GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTED FAMILIES: TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS AND DESTINATION CHOICE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Brighton for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2016

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Ph.D. thesis is to contribute to a critical understanding of lesbian and gay parented families in relation to their travel motivations and destination choice. While these families have gained increased visibility particularly in Western societies, they are still largely neglected in tourism research. Thus, this thesis helps fill a three-fold gap in academic scholarship. Firstly, it adds to knowledge about gay and lesbian tourism, thereby challenging the heteronormativity that dominates tourism research. Secondly, it helps fill the lacuna about family travel as tourism studies mainly emphasise individual choices and largely neglect the perspectives of the family as a decision-making unit. Thirdly, it helps complete the gap in tourism research about families whose configurations do not fit the heteronormative model, namely, the 'mother-father-children' trinomial.

In line with the interpretivist paradigm and phenomenological strategy adopted, qualitative interviews were utilised as the data collection method. Twenty-two interviews were held, involving sixteen mothers, thirteen fathers and six children.

Findings reveal the multiple significances of holidays for these families. Family tourism is prompted by a search for escape, familiarity and novelty while forging and enhancing multiple levels of connections and reconnections. Holidays are also opportunities to construct and strengthen family identity, with the rituals and memories they create helping preserve the past and guarantee the future of the family unit. While holiday decisions prioritise children's needs, they are jointly made between partners. Moreover, on family holidays, gay and lesbian parents minimise the role of sexuality, which is 'left to the background' of other identities; yet, sexuality impacts on destination avoidance. Sexuality-related shame can further cause lesbigay parents to shun social interaction on holiday

and / or avoid gay-centred destinations due to a concern of exposing children to demonstrations of 'gayness.'

This thesis offers several unique contributions to knowledge. It demonstrates same-sex parented families are, with regard to their holiday motivations and choices, more similar than different from the 'traditional' heteronormative family studied in the past. This contributes to extending the understanding of the family in tourism research. In addition, it reveals how gay and lesbian parents' somewhat paradoxical relationship with their sexualities informs their families' travel choices. In doing so, this thesis adds to knowledge about the influence of pride / shame in tourism studies. It also highlights these families' desire to blend in and reinforce their 'averageness' rather than difference in relation to heteronormative families. This finding contributes to an understanding of the 'assimilationist' nature of same-sex parented families. Finally, further contribution to research on family tourism stems from the new and unique light this study sheds on the interplay between holidays, togetherness and family identity.

Key Words

Gay and lesbian parented families – travel motivation – destination choice – family tourism – pride / shame

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is part of academic folklore that doing a Ph.D. is like riding a roller coaster. My Ph.D. journey has been no different, with days (or months) of enjoyment and excitement sometimes followed by days (or months) of doubts and apprehension. However, several people helped make this process smoother and definitely less painful. Without them, I would certainly not have been able to complete this thesis and achieve what I have.

I would like, first and foremost, to thank my family. My research would have simply not existed had my parents, Gilberto and Sandra, not encouraged me, in a crucial moment of my life, to quit my career in the industry to pursue my dream of becoming an academic. I know they followed, from across the Atlantic, my progress through the Ph.D. journey with anxiety and exhilaration that surpassed my own. Mum and Dad, I am really privileged for being able to count on you. I hope my study does justice to your incredible support.

A big 'thank you' also to my brother Adriano and my sister Gisele, who were so understanding and supportive throughout my Ph.D. process. During my research, I constantly reminisced about our family holidays when we were children. I particularly remember with affection our road trips to the beach, during which we sang along to Mum and Dad's endless collection of boleros. I miss that so much.

Of course, I simply could not have done this without my brilliant husband, Alan. 'Hun', thank you for your patience when I would not stop talking about my epistemological and ontological positions, my findings and my positionality (among other things). Thank you for coping with the mess I made at home with books, articles and interview transcripts scattered in every single space of the house. Thank you for so selflessly 'sharing' me with my Ph.D. and accepting not having me around as much as we both would have liked.

Thank you also to my amazing supervisors, Clare and Nigel, who are the very reason why I am at the University of Brighton doing what I love to do. Nigel and Clare, your feedback sessions helped me develop my academic skills in a way I did not believe would be possible. Thank you for doing your work so diligently, responsibly and brilliantly. Thank you for constantly challenging, encouraging, inspiring and believing in me. I hope to become a Ph.D. supervisor one day and you will always be my role models. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Paul to my research. His extremely challenging questions provided me with excellent food for thought throughout my studies.

I am really thankful to my Ph.D. colleagues Adam, Indra, Felicia, Jenny, Conor, Helen, Jayne, Michael and, in particular, Carla, Angela, Kirsti, Maria and Claudia. Thank you for all the philosophical debates both at the (in)famous Ph.D. suite and the Ship Inn. Thank you for listening to me, encouraging me to publish, present my paper at conferences, teach, and do it all at the same time. Thank you for all the fun we have had over these past few years, but mainly for reminding me I was not alone on my journey.

So many (old and new) friends, both in Brazil and the United Kingdom, were crucial in helping me maintain the focus on my research. Thank you, Margaret, Fred, Jayne, Neil, Justyna, Helen, Michael, Geoff, Francesca, Marianne, Jodi, Erika, Dan, and specially Ricardo, Andréa, Cris, Ellen, Fabíola, Jamila, Claudia, Joseph and Alice, who understood the importance of my research in my life and supported me throughout the process. Thank you so much for your constant concern, interest and generosity.

I am also very grateful to Adam, Nils, Steen, Len and Peter, who generously helped me find research participants. Thank you so much for stepping out of your comfort zone to help me. Finally, a big 'thank you' to all the families that so kindly volunteered to participate in this study and share with me their extraordinary holiday stories and experiences.

This thesis is dedicated to you all.

DECLARATION

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Dated

PUBLICATIONS ORIGINATING FROM THIS THESIS

Refereed Journal Articles and Book Chapters

Lucena, R., Jarvis, N. and Weeden, C. (2015). A review of gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations and destination choices: Gaps in research and future directions. *Annals of Leisure Research.* Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 272 – 289.

Conference Papers

Lucena, R. (2015). Researching gay and lesbian parented families' travel choices: Methodological and ethical challenges. Paper presented at the *Researching Sex and Sexualities Conference*, University of Sussex, Falmer, 6 May.

Lucena, R. (2014). Gay and lesbian parented families on holiday: Preliminary findings. Paper presented at the *Eastbourne and Falmer Doctoral College Student Conference*, University of Brighton, Falmer, 2 July.

Lucena, R. (2013). Accessing gay and lesbian parented families. Paper presented at the *Doctoral College MPhil/PhD and Professional Doctorate Student Conference*, University of Brighton, Eastbourne, 5 July.

