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**Possibilities to Reframe the Debate about the Status
of Homosexual Unions: LGBT Examined.**

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: ThLic. Bc. Barbora Šmejdivá, Ph.D.

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Anotace

Tato práce analyzuje příčiny toho, proč ti, kteří oponují kampani za stejnopohlavní manželství, selhávají a zdůrazňuje nutnost rekontextualizovat společenskou diskusi na toto téma. Práce poukazuje na příčiny, které vedou k sociálním změnám, které jsou ztělesněny v redefinici manželství. Dále se pokouší zaujmout odstup a zhodnotit účinnost klasické argumentace na obranu manželství. Mají-li úspěh, pak musí ti, kteří čelí ofenzivě hnutí LGBT, rozvinout mnohem informovanější a plnější strategii. Bude nutno vylepšit styl a efektivitu komunikace, rozšířit kontext celé debaty a přesunout její těžiště. První kapitola se zabývá globálním fenoménem stejnopohlavního manželství a nabízí stručnou analýzu slabých míst kampaně, která se mu snaží zabránit. Druhá kapitola rozebírá tyto tři kritické dimenze detailněji: načrtává zásady pro efektivnější komunikaci; nastiňuje důsledky stejnopohlavního manželství a doprovodné jevy, které s ním souvisejí, a konečně determinuje pojetí homosexuality, které je předpokladem konceptu stejnopohlavního manželství. Třetí kapitola z různých perspektiv zkoumá současné normalizující paradigma homosexuality. Následně jsou načrtnuta vodítka, která budou směřovat k dosažení nosnějšího alternativního paradigmatu, toto je uzavřeno úvahou o možném posunu katolické nauky v této oblasti.

Klíčová slova

homosexualita, LGBT, homosexuální svazky, stejnopohlavní svazky, homosexuální manželství, stejnopohlavní manželství, manželství pro všechny

Abstract

This paper looks into why those actively opposing same-sex marriage are failing and emphasises the necessity to reshape the discussion going forward. Apart from pointing to underlying causes leading to the social changes epitomised in the redefinition of marriage, it will take a step back and assess the effectiveness of the classical argumentation in support of marriage. It is argued that those standing up against the LGBT offensive must be able to develop a much more informed and comprehensive strategy in that they improve their style and communicative effectiveness, broaden the context of the discourse, and shift its focal point. Chapter 1 reflects on the emergence of same-sex marriage and offers a brief analysis of weak points of the counter-campaign. Chapter 2 reflects on the three dimensions in more detail: it outlines a more effective communication strategy; presents some consequences and of same-sex marriage and parallel development and finally establishes the concept of homosexuality as the foundational prerequisite for gay marriage. Chapter 3 examines the current normalisation paradigm of homosexuality from various perspectives. Following this, guidelines are proposed towards a more viable paradigm, inclusive of considering possible developments in the Catholic Church.

Keywords

homosexuality, LGBT, gay, lesbian, homosexual unions, same-sex unions, same-sex marriage, gay marriage

Počet znaků (včetně mezer): 117 386

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Preface

It was around 2010 when the issue of same-sex marriage first seized my attention as an issue with an explosive potential. At that time, it was only a handful of countries in Europe and beyond with a legal framework for the redefined concept of marriage – one could still perceive it only as an oddity with little significance for the standard understanding of marriage. But early in the last decade, this agenda really gathered momentum and swept massively in a quick succession through a number of countries (as of 2021, in Western Europe only Italy remains the exception). This transformation happened at a great, unexpected speed for many. Already in the mid-2010s, it was becoming clear that this revolutionised concept of marriage was turning into the new norm¹ in the Western and westernised world, and that a new paradigm was emerging which will have a far-reaching impact on many aspects of our lives as I will show in the paper.

It is also at this time, around 2015, that the idea to dedicate my final thesis to this issue emerged and I followed the developments of the public debates, social policies, behaviour and societal attitudes in various countries more closely. In some cases, this was, so to speak, a first-hand involvement thanks to the fact that I have spent many years in various countries where same-sex marriage is now available, which greatly expanded my perspective on this matter and on the way people think.

After several years of on and off research and sounding out the views of my contemporaries, I am coming to a sobering conclusion that the transformation of societal attitudes towards marriage cannot be halted once a certain level of acceptance of homosexual unions is already present. In other words: once the country has a legal framework for civil partnerships of same-sex couples and once a campaign for marriage equality takes off, it becomes nigh on impossible not to advance to the next step, which is the redefinition of marriage as a union of two people regardless of sex.

In autumn 2018, the proposal for homosexual marriage was introduced in the Czech Parliament, with limited success in getting space for the agenda. The recent pandemic with its ensuing harsh economic impact seems to have transformed the atmosphere and caused the society to newly reassess its values and priorities. However, the agents driving the changes will not give in. What many citizens do not clearly recognize is that the push for same-sex marriage is not a grassroots movement and a spontaneous

¹ On the margin, the EU funded projects supporting LGBT equality as early as in 2015. This funding also quietly covers marriage equality campaign albeit the EU (still) recognizes that this issue is fully in competences of the member states. Cf: European Commission. *List of actions to advance LGBTI equality - 2015-2019* [2021-06-20]. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025/list-actions-advance-lgbti-equality-2015-2019_en#documents >.

endeavour led by the minorities in question. Rather, it is a professionally led campaign massively supported by a broad range of funding entities from the corporate, state and NGO sector.² The annual report of the organisation Pride Prague, which runs the marriage equality campaign We Are Fair, reveals that in 2019 the organisation's budget was over 17 million CZK.³ With such an investment being made over the years, it is only to be expected that the foreign forces⁴ without which the campaign would be unthinkable will not relinquish their efforts.

Will our country follow the suit or pose an exception to the pattern? Can not only Czechia but also any other country defy the trend towards same-sex marriage with all the consequences it brings? Can the trend be reversed and what would be needed to argue for it more convincingly? The following paper is an attempt to explore this.

² The annual Report of Prague Pride for 2013 breaks down the income according to the type of the source as follows: 35% private foundations, 31% sponsors, 19% foreign embassies, 11% public finance. The income of Prague Pride in 2013 was about 2.7 million CZK. Cf. Prague Pride, o.s. *Annual Report 2013* [2021-06-20]. <<https://www.praguepride.cz/en/aboutus/media-downloads/annual-reports/25-prague-pride-association-annual-report-2013/file>>.

³ Cf. Prague Pride, z.s. *Annual Report 2019* [2021-06-20]. <<https://www.praguepride.cz/en/aboutus/media-downloads/annual-reports/82-prague-pride-annual-report/file>>.

⁴ Major donors supporting Prague Pride in 2013 include: Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe, Open Society Institute, The Czech-German Fund for the future, The Embassy of the USA.

Introduction

This thesis tries to look into why those actively opposing same-sex marriage are failing and emphasise the necessity to reshape the discussion going forward. Apart from pointing to underlying causes leading to the social changes epitomised in the redefinition of marriage, it will take a step back and assess the efficacy of the classical argumentation in support of marriage. I argue that this is bound to fall on deaf ears unless those standing up against the LGBT offensive are able to develop a much more informed and comprehensive strategy in that they improve their style and communicative effectiveness, broaden the context of the discourse, and shift its the focal point.

In chapter 1, I will reflect on the emergence of same-sex marriage observing that the campaign to halt it largely seems to be unsuccessful. Following this, I will more closely examine why the core argumentation defending marriage both in public discourse and in theoretical treatises is gaining so little traction and propose revamping along the lines mentioned above. Chapter 2 flashes out each of the three dimensions in more detail. In first section, it considers a more effective communication strategy. In second section, some consequences and parallel developments are outlined which should be explored in connection with the phenomenon of same-sex marriage. The last section establishes the concept of homosexuality as the foundational pre-requisite of gay marriage and proposes questioning the current model in an inclusive manner. In chapter 3, the normalisation paradigm of homosexuality is then examined from various perspectives and guidelines are proposed towards a more viable paradigm, inclusive of considering possible developments in the Catholic Church.

Right from the outset it should be made clear that this thesis is primarily not in ethics or theology in the narrow sense but, more broadly, in the field of Christian thinking on social theory. It examines how the principled opposition against same-sex marriage can be represented in the public space in a way that achieves higher impact. As such, it could be objected that this approach is tainted with pragmatism and utilitarian tendencies and thus possibly betraying the truths it is defending. I will neither refute nor concede this objection but uphold the legitimate plurality in the Church in terms of how we defend core shared values. Some will only point to Scripture and the Tradition, considering that anything going beyond is only weakening the message. Others will venture into a terrain beyond that and enter into argumentative encounters with those not belonging to the family of faith, thus also considering seriously their perspectives. The latter is the approach which is taken here, *in addition to* the former. Secondly, I should clarify that the aim is not necessarily to fully *persuade* the counterpart in the

discussion who holds a different view on same-sex marriage. My aim is much more modest: given the blocked debate in the Western Europe, the objective is merely to consider how polarization can be avoided and how a genuine dialogue could be elicited. At the same time, I want to show that the overall approach not only can be reconciled with Catholic teaching but also that it actually is, in a long term, better suited to nurture any development of the teaching in a sound way, avoiding the risk of falling into an outright revisionist positions departing not only from the teaching on anthropology and marriage but also, more importantly, the principles of Catholicity.

The paper assumes a reader who is conversant with the main lines of the argumentation on both side and will not restate them, mainly for the reason of limited space. Secondly: refraining from presenting the comprehensive argument against gay marriage all over again (and it is hardly conceivable that we could come with anything new on this issue anyway) is a conscious move away from the epicentre of the contention, to be able to see the dynamics and patterns of communication. Also, it is imperative to view the problem not as an abstract, timeless one – though the nature of human person and of marriage is something transcending a particular historical epoch – but as one which emerges in a definite constellation of human history and which very clearly evolves. I am firmly convinced that we must reflect the rapidly changing situation: in 2021 it is dramatically different from the situation in 2011, just a decade ago.

As the paper attempts to outline a topography of the desired reframing and given the vast area covered with the enormous extent of literature surging over the last decades, the treatment will often have to remain sketchy yet hopefully still clearly showing the contours of the approach I am proposing. In the research phase I have dealt with a wide range of contributions dedicated to this problem area: scholarly articles, popular books, statements issued by governmental institutions or professional bodies and also a range of journalism pieces; the nature of the problem dictates that all of these types of sources will be drawn upon in this paper. In tune with the approach emphasising the value of a broadly informed, up-to-date approach, the thesis takes into consideration the situation in Western European countries – rather than in Czechia – unless stated otherwise.

For the purpose of this paper, I use the terms broadly used in mainstream discourse such as homosexuality, sexual orientation, LGBT and similar without reservations (perhaps with one exception when I tend to favour the nouns *homosexual* along with the today's preferred terms *gay* and *lesbian*). Critique of this terminology and underlying concepts is possible and necessary. Nonetheless, in my approach I see important to share the language with those with whom I want to enter into dialogue. Rejecting the language from the outset can effectively close the dialogue as this implies a tacit expectation that the other side automatically adopts my language and concepts.

Corresponding to the nature of the paper is my methodological decision to disregard sources and scholarly studies which base their opposition to same-sex marriage and homosexuality on religious grounds. Moreover, all materials I refer to in the key passages are gay affirming; studies pathologising homosexuals were not included as their validity would not be accepted by the opposing side. In this dialogical approach, it is desirable to show the inadequacy of the current model looking exactly at evidence produced by those adhering to the model.

