6. Family Matters

This chapter is concerned with family affairs. Relationships to family members, especially parents, and starting a family of one's own were prominent themes in the biographical narratives, as were more general reflections about conceptualizations of partnership, family, and procreation. The following discussion approaches family and the space of the family home from two perspectives. The first part of this chapter analyzes interviewees' relationships to their *families of origin* and how they interpret and negotiate their role in them as sexually non-conforming family members. The second part focuses on interviewees' visions of creating their own *queer families*.

In this chapter, I draw on two theoretical perspectives on family, from feminist migration research and queer theory respectively. In migration research, the family is usually seen as a 'basic unit' of solidary networks and personal security. Since migrations are always accompanied by risks and insecurities, families are understood to be of particular importance in diasporic and transnational contexts (PASSAGEN 2014). While much migration research remains grounded in heteropatriarchal and biogenetic notions of family, feminist scholars have begun to formulate alternative perspectives that allow for differentiated interventions. The Swiss Working Group Migration and Gender, *PASSAGEN*, for instance, suggests conceptualizing family ties as three social practices: *inheriting*, *caring*, and *providing*. According to this view, family ties are typified by the fact that they persist beyond a single lifetime, which is implemented through the practice of *inheriting*. Not only goods and assets but also immaterial things like stories, traditions, and responsibilities can be passed on. The two other practices, *caring* and *providing*, are associated with the responsibilities of a family member. A typical characteristic of these practices is that they do not rely on immediate reciprocity but may change over the course of a lifetime – such as a child who later cares for her ageing parents. *PASSAGEN* (ibid:207) further argues that, while the responsibility to inherit, care, and provide within the family is mediated socially to a certain degree (such as through cultural values and laws), the exact determination of what a family obligation entails remains predominantly a matter of intra-familial negotiation, relegating family affairs largely to the private arena.

This notion of family usefully separates 'doing family' from biological kinship and normative gender roles. Nevertheless, feminist migration studies, too, have largely con-

tinued to work from the assumption that families are based on heterosexuality, biogenetics, and the nuclear family model. Queer theorists have taken issue with such essentialist perspectives on the family. Based on the insight that family lives in Western societies increasingly depart from normative models of the family (although these models have in reality never been as pervasive as generally suggested), queer critics have turned their focus to patchwork families, collective households, and 'rainbow families,' asking how these multiple forms of living together and procreating that reach beyond biogenetics, heterosexual couplehood, and the heteronormative ideal of the mother-father-child family disrupt previous conceptualizations of sexuality, kinship, and gender.

This body of work has been particularly influenced by Kath Weston's *Families We Choose* (1997 [1991]), in which the author examines the collective coming-out story circulating among gays and lesbians in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1980s.[1] Coming out (collectively), lesbians and gays moved out of their family homes and cultural isolation into a new kind of kinship and solidarity. These 'families we choose' were based on a sense of social and emotional belonging rather than heteropatriarchy and biogenetics. These chosen families became of particular significance in the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis, during which gay men could often not rely on their families of origin (nor the state) for support.

Weston herself likens such queer kinship ties to diasporic contexts:

> The families I saw gay men and lesbians creating in the Bay Area tended to have extremely fluid boundaries, not unlike kinship organization among sectors of the African-American, American Indian, and white working class. David Schneider and Raymond Smith (1987:42) have characterized this type of organization as one that can 'create kinship ties out of relationships which are originally ties of friendship.'
> —Kath Weston (1997 [1991]:108)

Such reflections eventually enabled the formulation of the concept of *queer diaspora* (Fortier 2002), which likens queer people's shared 'imagined communities' based on sexual identity to immigrants' shared imagined communities based on ethnicity or nationality (see also Chapter 3.4). However, despite the early establishment of this conceptual link between migration and sexuality, the proliferating body of literature about queer family formation long failed to view family from the perspective of international migrants (but see Cantú 2009, Manalansan 2006 and 2003, Chávez 2011, White 2013). That is, while queer people's realities are hardly considered in contributions focusing on family in migration studies, migrant experiences are rarely present in the queer critique of family.

This chapter inserts itself into this very gap. It takes up the suggestion by *PASSAGEN* to think of family ties as a result of the practices of inheriting, caring, and providing, but extends it by way of the queer critique. In other words, I use the conceptualization of family as a set of social practices (rather than biogenetics) in order to disrupt heteropatriarchal notions of kinship and lineage. Within this framework, I am mainly interested in two questions: How is queer migrant women's access to the social practices

1 See also the discussion of Weston's *Get Thee to a Big City* in Chapter 3.3.5.

that enable kinship ties regulated through dominant ideas about family and through normative or resistant family practices? And: What strategies do queer migrant women devise to gain access to these family practices, and under what circumstances do they dissociate themselves from them?

The first part of the chapter explores queer migrant women's relationships with their *families of origin*. Here I argue that queer migrant women are positioned in fundamentally different ways than their heterosexual counterparts vis-à-vis their families of origin. Rather than a frequent source of support and comfort, the family and the family home emerge as ambivalent sites of negotiation and disidentification, which for the women interviewed results in restricted access to the practices of inheriting, caring, and providing within the family of origin.

The second part of the chapter examines how queer migrant women envision and implement *their own queer families*. It discusses how the ways in which the women's access to 'doing family' are constrained by heteronormative legislation, discourses, and practices around partnership and reproduction that persist both in the country of origin and in Switzerland, and the transnational strategies they have developed to still implement their queer families. This discussion exposes that queer family matters are not private but rather are negotiated in a variety of political arenas.

6.1 Family Relations: The Family of Origin

6.1.1 National and Diasporic Sexualities Revisited

Because this study primarily focused on women of the first migration generation, the majority of interviewees' families of origin lived outside Switzerland, mostly in the countries where interviewees had been born and had grown up. Other families or family members lived in Switzerland, mainly, but not only, those of the few interviewees who were born in Switzerland. Before embarking on the discussion of interviewees' accounts of their relationships and negotiations with their families of origin – and especially with their parents –, I would like to put forward three considerations for contextualization.

The first consideration is to recall the discussion of the global negotiations of sexualities in Chapter 3 (see Chapters 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). There it was concluded that homophobias are not 'essential' to, for instance, 'Muslim,' 'African,' 'Eastern European,' or 'Balkan' cultures, as trending homonationalist discourses in Switzerland suggest. Instead, where homophobias occur in dominant discourses in certain countries outside the West, these must importantly also be read as legacies of colonialism and its continuities, and as results of heteropatriarchal nationalisms, which centrally define national identities through the juxtaposition of colonial versus precolonial and/or subaltern (female) sexualities. There is nothing 'essential' about these homophobias; on the other hand, they are not purely Western imports, either.[2] Furthermore, as also laid out

2 As discussed in Chapter 3, to frame homophobias as a Western import in (ex-)colonies would be to deny the differences and contestations of genders, gender roles, and sexualities *within* (ex-)colonies and in their precolonial histories, and would furthermore fail to account for the fact

in Chapter 3, Western perceptions of homophobias outside the West often disregard progressive LGBT legislation in many non-Western countries and ignore differences of positionalities with*in* non-Western societies; especially also *queer* positionalities. Particularly, these perceptions often fail to acknowledge same-sex cultures and practices that do not match the image of the "Gay International," whose rapid globalization, as Joseph Massad (2002) contends, is endangering certain same-sex cultures and practices and the queer people practicing them (see also Chapters 3.4.2 and 3.4.3).

The second consideration concerns *diasporic* sexualities. As Gayatri Gopinath states in her analysis of South Asian diasporas, as of yet not much sustained attention has been paid "to the ways in which nationalist framing of women's sexuality are translated into the diaspora, and how these renderings of diasporic women's sexuality are in turn central to the production of nationalism in the home region" (Gopinath 2005:9). As an example, Gopinath refers to the work of Tejaswini Niranjana, who showed how *anticolonial nationalists* in India constructed Indian women in Trinidad (thousands of whom worked as indentured workers in the early 20th century) as amoral and licentious. This negatively connoted figure of the diasporic Indian woman was contrasted with the chaste, pure, 'authentic' Indian woman 'at home' in India, who in this way became the emblem of Indian national(ist) morality. Taking Niranjana's argument beyond gender, Gopinath calls for including sexuality in the equation, that is, also to denaturalize *heterosexuality* as a central structuring principle of such national and diasporic female figures (ibid:9). Gopinath further discusses a number of instances demonstrating how *diasporic* male elites "attempted to counter nationalist framings of the diaspora as the inauthentic Other to the nation by positioning [diasporic] women's bodies as the site of an imagined communal purity and authenticity" (ibid:167). Diasporic masculinists hence sought to counteract the negative depiction of the diaspora by homeland discourses by themselves constructing 'their own' diasporic woman as the epitome of 'Indianness.'

However, diasporic communities not only come under moral pressure from such heteropatriarchal homeland nationalisms but are also targeted by racism in Western host societies, which stereotypes and marginalizes migrant communities. In her examination of negotiations of morale and sexuality between Filipino immigrant parents and their daughters in the U.S., Yen Le Espiritu argues that in general, diasporic evocations and reconfigurations of homeland culture are of particular significance in immigrant communities since "not only [do they] form a lifeline to the home country and a basis for group identity in a new country, [they] also serve as a base from which immigrants stake their political and sociocultural claims to their new country" (Espiritu 2003:157). Like Gopinath and other queer feminist migration scholars, Espiritu sees *gender* and especially the control of young women's *sexuality* as "a key to immigrant identity and a vehicle for racialized immigrants to assert cultural superiority over the dominant group" (ibid). Again, this superiority is centrally established by locating national purity and authenticity in diasporic women's bodies, pitted against the figure of the 'Western' woman, who is depicted as licentious and sexually corrupt. (Paradoxically this image of the 'Western'

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that the definition of genders and sexualities must be understood as an ongoing negotiation between different groups, among them ex-colonizers and native populations.

woman mirrors the image of the diasporic woman as depicted by homeland nationalists discussed above – which demonstrates the relational nature of constructions of gender and sexuality.) Such evocations of home culture, Espiritu argues, represent a "'politics of location' – how immigrants use literal or symbolic ties to the homeland as a form of *resistance* to places and practices in the host country that are patently 'not home'" (ibid, emphasis added; see also Holmes 2009). But these evocations of homeland culture come at a cost for women. As Espiritu points out, "the levation of Filipina chastity (especially that of young women) has the effect of reinforcing masculinist and patriarchal power in the name of a greater ideal of national and ethnic self-respect" (ibid:158). Espiritu continues:

> Filipino families forge cultural resistance against racial oppression by stressing female chastity and sacrifice, yet they reinforce patriarchal power and gendered oppression by hinging ethnic and racial pride on the performance of gender subordination. This form of cultural resistance severely restricts women's lives, particularly those of the second generation, and casts the family as a site of potentially the most intense conflict and oppressive demands in immigrant lives. (Espiritu 2003:178)

Such gendered and sexualized discursive politics of diasporic communities locating national culture and morale in women's bodies must hence be viewed in light of two contexts: in the context of *heteropatriarchal homeland nationalisms* (sometimes, but not always, shaped in the context of anticolonial movements), which tend to denigrate diasporic women in particular; and in the context of *racism in the host society*, against which diasporic communities resist by discursively establishing cultural and moral superiority over mainstream society.

The effects of these discursive formations also became manifest in the search for participants for this study. In the course of this search, I contacted around two dozen NGOs addressing migrants, most of which were self-governed NGOs specifically addressing migrant women of a certain nationality, region, or ethnicity. In these interactions I encountered a far-reaching lack of knowledge of and about queer community members, but in several cases also implicit or explicit negative attitudes towards homosexuality. With one exception, none of the representatives I contacted knew of or about non-heterosexual women within their diasporic communities. (As detailed in the introduction to this book, I did not use the terms "queer" or "lesbian" in my communications but in this context rather spoke or wrote more vaguely of "women who are in relationships with other women.") Also, with two exceptions, the representatives of these organizations refused to put up the call for the study in their bureaus or centers, at their events or on their websites. None of these organizations knew about any events, websites, or groups addressing queer community members, and only one representative knew any queer community members personally. On multiple occasions exponents of organizations self-governed by migrant women warned me emphatically of the profound taboos around homosexuality in their communities, and two explicitly expressed doubts that 'such women' existed in their communities at all.

When speaking to the organizations, on more than one occasion it transpired that the mere expression of the possibility of queer women existing within the folds of their community was perceived as a threat to the positive image these organizations at-

tempted to construct of their community vis-à-vis Swiss mainstream society (and me as its representative). These interactions hence confirmed Espiritu's theory that diasporic communities attempt to construct positive self-images in order to mitigate the negative effects of racism. One instance was particularly illustrative of this: When I asked a representative of a self-governed South Asian women's organization whether she knew of any members who were in a relationship with a woman, and with whom I could possibly speak in the context of this research, the representative initially confirmed that indeed there were always a lot of women present at the organization's center, and that they were all helpful and would surely be more than willing to talk to me anytime. Suspecting she had misunderstood I clarified the part about the women-to-women relationships. This changed the tone of my interlocutor, and she told me that no "such women" existed within their community. The female community members were hence initially represented stereotypically – feminine, nice, available – and, as it turned out when sexuality was directly addressed, implicitly always already heterosexual. Stereotypical femininity and heterosexuality hence emerged as crucial structuring principles of these female nationalized subjects. As the data discussed here testifies to, such images work to the detriment of 'real' diasporic women, girls, and daughters – queer or not – as they become subject to control and moral pressure. Within this discursive practice, queer community members become impossible subjects: Seeing that the clients targeted by these organizations are framed as always already heterosexual, this implicitly renders these spaces exclusive of (openly) queer community members. In the light of such representational strategies of resistance it was not surprising that this 'search channel' did not result in any interviews.[3]

The third and last preliminary consideration is to recall that many 'Swiss' families in Switzerland, too, react negatively to learning that their daughters are same-sex oriented (Caprez and Nay 2008, Stefan 1975, see Chapter 2.2). In sum, in light of the three considerations presented here, it is therefore not valid to outsource homophobia to racialized Others and their communities, as homonationalist discourses in Western Europe do. Taking these considerations as the backdrop against which interviewees' narratives of their relationships and negotiations with their parents and families (both in Switzerland and in their countries of origin) and with their diasporic communities (Chapter 7) must be read, I now continue to queer migrant women's accounts of 'doing family.'

3 Note that longterm participant observation in these organizations (versus – mostly – phone calls and also e-mails as used here) is likely to have yielded different results, as the building of relationships within these organizations might have enabled access to interviewees.

6.1.2 Family Relations: Introduction

Many interviewees describe themselves as "family persons," regardless of whether they grew up in a nuclear family or in a busy multi-generational house, sharing rooms with siblings. At the same time, most interviewees migrated by themselves, so that the connection to their family was disrupted, with no replacement; only few research participants joined family members abroad. Particularly those who grew up in busy family homes found it, or still find it, exceedingly difficult to adjust to the spatial and social isolation that accompanies the individualistic lifestyle in Western countries. This sense of solitude especially dominates narratives about the initial phase of the migration, but in some cases – aggravated by the multiple mechanisms of social exclusion faced in Switzerland – the original sense of isolation has increased rather than diminished over the years. Against this backdrop it is not surprising that participants almost never cut the ties to their family of origin in the long run in the face of negative reactions to their sexual orientation. Beyond the affective ties and the social capital entailed in family membership, they often depended on their families for financial support, at least in the initial stages of migration, but also in the longer term – only few interviewees sent remittances back home.

Especially parents reacted negatively to the news of their daughters' dissident sexual orientation. This dynamic renders many queer migrants' relationships to their families highly ambivalent: Caught between love for and the affective, social, or financial necessity to stay connected to their family on the one hand and rejection based on sexuality on the other, interviewees often moved intra-familial negotiations about family relationships and sexuality to the center of their biographical narratives. This sub-chapter discusses these negotiations and ambivalences. From these accounts, the family generally emerges as a locus of power through which both normative and dissident sexual identities are produced. In most cases, this means that the family home represented a site of production of normative gender roles and heterosexual prescriptions that have become normalized as undisputable 'traditional' or 'cultural' values against which the daughter's, granddaughter's, or sister's emerging sexual dissidence is measured. The resulting sense of confinement, unbelonging, and rejection on the part of the sexually non-conforming family member fuelled plans to migrate. In some cases, however, family homes also represented a protected "queer island in a heterosexual sea" (Caprez and Nay 2008:264, my translation, see below), creating a space within which the queer family member is enabled to develop her dissident sexuality against the broader heteronormativity prevailing in the given social context.[4]

4 I consider members of the 'family of origin' all those with whom interviewees grew up fully or in part sharing 'family ties.' In my sample this was mainly biological parents and siblings, but also grandparents, stepfathers or -mothers, and in one case foster parents.

6.1.3 "We are taught to be sacrificing ourselves for our families' sake": Family, Heteronormativity

Family members, and especially parents (biological or not), mostly exerted tremendous pressure on their daughters to follow a heteronormative prescript, that is, to marry a man and have children. *"[Mein Vater] hat immer so gesagt, 'Ja, solltest du nicht jemanden finden und heiraten und Kinder bekommen und so was?'* – "My father always said, like, 'Shouldn't you find someone and marry and have children and the like?'" Ayesha Umar reports about her otherwise very liberal father. In Augusta Wakari's family everybody goes "gnagnagnagnagna," nagging at her to eventually find a man and marry, despite her openly different inclinations. To reach this end, Augusta Wakari's family blackmailed her lovers and eventually sent her to Europe in order to separate her from her girlfriend. "When will I see a grandchild?" used to be a recurrent question in Laura Georg's conversations with her father before she came out to him, while her mother urged her to *"wieder mal einen Rock anziehen"* – "put on a skirt for a change," enforcing heteronormativity indirectly via normative gender stereotypes. Other family members psychologically blackmailed their queer children and siblings: Leyla Haddad's mother blamed her for not granting her old and sick father the grandchildren he desired, and Augusta Wakari's sister associated their father's heart problem with Augusta Wakari's declaration that she intends to marry her female partner in Switzerland and have children with her.

None of the participants in this study were disowned by their family when they learned about their daughter's dissident sexuality, but the family's reactions were often extremely painful nonetheless. *"Ich kann dich dafür nicht hassen. Du bist immer noch meine Tochter"* – "I can't hate you for this. You are still my daughter," one father said. The most common reaction was refusing to acknowledge the information altogether and to increase the pressure to marry a man and procreate; ignoring the differing sexual orientation; declaring it a phase or a curable illness; or reminding the daughters that homosexuality was a religious sin in the expectation that this would induce a change in 'attitude' and an adjustment of 'choices.' Such temporary and anti-identitarian conceptualizations of homosexuality created pressure on the queer family members to 'convert' to a heterosexual life, sometimes over years or even decades – no matter whether the family lived close or far. This stands in stark contrast to most interviewees' own perceptions of their sexualities, which they experienced as an unalterable fact rather than a choice.

The mechanisms productive of familial pressure to conform to a heteronormative prescript crystallize in Jasmine Sieto's account. The following discussion of her narrative provides the starting point for a broader argument exposing the 'family of origin' as a crucial site of the everyday (re)production of a culturalized heteronormativity and the role this has played in the interviewees' migration biographies.

Jasmine Sieto, who grew up in a wealthy family in urban Indonesia, tells me about her coming of age as a lesbian:

> I know that I'm lesbian since I was ten years old […]. Then, when I think it's not really, really good if you know such an early stage, because I feel like my teenagerhood is

> so like, fucked up, I don't know what, you know, it's like you're trying to find out what's wrong with you and strange thing happening to you, and, I realize it like five years later when I was almost in high school or something like that, ah so, this is why they call it *homosexuell* [German pronunciation]. Yeah. Because then they teach us […] not only like men women, so, also gays and something like that, […] also this homosexuality. Ahaaa, [I] see then, [when I was] fourteen, and that's why I need to go out from the country when, as soon as I finish my school, that's why I'm traveling to Europe, find the next place to stay.
> —Jasmine Sieto

Jasmine Sieto depicts her younger Self as subjected to her own awakening feelings and desires, which confused her and isolated her from her social surroundings and "fucked up" her teenagerhood. Her sense of being different in a wrong way was grounded in the silence around female same-sex desire and the invisibility of other women-loving women in Indonesia. Only after being taught about homosexuality at school was Jasmine Sieto able to make sense of the feelings she had harbored since the age of ten. The belated explanation provoked a sense of betrayal, which, coupled with her imagination of Europe as a 'queer homeland,' materialized in her leaving her parents' home for Europe ("that's why I need to go out from the country when, as soon as I finish my school, that's why I'm traveling to Europe"). Jasmine Sieto, funded by her wealthy parents, stayed in several European gay and lesbian capitals before eventually enrolling in professional training in Switzerland, after which she settled at the fringes of Basel. All of this happened much to her parents' discontent:

> I'm the eldest, right? In Indonesia you believe that the eldest must show the way. Yes. Until now my brother was always waiting for me until I come back, but then, now, I say, look, get married, make children, make your parents happy, okay, then I don't have to come back. Because they didn't [=don't] know that I'm lesbian, still, yet.
> —Jasmine Sieto

Jasmine Sieto's sexual orientation and the choices she has made based upon it unsettle the logic of the family hierarchy. At the same time, as her instructions to her brother and her attempt to mitigate the damage demonstrate, she continues to be granted a superior position among siblings. This happens 'despite' her dissident sexuality: Later in the interview, Jasmine Sieto qualifies her earlier statement that her parents do not know about her being a lesbian. "We never discuss it, about that, though. Yeah. But they know that I was with a girl for ten years, but […] we never discuss it openly asking yes or no."

Recently her parents learned that their daughter broke up with her long-term Indonesian girlfriend:

> And now they know that I'm not staying with her anymore, that's why they insisting me to go back last year- 'Look, girl, if you have nothing to do there. I mean, if nothing to hold you there anymore, uh, they saying like that- if there's nothing else for you to stay, well, no really reason, then why don't you go back home.' And then my girlfriend, my ex-girlfriend, is getting married next year, with a man, they know about it, because the parents, they know each other […]. So it's like the transparent condition. Yeah. Ev-

> erybody know, but we don't speak about it. Yes. That's the thing. […] But of course they know […]. Keep quiet, happy life, enjoy, don't speak about it, don't hurt me (laughs). Something like that, yeah, because my mother's really really Catholic (laughs).
> —Jasmine Sieto

Jasmine Sieto assesses that her long-term girlfriend was "just waiting for the right guy to come," but also just gave in to "the pressure of the family" when resorting to a heterosexual life. This in turn kindled Jasmine Sieto's own parents' hopes that their daughter might follow suit and eventually return home to lead a heteronormal life and reassume her position in her family. Her parents are either unaware of, or ignore, the difference between masculine same-sex oriented women like their daughter, who understand their sexual orientation as an irreversible fact, and their feminine "girlfriends," who tend to identify as heterosexual or bisexual instead and typically eventually resort to heterosexual relationships (see Chapter 5). The Sietos' negotiations with their daughter eschew their very origin, namely Jasmine Sieto's sexual identity, silenced in the face of all the evidence in order to maintain the semblance of a "happy family life." Despite their knowledge of Jasmine Sieto's inclinations and her brother's ongoing family-founding activities, her parents continue to expect their daughter to come back to Indonesia, to live with them under their roof, to marry and have children, and later to take care of them. "*Nachwuchs*" – "Offspring" (Jasmine Sieto uses the German word here although we speak in English) is the one-word concept which for Jasmine Sieto summarizes all family obligations and expectations. "So if I'll get married to a man, means [through] pressure from my family. We are teach to be sacrificing ourselves actually for our families' sake," she concludes laconically.

