intéresse ici n'est pas tant le pourquoi que le comment de ce processus de changement. Les facteurs concomitants de ces changements ont été étudiés. Une revue historique de la littérature suggère qu'un facteur primordial de ce changement qui a pris naissance dans les années 70 fut la visibilité croissante de la communauté homosexuelle, que ce soit dans les arts, les médias ou par le biais de la médecine et des articles.

Cette plus grande visibilité et tolérance face au fait homosexuel a résulté aujourd'hui en une vision pluraliste accrue du rôle de la famille. Foucault, grâce notamment à ses concepts de perspective historique, de sexualité, de construits de connaissance, de discours politique et de morale, a su démontrer le rôle de la « gouvernementalité » dans la définition et la gestion de l'homosexualité à l'intérieur d'un cadre hétérosexuel. En somme, la pensée de Foucault n'a rien perdu de sa pertinence aujourd'hui.

La question des droits réclamés par certains homosexuels (mariage, adoption, etc.) et les réticences des instances gouvernementales à les leur accorder nous amènent à conclure que les lois et politiques publiques ne changent qu'à la suite de pressions exogènes aux pouvoirs en place. Lorsque l'équilibre homéostatique est rompu, la tendance naturelle de la société est de chercher à rétablir l'équilibre par une solution modérée.

On doit prendre garde à ne pas confondre visibilité de la communauté homosexuelle et tolérance de la population en général à son endroit. On pourrait même

interpréter cette visibilité comme l'expression d'une stratégie visant à apaiser la communauté homosexuelle. Ainsi, l'histoire nous révèle que seules les menaces à l'ordre social sont propres à donner lieu à de véritables changements.

Foucault nous aide à réaliser comment nous percevons la morale et comment les notions de modération et d'excès sont intimement liées au développement de l'ordre social. Selon Foucault, l'homosexualité était perçue comme comportement excessif et l'hétérosexualité avait fonction de modérateur, avec d'importantes fonctions sociales (par exemple la procréation). Les structures gouvernementales, qui doivent satisfaire les continuels changements sociaux, médicaux et psychologiques de ses constituants, conserveront leur influence. Malgré cela, ce processus évolue, ce qui le rend perméable à un certain nombre de facteurs extérieurs. L'épidémie de SIDA est un bon exemple d'événement qui a projeté la communauté homosexuelle à l'avant-scène et de la conscientisation qui a résulté dans la population concernant les choix de vie alternatifs. Une fois cette prise de conscience établie, d'une perspective historique, aucun réel retour en arrière n'est possible pour la société.

Un processus évolutif a permis aux membres de la communauté homosexuelle d'exprimer plus librement leur sexualité, leurs croyances et discuter ouvertement de leur style de vie alternatif. Pour la plupart des membres de la communauté gaie, leur style de vie implique un renoncement implicite à avoir des enfants. Cependant, un nombre croissant d'entre eux ont cherché une reconnaissance officielle de leur style de vie, par exemple par la légalisation des mariages ou du transfert des bénéfices économiques et sociaux entre conjoints de même sexe. D'autre ont milité pour obtenir le droit d'adopter des enfants. Dans une perspective foucaldien, la stimulation du discours et

l'accroissement des connaissances concernant les enfants élevés par des conjoints de même sexe qui en ont résulté font partie du processus global de changement dont il est question.

Étant données l'émergence d'une façon plus moderne de voir la famille et la mouvance des perceptions et construits contemporains concernant celle-ci, l'adoption d'une perspective foucaldien s'est avérée une stratégie efficace pour la compréhension de la gestion de l'homosexualité. Ces nouvelles formes de familles ont été analysées sous l'angle du pouvoir, des contraintes et de leur rôle social en Occident. Le prédicat de Foucault sur l'existence d'un ordre social binaire conférait à la famille un cadre d'étude assez naturel. A mesure que la société progresse, de nouvelles formes de familles (par exemple chez les homosexuels) émergent. L'examen du processus et des facteurs de ces changements d'une perspective historique revêt une importance afin d'interpréter, voire de prédire les futurs changements sociaux.

La résistance au changement et la modification des normes sociales est un processus qui évolue lentement. Foucault a mis en évidence les mécanismes de ce changement et les facteurs concomitants qui l'influencent. Ces changements dans les attitudes contemporaines, les croyances et l'acceptation de la sexualité continueront. D'une perspective sociologique, notre compréhension de ce phénomène évolutif relié à la notion de famille et de sexualité s'en trouve clarifiée.

Il a été établi que les discours officiels et publics dans les sociétés contemporaines renforcent de l'ordre social. Ainsi, malgré une apparente ouverture envers le modèle homosexuel et les styles de vie alternatifs en général, les valeurs véhiculées vont clairement dans le sens d'un style de vie hétérosexuel. L'homosexualité demeure

encadrée par diverses stratégies (par exemple, les formes de gestion) visant à l'incorporer dans la structure hétérosexuelle. Malgré les *progrès* obtenus par le mouvement homosexuel, la répression sociale effective de l'homosexualité demeure. Les formes de répression ont été altérées et adoucies, certes, mais elles n'ont pas disparu. Le débat à savoir si la communauté homosexuelle est plus forte ou mieux intégrée se poursuivra sans doute aussi longtemps que le débat opposant les essentialistes et les constructivistes concernant la nature innée ou acquise de l'homosexualité. Malgré tout, il est impératif qu'on prenne conscience des processus qui gèrent ces débats sociaux et les changements dans les attitudes et perceptions, et qui permettent à diverses formes de répression d'exister. En appliquant la perspective historique de gouvernementalité de Foucault, il est apparu évident que l'homosexualité a été et continue d'être gérée dans un cadre général hétérosexuel.

Dans notre société contemporaine, il peut y avoir un retour en force vers les valeurs conservatrices telles que défendues par certains groupes religieux et mouvements politiques. Ceci pourrait affecter la reconnaissance de la communauté homosexuelle et inciter les politiques publiques à contraindre plus fortement cette communauté dans un cadre hétérosexuel "acceptable". Cependant, le discours et les lois évoluent avec les styles de vie. Lorsque de tels conflits surgissent, la tendance naturelle des individus et de la société est de chercher à récréer une homéostasie et trouver une solution à ces conflits. Ce processus est en parfait accord avec l'argumentation de Foucault concernant le mécanisme du changement social. Malgré cela, une société qui se dit progressiste et humaniste doit continuellement réexaminer ses croyances et attitudes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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K. D.

Introduction

For over a century, discourse involving sexuality has predominantly been focused upon a number of scientific fields of expertise including medicine, psychiatry, sexology, and psychology. All of these disciplines have traditionally taken similar positions with respect to homosexuality as a form of deviant behavior. The resulting antagonism between militant homosexual organizations and scientists has been long and ongoing.

Ironically, theories and studies advanced by professionals in different scientific fields have played an integral part in getting an important segment of the activist homosexual population to participate in research regarding their sexual orientation. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1970's that essentialist theory, which argues that human behavior is natural and genetically predetermined (including biological and physiological, determinants), was this theory challenged by constructivists. This represented a new way of conceptualizing the phenomenon of homosexuality. Constructivist theorists outlined the social process by which human sexuality is constructed by identifying important differences between sexual acts and behaviors and the cultural significance attached to such acts.

Michel Foucault's works on the *History of Sexuality* have played a key role in the solidification of constructivist theory and arguments. Foucault's analysis of the discursive practices of the social regulation of sexual practices has shed light on the social process by which the phenomenon of homosexuality has been medicalized over the centuries and the process that led to its demedicalization in contemporary society in spite of the search

for a *homosexual gene*. Intellectuals in the fields of literary and cultural studies have also made notable contributions to gay and lesbian studies and expanded the constructivist perspective beyond sexual identity and gender discourse. Through an analysis of literature, cinema, media, and governmental influence they have adopted a perspective that considers the production and consumption of social symbols associated with homosexuality. Their writings suggest that the production/consumption process in which homosexuals are engaged remains well within the dominant heterosexual social structure. In such a social structure, the heterosexual orientation remains the norm and becomes the predominant framework for the constellation of the contemporary family and society. Nevertheless, a number of factors in the late 20th century have led to a greater visibility of the homosexual phenomenon and an increased recognition and acceptance of the homosexual community. For most western societies, it seems reasonable to assume that the end of the 20th century marks the end of a singular conceptualization of sexuality and the beginning of its plural form within the social structure of western societies as well as within the structure of the contemporary family.

Many factors have contributed to the current changes that sexual expression has undertaken in western societies. The widespread concerns over AIDS and HIV have played an important part in raising public awareness of the existence of the homosexual community. Issues surrounding the legalization of homosexual marriages and homosexual rights concerning the adoption of children have also played an important role in the increased visibility of homosexuality and the social structure of the family. The media in its various forms has also made a considerable contribution to the diffusion and

representation of homosexual images in western societies worldwide. We need only think of the significant emphasis placed on the sexual orientation of television characters, professionals in the music industry and political figures to realize how much importance is placed on sexuality in contemporary society.

The end of the 20th century has been marked by notable changes in the evolution of our general acceptance of homosexuality as a legitimate alternative lifestyle. The issues remain not as to only why this has occurred but more importantly the need to investigate and document the processes underlying this change. The present study incorporates a Foucaultian historical perspective to help understand this process while considering some of the concomitant factors that have helped influence this change in attitude. This will be explored within the context of the social structure of the family since it serves as useful focus for understanding the process of change in the management of homosexuality in both past and contemporary society. Nevertheless, the main objective of this thesis will be to explore the social processes that *manage* homosexuality in contemporary society.

Within Chapter I, the debate between essentialist and constructivist theories concerning questions related to the origin of homosexuality are schematically addressed. The importance of the emergence of the constructivist theories in the late 1970's are outlined and illustrate the interest in identifying important differences between social acts and the cultural differences attached to these acts. Nevertheless, the main objective of this

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chapter remains a review of the sociological literature dealing with the management of homosexuality in contemporary society. While a number of sociological studies are presented as providing evidence that there have been positive changes concerning the management of homosexuality in western societies worldwide, the literature review also demonstrates the negative factors which have inhibited this change. Ambiguity has been shown to be the result of the perceived conflict between these positive and negative changes. The question as to how homosexuality is being managed in contemporary western society is raised.

In Chapter II, a careful examination and investigation of the social processes underlying the management of sexuality using a Foucaultian perspective is presented. This perspective provides a useful and contextual framework for understanding the processes involved in changing perceptions, visibility and acceptance of an alternative lifestyle in contemporary society. This chapter is situated within Foucault's conceptualization of sexuality, the pertinence of his arguments is presented, and the implications for the contemporary family are schematically discussed. More specifically, this chapter is devoted toward understanding and applying Foucault's basics tenets and theoretical constructs (e.g., his conceptualization of homosexuality as deviance, and the role of knowledge and discourse), and how they all operate within his notion of governmentality as a form of management of sexuality. This conceptualization is then applied to the homosexual lifestyle in contemporary society.

Finally, in Chapter III, using a governmentality perspective, the processes underlying contemporary changes in the perception and role of the family in the regulation of homosexuality is presented. Given the emerging conceptualization of the family, this perspective was found to be a useful strategy in understanding the management of homosexuality within the context of the changing perceptions and construct of contemporary forms of the family. Family as a form of governmentality is explored by analyzing the power, constraints and role of the family, and the socialization of the family in western society. Predicated upon Foucault's historical perspective that a binary social order has been constructed, an examination of the family provides a useful framework for analysis. As society continues to make progress, alternative forms of the family (e.g., homosexuality) have emerged. Examining the processes and factors affecting these changes is important from a sociological perspective in order to help predict and interpret future societal changes. The familial implications are provided.