1 Same-sex marriage, the debate so far and its evaluation

1.1 Global emergence of same-sex marriage. A first attempt to assess

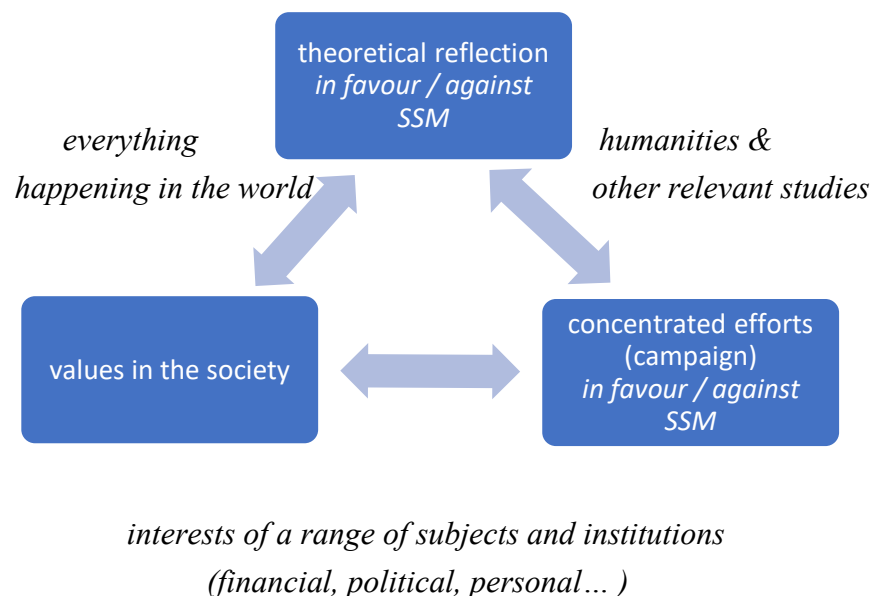
The drive for same-sex marriage has all but conquered the global North and is well set to gain ground in the remaining EU states and further beyond. Not to recognize this means to manifest the same naivety as those in Western countries some twenty years ago when the movement was only gathering momentum. At the moment, there are 29 countries in the world which adopted the revolutionised legislation. By the end of the year, there is highly likely that Switzerland will join the list following the referendum this autumn, and possibly also Czechia.

When looking for a pattern, there is typically a civil partnership of same-sex couples serving as a launch-pad for the push for same-sex marriage. There are some few exceptions to the rule that the former institution always paves the way for the latter, such as Hungary or Croatia – both recognizing civil partnership of same-sex couples but enshrining the original definition of marriage in the constitution – but time will tell whether this arrangement will last. The direction which Post-Communist countries will take is a big unknown in the whole story: it is the last area within global North where the LGBT-agenda still has not overtaken although it is celebrating advances. Now, it may be the case that in the meantime the absurd consequences of the LGBT ideology will become increasingly evident to the population of this geopolitical space and that this will result in radical refusal of same-sex marriage. Secondly, the opposition to the unwanted novelties may become part of emancipation process of the post-Communist countries where everything from the West is no longer automatically considered as superior. However, this development is only a speculation. – A long time it looked that gay rights are the domain of countries with Christian heritage, the recent arrival of same-sex marriage in Taiwan and steady progress towards it in parts of Japan confirm that we are dealing with a global phenomenon.

Same-sex marriage thus seems to be unstoppable, at least looking at highly developed countries with liberal economy. It is not the case that there would not be enough of those appalled by the aggressive social engineering of the marriage equality movement. Across various countries where same-sex marriage has been legalised – be it through the parliament or the judiciary– we could see a real surge of protests, in some countries, such as France, a remarkably large part of population was weighing in. Yet it was not successful.

The original plan for my thesis was to elaborate on the grounds against the redefinition of marriage. But it was exactly my research up till now which brought me to the recognition that even the most sophisticated defence of status quo has no chance in the historical situation in which the idea that marriage is an exclusive union of man and woman is so to speak put on trial *to be defended*. I will state once more: this unique historical situation which creates a stage for an eloquent and rich summation for the cause of marriage, this historical situation also implies that the cause of marriage has already been lost. Once it is necessary to explain why marriage can only be between a man and a woman or why even an infertile couple is entitled to marriage whereas a same-sex couple not, it is too late. Either there is such a tacit understanding in the society or there is not, in which case the cause has already been lost, no matter how passionate, thoughtful and articulate are those who oppose the redefinition of marriage.

When considering this situation, the following diagram might be useful to distinguish various dimension of the problem mutually influencing each other. The campaign or the theoretical reflection to propel or to prevent same-sex marriage is addressing the society but the already present attitudes in the society might be the major factor deciding this. The push for same-sex marriage also happens on the background of general developments in the society, another discernible variable playing the role are the state of knowledge in social sciences and related disciplines and broader power interests of a range of subjects steering the developments in one or the other direction.



At this stage one can make observations about rhetorical strategies accompanying the controversy. It appears that attempts to support the basic definition of marriage by referring to natural law, teleology, welfare of children, universality of this human

institution and similar are prone to failure. Paradoxically, efforts to underpin the basic definition of marriage as a union of man and woman by a rationale makes it only more vulnerable. Every argument invites a counterargument, often pointing to the fact that what can be said about married couples in general does not apply in all cases, thus pleading for less rigour, open-mindedness and generosity towards married couples of the same sex. One tentative conclusion I can propose right at the start is that it might be unhelpful to even embark on explaining the grounds against same-sex marriage. Simply, marriage is a union of man and woman because man and woman are fundamentally different – any argumentation which goes beyond this is counterproductive.

Contemplating the bleak outlook on defending marriage, what possibilities does it leave – or perhaps open – for the way forward? One obvious route should be to channel the resources into mapping out the consequences of legalising same-sex marriage in a comprehensive way. In 2021, we can talk not only about those anticipated but also about those which we can really observe in countries where the LGBT equality advanced and the evidence is growing very rapidly month by month. There is still a feel of alarmism when speaking about the consequences which same-sex marriage brings but in some cases the reality transcends the imagination of the warning voices years ago. To give a single example: in February 2021 many news outlets report about “a polyamorous gay family” in California formed by Alan Mayfield, Jeremy Hodges and Ian Jenkins where the newly born daughter of one of the men has three fathers in her birth certificate instead of a father and a mother.⁵

Same-sex marriage thus emerges as a watershed, a moment closing certain developments and at the same time ushering a completely new era. It could be seen as a culmination of many shifts, seemingly unrelated with the topic, which have been broiling under the surface for a very long time – which explains why the actual move from unthinkability of same-sex marriage to its wide acceptance then happens within a very short span, shorter than one generation. In this respect it is not unwarranted to reverse the popular and by the equality camp much ridiculed notion of same-sex marriage as threat for the family: rather, its emergence is symptomatic of and conditioned by already existing decline of marriage and family.

We should be aware how dramatically the perceptions of what is the norm have shifted to the west of our borders. And, even considering the specifics of post-communist countries, it is naïve to assume that these developments will not arrive. The fact is that conservatives, or even the moderate supporters of gay rights are spectacularly losing.

⁵ PAVIA, Will. *Children’s three fathers make a happy ‘throuple’* (March 30, 2021) [2021-06-20]. <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/three-dads-make-legal-history-as-a-throuple-wdk2jrprf>>.

Suffices to relate that the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy in its entry on homosexuality describes Bruce Bawer or Andrew Sullivan, both gay rights activists and early advocates of gay marriage, as *centrists*,⁶ occupying the middle ground between natural law theorists on the one side of the spectrum and queer theorists on the other. To most of us, reading through the works of queer theorists equals a visit into a different universe, a world which will never be what the majority perceives as normal. Yet the clout they exert *practically* is astonishing, let us just think of the uproar surrounding comments of J.K. Rowling in 2019 addressing extreme transgenderists. We do not need to go that far: in neighbouring Germany, Ulrich Kutschera, professor of evolutionary biology of The University of Kassel, was in 2020 de-platformed by the student union for voicing critical views on the impact of gay marriage on children. In general, there is a growing evidence of self-censorship by those in public life and by ordinary citizens as well.

A foretaste of what is coming provides a perusal in the theses on topics of homosexuality, homoparenting and similar authored by students of varied social studies or teaching degree programmes at Czech universities: the overwhelming majority of these theses does not even move on a neutral ground, they are explicitly LGBT affirming. Striking is that the absence of critical perspective is not pointed out in the supervisor and opponent reviews.⁷ This kind of teaching in humanities is, in my view, a fairly reliable indicator of the upcoming developments in the society as the graduates will eventually exert influence when occupying positions leading to the paradigm shift.

This invites another possibility how to treat the issue: to analyse the underlying causes of these developments. There are many perspectives to take, for instance, looking at the character of the modern moral dilemmas, the work of Alasdair MacIntyre could be useful. Or we could look at what historically nourished the gay rights movement or focus on the philosophical underpinning of the LGBT movement. Above all, we may examine the underlying causes of why the general public is so readily accepting theses which even a generation or two ago would not even be discussed. Such insights are valuable, and everyone involved should continuously deepen their understanding. Nonetheless, this kind of analysis has a limited impact as only few are able and willing to follow it. Even if there was such an audience, it does not move the problem a bit *as the effect which is described is by this description further strengthened* – the resulting

⁶ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy / Homosexuality* (February 28, 2020) [2021-06-20]. <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/homosexuality/>>.

⁷ E.g.: WEINGARTOVÁ, Kateřina, 2021. *Adopce dětí homosexuálními páry, rozdíly v České republice a Portugalsku*. Brno. Diplomová práce. Masarykova univerzita, Pedagogická fakulta, Katedra sociální pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Mgr. František Trapl, Ph.D.

account is only accepted by the group who is developing it as not even here we share enough ground, it rather cements the differences and reinforces the division *we* versus *them* and further blocks any genuine exchange of views (this process is now so advanced that in reality the seminal works of one group are not even read by the opposing group).

What complicates this kind of analysis is also the fact that not all underlying circumstances nurturing the move towards same-sex marriage are distinctly negative. For instance, this idea would be unthinkable without marriage becoming more authentic in the course of last century. So there is a paradox: in a culture where marriage is an indispensable social institution and often an arrangement of convenience, no one would suggest that this could be a union of people of the same-sex. In the moment when marriage is no longer a basic unit of social fabric, it becomes more genuine and this possibly opens the door to its eligibility to same-sex couples. What happens is that the aspect of companionship and love, ages ago something what may or may not arise after years of marriage, came to dominate the idea of marriage to the extent that it is only reduced to partnership of two people of opposite – or of the same sex.

And lastly: we cannot rewind the clock so even if we thoroughly interpret the background leading to today's situation, the world is different than it was fifty or hundred years ago. This may seem a trivial observation but it should have bearings on the approach to the debate. Not only our opponents in the same-sex marriage debate but also those firmly grounded in Jewish-Christian anthropology have been irreversibly marked by the current world. Things will never return to what they were. However, this is perhaps not even desirable. We may hope that the current predicament will eventually lead to something good. It means to strive not to *retrieve* the (often unduly idealised) social attitudes and patterns from the past but to induce a new beginning.

1.2 A look at the opposition to same-sex marriage: two snapshots and their critique

In the preceding section I identified three major areas which decide whether the push for same-sex marriage will be successful. Looking at the developments over the last two decades, I tentatively suggested that the changes in the society are likely to be the decisive element whereas theoretical reflection and campaigning against it seem to be less important. Nonetheless, I also suggested that it is essential to reflect why the defence of marriage so far might have been less than optimally efficient in pursuing the cause. The following will not be a comprehensive examination but merely a passing

look at recent decades with a particular angle on whether these strategies have been capable of self-reflection and necessary adaptation.

I will specifically look at the framing of argumentation of the campaigns and in treatises related to the topic. For these purposes let's narrow down the campaigning on the involvement in the public discourse, and specifically television debates since it shows both sides discussing. Thanks to the internet we can tap into dozens of recordings, be it excerpts or full lengths, from all over the world covering the period from circa 2005 until present, to get an idea of how opponents of marriage equality present their arguments.