Lucena, R. (2012). Reflections on the Ph.D. journey. Paper presented at the *Hollings Employability Event,* Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, 30 October.

Lucena, R. (2012). Rainbow families: Travel motivations and destination choice. Paper presented at the G*eographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group PhD Colloquium,* University of Surrey, Guilford, 6 September.

Lucena, R. (2012). Rainbow families on holiday: Motivations, destination choice and need for safety. Paper presented at the *Doctoral College MPhil/PhD and Professional Doctorate Student Conference,* University of Brighton, Eastbourne, 20 July.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This doctoral thesis is concerned with the travel motivations and destination choice of families parented by gay men and lesbians. It explores the significance of holidays to those families, and, as such, relates to family identity, bonding and belonging. It also examines the interplay between parents' sexualities and family holiday choices as well as the relationship gay and lesbian parents have with their sexual identities. This chapter presents the contextual background of this study and provides a definition of the terms used. It also presents the rationale for this research project while introducing its aims and objectives. The chapter then discusses the researcher's voice and ends by introducing the thesis structure.

1.1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

"Britain has legalized gay marriage after Queen Elizabeth II gave her royal stamp of approval."

(The Independent, 17 July 2013)

"Same-sex marriages are now legal across the entirety of the United States after a historic supreme court ruling that declared attempts by conservative states to ban them unconstitutional. Victory in the case [...] immediately led to scenes of jubilation from coast to coast, as campaigners, politicians and everyday people – gay, straight and in-between – hailed 'a victory of love.'"

(The Guardian, 26 June 2015)

"Pope Francis sends letter praising gay children's book."

(The Guardian, 28 August 2015)

Not more than ten years ago, the idea of gays and lesbians being legally able to marry would have been considered unlikely. Yet, same-sex marriage is now a reality in several industrialised Western countries. The 2015 legalisation of gay marriage in the United States (U.S.) was celebrated by corporations such as Facebook and more than 26 million people worldwide changed their profile pictures on the social media platform to show their support for the American decision (Dewey 2015). Pope Francis's praise of a children's book depicting gay parenting is hardly a rupture from Catholic dogmas that view homosexuality as sinful. However, it is indicative of the decreased cultural homophobia towards lesbians and gays in many Western societies.

Such apparent tolerance of gays and lesbians does not mean discrimination has ceased to exist. According to reports published by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), the federation gathering LGBT associations across the globe, in 75 nations, same-sex relationships are considered crimes (ILGA 2015). In six of these countries, gays and lesbians may be punished with death (ILGA 2015). In Nigeria, it is illegal not to report an LGBT person to the police (Ward 2014). Moreover, in nations where homosexuality is not a crime, public expressions of support for gay rights are sometimes censored. Such is the case with Russia, where 'gay propaganda', the term the government uses to refer to provision of information about homosexuality to people under 18, has been outlawed (BBC News 2013).

Further, in most places, public spaces are predominantly heteronormative. Heteronormativity, namely the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm, causes gays and lesbians to negotiate their sexualities outside a private arena (Gabb 2005). In equating heterosexuality with 'normal' (and homosexuality with 'abnormal'), heteronormativity creates conditions that may lead to bullying. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable, with suicides among LGBT adolescents remaining a significant issue throughout the world (Blonisch and Bossarte 2012; ILGA 2015). Families parented by gay and lesbians are also susceptible to anti-gay sentiment. For example, religious groups may have negative views of LGBT rights, with some of them advocating the exclusion of lesbians and gays from

having / adopting children (Wood and Bartkowski 2004). After Pope Francis's above-mentioned praise of a gay children's book, the Vatican quickly minimised his act by arguing it did not endorse homosexuality, gay adoption or gay families (Saul 2015).

While there is still a lot to be done in terms of advancing gay and lesbian rights, much has improved since the 'Stonewall riots'[1]. Demonstrations to end the persecution of gays and lesbians around the world have become stronger (Saner 2013). Joint adoption (two parents adopting a child together) and second-parent adoption (in which a parent is allowed to adopt his / her partner's child), are now legal in countries such as South Africa (since 2002), the U.K. (2005), Israel (2008), Brazil (2010), New Zealand (2013) and Ireland (2015) (ILGA 2015). In combination, these have fostered a rise in gay and lesbian parented families, a phenomenon which, whilst perhaps not entirely new, has gained force thanks to legal recognition and increasing societal acceptance.

Estimating the number of families parented by gays or lesbians is a difficult task. In fact, statistics on LGBT people are seen as controversial and unreliable (Sullivan and Behave 2003; Hughes 2006; Hughes and Southall 2012). Different surveys present figures as disparate as 2% and 37% (Banks 2003). A more recent report by the Office for National Statistics (ONS 2010) in the U.K. determined the number of non-heterosexual people as fewer than 2% of the population. These discrepancies may be due to, and are complicated by, people not always disclosing their sexuality in a census (Sullivan and Behave 2003; Alessi and Martin 2010).

Similar imprecision surrounds the number of families parented by lesbians and gays. The ONS (2013a) report on families revealed fewer than 1% of dependent children in the U.K. lived in families parented by same-sex couples. Yet, the report itself claimed the figures were not precise and should be viewed with care (ONS 2013a). These statistics might, however,

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[1] The 'Stonewall riots' took place in New York in 1969, when a group of LGBT people confronted the police who attempted to arrest the patrons of a gay bar. This episode is often viewed as a cornerstone of gay liberation in Western societies.

change (and become more precise) in the future as young gays and lesbians report a desire to be married / partnered and / or have children. For example, in 2015, Community Marketing Inc. (CMI), a consultancy company catering for the LGBT market, conducted a survey of 20,000 people from 96 countries. It concluded a significant proportion of gay men (51%) and lesbians (55%) between 18 and 34 want to have children (CMI 2015). Likewise, research conducted in the U.K. by the marketing agency Out Now (2015) showed 50% of gays and lesbians under 35 intend to become parents in the future. First4Adoption, the British governmental service that provides information for people interested in adopting, has recently decided to focus its marketing campaigns on lesbians and gays (O'Hara 2015).