The inner conflict between family obligations and a desire for personal freedom is key to Jasmine Sieto's narrative. Her continuing sense of obligation as her parent's eldest child and only daughter stands at odds with her tangible homosexuality as well as with her appreciation of Switzerland as a place to live. At great length she enumerates the advantages and "convenience" of life in Switzerland, the clean air, functioning transport system, easily accessible lesbian venues, and so on. This she contrasts to a life of basic survival in what she calls the "jungle" of urban Indonesia, despite her family's considerable wealth and comfort. Her own fear of returning emanates from tales of Indonesian expats with whom she is acquainted, whose return migration failed: "A lot of people get these trauma things," no longer used to the harsh conditions of everyday life in Indonesia.

Jasmine Sieto also frames her own difficulties with the idea of going back as a question of mentality: "I was actually growing up here [in Switzerland], also my thinking and you know, [at] seventeen [when she came to Switzerland], you don't know anything. In Indonesia it's not like here. But then here you can see the world, I mean you can know a lot of thing that we don't know before" – for instance about homosexuality. Her account foregrounds homosexuality as a major factor discouraging her from going back.

> This [homosexuality] is *normal* [German pronunciation] here [in Switzerland] […]. And it's nice to be accepted. I think it's also [what] brought us here, that's why we don't want to go [back] too, and I don't know anybody that [is] lesbian that go back actually to Indonesia again. I know two people in Holland. They also don't want, can't go back

> again to Indonesia, because they get married and then they not accepted in Indonesia so, you know you have your life here. Then why should you go back to Indonesia? […] But for me it's still open because I don't have anybody [=a partner] here. I can still go back anytime I want. Yeah. Yeah. This is *Vorteil* [German pronunciation/=advantage] und *Nachteil* [=disadvantage] when you're single, no?
> —Jasmine Sieto

The statement that "I think it's also what brought us here, that's why we don't want to go back" moves the lack of acceptance of homosexuality in Indonesia to the center of Jasmine Sieto's concerns about returning, which also qualifies the flexibility she ascribes to herself at the end of the quote ("But for me it's still open because I don't have anybody here. I can still go back anytime I want"). In light of the broad set of arguments she presents against a return to her home country, these assertions of unfettered personal freedom and mobility appear to be an act of self-conviction justifying ex ante her eventual return to Indonesia to reclaim her designated place in her family. Jasmine Sieto's account does not make reference to any ties she might have established to the homosexual community in her home city in Indonesia during her (rare) visits after establishing a lesbian identity in Europe, and her narrative fails to convey whether her changed perspective might enable her to recognize a homosexual community in Indonesia previously barred from her view.[5] When asked what she thinks it would be like to live as a lesbian in Indonesia Jasmine Sieto answers: "It depends on the family." She elaborates that for her this would be a big issue, "because maybe they (the family) are still expecting me in other side, still." In other words, the quality of her future (love) life in Indonesia would be dependent on whether her family would eventually acknowledge her sexual dissidence.

Nevertheless, throughout the interview Jasmine Sieto clearly expresses that her return to Indonesia is a question of *when* rather than *if*. She says she will indeed go back at some point in order to do "her job as a child," but the timing of her return remains unclear:

> TB: So are you planning to stay here?[6]
> JS: Eh not really actually (smiles). Not really. Maybe another ten years? Or five years? Or two years? (smiles) I [was] planning to go back actually next year. Yes. But now I

5 LGBT activism in Indonesia is growing (see e.g. http://aruspelangi.or.id/, downloaded on on February 7, 2014), but the increasing visibility of homosexuals in Indonesia is paralleled by a general rise in homophobia (see e.g. http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/10/22/homophobia-rise-survey-says.html, downloaded on February 7, 2014). LGBT activist groups ascribe the growing hostility to media reports conveying negative stereotypes of homosexuals and describing homosexuality as a disease from the West as well as to the condemnation of homosexuality by radical Islamist groups.

6 At the time of the interview, I was aware of the delicacy of this question, which among other questions of a similar kind (such as "But where are you *really* from?") denies immigrants the possibility of an unquestioned and normalized presence in Switzerland. In this case I brought the question forward because I had become confused by the expressed tensions between family expectations and personal freedom.

changed my plan I'm stay for another four years. That's for sure.
—Jasmine Sieto

Jasmine Sieto did indeed return to Indonesia some time after the interviews but re-returned to Switzerland sometime later.

Similar to her compatriot Charlotta Sembiring's view, Jasmine Sieto's view is that her social environment failed to inform her about the existence of homosexuality when she was growing up, denying her the opportunity to mitigate the feelings of difference and isolation she suffered during her adolescence. Accordingly, the sense of betrayal she felt when she was eventually introduced to a terminology that named her feelings for other women was instrumental in her decision to leave for Europe, which she imagined as sexually diverse and open (unaware of the fact that in Switzerland, too, it is not unusual for queer people not to learn about homosexuality until they are well in their teens, especially in rural areas).

Neither the fact that she continues to get involved with women in Switzerland nor her geographical distance stops her parents, who live in Indonesia, from exerting continued pressure on their daughter to return to Indonesia and follow a heteronormative prescript. At the same time, Jasmine Sieto continues to claim her position in her family, likely also owing to a need for financial security. Importantly, her parents' lack of acknowledgment of the fact that sexual desires can be formative of someone's identity frames the family as a site of (re)production of heteronormative ideals. Despite this, Jasmine Sieto and other interviewees related that they loved women long before they knew about any social concepts for same-sex love and long before knowing any queer people, and like Jasmine Sieto, Charlotta Sembiring, and Augusta Wakari, they feel deceived for having been left feeling wrong and alone.

By contrast, another interviewee, Siti Mohd Amin, does not attribute the enforcement of the heteronormative prescript to the institution of the family but instead describes heteronormativity as a cultural trait always already internalized by what she calls "Asian" women. When asked whether she thinks there is pressure on Asian women to marry and have children, she answers: "(Hesitates) Uh, not as pressure, but it's already used to it. They used to it. Just natural you know? This culture is already with you, so once you change your life [from a temporary homosexual to a permanent heterosexual relationship], automatically. No one is push you," she says in reference to the array of female lovers that have, like Jasmine Sieto's girlfriend, left her for men.

Siti Mohd Amin's analysis opens up a paradoxical space, for it situates queer Asian women like herself outside the Asian culture. The paradox is in part resolved when Siti Mohd Amin says later in the interview that "I know we are- the culture is no allowed to have partner same woman and woman, you know but I say, 'Okay my family is open.'" Here she positions herself less outside "the culture" or an Asian "we" than as a cultural dissident protected by her family. As mentioned earlier, Siti Mohd Amin's mother (her parents still live in Indonesia) views her three tomboyish daughters as her "boys," and Siti Mohd Amin herself does "not feel shy" about this attribution. Another reading of Siti Mohd Amin's perceived exemption from heteronormative Asian femininity may there-

fore be that she does not quite position herself as a *woman*, or not as a *typically Asian* woman, rendering the rules of normative Asian femininity inapplicable to her.

In sum, Siti Mohd Amin's and Jasmine Sieto's accounts both demonstrate that the concept of *Nachwuchs* (offspring) draws its power from the fact that family brings the concept forth as an integral and naturalized part of 'the culture' rather than as a private family matter. What 'culture' comprises remains vague, although religion is often mentioned. As Jasmine Sieto's says by way of explaining her family's silence about her homosexuality: "My mother's *really really* Catholic." However, the view that heteronormativity is situated in 'culture' masks the fact that the family *itself* represents a prime social site for the everyday (re)production and enforcement of, but also resistance against, these heteronormative cultural values.

In accordance with this 'culture' argument, interviewees like Siti Mohd Amin who have liberal parents tend to describe their families as exceptional. *"J'ai trouvé ça vraiment extraordinaire"* – "I found this really exceptional," Nour Saber says about her mother's affirmative reaction to her 'coming out.' She considers her parents' attitude not only to be exceptional for a country in the *"monde Arabo-Musulman"* (the "Arab-Muslim world") but also for a Western European context:

> *Je trouve ça très fin de la part de ma famille. Ceci dit que c'est pas malheureusement le cas de tout le monde. J'ai beaucoup beaucoup de chance d'avoir des parents comme ça et une famille comme ça. Et je suis sûre moi je connais des gens ici en Suisse qui sont des Suissesses ou bien des Françaises, qu'elles étaient carrément reniées de leur famille parce qu'elles sont lesbiennes. Donc c'est en ce moment-là je me dis que j'ai beaucoup de chance d'avoir une famille comme ça.*
>
> I think this is very fine of my family. The fact that I say so indicates that this is unfortunately not the case for everyone. I am very very lucky to have parents like this and a family like this. And I'm certain I know people here in Switzerland who are Swiss or French that were downright disowned by their families because they are lesbians. So this is the moment when I tell myself I am very lucky to have a family like this.
> —Nour Saber

Exceptional family homes emerge here as "queer islands in a heterosexual sea," granting queer adolescents the space to become 'who they are.' Further, by situating a queer-friendly family in her home country while at the same time locating homophobic families in Switzerland, Nour Saber's statement explicitly works to undermine the homonationalist imaginary establishing a dichotomy between a homo-friendly West and a homophobic Orient. However, this effort ends up unwittingly reinforcing the very image it seeks to invalidate, since the insinuation that her family is liberal *even* for a Swiss context, *not to mention* in the context of her home country, eventually reiterates the homonationalist argument. Also, by framing families as exceptional in the homeland, these families become paradoxically placed outside the homeland culture, rendering this 'culture' permanently trapped in homophobia. In the past twenty years, such homonationalist imaginaries have been gaining momentum despite ample evidence of homophobia within Western societies. Indeed, queer theorists have also described such narratives of 'exceptional families' within non-migrant Western contexts: Andrew Gorman-Murray

describes supportive family homes in Australia as "sites of resistance to wider practices of heterosexism, and support for GLB youth" (Gorman-Murray 2008:31); and the fitting image of liberal families as "queer islands in a heterosexual sea" is in fact taken from the account of a Swiss lesbian interviewee in Caprez and Nay (2008:264, my translation). The 'heterosexual sea,' then, can also be Swiss. But like Efra Mahmoud's proactive if implicit speaking against anti-Muslim racism, Nour Saber's statement testifies to the power of such racist homonationalist imagination in our interview interaction and the role of my whiteness in it.

In another example of parental liberalism, Ayesha Umar portrays her family as exceptionally open for the context of the Pakistani diaspora in Scandinavia, which is one of the places where she grew up, and where her parents continue to live:

> *Und ich bin auch dafür meinen Eltern dankbar. Okay, klar haben sie damit Mühe gehabt […] wir [die Geschwister] müssen dafür kämpfen aber die haben das irgendwie weiterhin das akzeptiert können dass sie haben drei Kinder die sind alle extrem eigensinnig und extrem selbstständig im Vergleich zu anderen sagen wir pakistanischen Leuten die auch in Norwegen aufgewachsen sind. Weil in dem Sinn sind meine Eltern extrem also sind sehr untraditionell. Weil die haben nicht gesagt, 'Du musst das tun oder das tun und das tun' so die haben auch gesagt, also die muslimische Kultur die haben gesagt – weil bei uns in Pakistan und so ist so diese arrangierten Hochzeiten und so Leuten haben dann irgendwann mal angefangen meine Eltern zu fragen – und meine Eltern haben immer zu alle in die Grossfamilie und Verwandten gesagt, 'Unsere Kinder entscheiden selber. Niemand wird jetzt irgendwo verheiratet oder so weggegeben.'*
>
> And I am also thankful to my parents. Okay of course they struggled with it […] we [the siblings] have to fight for it but somehow they have continued to accept this that they have three children they are all extremely headstrong and extremely independent in comparison to other let's say Pakistani people who have also grown up in Norway. Because in this sense my parents are extremely, well very untraditional. Because they didn't say: 'You have to do this or you have to do that and do that,' they also said, well the Muslim culture they said – because back home in Pakistan these arranged marriages and things like this, people started to ask my parents at some point – and my parents have always told everyone in the extended family and to relatives, 'Our children decide for themselves. Nobody is going to be married or given away or the like.'
> —Ayesha Umar

Ayesha Umar's personal desire for self-determination is not only encouraged by her parents' liberalism but also by the values she acquired in Scandinavia, such as the notion of people being equal and having equal rights. *"In den asiatischen Kulturen hast du mehr die Hierachien, und ich folge dieser Hierarchie nicht. So in dem Sinn bin ich […] respektlos"* – "In Asian cultures you rather have the hierarchies, and I don't follow this hierarchy. So in this sense I […] lack respect," she circumscribes one arena of negotiation with her parents. This also indicates that Ayesha Umar's parents' liberal attitude does not imply that they reject all aspects of Pakistani culture. Ayesha Umar grew up practicing Islam (which she later stopped, while retaining certain religious and cultural elements such as not drinking much alcohol).

By contrast, some interviewees have attempted to live up to parental/cultural homonormative expectations, like Jasmine Sieto, who has plans to retun to Indonesia. As Teresa Ruiz was quoted earlier: *"Und dann eben wahrscheinlich habe ich das gemacht was meine Familie wollte: (lahm) dass ich endlich [einen Mann] heirate und Kinder habe und dann habe ich gesagt doch ist gut, dann machen wir halt"* – "Probably I did what my family wanted: (lamely) that I would finally marry [a man] and have kids and then I said fine, that's what we do." This marriage failed within months, but Teresa Ruiz' mother only ceased pressuring her daughter after realizing the nature of her relationship with her partner:

> *Seit ich mit Angela bin, seit drei Jahren, also seit ich wirklich das Ganze [Lesbischsein] verarbeitet habe, meine Mutter fragt mich nicht mal 'Wann wann hast du wieder mal einen Freund? Wann heiratest du wieder?' Nie. Nie mehr. Und das war immer, immmmer! wichtige Frage. Nie mehr.*
>
> Ever since I've been with Angela, for three years, actually since I really processed the whole thing [about being a lesbian] my mother does not even ask me 'When will you have a boyfriend again? When will you marry again?' Never. Never again. And that was always, aaaaalways important question. Never again.
> —Teresa Ruiz

It is the premonition of exactly such a failed heterosexual family life of the kind Teresa Ruiz experienced that Maria Borkovic attempts to instrumentalize in her arguments with her mother:

> My mother didn't really want to meet my girlfriend at this time. I said 'Would you rather wanting me to have a man or husband and be unhappy for the rest of my life, just because you could come to Christmas, you know, to us, and, you know, play with your grandchildren, would you rather be happy I'm choosing that than seeing me with a woman that I'm happy with? And wanna live together?' She just couldn't answer. And I think I got her there.
> —Maria Borkovic

This argument is mirrored in several other accounts, which additionally capitalize on the point that potential *children* of an unwanted heterosexual marriage are likely to become unhappy.

Heteronormative expectations from parents do not stop at the question of the sex of the partner but extend to the question of what *kind* of man is desirable as a match for the daughter.[7] Leyla Haddad recounts how her mother tried to pair her up with the son of Lebanese friends who lives in the U.S.: *"'Du musst den unbedingt besuchen gehen, der hat dann Freude, die Eltern haben dann Freude,' und natürlich am liebsten hätten sie gehabt, wenn wir zusammen gekommen wären"* – "You absolutely have to go and visit him, he will be

7 Especially 'second generation' *hetero*sexuals are often also faced with such interference from parents in their choice of partners. Pascale Herzig (2014) analyzes according negotiations in Indian, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan migrant families in Switzerland.

delighted, his parents will be delighted,' and of course they would have loved for us to get together."

Where Leyla Haddad's parents emphasize a common cultural/diasporic background, other parents stress issues of gender and class. As Laura Georg relates about her father:

> *Ein Jahr nachdem ich verheiratet gewesen bin [mit einem Mann] habe ich gemerkt: Das geht so nicht. Weil einfach auch mit dem Verheiratetsein die Erwartungen sehr viel grösser geworden sind an die Frauenposition, oder? Also du musst irgendwie Kinder haben, musst Teilzeit arbeiten, musst zu Hause den Haushalt schmeissen, und das ist eben eigentlich vor allem auch von meinem Vater gekommen. Also vorher hat er eigentlich immer gefunden seine Kinder, auch seine Tochter, sollen etwas werden im Gegensatz zu ihm […]. Und nachher sobald ich geheiratet habe sind dann aber doch die sehr klassischen Erwartungen an mich gestellt worden.*
>
> One year after I got married [to a man] I realized: This is not going to work. Because with marriage the expectations grew to take on a woman's position, you know? Like you somehow have to have children, have to work part-time, run the household, and this actually mainly came from my father, too. Before he actually always found that his children, including his daughter, should make something of themselves, in contrast to himself […]. And then as soon as I got married the very classical expectations materialized nonetheless.
>
> —Laura Georg

Laura Georg's father's traditional views on gender roles also fed his skepticism vis-à-vis her male partner and eventual husband. He was an artist, and her father doubted that he could "provide for her" *("ernähren")* and his future family, ignoring Laura Georg's objection that she can very well provide for herself. When later Laura Georg told her father that she divorced her husband, he was inconsolable and blamed it on her "feminism," which he saw as the reason why her husband left her. For him, it was inconceivable that the separation could have been, as it indeed was, initiated by his daughter herself (who had realized she wanted to live with a woman, which, however, she did not tell her father at this point).

Beyond questions of ethnicity, common diasporic background, gender roles or economic status, heteronormative expectations also have a specific *temporality*. As Nermina Petar relates: *"Bei uns ist es halt natürlich so- als Bosnierin, neben dem noch Muslimin dazu, heiratest du mit zwanzig. Man ist eingeschränkt. Darum sage ich eigentlich bin ich froh bin ich lesbisch"* – "Back home [≈ with us] it's of course like- as a Bosnian, and moreover as a Muslim woman, you marry at the age of twenty. You are constrained. That's why I say I'm actually glad that I'm lesbian." If women do not marry at a certain age in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *"versucht man sie mit irgendetwas zu entschuldigen"* – "one tries to provide some excuse for them," like for instance that the woman in question has no time for a man because she is absorbed in her demanding career, or because her working hours are too irregular to entertain a relationship to a man and start a family.

For Nermina Petar, assuming a lesbian identity not only enables her to cut loose from having to marry a man but also from having to be subjected to an array of other constraints tied to the Bosnian diasporic heteronormative prescript represented and

enforced by her parents, such as its specific temporalities or the significance attached to the family in Bosnian culture: "*Die Familie ist das A und das O- du als Individuum hast nichts zu sagen*" – "The family is the be-all and end-all- you as an individual have nothing to say," Nermina Petar summarizes. By contrast, her homosexuality enables her to live her own idea of a relationship:

> *Klar habe ich eine Beziehung aber in dieser Beziehung habe ich extrem viel Freiheiten und ich kann sagen 'Hör zu, Barbara [Partnerin], heute Abend gehe ich weg, [mit einer] Kollegin' wie auch immer, das ist einfacher als man jetzt bosnische Heterobeziehung sage ich jetzt einfach ja? Du kannst als Frau nicht einfach sagen: 'Heute Abend habe ich einen Tanzkurs' oder weiss nicht was, oder? Man ist eingeschränkt. Darum sage ich eigentlich bin ich froh bin ich lesbisch.*
>
> Of course I have a relationship but in this relationship I have a lot of liberties and I can say, 'Listen up, Barbara [her partner], I'll be going out today, [with a female] colleague,' whatever, I say this is just easier than if you have let's say a Bosnian hetero relationship, yes? As a woman you can't just say: 'Tonight I have a dancing course,' or whatever, you know? You are restricted. This is why I say I'm actually glad I'm lesbian.
> —Nermina Petar

In sum, the heteronormative biographies propagated by parents are often (re)productive not only of sexually dissident subjects but also of other subjects constructed as undesirable, such as single women over a certain age or men with an insecure income. In other words, the heteronormative prescript polices an entire conglomerate of (culturally and historically contingent) norms regarding gender, sexuality, age, class, or ethnicity, and many intimate aspects of life such as love, relationships, procreation, and division of labor. Against this backdrop, homosexuality emerges as a strategy to cut loose from such restrictions and sometimes becomes the epitome of freedom, self-determination, and self-invention. These narratives hence confirm one of queer theory's central arguments, which is that sexual norms never exist 'per se' but are always already ethnicized, racialized, nationalized, gendered, classed, and so on.

What is more, the differentiations concerning desirable male partners, remarkably, does *not* extend to interviewees' *female* partners. Nermina Petar explains why her parents refuse to meet her partner:

> *Also es ist nichts in dem Sinn nichts gegen die Barbara [Partnerin] selbst, sie [Nermina Petars Eltern] kennen sie nicht, es könnte auch weiss nicht was für eine sein, auch eine Bosnierin, eine Muslima egal spielt keine Rolle, es geht darum dass einfach wenn sie da ist müssen sie [sich] damit auseinandersetzen […].*
>
> Well it's not in the sense of them having anything against Barbara [partner] herself, they [Nermina Petar's parents] don't know her, she could be any woman whatsoever, also a Bosnian woman, a Muslim woman whatever it doesn't matter a bit, it's about them having to deal with it if she's here […].
> —Nermina Petar

The primacy of the partner's sex erases the importance of other qualities Nermina Petar's parents would otherwise have an interest in in the context of a heterosexual

relationship. Indeed, across accounts, no reference is made to a parent who objected as to the female partner having the 'wrong' ethnicity, religion, age, gender identity, or profession.

In summary: Most parents, whether 'here' or 'there,' exert(ed) pressure on their daughters to follow a heteronormative biography, sometimes over long periods of time and despite implicit or explicit knowledge of their offspring's homosexuality. This exposes the family as a crucial site for the production of heteronormativity; which in turn disrupts dominant ideas about the relationship between family and 'culture': The family is not the 'location' or 'cell' of a prefixed (heteronormative) 'culture' but instead emerges as a social site *productive* of these heteronormative cultural values and the mechanisms of their enforcement. At the same time, it is sometimes also a site of resistance to and disruption of these very norms.