One would expect some degree of cross learning in the successive countries where the issue was tackled, so that a debate in Britain in 2014⁸ will bring more aspects than one in USA in 2008,⁹ and again in 2017 in Austria¹⁰ one would expect a more robust, more informed approach by those defending marriage than a few years back in another country. But it is not the case. Rather, when watching the debate in 2021 in Czech television,¹¹ it deploys principally the same rhetoric as the US debate in 2008 – despite the fact that there are 13 years between them with rather dramatic developments.

This reveals fundamental shortcomings of the campaign against gay marriage. The LGBT movement is a global phenomenon marching from country to country and with ever improving efficiency builds on experience and gains made elsewhere. To be able to reflect on progress in time and bring it to the game as a stepping-stone for conquering more terrain is not only a skilled tactic but the core of the business model. Compared to this, the campaign against gay marriage appears local, fragmented, uncoordinated and unrelated to time. As if in each country it was starting from square one, there is no substantial accumulated learning reflecting campaigns elsewhere and the pervasive changes the LGBT rights agenda achieved. It is too immersed into defending the ideological side of the matter, naïve and partially self-absorbed, lacking self-reflection and distance which would allow to broaden the context and allow for reshaping the debate. Part of this is down simply to a dire lack of resources which prohibit a professionally lead campaign – compared to the LBGT bodies, organisations opposing

⁸ *Question Time 16/05/13 - Gay Marriage Debate* (May 17, 2013) [2021-06-20].

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEO3frkVBvY>>.

⁹ *The Dr. Phil Show - Same Sex Marriage: Right or Wrong? - Pt.1* (November 26, 2008) [2021-06-20].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_6-kqHJqpo>.

¹⁰ *Ehe für alle – die große Diskussion* (September 18, 2018) [2021-04-21].

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TagunTC8DNA>>.

¹¹ *Ostrá hádka v 360° Berete adoptovaným dětem práva, volala Jochová. Nejsme pedofilové (Jagelka)* (February 11, 2021) [2021-06-20].

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iowqlQRVvMs>>.

the agenda are operating on a shoestring.¹² To offer a single example where marriage defence strategy is weak: in 2021, it still prefers to speak about risks and slippery slopes that same-sex marriage legislation brings instead of systematically researching, collating and interpreting such developments in countries featuring the new concept of marriage and presenting these findings to the public. Occasionally, there are warnings accompanied by examples, yet these are arbitrary and not providing a compelling coherent account.

Regarding the intellectual defence of marriage as a union of man and woman, I have already expressed my view that it has been inefficient in reaching its goals. One of the finest examples of making a secular case for marriage remains the article by Sherif Girgis, Robert P. George and Ryan Anderson *What is Marriage?*¹³ from 2010. The authors distinguish the authentic concept of marriage described as conjugal which is based on complementarity of man and woman and the ensuing capacity for procreation. Then they compare it with a revisionist view of marriage and purport to show why this is inadequate. Yet with stipulating something like revisionist view they inadvertently legitimise it as it only needs a different, more flexible world view to accept the revisionist concept as a viable or rather more valuable alternative.

The over-relying on rational argumentation as a tool to elucidate the position is also exemplified in the unfortunate use of analogies in stressing the incommensurability of same-sex and opposite sex couples. The following one purports to make a point that infertile couples deserve to be considered true marriages:

“Consider this analogy: A baseball team has its characteristic structure largely because of its orientation to winning games; it involves developing and sharing one’s athletic skills in the way best suited for honorably winning (...). But such development and sharing are possible and inherently valuable for teammates even when they lose their games.”¹⁴

We can see the merit of the analogy but those who do not want to accept the central claim can easily tap into its limits, such as Kenji Yoshino in his critique: “I suspect it will be cold comfort to many infertile opposite-sex couples to hear that while their marriage is still ‘real’, it is a ‘losing’ marriage as opposed to a ‘winning’ one.”¹⁵

¹² The Czech organisation Alliance for Family campaigning against same-sex marriage declared 1.2 million CZK as income in 2018; Prague Pride declared 17 million in the same year (source: annual reports).

¹³ GIRGIS, Sherif – GEORGE Robert P. – ANDERSON, Ryan. *What is Marriage?* (November 23, 2012). *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 245-287.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

¹⁵ YOSHINO, Kenji. *The Best Argument against Gay Marriage. And Why It Fails.* (December 13, 2010) [2021-06-30]. <<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2010/12/robert-p-george-s-argument-against-gay-marriage-fails.html>>.

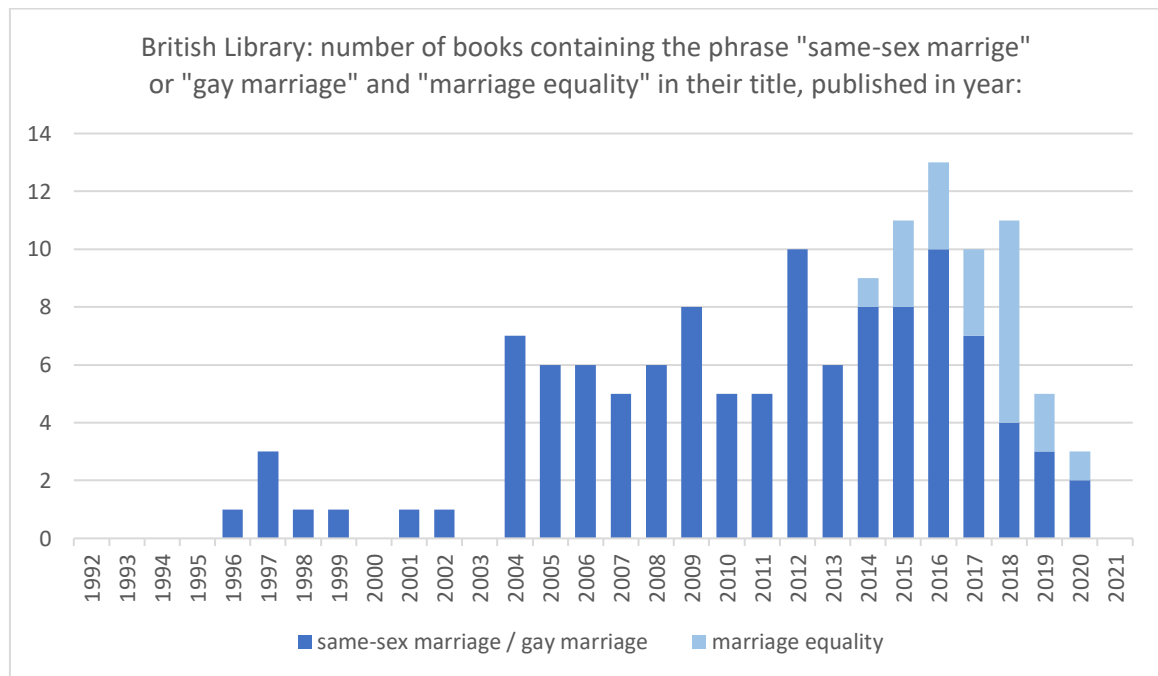
Whilst I fully concur with the propositions of these and many other authors defending marriage, I hold that it is imperative that the strategy change. It is difficult to pinpoint what exactly was lagging behind in the way we defended marriage, and we may even need more distance to fully analyse this. Some would not agree and will continue ahead in the same way, insisting on the importance of living what is proclaimed and truly being the salt of the earth. Living the values and not just pointing to them is certainly the most important element but I also want to offer a complementary view of how what is declared about the nature of marriage should be expanded.

The crux of the inefficiency of the defence is the following: the proponents tend to be too absorbed in developing a cogent and highly compelling account that they neglect other areas requiring consideration. First of all, it is not getting in touch with the emotional mindset and the world view of the opponents. This is just labelled, e.g. as revisionist, subjectivist, based on social constructivism etc. but little effort is made to better grasp this way of thinking and *from* there, by actually penetrating into the nuances of their stances and their incongruencies, develop a more subtle, more differentiated and fuller argumentation. Secondly, the deep immersion with the moral side of the matter severely restricts the field of vision and hampers from treating the whole problem in a much broader context, beyond the abstract propositions of treatises such as the above mentioned. Indeed, there is a serious myopia in regard to spot many connections of how the new agenda is establishing itself. To sum up both points, it is important to comprehend why so many people side with gay marriage, and even to be able to some extent to sympathise with these endeavours, but it is equally important to grasp as broadly and deeply as possible the LGBT rights agenda. My third major criticism is that this defence of marriage intentionally avoids to tackle head on the issue of homosexuality. Although one can see that this conscious omission forms part of the secular case against gay marriage, it is my firm conviction that idea of gay marriage can never be seriously questioned without questioning the current model of interpreting homosexuality.

The criticism is not directed towards the principled defence of marriage as union of a man and a woman. My reservation is not on the level of philosophy, ethics or theology, in that, for instance, the reasoning should contain more of a consequentialist outlook. It is more that this kind of stance, focusing on timeless significance of marriage, urgently needs to be complemented by a realistic, well informed approach looking at the issue of *global emergence* of same-sex marriage not only as an abstract concept but more as an extremely complex issue anchored in many developments in the current world.

The reshaping of the strategy of those speaking for marriage is inevitable anyway as, shocking as it may be, the contention culminated sometime between 2010 and 2015 and from that point the academic as well as public interest palpably abates. There are currently no polemical treatises any more developed on this topic as the matter is considered closed in the Western world. Similarly, no further television debates are to be expected soon, the battle is all over.

A look in the catalogue of British Library, the largest library in the world by the number of items, helps to get an idea about how trending of the topic over the last decades developed. This simple research was limited on books as they represent a more intensive engagement with the topic and, compared to scholarly articles, more closely reflect general interest in the area as the book needs to be marketed. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, only catalogued book titles in English featuring a particular phrase published in a year were counted (the full extent of literature pertaining to the topic will thus be much higher). This illustrative chronological overview confirms that the issue is on the downward trend:



The opposing camp was not only unsuccessful, it was also completely depleted once the legislation in question was approved, the issue lost profile and many in the society slowly “adapted to changing times”, so the change of strategy is inevitable.

2 Reframing the debate

2.1 Guidelines for reshaping the debate

In the preceding section I showed that the way the opposing camp is leading debate has been largely unsuccessful and proposed to reflex on the style. These adjustments should be on the one hand of pragmatic character and on the other hand in terms of reaching a genuine dialogue, so getting in touch with the utmost motives of the counterpart.

To unblock the debate on same-sex marriage, what is needed is the opposite of the approach delineating the incommensurable ethical foundations of the two camps: we need a discussion which would not be primarily driven by morality or at least which will not be based solely on moral a priori positions (although values are always at play). It means an attempt to de-ideologise the debate on same-sex marriage and found it on facts, insofar as they can be established and agreed upon in these post factual times.

This is leading to, at least theoretical, questions whether and how the whole problem area can be recontextualised, or, with a semantically similar but shorter word, reframed. By reframing I mean diverting the debate from its trajectory instilled by the proponents of the change. It means leading proactively the conversation, not just responding to the agenda as it is dictated but outlining it.

An essential prerequisite for this reshaping is to take distance, to step back from one's own position to get a glimpse on the dynamics of the whole public discourse. The experience from other countries shows that it eventually becomes extremely polarized once those undecided took their side. It is crucial to prevent the polarization so before anything else, the first objective should be to strive for a genuine dialogue. I am conscious that this flagship approach following Vatican II has been somewhat discredited in the recent decades as all too often it meant shedding fundamentals of our faith and adjusting to the world. At this point it should be explicitly said that quite to the contrary, we must not compromise on what is true only to get friends, so to speak.