Arguably, the desire of gay men and lesbians to parent could be both a consequence and an underlying cause of same-sex parented families being more commonly portrayed in the media. While lesbian and gay parented families had already been depicted in books in the 1980s (see, for instance, Bösche's (1983) *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin* and Newman's (1989) *Heather Has Two Mommies*), they have recently gained visibility on TV, particularly in American shows. The LGBT oriented *Queer as Folk USA* (2000 - 2005) and *The L Word* (2004 – 2009), as well as more 'mainstream' series, such as *Brothers & Sisters* (2006 – 2011), *Grey's Anatomy* (2005 -), *Glee* (2009 -), *Modern Family* (2009 -) and *The Fosters* (2013 -), all portrayed lesbian or gay parented families. The cinema industry also addressed the experiences of these families. For instance, the U.S. comedies *Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003) and *The Kids Are All Right* (2010) displayed challenges faced by lesbian mothers. Dramas like the Mexican *La Otra Familia* (*The Other Family* 2011) and the American *Any Day Now* (2012) focused on the hardships encountered by gay couples fostering children, whilst the Australian documentary *Gayby Baby* (2015) sheds light on the lives of children with same-sex parents.

Lesbian and gay parented families have also been used in mainstream marketing. In 2010, the healthcare company Kaiser Permanente placed an advertisement in *Time* magazine, and, in 2012, the megastore JCPenney published a catalogue for Fathers' Day. In both instances, gay fathers

were depicted with their children (Ellin 2012). Furthermore, internationally famous celebrities, such as the tennis player Gigi Fernandez, the actors Cynthia Nixon, Rosie O'Donnell, Neil Patrick Harris and Jodie Foster and the singers Melissa Etheridge, Ricky Martin and Elton John, have all publicly disclosed their homo/bisexuality and decided to have and / or raise children with their same-sex partners. This has possibly encouraged other gays and lesbians to do the same and contributed to the further acceptance of these families.

Families parented by gays and lesbians, like any other family, go on holiday, and are likely to gain strength as a tourism market segment in the future. Indeed, families in general (gay / lesbian parented or not) place holidays among their priorities. A report by the ONS (2013b) shows family expenditure in relation to holidays corresponds to almost one third of the expenses with recreation and culture, which, in turn, are amongst the highest expenditures of families in the U.K. As Southall (2012) clarifies, because family tourism is considered to enhance bonds among members, families are commonly determined not to cut expenditure on holidays even in times of economic difficulties. Carr (2011) affirms family tourism is expected to increase in higher proportions than travels by individuals. In a similar vein, gays and lesbians are often described as loyal customers who spend more than their straight counterparts (Out Now 2011), and gay and lesbian tourism is consolidated as an increasing market segment (Poria 2006; Waitt *et al.* 2008; Hughes and Southall 2012). If, as stated above, a significant proportion of lesbians and gays are willing to have children in the future and tolerance towards same-sex parented families continues to increase in Western societies, then it is expected these families' relevance for the tourism industry may be amplified. In fact, travel agencies and tour operators specifically catering for them, such as *R Family Vacations*, have appeared in the last ten years, and others, such as *Olivia*, have diversified their campaigns to reach lesbian and gay parented families too (Fox 2008; Hughes and Southall 2012).

Nonetheless, primary research that investigates the travel choices and experiences of same-sex parented families could not be traced. A significant corpus of research that discusses other aspects of these

families' lives, however, has been produced. Previous studies, for example, have looked at the parenting capabilities of lesbians and gays (for instance, Chan *et al.* 1998, Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; MacCallum and Golombok 2004; Bos *et al.* 2005) or the psychological / social adjustment of their children (Golombok *et al*. 1983; Patterson 2000; Crowl *et al.* 2008; Golombok and Badger 2010).

Against this background, this study explores the holiday motivations and destination choice of lesbian and gay parented families. Throughout the project, some key words were used. Therefore, before the research rationale, aim and objectives are discussed, the key terms adopted must be defined. These terms are to be consulted along with the glossary attached (p. 234).

1.2. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Family, child and parent

The ONS (2013a) defines the family as the group of people bound by marriage, civil partnership, cohabitation and / or child / parent relationships (ONS 2013a). As consistently observed by recent scholarship (Stein 2005; Stacey and Meadow 2009; Carr 2011; Backer 2012a; Hughes and Southall 2012; Schänzel *et al.* 2012; Yeoman *et al.* 2012; Lucena *et al.* 2015) and repeated throughout this study, the 'traditional' nuclear family, formed of the triad mother-father-children (Bengtson 2001), is no longer the norm. Indeed, families exist in all configurations. For example, monoparental families have become more common (Schänzel *et al.* 2012) and the increase in divorce and remarriage rates may cause children to live with half-siblings and step-parents (Yeoman *et al.* 2012).

The diversity of formations of the modern family is acknowledged in this project. Therefore, it was deemed important that the definition of family adopted in this inquiry encompass a wide range of configurations. On the other hand, it was considered crucial to focus solely on the experience of

families with children. In other words, it is acknowledged here that couples without children are also families (ONS 2013a). Yet, this Ph.D. project concentrates on the travel motivations and choices of gay and lesbian parented families *with children*. The reasons for this are three-fold. First, same-sex couples have already been under academic scrutiny, in particular gay male couples. Much of Hughes's (1997; 2000; 2002; 2005; 2006) prolific work, for instance, focuses on childless gay men and couples. Second, families with children travel more than those without, and the presence of children affects travel choice and behaviour (Southall 2012). Third, how gay and lesbian parents negotiate their sexuality in the public arena on holiday may be affected by the presence of their children (Gabb 2005). Consequently, using a similar approach to that used in contemporary literature (Carr 2011; Schänzel *et al*. 2012; Southall 2012), a family in this research is simply defined as the unit formed of at least one parent and one child.

The term *child* also deserves attention. The ONS (2013a) defines children as people between 0 and 18 years of age who are still in full-time education. The word *child* in this study, in accordance with the literature (Carr 2011; Schänzel *et al.* 2012), is construed in its wider sense, namely a person of 17 years and under. However, as explained in the methodology chapter, this age does not necessarily refer to the time when the data were collected. This is because this investigation is concerned with the holiday experiences of lesbian and gay parented families. Therefore, the children's ages mentioned here relate to the moment when the family travels took place. In other words, the accounts of research participants were based on holidays that happened when children were 17 or younger, regardless of their age at the time of data collection.

A *parent*, also in consonance with the literature (Carr 2011; Schänzel *et al.* 2012), is understood here as an adult with legal and moral responsibilities over a child. So, in this study, the caring duties are what characterises the parental relationship. Consequently, this project encompasses not only biological parents but also adoptive and foster ones, as well as legal guardians. In the understanding of the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF 2015), an adoptive parent is the one that acquires

definitive responsibilities and rights over a child to the detriment of the birth parents. A foster parent is the person with temporary responsibilities that do not affect the birth parents' rights (BAAF 2015). Finally, a legal guardian is the one whose duties suspend (without terminating) the birth parents' rights (BAAF 2015). In spite of these differences, for the sake of simplicity, the word *parent* is used throughout the study.