Heteronormativity within the family not only serves to police the sex of the daughter's prospective partner but simultaneously to secure ethnic/cultural lineage and social status as well as specific heteronormative biographies. Interestingly, requirements concerning potential male partners do not extend to female partners as the overwhelming importance of the sex of the partner nullifies other questions as to the female partner's ethnicity, class, or age. The queer migrant women interviewed here reclaim this very vacuum as a space of freedom: Homosexuality emerges as a strategy to liberate oneself not only from heterosexuality but from the entire *amalgamation* of restrictions tied to the heteronormative prescript. As such, these findings are also manifestations of two central arguments of queer theory: first, that sexuality is never only about sexuality but is always already intersectional, and second, that sexuality significantly structures all aspects of the social, such as also parents' restrictive ideas about their daughters' future partners.

At the same time, this sub-chapter has also portrayed interviewees who grew up in liberal and supportive families. The view that one's welfare as a queer subject "all depends on the family" therefore has multiple meanings, as families can *also* represent "queer islands in a heteronormative sea" that allow queer subjects to become 'who they are.' These family homes are described as exceptional and countercultural and can be viewed as strongholds against wider heterosexism, allowing the queer family member to explore her sexuality within the family home. Having said that, the portrayal of these families as exceptional within the homeland culture sometimes unwittingly rehearses homonationalist arguments trapping homeland culture in eternal homophobia, pitted against a liberal, gay-friendly West.

6.1.4 "It's simply not talked about": Tacit Subjects

This sub-chapter, which centers on how dissident sexuality was negotiated in families, walks a fine line. In Western Europe, speech acts that communicate someone's homosexuality are commonly termed 'coming out.'[8] However, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.1,

8 Udo Rauchfleisch (2002) suggests dividing the 'coming out' as a psychosocial process into three phases: The *pre-'coming out' phase* designates the time between birth and the first time a person

the functioning of 'coming out' is contingent on specific historically constructed ideas about sexuality that conceptualize homosexuality as an identity which already exists, or is formed, and then can be 'revealed.' In Europe today, queer subjects are perceived to be *homosexual persons* rather than persons *doing homosexual acts* (Foucault 1978, see Chapter 3.2.1). The act of sexual disclosure has accordingly become an imperative step both in being assigned and assuming a homosexual identity. This renders 'coming out' a paradoxical process: On the one hand, it is the speech act that *installs* the individual as a homosexual subject (rather than merely *reflecting* the subject's homosexuality); on the other hand, the subject already needs to have established a homosexual identity in order to perform this speech act (Butler 2009).

As discussed earlier, the figure of the homosexual and the 'coming out' narrative are instrumentalized by some queer migrant women who use the lesbian identity as a strategy to 'integrate' into Swiss society. However, not all interviewees think of their same-sex desires as formative of who they are, and reservations about identifying as a 'lesbian' are widespread. This raises questions as to the explanatory power of the concept of the 'coming out' narrative for the analysis of the interviews. Due to these caveats regarding the cultural and historical specificity of the term 'coming out,' I largely refrain from using this descriptor in the following discussion in an attempt to avoid a subsumption of differing concepts and practices around the (non-)communication of sexual orientation under its umbrella.

Yet it is important to bear in mind that avoiding the term has its own caveats, since it bears the risk of rendering invisible the geometries of power attached to it: First, the pervasiveness of the discourse around 'coming out' in Switzerland must not be underestimated. Regardless of whether queer migrant women living in Switzerland think of their same-sex desire in terms of an identity, and regardless of whether they identify with a same-sex sexual identity or not, *all* have been confronted with the question of whether and how to communicate their same-sex sexuality to other people in general and to their family in particular. Discourses around sexual identities are too dominant in Switzerland for sexually non-conforming migrant women not to have been exposed to them.

The second risk implied in avoiding the term 'coming out' is that this may deemphasize the geopolitical 'range' of the globally circulating figure of the homosex-

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feels 'somehow different,' often without understanding why; the *actual 'coming out' phase* designates the process of becoming certain of one's dissident sexual orientation and of communicating it to others; lastly, in the *integrative 'coming out' phase,* self-acceptance has been reached and fulfilling relationships can be experienced. Simpler models only distinguish between an *inner* 'coming out' (realizing and acknowledging one's same-sex desire) and an *outer* 'coming out' (communicating one's sexual orientation to others), whereas the outer 'coming out' is described as a lifelong process rather than a singular act (Müller 2004). These developmental models have been contested from a range of perspectives (ibid). For example, feminist theorists have shown that such models are largely based on the experiences and psychological processes of men; and that they postulate linearity where there is often complexity and contradictoriness (Schneider 2001). Further, as discussed throughout this study, queer/postcolonial scholars have criticized these models as Eurocentric and have admonished the lack of theories taking non-Western sexual cultures seriously, which are sometimes configured in fundamentally different ways and not necessarily organized around the notion of the 'coming out' (Brown 1995).

ual and the developmental liberation narrative attached to it. As discussed in Chapter 3.4, queer/postcolonial scholars have criticized the theory that an international gay figure/movement is emerging, driven by the globally spreading gay and lesbian liberation movement, whose origin is specifically located in the U.S. Stonewall riots in 1969 (Altman 1996). These scholars have reminded us that emotions and affects are not universal biological facts but are shaped by spatio-temporal contexts and geometries of power, which is why sexual identities need to be seen as *transnationally negotiated* rather than as traveling unidirectionally from 'center' to 'margin.' Different concepts of same-sex sexualities have been traveling back and forth, and have merged and transformed, defining and citing each other. In other words, sexualities from the 'margins' have always co-shaped sexualities in the 'centers' (Manalansan 2006). At the same time, there is no denying that the (itself also transnationally formed) figure of the homosexual and the attendant 'coming out' narrative have gained influence in many parts of the world, a development which the avoidance of the term 'coming out' runs the risk of masking.

This, in brief, forms the backdrop against which interviewees and their families negotiate and manage interviewees' dissident sexual orientations. Indeed, their accounts certainly suggest that the question of whether to communicate/show or silence/hide one's same-sex desires bears significance in queer diasporic contexts.

Most parents of the interviewees 'know,' even if they have never been told directly. If and when individual family members were told primarily depended on the parents' perceived conservatism or liberalism, as well as on the quality of the individual relationship between the sexually non-conforming daughter and other family members. Still, overall gender, age, religion, and place significantly structure communication strategies: Mothers tend to be told earlier and more frequently than fathers, siblings earlier and more often than parents, who are in turn told more often than grandparents.[9] Orthodox family members are told less often and with more reluctance, and family members who live in Switzerland tend to be more comprehensively informed than family who live at a distance. Expectations of family members' reactions were not always accurate, and disclosure often rearranged the queer family member's inner family maps: A long lost uncle living on the Canary Islands becomes an unexpected ally against an indignant orthodox mother, a sibling surprisingly turns against her sister, a grandfather living in a remote rural village unpredictably expresses his approval of gay marriage.

Family members' initial reactions ranged from a prosaic "I knew it" to expressions of disbelief and rejection. These first reactions were not necessarily indicative of the way family members would process interviewees' homosexuality in the months and years after the news had been broken. As Julia Morricone recounts:

> *Es ist gut gewesen wir haben eine Freundin gehabt damals die uns sagte wir sollen nicht die erste Reaktion der Eltern als die endgültige nehmen, wir sollen einfach das als das nehmen was es ist, gerade ihre spontane Reaktion, und sollen ihnen Zeit lassen zum verdauen und sich ihre Position auch überlegen, und das hat uns sehr geholfen weil- der Rahel [Partnerin] ihre*

9 This finding is mirrored in Andrew K.T. Yip's study (2004) on kinship relationships of queer Muslims in Britain.

Eltern haben sehr verständnisvoll reagiert und 'Wir haben dich immer noch lieb' und 'Das ist kein Problem' und tadadadada und sind jetzt aber eigentlich die wo fast etwas- mehr Mühe haben mit uns.

It was good we had a friend back then who told us not to take the parents' first reaction as the definitive one but just to take it as what it is, just their spontaneous reaction, and to give them time to digest [the news] and also to consider their position, and that helped us a lot because- Rahel's [partner] parents reacted in a very sympathetic way and 'We still love you' and 'That's no problem' and tadadadada and now they are actually the ones who struggle almost a bit more regarding us.
—Julia Morricone

No interviewee was disowned, which had been the worst fear for most. However, due to some parents' vehemently negative reactions, some felt the need to break contact with their parents for a period of time. While there were (exceptional) cases in which these near or total breaks in contact have extended across years, Ayesha Umar's experience is more exemplary for how the relationships between parents and daughters developed after the daughters' homosexuality became known:

Und dann habe ich ein paar Monate- ich glaube zwei Monaten, drei Monaten nicht mit dem [Vater] gesprochen. Ich war nicht dazu bereit ich habe einfach gesagt 'Boykott, jetzt müssen wir einfach sich ändern' und dann haben sie sich gemeldet und gesagt, 'Ja, es ist wichtig dass wir haben weiterhin dich als eine Tochter. Und möchte weiter- also quasi gegenseitig im Leben zu haben' und einfach nicht sagen, 'Ja, jetzt bist du nicht da.' So irgendwas, also das war das Schlimmste was passiert ist, aber danach ist besser gewesen.

And then for a few months- I think two months, three months I did not talk to him [her father]. I was not willing to I just said, 'Boycott, now we really have to change this' and then they contacted me and said, 'Yes it's important that we continue to have you as our daughter. And would like to- well like to have each other in each other's lives' and not just to say, 'Well, now you're not there.' Something like that, well that was the worst that happened, but then it got better.
—Ayesha Umar

At the same time, the fact that no interviewee was disowned should not deflect from the reality of the sheer fear of losing kinship ties. Nor should it deflect from the fact that most families' reactions were either vehemently negative – or, just as painfully, failed to materialize altogether. The strategy of silencing daughters' sexual orientation has emerged as a particularly dominant theme in biographies and will be addressed next, based on Nermina Petar's account.

Nermina Petar came to Switzerland from Bosnia and Herzegovina at the age of ten. Her parents had already worked in Switzerland for a couple of years at the time, while Nermina Petar and her older brother had stayed in Bosnia and Herzegovina with their grandparents and a cousin. *"Mit zwei Jungs bin ich aufgewachsen, kein Wunder bin ich lesbisch"* – "I grew up with two boys, no wonder I'm lesbian," she laughs. She says she has

known that she is lesbian *"heimlich von Geburt an"* – "secretly ever since I was born," but at the same time views her sexuality as an expression of her general rebelliousness: *"Ich bin eigentlich immer ein wenig rebellisch gewesen […] das Lesbischsein passt gerade dazu"* – "In fact I've always been a little rebellious […] being lesbian fits in well with that." For her, telling her parents was a question of *when* rather than *if*:

> *Eben gewusst habe ich es eigentlich schon immer. Und dann- ich habe- das ist ein bisschen ein Nachteil dass ich nicht unbedingt einen so guten Bezug zu meinen Eltern gehabt habe. […] Und weisst du wenn eine gewisse Basis, ein gewisses Vertrauen fehlt, dann kommst du halt nicht gerade mit dem. Und dann irgendwann mit sechzehn […] habe ich dann so einen Brief geschrieben, in dem habe ich geschrieben, ja eben es tut mir leid ich sei lesbisch- was alles noch dabei gewesen ist weiss ich nicht mehr- ich weiss ich habe geschrieben ich bin lesbisch- auf bosnisch- und habe den Brief am Morgen auf den Tisch gelegt, […] Mittag nach Hause gekommen, normal gewesen alles. Am Abend nach Hause gekommen, nichts. Ich habe nie gewusst was mit diesem Brief passiert ist. Und irgendwie ein Jahr später bin ich beim Znacht gesessen mit dem Vater- habe ich- hat er dann gesagt er hat den Brief gefunden auf dem Tisch und er hat den gelesen und was auch immer damit gemacht. Also die Mutter hat es nie gewusst.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *Ich habe irgendetwas erwartet weisst du? Und es ist einfach nichts-. Das finde ich eben hart also- […]. Ich muss sagen im Nachhinein sind sie selber schuld, sie haben- spätestens mit sechzehn wo ich gewesen bin dann haben sie gewusst was mit mir los ist, sie haben mich nie in dem Sinn damit konfrontiert.*

> As I've said, I've always known it. And then- I have- this is a bit of a disadvantage that I didn't necessarily have such a good relationship with my parents. […] And you know when a certain basis, a certain amount of trust is missing, then you don't exactly tell them straight away. And then sometime at the age of sixteen […] I wrote a letter, in it I wrote yeah well that I'm sorry, that I was lesbian- what else I wrote I don't know anymore- I know I wrote I'm lesbian- in Bosnian- and laid the letter on the table in the morning, […] came back at noon, everything was normal. Came back in the evening, nothing. I never knew what happened to that letter. And somehow a year later I sat eating dinner with my father- I have- he then said he had found the letter on the table and he read it and did whatever with it. So my mother never knew.
>
> […]
>
> I expected anything you know? And just nothing- I really find that hard- […] I have to say retrospectively it's their own fault, they have- at the latest when I was sixteen- then they knew what was the matter with me, they've never confronted me with it in this sway.
>
> —Nermina Petar

After opening the conversation, Nermina Petar considers it her parents' turn to pick up the dialogue, which they deny her. Her parents' tenacious silence with respect to her homosexuality and their persistent refusal to meet her longtime partner are key themes in Nermina Petar's account. She explains her parents' silence about her homosexuality in terms of cultural differences between Bosnian and Swiss people:

Und über das Lesbischsein selber kannst du mit den Schweizern super reden, du kannst fast eine fremde Person auf der Strasse auf das ansprechen und eine normale Reaktion erwarten. Aber du kannst, auch wenn es deine beste [bosnische] Kollegin ist, nicht damit konfrontieren, weil sie können nicht damit umgehen. Weil man redet nicht darüber. Ich denke ein Schweizer der sieht das noch in den Nachrichten oder in den Zeitungen oder sonst von irgendjemandem, vom Freundeskreis […]. Man wird durch das damit konfrontiert und einfach allgemein bosnische- sagen wir im Gemeinde- man besucht sich untereinander man redet miteinander man hört die Nachrichten aber sobald etwas kommt wo- unsittlich ist oder so tut man umschalten, man tut es einfach ignorieren. Das sind nicht wir, das gehört nicht zu uns, das ist der Westen, das ist Schweiz, das ist das Böse. Aber wirklich- überspitzt gesagt aber so ist es wirklich. 'So sind wir nicht.' Oder sie ignorieren eigentlich dass es wirklich unter ihnen es Leute hat die so sind.

And you can speak about being lesbian itself with Swiss people superbly, you can almost approach a stranger on the street about it and expect a normal reaction. But you cannot, even if it is your best [Bosnian] friend, confront her with that, because they cannot deal with that. Because one doesn't talk about it. I think a Swiss person sees that on the news or in the newspaper or from anybody, from friends […]. Through this, one is confronted with it and just generally Bosnian- let's say community- you visit each other and speak to each other and you listen to the news but as soon as something comes along that- is indecent or something you switch the channel, you just ignore it. That's not us, that's the West, that's Switzerland, that's evil. But really- I say this in an exaggerated way but that's really how it is. 'We are not like this.' Or they in fact ignore that there are really people among them that are like this.
—Nermina Petar

Nermina Petar distances herself from the Bosnian community and the politics of looking away and their externalizing the issue of homosexuality by calling it a disease from the West. In order to emphasize her point about homophobia in Bosnian contexts, she postulates a contrasting normalization of homosexuality in Switzerland, effectively effacing homophobia from Swiss people (and not accounting for the possibility that the "stranger on the street" in Switzerland might be a Bosnian national, too).

Nermina Petar situates the difference between the two cultures in the politics of looking (away) and insists on the importance of the media in making visible and normalizing homosexuality. "*Ich würde das irgendwie als Pflicht einführen in jeder Serie muss es ein Homopärchen- dass sie einfach damit konfrontiert werden*" – "I would somehow make that obligatory in each TV series there has to be a homosexual couple- just so that they are confronted with it." Once the winner of the Eurovision song contest was a Serbian lesbian ("*Die musst du nur anschauen dann weisst du es. Wirklich ich sag dir eine butch Lesbe*" – "You only have to take a look at her to know it. Really, a butch lesbian I tell you"). Nermina Petar's family loves to watch the show, but that year when Nermina Petar called her mother the day after the finals to talk about the winner, her mother evaded the subject:

Sie singt jugoslawisch, sie ist vom Balkan, sie ist lesbisch, das geht nicht auf, sofort Themawechsel. Weisst du, schon dort hat sie abgeblockt. Aber wenigstens ist sie ein bisschen konfrontiert geworden damit, quasi nicht nur meine Tochter aus dem Balkan ist lesbisch, oder? Das finde ich toll einfach. Dass sie wirklich auch gegen ihren Willen damit konfrontiert werden.

> She sings Yugoslavian, she is from the Balkans, she is lesbian, that doesn't add up, immediate change of topic. You know, already there she blocked. But at least she was confronted a little bit with it, like not only my daughter from the Balkans is a lesbian, you know? This I just find great. That they really are confronted with it even against their own will.
> —Nermina Petar

Nermina Petar's analysis that "they in fact ignore that really there are people among them that are like this" and "she sings Yugoslavian, she is from the Balkans, she is lesbian, this doesn't add up" point to the paradoxical space she herself inhabits *both* as a (proud) Bosnian and a (proud) lesbian. In many Bosnian circles homosexuality is considered an inherently Western phenomenon, Bosnians cannot be homosexuals and vice versa, which renders Nermina Petar's subject positionality impossible. Gayatri Gopinath writes in her analysis of Indian queer diasporas that "[b]ecause the figure of 'woman' as a pure and unsullied sexual being is so central to dominant articulations of nation and diaspora, the radical disruption of 'home' [=home nation] that queer diasporic texts enact is particularly apparent in their representation of queer female subjectivity" (Gopinath 2005:15). She consequently uses the notion of *impossibility* "as a way of signaling the unthinkability of a queer female subject position within various mappings of nation and diaspora" (ibid). "Given the illegibility and unrepresentability of a non-heteronormative female subject within patriarchal and heterosexual configurations of both nation and the diaspora, the project of locating a 'queer South Asian diasporic subject' – and a queer female subject in particular – may begin to challenge the dominance of such configurations" (ibid:16). Indeed, Nermina Petar herself conceptualizes her claim to the paradoxical positionality of being *both* a Bosnian *and* a lesbian as a political act:

> *Ich habe mit Barbara [Partnerin] schon viel darüber geredet was kann ich als Individuum eigentlich daran verbessern? (Feurig) Viel kannst du nicht machen, man müsste an die Öffentlichkeit gehen und sagen, 'Hört ich bin Bosnierin und ich bin lesbisch und Punkt. Uns gibt es noch mehr. Akzeptiert das endlich.'*

> I have talked to Barbara [her partner] about it a lot already what I can do as an individual to improve this? (Fiery) There's not much you can do, you'd have to go public and say, 'Listen up, I am Bosnian and I am lesbian, period. There's more of us. Accept this already.'
> —Nermina Petar

Accordingly, Nermina Petar enthusiastically applauds role models like the Serbian singer and every Bosnian that has "really confronted" his or her parents with their homosexuality.

Nermina Petar nevertheless suffers greatly from her parents' rejection. "*Sie würde es nicht glauben, meine Familie, aber ich bin eigentlich ein Familienmensch*" – "They would not believe it, my family, but I'm actually a family person." "*Du liebst deine Familie, möchtest dazu gehören und sie lieben dich, du weisst das selber, du gehörst ja glych [=trotzdem] mit dazu. Und es ist ja nicht so, dass ich mir das selber ausgewählt habe*" – "You love your family, would

like to be part of it and they love you, you know that yourself, you are still part of it. And it's not like I chose this for myself." Deep regret about the impossibility of being able to live the family person *and* the lesbian she is *at the same time* and *in the same place* (for instance by bringing her partner along when she visits her family), are accordingly pivotal to Nermina Petar's narrative.

Her belief that her family would accept her sexuality because family is so important to them turned out to be a miscalculation:

> *Ich bin eine von denen die einfach meine Eltern wirklich damit konfrontiert habe, weil ich weiss dass ihnen Familie selber sehr wichtig ist. Da habe ich gedacht ja okay wenn Familie sehr wichtig bin ich als Mensch auch wichtig, also werden sie wissen wollen was ich mache, [mit] wem dass ich zusammen bin etcetera. Das ist aber nicht so. Das geht gar nicht.*

> I'm one of the few who has really confronted her parents with it because I know that for them themselves family is very important. So I thought okay if family very important then I am important as a person as well, so they will want to know what I am doing, who I am [with] etcetera. But that is not how it is. That does not work at all.
> —Nermina Petar

Nermina Petar realized early that she felt too restricted in her family home: "*Ich habe nicht können rausgehen wenn ich möchte [...] einfach so wie ein goldener Käfig oder?*" – "I was not allowed to go out when I wanted [...] just like a golden cage, you know?" Like other interviewees she retrospectively grounds her sense of imprisonment in the narrow gender roles propagated by her parents, as well as in her dissident sexuality:

> *Und da ich schon immer gewusst habe: Ich bin anders. Ich bin lesbisch. Ich möchte nicht heiraten. Ich möchte nicht das Leben, das sie leben- es ist nicht schlecht- [aber] das bin nicht ich. Das ist für mich nicht leben und das ist einfach funktionieren oder? Ich habe es versucht [mit Freunden]- ich finde es einfach als Bosnierin- du hast einen gewissen Kreis wo du dich drin darfst bewegen. Du darfst dich fürs Kochen faszinieren für das Kind zu erziehen für Bücher auch- kommt drauf an was für Bücher, für Familie- die Familie ist das A und das O- du als Individuum hast nichts zu sagen. [...] Und jetzt, wie ich jetzt lebe ich bestimme mein Leben jetzt selbst. [...] Wenn ich so würde leben wie meine Eltern das gerne hätten- auch den Kreis haben, das wäre der bosnische Kreis, wäre das nicht möglich. Und ich wäre unglücklich und die Beziehung wäre nicht gut und irgendwann wären auch die Kinder unglücklich und- es bringt es einfach nicht.*

> And since I've always known: I'm different. I'm lesbian. I would not like to marry. I would not like to have the life they lead- it's not bad but [...] it's not me. That's not living for me and that's simply functioning, you know? I've tried it [with boyfriends]- I just think that as a Bosnian woman- you have certain circles within which you are allowed to move. You are allowed to be fascinated by cooking, childrearing, books, too- depending on what books-, family- the family is the be-all and end-all- you as an individual no say whatsoever [...] And now, the way I live now, I now make my own decisions. [...] If I lived like my parents would like me to- also have these circles, those would be the Bosnian circles, that would not be possible. And I would be unhappy and

> the relationship would not be good and sometime in the future the children would be unhappy too and- it just doesn't work.
> —Nermina Petar

This statement again points to the temporalities of the heteronormative ideal as well as to its linkages with questions of gender and ethnicity, and once more exposes the family home as a crucial site for the construction of normative sexuality. At the same time, Nermina Petar denies that her sexual identity is in any way tied to place: "*Ich denke auch wenn ich in Bosnien unten wäre dann wäre ich ja nicht anders, ich wäre auch unten lesbisch. […] Ich wäre der gleiche Mensch, ob ich unten bin oder da bin*" – "I think even if I were down in Bosnia I wouldn't be different, I would be lesbian down there as well. […] I would be the same person, no matter whether I'm down there or here." In saying so, she positions a lesbian subject in Bosnia and Herzegovina, again working against the impossibility of a Bosnian-and-lesbian subject.