But even finding some common ground with those with whom we cannot agree on everything is already a major achievement. Yet regardless of the actual contention and the outcome, the commitment to communicate entails effort, empathy and responsibility. It presupposes willingness to take distance, also to see my own position with the eyes of those who do not share it. How do my arguments come across? What misconceptions or misinterpretations can they elicit? Could it be that there is a grain of truth in what the other side says? Where do my opponent stand? Can they even relate

to what I am telling? It is essential not to vilify the opponents but to try to understand their motives. Then we can depart for a dialogue.

Speaking of dialogue, it is essential to understand exactly who the counterpart is and consider the various strata within the overall push for this kind of social change. At the top of the pyramid are those core drivers of the agenda who design it and provide the ideological underpinning. As things advance, they have existential interests in driving the agenda as the involvement is often linked with full time jobs. These are relatively few agents whose change of direction is extremely unlikely. At the next stratum are the adherents who do not actively elaborate but follow and promote, typically within lower rank paid jobs or voluntary engagement. The base of the pyramid is then the public embracing the paradigm, they are not actively following nor promoting but simply accepting the new norms. Interfacing with each of the level has its own rules, one should be first of all conscious which strata is one talking to and adjust the communicative strategy.

It appears that the dialogical approach has best prospects of success when directed to the broader public rather than those at the forefront of the movement. At the moment, the situation in Czechia is still not that as advanced as in Western Europe. There is at least anecdotal evidence that broad segments of the Czech population are not favourably inclined towards the LGBT agenda. The marriage equality campaign, as the slow motions through the parliament show, might only be in its initial phases and there is still space to address broad segments of the population who are open to critical account.

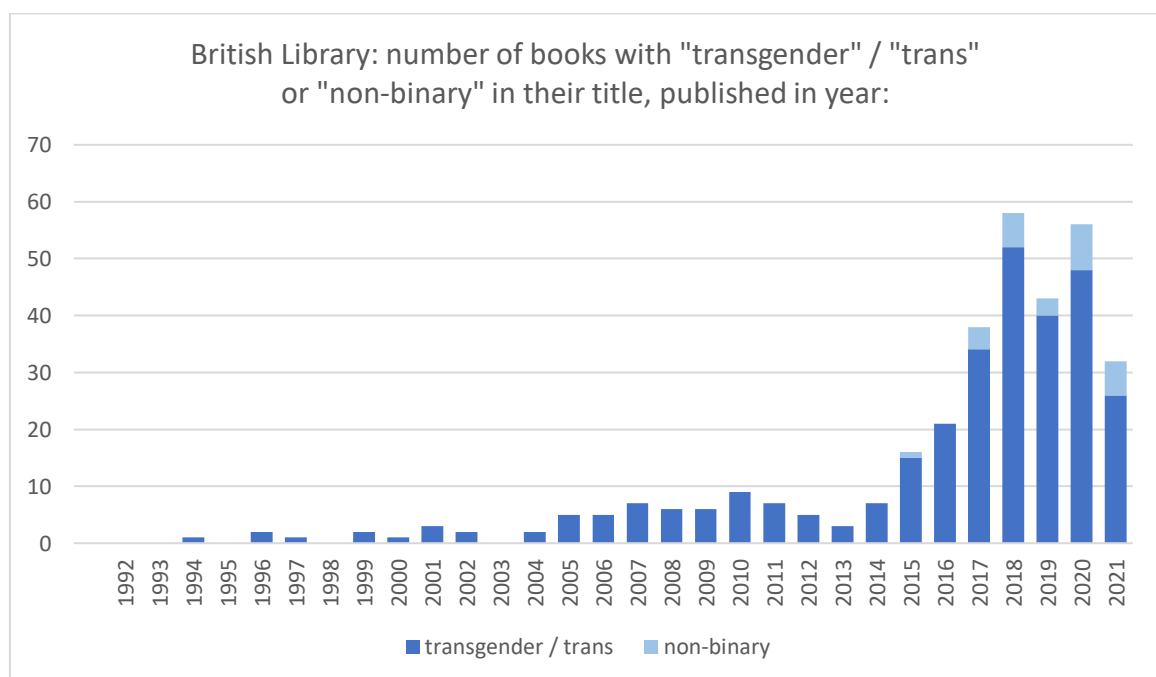
The attempt to de-ideologize the debate, to depart not from foundational moral position is not only a tool for a higher communicative reach. There is another dimension: the focus on appealing primarily to common sense a not to values in the first place can reveal new, unexpected aspects which might not get attention if one is operating primarily from the ethical position. As everything is rooted in this world, interconnected with myriad of other meanings where there is a shared ground with our opponents and thus we can refer to these often overseen but countless cracks. Admittedly, principally moral opposition will also be linked with the negative consequences but the primarily value-guided perspective can preclude the access to other types of insights gained from a common-sense driven inquiry. It then follows that such inquiry might deviate from the coordinates charted by the proponents of same-sex marriage campaign – this is the desired reframing of the debate. In the following I will outline how the debate should be broadened, the next section will deal with shifting the focal point of the debate to address its underlying foundations.

2.2 Broadening the context: consequences and parallel developments

Here we should not only speak about consequences but also about parallel developments as causation and correlation is not clear. What we need is another kind of analysis but it requires changing the zoom. For this again we need to take distance. Then we will be able to apprehend the dramatic developments in the background which are not sufficiently captured and analysed. I will merely list some of the major areas requiring a systematic inquiry without fully evaluating and exploring the relationships between them – that is the task which until now has been neglected.

Rocket rise of transgenderism

In many countries with same-sex marriage, and only in these, we can observe a massive surge of transgenderism. A similar enquiry in book titles in British library shows the rise since 2015, broadly coinciding with decline of same-sex marriage as a topic. Is it likely to be more of a cultural phenomenon rather than strictly related to gender dysphoria? The same shift of the agenda is also observable in LGBT+ voluntary organisations. Ondřej Šmigol points to a marked drop of homosexual and a steep upshoot of transgender agenda observable with LGBT organisation in the UK and in the USA. In both countries, one can pinpoint the turning point to legalisation of gay marriage: there is no further major aim which to campaign for for homosexuals, at the same time, the organisations need to justify their *raison d'être*.¹⁶



¹⁶ Cf. ŠMIGOL, Ondřej. *Případ mizejících leseb* (March 25, 2021) [2021-06-20]. <<https://echo24.cz/a/SihdR/pripad-mizejicich-leseb>>.

Promotion of polyamorous relationships and ‘polyamorous parenting’

Since 2015 there is an observable increase of these formations, particularly of so-called polyamorous parenting, promoted by many media outlets. Some countries or local governments are progressing to give them legal recognition. Only within the USA, New York Times report about 12 states where more than two parents are possible.¹⁷

Rapid buy-in of the commercial and particularly corporate sector

All the big players, particularly from tech-sector and finances, were among the first to support the agenda: Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft. In the Czechia: Česká spořitelna, Komerční banka, RegioJet. A sub-category is the issue of buying power of the LGBT community, which only partly explains why the liberal market is so quickly embracing the social changes. There is evidence that some segments of business consider LGBT community having above average purchasing power.

Acceptance by supranational governing bodies and the NGO sector

Noteworthy is that organisations which can be considered more supranational in their character rather than international are much ahead of accepting the agenda than governing bodies directly representing the population of individual countries. To name a few: European Union,¹⁸ United Nations, The World Health Organisation. Basically all supranational and large national NGOs are also vocal in their support of LGBT+ agenda as of 2021, not just those with specific LGBT focus. E.g.: Amnesty International, Fairtrade International, Transparency International, Doctors Without Borders, Greenpeace International. In effect, organisations which do not have a direct mandate are pushing through norms top down. One analysis offers Marguerite A. Peeters in *Hijacking Democracy: The Power Shift to the Unelected* from 2001.¹⁹

Victim status or progress achieved?

How the actual state of rights or discrimination of LGBT population stands is often portrayed from contradicting perspectives so as to either support the picture of victim

¹⁷ McKELVEY, Cynthia. *The Challenge of Polyamorous Parenting* (August 4, 2020) [2021-06-30]. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/parenting/polyamorous-parenting.html>>.

¹⁸ Marta Lamas offers a chronology of the EU's . Cf: LAMAS, Marta. Orientación sexual, familia y democracia. *Nexos* 2005, Vol. 27, Núm. 335, 37-44.

¹⁹ PEETERS, Marguerite A. *Hijacking Democracy: The Power Shift to the Unelected*. AEI Press, 2000.

status or notion of normality of gay rights elsewhere, to create a pressure to advance them where needed. Not rarely, it is also facts that are adapted to the perspectives to fit the purpose. So for instance the German government funded Federal Agency for Civic Education states in the section on homosexuality that “in the most European countries homosexuality was not decriminalised until early 1980s”,²⁰ which is patently wrong.²¹ Yet another section says that Germany approved same sex marriage in 2017 “as one of the last parliaments in the EU”,²² which again is grossly incorrect.²³

Revenue of LGBT+ third sector organisations steadily rising

Despite the inconceivable milestones achieved, the revenue of most of these organisations seems to be constantly on the rise. In the UK, there operates more than 480 of organisations of varied size under the umbrella of Consortium of LGBT Charitable and Community Organisations. To name some of the best known LGBT+ charities in the UK and the increase of their total gross income between 2016 and 2020, according to records from Charity Commission in England and Wales:

	Total gross revenue		
	2016	2020	Increase
Consortium of LGBT Charitable and Community Organisations	£235k	£741k	215%
Birmingham LGBT	£467k	£865k	85%

²⁰ Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. *Französische Nationalversammlung beschließt Gesetz zur gleichgeschlechtlichen Ehe*. (February 13, 2013) [2021-06-30]. <<https://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/154984/frankreich-gleichgeschlechtliche-ehe-13-02-2013>>.

²¹ In 1982, male homosexuality was illegal only in Portugal, Ireland, Finland, Liechtenstein, Romania, USSR, Yugoslavia and Albania, thus in 8 countries out of the total of 31 European countries in 1982.

²² Cf. KLOCKE, Ulrich. – KÜPPER, Beate. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. *"Homophobie": Abwertung von lesbischen, schwulen und bisexuellen Personen*. (February 28, 2018) [2021-06-30]. <<https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/gender/homosexualitaet/265197/homophobie>>.

²³ In 2017, same-sex marriage had only 13 (inclusive of Germany) out of the 28 EU member states in 2017.

Just Like Us	£37k	£207k	459%
LGBT Foundation Ltd	£1.94m	£2.70m	39%
Manchester Pride Ltd	£1.66m	£3.94m	137%
Metro Center	£3.24m	£4.68m	44%
Mindout LGB&T Mental Health Project	£218k	£470k	115%
New Family Social	£161k	£211k	31%
Stonewall Equality Ltd	£6.32m (2015)	£8.32m (2019)	31%
The Proud Trust Ltd	£650k	£2.98m	457%

Restrictions to freedom of speech

In September 2021, Switzerland is holding a referendum on same-sex marriage and artificial insemination of lesbian women. The cross-party Referendum Committee *Nein zur Ehe für alle* experienced discrimination when looking for a bank. The opening of a bank account was refused by multiple banking institutions without giving a valid reason (except for indication ‘damage to reputation’). The referendum committee is resorting to the court.²⁴ A British law student Lisa Keogh, declaring that

²⁴ The Referendum Committee does inform on this in the news section on their website. However, the fact of discrimination – even more worrying that it is still *prior* to the referendum – is not mentioned within the reasons listed in the area presenting grounds against the same-sex marriage. Cf. *Diskriminierung andersrum: Banken verweigern Referendumskomitee “Nein zur Ehe für alle” Kontoeröffnung“ – Strafanzeige eingereicht* (April 9, 2021) [2021-06-30]. <<https://ehefueralle-nein.ch/diskriminierung-andersrum-banken-verweigern-referendumskomitee-nein-zur-ehe-fuer-alle-kontoeroeffnung-strafanzeige-eingereicht/>>.

women have vaginas and are physically weaker than men, faced a disciplinary action at University of Abertay for “offensive” and “discriminatory” remarks.²⁵

One of the key theses of this paper is that there is a serious lack of scholarly interest in this area, neutral social science is peculiarly absent from observing, relating and interpreting these developments. Paradoxically, not many seem to be worried about these developments which over the last five years seem to intensify.