Family tourism

The words *tourism* and *holiday* often generate ambiguity in tourism literature. For example, Hughes (2006) views tourism as a broader construct than holiday in that the former encompasses travel made for all purposes (such as business trips or religious pilgrimage), whereas the latter includes only leisure travel. In contrast, Decrop (2006) understands holiday as a wider notion than tourism because it refers to the time spent away from work. Thus, for him, holidays include not only trips but also free time spent at home (Decrop 2006). In this project, because the focus is the travel undertaken by families while on holiday, the terms *family tourism* and *family holidays* are used interchangeably. Drawing upon the doctrine (Carr 2011; Schänzel *et al.* 2012), family tourism / holiday is understood here as encompassing not only the travel made by a family for the purposes of leisure, recreation and / or to visit relatives and friends, but also the activities performed during the trips and the decisions that precede them. Further, family tourism in the context of this study includes both domestic and overseas travel.

Two comments must be made about this definition. First, leisure and recreation are viewed here as two separate constructs. Although both are connected to the time spent away from work and routine, they have slightly different connotations. Leisure is seen in this study as the activities that are concerned with individual freedom, whereas recreation refers to structured activities that relate to personal development (Carr 2011). To put it differently, leisure is the *unstructured* time the family devotes to relaxation and free exploration like playing on the beach or walking in the park. Recreation, on the other hand, is purposive and constructive (Mill

2008). It encapsulates *structured* activities aimed at developing the family members through intellectual and physical education, such as going to a museum or engaging in a sports competition (Carr 2011). Such distinction, as Carr (2011) explains, is relevant as far as family travel motivations are concerned. The second comment relates to visits to friends and relatives (VFR) as a component of family tourism. Although sometimes viewed as a separate type of tourism, VFR travel is an important motivator for families to go on holiday (Backer 2012b). Thus, it should not be neglected in an exploration of the gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations.

Gays and lesbians

The word *gay* is used in this project to refer to a male who is sexually and / or affectively attracted to other men, and *lesbian* to a female sexually and / or affectively attracted to other women. A heterosexual (also referred to as 'straight') is viewed as someone who is sexually and / or affectively attracted to the opposite sex. However it is acknowledged here that this definition does not entirely express the richness and fluidity of sexuality, which is a multi-faceted construct. According to the ONS (2010), sexuality may relate to different things: sexual attraction, connected with sexual interests and feelings, sexual behaviour, referring to sexual acts, and sexual identity, related to how people perceive and define themselves. Sell (1997) adds sexuality is a multi-dimensional concept that includes, among other things, sexual fantasies, emotional, social and lifestyle preferences.

The complexity underlying sexuality may be found in the number of expressions and acronyms used to refer to non-heterosexual people, with LGBTQIQ being perhaps the longest one. To explain it in simple terms, this acronym stands for lesbians, gays, bisexuals (people who are sexually and / or affectively attracted to both men and women), transgender (people whose gender identity does not align with the sex assigned at birth), queer (a term with strong political connotations to refer to those who reject labels), intersex (or hermaphrodites, born with sexual anatomy that cannot be categorised as male or female) and questioning (those who are unsure of their sexual orientation) (Alonso 2013). It is clear that not even

the longest acronym can capture the diversity and fluidity of human sexuality. Therefore, rather than discussing all the multiple forms of sexualities, what is important here is to justify this study's adoption of the expression *gays and lesbians*. In this sense, transgender (and, by analogy, intersex) individuals fall out of the scope of this research since their identities are related not only to sexuality but also gender identity (Browne and Lim 2010).

An interesting dilemma arises with the other terms (*bisexuals*, *queer* and *questioning*). What these forms of sexuality have in common is that they are not aligned with a heterosexual orientation, and, thus, they all fall into the scope of this inquiry. Nevertheless, because the words *gay* and *lesbian* are widely used by, and have positive connotations within, the LGBT community, they were preferred to the detriment of other expressions. In other words, this study does not negate the fluidity of sexuality, nor does it intend to restrict sexuality to a binary construct excluding bisexual, queer and questioning people. Rather, it uses *lesbians* and *gays* as inclusive terms to encompass those who perceive themselves as non-heterosexual. In this vein, the main criterion used to recruit participants in this research was self-identification. In other words, all respondents voluntarily identified themselves as lesbians or gays when invited to participate in the project. A few of them, during data collection, revealed they identified as bisexual. When this was the case, the researcher acknowledged their bisexuality and focused on their travel experiences with their children while they were in a same-sex relationship. Conversely, several respondents told the researcher they had had heterosexual relationships in the past but now described themselves as lesbian or gay. Not only do these remarks reveal sexuality as a fluid concept but they also indicate the general acceptance by participants of the terms *lesbian* and *gay*.

Another comment is noteworthy here. As explained earlier, sexuality is a multi-faceted construct encompassing concepts such as preference, behaviour and identity. However, because research participants *identified* themselves as gays or lesbians, the terms *sexuality* and *sexual identity* are employed interchangeably in this study. In a similar vein, although it is

acknowledged in this research that *sexual orientation* is one of the significant components that inform and explain *sexuality* (McKnight 1997), for the sake of simplicity, *sexual orientation* and *sexuality* are used synonymously in this thesis.

This project also attempted to avoid the word *homosexual* because of its strongly negative resonance. Homosexuality was considered a mental disorder by the World Health Organisation until 1992 (Hughes 2006). Likewise, *gay* is a word commonly used to designate both males and females who are attracted to the same sex. In this study, this can be seen in some of the original quotes (both from the literature and from research participants) which use *gay* to refer to both men and women. However, in this project, both expressions *gay* and *lesbian* were used as often as possible, as a way of highlighting the relative high number of women participating in this Ph.D. project.

Gay and lesbian parented families

Within this context, gay and lesbian parented families are considered the units formed of at least one child and one gay father or one lesbian mother. As is the case of families in general, here all types of families are considered, including the ones formed of one or more than two parents (for example, when a child is raised both by a couple of lesbian mothers and a couple of gay fathers).

Here, a remark is necessary. At initial stages of this study, lesbian and gay parented families were referred to as *rainbow families*. This expression, used in the working title of the research proposal, was chosen because it is commonly used by organisations gathering data about these families. The image of the rainbow has also been consistently linked to gay and lesbian movements and the researcher initially found it might be an effective way of expressing the diversity of these families. However, it was observed during data collection that many respondents reacted negatively to the term, considered childish, naïve, clichéd, too positive or market-oriented. Therefore, following the families' suggestions, the expression

rainbow families has given place to *gay and lesbian parented families*.
Other expressions interchangeably used in this project are: *lesbian and
gay parented families, same-sex parented families* and *lesbigay parented
families*.