As a consequence of her discomfort in her family home, Nermina Petar moved out against her parents' will at a relatively early age. She did so in steps: First she moved only two kilometers away from her parents' home, and later she moved to a bigger city. She says that her relationship with her parents has gotten much better since moving further away, but when she first moved out both parties initiated a six-month break in contact. By moving out, Nermina Petar distanced herself not only from her family but also from her Bosnian circles more generally and from a social environment in which she feels gender roles are too narrow and homosexuality has no part. "*Das gehört nicht dazu, man möchte das nicht. Man möchte das nicht hören, das ist ein Tabuthema. Solange man nicht darüber redet existiert es einfach nicht*" – "This is not part of it, people don't want it. People don't want to hear this, this is a taboo issue. As long as one doesn't talk about it, it simply doesn't exist."

Up to this point, I have read Nermina Petar's account mainly in terms of a legitimation of her dissociation from her family and her diasporic community, which she explains by reference to her dissident sexual orientation as well as with her desire to break free from traditional Bosnian gender roles. In other words, the discussion so far has shown Nermina Petar caught between being a "family person" and proud Bosnian on the one hand and her parents' politics of denial of her sexuality on the other. As I have argued, her statement "I'm a Bosnian and I'm lesbian" simultaneously points to and momentarily leverages the impossibility of her subject position as *both/and*.

However, Nermina Petar inhabits another paradoxical space. While in her Bosnian circles she feels unacknowledged as a lesbian, she also experiences exclusion as a Bosnian in Swiss circles. "I am what I am," Nermina Petar insists, stating that she does not feel as though she has needed to 'assimilate' in lesbian circles in Switzerland in any way:

> *Ob ich jetzt unten [in Bosnien] bin oder da bin, unterscheide ich mich nicht unbedingt grossartig viel von anderen lesbischen Schweizerinnen. Auch die haben mit dem Gleichen mehr oder weniger zu kämpfen. Klar ich denke schon, wenn du Ausländerin bist und dass du nebst dem dass du lesbisch bist dass du noch damit zu kämpfen hast dass du Ausländerin bist, merkst es am Namen und du wirst zum Teil ausgegrenzt […].*

> Whether I'm down there [in Bosnia and Herzegovina] or here, I don't differ a whole lot from other Swiss lesbians. They have to fight with the same things more or less, too. Of course, I do think that if you are a foreigner and that apart from being a lesbian that you additionally have to fight with the fact that you are a foreigner, you notice it from the name and it's a fact that you are sometimes excluded […].
> —Nermina Petar

In the beginning of this statement, Nermina Petar identifies as a "Swiss lesbian," equating the "fights" that "other" Swiss lesbians have to engage in with her own (and thereby qualifying her earlier portrayal of Switzerland as pervasively homo-friendly). The second part of the statement, however, sets her apart from Swiss lesbians due to her positionality as a Bosnian in a Swiss nation-state structured by ethnicized hierarchies. In other words, just as it is impossible for Nermina Petar to inhabit the positionality of a Bosnian lesbian, it is also impossible for her to fully inhabit the positionality of a Swiss lesbian.

To conclude this discussion of Nermina Petar's account, I want to read it 'against the grain' from two different perspectives. My first argument is that contrary to Nermina Petar's dominant line of argument, in which she presents herself as a rebel and her parents as deniers, Nermina Petar is at the same time complicit in maintaining the silence around (her) homosexuality in her family. Soon after she had written her letter of disclosure (which her mother never saw because her father disposed of it), her mother nevertheless began to suspect something and asked her daughter *"einfach so in einem normalen Ton"* – "just like that, in a normal tone" whether she has something going on with women. *"Ich habe es dann bestritten, warum auch immer. Ich denke die Angst ist zu gross mit ihr darüber zu diskutieren, oder? Sie hat ein paar Mal probiert aber [jetzt] blockt sie heute noch ab […]"* – "I denied it then, for whatever reason. I think the fear is too great to discuss it with her, you know? She tried a few times but ever since she has been blocking the issue." This incident complicates the position of both parent and child, revealing effort and proactivity on the parent's side and fear and denial on the part of the queer daughter. Also, despite Nermina Petar's periodical efforts to confront her family with her homosexuality, she has to a certain extent accepted her parents' denial. She continues to visit her parents on a regular basis and in the context of these visits usually abides by their silence around the absence of her partner. The totality of Nermina Petar's account, which strongly emphasizes both her love for her family as well as her insistence on her individual freedom as a woman and a lesbian, suggests a reading of this acceptance as a temporary strategy in her ongoing effort to eventually conciliate the most important people in her life.

My second reading against the grain is that Nermina Petar's negotiations with her family also need to be viewed in the context of parent-child relationships in migration more generally. While the denial with which Nermina Petar's sexuality is met in her family and her diasporic community is severe, her negotiations with her parents resemble discussions heterosexual migrants of the 'second generation' have with their parents around contested issues such as their choices and preferences with regard to partners, relationships, spouses, procreation, or gender roles. Negotiating the traditional views of their parents and their own views co-shaped by exposure to Western traditions and

education, many participants in this study, 'first' and 'second' generation, set out to explore the limits of the negotiable, devising strategies to accommodate their parents' expectations (and their own desire and need to salvage family ties), the cultural heritage of their homeland, and the simultaneous (if always necessarily contested) sense of belonging to 'Swiss' culture in a complex quest to determine their positionalities and personal boundaries (e.g. Espiritu 2003, Herzig 2014, Jain 2018).

In contrast to Nermina Petar's claim that she would be the same person (and lesbian) had she continued to live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, her vehement vote for the public visibility of homosexuality should also be read as a manifestation of cross-cultural and cross-generational negotiations. In this context, age at the time of migration, as well as whether migration happened with or without parents, emerge as crucial variables setting the stage for intra-familial negotiations around issues of sexuality, procreation, gender roles, and sexual citizenship. Children of immigrants in particular are thereby caught up in colonial imaginations grounded in the idea of a 'culture clash,' which frame the 'second generation' (who in Switzerland are also referred to, and sometimes refer to themselves, as *'Secondos/Secondas'*) as eternally torn between two conflicting cultures, their 'own' culture (in majority society depicted as backward, traditional, constrained) and the 'other' culture (depicted as modern, liberal). Rohit Jain untangles the biopolitics behind the historical (and persisting) construction of this figure of the 'crisis-ridden second generation' in Switzerland, which he shows to have emerged from an assimilationist biopower that serves to produce and police Swiss nationalist ideals. This assimilation logic – which, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.3, is crucial to how migrant people and their children in Switzerland become categorized and marginalized – establishes the 'second generation' as potentially more easily assimilable (patronizable, disciplinable) into the mainstream society, while at the same time framing its subjects as "existences in crisis" *("krisenhafte Existenzen")* eternally trapped between two irreconcilable cultures (Jain 2018:96). As Fatima El-Tayeb points out for the Western European context, people of the 'second generation' thereby "remain defined through the paradigm of migration: the children (and grandchildren) of migrants of color, rather than becoming first- or second-generation *citizens*, are considered second- or third-generation *migrants*" (El-Tayeb 2011:180, emphasis added).[10] The conceptualization of the 'second generation' as 'lost between cultures' and hence eternally homeless is intimately tied to a perceived inability of its members to belong. This then becomes framed as an "individual and cultural failure rather than as the outcome of structural exclusions, [which] works to disempower and alienate groups who threaten the binary identification on which Europeanness continues to be built" (El-Tayeb 2011:xxxi).

10 El-Tayeb further raises attention to the paradox that the public and political debates around migrants' contested abilities to adapt to European 'values' have remained the same over the last five decades, keeping the focus on the moment of arrival and on the question of what happens if all of these migrants stay. As El-Tayeb succinctly points out, "[h]alf a century later, it should seem fairly obvious that the vast majority of migrants did stay and that the face of Europe has changed accordingly. The logical conclusion however, that they are by now as European as those worrying about them, is rarely drawn, prevented by an often unspoken, but nonetheless seemingly very precise, racialized understanding of Europeanness that continues to exclude certain migrants and their descendants" (El-Tayeb 2011:xii).

On the one hand, the (few) accounts of members of the 'second generation' discussed here frequently rehearse aspects of this 'in-between' narrative, as is for instance manifest in interviewees' frequent framing of their lives as a life 'between worlds.' These accounts also demonstrate the effects of such a positioning, such as internal and external struggles and conflicts with oneself and the families of origin regarding issues of sexuality, relationships, and reproduction (Herzig 2014, Jain 2018). On the other hand, these accounts powerfully testify to the ways the 'second generation' at the same time resists, complicates, and positively reappropriates the positionality allocated to its representatives.

Overall, Nermina Petar's account exposes her as caught between being a 'born' rebel against the Bosnian heteronormative prescript propagated by her parents and being a "family person" at heart. Reflections about the origins of this dilemma and Nermina Petar's efforts to reconcile the two roles dominate her narrative. Her account locates the origin of her struggle in a double paradox. On the one hand, Nermina Petar fails to claim the positionality of a Bosnian lesbian because her parents explicitly view homosexuality as a Western evil that is by definition situated outside the Bosnian culture and therefore cannot possibly affect their daughter. In response to this denial, Nermina Petar practices in-your-face-tactics to make Bosnian lesbians visible and establish them (and herself) as valid *Bosnian* subjects, both in the Bosnian diaspora in Switzerland and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her insistence on claiming this impossible subject position is not only grounded in her explicit pride about being Bosnian but is also tied to the impossibility of her claiming the subject position of a *Swiss* lesbian: As a 'foreigner' – and especially as a *proudly Bosnian* one – she is marked as always already different from "other Swiss lesbians." This distinction remains in place even though Nermina Petar knows that 'Swiss' lesbians often share many of her experiences. In other words, family conflicts due to homosexuality are, in contradiction to homonationalist imaginations, not at all a distinctly 'migrant' phenomenon, and yet continue to be constructed as a line of difference between 'us' and 'them.'

Another reason for families to silence their daughter's homosexuality was parents' fear of 'people's' reactions and possible damage being done to the family reputation. Nermina Petar is hurt by her parents' prioritization of 'other people's' opinion over the wellbeing of their daughter. Speaking about "Bosnians," she states:

> *Und vor allem sobald sie ein bisschen wohlhabend sind oder sie meinen sie seien es- ja, 'Was sagen die Leute? Meine Tochter ist lesbisch das geht doch nicht' und es ist- ich weiss nicht, sie denken gar nicht so weit was mit ihren Kindern passiert. Sie denken automatisch, 'Was denken Leute über mich was habe ich falsch gemacht?' Sie denken völlig falsch irgendwie.*
>
> Above all as soon as they are a bit well off or think they are- well, 'What will people say? My daughter is lesbian, that is not possible' and it is- I don't know, they don't think as far as what happens to their children. They automatically think, 'What do people think about me what have I done wrong?' They think completely wrong somehow.
> —Nermina Petar

Leyla Haddad extends Nermina Petar's point by arguing that in Lebanese family life, disagreeable topics are generally evaded, especially in external communication:

Man redet nicht drüber, nie nie, also meine Eltern haben nie- obwohl mein Vater eine Tochter hat, die lesbisch ist, […] man hat nie drüber geredet, man redet einfach nicht drüber, aber das ist auch so bezeichnend die libanesische Mentalität, man redet nie über schlechte Sachen, es geht immer einem bestens, auch wenn der Mann sich grad in der Küche am Erhängen ist, 'Ah oui, tout va bien, ououais, il te salut,' dabei ist er halb schon tot, nein also, es ist so ein bisschen so, dass Schein ist wichtiger als wie es wirklich ist, und es ist immer alles gut, alles ist in bester Ordnung, man hat immer alles im Griff und darum denke ich, dass man nicht über das redet ist ist nicht weil es um die Homosexualität sondern es ist einfach etwas, das unangenehm ist und darum tut man es wie ausblenden, dann existiert es wie nicht.

It is never talked about, never never, well my parents never- even though my father has a daughter that is lesbian, […] it was never talked about, it was simply not talked about, but this is also very characteristic of the Lebanese mentality, bad things are never talked about, everybody is always doing perfectly well, even though the husband might just be hanging himself in the kitchen, [in French] 'Ah yes, everything is fine, yesyes, he says hi,' and he is already half dead, no really, it's a bit like that, it's more important how things seem to be than how they really are, and everything is always fine, everything is completely fine, everything is under control and that's why I think that the fact that this is not talked about is not because it's about homosexuality but because it's just something that is disagreeable and therefore it's like eclipsed, then somehow it like does not exist.
—Leyla Haddad

Respect among family members plays a central role in acting out silences around same-sex orientation in families. Nour Saber, for instance, interprets her parents' *silence* about her homosexuality as a demonstration of mutual respect: "*Dans ma famille on se respecte tellement on parle pas de notre vie privée, c'est par respect c'est pas par autre chose*" – "In my family we respect each other so much that we don't speak of our private lives, it's out of respect, it's not because of anything else." More often, however, respect is critical in the *daughters*' decision not to communicate their sexual orientation to their parents, in an effort not to put family members or the family as a whole in a tight spot. For instance, whenever Leyla Haddad visited her father in Lebanon, she heeded the family silence in order not to harm her father's position as a renowned public figure and respected patriarch of his larger family "down there." Jimena Reyes, very much 'out and proud' in Switzerland, out of respect has never told her mother in Peru about her sexual orientation:

Alors j'ai pas raconté à ma mère. Ni à mon père, moi j'ai pas beaucoup de contacts avec mon père, mais à ma mère je lui ai pas raconté parce qu'on vivait pas ensemble. Et je trouvais pas nécessaire. Je trouvais pas nécessaire, c'est une culture qui est différente, moi j'ai évolué, moi j'avais dix-sept ans [quand elle est venue en Suisse] donc je pouvais changer ma mentalité, et ça je l'ai changée et je me suis intégrée tellement en Suisse que pour moi, je te dis j'ai deux cultures, j'ai deux cultures très fortes, mais au niveau de ma liberté, c'est plutôt celle que je vis actuellement en Suisse. Donc pour ne pas choquer la culture à ma mère, j'ai pas eu besoin de lui raconter.

> Well I haven't told my mother. Or my father, I don't have a lot of contact with my father, but I haven't told my mother because we didn't live together. And I didn't find it necessary. I didn't it find necessary, it's a culture that is different, me I have evolved, I was seventeen [when she came to Switzerland] so I was able to change my mentality, and I have changed it and I have integrated in Switzerland to such an extent that for me, I told you I have two cultures, I have two very strong cultures, but regarding my freedom, it's more this one I live in Switzerland right now. So in order not to shock my mother's culture, I haven't needed to tell her.
> —Jimena Reyes

Her mother embodies Jimena Reyes' first 'culture,' the Peruvian culture, in which dissident sexualities remain unexpressed within the family, and which Jimena Reyes clearly delimits from her other, Swiss culture, which she has acquired since migrating, and into which she has successfully integrated, among other things by coming to live openly as a lesbian. For her sexual independence, self-understanding, and self-assurance, 'coming out' to her mother is not a prerequisite. This fundamentally disturbs the common trope of 'coming out' as reproduced by the queer geographical literature discussed in Chapter 3.3, in which 'telling the parents' plays a central role. Jimena Reyes' position instead converses with Tom Boellstorff's observation (2011) in Indonesia, where same-sex loving men consider it important to 'come out' among the like-minded yet communicating one's sexual preferences to the family or broader society bears no significance.

At the same time, not telling one's parents is rarely only an issue of respect but is mostly coupled with fear of rejection and persistent inner struggles with one's sexuality. Teresa Ruiz proactively told everyone at work and in her circle of friends about her sexual orientation, but not her family, and especially not her mother in Cuba. She explains this as follows:

> *Ich habe Angst- also ich habe nicht Angst zum meiner Mutter das zu erzählen dass sie würde sagen 'Hey, nöd,' das würde sie nie sagen, meine Mutter, ich glaube, meine Mutter vergott [vergöttert] mich, es ist einfach- es ist kein Problem aber ich habe einfach Mühe, ich kann es nicht sagen, kann wirklich nicht so mit meiner Mutter reden. Auf was ich Angst habe: keine Ahnung […].*

> I'm afraid- well I'm not afraid of telling this to my mother that she would say, 'Hey, no,' she would never say that, my mother, I think my mother idolizes me, it's just- it's not a problem but I just have trouble, I can't say it, I really can't talk to my mother like that. What I'm afraid of: no idea […].
> —Teresa Ruiz

For a range of reasons, many interviewees hence collaborate in maintaining their family's silence around their sexual orientation. Jimena Reyes' statement further directs attention to the significance of *geographical distance* in interviewees' family communication strategies. Across accounts, spatial distance allowed for *selective communication* to take place with the family much more easily. Emigration thus emerges as an effective strategy for exploring one's sexuality while at the same time maintaining respect for the family. This is contrasted by cases like Jasmine Sieto's (see Chapter 6.1.3), where parental

interference, financial dependence, and mutual expectations remain highly significant after migration, creating a transnational interdependence that transcends spatial distance.

Even if they have not been explicitly informed, most family members 'know': "*Für mich die wissen alle. Es wird einfach nicht darüber geredet*" – "In my view they all know. It is simply not talked about," as one interviewee put it. Even if the topic has never been made explicit, parents witnessed the close relationships their daughter maintained with other girls and women when they grew up; they have witnessed a lack of boyfriends and male partners; they have visited their daughters in their apartments and have seen the shared bedrooms or the lesbian posters on the walls; they have met their daughter's lesbian friends; and they have been introduced to their daughters' partners, who have more often than not become a part of the family at least in some ways.

This silence within the family can be interpreted in three partly contradictory ways. First, it often represents a family politics of *denial* and *lack of acknowledgment* of the sexually non-conforming family member's inclinations and choices, which on the part of the latter results in a sense of rejection by the family. Given the often precarious situation of the interviewed women and their continued emotional attachment to their families, this sense of exclusion often becomes key to their biographical narratives, as Nermina Petar's account demonstrates. These interviewees are torn between the seemingly 'open' discourse about homosexuality in Switzerland and the taboo/silence around same-sex desire and relationships within their families.

At the same time, the sexually dissident family members often collaborate in the establishment and maintenance of this silence around their sexualities. This is an ambivalent practice grounded both in cultural taboos and continued inner struggles as well as in showing respect for one's parents' perceived cultural sensitivities and the family reputation in particular and the 'home culture' more broadly. *Respect* hence emerges as the second notion through which the silence in the family needs to be read. Respect is not only an important reason for many interviewees not to verbalize their sexual orientation in their families; their accounts sometimes also establish the *parents'* silence as a cultural value, framing the family politics of silence as an active gesture of mutual respect rather than suppression. This is exemplified in Nour Saber's and Siti Mohd Amin's accounts.

A third line of argument circles around personal freedom and safety. Efra Mahmoud was planning to return to Egypt with her partner, where the couple wanted to live under the same roof as Efra Mahmoud's parents without telling them about the nature of their relationship. This act is framed as an act of liberation, which would effectively remove Efra Mahmoud from the constant confrontation with her sexuality she suffers from in Switzerland, and would place her in a safe environment in which she would be able to act out her inclinations without needing to verbalize them, hence steering her out of the way of stigmatization and homophobia (see Chapter 5.3).

These different ways of reading the silence around non-conforming sexuality within the family cannot be neatly delimited within narratives as they typically contain aspects of all perspectives. However, they usually exhibit a clear bias towards one of them.

Silences around same-sex sexualities within families thus remain highly ambivalent and complex. In his work on same-sex desire among Dominican immigrant men in the U.S., Carlos Ulises Decena (2012) refers to the theme of dissident sexuality as a "tacit subject" within diasporic Dominican families. Tacit subjects are matters that are not verbalized but are always understood. Family members are complicit in keeping the subjects of same-sex intimacies and relationships silenced in order to bind the family together. "What binds people to one another and what makes networks, solidarities, and resource sharing possible and sustainable," Decena says, "are forms of connection that cannot be fully articulated but can be shared, intuited, and known" (ibid:3). Taking up Decena's argument, Katie L. Acosta writes in her personal introduction to her study about how same-sex loving Latinas in the U.S. negotiate relationships with their families:

> I thought about the tacit relationship my family had with my aunt: the ways they never acknowledged her lesbian existence while all the while accepting her partner as part of the family. I had been well trained in these tacit arrangements, never mentioning my own relationships with women to anyone in the family. For them, alternative sexualities was a tacit subject; even when it was understood, it was never discussed, and through the lack of verbalization we maintained family ties. (Acosta 2013:1)

Likewise, in the narratives discussed here, the family practice of keeping family members' queer sexualities tacit effectuates a sense of exclusion from the family but at the same time serves the function of tying family members together. There are considerable differences in which of these aspects is experienced more strongly. In Nermina Petar's case, a sense of exclusion prevails. Her desire to make her sexuality visible and for her parents to acknowledge her sexual orientation and her partner clashes with her parents' persisting silence, obstructing Nermina Petar's efforts to "do family" (Acosta 2013:12). By contrast, Teresa Ruiz is the key figure keeping the subject tacit in her family. It is her decision rather than her family's to not verbalize her sexual orientation or the nature of her relationship with her partner. In Teresa Ruiz' view, speaking about her sexuality would be to treat her mother disrespectfully and to violate Cuban family etiquette. At the same time, Teresa Ruiz also instrumentalizes this 'cultural' excuse to avoid troubling negotiations with her mother that would necessarily excavate painful experiences and cause shame on both sides, to no one's benefit. However, for Teresa Ruiz these conditions are much more favorable than for Nermina Petar because Teresa Ruiz' parents (whom she never told explicitly but who 'knew') silently accepted her partner into the family.

Both the practice of keeping certain subjects silenced in order to bind family members together as well as interviewees' transnational strategies of (non-)communication disrupt the master narrative of the 'coming out.' This narrative assumes a development from a closeted individual embedded in a homophobic and backward social context to a liberated, outspoken, and self-assured queer Self. In many ways, migration narratives like Teresa Ruiz' tell exactly such stories, instrumentalizing the 'coming out' as a means of integration into Swiss society (see Chapter 5). At the same time, her 'coming out' story becomes complicated by the silencing of her same-sex orientation within the family, which remains ambivalently valued. On the part of the sexually non-conforming

family member, the silence is upheld not only due to fear of negative reactions and a continued sense of shame, but also out of respect for the 'culture' in the home country – embodied by the parents – and the family's reputation. On the part of the family, tacit subjects are maintained as such due to a lack of acknowledgment of the dissident family member's inclinations and choices, but also in order to bind family members together. These motivations intermingle and are articulated to varying degrees across narratives. Such complex configurations of silence and articulation, shame and respect, denial and silent acceptance call into question the simplistic movement from silence/invisibility to verbalization/visibility that the dominant notions of the process of 'coming out' continue to propagate.