Again, I want to emphasise that it is necessary to consider the emergence of same-sex marriage as a phenomenon in the broadest possible context and together with other developments in the society. Viewing it only as an ethical issue – be it as something right or not right, it is immaterial where one stands on that – is restricting the field of vision. At this place, I will briefly introduce one author who is offering such broader interpretation: John Milbank points to the looming totalitarian power of state in his article from 2013 *The impossibility of gay marriage and the threat of biopolitical control*.²⁶ Parenting of gay and lesbian couples is only possible through a third person, the biological parent, who is by the consent of all involved (except for the child, whose rights are most in stake and who is not asked) and by sanctioning of the state deprived of his parenthood and replaced by one of the same-sex couple as a parent of the child. Milbank anticipates that in much the same way we have seen the concept of natural marriage to adjust to gay marriage so that it become only a union of two people regardless of sex, that in much the same way we may expect moulding of biological parenting to the pattern of same-sex parenting: the social parenting being on increase (as also the tendency to polyamorous formations proves), the biological parenting will become less relevant; eventually one will become parent only if the state approves of that.

2.3 Shifting the focus: the need for a new consensus on homosexuality

The push for same-sex marriage grows out from a conglomerate of concepts out of which the notion that homosexuality is basically equal to heterosexuality appears to be a dominant one, itself again only thinkable thanks to a range of assumptions. Arguably,

²⁵ HORNE, Marc. University student faces disciplinary action for ‘offensive’ remarks (May 20, 2021) [2021-06-30]. <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/university-student-faces-disciplinary-action-for-offensive-remarks-g7rk2zppm>>.

²⁶ MILBANK, John. *The impossibility of gay marriage and the threat of biopolitical control* (April 23, 2013) [2021-06-20]. <<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-impossibility-of-gay-marriage-and-the-threat-of-biopolitical/10099888>>.

the acceptance of homosexuality as normal – or as a normal variant of sexuality – is the single one most essential assumption of marriage equality debate and this will be incomplete without focusing on this assumption.

Therefore, the current normalisation paradigm of homosexuality needs to be subjected to a radical, extensive and systematic critique, not just one which would be accidental or based on personal preferences or unprobed criteria. In the this, chapter I will propose a way how to examine this paradigm in way which could be in line with the above outlined criteria of de-ideologizing approach.

What we have seen so far in the countries of Western Europe is that most of those opposing the redefinition of marriage operated within this broadly shared view on homosexuality, thus favouring civil partnership but not marriage as the adequate union for same sex couples. Yet as I have suggested, the tacit or sometimes explicit equalization of homosexuality with heterosexuality entails that the redefinition of marriage is virtually unstoppable.

This is true not only on the level of public dispute but also on the level of philosophical discourse related to the topic. Among contemporary philosophers, it is widely accepted that there are no solid grounds for opposition to gay marriage except for those religiously motivated. To give a small example of how widespread this position is: in 2004 American Philosophical Association issued a newsletter focusing on gay marriage;²⁷ all six of the featured contributions were unreservedly supportive. My point here is not to look at *why* the philosophical discourse is so oriented these days, merely to support the hypothesis that once homosexuality is accepted as normal, then same-sex marriage is sooner or later inevitable. So on the route to clarify the question of marriage, it is imperative to grapple once again profoundly with the issue of homosexuality, which should by no means be considered once and for all closed.

But how to go about the critique of the model? It is true that in the marriage debates we have seen, there were also some isolated voices portraying homosexuality as sinful and morally flawed who opposed not only the idea of marriage but also civil partnerships of same-sex couples. Such voices fell completely on deaf ears, they were largely marginalised or even ostracized, often also by the much larger group of moderate opponents favouring civil partnership. It appears that any opposition to the ruling paradigm is destined to be side-lined at the current climate. Is there any way forward?

²⁷ The American Philosophical Association. *Newsletter on Philosophy and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues*, 2004, Vol. 4, Nr. 1 (Fall, 2004)

If the public debate is deadlocked, the academic discourse in philosophy and theology offers a similar picture. Perusing through these countless contributions dedicated to the issue over the last decades, it appears that the author intent on examining the status of homosexuality typically operates with a pre-understanding which in the treatise is only verified, so the potential to contribute to the dialogue is limited. Usually, the author always first probes into the normality of homosexual behaviour (or orientation, depending on where the author stands) and from there it goes to its ethical significance. There are various areas how to examine the normality or non-normality, e.g. natural law theory or looking at whether homosexuality is innate or acquired. Notable is that even if the authors are starting from a range of shared assumptions, they are often coming to conflicting outcomes whilst offering an account with a high degree of internal coherence, so at least from the point of communication there is clear impasse.

I have shown that to focus on the current paradigm of homosexuality might be the key to thwarting the trend towards same-sex marriage. However, the competing accounts of homosexuality as either morally flawed or pathological have been collectively rejected a long time ago and for many reasons their revival is highly unlikely and not even desirable. Given this and acknowledging the great social harm the current paradigm is causing,²⁸ we must be creative in looking for a much needed break-through.

Therefore, in line with the de-ideologising approach, I propose to temporarily bracket off our own convictions in order to explore the way forward in an experimental way. If we want any partner in dialogue to re-examine their position and to be open to see other perspectives, we must be prepared to do the same. Another benefit of this temporary suspension is that it can prove essential in revitalising the authentic sources of the opposition against homosexuality and same-sex marriage and at the same time dispensing with distortions which might be obstructing the dialogue. So we are trying to step back to glimpse the dynamics of the discourse and certain similarities in the way both sides behave.

It appears that each of the sides is employing airbrushing, possibly to avoid even the theoretical possibility that their stance might be accounted for by the other side or that their own position might look less coherent by those they are attempting to win over. One example: if the renowned Catholic psychologist Joseph Nicolosi, who has worked with thousands of homosexuals in his therapeutic sessions, quotes the legendary psychiatrists Irving Bieber saying ‘I have never met a gay man who would have a good, loving relationship with his father’,²⁹ it is exactly the airbrushing mechanism which

²⁸ Cf. part 2.2. of this paper.

²⁹ *Joseph Nicolosi speaks to Mike Davidson*. (July 10, 2019) [2021-06-30].
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOjEdXQWj3g>>.

then on the opposing side is represented with the claim that being gay man has nothing to do with having a bad relationship with one's father. Clearly, the above statement is pronouncing something which is very common as universally valid so slightly but significantly distorting the facts to fit the overall picture. With this, he is losing much of his credibility and such voices should not appear in the de-ideologising approach I am developing. And it might be an unreliable source even for those who broadly share his main position: if there is at least one occasion where I recognise that his account is ideologically biased, there is likelihood that it happened in other areas where I do not have the erudition to spot it.

To look at the trap of polarisation, we should first consider the immense difficulties for the members of public wishing to independently inform themselves. These days, the vast majority will resort to the internet as a convenient source of knowledge, starting typically with a query via search engine. Here undoubtedly the number one is Google. When entering the key word "homosexuality", at least 90% of the first 100 results is distinctly LGBT approving. Within the first five search results are general reference works such as Wikipedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica and similar, all unreservedly gay affirming. Wikipedia is the most visited site when discounting hub sites pointing to other sites or social media. When it comes to topics related to LGBT, it is evidently heavily biased,³⁰ which most users probably do not fully realise or feel need to probe into. Now, what alternatives are there? Sadly, the offer is very thin, the internet space has been really monopolised by the mainstream agents on the market.

There are resources which consciously define themselves as *competing* with Wikipedia, such as for instance www.conservapedia.com. Yet the entry on homosexuality is not intent on presenting a possibly unbiased picture from the scientific perspective either, it is designed as an ideological counterpose to the Wikipedia entry. Though relatively extensive, it is in many respects wanting: starting the exposition from Biblical statements about homosexuality (where one illustration reads a caption that Moses was the author of Leviticus), there are inaccuracies, incomplete accounts, obsolete data and missing sources. This shows two things: firstly, that it is extremely difficult to find unbiased source of information which would be sufficiently comprehensive and extensive yet not on the specialist level. Secondly, if there is an attempt to provide an alternative to the mainstream, it is showing strong ideological colouring which immediately discredits the source in the eyes of the broad public.

³⁰ V.G. Lysov offers ample evidence that in terms of these topics, Wikipedia is far from being an open-source. LYSOV, V.G. Science and Homosexuality: Political Bias in Modern Academia. *Russian Journal of Education and Psychology* 2019, Volume 10, Number 2, pp. 6-49.

The authors simply do not consider that it is possible to refute the mainstream positions whilst staying at a neutral ground. When refuting a mistaken current of thought, one must resist falling into the trap of developing own position by simply negating the opposing camp. It is necessary to correct the error by starting the discourse all anew, not overfocusing on the error made since that can lead to additional distortions.

Looking at these difficulties, I am coming to the conclusion that in this transformative process of looking for a new paradigm, we must at least hypothetically concede that also the side upholding the pathological or immoral view of homosexuality needs a corrective. What does this suggest for our attempt to reframe the debate? One obvious option is to point to the tensions within the current paradigm of homosexuality strictly *without* providing a comprehensive alternative account.

Secondly, it is necessary to deploy methods which could prepare the ways leading to a more viable social model of integrating homosexuality which would not be socially damaging and which would be met with a higher acceptance across the society. I believe that the only way of transforming the current paradigm is by extricating the discourse from the fruitless dialectics of the inevitable antagonism of the pro and contra camp and switching off the mechanism where only two poles are conceivable.

3 Questioning the current and exploring an alternative paradigm of homosexuality

3.1 Philosophical insights

At this stage, we may look for help to expand the horizon of thinking by consulting those thinkers who do not offer a definitive account. Called for are approaches which would not be primarily driven by ethics so not falling flatly into one of the two opposing camps so as to be in a position to enrich the debate by offering valid points to both sides. To clarify, this method should not lead to a compromising solution to satisfy the demands of both sides but it should help expand our field of vision, so it is a means not of a political but of a cognitive process.

Differentiated philosophical accounts of the phenomenon of homosexuality are sparse. One prominent author is Roger Scruton with his analysis offered in the work *Sexual Desire*. Scruton clarifies that he does not consider homosexuality to be a perversion such as necrophilia or zoophilia. He states: “It is *significantly* different from heterosexuality, in a way that partly explains, even if it does not justify, the traditional judgement of homosexuality as a perversion”.³¹ Yet he also dismisses those claiming that homosexuality should be considered on a par with heterosexuality if they posit that the intentional content of homosexual love is the same as by heterosexual love, only the other is of the same sex. Central to Scruton’s critical stance is the interpretation of sexual desire as longing for uniting with the other person. Decisive are not the actual sexual organs, although practically they of course play a role, but the fact that the other belongs to another gender, thus representing an entirely different type of person. Scruton speaks about familiarity with the same gender and a sense of otherness, even mystery, towards the other gender. It is impossible to relate succinctly what this entails for the bonding of man and woman and for the bid of mutual commitment which mature sexuality is linked with. But it follows that the nature of same-sex erotic bonding is significantly different and not only this, it will follow that the male-male and female-female erotic relationships will also significantly differ one from the other. Finally, Scruton maintains that if he is considering homosexuality ‘not normal’, it points to a distinction between homosexuality and heterosexuality on the level of metaphysics, not necessarily on the level of ethics, which is a treatment he does not develop in the treatise

³¹ SCRUTON, Roger. *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation*. London/New York: Continuum, 2006 (first published in Great Britain by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), p. 307.