1.3. RESEARCH RATIONALE

Three very significant gaps in knowledge indicate the need for this study to
be undertaken. One of these lacunas relates to the underrepresentation of
LGBT people in tourism. Much of tourism scholarship fails to address the
needs and desires of lesbians and gays (Hughes 2006; Waitt and
Markwell 2006; Melián-González *et al.* 2011; Mendoza 2013). Blichfeldt *et
al.* (2013, p. 473) explain little is known about what the "gay tourist" really
wants. This is particularly true as far as lesbians are concerned due to
their being largely overlooked in tourism studies (Hughes and Deutsch
2010; Weeden *et al.* forthcoming). It is argued here that research focusing
on the non-LGBT tourist contributes to keeping the presumption of
heterosexuality as the norm. This causes the needs and wants of gays
and lesbians to be ignored or automatically assumed to be identical to
their straight counterparts. Understanding the travel motivations and
choices of lesbians and gays can lead to a better grasp of the diversity of
holiday experiences. Further, it can provide insights into how sexuality
may shape such experiences and how holidays can impact on the
negative feelings potentially caused by anti-gay discrimination. Therefore,
more research is needed that focuses on the motivations and choices of
the non-heteronormative tourist.

Another very important gap in knowledge refers to family tourism. Indeed,
holidays play a pivotal role in strengthening family links, which are
amongst the most important emotional bonds in a person's life (Schänzel
and Carr 2015). Nevertheless, tourism research, with its emphasis on
individual choices and motivations, largely neglects the family as a primary
unit of leisure (Carr 2011). As Obrador (2012) explains, although tourism

is predominantly a group-based activity, academe still emphasises the solitary tourist. This creates an individualised and fragmented representation of the tourist (Schänzel *et al.* 2012), which, in turn, leads to a "de-socialisation" of tourism research (Obrador 2012, p. 403). The underrepresentation of family in tourism studies is also restrictive to knowledge because it fails to address the complexity of family holiday decisions (Decrop 2006). Further, it fails to recognise family travel choices as crucial to the decisions children will make when, later in life, they travel by themselves or with their own families (Southall 2012). Hence, as Schänzel and Carr (2015, p. 171) point out, "much is still left to do" in academia for the diversity and complexity of family tourism experiences to be fully understood.

Finally, there is an impressive gap in knowledge about the 'non-conventional' family in tourism. The family as a 'social institution' has changed. Families nowadays exist in all types of configurations and the rigid family structures from the past are no longer considered the norm (Yeoman *et al.* 2012). Nonetheless, tourism research emphasises the 'traditional' nuclear family, namely, the unit formed of mother, father and children (Johns and Gyimóthy 2003; Hughes and Southall 2012; Schänzel *et al.* 2012; Lucena *et al.* 2015) and assumes all families as homogeneous. Neglecting less 'conventional' families results in a superficial, or, at best, limited understanding of family holiday motivations and decisions. Moreover, the increasing diversity in family configurations is likely to represent significant economic returns for the tourism industry (Southall 2012). When arguing the holidays of all types of families deserve to be investigated, Carr (2011, p. 33) affirms "the tourism industry needs to move away from its traditional focus on the nuclear family for ethical reasons as well as economic ones related to the growth in the number of non-nuclear families." Despite these remarks, families that are considered 'non-conventional' remain largely alienated from tourism research. Therefore, it is crucial that families that 'stand out' from the norm be given a voice in tourism studies.

1.4.   RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Given the considerations above, the aim of this study is to contribute to a critical understanding of lesbian and gay parented families in relation to their travel motivations and destination choice. Travel motivations (what drives these families to go on holiday) and destination choice (the places they choose to go to on holiday) were chosen as starting points in this project because they are central constructs to tourism. Indeed, travel motivations can be helpful to identify tourism subgroups and consumption behaviour (Poria *et al*. 2004; Biran *et al.* 2011). Likewise, destination choice, a notion that is linked with travel motivations (Moscardo *et al.* 1996), is key in determining travel behaviour (Decrop 2006) and tourism demand (Yang *et al.* 2013). Therefore, they have important implications for tourism research, management and marketing.

For this aim to be reached, and based on the topics addressed and the questions raised by a review of the literature, the following objectives are appropriate:

1. To critically review and analyse literature on travel motivations and destination choice with a special focus on those of families and of gays and lesbians;
2. To critically review and analyse the relevant literature on lesbigay parented families, particularly in relation to how they manage heteronormativity in the public arena;
3. To explore the travel motivations and holiday destination choice of same-sex parented families and to investigate how, if at all, parents' sexuality impacts on these motivations and choices;
4. To investigate how holiday decisions take place within the family and whether the children participate in these processes;
5. To explore how, if at all, the heteronormativity of public spaces affects these families' social interaction while on holiday and

whether it impacts on their travel motivations and destination choice;

6. To conceptualise the conclusions on lesbigay parented families' travel motivations and destination choice by relating them to wider theoretical debates.

The aim and objectives of this study highlight its unique value. In shedding light upon the holiday experiences of same-sex parented families, this project helps fill the above-mentioned gaps in tourism research, which underlines its academic importance. It brings gays and lesbians to the fore of tourism academia, thereby helping fill a dearth of LGBT studies in the field. It also addresses family holidays, and, thus, it lessens the underrepresentation of the family in tourism knowledge. Further, it adds to knowledge about the 'non-typical' family in tourism, thereby helping erode the presumption of the 'traditional' nuclear family as the norm.

In addition to its academic significance, this study has strong social relevance. Exploring what motivates lesbian and gay parented families and how they make their decisions leads to an enhanced understanding of these families' needs, wants and practices. If, as Gabb (2005) suggests, discrimination targets the different, then understanding lesbigay parented families implies getting to know them. Such knowledge may, in turn, add to their visibility and lead to reduced stigmatisation. Likewise, this study provides insight into the mechanisms used by parents to negotiate their sexuality in heteronormative spaces. Understanding the impact of heteronormativity on these parents' holiday experiences and choices is of particular importance to society (and to LGBT people in specific) as it may lead to normative assumptions being questioned and contested.

Finally, this study has invaluable practical ramifications. In addressing the holiday decisions of same-sex parented families and the processes these families undergo when making such choices, this study is especially relevant to the tourism industry. As noted earlier, lesbigay parented families are likely to become a significant market segment in tourism in the future. Thus, the findings from this study are crucial for tourism marketers and practitioners catering for these families. These findings will enable the

tourism industry to develop and refine products, communications and operations so as to satisfy these consumers' needs and wants.