6.1.5 The Family Home

The space of the 'home' has been a frequent subject of scrutiny in feminist and queer geography. This body of work has shown how the family home is generally perceived as a space "where people are offstage, free from surveillance, in control of their immediate environment. It is their castle. It is where they feel they belong" (Saunders 1989:184, quoted in Valentine 2000 [1998]:98). It is "a place where inhabitants can escape disciplinary practices that regulate our bodies in everyday life" (Johnston and Valentine 1995:99), and a sphere of safety, of control over one's body. However, the narratives discussed so far in this chapter validate the feminist/queer critique that this imagination of the home as an allegedly unregulated space of safety and recuperation is primarily constructed to secure the power of heteropatriarchal family heads, while for other inhabitants of the family home privacy is an unevenly distributed privilege. Heteronormative and neoliberal ideals continue to relegate women to the space of the home, for whom the private sphere often connotes domestic work rather than leisure, and all too often violence and oppression rather than safety (Valentine 2001:63). For sexually nonconforming people, the family home can be associated with a sense of social control, coercion, or exclusion, rendering the space highly ambivalent as familiarity, the love for the family, and the desire to belong clash with experiences of rejection and estrangement. This sub-chapter provides a more focused examination of these ambivalences, revisiting material discussed earlier but also drawing on further data.[11]

Nermina Petar describes her family home as a "golden cage." At the age at which she sought to break out of the heterosexual prescript her parents represent and attempt to enforce, she connoted the space of her family home with overprotection and imprisonment. The trope 'move out to come out,' with which queer geographers have indicated the significance of leaving the family home in the process of becoming a homosexual subject (see Chapter 3.3) aptly describes Nermina Petar's strategy: The further she has moved away from home, the more defined her lesbian sexual identity has become, and the more her general self-confidence has grown, which has in turn strengthened her position in her continued negotiations with her parents.

11 The 'family home' here designates the household interviewees grew up in, or, alternatively, the place where their parents lived at the time of the interview.

Other interviewees not only moved out of their parents' homes but to another country altogether to escape their parents' expectations and explore their dissident sexualities. As Ayesha Umar recounts:

> *Also ich habe zum Beispiel schon früher gewusst dass ich stehe- Frauen interessieren mich auch. Obwohl ich habe lange Zeit gedacht ich bin bisexuell, aber dass ich überhaupt sowas tun könnte, wenn ich habe zuhause gewohnt, oder irgendwie, weisst du Lesben, schwule Freunde suchen wolltest- ich wollte es wirklich, aber ich habe nicht den Mut gehabt und ich habe es nicht gewagt das zu tun gegen meinen eigenen Anstand. Konnte es nicht. Solche Dingen, oder? Also es hat es wirklich ein Abbruch gebraucht von zuhause umzuziehen irgendwo ganz weit weg damit ich Junge quasi meine eigene Leben anfangen zu leben könnte.*
>
> Well for instance I already knew earlier that I'm attracted- that I am interested in women as well. Although for a long time I thought I'm bisexual, but the fact that I would be able to do such a thing at all when I lived at home, or somehow you know, you wanted to look for lesbians, gay friends- I really wanted to, but I did not have the courage and I did not dare to do this against my own decency. I couldn't. Such things, eh? So it really took a break, to move out to a place far away so that I, the youngster, could start to live my own life so to speak.
> —Ayesha Umar

Although not clearly defined in terms of a sexual identity, Ayesha Umar is aware of her same-sex sexual desires and feels the need to move out in order to "dare" to explore these emotions, feeling that it would go against her own sense of "decency" to do so while living at home. This reservation mirrors the above discussion of interviewees' motivations not to tell parents: It is indicative of a sense of doing wrong and of the shame Ayesha Umar continues to feel. Yet, importantly for the context of this discussion, the notion of decency complicates the 'move out to come out' argument. It is not only the egocentric urge to explore and liberate the sexual Self but also respect for the family that motivates a move out of the family home before investigating one's sexuality. Geographical distance enables queer migrants to simultaneously establish self-conscious same-sex identities while heeding their respect for their families by refraining from exploring, verbalizing and demonstrating certain things within the space of the family home. (As discussed in Chapter 3.3, the 'move out to come out' strategy is also practiced among Swiss lesbians, see e.g. Nay and Caprez 2008.)

The sense of social control and lack of freedom to explore one's sexuality within the family home leads to a desire for a *room of one's own* (Woolf 1981 [1929]). The desire for such a room is a conspicuously prominent theme across accounts, as is for instance crystallized in Ariane Velusat's narrative. The first picture Ariane Velusat shows me in our reflexive photography interview is an image of the door to the little studio that was built for her in the garden of her urban family home in Venezuela when she was fifteen:

> *Avant de changer ma chambre là, je dormais dans la chambre avec mon frère. On partageait une chambre, qui n'était pas vraiment une chambre. C'était comme une longue pièce ma grand-mère avait le bureau au fond, là où elle travaille, et mon frère et moi on était dans le large couloir mais du début. […] Donc j'avais pas un espace où je pouvais fermer la porte, d'autant plus*

> *qu'à la maison, on a toujours eu l'habitude de ne jamais fermer les portes des chambres. […] Là du coup j'avais l'excuse que c'était le jardin et qu'il fallait fermer la porte.*
>
> Before changing my room, I slept in the room with my brother. We shared a room, which was not really a room. It was like a long room at the back of which my grandmother had her desk where she works, and my brother and me we were in the large corridor, but at its beginning. […] So I didn't have a space where I could close the door, the more so as in the house we always had the habit of never closing the doors to the rooms. […] That's why here I had the excuse that it was the garden and that the door needed to be closed.
> —Ariane Velusat

The desire to have a space of her own dominates Ariane Velusat's account of her youth. The lack of privacy in the multigenerational house, aggravated by her restricted mobility in the city outside the family compound, becomes crucial in her decision to leave for Switzerland at the age of eighteen:

> *Je disais à une de mes tantes que j'avais besoin de partir, que je sentais qu'à la maison j'étouffais. Qu'on contrôlait toujours tout ce que je faisais, et je me disais, 'Mais je suis suffisamment sérieuse responsable et consciencieuse pour qu'on soit toujours derrière moi à voir ce que je suis en train de faire ou pas faire, ça m'énerve, donc j'ai besoin de, non, de respirer,' et c'est une des raisons pour lesquelles je suis partie aussi.*
>
> I said to one of my aunts that I needed to leave, that I felt that at home I was suffocating. That someone always controlled everything I was doing, and I told myself: 'But I am too serious and responsible and conscientious for people to always be behind me and look what I am doing or not, this gets on my nerves, so I need to, no, to breathe,' and this was also one of the reasons why I left.
> —Ariane Velusat

Ariane Velusat does not explicitly relate her sense of suffocation in her family home to her (homo)sexuality, which she only became aware of in Switzerland. However, her pressing desire *"de vivre moi seule"* – "to live alone" indicates her need for a space of self-reflection and exploration, which was needed to set the stage for her encounter with her eventual partner, a young woman who is, like Ariane Velusat, from Latin America. In the course of the two women's investigations into their awakening feelings for each other, they also discussed their uncertainties with their mothers and grandmothers back home. *"Et puis bon les deux ont mal réagi, donc ça n'a pas aidé, et en même temps ça nous a aidé, parce qu'on s'est dit : 'Mais oui. Mais elles sont pas là, c'est pas elles qui sont en train de le vivre, et on se sent tellement bien avec, que non, on vas pas le changer'"* – "And then well the two reacted badly [Ariane's favorite grandmother, with whom she had grown up in the same household, said to her, *'t'es complètement anormale'* – 'you are completely abnormal'], so that was not much help, and at the same time it was a help, because we told ourselves, 'But yes. But they are not here, it's not them who are living it, and we feel so good with it that no, we will not change it.'" The physical distance from the family home hence enabled the couple to make their own decision and live their own lives.

Other interviewees devised strategies to live their relationships *within* their family homes. This involved *temporal* strategies, such as taking advantage of the absence of parents and other family members, and *spatial* strategies, such as confining intimacies to the bedroom or evacuating siblings from shared rooms in order to spend the night with a lover. When in her teens, Jimena Reyes lived alone with her mother in their big family house; all her other family members had left Peru to seek work. Soon Jimena Reyes and her girlfriend had the idea of talking their mothers into moving in together in Jimena Reyes' family home:

> *Donc ma copine et moi on avait discuté pour dire, 'Bon ma belle y faut qu'on fasse quelque chose, donc on essaie de vivre un truc,' et puis on dit 'Pressons nos mamans et puis on vous loue la maison quoi.' Et j'ai vécu avec ma copine, donc depuis l'âge de quinze ans à dix-sept ans, chez moi. Toujours avec une discrétion incroyable sous des clefs enfin, très discret parce qu'on n'aurait pas pu comprendre, et puis après je suis arrivée en Suisse, j'ai vu toutes mes sœurs avec des copains ou des maris etcetera et je me suis dit: Bon ils savent pas mon histoire, tout ce que j'ai vécu avec Cecilia, j'ai envie de vivre comme eux [les sœurs], et je vais essayer de vivre comme eux. Alors j'ai essayé une fois bien sûr et puis ç'a pas joué.*
>
> So my girlfriend and I discussed and said, 'Okay beautiful we need to do something, so we'll try to live out a thing [a relationship]' and then we say, 'Let's pressure our moms to rent you the house.' And [so] I lived with my girlfriend between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, at my place. Always with an incredible discretion, kept under tight wraps, very discreet because we could not understand, and then after I came to Switzerland, I saw all my sisters with boyfriends or husbands etcetera and I told myself: Well they don't know my history, all I've experienced with Cecilia, I feel like living like them [the sisters], and I will try to live like them. And then I tried once and of course it didn't work.
> —Jimena Reyes

Jimena Reyes and her partner cleverly turned the family home into a space of opportunity, allowing them to explore their same-sex desires in a protected space without having to face the question of sexual identity. Jimena Reyes only became exposed to this question once she moved to Switzerland, where her attempt to reinvent herself sexually by establishing a heterosexual relationship failed. However, despite the possibilities it opened up, the teenagers' double family home remained a highly segmented and dangerous space: The girls' relationship remained confined to their respective rooms, and the girls had a distinct sense of 'doing wrong' and lived in constant fear of being found out:

> *On avait une chambre pour nous avec deux clefs bien sûr pour chacune, pour toujours avoir une privacité stricte, pour justement, pas qu'on nous surprenne, mais une fois […] je l'ai donné un bec sur la bouche, juste quand son père rentrait à la maison. Et ça a été le bordel. Mais comme son père il était un peu fou il était un peu misogyne un peu bizarre, Cecilia et moi on lui a tout de suite dit. 'Ecoute toi t'es complètement taré, t'hallucines, t'es déjà- tu faut mettre des lunettes parce que t'es en train de voir des choses horribles,' enfin bref on s'est tellement défendues que, c'était toute la famille, devait croire soit le vieux soit nous. Et ils nous ont cru nous.*

> We had a room for ourselves with two keys of course for each of us, to always have strict privacy, exactly so that nobody would surprise us, but once […] I gave her a kiss on the mouth just as her father returned home. And this was a mess. But because her dad was a little crazy, he was a little misogynist a little bizarre, Cecilia and me we told him immediately, 'Listen you're completely nuts, you're hallucinating, you are- you need to put on glasses because you are starting to see horrible things,' in a nutshell, we defended ourselves so vehemently that, it was the whole family, had to either believe him or us. And they believed us.
> —Jimena Reyes

Although the girls succeeded in creating a queer space of opportunity within their family home, their shame and at the same time their inability to "understand" and integrate their actions rendered it a contested and unsafe place. When discovered, the girls were forced to denigrate their intimate feelings for each other in order to protect themselves from the negative reactions they anticipated in case their argument should fail.

Interestingly, it is exactly this kind of family home – a protected space where sexuality can be lived without being verbalized – Efra Mahmoud envisioned when she planned to return to Egypt with her Swiss partner, confident that within the family tacit subjects would be maintained as such. Her narrative largely frames her return to Egypt as a 'return' to the family home that would enable her to live "normally," that is, without constant inquiries into her sexuality.

In some cases, the family home also represents an *unproblematic* space, earlier termed "queer islands in a heterosexual sea." Siti Mohd Amin has always been able to live her same-sex relationships in her family home, both when growing up and now when she returns home to visit her Malaysian girlfriend. As Siti Mohd Amin relates about her visits to her family home:

> SMA: My family know about my [?] and somehow when I bring my girlfriend, they a bit open-minded, it was okay. Only I tell my girlfriend to respect the old people you see, you know. I know we are- the culture is no allowed to have partner same woman and woman, you know but I say: Okay my family is open, just only talk to them and- okay if you make different. Just come and straight to my room, sure what is they are thinking you know. It's not so good. So I said, say hello, talk a little bit watching TV movie with them, is okay. And what we do in our room is private (smiles).
> TB: And that's okay for your family?
> SMA: Yeah, for my family it's okay.
> TB: […] What about her [girlfriend's] family, do they know?
> SMA: Umm, in her family it's no. It's very- only the brothers sisters it's okay. But for parent no.
> TB: Yeah. So she usually would come to your place and not the other way around?
> SMA: I go to her place during her parents is out, when I knew it's- sisters brothers alright know.
> TB: So where you live, your family home, […] everybody is living in the same house, and when you go there you also stay in this place?
> SMA: My room, I just stay with my younger sister so we turn by turn to stay in the room, you know. If I'm out, so she stay in the room. Sometimes we have the same- uh, when

I say I bring my girlfriend so she know she have to sleep outside.
—Siti Mohd Amin

Siti Mohd Amin hence shows more concern about her girlfriend showing respect for her parents than with her parents' reaction to her sexual orientation.

The family home – no matter whether it is located in Switzerland or 'back home' – remains an important point of reference even after moving out, regardless of whether the family accepts or rejects the daughter's, granddaughter's, or sibling's sexuality. One recurrent theme in these negotiations with the family is parents' acceptance of partners within the family home. Teresa Ruiz: *"Angela [Partnerin] gehört zu der Familie auch in Kuba […] meine Mutter liebt sie. Momol. Also mit meine ganze Familie hat sie wirklich ein sehr gutes Verhältnis. Natürlich wir verstecken uns auch, klar"* – "Angela [partner] belongs to the family also in Cuba […] my mother loves her. Yes. In fact with my entire family she really has a very good relationship. Of course we also hide, that's clear." Teresa Ruiz' partner is welcomed into the family home under the precondition that nothing is verbalized. There are cases, however, when partners are explicitly excluded from the family home. *"Nicht über diese Schwelle"* – "She won't cross this doorstep," Julia Morricone's father told her after she informed him of the true nature of her relationship with her 'friend.' Across accounts such strict verdicts have usually been temporary, but in some cases they have lasted for years.

In summary: While growing up, many interviewees associated their family homes with confinement, restriction and a sense of unbelonging, which some retrospectively ascribe to their sense of being unable to explore their awakening same-sex desires within the space of the family home, both out of shame and respect. Others describe a vague but no less pressing sense of having to leave the family home in order to create a space of their own in which to 'find themselves.' The strategy of 'moving out to come out' supports the suggestion brought forth by queer geographers that "non-normative sexuality is often tantamount to spatial displacement" (Puar, Rushbrook, and Schein 2003: 386), and that for queer people the family home is not as readily available as the protected, unregulated space that the private sphere is commonly believed to represent.[12]

At the same time, queer migrant women's narratives disrupt this logic of displacement in multiple ways. First of all, in the context of queer international migration,

12 Recent feminist, queer, and postcolonial work has taken the discussion around 'safe space' beyond the family home. For instance, Cindy Holmes (2009) exposes that discourses on domestic violence are largely organized around the experiences of white middle class heterosexual women and hence around violence in the private sphere. She argues that this definition of domestic violence erases the *public* forms of violence (welfare systems; immigration legislations; unequal work conditions; moral pressure; discrimination in public everyday encounters; etc.) that shape the intimate lives of, for instance, non-white-identified, working class or queer women, or single mothers (see also Chapter 8). Another vein of this work has shown how lesbian and gay rights activists' call for public 'safe spaces' in the U.S. is complicit in broader public security discourses based on policing and privatization, which has caused social exclusions along the lines of race and class (Hannhardt 2013). From this work, the global North/West emerges as a 'safe space' for citizens privileged by their race and class only.

family ties are not easily cut based on a host of reasons ranging from affective ties to financial dependence and the need for moral support (such as importantly in the face of exclusion and social isolation encountered in the diaspora). Second, for some interviewees the family home represents a protected space for sexual exploration or unverbalized sexual practice. Some sought to create 'queer bubbles' within the family home when growing up, devising temporal and spatial strategies in order not to be found out. By contrast, Efra Mahmoud intended to capitalize on the fact that in her family her sexuality was likely going be treated as a tacit subject, accommodating her desire to keep private things private and to evade constant exposure to sexualized discourses. Finally, as the case of Siti Mohd Amin demonstrates, spatial displacement is not always a necessary precondition for the successful establishment of a same-sex sexual identity, for sometimes these desires can be explored and lived largely unproblematically within the family home. In sum, and partly in contradiction to existing queer geographical work, the family home emerges both as a crucial site of *exclusion* as well as a space of *opportunity* and *support*.

6.1.6 Conclusion

Swiss feminist migration scholarship has identified the family as a critical safety network in transnational and diasporic contexts. Restrictive immigration regimes, obstacles to entry into the Swiss labor market, limited access to the social security system, and social exclusion emphasize the significance of the family in addressing basic needs (PASSAGEN 2014:208, Soom Ammann 2011, Soom Ammann and van Holten 2014). However, biographical accounts by queer migrant women in Switzerland suggest that the family of origin cannot be to them what it is to their heterosexual counterparts. Persistent pressure from the family to follow a narrow heteronormative prescript, the silencing of same-sex desire in the family home and negative reactions to dissident sexualities often mark families as sites of rejection and exclusion rather than comfort and support. This critically restricts queer migrant women's access to practices of inheriting, caring, and providing in the context of their family of origin.

At the same time, mutual emotional and material dependencies persist even if the family is critical of the queer family member's 'choices.' Many interviewees who grew up in close-knit families understand themselves as "family persons" and despite conflicts with their parents are not about to cut family ties (and neither are, for that matter, their parents), especially since, as queer migrants, they find themselves exposed to a heightened risk of social isolation and exclusion in the host country. Despite families' often adverse attitudes, the family hence remains a crucial source of support and comfort, mitigating the negative effects of migration. Indeed, the social and structural exclusions that are often experienced in Switzerland, coupled with a distinct sense of 'missing the family,' often fuel considerations of returning to the home country. Due to these experienced exclusions, there is sometimes also a continued dependency on parents' financial support (while vice versa some families depend on remittances from the migrant; however, in this sample this was the exception).

Caught in these contradictory positionalities vis-à-vis the family, queer family members devise strategies that accommodate both their love and respect for their

family on the one hand and their love for the same sex on the other. One such strategy is leaving the family home for another country. Not corporeally being in each other's everyday lives minimizes potential sources of intra-familial friction while it facilitates sexual exploration and self-determination as well as selective communication with the family. This strategy of spatial segregation enables interviewees to show their parents and their 'culture' respect and to save their family's 'face' without betraying their own needs and desires. Other strategies are transparency, openness, and confrontation of the family with queer perspectives and realities. From queer migrant women's narratives, the family hence emerges as a locus of power through which 'culture' and the attendant heteronorms become defined, and through which both normalized and dissident sexual identities (which are always already ethnicized and racialized) are enforced and controlled.

At the same time, the family home does not always represent a site of exclusion. It can also emerge as a "queer island in a heterosexual sea," which offers the sexually non-conforming family member the chance to develop her dissident sexuality within the family home. In this sample such narratives have remained the exception, however.

In conclusion of this sub-chapter, I want to recall the three considerations put forward at the outset, which stressed the importance of reading parents' reactions to their daughters' queer sexualities from a critical postcolonial, feminist, and queer theoretical stance. This critique exposes homophobias outside the West and in diasporic communities also as legacies of colonialism and its contemporary persistences, and as results of heteropatriarchal nationalisms in the context of the global contestation of sexualities. Homophobias outside the West are hence not in any way 'essential' to such and such a homeland or diasporic culture – nor are they simply imports from the West. Furthermore, in the specific case of the negotiation of sexualities within diasporic communities, queer migration scholars have shown how racialized migrant communities and girls and women in particular come under twofold moral pressure. On the one hand, heteropatriarchal homeland nationalisms tend to denigrate diasporic women as licentious, while on the other hand racism in the host society produces a host of negative stereotypes of migrant subjects in general. In the face of such negative depiction and consequent exclusion, migrant communities work towards representing themselves as morally superior to the Western host culture. These representations epitomize 'our' (Filipino, Bosnian, etc.) girls/daughters as pure and chaste versus 'their' (Swiss, Western) girls/daughters as sexually corrupt. As queer postcolonial scholars emphasize, such imaginary female emblems of the nation are always already *heterosexual*, which implicitly establishes heterosexuality as the national sexual norm while simultaneously framing queer sexualities as its abnormal Western counterparts. Within this framework, queer migrant women are rendered impossible subjects – they can never attain the subject position of a lesbian *and* a Bosnian (for example) as embodied in one person.

At the same time, queer migrant women's subject positions are also rendered impossible by the increasing homonationalist discourses within Switzerland. Since these discourses frame migrant communities and their 'cultures' as essentially homophobic, they per definition exclude the possibility of the existence of queer migrant subjects. This invisibilizes migrant women in Swiss lesbian spaces and exposes these spaces as intrinsically white.

6.2 Queer Families

Interviewees' frequent ambivalence and precariousness of their relationships to their family of origin and their subjection to multiple discrimination in both home and host country are productive of "homing desires" (Brah 1996), which as defined earlier are "desires to feel at home achieved by physically or symbolically (re)constituting spaces which provide some kind of ontological security in the context of migration" (Fortier 2003:115, see Chapter 3.4). This view on the space of the home distinguishes the desire for a homeland from the desire to create belonging independent of the location of the 'home.' In this sense, interviewees' negotiations with their families, too, are consequences of their 'homing desires.' The present sub-chapter is concerned with another avenue of 'making home,' namely the discussion of how homing desires are actualized in interviewees' visions and implementations of *queer families* and queer family homes. These 'queer homes' are safe spaces the women strive to create for themselves as bulwarks against heteronormativity and racism, and especially against multiple mechanisms of Othering that frame queer migrant subjects always as *either* a homosexual *or* as a 'foreigner.'