Sexual desire,³² although we know that Scruton expressed himself sharply against same-sex marriage on many other occasions.

Another voice of ambivalence is the Australian thinker Michael Kowalik in his essay *Homosexuality is Abnormal But not Morally Wrong*³³. He starts from the functional view of sexuality as an attraction to the other sex ensuring procreation. From this point of view is homosexuality an aberration since it cannot lead to procreation, thus constituting a serious disadvantage. Kowalik also holds that a sound level of repulsion towards homosexual acts is natural since the attraction towards the other sex is accompanied by certain distance to the same sex when it comes to physical intimacy. He further explains that homosexuality is an anomaly with statistically stable occurrence across various cultures in the history and that as such it is not a choice. But he warns against making the logical step that homosexuality is normal in the broad sense of the word and also puts a finger on the nature of this erroneous reasoning: “There is a strong tendency in the social sciences to extrapolate the medical judgment of the narrow-scope normality to all domains of rational discourse, in effect regarding homosexual orientation as normal in the wide-scope sense”.³⁴ On the other hand, whilst holding on the abnormality of homosexuality, Kowalik refrains from positing that this condition is immoral. Whilst I do not intend to engage with the morality aspect, his final observation pointing towards the appropriate societal recognition of this phenomenon is noteworthy:

There is something wrong with homosexuality, but this ‘wrongness’ is neither moral nor pathological but just the ‘narrow-scope’ abnormality of a particular existential function of the human species. It does not justify discrimination in any context other than when selecting for a partner with the aim of procreating and establishing a family and, perhaps, in explaining moderately-negative attitudes to public displays of gay sex.³⁵

Both visions are remarkable because they do not erase the contradictory tones in the pursuit of an unambiguous account but exactly preserve them. In the attitude of non-discarding the analogical character of homosexuality there is also cautioning against stretching the analogy too far. Moreover, these aspects are portrayed in a way that one cannot override the other. Finally, whilst Scruton completely evades implications for the public sphere, in Kowalik’s account this is the area where the whole text is pointing to, and it amounts to nothing less than a full-blown opposition to same-sex marriage.

³² Cf. SCRUTON, Roger. *Sexual Desire*, p. 311.

³³ KOWALIK, Michael. *Homosexuality is Abnormal but Not Morally Wrong* (February 16, 2018) [2021-06-20].

<<https://culturalanalysisnet.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/homosexuality-is-abnormal-but-not-morally-wrong/>>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

This is not to say that these concepts can withstand any criticism but they represent a viable coherent alternative to the mainstream paradigm and from this point of view they deserve attention. In addition, many of the insights of Scruton and Kowalik will resonate with the perspectives offered throughout this chapter.

3.2 Normality of homosexuality in other cultures

Let us briefly touch upon the question of presumed normality of the phenomenon of homosexuality in other cultures. This argument has often been used in support of the current paradigm as a proof that liberal attitude does exist around the globe if one bothers to look, sometimes even stretching the point in contrasting the unenlightened discriminatory approach and the open-mindedness elsewhere. But in my view, the acceptance of homosexuality in other cultures (let alone homosexual behaviour in other species than humans, which I leave completely aside as irrelevant) is not an argument for or against same-sex marriage or even for or against a particular status of homosexuality in the Western society, though these findings to some extent can contribute to the discerning process.

Before looking at any findings, it is useful to remind that our current situation where the status of homosexuality is weighed up in a discursive process is unprecedented. In any other culture or civilization, the attitude to homosexuality was not reflected upon and even if there was partial rationalisation of the norms, certainly the given ethos was not an outcome of deliberation. There were cultures where homosexuality was condemned or marginalised and within the society there was typically no pressure to change the status quo and there were cultures where homosexuality was tolerated or enjoyed certain form of acceptance and again, there was no pressure to change it from within the culture (the situation is different in case of clash with another culture exerting this pressure, which could be considered an external influence). Reflecting on these incommensurable historical situations regarding the mode how the status of homosexuality emerges would have many implications for further enquiry into our problem as the Western culture is only one culture among others and at the same time also different with its often not fully realised self-perception as a kind of super-culture transcending other cultures. Following these two perspectives when trying to cast light on the ideological foundations of same-sex marriage and looking how they interplay might bring valuable insights but it is beyond the scope of this paper. For now, I will only state that we should be cautious about how to adequately introduce the outcomes of the anthropological research on homosexuality into the current debate.

First of all, there has never been a culture which would have an equivalent of same-sex marriage or which would accept same-sex permanent unions as carrying in all aspects the same value as opposite sex unions although in some primitive cultures we see the institute of same-sex unions modelled in a special way.

Looking at particular examples of male homosexuality in primitive cultures, we can see a pattern that these are oft temporary, ritual encounters which then happen within a strict protocol.³⁶ Considering today's scientific definition of homosexual orientation as encompassing the element of attraction, behaviour and identity, these would often be instances of homosexual behaviour where one side is either compelled or incentivised to act out, for instance in ritual initiation of youngsters. One wonders where the naive enchantment with mostly pre-modern cultures comes from as we can see a strong element of social pressure which is something which on the other hand is denounced as a negative factor when it comes to defending gay rights in today's society. Only the sheer variety of distinct institutionalised forms of homosexuality (in the casual sense of the word) in various pre-modern cultures exactly reveals that to a much bigger extent it is a social construct rather than something which was freely lived out and enjoying the same status as heterosexuality. The element of coercion is more pronounced in a thought experiment where we imagine that the sexual behaviour would be enacted by members of the opposite sex. So, for instance the much-praised Greek pederasty would then look as follows: a married man of early middle age maintains a temporary, one-sided clearly exploitative erotic relationship to a pubescent girl. This kind of situation would rightly elicit indignation among many of today's LGBT supporters and it is deeply worrying if its original, male-male variant is regarded as a positive example of homosexuality in pre-Christian European culture.

The phenomenon of pederasty in non-Western cultures – or intergenerational male love, using the wording from one of the texts – represents a favourite area of the scholarly interest.³⁷ In this context it should be noted that the ethnographers and anthropologists researching this topic are disproportionately, if not predominantly, coming from the LGBT minority, which is something Walter L. Williams recognises and praises in his article *Being Gay and Doing Research on Homosexuality in Non-*

³⁶ Cf. KIMMEL, Michael. Ritualized Homosexuality in a Nacirema Subculture. *Sexualities* 2006, Vol 9 (1): 95-105.

³⁷ E.g. the following sections are covered within the part Age-Structured Homosexualities in Murphy's *Homosexualities*: 'Accommodations to Pederasty across the Abode of Islam', 'Boy-Wives in Sudan', 'Love of *Pueri Delicati* in Republican and Early Imperial Rome', 'Feminized Boy Actors in Japan', 'Effeminized Boy Entertainers/Prostitutes in Some Islamic Societies'. In: MURPHY, Stephen O. *Homosexualities*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Western Cultures.³⁸ He speaks quite candidly about many benefits which being gay brings when conducting the field research: “Anthropologists are beginning to write about the intersubjective relations connecting the fieldworkers to informants. We do not just interview our research subjects, we *live* with them as part of their community for an extended period of time”³⁹ and alludes to the intimate relations he or other anthropologists maintained with their informants. This should raise a whole battery of questions related to scientific method of such research, particularly if the researcher declares his or her allegiance with the gay liberation movement.⁴⁰ All too often we see that findings on this subject are simply taken on the face value with the naïve trust that the scientific standards correspond to those which we apply in other disciplines.

Even without background in anthropology, one observes another recurring motive in the varied accounts of homosexuals in primitive cultures where their behaviour could be ascribed to personal identity as someone attracted to the same sex rather than to ritual behaviour, namely that whilst their behaviour was considered acceptable, their status was special. Their homoerotic make-up is something demonstrating special endowment and singles them out from the community, sometimes up to the point of reverence.⁴¹ But this status can hardly be an example of “normality” of homosexuality as it is pushed by today’s Western paradigm, which is something that Williams, despite much of his assurance how common and accepted homoeroticism is in other cultures, somewhat ingenuously reveals when explaining why gay anthropologists are in a better position to gain the trust of the research subjects: “Because native homosexuals often see themselves as different, sometimes as ‘outsiders’ in their own culture, they are likely to feel an immediate identity with other they perceive to be ‘like themselves’ – even if these persons are from a different culture.”⁴² Significant is that whilst many native Indian tribes in North America are known for recognising gender non-

³⁸ WILLIAMS, Walter Lee. Being Gay and Doing Research on Homosexuality in Non-Western Cultures. *Journal of Sex Research* 1993, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 115-20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁴⁰ Incidentally, in 2013 Williams was sentenced for five years in prison on the charge of possession of child pornography and sexual abuse of underage boys during his repeated stays in Thailand and the Philippines. Whilst it should not lead to generalisation of all homosexual anthropologists, it is something that should not be dismissed as merely accidental.

⁴¹ “In many cultures around the world, people are allowed to live their lives beyond conventional binaries; they need not adhere to the biological sex they were born into. These people are usually revered and there are special circumstances where individuals are allowed to shift their gender position.” In: ZEVALLOS, Zuleyka. *Rethinking Gender and Sexuality: Case Study of the Native American “Two Spirit” People*. (September 9, 2013) [2021-06-20].

<<https://othersociologist.com/2013/09/09/two-spirit-people/>>.

⁴² WILLIAMS, Walter Lee. Being Gay and Doing Research, p. 119.

conforming “two-spirited people”,⁴³ they – having their own jurisdiction – are only slowly joining in acceptance of the same-sex marriage legislation in the USA⁴⁴.

No matter what models of homosexuality we see in other cultures, be it existing or extinct, the most important thing is that one has to consider them within the context and only together with the whole culture. One extreme example is the ritualised homosexuality in many tribes in Melanesia⁴⁵ where we also see extreme segregation of sexes and where until relatively recently cannibalism was routinely practiced. Perhaps the other side of the Greek pederasty was the low status of women in Ancient Greece, which is convincingly captured by philosophers of the classical period, and so on. But even without any conspicuousities, we always have to look at the context with the whole culture, at the totality of values, explicit and implicit, within this culture. So to decide how acceptable and “normal” is a particular model of homosexuality for us in our culture is a question which completely transcends the remit of cultural anthropology and of any discipline of social sciences.

3.3 Foundations for the normalisation of homosexuality in the Western culture

Whilst it was in the 19th century Germany where the first theoretical steps towards normalisation of homosexuality were undertaken, the American gay liberation movement achieved the epochal break-through which proved to have a world-wide impact. It is not possible to retrace the whole historical overview of how the understanding of homosexuality has developed in the Western civilization, yet in the modern history there is one milestone which should not go unmentioned and it is the momentous decision of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in 1973, the cornerstone of the today’s normalisation paradigm. On the global stage, this validation was confirmed in 1992 by a similar step by the World Health Organisation.

Very briefly, let us recapitulate what happened on clinical terms. Homosexuality, up to December 1973 on the list of sexual deviations, was de-listed. The manual states that

⁴³ Cf. reference 42.

⁴⁴ In 2020, there were twelve nations – among them also Navajo, the largest – explicitly banning same-sex marriage. In:

⁴⁵ HERDT, Gilbert H. (ed). *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993.

“Homosexuality *per se* is one form of sexual behavior, and with other forms of sexual behavior which are not by themselves psychiatric disorders, are not listed in this nomenclature.”⁴⁶ At the same time, a new item was included: sexual orientation disorder [homosexuality] referring to a condition when somebody is in conflict with or disturbed by the fact that their sexual interest is directed primarily towards people of the same sex. In 1980, the category was redefined as ego-dystonic homosexuality to denote roughly the same (distinguished from ego-syntonic homosexuality). Finally in 1987 this condition disappears from the diagnostic manual of American psychiatrists and with this any reference to homosexuality.