1.5. A BRIEF NOTE ON POSITIONALITY, REFLEXIVITY AND VOICE

At this point, a note needs to be made and briefly reflected upon. In this study, the researcher's positionality as Brazilian childless gay man has not only inspired his choice of Ph.D. subject but also informed the research process as a whole. This position is not only acknowledged in this study but also welcomed. As will be explained in the methodology chapter (please see 3.1.1. Ontologies and Epistemologies, p. 87), this project takes the epistemological stance of knowledge as the result of a co-construction between researcher and participant. Thus, the inquirer, rather than a detached observer, is here considered an integral part of the research process. In this sense, the researcher's positionality, as well as its implications to the research, needs to be understood rather than denied or ignored. This is effectively done via reflexivity, namely the inquirer's ability to reflect upon their own values (Feighery 2006), a practice that enhances the quality of research (Sultana 2007; Everett 2010). In this study, reflexive techniques were adopted throughout all stages of the research process as a way of grasping the interplay between the researcher's identity and beliefs and the inquiry itself (for more about these debates, please see 3.2.6. Reflexivity and Positionality, p. 127).

Reflexivity, however, may have its pitfalls. Commentators often call attention to the risk of reflexivity becoming a tiresome exercise of self-indulgence (Pillow 2003; Santos 2012) or narcissism (Finlay 2002). As Sultana (2007, p. 376) points out, reflexivity can turn into a "navel-gazing" experience, with researchers sometimes becoming self-absorbed with their own "language games" (Patai 1994, cited in Pillow 2003, p. 176). This may cause researchers to lose focus on the research aim and / or its participants. As Finlay (2002, p. 212) highlights, researchers risk falling into the trap "of the infinite regress of excessive self analysis and deconstructions at the expense of focusing on the research participants

and developing understanding." This in turn could make researchers distance themselves from the social world. DeVault (1997), for instance, openly criticises researchers who spend more time at the computer than in the field, arguing personal accounts should not prevail over the research project itself. Indeed, academics are often accused by sectors in society of being protected by and confined to 'ivory towers' of knowledge (Blichfeldt 2007; Blichfeldt *et al.* 2010). In this sense, it is argued that an excess of reflexive practices might lead academic knowledge to become too abstract and potentially disengaged from the 'real' world.

Therefore, an interesting dilemma arises: when and how should the voice of the researcher appear in this study? In view of the remarks above, a decision was made for the researcher's voice to emerge in the methodology chapter. As previously explained, this Ph.D. thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of lesbigay parented families in relation to their holiday choices and motivations. As such, it intends to place *them* at the centre of the research process. As stated earlier, the participation of the researcher is recognised but it is argued that it should not overtake the focus on and centrality of participants' experiences. As a consequence, the literature review, findings, conclusion and part of the methodology chapter adopt an impersonal voice, aimed at providing the reader with a balanced view of the diverse debates informing and relating to this inquiry. Within the methodology chapter, the voice of the researcher emerges and his positionality is revealed and discussed in depth, in an attempt to further understand how it affects and is affected by the research. This is done in the methodology chapter (as opposed to other parts of the thesis) because reflexivity and positionality are inextricably linked with the researcher's philosophical stance and worldview. Moreover, Finlay (2002) argues reflexivity is the result of a fusion between introspection and intersubjective reflection. In other words, reflexive techniques should delve not only into the researcher's recognition of the self but also his relationship with the other(s). This implies reflexive practices should take into consideration the researcher's interaction not only with participants but also the data produced through such interaction (Schwandt 2000; Everett 2010). Therefore, it was deemed suitable to let the researcher's

voice appear after the research philosophy, participants' recruitment and profile, data collection and analysis had been thoroughly discussed.

1.6. THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is divided into five chapters: literature review, methodology and methods, findings, discussion of findings and conclusion.

The literature review is structured around four sections. The first presents the main theoretical debates about travel motivations and destination choice. It discusses travel motivation theories and explores the relevance of these debates for this study. It then focuses on destination choice and avoidance, and concludes by critically reviewing the scholarship about the travel motivations and choices of lesbians and gays.

The second section reviews the literature on family tourism. It first looks into the significance of tourism for the family and critically analyses the social changes that have affected the family as an institution while exploring the effects this may have on their travel decisions. It then discusses the roles of the family members in relation to holiday decisions whilst analysing the influence of children in the process. In the final part of this section, family travel motivations are discussed in light of very recent literature about the topic.

The third section of the literature review revolves around the social phenomenon of lesbigay parented families. It reviews the debates about where these families sit and what challenges they face in a heteronormative world. It concludes by critically analysing the studies that compare these families to their heterosexual counterparts and exploring the importance these studies might have for this project.

The fourth and final section summarises the main topics addressed in the literature review and presents the research questions that emerged.

Two sections comprise the methodology and methods chapter. The first delves into research philosophy and reviews scholarly debates about

ontologies, epistemologies, research paradigms and strategies. Within this section, the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions are explained and the choices for an interpretivist paradigm and a phenomenological strategy justified.

The second part discusses research methods and process. It justifies the qualitative techniques used in this study, describes the data collection process and discusses the challenges encountered to recruit participants, as well as the measures adopted to face such dilemmas. Subsequently, it explains how the data were analysed, addresses the ethical considerations involved in the research process and discusses what was implemented to enhance the study's trustworthiness. The section then concludes with the researcher's reflections on his positionality.

The findings of this study are presented in two chapters. The first describes the data collected and provides participants' answers to the research questions. As such, this chapter is didactically structured around the main topics addressed by this study, namely, travel motivations, destination choice, family holiday decisions, and visibility and social interaction.

The subsequent chapter, discussion of findings, makes sense of the meaning ascribed by participants to their motivations and choices. It also conceptualises the findings by positioning them in wider theoretical debates. This chapter is, therefore, organised around the themes that emerged during data analysis. The first, similarity and difference, explores the multiple significances of family holidays for the families interviewed, discusses how holidays contribute to shape and enhance family identity and delves into the interplay between family tourism and parental duties and guilt. The second theme, underlying expressions of pride / shame in gay and lesbian family tourism, reveals the sometimes paradoxical relationship lesbigay parents have with their sexual orientations. It discusses how such contradictions may shape not only their travel decisions but also their possibilities of social interaction whilst on holiday as well as other aspects of their families' lives.

Finally, the conclusion highlights the study's contributions to knowledge as well as its practical implications while suggesting possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

As indicated in the introduction, this study explores the travel motivations and destination choice of lesbian and gay parented families. This chapter, which critically reviews the theoretical debates that inform this research, is structured around three key topics: travel motivations and destination choice, family tourism and lesbigay parented families.