CHAPTER 1

Homosexuality in Western Societies

1.1 Introduction

Why is it that when we speak of sexuality we mean heterosexuality? Aside from personal reasons that accounts for my interest in the field of sexuality, it is my readings of Michel Foucault's works that have led me to reflect upon this question. As I continued to read Foucault's works and thought about their current applications, the true question became: Why is it that in contemporary society, when we discuss sexuality we can no longer make the assumption that we are speaking of heterosexuality? What has changed or what is changing in western society that is allowing the visibility and the expression of that which has been previously conceptualized as an atypical form of sexuality, such as homosexuality, to occur more freely but yet still be repressed? Why has the way we conceptualize sexuality and more specifically homosexuality changed, and more importantly how has this process evolved?

In asking these questions, I by no means wish to downplay the discrimination that homosexuals and other sexual minorities have suffered in the past and still continue to suffer. On the contrary, this study aims to examine the process that has allowed such changes to occur and questions the mechanisms that are allowing sexuality, and more specifically homosexuality, to take on different expressions in western societies. Perhaps, the underlying hypothesis behind the questions asked in this study focuses upon the

process by which changes in regard to the freedom of sexual expression is being achieved in the social arena. This may be merely an example of a masked form of control.

The literature dealing with sexuality is vast and thus cannot be looked at in its entirety. It is for this reason that one aspect of sexuality, that is homosexuality, shall be explored. This social phenomenon has been given considerable attention for many different reasons over the years. Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that in most western societies, the term sexuality has for long been associated with its singular heterosexual expression. A more contemporary perspective assumes sexuality in its plural form.

Why is it that when we think of sexuality we no longer think only of heterosexuality? Any attempt to answer this question requires an investigation of other social phenomena. Let us for a moment consider the influence of the media in its various forms. A cursory examination of American prime-time television shows like *Ellen*, starring Ellen De Generis, reveal modern day examples of the lives of American lesbian women. It seems that at least one same-sex oriented character has become the standard for many prime-time television shows. The popular sit-coms, *Spin City* and *Will and Grace,* have had at least one primary character being depicted as either gay or lesbian.

The music industry has also played a role in the diffusion and visibility of the homosexual phenomenon. The focus on the sexuality of singers such as Melissa Ethridge,

Elton John, K.D. Lang, Michael Jackson, and countless other media and theatrical personalities in popular newsmagazines has been prominent. The proliferation and consumption of such magazines and tabloid newspapers is telling about western society and its changing values. Aside from the blatant fact that sexuality sells, sexuality is being used to send out different messages. The *maneuverability* of sexuality, to use one of Foucault's terms, is exemplified by the interest we may have in investigating how the most intimate part of our being, our sexuality, is being used towards extraneous goals.

The American political scene has also had its share of sex scandals emphasizing the sexuality and sexual practices of its country's leaders. The cover of a recent issue of the tabloid magazine, *The Globe*, read *Is Hillary Clinton A Lesbian*? and featured a three page story delineating the author's beliefs about Hillary Clinton's sexual preference for women. The article further insinuated that Mrs. Clinton, currently a U.S senator from the New York State, practically pushed her husband President Bill Clinton into the arms of other women because of her homosexual orientation. Included within the article, were six pictures of women with whom Hillary allegedly had sexual relations. It seems that sexuality and more particularly homosexuality, are the hottest and most fashionable subjects of the past century, despite their being supposedly "taboo." The frequency of "advertisements" that homosexuality has received in the media stirs suspicion. We are left with the feeling that it is virtually acceptable to practice homosexuality. Yet, how did this feeling of acceptance arise, and more importantly, what changes have occurred to make the practice of homosexuality feel more natural and acceptable in contemporary society? Is it the provocative advertisements that designers like Christian Dior, Versace,

Gucci, and others are using to market their clothing that are transmitting this message? What does Dior's latest advertisement featuring two beautiful women in sexy clothing, legs intertwined and mouths touching, say about modern sexuality? After seeing such an advertisement are we left with the impression that being a lesbian is acceptable or is it just trendy? These questions would probably provoke a strong set of different responses. However, there remains a certain *malaise* about same-sex oriented individuals walking hand in hand or kissing in public. There seems to be many contradictions operating within contemporary societies concerning the subject of sexuality and more precisely homosexuality. Is it acceptable to be same-sex oriented in our society? And from whose perspective? There seems to be confusion in our role definitions. Nevertheless, one cannot merely attribute the visibility or the different levels of acceptance of homosexuality exclusively to the media in its various forms. Other factors, in the public as well as the private sector, have contributed to the positive or negative attention this phenomenon has been given.

The deadly autoimmune disease and its virus, AIDS and HIV, have also played an important part in raising public awareness of the existence of a homosexual community. Although AIDS and HIV are not exclusively associated with homosexual practices, since the virus can be transmitted by other means, male homosexuals are at a significantly greater risk than other segments of the population (Busscher, 1997). As a result, many have equated AIDS and HIV with homosexuality. This equation has caused political upheaval and subsequently a number of Gay Rights issues to be raised. Nevertheless, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases have not been the only issues on the

agendas of gay and lesbian activists. The legalization of homosexual marriages and homosexual rights concerning the adoption of children can also be noted as pressing concerns. Homosexual communities, in most western countries, now declare official days for parades, such as Gay Pride, to ensure that they are acknowledged not only as a community but also as a legitimate community of individuals with rights and needs. The legalization of homosexual marriages or unions in some western societies also raises many interesting questions such as: Why are we even thinking of accepting homosexual marriages? Is it against God's wishes? Is the acceptance of homosexual marriages a strategy for the incorporation of homosexual individuals within a heterosexual structure? Are the real issues that concern the homosexual population being sublimated at the expense of incorporating these individuals into a heterosexual structure? For example, are there programs to sensitize children in elementary schools about the existence of alternative type of family structures such as homosexual families? Do homosexual couples enjoy the same rights concerning child adoption? Is public policy headed towards the institutionalization of homosexuality in order to better contain it in acceptable ways within a heterosexual structure? Are contemporary western societies ready to accept a lifestyle other than one that is heterosexual in nature? Perhaps the attitudes of acceptance that we are witnessing in western societies are simply ones of tolerance towards a different orientation but not a different lifestyle. The former hypothesis would explain the visibility of homosexuality in western societies as well as the resistance that this phenomenon encounters on a legislative level.

Although, important questions concerning the reasons behind the growing level of visibility and acceptance that the homosexual population has experienced in present western societies have been raised, any attempt to answer these questions requires an understanding of the historical reasons for the non-recognition of homosexuality. The essential questions: What are the elements in the historical process that have produced attitudes of non-acceptance towards homosexuality is crucial to both our understanding of our current thoughts about sexuality and basic questions related to our freedom as human beings?

How is what some consider the most intimate part of our being, our sexuality, used to create docile individuals? It is Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, a three-volume treatise that has led me to question the possibility that sexuality is becoming an instrument to produce desired behaviors in individuals. Foucault has suggested that the historical process has created a social structure that legitimizes and justifies the disciplining of individuals to produce a desired effect. This study is an investigation of the production of a dynamic process that has at different points in time legitimized and denigrated homosexuality in western societies. While Foucault examines sexuality from a historical perspective, he concentrated on how this process has occurred with respect to sexuality in general, this thesis will focus on its applications to homosexuality and the changing roles and perception of the family in contemporary western society. By examining this dynamic process we can develop an analytical strategy that will allow us to determine and understand structural similarities of forms of domination/subordination

and their relation to the changing definitions and conceptualization of sexuality that stretch across western cultures and historical epochs (Scott, 1990).

Although most analyses of the phenomenon of homosexuality address the debate between essentialist and constructivist theory of homosexuality, this study does so only schematically. The ongoing debate as to the issue of whether homosexuality is an innate or socially constructed phenomenon is a never-ending story. Although quite tempting, it is not the aim of this paper to take a position on that debate. This study is designed to understand what factors from a historical perspective have influenced the existence and management of homosexuality in western societies. What is the normalizing process that regulates sexuality and allows the acceptance or non-acceptance of homosexuality? How are knowledge, and discourse related to sexuality? How has this relation changed over time? And finally, has society come to address the conceptual changes of sexuality and view homosexual lifestyles as an acceptable alternative lifestyle?

The literature review that follows expresses many contemporary concerns about the management of issues surrounding homosexual individuals in western societies. Explored are the different theoretical perspectives and conceptual tools, which have been adopted to address a variety of issues, surrounding the phenomenon of homosexuality in western societies. Although these perspectives are provided as an underpinning, the primary focus of this study is to understand the dynamic processes of change involved in our current conceptualization and attitudes toward homosexuality from a Foucaultian historical perspective.

1.2 Homosexuality: An overview

For over a century, discourse involving sexuality has predominantly been focused upon a number of scientific fields of expertise. These scientific and medical disciplines have taken similar positions with regard to homosexuality as a form of deviant sexual behavior. The resulting antagonism between militant homosexual organizations and scientists has been long and ongoing. Ironically, theories and studies advanced by professionals in different scientific fields have played an integral part in getting an important segment of the militant homosexual population to participate in research regarding their sexual orientation. In efforts to disqualify the different theories elaborated by researchers, homosexuals have willingly engaged in scientific research aimed at helping identify the truth about what makes homosexuals same-sex oriented. Strangely enough, a strategic alliance and rather odd relationship has been created between the homosexuality community and medical science. According to Line Chamberland (1977), it was not until the 1970's that gay and lesbian activists/researchers challenged and contested ideological practices that reigned in Western Universities. Nevertheless, as she points out, endeavors to break the wall of silence surrounding the taboo of homosexuality as a legitimate form of sexuality were pursued outside university institutions without any funding.

Regardless of the financial and ideological obstacles that research concerning the phenomenon of homosexuality encountered (and which continue to exists), a substantial literature concerning the historical and cultural representations of homosexuality emerged

and became a visible social reality and concern. Chamberland delineates the 1970's as an important decade for the homosexual movement since it is at this point in time that one can begin to trace the emergence of positive expressions of homosexuality in western societies. It is also during this period, she suggests that gay and feminist movements led intellectuals to elaborate theories concerning the social and political implications of such movements. The phenomenon was worldwide occurring in western societies including the U.S.A., Canada, Holland, Australia, Germany, and France.

It was not until the mid 1970's that essentialist theory, which argues that human behavior is natural and genetically predetermined (including biological and physiological determinants), was this theory challenged by constructivists. This represented a new way of conceptualizing the phenomenon of homosexuality. Constructivist theorists outlined the social process by which human sexuality is constructed by identifying important and essential differences between sexual acts and the cultural significance attached to such acts. The heated debates between essentialist and constructivist theorists have played an instrumental role in the demedicalization of homosexual behavior and homosexual individuals. Constructivist theorists have generated important research studies that have renegotiated the position of homosexuals in present western societies. Michel Foucault's works on *The History of Sexuality* have played a key role in the solidification of constructivist theory and arguments. Foucault's analysis of the discursive practices of the social regulation of sexual practices has shed light on the social process, by which the phenomenon of homosexuality has been medicalized over the centuries and the process that has led to its demedicalization in the contemporary society (despite research

searching for a homosexual gene). The efforts of Jeffery Weeks (1977, 1981a), Kenneth

Plummer (1981), and John D'Emilio (1983) can also be noted as indispensable since they

underline the necessity to use a historical perspective in understanding the phenomenon

of sexuality and its homosexual expression.

Intellectuals in the fields of literary and cultural studies have also made notable

contributions to gay and lesbian studies (e.g., Judith Butler, 1990,1993; Diane Fuss 1989,

1991; Teresa de Lauris, 1994; Eve Sedgwick, 1990). Consistent with the constructivist

perspective, these authors have expanded that perspective beyond sexual identity and

gender discourse. Through an analysis of literature, cinema, and culture they have

adopted a perspective that considers the production and consumption of social symbols

by homosexuals. Such theorists purport that the exclusion of homosexuals from the

dominant codes of special symbols (signs) has led homosexuals to search for their own

symbols, signs, and images to assert their existence. Nevertheless, a number of factors in

the late 20th century have led to a greater visibility of the homosexual phenomenon and

an increased recognition and acceptance of the homosexual community. Within most

western societies, the end of the 20th century marks the end of a singular expression of

sexuality.