It appears that the decision in 1973 remains the one carrying the most weight. One would expect that this ground-breaking moment would deserve more attention as an axis on which all of the subsequent equalisation developments are hanging. Yet the focus is remarkably low-key both in popular reference works and, more surprisingly, in academic sources. One obvious reason is that the significance of the decision, revolutionary in its times, has lost its punch with the rapid advance of the agenda. It is now no more than a key historical date in the context of the matter as it soon lost its legitimisation function when it was superseded by countless other steps which cemented the overall direction to the point that this does not require any legitimisation (or, in fact, that disputing accounts find it impossible to legitimise themselves other than by founding their authority in religion). Simply, it became overshadowed by other important milestones and lost its appeal as a point deserving meticulous enquiry. The other reason of this lack of interest might do with the notion that a specialist training in psychiatry or psychology would be necessary to get full insight into the background surrounding the ruling.

It is desirable to cast more light precisely on this turning point as it can be the case that it captures all key aspects of the ongoing controversy better than any other moment. I also argue that the lack of expertise in relevant disciplines is not to the detriment of this undertaking, quite to the contrary: psychiatry needs to be complemented and assisted by other fields of study in order to adequately interpret the change of direction in 1973. The actual underlying findings leading to the declassification, resting on the presumed evidence of two major sources – research conducted by Alfred Kinsey and by Evelyn Hooker – are also important but relatively less relevant. I propose to look at the issue through the lenses of selected authentic sources from the period.

⁴⁶ American Psychiatric Association. Homosexuality and Sexual Orientation Disturbance: Proposed Change in DSM-II (1973). Document Reference No. 730008.

Reminiscences of Charles Silverstein, an American gay psychologist and one of the leading figures of the gay liberation movement, are a useful prelude to our examination since they pithily express the gist of the issue. In his article *Are You Saying Homosexuality Is Normal?*⁴⁷ from 2008 he retrospectively recounts the events in the run up to the declassification in 1973. First of all, Silverstein is not reticent about the fierce lobbying preceding the ruling. He tells the story of “how we radical gay activists forced the psychiatrists to remove the scarlet ‘H’ from our lives” and acknowledges that “the decision to remove homosexuality as a mental illness was as much a political as a scientific act.”⁴⁸ Secondly, his account shows how extremely concisely the ruling can be summarised when he relates the exchange at the press conference between the APA president and a journalist following the announcement. At some stage, the journalist asks the president for clarification: ‘Are you saying that homosexuality is normal?’. To which the president retorts: ‘No, only that it is not abnormal.’⁴⁹

Surprisingly, the perusal of the internal position statement expounding the decision does not offer much more. In the three pages long document it says that homosexuality does not fulfil the description of mental health disorder following the given criteria: “for a mental or psychiatric condition to be considered a disorder, it must either regularly cause a subjective distress, or regularly be associated with some generalized impairment in social effectiveness and functioning”. Then the documents lay out its stance on the declassification – a passage which is worth quoting in full:

If homosexuality per se does not meet the criteria for a psychiatric disorder, what is it? Descriptively, it is one form of sexual behavior. Our profession need not now agree on its origin, significance, and value for human happiness when we acknowledge that by itself it does not meet the requirements for a psychiatric disorder. Similarly, by no longer listing it as a psychiatric disorder we are not saying that it is "normal" or as valuable as heterosexuality.

And on a different place:

What will be the effect of carrying out such a proposal? No doubt, homosexual activist groups will claim that psychiatry has at last recognized that homosexuality is as "normal" as heterosexuality. They will be wrong. In removing homosexuality per se from the nomenclature we are only recognizing that by itself homosexuality does not meet the criteria for being considered a psychiatric disorder. We will in no way be aligning ourselves with any particular viewpoint regarding the etiology or desirability of homosexual behavior.

⁴⁷ SILVERSTEIN, Charles. Are you saying homosexuality is normal? *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health* 2008, 12:3, 277-287.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 177.

Look back at those nearly fifty years since the decision reveals a chain of misinterpretation. In effect, APA has cut the link of homosexuality to psychiatry but also disavowed itself from any responsibility as to how it should actually be regarded. At the same time, the large society actually took the pronouncement of APA as confirming that homosexuality is not pathological, hence it is normal. Notable is that APA executed a complete U-turn on what in relation to homosexuality constitutes a disease: until now, ill was the homosexual; from now on, ill is the homosexual who is not happy to be homosexual and correspondingly, anyone else viewing homosexuality as a less desirable condition will soon be pathologised under the label of homophobia. Truly shocking, from the point of view of scientific rigor, is that this did not happen in a successive, evidence-based development but in a single move from one extreme pole to the other, without coherent justification.

Very soon afterwards, the American Journal of Psychotherapy subjects the ruling of APA to a scathing criticism. Stanley Lesse bemoans the decision in the editorial *To Be or Not to Be an Illness? That Is the Question – Or – The Status of Homosexuality* from January 1974: "... APA has performed a disservice to society in general and to psychiatry and psychology in particular."⁵⁰ First of all, Lesse refers to the confusing "not abnormal, not normal" position and points to the dangerous lacuna which the definition creates in that it indicates what homosexuality is not but it does not indicate what it is.⁵¹ Lesse finds fault with the fact that the criteria of psychiatric disorder are applied in a strikingly different manner than in other areas.

Hugely enlightening is the last source from this time, an interview between two leading psychiatrists in New York Times published as *The A.P.A. Ruling on Homosexuality: The Issue Is Subtle, The Debate Is Still On*.⁵² Robert L. Spitzer is one of the promoters of the declassification, Irving Bieber is a staunch opponent. On two places Spitzer reiterates his magic formula about homosexuality not being abnormal but also not normal. First of all, Spitzer talks about illness and disorders within psychiatry and characterises them as condition which cause distress or impair social functioning. From this point of view, homosexuality is not a disorder; Spitzer proposes to view it descriptively as a form of sexual behaviour. Bieber insists on distinguishing between psychiatric illness, which homosexuality is not, and disorder in the sense of certain malfunction. Looking at the biological role of sexuality, then conditions such as

⁵⁰ LESSE, Stanley. *To Be or Not to Be an Illness? That Is the Question – Or – The Status of Homosexuality* (editorial). *The American Journal of Psychotherapy* 1974, Vol. XXVIII, No. I (January 1974), 1-3.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵² *The A.P.A. Ruling on Homosexuality: The Issue Is Subtle, The Debate Is Still On* (December 23, 1973) [2021-04-21].

< <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/23/archives/the-issue-is-subtle-the-debate-still-on-the-apa-ruling-on.html> >.

homosexuality or frigidity must be considered a disorder to the function – regardless of the fact whether they cause subjective stress to the person in question or not.

From the authentic sources reacting on the ruling it is sufficiently clear that it was only a half-baked attempt to rectify the injustice towards homosexuals – there is no doubt that the automatic pathologising was an scientific error and injustice. It seems that there was certain intellectual laziness in thinking the matters to the end. The declassification ruling was conceptually flawed. This is not to say that the classification of homosexuality as a disorder was correct, this is to say that it was an inadequate attempt to rectify the matter. Spitzer says in the interview this condition is not abnormal but also not normal and adds that “normal” and “abnormal” are not psychiatric terms. We have here a conflation of scientific and value terms which until this day has not been satisfactorily resolved.

3.4 Tensions within the current normalisation paradigm of homosexuality

The most reliable and perhaps the only way to look at why homosexuality should not be equalised with heterosexuality is to look at statistical observations related to homosexual behaviour. What is to be emphasised is that these are statistical differences so they should be by no means generalised. The first area is the dynamic of relationships in couples. Here it is paramount to consequently distinguish males and females and never just speak about homosexuals in an abstract way. Some of the consistently proven differences compared to heterosexual couples are for instance: significantly higher levels of promiscuity in male couples, moderately higher promiscuity of female couples, lower rates of stability in female couples and higher levels of intimate partner violence in female couples.⁵³

Peculiar is the gendered difference of these four findings, suggesting that it is something inherent to them. The apparent conclusion is, disregarding the obvious disposition for procreation, that the male-female coupling simply *differs* from male-male and female-female couple and that it deserves to be considered having a unique status.

⁵³ Timothy Dailey colates widely accepted research studies on all of the parameters. DAILEY, Timothy J. *Comparing the Lifestyles of Homosexual Couples to Married Couples* [2021-06-30]. <https://uniteproduction.s3.amazonaws.com/tenants/mtcalvaryhuron/attachments/75957/Comparing_the_Lifestyles_of_Homosexual_Couples_to_Married_Couples.pdf>.

Let's take the first item, the male gay promiscuity. What do the LGBT activists have to say on this themselves? In 2021, this is no taboo and it actually tends to be viewed as something negative or at least problematic by male gays themselves. One is the self-help book *The Gay Man's Guide to Open and Monogamous Marriage* by gay psychotherapist Michael Kimmel.⁵⁴ Already the division of the book where the section Exploring Open Marriage is discussed before Exploring Monogamy speaks volumes. In the introduction, the author candidly admits that "Marriage between two men is – in my experience as a psychotherapist – dramatically different from a heterosexual marriage."⁵⁵ He elaborates on the unique challenges of gay marriage, mostly to the effect that it is a "double testosterone marriage".⁵⁶ But in my view, is the following general observation he makes on same-sex couples in general which echoes the insights of Roger Scruton and which puts a finger on the grounds for the statistical disparities in the coupled dynamics: "There's a great sense of familiarity with your partner when you share gender, but there can also be a lack of 'mystery' and, as a result, boredom and predictability may rear their ugly heads."⁵⁷

The gay psychiatrist Jack Turban discusses the detrimental effects of casual sex in *We need to talk about how Grindr is affecting gay men's mental health*.⁵⁸ Grindr is a social networking app specialised for gay men. Turban's trial shows about 100 profiles within a one-mile radius of his flat in Boston keen for an instant date, all searchable according to the body type, preferred position and HIV status. Turban describes the mechanism of addiction to this app through a cycle of clicking through the profiles, hookup, regret, feeling lonely and depressed and relieving the low feel by resorting to the app again. John Pachankis, an LGBTQ mental health expert, is quoted by Turban: "Apps like Grindr are often both a cause and a consequence of gay and bisexual men's disproportionately poorer mental health. It's a truly vicious cycle."⁵⁹

This takes us to another area where homosexuality manifests itself as an anomaly: the consistent health disparities in LGBT individuals compared with the wide population, which is something widely recognised. To quote one example: the US National Alliance of Mental Illness states that LGB adults are more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition and nearly twice as likely

⁵⁴ KIMMEL, Michael Dale. *The Gay Man's Guide to Open and Monogamous Marriage*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2017.

⁵⁵ KIMMEL, Michael Dale. *The Gay Man's Guide*, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ KIMMEL, Michael Dale. *The Gay Man's Guide*, p. 178.

⁵⁸ TURBAN, Jack. *We need to talk about how Grindr is affecting gay men's mental health* (April 4, 2018) [2021-04-21].

<<https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/4/4/17177058/grindr-gay-men-mental-health-psychiatrist>>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

to experience a substance use disorder.⁶⁰ Any discrepancy in physical and mental health is then typically explained with the *minority stress theory* (somewhat simplified: prejudice and rejection are the root cause of any criteria where the minority group is faring worse), often as the unique cause.⁶¹ Yet it is apparent, just looking at what Pachankis said, that at least partly the homosexual behaviour is a factor to consider in the causation.