2.1. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS AND DESTINATION CHOICE

This section of the literature review presents a critical analysis of travel motivations and destination choice and is divided into four parts. Firstly, travel motivation theories are analysed from an inter-disciplinary approach and from a more specific tourism perspective. Secondly, destination choice theories, with an emphasis on choice set and process-based models, are presented and discussed. Thirdly, attention is given to the scholarship on destination avoidance. The section concludes by discussing lesbians' and gays' travel motivations and destination choice.

2.1.1. Travel Motivations

The word motivation comes from the Latin *movere* (to move), which denotes the idea of motivation as a generator of action (Dann 1981), or, as Schiffmann and Kanuk (2009) view it, the force within individuals that leads them to action. Nonetheless, much of the literature pertaining to travel motivation actually does little more than enumerate reasons why people travel. These reasons, generically referred to as motivators, are

usually typified under categories. For instance, Beard and Ragheb (1983) classified motivators as intellectual (linked to mental stimulation), social (relationships with other individuals) competence-mastery (associated with competition and challenge) and stimulus-avoidance based (connected with relaxation). Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) categorise them into five types: cultural (related to the desire to explore other cultures), physical (pertaining to the practice of activities and the need for rest), personal (connected with intellectual development), emotional (relating to feelings such as romance and nostalgia) and status-related (connected with the desire for recognition and reward).

Such approaches are superficial as they merely attempt to explain why people travel. They fail to clarify how motivation, namely "the process by which an individual will be driven to act" (Decrop 2006, p. 9), is originated and translated into behaviour. Because motivation is a construct that draws upon other disciplines, an investigation of motivation should necessarily be grounded within an inter-disciplinary perspective. Thus, before delving into the seminal theoretical framework of motivation in tourism, it is important to understand how the topic has been addressed in other spheres of knowledge.

Travel motivation: an inter-disciplinary approach

Travel motivations have already been investigated from diverse perspectives. The economic approach, for instance, views motivation from a utilitarian viewpoint; thus, tourists are motivated by a desire to attain an outcome with efficiency (Gnoth 1997). This approach, more concerned with creating predicting models of motivation (see for instance Archer 1977; Farell 1977), assumes behaviour as rational and target oriented. From an anthropological point of view, motivation is associated with culture and communities (see, for instance, Adler 1989; Smith 1989). From a sociological perspective, travel motivation is described as a search for authenticity (MacCannell 1973) or a pursuit of the different (Cohen 1979). Both sociological and anthropological conceptions of motivation have been criticised for being outdated and perpetuating ethnocentrism, namely, the

perception of European culture as more refined and evolved than other cultures (Korstanje 2013).

In his discussions of social roles and motivations, the sociologist and philosopher Max Weber (1978, p. 11) described motivations as the "complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself and to the observer an adequate ground for conduct." For Weber (1978), motivation is less about the compelling drive toward behaviour than it is about the meaning attributed to it, and, therefore, motivations, akin to other social constructions, can be understood only through the lens of the meaning attributed by individuals to them. For Alfred Schütz (1967), this meaning presupposes an experience, which is not necessarily based in the past. It could also be an experience of a projected action. In this study, motivations and meanings are indeed viewed as inseparable notions. Motivations, as subjective constructs, can be fully grasped only through the meaning people assign to them. This affects the design of research focused on motivations and calls for the use of qualitative methods, which allow the meaning individuals attach to their motivations to emerge (for more on this topic, see 3.1.2. Paradigms, p. 90).

Motivations are the internal motors of behaviour (Li and Cai 2012). Thus, their study is inextricably linked to the understanding of personality (Page and Connell 2009), which is a key construct in psychology. Arguably, this explains why no other field of knowledge has produced more scholarship on motivation than psychology. Personality is explained according to five different psychological schools of thought. The psychoanalytic theories, whose main exponents were Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, explained behaviour as originating from unconscious forces of motivation which seek to satisfy needs for sex, arousal, competence, acceptance and love (McIntosh *et al.* 1995). Trait theories, represented by Gordon Allport and Raymond Cattell, viewed personality as a system of mental structures that explain the patterns of human behaviour (Frew and Shaw 1999). According to trait theorists, motivations aim to satisfy the human need for a repetition of behaviours. Cognitive theorists such as Daniel Berlyne understood personality as a result of a learning process; thus, motivations are forces aimed at meeting the human need for mental stimulation (Iso-

Ahola 1980). The socio-behaviouristic school of thought also viewed learning as having a crucial impact on the formation and evolution of personality; socio-behaviourists, however, believed the learning process is a function of the environment and motivations arise to satisfy human needs and reduce tension in their adaptation to the environment (Madrigal 1995). Finally, the humanistic approach saw personality as function of a search for evolution and improvement, explaining human motivation as a force to meet the need for constant self-actualisation (Maddi 1996).

Although these theories are *per se* not sufficient to explain travel motivations, they are important starting points in that they all draw upon a link between motivations and needs. In other words, the psychological theories share the idea that motivation is a driving force propelled by a need. In this sense, Abraham Maslow's (1987) humanistic theory of needs is central to an understanding of motivations. Maslow's seminal explanation of needs as a hierarchical system in which basic needs must be satisfied before other more elaborate ones are met has served as a base for motivational theories. Nonetheless, Maslow's hierarchy has been open to much criticism. For instance, it has been accused of not contemplating more 'negative' needs, such as aggression or dominance (Witt and Wright 1992). Cooper *et al*. (2005) claim Maslow's division of needs is arbitrary and cannot be empirically proven. To this criticism, it can be added that Maslow's alleged hierarchy exists only on a theoretical level; higher needs may actually co-exist with lower needs. Nevertheless, perhaps due to its simplicity and easy applicability, Maslow's theory continues to inform the scholarship on travel motivations.

Because of the intrinsic interplay between motivation and other related concepts, such as motive, reason and disposition, considerable attention has been given by the doctrine to the distinction among them. Motive is a term that is often employed as a synonym of motivation, and authors such as Weber (1978) and Crompton (1979), for example, used the words interchangeably. Heckhausen and Heckhausen (2008) clarify the distinction by explaining motives as generic energisers of behaviour. To put it simply, motives are targets or goals of behaviour that do not necessarily exist in a context. Motivations, conversely, are forces that

imply action; they refer to a process that is unavoidably contextualised or situation-specific. This is why Heckhausen and Heckhausen (2008) define motivations as interactions between motives and situations. Li and Cai (2012) perceive motivation as an action. Thus, each motive may trigger a number of diverse motivations. In Dann's (1981) view, motivation is wider in that it encompasses a conscious state of mind and a meaningful action, a statement corroborated by Gnoth (1997), for whom motivations are cognitive in essence and may, therefore, be explained through mental representations such as knowledge and beliefs. Motives, in contrast, are of an emotional nature since they trigger feelings and instincts (Gnoth 1997).