Many factors have contributed to the changes that sexual expression has

undergone in western societies. The sociological literature that deals with such changes

seems to account for both positive and negative representations of homosexuality. This

literature review will be presented in two sections. The first section offers a sample of the

sociological literature that provides evidence that homosexuality is not only finding a legitimate place in western societies but is also coming to be represented as a positive formulation, albeit an alternative lifestyle. The second section addresses that literature that suggests that homosexuality is still a long way from legitimate recognition and that any representation of the homosexual lifestyle is at best indifferent and negotiated in a very tight social space and always within a dominant heterosexual structure.

1.3 Homosexuality and positive changes

When we conceptualize the vast number of deaths associated with AIDS and HIV, it is difficult to think of any positive attributes that may have resulted from such an epidemic. Nevertheless, the impact that such a deadly disease has taken on western societies has ironically resulted in some positive changes for the homosexual community. In a study conducted in France, a country that provides a good example of an environment where male homosexuals represent one of the largest groups of individuals afflicted with the AIDS epidemic, Busscher (1997) noted a positive impact that AIDS had upon the homosexual community. Although he does not dismiss the obvious negative deadly and long suffering aspect of the disease, Busscher points out that as a matter of public health, AIDS has forced the State to undertake a more proactive role in its relationship with the homosexual community. Since male homosexuals in France represent the largest group of individuals afflicted with AIDS, the government has had no choice but to recognize a number of homosexual organizations which provide help and support to its members. In efforts to manage the AIDS epidemic in France, Busscher notes the strategic alliance that the State and homosexual organizations have formed. His

findings reveal that while homosexual associations are dependant on the State for funding prevention programs, medical assistance and social support programs, the State depends greatly on the homosexual associations to provide the active cooperation of its members towards the advancement of scientific research concerning this deadly disease. In addition to the motivations just outlined, Busscher's study reminds its readers that the strongest motivation and primary reason for a strong alliance still remains the search for a cure.

Another interesting aspect and consequence of the AIDS disease is the enormous amount of media exposure that the homosexual community has received since the appearance of the HIV virus. Busscher's study demonstrates the positive aspect to such exposure by identifying the significantly increased pressure that such medical necessity places on the State to help those afflicted with the disease. Furthermore, such media coverage also contributes to a greater visibility of the homosexual community and thus a greater recognition of its existence.

The AIDS disease and its deadly HIV virus have prompted a renewed interest in the homosexual phenomenon by the scientific community. This is evident by the increasing number of studies focused upon identifying the number of homosexuals in different countries in relation to the AIDS epidemic (Lhomond, 1977). While Lhomond does not fail to acknowledge the different meanings that may be attributed to such quantitative types of studies in the political sphere, she underlines the importance of the question of prevalence for the homosexual community. Lhomond reminds us of the

impact that the Kinsey report had in western societies when in 1948 he announced that

10% of the male population are more or less exclusively homosexual (Kinsey, 1948). For

the homosexual community, the results of the Kinsey report was a major event because it

presented the opportunity to step out of both the pathological and marginal segment of

society. Furthermore, Lhomond states that to this day, the results of the Kinsey report are

still referred to by the homosexual community to assert their legitimate existence.

According to Lhomond, homosexual individuals can attribute the active participation of

the homosexual community in scientific research to a general sentiment of strength in

numbers.

While the AIDS epidemic has definitely drawn considerable public and scientific

attention towards the homosexual community, other issues such as the legalization of

homosexual marriages have similarly stirred much controversy. The increased visibility

and acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle is forcing the mainstream culture to redefine

terms such as "family" and "couple." In an article dealing primarily with the

psychological aspects of gay and lesbian families, Julien and Chartrand (1977) reported

that homosexual families and couples are finding positive expressions in contemporary

societies. Although studies concerning homosexual families and couples are relatively

few, these authors suggest that research has shown that there exists little difference

between homosexual and heterosexual families and couples. Using a quantitative

analysis, Peplau (1994) illustrates that both homosexuals and heterosexuals present

similar characteristics concerning the different aspects of conjugal life. The only

differences found between homosexuals and heterosexuals seemed to favor those of

homosexual couples in that Peplau's results indicate that homosexual couples seem to experience conjugal life as equal partners more so than heterosexual couples. Peplau's findings further help to dismantle the popular belief that homosexual unions last less long than heterosexual unions.

In a similar spirit, using a quantitative experimental methodology, Patterson (1992) compared the development of children of homosexual parents to those of heterosexuals and concluded that there were no real differences between the children. The only differences reported seemed to favor the children of homosexual unions since they demonstrated higher levels of tolerance towards frustrating incidents than children of heterosexual unions. Patterson elucidates the value of her study for the homosexual community by stating that such results may help convince legislators that children of homosexual parents are as normal as those of homosexual parents. Her results would provide support for the enactment of laws allowing homosexuals to adopt children as well as the right to use reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination. Nevertheless, regardless of the social, political, and legislative obstacles that homosexual individuals encounter on a daily basis, an ample number of studies demonstrate that homosexual families and couples exist in contemporary societies and are forming long lasting bonds and relationships.

Aside from the increased visibility of gay and lesbian couples in contemporary societies, the film industry has also helped in the representation of the latter reality. A quick look at Hollywood movie productions such as *Bird Cage, The Next Best Thing*, and

American Beauty, reveals that sexuality in western societies is taking on different expressions. Sexuality in modern cinema is no longer represented as strictly a heterosexual phenomenon. Each one of the movies mentioned above has a story line, which deals with the existence of homosexuality in contemporary western societies and depicts different realities assumed by homosexual individuals.

Although the movie industry has definitely contributed to the widespread visibility of the homosexual phenomenon, it seems that it has primarily focused on male homosexuality. It wasn't until recently, in movies such as *Gazon Maudit* (Josiane Balasko, France, 1995) and *When Night is Falling* (Patricia Rozema, Canada, 1995), that female homosexuality has not only been dealt with as a subject matter but also positively received by audiences worldwide. In a study conducted by Chantal Nadeau (1977), the two movies are analyzed and seen as examples of negotiated forms of lesbian visibility.

While this review so far suggests that the phenomenon of homosexuality has taken on more positive expressions in western societies, a more in-depth examination of the same literature, along with other studies, suggests that such changes have occurred only under specific conditions. In the following section, I will suggest that the specificity of such conditions is largely related to the negotiation of a very tight social space for the homosexual community. Furthermore, the conditions, which permit the allocation of such a social space to the homosexual community, are always found to be ambiguous in nature and well defined within a heterosexual social structure. An exploration of how homosexuality is being managed is provided.

1.4 Positive changes: A second look

While western societies have in the past denied the existence and recognition of a homosexual community on both a social and legislative level, present contemporary societies seem to have, at first glance, accepted the existence of a homosexual reality. Many individuals can now enjoy gay and lesbian film festivals in major cosmopolitan cities worldwide, enter specialized book stores that deal exclusively with gay and lesbian literature, or even place a personal advertisement in local newspapers soliciting and seeking a same-sex oriented companion. Designer brand names such as *Gucci, Versace, Christian Dior,* and countless others continue to use same-sex models in sexually provocative positions to market their products which are appearing on billboards in numerous major cities. Within the state of Vermont, homosexual civil unions are currently legal. Still further, the legislators are eager to follow the steps of the Netherlands whose laws have already recognized homosexual "marriages" in the traditional sense of the word (ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project, 2000). The faces of western societies around the world are changing and sending out different messages through their politicians and various media formats. It now appears socially acceptable in many communities to be gay. However, at the same time this does not mean that homosexuals are going to be treated, accorded, or guaranteed the same rights as heterosexuals. Hence, despite the increased visibility and acceptance of the homosexual phenomenon in the media and the political arena, the repressive ordering of a homosexual lifestyle remains and manifests itself through discriminatory practices that are exercised towards homosexual individuals on a daily basis.

It is interesting to note that while homosexuals suffered repression in the past by being denied their right to express a homosexual lifestyle or be visible in any shape or form, the repressive ordering of homosexuality has not entirely come to an end. The only thing that has changed within the context of contemporary societies is that the management of the homosexual lifestyle is occurring under different forms. The literature provides pertinent observations and research supporting the perspective that homosexuals represent a segment of the population that suffers discrimination due to their sexual preference and different choice of lifestyle. Furthermore, it reveals how the homosexual phenomenon is being managed in western societies through different power networks, such as public policy, research, education and the media in its various forms. This is being done in order that it can be contained, monitored and controlled. The examples that follow illustrate and offer a brief overview of the different ways that homosexuality continues to be distinguished and controlled.

While the AIDS epidemic has brought the homosexual community to the forefront, one cannot dismiss the negative and traumatic repercussions that this disease has brought upon its community. The AIDS epidemic has forced the State and homosexual organizations to form a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship. Although it appears at first glance that many governments report a dedication to the funding of AIDS research and homosexual organizations that help its members deal with the disease, a closer examination reveals quite a different story. In Busscher's (1977) article we see that the relationship between the State and homosexual organizations is not

always an easy, cooperative one. Quite often there exists a conflict between the State and homosexual organizations concerning the selection of scientific researchers that work on inquiries dealing with the AIDS epidemic. It seems that researchers must fit both the acceptable criteria established by the homosexual organizations as well as the State. Aside from being academically qualified, researchers must be perceived as conducting legitimate studies yielding interpretations that are neither ambiguous nor discriminatory towards the homosexual community. According to Busscher (1977), researchers must acquire a status of dual legitimacy if they are to retain the sympathy and cooperation of homosexual organizations as well as retain funding from the State. The former task is not always easily managed by researchers and often results in conflict. There seems to be a general sentiment within the homosexual community that researchers, inquiring on the relationship between homosexuality and the aids epidemic, often use homosexual organizations as information banks and are insensitive to their needs and plight. It appears, according to Busscher that the mere fact that the State has control over funding concerning AIDS research, that homosexual organizations and its members are often left in vulnerable positions.

Stephen Schecter (1992) in an article entitled *L'identité, le sexe et le soi à l'ère du sida*, expresses similar concerns about the rather fragile position of homosexual individuals in western societies since the appearance of the AIDS epidemic. Schecter's article reminds us that although contemporary societies seem to be more accepting of the visibility of a homosexual lifestyle, the emergence of the AIDS epidemic seems to have confirmed that there still exists a very strong sentiment within society that homosexuals

are individuals with atypical, unacceptable sexual practices. Schecter exemplifies the former point by reminding his readers of the delayed reaction of modern governments around the world in their implementation of prevention programs, research, and healthcare for the homosexual community. Furthermore, Schecter invites his readers not to forget the acts of violence and discrimination reported against AIDS afflicted individuals and more specifically those who are homosexual. Perhaps the most interesting, and by far the most important point that is made in Schecter's article, is that the AIDS epidemic must not be used to encourage homosexuals 'back into the closet.' According to Schecter, militant homosexual organizations must continue to make efforts to dissipate the myth that all homosexuals have AIDS or are HIV positive.

Brigitte Lhomond (1997) also provides some interesting reflections concerning the AIDS epidemic and the homosexual community. In her article, *Le sens de la mesure. Le nombre d'homosexuel/les dans les enquêtes sur les comportements sexuels et le statut de groupe minoritaire*, Lhomond questions the political reasons behind research aimed at gathering data that will produce prevalence estimates of the number of homosexuals in a given society. Lhomond suggests that there are definite dangers associated with quantitative types of survey research by pointing out that the results of such inquiries may negatively influence the actions of those who hold political power. According to Lhomond, the question of the number of homosexuals in society can lead to acts of increased discrimination against homosexuals and even greater obstacles on a legislative level. She demonstrates the former point by exposing the discriminating practices of researchers that use prevalence estimates of the number of homosexuals to project the

number of AIDS or HIV afflicted individuals. Perhaps the most important point in

Lhomond's article is that the question of prevalence is definitely a factor that will either

eliminate or encourage discrimination against homosexuals. Of course, an increased

proportion of homosexuals may prompt legislators to recognize certain rights for the

community such as the legalization of homosexual marriages and the adoption of

children, but a small proportion would necessarily translate in the denial of such rights.