Another perspective is offered by the large-scale Dutch comparative study on mental health from 2014,⁶² which specifically focused on establishing whether the disparities diminished over time with the increased acceptance of homosexuality (the Netherlands was the first country to introduce same-sex marriage in 2001). The study comes to the following conclusion: “There were more disparities in the prevalence of disorders based on sexual attraction than based on sexual behavior. Comparing these results with a previous study⁶³ showed that no significant changes over time have occurred in the pattern of health disparities.”⁶⁴ So it appears more research is needed and above all alternative models to interpret the disparities. Recently, voices are raising in academia tentatively pondering whether there might be other causes to the disparities than the minority stress.⁶⁵

However, on the level of the public discourse the prejudice and discrimination of homosexual are the only accepted cause. If one points to the fact that same-sex couples need to be considered essentially different from opposite sex couples, it is typically labelled as *homophobic*. I consider the concept of homophobia an essential component of the current paradigm without which it would not be complete. Critique of the pseudoscientific term *homophobia* thus constitutes another important – if not the most important – pillar of the opposition to the current normalisation of homosexuality. It is surprising how little attention this term and its use receives by those towards whom it is directed when non-mainstream views are voiced. Instead of carefully dissecting it, those who are accused of being homophobes are complicit in legitimising this concept

⁶⁰ Cf. *National Alliance of Mental Health / LGBTQ* [2021-04-21]. < <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/LGBTQI>>.

⁶¹ Cf. Federal Agency in Civic Education:

⁶² SANDFORT, Theo G. M. – DE GRAAF, Ron. – TEN HAVE, Margreet. – RANSOME, Yusuf. – SCHNABEL, Paul. Same-Sex Sexuality and Psychiatric Disorders in the Second Netherlands Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study (NEMESIS-2). *LGBT Health* Nov 2015, 1(4):292-301.

⁶³ Cf. SANDFORT, Theo G. M. – DE GRAAF, Ron. – BIJL, Rob V. – SCHNABEL, Paul. Same-Sex Sexual Behavior and Psychiatric Disorders. Findings From the Netherlands Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study (NEMESIS). *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2001; 58(1):85-91.

⁶⁴ SANDFORT, Theo G. M. – DE GRAAF, Ron. – TEN HAVE, Margreet. – RANSOME, Yusuf. – SCHNABEL, Paul. NEMESIS-2.

⁶⁵ Cf. BAILEY, Michael J. The Minority Stress Model Deserves Reconsideration, Not Just Extension. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour* (2020) 49:2265-2268.

by vigorously attesting to not being homophobic prior to articulating their critical stance.

No one wants to be considered homophobic but what actually constitutes homophobia? Oxford Dictionary defines this word as “dislike of or prejudice against gay people”. Cambridge Dictionary says: “a fear or dislike of gay people” and Merriam-Webster “irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or gay people”. Homophobia, despite of the word phobia, is clearly not a clinical term such as claustrophobia or agoraphobia.

Its unclear contours then drive the need to categorise all that might fall under this label, be it for application in praxis or within academic discourse. For instance, LGBT Resource Centre at University of Rhode Island distinguishes four distinct but interrelated types of homophobia: personal (or internalized, in case of a homosexual person), interpersonal, institutional and cultural.⁶⁶ Another tool aimed at combating homophobia among teachers then suggests the following taxonomy: cognitive, affective, behavioural and liberal.⁶⁷ Frida Lyonga in an scholarly article distinguishes as many as seven types: radical, prohibitionist, denialist, avoidance, morbidity, tepid, and veiled.⁶⁸ The sheer variety of taxonomis of homophobia demonstrates that the whole concept is flawed.

Lastly, what happens if the homosexual himself is unhappy about his or her state of attraction to the same sex? Typically, this is described as *internalised homophobia*. Yet the American Psychological Association, one of the major voices shaping the agenda, surprisingly does allow for an alternative and relatively lesser-known perspective. When describing approaches to the so-called SOCE (sexual orientation change efforts), terms *organismic and telic congruence*⁶⁹ are introduced. Given the value anchoring of the person in question, there might be *organismic congruence* preferred, so striving to be in accordance with one’s own psycho-physical set-up, or *telic congruence*, striving to be in accordance with the telos of one’s own existence, with one’s own values. The APA does recognize that neither psychology nor psychiatry can adjudicate here. Yet the fact that the right to direct oneself according to organismic or telic congruency is not recognised universally towards all conditions, not only a condition which one

⁶⁶ Cf. University of Rhode Island. The Committee to Eliminate Heterosexism and Homophobia. *Article on Homophobia*. (February 13, 2013) [2021-06-30].

<<https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1179&context=cmt-e-eliminate>>.

⁶⁷ Cf. PENA TOSSO, Melani. Diferencias de los niveles de homofobia del futuro profesorado hacia los gays y los lesbianas. *Len Online* 2013, 5 (1) 35-46.

⁶⁸ Cf. LYONGA, Frida. Shades of Homophobia: A Framework for Analyzing Negative Attitudes Toward Homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality* 2019, 68:10, 1664-1684.

⁶⁹ American Psychological Association. *Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation* (2009) [2021-06-20].

<<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf>>.

experiences personally, is illogical. What is needed is genuine respect to people with same-sex attraction as human beings and agents of morality. But we cannot prohibit having a particular value guided view on homosexuality.

3.5 Towards a more viable paradigm – functional outline

It seems that the current paradigm is an outright reversal of any previous cautious interpretation of homosexuality, be it in the form of tabu, sin or mental disorder. It intends to overwrite everything which was perceived as negative with a plus sign. That is where its weakness lies as in the pursuit to provide an approving account it erases those areas where there is evidence that a homosexual person in various respects is worse off compared with a heterosexual. Now, in our civilizational sphere, the return to one of the previous models is unthinkable, even taking into account that there is very likely to be a swing from the current extreme back into the opposite direction, although probably not in the near future. Any future broadly accepted understanding of homosexuality will, in my view, have to subsume and integrate the contrasting insights of the preceding models without neither overtaking their totalitarian claims nor erasing them from the picture altogether. Looking at the various perspectives offered in this chapter., perhaps the following points may serve as guidelines for integrating homosexuality in society. I propose to depart from two positions, each of them only thinkable when complemented by the other:

- I. Homosexuality, understood as lived permanent attraction to the same sex, and homosexual unions in many measurable parameters statistically significantly differ from heterosexuality and from heterosexual unions;
- II. Recognition that for the secular society, an unambiguous and universally shared moral evaluation of homosexuality is neither possible nor desirable.

Another formulation of this functional consensus could be summarised as follows: firstly, it is sufficient to recognise that homosexuality cannot be normalised in the sense of equalisation with heterosexuality; secondly, its moral evaluation should be limited to the remit of each and every one avoiding imposing this view on others. One can hear the objection that this is not saying anything else than that sexual orientation should simply remain a private matter. Yet there is more to it. Most importantly, such formulation reflects that any harmful extremes which we have seen in the past should be avoided.

Excursus: Catholic Church

I mentioned in the introduction that the method and positions reached will be reconcilable with the Catholic teaching. Whilst this paper does not explicitly deal with the issue from the point of ethics, I believe that the perspective of this thesis and the wide research I have conducted very well enables me to make observations on the possible development in the Catholic Church. How could such a sustainable and theological development look like? Czech moral theologian Libor Ovečka, SDB, considers this in his text from 2008. Ovečka provides an overview of all important magisterial documents on the issue from 1975 till 2005. Assessing them, he concludes that if they might have been any indication towards a more accepting stance to homosexuality, the most recent documents definitely reverse his trend. Yet looking at the development on the teaching in sexuality and its role within marriage, Ovečka considers conceivable that the Church teaching on homosexuality may develop.⁷⁰

How might such development look? Putting aside any revisionist approaches, we may look for those which are more careful in their reasoning and do not argue for a flat reversal of the teaching. Such example could be Gareth Moore, OP, with his work *Question of Truth*. Admittedly, he does come to the conclusion that “if we look at cogent biblical or natural-law arguments against homosexual relationships and acts in general, we will not find them: they aren’t any”⁷¹ but immediately afterwards Moore goes on to assure: “It does not entail that it is good to be gay and that Christian moral teachers who teach otherwise are wrong. It entails only that there is no good reason to think otherwise.”⁷² So whilst Moore shows some of the arguments against homosexuality in the Scripture and tradition to be not sufficiently convincing, he is careful not to take an explicitly pro-gay stance. But the problem is that Moore’s carefully measured position is then used, or better misused, as a stepping stone and legitimisation for theological approaches within queer theology which in many ways completely break away from orthodoxy.⁷³ It is beyond the scope of this thesis but it

⁷⁰ Cf. OVEČKA, Libor. Oblouk vývoje církevní nauky o homosexualitě a homosexuálním jednání od roku 1975 do 2005. In VYBÍRAL, Jan (ed.). *Pastorální a etické výzvy v oblasti manželství, rodiny a sexuality*. Brno: CDK, 2008, p. 108-118.

⁷¹ MOORE, Gareth. *A Question of Truth: Christianity and Homosexuality*. London: Continuum, 2003, p. 281.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ One example is LOUGHLIN, Gerard (ed.) *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. The book is dedicated to Gareth Moore. In the introduction, the editor acknowledges Moore as an inspiring force and a few paragraphs later he vigorously develops an argument in favour of gay marriage.

seems that any moderate or nuanced position always contains the risk that it will swing into an outright revisionist one.

So it looks that the Catholic Church cannot ever re-interpret the overall negative view of the Bible. But at the same time, maybe it does not need to condemn homosexuality and overfocus on this particular ethical matter. If there are two Catholics of the same sex living together in a discrete way and not making any pronouncements or stipulating requirements, what is there to say? Some are living in continence, some not. Whilst the teaching is clear, it is not the community's matter to further interfere in such situation.

Catholic teaching on homosexuality, as any other teaching, is sound and truthful in that it offers a sure path to salvation. The Biblical injunctions against sodomy simply cannot be lightly dismissed. At best, they can be understood as a vaguely articulated safeguard⁷⁴ against normalising homosexuality. But it is also true that the Bible is not the only locus to fully apprehend the phenomenon of homosexuality.⁷⁵ Any further development will take time and patience, there are no quick fixes. And I expect, given the impossibility of . It will only bear good fruits if we all are conscious of avoiding any pitfalls of falling into an extreme.

Conclusion

In the preface I put the question whether the trend towards same-sex marriage can be reverted. In chapter one, I have shown to this aim those opposing it will have to substantially re-shape and expand their strategy should this have a chance and this has been outlined chapters two to four. Realistically, it is also necessary to be aware of the limited impact of argumentative approaches as the issue is highly emotionally charged – it is very difficult to lead a debate with someone who does not see the need to justify their stance other than with convictions like ‘Love is love’ or ‘Everyone should be able to get married’. It is difficult to lead a debate with somebody who insists that term ‘birthing people’ should be used instead of ‘women’. First of all, we need to analyse the situation and how it came about from the point of philosophy, theology, history of ideas, political theory etc. Secondly, this lack of rationality surrounding issues around sexual orientation and more recently also gender identity should be countered with even heftier push for clarity, evidence, logic and congruency with other fields of study. From

⁷⁴ With the exception of Romans 1, 26-27, which stands out among places condemning homosexual activity. It does not express disgust at the physicality of the homosexual conduct but in more calm language puts across its non-acceptability. It is also the only place in the Bible where not only male but also female homosexual behaviour is negatively valued.

⁷⁵ The Bible does not know the term homosexuality, neither does it know the term or the concept of heterosexuality, it only knows heterosexual unions.

my point of view, overly dwelling on the moral aspect of the matter is unhelpful as it only disengages the broad public and undermines its receptiveness and secondly, it leads to complacency which does not produce much more than bemoaning the decline of Western society. My central claim is that we can and must demonstrate the erroneousness of same-sex marriage with its underlying concept of homosexuality not only from the position of faith, and not only on the background of natural law, but rigorously and extensively in an in-depth analysis of the concepts which are providing the scientific underpinning of the increasingly disruptive agenda.

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