6.2.1 Introduction: Brief History of Two Questions

Forms of living together that depart from the heteronormative ideal of the father-mother-child-family have been among the most contested issues in Switzerland in recent years (Mesquita 2011, Nay 2013). This is crystallized in the continued debates raging around the legal regulation of forms of living together and procreation that reach beyond couplehood and/or heterosexuality, which queer scholars sometimes subsume under the term *queer families* (Bannwart et al. 2013:13). The political initiative with the most relevant and direct impact on interviewees' lives was the introduction of the national Partnership Act in 2007, which allows queer couples to register their partnership (see Chapters 2.2.2, 5, and 8). While the Act brought significant improvements in the possibilities of 'doing family' for both Swiss and non-Swiss women-loving women and men-loving men, it by no means installed equality between heteronormative and queer families. For instance, Swiss legislation still excluded the possibility of adoption by registered same-sex couples (but note that stepchild adoption became possible in 2018, and that same-sex couples will gain access to 'full' adoption with the introduction of gay marriage in 2022). Also, to this date the Act bars same-sex couples' access to reproductive medical treatment and technologies. (While in the future gay marriage will grant lesbian couples access to institutionalized sperm donation, legal inequalities between heterosexual and same-sex couples will persist: Lesbian couples have to declare the sperm donor to the state and have to seek medically assisted sperm donation for both partners to be formally acknowledged as mothers from the child's birth.) Finally, non-Swiss citizens in same-sex couples remain excluded from facilitated naturalization (which again will change with the introduction of gay marriage) (Nay 2013). Prior to the national vote on the Partnership Act, LGBT campaigners consciously avoided matters concerning procreation for fear that the Act as a whole would be threatened if these particularly controversial issues were included in the voting package. As it happened, Swiss

voters passed the Act. Ever since, LGBT rights activists have been working towards establishing equal rights for queer parents and their children, a campaign that has been gaining significant momentum over the past few years and has recently culminated in Swiss voters' consent to 'full' gay marriage.

The Partnership Act was introduced during my fieldwork, and when I started the interviews, the Act was under intense public discussion. The issue had been present in public discourse for quite some time already, as before the introduction of the federal Act several Swiss cantons had already passed cantonal acts, which had already brought improvements for the legal status of non-Swiss partners living in these cantons. The proliferation of these debates at the time of my fieldwork resulted in rich interview material on the topics of formalized partnership and queer families. What had been unthinkable just a few years before had become standard questions every openly homosexual woman found – and still finds – herself confronted with in Switzerland, both from in- and outside lesbian circles: "Are you going to marry?" and "Are you planning to have children?" "*Das ist eigentlich nicht das, was wir alte Lesben uns mal vorgestellt haben*" – "This is actually not what we old lesbians had in mind," research participant Barbara Wiegand says. Barbara Wiegand wrote one of the first articles advocating gay marriage in a Swiss lesbian magazine in the 1980s, in which she argued that marriage should be made accessible to queer people as a ritual legitimizing homosexual partnerships.[13] However:

> *Und heute bin ich eigentlich eher entnervt, dass sich die Homosexuellen ob jetzt Mann oder Frau einfach wieder Richtung Mainstream entwickeln und sich eigentlich fast überschlagen, jetzt auch noch mit Kindern haben und so, und ich finde 'Hey Man, hey Woman, das ist es eigentlich nicht gewesen, was wir alte Lesben uns mal vorgestellt haben, dass man sich dermassen anpasst, dass man irgendwie vom Möbel Pfister nicht mehr zu unterscheiden ist' (lacht). Und es geht mir dort nicht um den Unterschied per se, oder dass es radikal sein muss, sondern homosexuell sein ist einfach nicht heterosexuell sein, wieso soll man es imitieren? Es ist etwas anderes. Für mich, in meinem Denken, wieso muss ich jetzt da Mami Papi und Kinder spielen wie aus dem Lehrbuch. […] Und dann wird man einfach genau auch wieder unsichtbar, […] weil man dann genau wie Herr und Frau Müller tun auch Frau und Frau Müller und Herr und Herr Müller dann wieder ihr eigenes Balkönchen schützen, und das nervt eigentlich. […] Also ich finde ja die Gesetze die die sollten einfach selbstverständlich sein wenn man eine Lebenspartnerschaft hat, ist doch völlig egal was man für Geschlechtsteile hat, jemand pflegen, ins Spital können [um eine_n Partner_in zu besuchen], also ich finds jenseitig. Ich finds gut dass sie jetzt dann anfangen, und die die dafür sind können sich auch wieder sehr gut dabei fühlen, sehr tolerant (lacht), aber mindestens hat man jetzt einen gewissen Fortschritt gemacht.*
>
> And today I'm actually more unnerved that the homosexuals, whether man or woman, are just developing in the direction of the mainstream and actually almost outdo each other, now also with having kids and so on, and I'm thinking, 'Hey man, hey woman, this is actually not what we old lesbians had in mind, that you adapt to this extent, that you're somehow not discernible from Möbel Pfister[14] anymore' (laughs). And for

13 The literature reference is not given here for reasons of anonymity.

14 Upright middle class furniture department store in Switzerland.

> me it's not about the difference per se, or that it has to be radical, but to be homosexual is just not like being heterosexual, why imitate it? It is something different. For me, in my thinking, why do I have to play Mom Dad and Kids as if by the book. […] And then you're exactly invisible again, […] because then just do like Mr. and Mrs. Müller, also Mrs. and Mrs. Müller and Mr. and Mr. Müller protect their little balcony, and this actually gets on my nerves. […] Well in my opinion the laws they should just be self-evident, if one has a committed partnership [literally 'life partnership'], who cares what genitals you have, to care for somebody, being able to go to the hospital [to visit a partner in the hospital], I think it's outrageous. I think it's good that they are starting now, and those who advocate it can feel good and tolerant (laughs), but at least a certain degree of progress has been made now.
>
> —Barbara Wiegand

Barbara Wiegand advocates equal rights irrespective of whether a partnership is registered or a couple married or not. She is particularly worried about what she perceives as homonormative trends, that is, the growing tendency to create homosexual stereotypes that assimilate heteronormative ideals into homosexual culture. Alongside other critics of homonormativity, Barbara Wiegand hence formulates a critique of gay and lesbian politics and practices that do not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions such as monogamy, procreation and binary gender roles but instead reinforce them in an effort to lead a 'normal' life (Puar 2006, Duggan 2002, Oswin 2007a, see Chapter 3.2.1). She particularly worries that homosexuals' increasing efforts to establish such a 'normal life' and generally the practice of being *"brav"* (well-behaved, upright) furthers the marginalization of queer people that are more *"exaltiert"* (exalted) and *"unangepasst"* (non-conformist), such as herself.

Although she distances herself from lesbian circles and asserts that she has always felt more at ease in more eccentric mixed homosexual/gay circles, Barbara Wiegand could be counted among what Christina Caprez and Eveline Y. Nay (2008) have termed *"frauenbewegte Frauen,"* women who are openly lesbian and politically active, and who view sexuality as a political issue.[15] Among the cases examined in this study, those few interviewees who were politically active were, like Barbara Wiegand, predominantly

15 Barbara Wiegand is, however, very selective about communicating her sexual orientation: "*Ich finde ich muss meine Sexualität nicht öffentlich vor mir hertragen, das finde ich auch bei anderen Leuten irgendwie eher unangenehm, aber es gibt dann eine Schallgrenze wo ich denke du müsstest eigentlich etwas sagen*" – "I don't think I have to wear my sexuality out on my sleeve, I also consider it somehow disconcerting when other people do it, but there is a limit [literally: 'sound barrier'] where I think now you should actually say something." While she does not actively hide it, she does not display her homosexuality openly at work (which sometimes requires her to travel to countries in which homophobia is flagrant), nor in the conservative Swiss village where she lives. When asked about why she has decided not to come out at work she says that this had not even been a decision: "*Für mich ist meine Sexualität ja eigentlich kein Problem. Doof gesagt. […] Und ich finde es auch nicht so ein super Thema dass ich denke- jeder hat eine [Sexualität], irgendeine, und ich teile das einfach nicht, die grassierende Sexualisierung, das ist etwas das mir extrem auf den Geist geht*" – "For me my sexuality is actually not a problem, is it? To put it in a silly way. […] I don't consider [sexuality] such a great topic- everyone has one [a sexuality], any one [sexuality], and I just don't share that, the rampant sexualization, that is something that really gets on my nerves."

of the 'second generation' and have been politicized in the women's and lesbian and gay movement in Western Europe. By contrast, political activism in general and LGBT activism in particular was exceptional among those who migrated to Switzerland as adults, who rarely exposed themselves politically beyond the occasional participation in a Gay Pride parade. Questions such as whether commitment in a partnership should be tied to official registration or not, or whether or not (and how) to have children, tended to be considered private matters and were handled as such. However, despite the fact that the participants in this study mostly refrained from political activism, their insistence upon retaining control over their partnerships and procreation inadvertently turn these aspects of their lives into sites of resistance and civil disobedience.

The following discussion focuses on two aspects of the *queer family*: *procreation* and *partnership formalization*. Since considerations about *partnership formalization* was more often than not inextricably linked to issues of residency and citizenship, perspectives on and experiences with partnership registration will chiefly be examined in the next chapter (Chapter 7), which is concerned with sexual citizenship. The present sub-chapter discusses queer migrant women's perspectives on *procreation*, tied up as it is with cultural values, the division of labor within the family, and custody rights. The following analysis primarily focuses on "baby projects" (Maria Borkovic) rather than actual family lives since only three interviewees already had children: one couple had a child from one of the partners' earlier heterosexual marriage, and another interviewee continued to live with her husband and two children while maintaining a long-distance relationship to a woman in her home country. Both of these cases are presented in more detail in other chapters (see Chapters 5 and 8). This unequal distribution of interviewees with and without children is in part due to the structure of the sample, which is biased towards skilled women between the ages of thirty and forty. While women with a higher education and professional ambitions generally tend to bear children later, the fact that many interviewees who were in their thirties did not (yet) have children is *also* crucially tied to the effects of their migration. Some interviewees not only had to (re)launch their careers in Switzerland but sometimes also had to come to terms with their homosexuality and/or the cultural and technological possibilities of procreation in the context of a homosexual relationship (see below). Further, older queer women who grew up in Switzerland or other Western European countries are less likely to have children (who were planned together with their partners) than younger women. This is likely due to the broader social acceptance of lesbians having children, which in turn is the result of relentless LGBT activism in the past two decades on the one hand and the rapidly growing number of reproductive medical institutions and technologies accessible to homosexual couples on the other. Lastly, queer women who have chosen not to live a homosexual life but live with a husband and children instead were not likely to answer the call for participation in this research project, since many of them are not likely to have communicated their same-sex desires to their families (an exception to this is Suki Schäuble, see Chapter 7.2.4).

In other words, many participants were at a point in their lives at which the question of having children was potentially salient, and in fact, some interviewees had an imperative wish to become mothers. Yet even couples in which neither partner had an urgent wish for children gauged the advantages and disadvantages of procreating, dis-

cussed methods of conception, weighed models of labor division, assessed the role of the sperm donor, or considered different forms of living together as a family. Preferences regarding these issues varied widely and will not be discussed in detail here, as this has been done more extensively in other literature on queer families in German-speaking contexts (Gerlach 2010, Irle 2014, Schulze and Scheuss 2007, Streib-Brzic and Gerlach 2005). Instead, the following analysis focuses on the more specific question of how *migration* structures perceptions and strategies of queer procreation.

6.2.2 Baby Projects

Some participants in this study did not think of themselves as potential mothers (as one interviewee put on record: "I hate babies"). Others had decided against having children but satisfied their desire to mother through nieces and nephews, godchildren, or neighbors' children. For others, having children was an option to be considered rather than an imperative. However, among the women interviewed for this study those with a clear desire to have children were the majority. Several described their desire to have children to be so imperative that at some points in their lives they had been on the verge of abandoning their homosexual lives in order to have children with a man, or leaving an unwilling female partner in order to look for one with the same wish. "*Familie, Kinder, heiraten, ja das ist klar gewesen. Absolut.*" – "Family, children, marrying, yes that was clear. Absolutely." This is how Teresa Ruiz' envisioned her future when she lived in Cuba and still considered herself heterosexual. Since then she has left her mother and brother in Cuba to come to Switzerland, has relaunched her professional career, had a sobering experience with a heterosexual marriage, has 'come to terms' with her homosexuality – and has acknowledged the possibility of raising a child with a female partner. Apart from her professional ambitions, the desire to start her own family has been the only element on her original map of life to persist over the years.

For Teresa Ruiz, accepting the possibility of having children with a woman as a valid alternative to having children with a man has been the ultimate but crucial step in assuming a lesbian identity:

> *[Angela und ich haben eineinhalb Jahre zusammen gewohnt] bis ich eigentlich festgestellt habe dass ich halt auch noch ein Kind haben will, oder? Und dass das mit Angela nicht möglich wäre. Da habe ich gesagt 'Ich möchte wirklich nichts mehr mit ihr zu tun haben, ich möchte gern ein Kind haben.' [Angela sagte] 'Dadada, das können wir auch zusammen' 'Nein das geht nur mit einem Mann,' das ist wirklich meine Vorstellung, damals gewesen. Und dann habe ich sie verlassen. Habe gesagt 'Nein, wirklich nicht.' Und es ist mir wirklich so schlecht gegangen wirklich schlecht schlecht schlecht, und dann habe ich müssen hab ich zum Psychologen gehen und das Ganze wirklich anzuschauen. […] Und jetzt kann ich auch sagen 'Ich bin Lesbe.'*
>
> [Angela and I had been living together for one and a half years] until I actually realized that I also want to have a child, you know? And that this would not be possible with Angela. Then I told myself 'I really don't want to have anything to do with her any longer, I would like to have a child.' [Angela said] 'Dadada, we can do that together, too' 'No, this only works with a man,' this really was my conception at the time. And then I left

> her. Said 'No, definitely not.' And I felt so bad really bad bad bad and then I had to go to a psychologist and to really look at the whole thing. […] And now I can also say 'I'm a lesbian.'
>
> —Teresa Ruiz

Only after psychotherapy and an unsatisfying interlude with a man does Teresa Ruiz overcome her heteronormative imaginary and acknowledge that she does indeed want to commit to a homosexual relationship with Angela Hieber *and* have children with her. Following the logic of her narrative, it is only the cultural possibility of lesbian motherhood that has eventually enabled her to fully step into the lesbian identity and to live a homosexual relationship.

At the same time, Teresa Ruiz' initial repulsion from engagement in the debate around queer procreation is indicative of the ambivalence she attaches to discourses of queer family foundation. Discussions around queer procreation are grounded in biological fact: Seeing that conception cannot 'happen' accidentally between two biological women, deliberate action is called for. Unless there is a child from a former heterosexual relationship, starting a queer family in Switzerland calls for explicit reflection, planning, and negotiation, for instance with partners, co-parents, sperm donors, or reproductive health institutions.

Moreover, wanting a child requires knowledge about the *"magouilles"* (Jimena Reyes), that is, the legal machinations necessary to bypass persistently prohibitive Swiss legislation – which at the time of the interviews explicitly did not foresee queer family foundation.[16] As one interviewee who has drawn up a fake relationship with a man in order to gain access to reproductive health services in her home country says: "Unfortunately […] you just have to make these bypass routes just to make your dream come true." Because access of lesbian couples to reproductive technologies is barred in Switzerland, these services have to be obtained outside of the country. Still these obstacles usually cannot thwart the plan to have children, thus confirming Eveline E. Nay's finding that "law frames the family foundation of a lesbian couple [in Switzerland], but it does not prevent it" (Nay 2013:379, my translation), which points to the obsolescence of this prohibition in terms of its effect. However, in the face of persistent heteronormative ideals and legislation that explicitly work against queer family formation, artificial insemination at a reproductive health institution abroad or self-organized insemination with sperm from a male acquaintance involve a process of engagement and personal development that is challenging for migrant and non-migrant queer women alike.

16 With respect to procreation, the Partnership Act and associated legislation remains grounded in heteronormative ideals: It explicitly states that registered partnerships are not families, and that a registered partnership does "not provide a basis for family foundation" (Botschaft zum Bundesgesetz über die eingetragene Partnerschaft gleichgeschlechtlicher Paare, BBl 1997 I 1, 1.6.2.) (Nay 2013:373). As mentioned above, the situation has since changed with the introduction of stepchild adoption for same-sex couples in 2018 and the imminent introduction of 'full' gay marriage in 2022. Inequalities and open questions with regard to rainbow family foundation remain, however, such as the prerequisite to register sperm donors or the ethically delicate question whether surrogacy should be legalized in Switzerland, and under what conditions.

Ariane Velusat's discussions with her partner are illustrative of the character of such a process. As introduced above, Ariane Velusat emigrated from Venezuela as an eighteen-year-old, seeking to break free from the confines of her family home. In Switzerland she soon met another young Latin American woman, and after a lengthy process of exploration and debate the two women acknowledged their mutual attraction. Their *"drame"* (drama) does not stop here, however. Ariane Velusat's partner faced residency issues, and both women were in critical economic situations – but the nascent relationship was put to its most serious test when the question of procreation arose:

TB : [Vous avez dit que] vous voulez des enfants ?
AV : Oui. Oui oui on aimerait bien. C'est quelque chose qu'on a parlé depuis le départ. Même avant qu'on se dise 'Oui on est un couple et on décide de construire quelque chose,' même avant ça on se disait 'Ah, comme on est bien ensemble on se sent bien. Et des enfants. Et c'est comment sans enfant ?' C'était un drame. Clairement oui. Si moi je me souviens que les premiers mois je disais 'Mais, juste à cause de ça, pour moi c'est un poids suffisent pour réfléchir vraiment si je continue pas.' Et bon de ça aussi on a beaucoup parlé et puis après, moi j'ai regardé sur les forums sur internet et tout ça, j'ai dit 'Non, c'est possible, on peut faire des enfants en étant ensemble, donc c'est bon.' Et du moment que je-, Florencia parfois elle me disait 'Mais c'est bon tu me fais peur parce que t'as fait toutes les démarches et tout ça,' j'ai dit 'Mais non j'ai pas fait toutes les démarches mais, au moins savoir si c'est une possibilité qui rentre en ligne de compte, ou si ça coûte je sais pas combien de milliers d'euros et qu'on peut pas le faire. Mais j'ai besoin de le savoir maintenant.' Et du moment que j'ai su que c'était quelque chose qui était possible et réalisable pour nous, c'est bon. Ça y 'Pfiou.' Oui.

TB: [You said that] you wanted children?
AV: Yes. Yes yes we would like that. This is something we have been talking about from the start. Even before we said 'Yes we are a couple and we are deciding to build something together,' even before that we told ourselves 'Ah, how good we are together, we feel good. And the children. And how is it without a child?' It was a drama. Clearly, yes. Yes, I remember that in the first months I said 'But, just because of that, for me this is weighty enough for really considering if I don't want to go on.' And yes we talked about it a lot as well and then after that I checked the forums on the internet and so on and I said 'No, it's possible, we can have children when we are together, so it's good.' And from this moment- Florencia sometimes told me 'But that's good, because you scare me because you took all those steps and everything,' I said 'But no I haven't taken all these steps but, at least to know if it is a possibility that we will have to take into consideration, or whether this costs I don't know how many thousand euros and we couldn't do it. But I need to know it now.' And from the moment I knew that it was something that was possible and feasible for us, it's good. That was 'Puuuh.' Yes.
—Ariane Velusat

Here Ariane Velusat and her partner's negotiations around having children emerge as a rational and objective process of collecting and juxtaposing seemingly 'hard' facts. But like Teresa Ruiz, Ariane Velusat fundamentally questions her budding homosexual relationship when the issue of reproduction surfaces. Her narrative constructs both the fact that there needs to be the possibility of having children as well as the specific method by

which they should be obtained as unalterable, external, almost objective factors rather than personal choices. And it is as such facts they enter Ariane Velusat's balance sheet of the pros and cons of committing to a serious relationship with a woman. Finding that there are ways to have a child and that the necessary funds can be raised brought her relief: "Puuuh," as in: That was a close shave. The basic assumptions – that there needs to be procreation, and the exact way it has to happen (via a sperm bank) – remain intact.

In Ayesha Umar's account, too, the issue of having children emerges as a potential motivation for separation. As she states about her current partner's lack of a wish to have children: "*Ich habe noch nicht entschieden ob es [eine Familie] notwendig ist oder nicht. Also wenn diese Entscheidung kommt dann ist für mich klar, vielleicht müssen wir dann getrennte Wege gehen. Und dann muss ich eine andere Partner suchen*" – "I have not yet decided if it [having a family] is necessary or not. When this decision comes then it is clear for me, maybe we will have to go separate ways then. And then I'll have to look for another partner."

These anecdotes are representative of the clear desire of the majority of the participants to have children. In this sense, queer immigrant women in Switzerland can be counted among the contributors to the 'Lesby-Boom,' which describes the significant increase of queer family foundation by lesbians over the past two decades (Nay 2013:360). For several research participants, the wish to have children was indeed so imperative that they stated they would have given up their same-sex relationship for a heterosexual way of life had it not been for the cultural, institutional and technical possibilities of founding a queer family. As exemplified by Ayesha Umar above, several interviewees equally considered, or had considered in the past, giving up relationships with partners who did not want to have children. However, the process of learning about and acknowledging these possibilities of queer family foundation and to seriously take them into consideration as one's own path was often lengthy and marked by alienation and intercultural negotiation. As will be discussed next, adopting a nuclear family model thereby emerged as one strategy for research participants to create the home they had been denied both as sexual dissidents and as migrants.

6.2.3 On Methods of Conception and Labor Division

Besides the question of whether to have children or not, and whether or not to have them together, debates about procreation primarily addressed the question of the *method of conception* and *labor division*. The negotiation of the appropriate method of conception is closely tied to the question of what criteria the sperm donor should fulfil and what role he is envisioned to assume in the future family, such as whether he should take on the role of a father – and how and to what extent – or whether an anonymous donation is preferred. Positions with respect to these questions varied widely across accounts: While some argued that the child was going to need a "masculine presence" and were hoping to find a sperm donor who wished to assume some responsibilities, others preferred artificial insemination at a reproductive health clinic, with or without the option for the children to learn the identity of their father at a certain age.