> *Dans cette perspective, la fin de la discrimination et l'obtention de*
> *droits égaux seraient dépendants de l'importance numérique du*
> *groupe considéré, perspective moralement contestable, politiquement*
> *discutable, mais pratiquement realistique (Lhomand, 1992, p. 66).*

Perhaps the concerns expressed in Brigitte Lhomond's (1992) article are best

summed up in the following: "*Clinton se bougera pour 10% de la population, mais pas*

pour 1%." Julien and Chartrand's (1997) study is an excellent example of the dangers

that weak estimates of prevalence rates within a homosexual population can bring about.

They conclude that very little research dealing with homosexual couples and families is

conducted and published as a result of relatively low prevalence rates. As a result, from a

legislative perspective the ensuing issues may not even reach their "radar screen."

> *Ainsi, dans leur recension de 8000 articles sur la famille publié entre*
> *1980 et 1993 dans les meilleures revues scientifiques américaine*
> *s'intéressant à la recherche sur la famille (neuf au total), Allen et Demo*
> *(1995) montrent que moins de 1% des recherches traitent explicitement*
> *de la famille homosexuelle (Julien & Chartrand, 1997, p.72).*

According to Julien and Chartrand, Allen and Demo's (1995) content analysis of

the scientific literature dealing with homosexual couples and families, shows a hesitation

to extend sexual minorities the full status of "family member."

Comparer aux autres type de famille émergent dans notre société contemporaine, la famille homosexuelle à cette caractéristique unique que son droit a l'existence est déniée par les systèmes politiques, légaux, religieux et autre institutions (Demo et Allen, 1996, p. 75).

On a summative note, Julien and Chartrand reveal that research focused upon homosexual couples and families remains both poorly funded and has minimal visibility. At best the, most visibility, apart from the AIDS epidemic, is reflected in the recent popularity of homosexual themes in Hollywood and European movie productions, in fashion magazines, publicity campaigns and North American prime time-television shows. Nevertheless, even this visibility has occurred in a constrained social space and always within a heterosexual social structure. Nadeau (1997) illustrates this point quite clearly. In her view, the homosexual community pays a heavy price in order to experience some level of visibility in a predominantly heterosexual society. Although it is true that the homosexual phenomenon is experiencing a great amount of visibility in the media, publicity campaigns, and the cinema industry, she questions the conditions under which such visibility is being negotiated.

Nadeau further suggests that those who hold public power to incorporate homosexuals within the heterosexual social structure are adopting very specific strategies. She provides the example of publicity campaigns that use strategies such as "gay window advertising" in order to attract both a gay and heterosexual clientèle. While advertising strategies may at first glance emit the message that gay is beautiful, a closer examination reveals that it is only beautiful because it's not so different from that of a heterosexual. The former, according to Nadeau, is quite dangerous for the homosexual

community since it denies homosexuals the right to exist as a culturally diversified and distinct community. Furthermore, she makes the important point that such representations of homosexuals make it easier for those who hold public power to incorporate homosexuals into a heterosexual structure and model that encourages traditional heterosexual values. Hence, although magazines such as *Vanity Fair, Newsweek, Femme and Vogues* (since 1992) have featured images and stories about famous lesbians, Nadeau explains that this has always been done in such a way as to reinforce a traditional heterosexual lifestyle. Lesbian women are depicted as sexy, successful, family oriented and motherly. Nadeau reminds us that such a representation of the lesbian woman has been referred to as the "lesbian chic" (1993) and has contributed to an indifferent representation of homosexuality.

While the media in its various forms has definitely painted a rather indifferent representation of homosexuality, Nadeau demonstrates that the movie industry has also done the same. Through the analysis of two movies *Gazon Maudit* (Josiane Balasko, 1995, France) and *When the Night is Falling* (Rozema, 1995, Canada), she demonstrates that the representation of female homosexuality is depicted in such a way as to reinforce traditional heterosexual values. According to Nadeau, although the movie *Gazon Maudit* features female homosexuality, the main story line of the movie deals with the reproduction of the traditional nuclear family. As for the movie *When the Night is Falling*, she notes that the movie is conveniently situated within the context of a magical dream world where time, culture and social context do not seem to be a predominant factor. Aside from being a rather unrealistic representation of female homosexuality,

Nadeau intelligently remarks that two very beautiful, female actresses were selected to play the main roles in order not to shock audiences.

It seems, according to the evidence provided within this chapter, that the relationship between public space, negotiation and regulation is not dissociable to a culture that places great importance on the visible. The public discourses that are being held within contemporary societies are those that reinforce a social ordering that is already existent and one that represents a traditional heterosexual lifestyle. The homosexual community appears to be a captive population targeted by strategies that aim for their incorporation in an essentially heterosexual structure. Hence, despite the observable "progress" that the homosexual movement has experienced at the end of the 20th century the repression of the homosexual lifestyle remains. The contemporary era has definitely altered the forms that the repression of the homosexual lifestyle has taken on but has most definitely not eliminated it. The debate on whether things have changed for the better for the homosexual community can be as never ending as the debate between essentialist and constructivist theorists who argue about whether homosexuality is an innate or socially constructed phenomenon. Nevertheless, one thing remains certain; we have an interest in investigating the social process that allows for the construction and maintenance of debates and structural ambiguities, which in turn allow forms of repression to exist.

CHAPTER 2

Investigating Processes for the Management of Sexuality: Foucaultian Perspectives

2.1 Introduction

Questions concerning the existence and repression of the homosexual lifestyle still need to be addressed. What accounts for the repression of homosexuality in western societies and how are these new forms of repression being managed? In an attempt to answer these questions, an examination of Foucault's perspectives is situated in his conceptualization of sexuality, the pertinence of his arguments are presented, and the implications for the contemporary family are discussed. In order to best realize the answers to these questions, an examination of Foucault's historical perspectives on sexuality is initially presented, its basic tenets are provided (e.g., his conceptualization of homosexuality as deviance, its relationship to the role of marriage, and the role of knowledge and discourse), and his notion of governmentality as a form of management of sexuality is applied to the newly changing pluralistic forms of the family.

2.2 Foucault's conceptualization of sexuality: Binary learning and homosexuality

Foucault, in his many publications, was preoccupied with societal views toward sexuality. While his writings appeared to be strongly influenced by his contemporary times (much of his writing was done in the 1970's and early 1980's) and the context in which he lived (France), his conceptualizations of sexuality represents an important framework for understanding the processes by which society views individual sexuality.

In an interview conducted before Foucault's death, *Sexual Choice, Sexual Act: Foucault and Homosexuality*, James O'Higgens (1982/1983) reported that Foucault viewed the question of sexuality and reflected upon a social need to organize things by dividing the world into two domains; one containing all that is sacred, and the other all that is profane. Foucault's vision of sexuality reminds us "there is nothing left with which to characterize heterosexuality (the sacred) in relation to homosexuality (the profane), when categorically opposed, except their heterogeneity" (Jay, 1991, p. 91). Their heterogeneity is made to be sufficient in the characterization of this classification of sexuality in that it is absolute. This is not surprising, since situating heterosexuality at disparate poles of opposition without questioning the distance that separates them can only lead to absolutism, the absence of discourse, and last but not least, the articulation of a logical model.

Foucault's (1984b) vision of sexuality or sexual preference can be seen as an attempt to dramatize and magnify the gap between the sharp divisions that society makes between heterosexuality and homosexuality, family and homosexuals, children and homosexuals, between A and Not-A. Foucault's writings express the desire to expose the discriminating practices that emerge and go on within society's heterosexual binary social structure.

Laura Benkov (1994) espouses a vision of sexuality that is very similar to Foucault's, "...I grasped how wide the gulf is separating true lesbian and gay experiences and what many well-meaning people believe about homosexuals. I also learned how

difficult and yet crucial it is to speak across the gulf" (Benkov, 1994, p. 11). A process of deconstruction must be undertaken and the former must begin at the most basic of levels. The present sexual structure is implicitly binary, pervaded with sexual political values and related to the patriarchal differentiation of the sexes (Grosz, 1991).

The nuclear family harmonizes well within such a structure because it operates on similar if not the same principles but on a smaller scale. The nuclear family (that is, in itself, a heterosexual binary model) is a subset of the binary social structure. In contrast, an alternative type of family, consisting of a homosexual couple and a child is problematic within such a structure.

While the traditional family markets gender inequality as a natural part of life or a God given reality, the homosexual lifestyle challenges the organization or the order within which the nuclear family operates and reproduces itself. Gay men and women re-conceptualize the order that society imposes, redefining themselves and their sense of family, and in so doing tear apart the automatic pairing of heterosexuality and parenthood (Benkov, 1994). The suggestion that homophobia is interwoven with the idealization of the nuclear family comes as no surprise.

If we look at North American culture, social order and the organization of such an order, it depends heavily upon relationships of a binary nature. The nuclear family, the most sacred and most fundamental of social institutions, is a perfect illustration of this. The traditional family structure is a powerful organization because as mentioned

previously it is *a general ideology* and an agent of transmission of *specific ideologies.* Amongst the vast array of ideologies that the nuclear family transmits, one in particular; that of sex roles or sex typing can be illustrative of such ideological beliefs.

The concept of sex roles or sex typing is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the importance of the role of the family in the acquisition of gender identity. Gender identity does not refer to the biological sex of an individual, although the two are traditionally associated. Sexual identity refers to the anatomical differences between individuals, more specifically, genital differences. The acquisition of gender identity, on the other hand, refers to male and female distinctions in the social sense.

The acquisition of gender identity refers to the learning involved in being a male or a female. According to Hirsch (1996), the learning of sex roles, attitudes, interests and identification develop partly in response to parental training and cultural expectations, but more particularly as a result of gender roles in and outside of the family. Although it is only one of the ways gender identity is learned, direct training and modeling by parents represents a large part of the way sex roles are communicated and transmitted to children (see the works of Bandura and colleagues for a social modeling theoretical approach). The child, according to his or her biological sex, acquires gender characteristics either from associating with the same-sex parent or fear of alienation from the same-sex parent (for a psychoanalytic perspective see the work by Freud). Thus, the family remains a powerful agent of socialization that reinforces sex role definition. Individuals possessing male sex genitalia will be of masculine gender, thus logical, competitive, and initiative

taking; while females acquire roles that are feminine, intuitive, co-operative, and passive. Hence, the traditional family supports the reproduction of heterosexual norms and a heterosexual structure.

As individuals began to consider the possibility of children being reared by homosexual parents, the larger question remained; will the children grow up to be gay (Benkov, 1994)? Of course, many other questions also followed concerning the degree of masculinity or femininity present in children. Nevertheless, the question remained, would children of lesbian and gay parents be confused about their gender identity and are they unable to take on their proper social roles (Benkov, 1994)? Interestingly enough, a multitude of research has revealed that children raised in homosexual households were no more prone to confusion about their gender and sexual identity when raised in heterosexual households. Furthermore, Benkov makes an essential point stating that common sense argues "that the development of sexual orientation is not purely a matter of imitation of one's parents: the vast majority of lesbian and gay men have been raised by heterosexual parents" (Benkov, 1994, p. 62). In any case, although the studies conducted refuted theories that children raised by homosexuals were more prone to confusion concerning their gender identity, there remains something very disturbing about the continued social fear and perception that lesbians and gays will raise children that will turn out to be gay. Such a fear predisposes a belief that it would be wrong and undesirable for such behavior to occur. The notion that lesbian and gay parents are inadequate role models is implicitly suggested in the homosexual/family binary structure. At this point, it is interesting to note that the family plays a large part in the creation of

the masculine/feminine dichotomy. Furthermore, if one takes the latter mentioned line of reasoning one step further, we can readily see that the masculine/feminine dichotomy spills over into a series of dichotomies: heterosexual/homosexual, normal/abnormal, us/them; that together come to establish the reigning social order.