For more than a year prior to the interview, Teresa Ruiz and her partner had been working with a gay couple who provided them with sperm for self-administered artificial insemination – without success as of yet. They found the donors through a group of gay and lesbian people brought together by the common desire to have children, hosted by a local LGBT organization. Teresa Ruiz speaks about the role of the sperm donor only upon my request. She seems unconcerned about the exact definition of his role, even though the donor himself seems to envision a significant role for himself: *"Er möchte der Vater sein"* – "He would like to be the father." It remains unclear what exactly this entails. Teresa Ruiz, for her part, asserts that she has "nothing against it," and that once she is pregnant the couple are going to have to "protect ourselves against legal issues" *("Mit den rechtlichen Sachen müssen wir uns halt absichern")* – eliding the fact that this is a legal impossibility once the donor has officially acknowledged his fatherhood.[17]

By contrast, Ariane Velusat and her partner spent a great deal of time debating the role of the sperm donor, which eventually brought the couple to the conclusion that an artificial insemination performed at a specialized clinic abroad was the only valid option for them. They initially wanted to ask a friend for assistance, saying *"Oui mais il faut un père"* – "Yes but there needs to be a father," but this option was qualified upon further reflection. Above all, the couple want to remain flexible : *"Si on part au Venezuela, si on part à Argentine ou si on part à, je sais pas au Canada ou je sais pas où, oui, on peut pas faire ça a une autre personne. Lui dire 'Non on va rester ici on part pas nanana' et une fois qu'on les a, 'Ciao!' On peut pas."* – "If we leave for Venezuela, or if we leave for Argentina, or if we leave for, I don't know Canada or I don't know where, yes, we can't do this to another person. Tell him 'No we will stay here we won't leave nanana' and then once we have them [the children], 'Ciao!' We can't." The couple find themselves caught in a dilemma: On the one hand, they want a father who is also prepared to assume the *role* of a father; on the other hand, they want to retain their mobility. Eventually Ariane Velusat and her partner revisit their previously unquestioned assumption that there needs to be a father in the child's life: *"Peu à peu je me suis dit 'Mais, non c'est pas indispensable'"* – "Little by little I told myself 'But no, this [a social father] is not indispensable,'" finally admitting to themselves that in fact *"on n'a pas envie d'avoir une troisième personne"* – "we don't feel like having a third person."

While the envisioned role of the sperm donor varies, Ariane Velusat's position is exemplary of the tendency across narratives towards *homonormative family models*. In the biographies generated in the context of this study, no visions appear of a common household with the father, or indeed any kind of enlarged family household. The family home and thus the nucleus of the family unit is understood to consist exclusively of the two mothers and the child(ren).

A further issue that emerges in the context of interviewees' negotiations of the method of reproduction is race and ethnicity. For Ariane Velusat and her partner, the

17 Generally, a gap was discernible in terms of knowledge about the legal restrictions imposed on lesbian couples with regard to issues of procreation. Some who were planning a family were for instance of the incorrect opinion that once a partnership is registered the non-biological mother automatically receives custody.

question of *visual similarity* between the child and the non-biological mother is as central to their decision to obtain the sperm from a sperm bank as their desire to retain their mobility. According to Ariane Velusat, the couple want there to be *"plus ou moins la même optique [...] une certaine harmonie dans, oui, dans le type physique ou comme ça"* – "more or less the same optics [...] a certain harmony in, yes, in the physique or something like that" between child and non-biological mother. Such visual politics are emphasized by interviewees living both in all-migrant and mixed couples. As the white partner of one of the interviewees told me, *"J'aimerais bien que ce soit un petit métize. Donc le spermatozoïde soit asiatique par example"* – "I would like it to be a little métiz. That the sperm is Asian for example." The strategy of creating visual similarity among family members heightens the illusion of biological kinship, reiterating the primacy of relation by blood.[18] Visual likeness is held to make the child more 'one's own,' both to the individual partners as well as to the couple and family as systems of relations, and as such is seen to strengthen family ties. These ties are established not only by mimicry of genetic kinship but also function on the basis of socially constructed racial markers as a central source of identification for both partners, and by extension for the child. In other words, sharing the racial positionality of the child is identified as a crucial factor that binds family members together. In this study, not enough data was generated to analyze the question of race in the procreation strategies of same-sex partnerships in-depth, an issue that deserves further attention in queer and critical race studies (Steinbugler 2005). Further inquiries should specifically focus on how dominant discourses and practices around queer family formation in the West implicitly construct same-sex couples as monoracial and white, and how such procreation strategies among migrant or mixed same-sex couples at once reproduce and disrupt this hegemonic production of racialized and ethnicized sexualities.

In the context of this study, the concern with visual similarity and racial identification further raises the question of accessibility to specific kinds of sperm. Ariane Velusat and her partner explicitly chose to use a sperm bank because this offers them the required variety of sperm to effectuate the visual similarity that is desired between the non-biological mother and the child. This means that for queer members of immigrant minority groups in Switzerland the method of self-organized sperm can be problematic as it may not be possible for the couple to find a suitable private sperm donor. At the same time, insemination in an institution abroad requires considerable financial and social capital; a flexible availability; and a residence permit that allows for leaving and re-entering the country spontaneously, which not all queer migrant women possess. This leads to the question of how class shapes reproduction strategies among queer migrant women and specifically points to a social inequality that is produced by barring same-sex couples from access to sperm banks and reproductive health services in Switzerland, which is that not all queer migrant women have equal access to determining the visual similarity of their children.

18 This is not to imply that 'visual similarity' is an objectively measurable fact, but is simply a description of how interviewees' narratives (re)constructed such visual similarity.

Two further central issues of negotiation in the context of procreation have been which partner is going to bear the child, and how the couple's labor division is going to be organized once the child is born. Again, perspectives varied widely, though they did expose certain tendencies. When asked who will be bearing the child Teresa Ruiz replies:

> *Im Moment nur ich. Aber sie [Partnerin] will auch Mutter werden. Ich glaube jetzt bis sie die Ausbildung fertig gemacht hat […]. Also zwei Kinder wollen wir sowieso haben. […] Und wenn es nicht klappt dann kann auch noch Angela, also bin ich auch nicht so fixiert.*
>
> At the moment only me. But she [partner] also wants to become a mother. I think now until she has finished her professional training […]. Well, we want to have two children anyway. […] And if it doesn't work out then Angela can give it a try as well, so I'm not that fixated either.
> —Teresa Ruiz

At the moment, Teresa Ruiz, who is considerably older than her partner, is both the main breadwinner and the future biological mother. In her statement these roles do not appear fixed but are expected to be adjusted as careers and fate dictate and as each partner goes through different life phases. However, a later comment by Teresa Ruiz indicates a more normative perspective on the envisioned division of labor: *"Wenn es soweit ist dann wird halt Angela da bleiben, also sie halt die Kinder aufpassen und- ja, ich werde halt weiterhin schaffen, klar ich verdiene ja mehr als sie, und so können wir uns schon arrangieren so"* – "When the time has come then Angela will stay here, will look after the children and- yes, I will continue working, of course, I earn more than she does after all, and that's how we can arrange it." The couple hence plan to reverse roles once the child is born, picturing a traditional division of labor in which Angela Hieber takes on the role of the social mother with a significantly reduced paid workload while Teresa Ruiz resumes her role as the breadwinner. That being said, as Teresa Ruiz' case demonstrates, biological and social motherhood need not necessarily align, be it by free volition or coercion (Ramiza Salakhova, for instance, is forced to take on the role of the breadwinner against her and her partner's plans because as an asylum seeker her partner is not allowed to work, see Chapter 9.3).

Teresa Ruiz' vision reflects a more general tendency among interviewees towards the 'breadwinner' model in which one partner assumes primary responsibility for earning income, while the other is responsible for nurturing. While the roles (breadwinner/nurturer) are rarely questioned per se, in contrast to the heteronormative family they are considered to be more interchangeable, which allows professionally ambitious people like Teresa Ruiz or Maria Borkovic to act as biological mothers and slip into the role of the social mother for as long as they deem it necessary before resuming their careers.

In contrast, other interviewees cannot imagine such a crossover of biological and social roles. This becomes particularly evident in the accounts of more masculine Asian interviewees who, like Augusta Wakari, Siti Mohd Amin, and Jasmine Sieto, were used to assuming the 'role of the man' in what they themselves term "heterosexual" relationships with feminine women when still living in Asia. Even though their gender positionalities have undergone significant shifts in the diaspora (see Chapter 5), they cannot imagine their own body as pregnant. "I still can't picture myself getting pregnant," Au-

gusta Wakari states. "I will love that child crazy but me, myself being pregnant, I don't know, I mean it's not impossible but it's just never crossed my mind." Estrangement from the image of her own pregnant body is also the reason why Ayesha Umar draws the line at bearing a child. Her position vis-à-vis procreation is particularly matter-of-fact: *"Ich möchte selber keine Kinder produzieren, ich kann mir in Zukunft vorstellen eine Familie zu haben, wäre mir auch ein Wunsch. Dann wäre die Frage entweder Adoption oder eine Frau finden die das Kind produzieren möchte. […] Ich möchte mein Körper gut bewahren (lacht)."* – "I would not like to produce a child, I can imagine having a family in the future, it would also be a wish of mine. Then it would be between either adoption or finding a woman who would like to produce the child. […] I would like to conserve my body well (laughs)." There were hence differences contingent on gender identities concerning the ways interviewees could or could not envision their bodies as pregnant and could imagine themselves to act as biological mothers.

To conclude: Across queer migrant women's accounts tendencies were discernible in the choice of the method of reproduction as well as in the labor division model envisioned for the queer family. While the imagined queer families featured a certain flexibility as to biological and social motherhood and labor division, for the most part homonormative nuclear family models were favored, in which the biological father plays a limited role and the labor is divided according to a breadwinner/nurturer model. The adoption of this model can arguably also be read as an assimilationist move: The breadwinner/nurturer model clearly continues to represent the norm in Switzerland. The question of how migration is implicated in the formation of these preferences guides the next sub-chapter.

6.2.4 Restoring the Lost Family Home, Adopting Swiss Homonormativity

Family was the single most important reason why many interviewees considered returning to their homeland. The loss of family homes was a prominent theme and showed effects on at least three levels: First, the family home is lost as an *everyday space* through geographical distance, which was sometimes chosen and sometimes enforced. Second, in the context of international migration the loss of the family home also implies a loss of the '*culture*' one grew up with, as the family home represents a main locus for the performance of the intimate everyday rituals that make up a sense of home and home 'culture.' Lastly, as discussed above, the family home is lost through the *dissident sexuality*. Despite interviewees' ambiguous relationships to their families of origin, they devised strategies to maintain or re-establish contact with family members or attempted to compensate for the loss in other ways. Starting one's own (queer) family was among the most prominent of these strategies.

At first it was utterly unthinkable for Teresa Ruiz to live without her mother (and her cooking!) in the long run. As a child she had been riddled by an illness, which tied mother and daughter together intimately. During her first few months in Switzerland Teresa Ruiz could not bear to be alone in her apartment (where she lived on mayonnaise and Coca Cola): *"Ich habe immer wieder Mühe gehabt mit allein zu wohnen"* – "I've always had difficulties living alone," and therefore Teresa Ruiz initially spent most of her time in

the family home of a Spanish friend. When her surrogate family left, a quick marriage to her boyfriend presented itself as the only possibility to fill the renewed vacuum, even though Teresa Ruiz was completely unemotional about the relationship. Although the marriage failed quickly, the desire to create/restore a family home has persisted and is now materializing in her relationship with Angela Hieber.

Even interviewees who were initially explicit about not wanting children waver when considering the relevance of family ties and a family home. "Who will take care of you when you die?" ponders Jasmine Sieto, who otherwise "hates babies." Her concern about care during old age adopts her own parents' concept of *Nachwuchs*, which ties children into the practices of inheriting, caring, and providing in ways Jasmine Sieto herself experiences as exceedingly confining (see Chapter 6.1). Leyla Haddad, although explicitly not willing to expose herself to the social expectations directed at a mother in Switzerland, still wonders *"ob man denn dann vielleicht wie das Bedürfnis hat noch selber so etwas ein Nestlein zu bauen"* – "whether one will perhaps after all experience the want to build kind of a little nest" once her mother has died. In her experience, the love between a mother or a father and a child is unique in its depth, a source of "absolute love" that can never be matched by a romantic relationship or friends. In her view, only having one's own children can secure continued access to and the passing on of this love.

Since the loss of the family is not only grounded in geographical distance but also in alienation from the family because of one's sexual orientation and sometimes through cultural differences that develop between immigrant parents and their Switzerland-educated daughters, the topic of starting a family of one's own to reinstate the lost family home also appeared in accounts by interviewees whose families lived in Switzerland. As Nermina Petar states: *"Das Einzige das ich einfach vermisse das ist das Familiensein, also ich habe vor allem momentan einen extremen Kinderwunsch"* – "The only thing I miss is being in the family [literally the 'family-being'], above all I have an extreme desire to have children at the moment." Her relationship with her parents suffered great damage when she told her parents about her sexual orientation. *"Du wirst alleine alt werden"* – "you will grow old alone" they predicted, without family or children, which for Nermina Petar was *"einer der Sätze der mich eigentlich getroffen hat"* – "one of the sentences that actually affected me."

Against the backdrop of her own nostalgic wish for a child, Nermina Petar despairs over her female heterosexual relatives who threaten their potential to have children, for instance by indulging in smoking cigarettes. *"Du hast einen Mann, du hast die Möglichkeit, oder?, eine normale Familie zu haben, eine normale Beziehung und machst es ja doch durch gewisse viele Sachen kaputt."* – "You have a man, you have the possibility, don't you? To have a normal family, a normal relationship and you destroy it with certain many things." This exposes her desire to live like 'normal,' heterosexual couples and families, which is coupled with the painful acknowledgment that as a lesbian one is by definition excluded from the possibility of establishing such normalcy. Laura Georg, though she does not have nor does she even plan to have any children, also describes this sense of exclusion as she speaks about her ventures with her goddaughter[19] with nostalgia:

19 In Switzerland it is common for children to have both a godfather and a godmother. These can be aunts or uncles or can come from outside the family. Their imagined role is to provide an additional

(Auf ein Foto von ihrem Patenkind zeigend) Das ist mein Gottenkind wo ich- also sie lädt mich immer auf so lustige Sachen ein wo ich dann das Gefühl habe: Ja, ich gehöre auch ein bisschen dazu. Zu der Familie, oder? Weil da triffst du immer Eltern und Lehrerinnen und Lehrer. Dann gehst du sagen, 'Ja, ich bin das Gotti,' und dann, 'Ah, freut mich,' und so. Und sonst habe ich das ja nicht so und das geniesse ich dann manchmal zum einfach so ein bisschen in diesem recht- ja- (zögert) bürgerlichen Ambiente auch mal ein bisschen daheim zu sein durch sie.

(Pointing at a picture of her goddaughter) This is my godchild where I- well she always invites me to these funny things where I feel like, yes, I also belong a little bit. To the family, you know? Because there you always meet parents and teachers. Then you say, 'Yes I'm the godmother' and then, 'Ah, nice to meet you,' and so on. And I don't normally have this in my life and then I enjoy that sometimes just to be a little bit at home in this quite- yes- (hesitates) bourgeois ambience, through her.
—Laura Georg

It is through her godchild that Laura Georg can, to a certain extent, experience a normalcy that is out of reach for her as a lesbian, and moreover as a brown-skinned lesbian in a society that is defined by a white norm and self-understanding (see Chapter 7).

Laura Georg's reference to "bourgeois ambience" points to what most other interviewees frame as a 'normal' family life grounded in a nuclear family structure and the breadwinner/nurturer model that continues to represent the norm in Switzerland. In a European context, the traditional nuclear family model, with a father working full-time and a mother concentrating on childrearing without pursuing paid work or only working part-time, has significantly receded over the past fifty years in favor of more gender-flexible and gender-egalitarian models. While this trend is also discernible in Switzerland, the transition has been significantly slower here: In 2008, this form of living together was still practiced in about 80 percent of all households with children (BFS 2008b:69ff.).[20] In Switzerland the nuclear family model hence persists not only as an ideal but also in terms of lived experiences. However, for families with same-sex parents this model is only representative to a certain extent. As queer scholars have shown, in these families the paid and unpaid workloads are generally distributed in more egalitarian ways and are generally more oriented towards personal preferences than in families with heterosexual parents (e.g. Copur 2008, FaFo 2013). As the discussion above about the division of labor in interviewees' imagined family models has shown, this finding is partly confirmed and partly questioned by this study.

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adult contact person for the child apart from mother and father, and typically to spend some time with the godchild on a more or less regular basis, to varying degrees. Laura Georg is not related to her goddaughter by blood.

20 In recent years, the percentage of households in which the mothers pursue no paid work at all has declined in favor of the model in which the mother works part-time, while the father continues to work full-time. Feminist scholars mainly locate the persistence of this gendered inequality in the fact that, culturally, men are still expected to work full-time in Switzerland to provide for their families while the housework and childrearing remains the mother's realm, no matter her paid workload.

In general, queer migrant women's homonormative imaginations of family can be read as one strategy to integrate into Swiss society in an effort to tame the disruption caused by their dissident sexuality on the one hand and to mitigate the negative effects of their positionality as perceived 'foreigners' in Switzerland on the other. Teresa Ruiz ascribes the success of her integration to three milestones: learning the language, being integrated in the labor force on an adequate level of qualification, and becoming a lesbian. The fissures created in these efforts manifest themselves in instances of resistance. For example, when asked whether the couple plan to register their partnership, Teresa Ruiz is quick to answer:

> *Im Moment nöd [nicht]. Im Moment nöd. Ich habe so ein Trauma mit meine Scheidung undsoweiter, im Moment alles was auf Papier steht das macht mich wirklich Mühe. Ich meine es geht uns auch gut ohne Papier, ich weiss schon es gibt auch viele Vorteile, das weiss ich, ich habe mich schon mit das Ganze auseinandergesetzt. Aber wer weiss also-*
>
> Not at the moment. Not at the moment. I have such a trauma with my divorce and so on, at the moment everything that is on paper really troubles me. I mean we're good also without paper, I know there are also many advantages, that I know, I have really looked at the whole thing, but who knows well-
> —Teresa Ruiz

Against the backdrop of her own negative experiences, Teresa Ruiz (for the time being) rejects what remains a crucial pillar for building a homonormative family in Switzerland: marriage.

In this context it is important to note that the connection between the wish to have children and the desire to restore a lost family home is certainly not restricted to queer migrant women. As discussed above, queer geographers have argued that displacement (especially from the family home) is necessary to know oneself as homosexual. It can therefore be argued that many queer people suffer the loss of their family home. However, as demonstrated here, this postulation does not justify a conceptual amalgamation of the positionalities of immigrant and non-immigrant queers respectively, as these continue to differ in important ways. As queers and as migrants, queer migrant women 'lose' their family homes in multiple senses, a loss that becomes particularly momentous in the face of the intersecting mechanisms of exclusion queer migrant women face in the diaspora. This is also the backdrop against which interviewees' tendency to favor traditional(ly Swiss) family models has to be read. These choices are not only manifestations of larger homonormative trends in Switzerland but are at the same time bound up with discourses around 'integration' and sexual citizenship. Becoming a 'normal homosexual family' serves as a strategy to live 'normally,' that is, to integrate into Swiss society while simultaneously erasing the status of foreigner to a certain extent. Queer migrants' homonormative preferences therefore always also have to be read as expressions of home-making strategies that aim at mitigating their exposure as multiply marginalized subjects. In other words, in the case of queer migrant women, homonormativity paradoxically also becomes a strategy of resistance against racism and xenophobia.

6.2.5 Transnational Family Planning: Here or There?

"In migration contexts caring and providing receive a transnational aspect, […] which manifests itself through an increase of options concerning care work in old age," Eva Soom and Karin van Holten (2014:236, my translation) conclude in their study about migration and care for elderly people. The authors show how elderly Italian and Spanish immigrants in Switzerland seek to maximize the advantages from being tied into two social networks and two social security systems to ensure a good livelihood in their old age, here and there. However, this seeming "surplus of options" *("Optionen-Mehr")* is qualified by the fact that most of these options remain *deficient* due to mechanisms of discrimination, here *and* there, often resulting in an impenetrable "sea of options" *("Optionen-Meer")*.

Queer migrant women pursue similar strategies. Most who emigrated as adults had not planned to stay in Switzerland but instead had wanted to return to their country of origin sooner or later (a finding that will come as no surprise to Swiss migration scholars, who have identified similar narratives, but which might be less expected by queer geographers, who have tended to frame queer people's migration from their homes as a once-and-for-all movement). As time goes by, these intentions have shifted in some cases and persisted in others, but great importance is invariably attached to remaining flexible and retaining the possibility of living here *or* there in an attempt to capitalize on two sets of social and institutional resources.[21]

However, plans to have children radically intervene in deliberations about whether life is better here or there. Augusta Wakari associates her plans to start her own queer family with a significant loss of flexibility:

> Oh yes! I really wanna go back, but then when I also have a baby, and then […] how are my children going to be accepted there? Here, okay, it's clear. Here it's no problem, but we are planning also to go back to Indonesia but we don't know how we are going to raise our children there. […] About work about financial - it is not bothering me when I go back to Indonesia. But the most that's really bothering me is just how the society accepting of my relation […] and especially when we have children. That's the only thing. Before, I know I'm going back, but then, when I want to get married, somehow in the back of my head, 'It will never happen. It will never happen.' Because the way I raise: how? Since when you see two women get married, since when? […] But then, since I got married it's getting real, it's happening, to me, it's happening, and, yeah, one day you will have children. And, how, how are we gonna- (interrupts herself)? […] Having the thought that my children would have a difficulty because of my choice of life I couldn't bear, because I know how difficult when- I've been through all this. I know how difficult, how painful it is, and- to see my children in that, I- pffff, I- don't know if I can manage that. […] I can't face if- I will get crazy if someone's hurting my children or my partner or- yeah.
>
> —Augusta Wakari

21 This does not apply to interviewees who were in the process of seeking asylum. They did not have the intention or even the possibility of returning (see Chapter 8).

Based on her own experiences of exclusion as a queer juvenile in Indonesia, Augusta Wakari finds herself unable to imagine a life in Indonesia with her wife and future children. She is overwhelmed by recent developments in her life – partnership registration, plans to start a queer family – which she had not believed would ever be possible. At the same time, the realization of these desires undermines the implementation of her other desire – to return to her family and to Indonesia. The logic of a queer-family-friendly Switzerland versus a queer-family-adverse Indonesia is upset (but eventually reinstated) as Augusta Wakari reviews the option of returning from her new perspective as a future queer mother: "Maybe when you have a children your parents will just accept you because you know, people normally they melt when they see a newborn, there's possibility, yes, but at the moment I just couldn't see that."

By contrast, Jimena Reyes does not see a problem with living in Peru with a queer family, a plan that has, however, been disturbed by falling in love with a much younger woman in Switzerland:

> *Quand on s'est connu je disais, 'Merde, moi je voulais pas avoir de copine, je voulais partir au Pérou, faire un enfant là-bas et puis vivre avec mes chèvres, là t'es là dans ma vie, et tu bouscule tout quoi, parce que même le projet de faire un enfant, ça il me semble pas très adéquat pour toi [a ton age] tu vois.' Donc voilà. Faut faire des concessions des fois (rire).*
>
> When we got to know each other I said: 'Shit, I didn't want a girlfriend, I wanted to go to Peru, have a child there and then live with my goats, now there you are in my life, and you turn everything on its head, because even the project of making a child, it doesn't seem very adequate for you [at your age], you know.' Well, there it is. You need to make concessions sometimes (laughs).
> —Jimena Reyes

However, positions like the one held by Jimena Reyes remain the exception. Those who connect their transnational and bicultural subject positions to imaginations of flexibility, mobility, and freedom of choice (to live here, or there, or everywhere) tend to perceive that their options become restricted in the context of their plans to start their own queer families, especially if they plan on moving back to the homeland. Raising children in the country of origin is contemplated but usually dismissed based on perceived or experienced homophobia and concerns about how a child would fare 'there.' This homophobic 'there' is juxtaposed to a queer-friendly 'here,' though concerns about the wellbeing of the child also extend to the Swiss context, if to a lesser extent. Whether a queer family life in the home country can be imagined or not hinges on whether interviewees had been targets of homophobia when growing up in their home countries, on the extent to which they have experienced social exclusion as queer foreigners in Switzerland – and on their family's position vis-à-vis their sexual orientation and queer procreation.

6.2.6 Reactions to Queer Family Foundation Plans

Pressure from the family of origin to produce grandchildren does not extend to queer family formation, which is for instance expressed in family members' refusal to attend queer weddings or through negative reactions to the queer family member's plans to have children. Negotiating the issue of queer procreation within the family of origin is hence a source of great mutual pain, disappointment and friction:

> When I get married [same-sex marriage], my parents screeeeam like crying like you know but my sister said 'If anything happen to our parents,' because my father have a heart problem, she said 'It's your fault.' 'Gee, thank you,' I said (smiles). 'I've been keeping this [wish] for twenty-five years at least as far as I can remember and in my happiest day this what you say?' I was really disappointed, my brother just get along with it, for my brother it's okay, my younger brother, for my sister she's just like- you know I said everybody in my family also don't take the best decisions. But at least when I see a smile in their face, taking their decision, I'm smiling with them. Even though it's just not my preference.
> —Augusta Wakari

Partnership registration also emerges as an effective – but painful – practice against persistent anti-identitarian perspectives on same-sex desire on the part of the parents, who sometimes keep hoping that the queer family member might yet come to her (heterosexual) senses. As is the case for positions vis-à-vis homosexuality more generally, family positions concerning their daughter's family planning are not monolithic but diverse, with the younger sibling (typically) accepting the queer sister's 'choices.' Critical views on queer family foundation are chiefly grounded in worries about daughters' and also future children's wellbeing, as is expressed in Maria Borkovic's mother's reaction:

> Actually that was worse to accept the plans about family and having a baby together, because she [the mother] is really afraid of [=for] the child, you know, how it's gonna be perceived in the- actually the same fears which I also have- in the society and she always said you know it can go a thousand hundred years in advance, perception of gay people will not change. It might change like this (holding up a little space between her fingers) but it will always be like different group. And you always will have to live with this issue. So yeah actually she knows that it's difficult for me.
> —Maria Borkovic

Paradoxically, parents instrumentalize fears about homophobia to reinstall heteronormativity, which results in more discrimination. At the same time, homophobia appears as an unalterable fact rather than a perpetuated social practice. Parents' critical views on queer families nourish daughters' own worries about the welfare of unborn children, fundamentally calling into question "baby projects" in a queer context. At the same time, plans to start a queer family tend to aggravate queer daughters' relationships with their parents, which in turn refuels their desire to build a family according to their own imagination and sense of nostalgia.

Importantly, none of the children discussed in this chapter had yet been born, or even conceived. It therefore remains unclear how the parents will react once the babies

have arrived. Circumstantial evidence in my own queer circles suggest that the dynamic between queer offspring and their parents and especially the attitude of the grandparents towards their grandchildren can alter drastically once the children are born. Since this research was conducted at a time when "baby projects" among queer women had generally only just started to gain momentum, I did not have an opportunity to interview queer migrant women who had already given birth to children in a queer family context.

6.2.7 Being Whole at Home

Interviewees who had established or were in the process of establishing family homes in Switzerland with a partner or with children (I define both as 'family homes' here) represented these homes as the most important among those rare spaces where the irreconcilable can be reconciled. In the space of the home, the participant queer migrant women could be all they considered themselves to be within the same time-space – lesbians, Indonesians, passionate gardeners, daughters, writers, and so on – without judgment or justification. While the original family home often represented an ambivalent space rife with divergence and negotiation, the envisioned (and sometimes implemented) queer (family) home was conceptualized as a site of harmony, acceptance, security, unification, and wholeness, conveying a sense of belonging, identification, and self-assurance. As such, queer migrant women's representations of their homes reflect existing studies about the homes of subjects inhabiting paradoxical social positionalities. In her research about lesbian parents' negotiation of everyday public spaces, Jacqui Gabb contends that the home is "crucial in lesbian parents' consolidation of self" (Gabb 2005:420), since home "represents one of the few places where the sexual and the maternal identities of lesbian parents may be reconciled" (ibid). Since the intersectional home reconciles the irreconcilable – being a Bosnian *and* a lesbian – it is always also a site of resistance to, and escape from, discrimination in those public, semi-public and private spaces that are organized around specific social identities and hence productive of social exclusions.

Indeed, within the collections of pictures produced or presented for this research, the queer family home emerged as one of the most represented spaces. Some of these pictures were wide-angle shots of apartments or houses. One of them showed Beatriz Krais and her partner's new apartment, upon which Beatriz Krais commented:

> *Ça c'est plutôt pour montrer la réussite dans le sens, ouais j'ai beaucoup ramé quand même, j'ai beaucoup bataillé pour arriver avoir ce que j'ai maintenant, dans le sens que maintenant je peux vivre tranquillement, sans pression d'argent, sans pression des permis de séjour tout ça, […] j'ai eu habité dans des appartements qui tombaient en ruine, j'ai loué des chambres dans des maisons où c'était presque des galetas, des chose comme ça, alors ça c'est plutôt pour dire j'ai quand même réussi à, ouais à m'en sortir quoi.*
>
> This is rather to show the success in the sense of, yes I've worked a lot after all, I've struggled to obtain what I have now, in the sense that now I can live peacefully, without financial pressure, without pressure from the residence permit, all that, […] I've lived

> in apartments that were falling apart, I've rented rooms in houses that were almost attics, things like that so, this is rather to say that I've succeeded after all, yes to get myself out of this.
> —Beatriz Krais

Beatriz Krais' apartment is a source of pride, a marker of social status and a successful migration biography, a signifier of arrival, and a site of tranquility and security. The new home is also everything the old homes were not, which points to the importance of queer homes as *imaginary spaces;* the wish to establish a home representing the above qualities has been Beatriz Krais' main motivation for the hard work and tedious immigration procedure she has undergone to arrive at the place she has now reached.

Other pictures showed specific details of an apartment. "The bed" was a particularly recurrent answer to the question of what represented the most important place in everyday life, and several interviewees submitted very intimate pictures of their beds, sometimes with their partners in them. Augusta Wakari:

> The bed- the bed I think is the most important place, the sleeping room is the most important place, cause at the end of the day we both really looking forward just to be in the bed and talk and forget everything what's happening, or talk about what's happening through the day or whatever, everything, it's just- and we next to each other again and we're quite relaxed next to each other and- yeah I think- it gives me- also energy for the next day. Or during the day (smiles), when I really bad day, I just think about that, I just think about, 'Aah tonight I'm going to be in bed with her and talk and hug,' and- and then the day gets easier. So I think that's very very very important for me, I think.
> —Augusta Wakari

The bed not only represents an important material space from which everyday pressures and demands are absent but is also a source of strength as an imaginary space: Thinking about the bed mitigates the intensity of an arduous working day. This perspective on the bed is also reflected in Teresa Ruiz' account:

> *TB: Wo fühlst du dich am wohlsten?*
> *TR: Im Bett mit meinem Schatz (lacht). Nein weisst du, es geht wirklich nicht um Sex einfach- ich bin immer den ganzen Tag so beschäftigt hin und her und hier und dort […] Ja. Sage ich immer ja wirklich immer wieder, 'Oh, das ist wirklich das Beste was es gibt.'*
>
> TB: Where do you feel most comfortable?
> TR: In bed with my sweetheart (laughs). No you know, it's really not bout sex just- I'm always busy the whole day back and forth and here and there […]. Yes. I always say yes really always say again and again, 'Oh, this is really the best there is.'
> —Teresa Ruiz

The bed is the home within the home, the most private space within the private space. It is a site of recreation, realignment, and of mutual love and desire. The bed and connecting to the body of the partner in conjunction signifies home. *"Jetzt weiss ich was gut ist"* – "Now I know what's good," Teresa Ruiz says more generally about the discovery

and acknowledgment of her same-sex desires. In this sense the (pictures of the) bed, and the partner in it, are realizations of sexual 'homecoming.' The bed more than any other space represents the choice to live a homosexual life as Beatriz Krais and Augusta Wakari find their choices confirmed (literally and figuratively) at the end of the day.

As already discussed from different perspectives, the choice to live in a same-sex relationship often entailed distance to the family of origin, both due to geographical distance and families' negative reactions to sexual choices. Interviewees regretted that they could not unite these two worlds, expressing that for them their ideal home would be a place that contains both their partner and their biological families unproblematically (although only few wish to actually have their families within their very house; most instead wish the family lived close by). "*Ich kann nicht mit beide zusammen*" – "I can't have both together," the homosexual life in Switzerland and family life back in Egypt, Efra Mahmoud assesses with bitterness, as she had eventually not been able to realize her plan to move back to Egypt. However, interviewees developed strategies to incorporate their families into their homes nevertheless, at least to a certain extent. While videoconferencing and telephone sessions bring the family into the home briefly and periodically, family presence within the home was also established by *family pictures*. I saw these pictures when I interviewed research participants in their homes, but they were often also included in the photo collections. They were either pictures from a digital archive showing family members, or *pictures taken of pictures* of family members, pinned to walls, fridges, or computers in Swiss homes. These pictures mark both an absence and a presence: They point to the loss of the family but at the same time restore the family to the home to a certain extent. This presence is not only created by what the picture represents (the signifier, i.e. the absent family) but also by the very materiality of the photo itself (paper, color, frame), which establishes a presence of the family that enables a physical contact of sorts.[22]

(The specific spatial arrangement of) pictures, posters, and objects is generally an important vehicle for reconciling the irreconcilable. Within the queer migrant home, lesbian posters are placed side by side with a giant Bosnian flag, and family pictures are placed next to images of interviewees with their partners, queer friends, and so on. As mentioned earlier, one of Jimena Reyes' walls is decorated with a poster-size collage of pictures showing friends, her mother in Peru, her family members in Switzerland, the Hindu god Ganesha, landscapes, former versions of herself, herself with her partner, neighbors, concert tickets, and so on, bringing together all the aspects of life that are important to her. Reconciliation is also performed acoustically, such as in the case of Nermina Petar, who regularly listens to Bosnian folk music at home.

22 In her research about the significance of family photos for white middle class mothers with young children in the U.K., Gillian Rose found not only that family pictures were "indeed extraordinarily important, emotionally resonant objects" (Rose 2004:549,553-554) for her interviewees, but that they were also tactile objects to be handled – sorted, labelled, put in an album, framed, displayed, dusted, taken out and studied, showed around, and so on. The same desire was discernible among my own interviewees. I wonder how Rose's study would have to be revised in the age of smartphone photo albums, with everyone 'stroking' their family pictures.

As such, queer homes are also actualizations of the recurring statement "I lead *my* life" flung in parents' faces, especially in connection to negotiations around sexual 'choices.' None of the narratives featured the stereotypical tale of the lesbian feverishly yanking unambiguous posters from the walls when parents arrive unexpectedly (although some *did* give up the common bedroom when parents visited, yet they refrained from going to great length to hide other evidence). By contrast, some homes are *meant* to make a statement when family visits. These homes also play a central role in rendering tacit subjects tacit. When her family visits, the lesbian poster in Teresa Ruiz' bedroom stays up. *"Und eben, also in meinem Schlafzimmer oben sind schon so zwei Frauen, ich weiss nicht ob du den Poster schon gesehen hast, also zwei Frauen die sich küssen die sind ganz herzig. Und die [Familienmitglieder] gehen nach oben"* – "And well in my bedroom upstairs there are indeed these two women, I don't know if you've seen the poster, well two women kissing and they are quite sweet. And they [the family members] go upstairs."

Teresa Ruiz' younger brother, who has just emigrated from Cuba, has been living with Teresa Ruiz and her partner for several weeks while looking for work and a place to stay. Despite the obviousness of what is going on (see the poster, the common bedroom, the lesbian friends, the leisure activities), the siblings never speak about the nature of Teresa Ruiz' relationship to Angela Hieber. Recently the brother asked Angela Hieber (half-prompted by her, although she knew this was against Teresa Ruiz' will), who told him. After that the brother still never discussed the issue with his sister but was aware that she knows about the conversation. Teresa Ruiz thus consciously deploys her home as a vehicle both for communicating her sexual identity to her family while at the same time keeping the subject unverbalized, enabling both parties to save face and evade shame. This constellation reflects the earlier finding that the silence around dissident sexuality is usually not unilaterally enforced by the family but also co-constructed by interviewees themselves. Teresa Ruiz is self-assured with her brother living in her home; this is her space, where she makes the rules, where she acts the way she likes, where she is all that she is, and it is from this strong position that *she* decides to keep the tacit subject tacit, which the brother acknowledges and respects. At the same time, the above incident demonstrates that the home as a 'safe space' remains an imagined space that becomes materialized partially only. Even in the space of her own home, in the end Teresa Ruiz cannot bring everything under control, as this is the place where she is forced out of the closet by her partner.

In sum, the significance of the home in the interviewed queer migrant women's everyday lives is that of a space where one can be all one is within the same time-space without being called into question as a person or relegated to an identitarian category. The importance of this space can hence hardly be overestimated. For interviewees who feel they have succeeded in establishing such a home, it is a space of identification and belonging; a source of self-assurance and pride; a place marked by security, acceptance and love; and a place where their choices are materialized. Even when absent from it, the knowledge of its existence is a source of strength. As one of the few spaces capable of reconciling the irreconcilable, it allows interviewees to be whole persons. However, these reconciliations necessarily remain partial and marred, or eternally deferred: The

family picture on the refrigerator door marks the absence of the family as much as it invokes their presence, and the Indonesian food lovingly prepared by a Swiss partner can never quite live up to the soul food prepared by a mother, as one interviewee stated with a rueful smile.

Yet it is important to note that not all interviewees had such homes. Many feel alienated from the places in which they live. Nara Agayeva, Ramiza Salakhova, and their daughter are confined to a crammed apartment provided by the asylum authorities; they have not been able to furnish it themselves and hate the interior. Nour Saber misses her partner (who has left her), without whom she finds it difficult to maintain their shared apartment as a queer bubble within the conservative town in which she lives; Beatriz Krais' earlier dwellings in Switzerland simply lacked dignity; and for Maria Borkovic being at home alone aggravates her sense of social isolation, and moves the computer (i.e. cyberspace) to the center of her apartment both literally and figuratively. However, for these interviewees the home as a place that conveys a sense of security and arrival still represents a crucial *imaginary* space. Nara Agayeva and Ramiza Salakhova, for instance, browse the local furniture stores, already putting together the home they dream of having in the city.

A final note: This sub-chapter has engaged with the home as a space of inscription for 'homing desires,' which most interviewees have materialized to a greater or lesser degree. In other words, it has been about the homes that interviewees imagine and desire, and how they perceive their queer family homes. However, this does not mean that these homes are spaces devoid of power. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 8, dominant discourses discipline and regulate the intimate – love, relationships, desires, preferences, tastes – even in the most private of spheres. Angela Hieber decides against her partner's will to tell her brother about the nature of her relationship with his sister, because it is important to *her*, Angela Hieber, to make this explicit. It is in the bed, which Augusta Wakari considers to be the most important place in her everyday life, that she positions herself as her partner's 'disciple' in the process of unlearning prior sexual practices that she now thinks have worked against her. But reading queer family homes as a locus of power is reading interviewees' accounts against the grain and is not how they experienced these places.

6.2.8 Conclusion

This sub-chapter addressed the question of how migration is implicated in queer migrant women's perspectives on queer procreation and their visions of a queer family and queer family home. Seeing that relationships to families of origin were often ambivalent, starting one's own queer family emerged as a way to reconcile loving the family with loving the same sex, as well as a strategy to restore the lost family home. However, entering the highly specific discourse around queer procreation in Switzerland was not

straightforward and often required considerable cultural 'learning' on the interviewees' part.[23]

The negotiation of methods of conception, forms of living together and the couple's (planned) labor division after the arrival of the children was mostly guided by an imaginary of family life firmly rooted in the dominant heterosexual breadwinner/nurturer nuclear family model prevailing in Switzerland.[24] A critical queer perspective could hence frame queer migrant women's imaginations and implementations of their queer family homes as drivers of homonormative tendencies in Switzerland, as they seem to reiterate the heteronormative primacy of couplehood, monogamy, marriage, reproduction, nuclear family, and consumerism (see Chapter 3.2.1 and 3.4).[25] However, such a framing of queer migrant women's family planning neglects the dimension of migration. 'Swiss' normative family ideals may also act as an 'assimilation machine' that promises to mitigate the negative effects of experienced exclusions in the host society, but also in the family in which they grew up and in the diasporic community. The envisioned families must hence also be read in terms of interviewees' expressed desire to create a 'safe haven,' which particularly includes its function as a safe space free of social pressures and discrimination. Therefore, queer migrant women's family planning grounded in normative family ideals must also be read both as a coping strategy and as an act of resistance against racist, sexist, and heterosexist exclusions they experience in different contexts. Family planning and the desire to establish a queer family home hence require an intersectional and partially contradictory reading: They are as much radical acts of separation from parents' heteronormative expectations as they are strategies to address nostalgia of the lost family home and to mitigate conflicts with the family. At the same time, they work to tame the disruptions caused by being perceived both as 'homosexuals' and as 'foreigners' in Switzerland.

6.3 Conclusion

Queer migrant women's access to 'doing family' and the family practices of inheriting, caring, and providing is often restricted both within their families of origin and within the queer families they strive to establish to address their 'homing desires.' Rather than the safety network postulated by Swiss and other migration scholars, the family of origin often emerges as a locus of power through which both normalized and dissident sexual identities are produced and policed. The family and more specifically the heterosexuality – marriage – procreation trinity is exposed as "the only possible reference to

23 Again, this is not to insinuate that for Swiss-born lesbians entering this discourse is more 'natural' or easier in any way, but to point to the fact that queer migrants face specific additional obstacles in entering this discourse, which are tied up with their positionality as migrants.

24 Although note that research suggests that overall same-sex couples tend to divide labor in more egalitarian ways than heterosexual couples (Copus 2008, FaFo 2013).

25 Note again that some queer scholars problematize and differentieate the concept of homonormativity by stressing that the discourse of inclusion surrounding it is in fact a "*fiction* of inclusion" that stands in contrast to persisting legal and cultural discrimination of non-heterosexual people (see Chapter 3.2.1).

think culture or society" (Arán and Corrêa 2004:333, quoted in Simões Azevedo Brandão and Machado 2012:671) and as a crucial site of the everyday mutual production of 'culture' and normative sexuality. By contrast, the family can also form a countercultural milieu, a "queer island in a heterosexual sea," though this was rare in the accounts analyzed here.

With the exception of temporary relationship breakdowns, all interviewees sustained ties to their family of origin, but in most cases have to renegotiate these relationships constantly. Negotiation strategies include in-your-face tactics but more often demonstrate respect for the family and family communication practices, which frequently require that the dissident sexuality be kept tacit in order to bind family members together: The dissident sexuality is known and understood, but not verbalized.

Within the discussion around the relationship between queer migrant women and their families I want to pick out one particular aspect that stands in contrast to earlier findings of queer migration scholarship. Several authors have described how part of the ambiguity of the relationship between queer migrants and their families is produced by the family's rejection of the migrant's dissident sexuality on the one hand and their dependence on remittances and other support from the queer family member on the other (Cantú 2009, Manalansan 2003 and 2006:236, Manalansan and Cruz-Malavé 2002). Among my own research participants, this was not a widespread dynamic. By contrast, not many interviewees needed to send home money on a regular basis, because their families were well situated. To the contrary, several interviewees depended on their families' funds, at least in the initial stages of their migration. This financial dependency, combined with the promise of an elevated social status upon their return to the home country, creates different kinds of ties to the family as well as different views on return migration: Due to the higher level of dependency on the family, dependency on the family's grace in terms of sexual 'choices' is also increased. In short, for queer family members receiving funds from home, something else is at stake in negotiating family ties than for queer migrants who send home remittances.

In the face of the ambiguous relationship to the family of origin on the one hand and the lack of designated spaces for queer migrants in Switzerland on the other, queer migrant women seek to establish queer families and family homes to 'reground' themselves and create a sense of belonging. Within these efforts queer family foundation promises to provide a surrogate for the family home that has been lost due to geographical distance and/or rejection, but also serves to mitigate the multiple displacements within Swiss society caused by sexual dissidence and foreignness.

Here I want to point to another finding that deviates from existing research. As feminist migration scholars Nadia Baghdadi and Yvonne Riaño (2014) point out in their research on how skilled migrant women in Switzerland balance family and career, starting a family offers skilled migrant women a strategy – though often only partially satisfactory – to escape professional disqualification and unemployment, promising social recognition on a different level as mothers. As the migration biographies of *queer* women expose, this strategy is not available to this 'group' in the same way, because queer family foundation often results in estrangement and further rejection from the family of origin rather than social recognition, at least at the outset of queer 'baby projects.' (However, it remains to be seen how families react once the children are here;

the findings presented here refer to the process of family *planning* only as none of the planned children were born yet.) As will be discussed in Chapter 9, the fact that motherhood does not offer the same kind of relief to queer migrant women that it offers to their heterosexual counterparts further heightens the pressure on queer women to succeed and be recognized professionally. On the other hand, the lack of a male significant other in interviewees' lives eventually releases many of them from the parental pressure to follow a heteronormative prescript. In contrast to heterosexual women, they are eventually often spared the parental expectation to be a mother, or to abandon a career to join a husband abroad. As shown in this chapter, this is not to insinuate that queer women do not make professional concessions or plan to assume typically female gender roles in relationships once children are present. But since this remains a matter of negotiation within the same-sex couple, queer women seem to enjoy more freedom in shaping their roles within their relationships as well as within their own queer families.

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated the importance of including sexuality in examinations of family relationships in migration contexts, and of considering migrant experiences in queer critiques of the family. Beyond making visible queer migrant experiences, such an extended view allows for a critique of the ways in which 'culture' and sexuality are co-constructed through the trope of the family. Thinking family, migration, sexuality, and *home* together moreover enables a more differentiated view of concepts of home-making, which in the context of queer migration emerges as an ambivalent movement of estrangement from and simultaneous reproduction of home, performed through renegotiations and reimaginings of family ties both within the family of origin and the queer families and family homes.