The problem with binary systems as an instrument of social order is that it is likely an instrument of social distinction and a system of categorization. To illustrate this point, let us look at the problem that binary structures as an instrument of social order causes in the "coming out" of gays in contemporary society. According to Foucault, the concept of "gayness" is symptomatic of a society whose social structure is essentially heterosexual.

The "coming out" of gays seems to violate all that is considered sacred in our values and has been perceived to be an example of deviant behavior. Homosexuality or rather the lifestyle that is associated with such a sexual orientation it would seem threatens the reproduction of the traditional nuclear family, the production of sex roles, the latter assures, and the strengthening and fortification of the heterosexual social structure. Despite the *observable progress* and acceptability of the homosexual lifestyle, we need to understand historically how homosexuality was constructed as the normative sexual preference, how it became perceived as deviant, and what processes account for its maintenance in contemporary society.

2.3 From binary to *right* and *wrong* sexuality: Homosexuality as deviance

Homosexuality as a form of deviant behavior is one construct which facilitates our understanding of how homosexuality has come to be managed in contemporary society. The notion of deviance is not meant to have a negative connotation but rather merely represents some behavior, which is atypical and not representative of the norm. Historically, heterosexual relationships were considered within the context of the need for procreation and reproduction. As a result, any alternative lifestyle (e.g., homosexuality) eventually came to be viewed as deviant and subsequently a heterosexual social order came to be established. Were homosexual practices a threat to the existing social structure? Can we not at this point detect the construction of the *right sexuality* for the *right heterosexual social structure?* And, what function does marriage serve in relationship to the heterosexual social structure?

In *The Care of The Self, The History of Sexuality, Volume 3*, Foucault (1984b) discusses the role and function of marriage as an institution and its rise in the management of deviant sexual behavior within Greek antiquity. Homosexuality was perceived to become deviant only after society assumed a heterosexual order. Foucault highlights the importance of this change in the ancient Greek social structure. This change set the foundation for a normative preference for heterosexuality and marriage that continues to exist in contemporary society. From this historical period, marriage continued to remain a sacred institution within western society. It was perceived to embody a dual relationship that was specific in its intensity and its strength. In actuality,

marriage came to be the basic unit according to Foucault in the establishment of a binary social order and the management of sexuality. Marriage was perceived as desirable and appropriate. A certain seriousness was attributed to a married man. Furthermore, marriage, as an institution, had a dual purpose, these being: procreation, and the eventual contribution to the general community. Marriage and more importantly, procreation, assured humanity's continued existence. According to Foucault, "marriage is one of those duties by which private existence acquires a value for all" (Foucault, 1988, p. 158). Its value is found in its utility for society as an instrument of order. It allows for the creation and formation of families, and families in turn, allow for the education of its members. Within this perspective, everything is neatly interrelated; marriage is a social obligation affecting political life, religion and family. As such, marriage becomes a way to subordinate our pleasures to noble principles allowing progress.

The institution of marriage represents a binary structure enabling males and females to assume specific roles. According to Foucault it is a domination/submission type of relationship, guaranteeing the reproduction of the masculine/feminine discourse. Marriage may be viewed as a convenient instrument at the hands of the state to sex-type individuals. Marriage also sanctifies the creation of families, which in turn create children who acquire their respective gender roles according to their biological sex. Hence, in a Foucaultian perspective, marriage can best be seen as a way of assuring the reproduction of "docile bodies;" individuals that are ready to assume a previously defined social role based upon a preexisting role that has already been socially defined from its biological origins. Women were recognized as forming a bond with men and thus assuring the

reproduction of a social order. The worth of a woman was perceived to lie in the reproduction process and maintenance of children. This social order was finally recognized and rewarded with a man's pledge of fidelity. The grounds of marriage as we still know it in present day patriarchal society had been set. The institution of marriage soon became crucial in the establishment of the social order. Atypical sexual practices, such as homosexual behaviors, soon took their place in the realm of silence. Homosexuality had no social worth and was seen as an illegitimate concept of pleasure. It had no finality since it did not lead to marriage and homosexuality had no effect upon maintaining the social order. Homosexual practices were soon to be seen as excessive and deviant behaviors with no ethical, social or moral value.

The goal of marriage was conceptualized to make man's sexual pleasures legitimate. Without the social construction of the institution of marriage, man's sexual desires or drives were perceived to be *evil*. The same way perhaps that knowledge about sex is evil without it being medicalized. In Freudian terminology, the *Id* required some control by the *Superego*. Perhaps marriage became a way to identify those individuals who comply with the social order. The institution of marriage as a mainstream social institution exposes those individuals who do not conform to this choice of life. The institution of marriage may be thought of as another form of confessional technology. Individuals who do not get married are constantly questioned as to the reasons why they are not seeking matrimony and are viewed by many as deviant within contemporary society. Is it because they have unethical sexual desires or hidden practices -

homosexuality? Foucault sees confession, especially the confession about one's sexuality, as a major component in the technologies of disciplines and control.

Nevertheless, homosexual desires began to be seen as deviant and dysfunctional behavior in society. Homosexuals had difficulty justifying the role of both partners in the relationship. If one man was active, by deductive reasoning this necessarily made the other passive or submissive. Passivity for a man was not a valued trait. There was nothing about homosexual practices that was moderate. The term in itself as society's structure took a heterosexual shape and became synonymous with excess. No political relationship between two men could be legitimately established; the former being a problem. Between a man and a woman, the relation of the ruler to the ruled was not in contradiction to the male and female sex roles. Women were considered in antiquity as inferior and thus were to be ruled over. However, within homosexual relationships it was obvious that a contradiction operated. How can a man rule directly over another man, especially sexually? There was no room for a confusion of roles in a society that was trying to establish some sort of social order.

It was obvious that something had to change as related to the sexual practices of men. On a recapitulating note, one could say that classical antiquity's moral reflection concerning pleasure was not aimed towards a categorization of acts, but rather towards what Foucault calls a "stylization of attitudes and aesthetics of existence" (Foucault, 1984b, p. 92). The virtue of anything depended on it being structured, ordered and part of a bigger order that in turn made it good. Hence, it would follow that sexual intercourse

could only find its juridical-moral legitimacy in marriage and its reproductive finality. As for same-sex relationships, they were mostly seen as experiences rather than "homosexual acts," as we understand the former term today.

The ancient Greeks did not perceive the love for one's same sex and the love for the opposite sex as diametrically opposed to one another or radically different types of sexual behavior. The dividing line between men was what separated moderate self-possessed men from those given to pleasure. Homosexual practices came to be conceptualized as un-moderated behavior and somewhat unethical. Therefore, the homosexual practices of the Greeks can be viewed only in terms of experiences and not as a lifestyle as we know it today. Perhaps it would be more accurate to see the practice of homosexuality as a product of bisexual thinking. Their sexual practices did not belong to a structure but rather to a way of thinking. It is for the former mentioned reason that it was possible to desire both a man and a woman. It was just a question of appetite, not a question of sexual preference. "To desire a man or a woman was simply the appetite that nature had implanted in man's heart for a "beautiful" human being, whatever their sex might be" (Foucault, 1984b, p. 188).

As previously echoed, the reasons that homosexual acts gradually came to be seen as inappropriate are essentially linked to questions having to do with the polar opposition of activity and passivity. It was unacceptable for a man to take on the role of the passive partner in a sexual relationship. Therefore, it is more than obvious that in a same-sex relationship, one of the partners would be the object of criticism. There seemed to be

some ambiguity as to the role of at least one of the men in the sexual relation and the former drew considerable attention to what should or should not occur in that regard. Suddenly, the role of the body became the focus and there was a great deal of uncertainty that surrounded its use. Foucault states that it was found both "natural and at the same time beside nature that two men could be attracted to each other" (Foucault, 1984b, p. 221). It was difficult to perceive a man (a boy in this case) as an object of pleasure. However, in thinking such as the one that characterizes our present-day society, the relationship between two individuals of the same sex is questioned from the standpoint of the subject of desire and not from the object of pleasure as in the Greek antiquity. The sexual ethics of the Greeks, from which our own sexuality is partly derived, rests on a system of inequalities and constraints. The role of the man as the active partner and the woman as the passive one took on greater importance as society's structure became more defined.

Nevertheless, although there are some important differences between the conceptualization of sexuality in ancient Greek society and our contemporary views, the role of marriage as a social institution has changed little. While there are an increasing number of individuals who are electing to delay the age at which they marry, and some have elected to be single parents, the role, desirability and function of marriage as a social institution has remained intact. Within contemporary society, homosexuality has become an acceptable alternative lifestyle and is no longer perceived to be deviant. Nevertheless, there still remains a repressive ordering within society, with heterosexuality being the preferred lifestyle. How then is homosexuality managed within contemporary

society? To answer this question, an analysis of Foucault's perspective of governmentality is provided.

2.4 Conceptualization of Governmentality

A *Governmentality* (Foucault, 1984b) perspective may be a plausible form of analysis and conceptual tool for investigating the social process that permits repression of homosexuality to exist and be managed in contemporary society. The term governmentality is used in its Foucaultian sense and refers to "an analytical focus upon the formulation and functioning of rationalized and self-conscious strategies that seek to achieve objectives or avert dangers by acting in a calculated manner upon the individual and the collective conduct of persons" (Rose & Valerde, 1998, p. 544). Governmentality is defined through the concepts of *knowledge* and *discourse* and proposed as a potential sociological perspective for the analysis of sexual repression in present western societies. Sexuality can be explored as a possible mode of government and binary system yielding to the production of a dynamic social process allowing for the existence and management of the social repression of homosexuality.

In an attempt to explain how forms of control are managed and exist within contemporary society, Foucault first drew our attention towards a governmentality perspective that sketched a certain way of thinking and acting embodied in all those attempts to know and govern wealth, health, and happiness of populations. With the term *governmentality*, Foucault wished to define a domain in which the implementation of political rationalities is embodied and carried out by different forms of technologies and

power networks. According to Foucault, governmentality consists of "the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self" (Gillian, 1988). His perspective on how control is exercised over individuals and how a social order is constructed or made possible is clearly illustrated by an in-depth look at discourse, knowledge and ethical problems and how each of these social constructs plays an instrumental role in the generation of a social process that appears both natural and self-evident.

Inspired by Foucault's writings, Rose and Miller (1992) conceptualized the problem of government as "the historically constructed matrix within which are articulated all those dreams, schemes, strategies and maneuvers of authorities that seek to shape the beliefs, and conduct of others in desired directions by acting upon their will, their circumstances or their environment" (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 175). Similar to Foucault's conception of how social order is achieved, Rose and Miller delineate three areas of importance in their investigation of western forms of governmental process. These three areas include knowledge (a domain of cognition, calculation, experimentation and evaluation which they view as a central concept in the understanding of contemporary forms of government); political rationalities (the discursive field in which the exercise of power is conceptualized and within which moral justifications are articulated to justify the exercise of power), and governmental technologies (defined as the "complex of mundane programs, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions") (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 177).

An analysis of the power-knowledge relation is critical in understanding Foucault's conception of power. Foucault claims that through the exercising of power, knowledge is produced and that, conversely, knowledge constantly induces the effects of power (Racevskis, 1988, p. 97). Foucault further contends that recognition of specific types of knowledge brings about power, and power in turn justifies the genesis of the knowledge. Henceforth, it is a strong and reciprocal relationship between power and knowledge that allows discourse to consume individuals and make them docile. Foucault's analysis of sexuality clearly puts into evidence the power/knowledge relationship operating in Western societies. He explains that sexuality, or rather the discourse on sexuality, is "not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest *instrumentality;* useful for the greatest number of *maneuvers* and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (Foucault, 1976, p. 103). Nevertheless, however strong, no strategy is perfect. There is no single, universally valid, all-encompassing strategy that uniformly bears upon all the manifestations of sexuality. For example, the idea that there have been repeated attempts, by various means, to reduce all of sex to its reproductive function, its heterosexual and adult form, and its matrimonial legitimacy, fails to take into account the objectives employed in different sexual policies concerned with both sexes, the different age groups and social classes (Foucault, 1976).

According to Foucault, sexuality is a very real historical formation that gave rise to a desire for "sex." It is for this reason that we must not be tempted to believe that by

agreeing to have sex that we are saying no to power (Foucault, 1976). On the contrary,

Foucault suggests we are falling in the trap that was established and waiting. At this

point, Foucault suggests a rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of

sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures" (Foucault, 1976, p. 157).

Hence, the crucial determinants functioning within the discourses concerning sexuality

should be traced back to the context(s) and/or circumstances involved in the production

of power/knowledge relations. The economic changes of the 18th century forced the

effects of power to seek more subtle strategies for its diffusion; as such, sexuality seemed

to be the strategy *par excellence* because it "constituted in Western societies, an

experience which caused individuals to recognize themselves as subjects of a "sexuality"

which was accessible to very diverse fields of knowledge and linked to a system of rules

and constraints" (Foucault, 1976, p. 4). Having discussed the perspective of

governmentality and the management of sexuality, it is important to consider how

governmentality operates towards the management of homosexuality in western societies.

2.5 Knowledge and discourse

It is necessary to examine more closely how the concepts of knowledge and

political discourse interact to form a social process that incorporates sexuality as a way of

governing. To better understand this, the concept of knowledge is defined as the domain

in which persons, theories, projects, experiments and techniques come together to

influence the lives of individuals through the production of beliefs and/or conceptions of

what is good, healthy, normal, virtuous, efficient, or profitable. We are quick to see that

the repression of homosexuality and the homosexual lifestyle in western societies is the

product of a binary social structure. The knowledge that is produced and transmitted within such a structure is one that reinforces traditional ideas and values of family, religion, education, and marriage and one that is presented in the form of a dichotomous or binary discourse (e.g., good/bad, moral/immoral, normal/abnormal, heterosexual/homosexual, etc.).

The key element to retain from the three volumes of *History of Sexuality* centers upon the problematization of sexuality throughout time and its relationship to the self. Foucault reminds us that we have been conditioned to think of our sexuality in specific ways and that we function in set patterns. He provides the evidence for such a claim and denounces the popular conception that truth and knowledge is directly opposed to power. Foucault suggests that true freedom of thought, which initiates and sustains critique, is the contestation of the differences that transgress the limits that destroy the illusion of identity in sameness (Gillian, 1988).

Within *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault suggests important questions pertaining to the origins and normativeness of truth and the formers link to discursive practices, techniques of power, and the relationships existing between knowledge and power, pleasure and power, and the inter-relationship between knowledge, pleasure and power. Foucault shows how pleasure is disproportionate to itself and how attempts to try to regulate it will ultimately always result in a conflict with the innate sensibilities of the individual. He writes that the only practical solution to the excess of pleasure has been found to be moderation. Nevertheless, he points out that even moderation cannot

prescribe rules. Moderation can only exist in contrast to excess. The anti-subject is only present because the subject already exists. The only real truth is that discourses are the product of thought and that thought has the ability to create, construct and shape our lives. The former being the case, we are left with the inescapable realization that sexuality, as we know it today has been constructed through discourse for practical reasons. These reasons are linked to the characteristics of our present social structure. Sexuality as a notion has been constructed through discourse to regulate sexual practices and ultimately its effects on society.

Greek antiquity has provided additional proof that the concept of sexuality came to the forefront because some forms of sexual practices, such as homosexuality, became inappropriate and useless in a meaning-obsessed society. One could no longer do or be, simply for the pleasure of it. Individuals had to have justification for their pleasures and legitimize them as well; the former being crucial if they were to see themselves as ethical human beings. Once again, we detect the binary discourses of the good/evil, sacred/profane, and right/wrong. It seems that while man's struggle has taken different forms, it has essentially remained the same. At this point, one is led to believe that what Foucault is attempting to illustrate is that history has a way of repeating itself through discourse.

Foucault's theoretical underpinnings have direct implications toward explaining the social system of the family. Integrating sexuality within the context of the contemporary family has implications for our conceptualization and acceptance of

alternative lifestyles. The next chapter shall demonstrate through an analysis of contemporary discourse around the family some of the particular mechanisms of the governmentality of homosexuality in contemporary society.

CHAPTER 3

The Governmentality of Homosexuality in Contemporary

Society: The Role of the Family

3.1 Introduction

Although alternative types of families, such as homosexual families, exist within contemporary societies there are no current concerted efforts being made to change or redefine the conception of family on a social level. The knowledge and belief that family is a heterosexual structure remains intact regardless of the social manifestations of homosexual families. Apart from the apparent visibility and tolerance that homosexuality has recently experienced in the media, political arena, and on a social level, there are no real efforts being produced to generate a type of knowledge that will change the social process that allows repression of homosexuality to exist and to be managed. For example, educational programs in schools very rarely include information aimed at sensitizing children that alternative types of family structures such as homosexual families even exist. The only family model and values being reinforced in educational materials and curricula is one that is traditional and heterosexual in nature. Even though the proliferation of single-parent households exist resulting from divorce and artificial insemination, the underlying family structure still remains heterosexual in nature.

In this chapter, the concepts of power, knowledge, moral regulation and political discourse are used to analyze the language of family, its pluralistic form, and how that serves to govern and manage homosexuality in contemporary society.

3.2 Contemporary Expressions of Family

3.2.1 The power of the family

An essential component in the process of underlying the social structure of the family is predicated upon understanding how the language of the family serves to govern homosexuality. The language employed to describe or represent what *family* means should not be under-estimated since language is not merely "contemplative or justificatory, it is performative" (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 177). Language has become the instrument by which knowledge is made thinkable. Thus, if a *traditional* family is conceptualized and defined by governmental, educational and religious institutions as a heterosexual social structure, comprised of both a man and woman, it is not surprising that homosexual families would be found to be unethical or immoral and consequently discriminated against in society. In short, the knowledge that defines family is presented and articulated in a language that employs ethical/moral terms. In so doing, those holding the power "attempt to normalize," or get accepted as "natural," actions and positions which are, in fact, based on the premises that are value oriented, ideologically based, and historically relative" (Matthews, 1996, p. 507). Accordingly, Corrigan and Sayer (1985) contend this normalizing process may be termed as moral regulation:

> A project of normalizing , rendering natural, taken for granted, in a word "obvious" what are, in fact, ontological and epistemological premises of a particular and historical form of social order. Moral regulation is coextensive with state formation, and state forms are always animated and legitimated by a particular moral ethos (Matthews, 1996, p. 507).

This example illustrates how knowledge, morality, and language are strongly linked and come together to form what may be termed - "political discourse," a notion

previously alluded to and referred to by Rose and Miller as "the domain for the formulation and justification of idealized schemata for representing reality, analyzing it and rectifying it" (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 178). Political discourse becomes the domain in which knowledge, morality, and language come together to define our social order. It is the arena in which social phenomena is represented or depicted in dichotomous categories of good/bad, sacred/profane, normal/abnormal, and heterosexual/homosexual. Perhaps one may conclude that political discourse is the social space in which the activity of government is both justified and given a legitimate character, where a dialogue between the state and the citizen is established, and where different social phenomena is problematized.

The notion of political discourse is thus crucial to the understanding of how the visibility and the expression of social phenomena (e.g. homosexuality) occurs more freely in western societies but yet still remains repressed. The notion of political discourse exposes the relation between the "government of the self by the self" and different government agencies (Dean, 1994) and brings to light the process of governmentality that makes the establishment of social order possible through the problematization of sexuality.

Although many social institutions may use sexuality to achieve the activity or goals of government, the manner in which the institution of family relates to sexuality needs to be articulated. A brief overview of the contemporary discourse of the family in western society shows how sexuality is used as an instrument of government. In

examining this process, the phenomenon of homosexuality will be shown to be repressed and managed within the binary social structure of western societies.

In his book *La police des families,* Jacques Donzelot (1997) illustrates the importance and power of the family as both a seemingly natural and social construction at the disposition of the government. Its political nature, since it is *la plus petite organization politique possible* (Donzelot, 1997, p. 51), makes it an interesting and ideal instrument of government. The traditional type of family is a phenomenal social construction because it possesses the dual function of governing individuals and that of being the agent by which government is made possible in a given society.

Families are not naturally occurring, isolated, autonomous units. In Benkov's terms families are "socially constructed arrangements embedded in and formed by the power relations of the surrounding culture" (Benkov, 1994, p. 25). In light of what has been said, it is clear that the nuclear family most definitely has not only an interesting but instrumental role in the establishment and maintenance of the social structure and order.

Similar to Donzelot's (1997) analysis of the moralization of the working class, a homosexual alternative form of family can be considered within the dominant social structure since homosexuality and its concomitant lifestyle do not encourage the reproduction of the species. The justification of same-sex partners destroys the *logical,* biological model that has traditionally operated within society for generations and which has situated men and women at opposite poles.

It seems that assigned sex roles within the family, as viewed by the majority of individuals, cannot exist without the repression of the minority, homosexuality. Gay people, gay relationships, gay parents and gay liberation serve to threaten the ingrained dominance/submission roles underlying the nuclear family. The homosexual reality threatens to deconstruct the binary polarization of the sexes and their respective sex roles within the traditional family and society. Furthermore, the phenomenon of homosexuality forces society to "rethink its presuppositions regarding sex roles, sexuality, and the notion of family" (Kritzman, 1990, p. 287). Accordingly, Foucault posits that sexual behavior does not find its origin in desires that derive from natural instincts, or of permissive or restrictive laws that dictate conduct that is right and wrong. Rather, sexual behavior, according to Foucault is more encompassing. It involves cognition of one's acts, a state of mental awareness that gives such behavior a "real character." Thus, sexual behavior within the context of the family is an experience that an individual recognizes as real because it has a certain value. What is important and necessary to note is the emphasis that Foucault places on sexual behavior being an "experience." He does not qualify this experience as either heterosexual or homosexual, the orientation of one's experience being quite secondary. Rather, if one were to distinguish between a homosexual or heterosexual experience, the former would be for purely descriptive purposes.

The value of a homosexual as well as a heterosexual experience remains intrinsically the same. Although Foucault believes that sexuality is an individual experience whether it be of homosexual or heterosexual nature, the homosexual

experience or rather homosexual consciousness that comes with such an act certainly goes beyond one's individual experience in that "it includes an awareness of being a member of a particular group"(Kritzman, 1990, p. 288). Nevertheless, this conceptualization can be anchored within family. A homosexual lifestyle involves the aspect of collective consciousness similar to any other minority group that is striving to fight against oppression and achieve legitimate freedom. Although a collective consciousness exists within the gay or homosexual community and the political model seems to encourage the formation of class-consciousness, Foucault suggests that the present economic and social models precludes homosexuals forming a distinct social class. The formation of a social class would play a major role in the deconstruction of the binary polarization of the sexes and family and subsequently their respective perceived sex roles within society. A homosexual class threatens heterosexual behavior, the backbone of patriarchy. The presence and the reality of its presence would break the silence that would bring about both personal and social changes. Foucault suggests that homosexuals should have the freedom of sexual choice as paramount on their political agenda. He believes that one should be intransigent when speaking of the freedom of sexual choice and an individual's freedom to express their beliefs.

Homosexuals, even within the context of family, must not be seen as *deviants* who are given the liberty to practice in peace (Kritzman, 1990, p. 290). Of course social tolerance is a good place to begin concerning sexual choice but it should definitely not stop there. Social legislation must also play a large role if society's conceptual scheme is to be rethought. Another essential issue that should be of concern evolves around the

place that sexual choice; sexual behavior and the subsequent effects of sexual relations between people could have with regard to the individual. Foucault provides the example of the legal status of same-sex partners. The former is not only an interesting issue but also a crucial one if progress is to be made concerning the recognition of same-sex partners within the legal and social framework. Homosexuals are a reality and so is their lifestyle. Lesbians and gay men continue to create families and in doing so are forcing the system of constraints in which western societies function to be reconceptualized.

3.2.2 **Constraint and freedom**

One may ask if Foucault's views on the role that sexual preference plays in our society suggests the desirability of a culture without restraint? According to Foucault, a culture without restraint is neither realistic nor is it a necessary condition in the negotiation of freedom of sexual choice. What is important to examine, says Foucault, is whether "the system of constraints in which a society functions leaves individuals the liberty to transform the system." If the discourse is non-existent, then the resulting system becomes absolute in nature, and consequently potentially very dangerous. The system of constraints becomes potentially dangerous in that it may become intolerable to those segments of society who are directly affected but at the same time are incapable of modifying it. Foucault suggests that the former occurs when a system of constraints becomes intangible resulting from it being considered a moral and religious imperative or a consequence of science.

A further danger arising from a system of constraints, which is considered a moral and religious imperative, focuses upon the racist and biased attitudes that such a system encourages and nurtures. For example, if our social institutions that shape our thoughts, which ultimately shape society, only encourage a heterosexual lifestyle and condemn all others, homosexuals will always antagonize heterosexuals. Foucault contends that it is not the homosexuality or sex act in itself that bothers heterosexuals, but rather the gay lifestyles in which homosexuals participate.

Having situated homosexuals at the opposite end of the continuum, heterosexuals necessarily view gay relationships as distinctly different from straight relationships. According to Foucault, there seems to exist a fear that gays will develop intense relationships that do not conform to the ideas of relationships commonly held and advocated by heterosexuals. The former results from a lack of discourse between heterosexuality and homosexuality; the two being presented, via our social institutions, as either-or categories, the sacred and the profane. As explained by Durkheim, it is as if there "seems to be a break in continuity ... since we picture a sort of logical chasm between the two, the mind irresistibly refuses the two corresponding things to be confounded, or even too direct a contiguity would contradict too violently the dissociation of those ideas in the mind" (Jay, 1991, p. 93). Nevertheless, although our social institutions destroy the obvious discourse that resides in sexuality, the real world and its social actors remain visible proof that sexuality is not only a continuum biologically but also socially if the system of social constraints permit certain segments of society to express themselves freely.

Foucault sees the difficulties of expressions that atypical forms of sexuality encounter within the social arena; this being a product of the limitations of our knowledge and its pretence of systematic arrangements accompanied by the inescapable consequences of the existing system of morality. They produce the realization that distinctions between true and false have their inevitable counterparts in distinctions between good and evil, between virtue and vice (Racevskis, 1988). As such, Foucault believes that although our social institutions seem to be looking for *Truths;* that is, looking for what is right and what is wrong, good or bad, sacred or profane, the truth that such institutions look to define is ultimately political in nature (a form of knowledge which possesses the greatest instrumentality and tactical efficacy). He argues that the present social institutions invites us to look for truths by appealing to our souls, that is our sense of morality, in order to create docile bodies. The soul is the effect and instrument of political anatomy and the prison of the body.

From a Foucaultian perspective, the social repression of homosexuality or rather the expression of the latter can be seen as a form of subjection, in both a moral and physical sense. The former is better understood if it is seen as being carried out by means of a dual functioning of discourse which socializes bodies by making them amenable to the effects of a second purpose, which is the definition and organization of the restraints and coercions.

A contemporary example illustrates Foucault's point about the political nature of sexual preference and its association to the nuclear family. Amid the family values rhetoric of his 1992 presidential campaign, former President George Bush ushered in the past decade declaring that "homosexuals raising children is not normal (Benkov, 1994). During the same campaign for re-election, President George Bush said that "children should have the benefit of being born into a family with a mother and a father," thus citing the number and gender of parents as a pivotal aspect of optimal family life and implicitly privileging a biological connection between parents and children by the phrase "born into" (Benkov, 1994, p. 112). Bush's political discourse clearly sent the message that the traditional type of family is the ideal form of lifestyle; the former characterized by heterosexual procreative unions and legal sanction. His position concerning family and family life should be rejected as it is based entirely on structural characteristics, does not take into account any emotional ties, and reflects both a close-minded and out-dated definition of the construct of family.

The family is finding new expressions in contemporary western societies and efforts must be made to bridge the distance that obviously exists between the various forms of family lifestyles and the legal guidelines in which individuals are constrained. The legislative laws that govern our society often fail to consider and/or to rapidly respond to a changing society and its ever-changing social arrangements. It is necessary to rework its conceptual scheme when dealing with complex issues.

Lesbian and gay parenting represents an excellent example of such a complex issue since it highlights the role of government in regulating the intimate relationships that together come to define family and family life. Lesbians and gays are creating families that do not conform to the legal parameters of the family. Hence, there is conflict between certain individuals' definition of family and the State's definition. However, beyond such conflicts, the realm of family creation is fascinating because lesbians and gay men are inventing new family structures. These new family forms are transforming mainstream culture by questioning the limits and constraints that society sets in its definition of family thus modifying and enhancing the existing cultural context. As interesting and innovative as alternative family forms resulting from homosexual unions might sound, there is a negative side to our present culture that makes life difficult for homosexuals who express their desire to create families. Many of these difficulties area a result of misconceptions and false beliefs concerning homosexual's ability to parent.

3.3 Homosexual parents, heterosexual socialization

To truly understand the underlying reasons why our society has such a negative perception of lesbian and gay parenting, we must first look at understanding homophobia. We must recognize that homophobia is "a complex weave of anxious preoccupations with sexual categories and tendencies to project malice and violence onto marginalized groups" (Benkov, 1994, p. 64). Homophobia is often a result of the inherent beliefs in various myths that are attributed to individuals with a homosexual orientation. One such example is the belief that homosexuals are prone to be child molesters. Regardless of the fact that the majority of pedophiles are heterosexual men, homophobic individuals remain

ignorant and in denial to such facts. Another common misperception that persists amongst homophobic individuals is the belief that children reared by homosexual parents will be confused about their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity. This again is an inaccurate assumption, as homosexual unions do not mimic the role dynamic that is typical in heterosexual couples (husband/wife, man/woman). In short, homophobic individuals fervently believe that lesbians and gay men take on roles that are the opposite of their biological sex. Given their inaccurate understanding of the reality of homosexual life, it is not surprising that homosexuals are viewed negatively. Society, as a whole, appears fearful to acknowledge that homosexuals are really not significantly different from heterosexuals except that they express a different sexual preference. One plausible reason why such a fear exists is that by admitting that there are no real differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals, a redefinition of the conceptual framework of family would be required.

The capacity to raise children has traditionally been associated exclusively with individuals practicing a heterosexual orientation; the possibility that homosexuals can do the same has never been seriously considered. The notion that men can be primary nurturing parental figures is almost ridiculed in society. Benkov notes "many men seeking to become fathers and perhaps raise children without significant female input, feel out of place simply by virtue of their gender" (Benkov, 1994, p. 110). Single, straight and lesbian women who become or seek to become parents also experience similar difficulties.

Society has been slow to recognize or grant homosexual couples parental status. In the case where a lesbian has become impregnated through artificial insemination, she is readily recognized as the child's biological mother but her partner is not perceived as having a legitimate parental role. Even donor insemination practices operate in such a way as to reproduce or rather replicate as much as possible the nuclear (heterosexual) family.. Donor insemination perfectly illustrates the point that there is a distinction to be made between genetic and social parental roles both in the cases of homosexual as well as heterosexual couples. Men whose wives have been artificially inseminated with donor semen take on the *social role* of parenthood as much as lesbian women whose partner has been inseminated. Although the latter mentioned point is a reality, somehow there seems to be the social distortion that the heterosexual couple that has used the practice of donor insemination is a 'real family.' Yet, the homosexual couple having used the identical practice is not recognized as a real family. The former is rather alarming because the legal parameters that have developed within society regarding donor insemination do not reflect the needs and lives of those concerned. The partners of homosexual men and women whose genetic material was not used in the procreation of a child are totally unprotected by law in the event of a break-up.

Children who live in same-sex households have no legal status that protects them from losing their non-biological parent if the parents separate or the biological parent dies (Dundas & Kaufman, 1995). In Canada, no legal precedents have been established for second (same-sex) parent adoptions. Canadian children who live within a two-parent same-sex relationship have no right to the estate of a non-biological parent who dies

without a will (Dundas & Kaufman, 1995). The picture is even bleaker when the biological father is absent or when the nature of the relationship (homosexual) is kept secret. Since the partner of a homosexual parent is never formally recognized as a second parent of the child they have raised with their partner, they have no legal rights to the child. At this point, it is perhaps appropriate to note and emphasize the importance of the definition of family. Tragic consequences result from conflicting definitions of the family, with children often being the victims. Because the existing laws do not recognize the partners of lesbian mothers and gay fathers, children who live in homosexual households often suffer an added burden when there is a break-up of the family.

A significant amount of research has been conducted concerning a child's attachment to a parent or "caregiver" and has revealed evidence that it is the quality of a child's attachment that influences the child's evolving adaptation to the environment. A child's attachment to a primary caregiver, biological parent or not, can have a powerful positive influence on the social, cognitive, and emotional development of that child. The loss of any important attachment figure can have a devastating effect upon a child (Dundas & Kaufman, 1995).

How significant is the biological bond between the child and the mother or the child and the father? Our culture seems to place significant importance to the biological mother and father. In the homosexual family dynamics, gender plays an important role in how lesbians and gay men experience being "real" or "not real" parents. Who the real (biological) mother or father is seems to be an important issue. Benkov explains that

western culture constructs women as primary parents and men as secondary parents. The problem then with homosexuality is that it challenges the way that men and women are socialized and perceived. Without the element of gender to regulate the roles that men and women take on when raising children, homosexual couples share the task of parenting as individuals; gender being no longer a question.

Lesbians and gay men have created a new model of parenting and in so doing have exposed our western cultures to define parenting roles through the lens of gender (Benkov, 1994). Thus, it is not homosexuality that threatens the family but rather gender as the defining mode of parenthood (mother/father). The political nature of gender and its natural appeal as a defining mode of parenthood produces a powerful form of knowledge; the knowledge that family is a heterosexual structure and that certain social advantages are exclusive to it since it is both a natural and ethical form of existence.

3.4 The homosexual family: Change and ambiguity

The family as a contested domain in our society is aptly illustrated by an event reported in the *Boston Phoenix* in 1992. Australian Toyota dealers ran an advertisement aimed at gay audiences, featuring two, approximately thirty year old men, a pair of Dalmatians, and a picnic basket beside a Toyota Seca Ultima. Its headline read: *The Family Car*. The text says: "When we talk to you about a family car we mean a car that is big enough for a couple and their friends to stretch out in comfort."

In response to this advertisement, the American Family Association, an archconservative group called for boycott of Toyota products and organized a letter writing campaign to pressure the company from any advertising that undermines "traditional family values" (Benkov, 1994). What then is the meaning of family? After reading the above passage, one cannot define nor derive the meaning of family. Nevertheless, using an exclusionary definition one can definitely conclude what family is not..gay. Examples like the Toyota car advertisement illustrate one of many sharp divisions within society; lesbians and gay men on one side, with heterosexuals, children and traditional families on the other.

The categorical opposition between homosexuality and family reveals much about how North American culture conceives homosexuality and family. The rigid view that places lesbians and gay men (homosexuals) at one end and children and families at the other, reflects both homophobia and the idealization of a specific type of family structure - the nuclear family - a married heterosexual couple and their biological offspring. Although there seems to be an obvious glorification of the nuclear family, daily life provides visible and tangible proof that it is only one type of structure amongst many. Even though the nuclear family seems to be the "prized model," it remains that this type of family structure represents a minority of American households (Benkov, 1994, p. 5). While mainstream culture reveals its power by suggesting that the nuclear or traditional family structure is the most natural, a growing number of individuals are electing alternative family forms (e.g., divorce, remarriage, and out-of-wedlock pregnancies are examples of single parent and/or blended stepfamily models).

Homosexuals with children from former heterosexual relationships also represent alternative types of family systems and clearly illustrate that becoming a parent does not necessarily entail a heterosexual family arrangement. Parenting may become a reality incorporating a wide range of family alternatives. Nevertheless, although the current reality suggests the expansion of the notion of family, the traditional family structure remains very powerful as an ideology and as an institution.

History has taught us that contemporary values, mores, and attitudes are constantly evolving. As a result, alternative familial lifestyles are emerging. These changes are a result of a number of internal and external factors for which individuals may have a limited impact. Rather larger issues on a societal level will accelerate this "evolutionary" process.

The language, knowledge and political discourses favoring the heterosexual lifestyle and influencing the family have compounded the ambiguity in our current expressions of family in contemporary society. This has served to constrain the family in heterosexual ways while simultaneously permitting greater freedom. Nevertheless, this ambiguity has in effect repressed the expression of homosexuality, or at the very minimum, kept it in a less morally desirable category. Thus, one may conclude that although contemporary western societies are allowing the *appearance* of homosexual families, their acceptance with as an alternative lifestyle is limited at best.

Conclusion

How Homosexuality is Managed in Contemporary Society

This thesis has sought to answer a number of important questions concerning the growing visibility and acceptance of homosexuality in western society. One of the primary objectives has been to move away from merely asking questions that seek to answer *why* there has been change in our acceptance of homosexuality as to *how* this process has occurred. The concomitant factors influencing this change were reviewed. More importantly, a historical review of the literature dealing with homosexuality in contemporary societies has suggested that the changes that have occurred since the 1970's are a result of the growing *visibility* that the homosexual community has gained through medical issues, the theatre, a proliferation of articles, and media attention.

It is important to remember that Foucault's context and framework was strongly influenced by the European contemporary community in which he lived. Writing in France, during the 1970's and early 1980's, there existed significantly less ambiguity concerning sexuality. It is also important to remember that Foucault was not an unbiased observer. His own homosexuality and subsequent death resulting from AIDS likely influenced his perceptions, fears and writing. Today, as a result of greater visibility and acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle, there is a widening acceptance of a more pluralistic role of the family. While one may question the utility of Foucault's historical perspective, his conceptualization of sexuality and his basic constructs of knowledge, political discourse, morality, and power continue to have significant implications for

contemporary society. Through these constructs, Foucault was able to demonstrate the role of governmentality in defining and managing sexuality and homosexuality within a heterosexual framework. Foucault's governmentality framework was applied to an analysis of the role of the family in the previous chapter. As a result, his writings remain pertinent and the applicable to contemporary society was exemplified.

To best understand the underlying processes involved in our conceptualization of homosexuality, the AIDS epidemic provides a good example. This epidemic has forced governmental agencies to not only recognize the existence of a homosexual community but to take a proactive role in the management of medical issues that affect this constituent group. The ambiguities related to this disease are exemplified through the social processes. Through social pressure, medical research, and political pressure, we can see how government agencies have had little choice but to give this matter significant attention due to its affects upon the larger population. One can only hypothesize as to whether or not governmental agencies would provide ample research and medical funds if AIDS only affected the homosexual community.

If we look at issues such as the legalization of homosexual marriages and the rights of homosexuals to adopt children and the reluctance of governmental agencies to accord homosexuals these rights, we can only conclude that external pressures and political discourse prompt legislative and public policies. At best, and consistent with Foucault's beliefs, homosexuality is merely being managed in contemporary society within a heterosexual structure. The movie industry has illustrated this point quite well.

The sociological literature reveals that although we now view many movies dealing with the subject of homosexuality, few depict individuals in sexually explicit scenes. As well, while these movies and television productions have homosexual characters the themes are basically heterosexual in nature. As a result of this ambiguity, in a quasi-virtual way, we no longer perceive that homosexuality is being repressed as it was in the past. While the alternative lifestyles of homosexuals remain visible, this should not be confused with widespread acceptance. Exposure and visibility may be clever strategies that merely appease the homosexual community. Lessons acquired from a historical and sociological perspective of sexuality revealed that the issues concerning homosexuals are being managed and changed only when they affect the prevailing social order.

How this process has occurred and influenced our understanding, acceptance and fostered our conceptualization of sexuality remains of paramount importance. In order to address this issue the concept of sexuality was viewed from a Foucaultian historical perspective. This paradigm allowed us to see how we came to understand sexuality in its current state. Foucault makes the important point that we must differentiate between sex as a pleasurable act, sexuality and lifestyle. Following Foucault, we sought to understand the importance of family structure in the ambiguous management of contemporary homosexuality. These would include the influence of governmentality and contemporary moral perspectives held by the individuals within a given society.

Foucault helps us conceptualize how we perceive morality and how we came to understand the issues of moderation and excess and how that is linked to the development of a social order. Homosexuality, according to Foucault, was seen as excessive behavior,

heterosexuality being seen as moderation, having an important functional aspect (e.g., procreation). Concomitant with homosexuality there is role confusion while with heterosexuality there remains little role confusion. Government structures designed to meet the ever-changing social, medical and psychological needs of constituents will continue to undoubtedly have a significant influence. Nevertheless, this is a constantly evolving process, which can be influenced by a number of external factors. The AIDS epidemic is a good example of how the homosexual community came to the forefront (although not in a positive vain) and in effect raised awareness about its community and alternative lifestyle. Once this awareness has been raised, from a historical perspective, society can no longer return to its former beliefs. In addition, the AIDS epidemic (which has often been linked to the homosexual community but its problems and consequences has been much more widespread) has raised the level of discourse and knowledge not merely in terms in trying to find a cure for this disease but in its relationship to the homosexual community and what is perceived to be an alternative lifestyle.

Foucault's historical perspective from the process point of view depicts how we have gone from a singular to a pluralistic expression of sexuality. The implications for contemporary society and more importantly how it relates to the changing family have been espoused. This evolutionary process has permitted the members of the homosexual community to more freely express their sexuality, beliefs and to openly display and discuss their alternative lifestyle. For most of the gay community this lifestyle has precluded having children. However, a growing number have sought validation of their lifestyle (for example with respect to the sanctification of marriage between same-sex

individuals, the transfer of economic and social benefits) and others have sought the legal and moral right to adopt and rear children. This has been not without its major critics. Nevertheless, from a Foucaultian perspective the stimulation of discourse and acquired knowledge concerning the effects of children living with homosexual parents is part of this changing process. These changes will likely ultimately lead to its more widespread acceptance in contemporary society. Similar phenomenon has occurred with single parenting as a result of divorce, two-parent working families, and the widespread use of daycare.

The homosexual phenomenon, in particular in respect to child rearing, is an enormous social experiment for which we do not yet have any answers. While Benkov (1994) reports no negative consequences for children being reared by two same-sex parents, her results are tentative at best and are indicative of measurements based upon a small sample of individuals over a short time period. Similar to the differences found when examining the long-term versus short-term effects of divorce upon children, the social and psychological consequences for children being reared in homes in which there are same-sex partners over time may differ significantly. While a Foucaultian analysis would suggest this is the trend that we are heading, social scientists will need to monitor the effects upon the family closely.

In contemporary society with women being actively involved in the workplace the role definition is being diffused. In the past, women have assumed as their primary role that of child rearing but today they are more actively involved in their personal careers

and the work force. This necessitates a redefinition of family, structures and the roles of individuals within the family. Nevertheless, it can be argued that despite the fact that women are well integrated into the workforce, they still remain unequal to men within the family (e.g., studies have shown that they do most of the housework and childrearing). Within the workplace, in general, their salary differential is discernable. Yet, most young men and women would likely report that women are equal to men because the dominant discourse is one of equality and not paternalism as in the past. A similar example is found in our contemporary discourse of homosexual rights. While their exists a perception of equality, distinct differences are abundantly evident. It is likely that this discordance between perception and reality, using a cognitive dissonance model, will ultimately result in changes.

Given the emerging conceptualization of the family, this perspective was found to be a useful strategy in understanding the management of homosexuality within the context of the changing perceptions and construct of contemporary forms of the family. These forms of the family were explored by analyzing the power, constraints and role of the family, and the socialization of the family in western society. Predicated upon Foucault's historical perspective that a binary social order has been constructed, an examination of the family provided a useful framework for analysis. As society continues to make progress, alternative forms of the family (e.g., those headed by homosexuals) has emerged. Examining the processes and factors affecting these changes is important from a sociological perspective in order to help predict and interpret future societal changes.

While resistance to change and modification of social mores and values is a slowly evolving process, Foucault has elucidated this process and drawn our attention to the concomitant factors influencing this change. Changes in contemporary attitudes, beliefs and acceptance of sexuality will continue. No one could have predicted the AIDS epidemic. From a sociological perspective, our understanding of the process of change in our conceptualization of sexuality and family has been more clearly defined. Another example of changing attitudes can be seen in the number of increased women elected to legislative offices, heads of large and powerful corporations, and most recently the appointments of three senior cabinet positions to identifiable ethnic minorities during the Presidency of George W. Bush. The 21st century will bring many new changes.

The evidence provided has substantiated that the public discourses currently being held within contemporary society are those that are reinforcing a social ordering that currently exists and while there is an appearance of an acceptability of alternative lifestyles, the values are clearly placed on the traditional heterosexual lifestyle. Homosexuality remains targeted by strategies (e.g., forms of governmentality) that aim for their incorporation in an essentially heterosexual structure. Despite the *progress* that the homosexual movement has experienced, the repressive ordering of the homosexual lifestyle remains. While society has altered the forms of the repression of the homosexual lifestyle, it most certainly has not eliminated it. The continual debate as to whether or not the homosexual community is stronger, more resilient, and better, can be as never ending as the debate between essentialist and constructivist theorists who argue about whether homosexuality is an innate or socially constructed phenomenon. Nevertheless, all the

literature and the analyses provided suggest there is a need to be aware of the social processes that allows for the construction and maintenance of debates and structural ambiguities, which ultimately allows forms of repression to exist.

This thesis sought to answer a number of important questions that allowed us to examine the processes involved in our changing conceptualization of sexuality, homosexuality, and the contemporary family. By applying Foucault's perspective of governmentality and his theoretical constructs of knowledge and discourse, it became evident that homosexuality has been historically, and is currently, being managed within a heterosexual framework. It is only through an understanding of this repression of homosexuality that change can occur. Within this thesis, the family unit was used to exemplify this repressive ordering. While it may appear that we are moving towards an acceptance of a more pluralistic form of the family, there currently exist severe limitations as to its acceptability. Marriage between homosexuals, transfer of benefits, and the adoption of children between same-sex individuals are limited at best. Homosexuality is currently being sublimated independent of a growing positive representation of the homosexual community by the media. Nevertheless, homosexuality continues to be situated within the heterosexual structure. As an example, there exists few programs, if any, that teach children in schools about alternative lifestyles (including single parent families). As well, few psychological support groups exist for children who may be experiencing confusion, disorientation, and/or emotional difficulties as a result of living within a family with same-sex parents. As society evolves, and families practicing

alternative lifestyles become more common, longitudinal research will be necessary to determine both short-term and long-term consequences for children.

In our contemporary society, there may be a return to the basic values advocated by religious and governmental leaders. This may in fact undermine the recognition and validity of the homosexual community and direct public policy towards the institutionalization of homosexuality in order to better constrain it in acceptable ways and within a heterosexual structure. Consistent with lifestyle changes, our discourse and laws must evolve with such changes. When such conflicts arise, the natural tendency for individuals and society is to try to achieve homeostasis and seek resolution of these conflicts. This process further supports Foucault's arguments as to how change occurs. Nevertheless, if we continue to think of ourselves as a progressive, humanitarian society we will continually need to re-examine our beliefs and attitudes.

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