However, affirming motivation is essentially cognitive does not imply it being equated with a reason or a rational justification. As Dann (1981) clarified, reasons are merely subsets of motivation; they are the logical means through which motivation is explained or justified and motivations do not necessarily have a rational component. Motivations are also distinct from dispositions. Albeit these terms are conceptually close to one another, dispositions refer to consistently repeated behaviours which may or may not inform motivations (Dann 1981). These distinctions reiterate the need for research on motivations to be guided by the search for the individuals' deeper meaning as suggested by Weber (1978). Otherwise stated, because motivations are not simply statements of reasons or motives, their investigation might benefit from emic methods that allow the voice of the researched to emerge.

Travel motivation: the search for a theoretical framework

According to Cooper *et al*. (2005), travel is a response to what is lacking, a need that pushes for actions. Tourism research is essentially market driven and, within this context, motivation is an important topic as it allows for better market segmentation techniques, service quality, product development and positioning (Fodness 1994). Despite this, Dann (1981) called into question the methodological validity of researching travel motivations; according to him, motivations are constructs that cannot be

entirely grasped by the researcher. Because Dann (1981) also perceived the fluidity of the concept of motivation as a barrier for its comprehension, he contended individuals may not be able to really understand their own motivations, reflect upon and articulate them. He also conjectured people might want to hide their real motivations. Dann's (1981) concerns, however, should be viewed with caution. As Iso-Ahola (1982) stated, such difficulties characterise all types of research. Moreover, as Middleton (2001) argued, because motivations differ from simple statements of reasons or intentions, research on motivations should necessarily rely on the researcher's ability to probe. To these arguments, it can also be added that research on motivation should be grounded in a co-construction of meanings. Research is a process in which the researcher's and participants' realities are fused (Gadamer 1976) and a study on motivation guided by an attempt to find a unique truth will be inevitably flawed or, at best, limited.

As previously stated, much research on travel motivations does little more than list generic reasons why people travel. A critical investigation of travel motivations should take into account their purpose of satisfying latent needs and consider the underlying forces that drive behaviour. In this sense, research on travel motivation basically tries to understand motivation from two perspectives: from the points of view of needs and expectations.

Need-based theories explain motivation as a function of a need, namely, a physiological or psychological requirement that must be met for well-being to be attained (Crompton 1979). In other words, a need is a lack that creates a tension which, in turn, leads the individual to seek the fulfilment of that specific absence. Crompton's (1979) seminal work on pleasure vacation motivations may be considered a useful starting point. He categorised motives in nine different types. Table 1 identifies these motives:

Table 1: Crompton's (1979) travel motives (pp. 415 – 420)

Socio-psychological motives: related to the traveller's social and psychological status	Escape: need for a change of environment
	Self-exploration: need for self-discovery and attempt to refine one's personality
	Relaxation: need for a mental state free of concerns
	Prestige: need for representation of a lifestyle
	Regression: need to adopt attitudes that are not part of daily life
	Family interaction: need to enhance family relationships
	Social interaction: need to engage socially both with local people and other tourists
Cultural motives	Novelty: need to search for the unknown
	Education: need to search for learning

Crompton's (1979) nomenclature of motives may be perceived as arbitrary as there does not seem to be sufficient elaboration as to why the two last motives could not be considered socio-psychological. Nevertheless, his main contribution lay in his development of Dann's (1977) binary construct of *push* and *pull* factors. According to Crompton (1979), the socio-psychological motives are linked with push factors, which relate to the desire to go on holiday, whereas the cultural motives are associated with pull factors, which relate to destination attributes (Gountas and Carey 2000). As Dann (1981) clarified, there is a chronological order in these factors with push preceding pull factors. In other words, the push factors predispose the individual to travel and then the pull factors attract and stimulate the prospective traveller to choose a destination. In his view,

travel motivations are essentially push factors and, hence, he refers to these factors as "motivational push" (related to the tourist) and "destinational pull" (related to the place) (Dann 1981, p.190). Others argue push factors are a response to the disequilibrium in the motivational system and the struggle to obtain homeostasis, which refers to a state of psychological stability (Goossens 2000; Prayag and Ryan 2011). This idea has led Witt and Wright (1992) to affirm pull factors are less related to motivations than they are concerned with mere preferences. This is in line with Decrop's (2006) statement that pull factors are only mental images of destinations, thereby being associated with destination choice rather than motivations.

Dann's (1977; 1981) theory shared some common ground with Crompton's (1979), namely the idea that travel motivations consist of forces boosted by needs. Dann (1977; 1981) explained the push forces through the concepts of *anomie* and *ego-enhancement*. Anomie (the absence of meaningful norms in society that leads to isolation and monotony) produces a need to escape the chaos and stress that characterise everyday life. An important part in the anti-anomic process is played by fantasy, used as an attempt to restore the meaning of life. Fantasy explains why people look for environments that are different from home, engage in conversation with people from different backgrounds and even adopt more permissive behaviours whilst on holiday. Ego-enhancement relates to the need to be recognised; travels, therefore, collaborate to create prestige and status, which explains why travellers like to recount stories about their trips. Anomie and ego-enhancement are push factors because the former allows for stress alleviation and the latter upheaves self-esteem (Dann 1977; 1981).

Adopting a socio-psychological stance, Iso-Ahola (1980) declared motivation to be a dialectical construct that encapsulates two simultaneous forces: *escaping*, the need to avoid the troubles of the personal and the interpersonal world, and *seeking,* the need for personal rewards (through freedom, knowledge, challenge or relaxation) and interpersonal rewards (through social interaction) (see also Mannell and Iso-Ahola 1987; Dunn Ross and Iso-Ahola 1991). Crompton and McKay (1997) later refined

Crompton's (1979) pull and push forces by combining aspects of Iso-Ahola's (1980) theory. In doing so, they integrated the pull forces with the search for benefits. In other words, to put an end to the debate about whether or not pull forces are really motivational (as opposed to merely destinational), they explained pull forces as a motivational search for the benefits represented by the destination attributes.

Although Crompton's (1979), Dann's (1977; 1981) and Iso-Ahola's (1980) theories are based on Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs, it is only in Pearce (1988; 1993; see also Pearce and Caltabiano 1983; Moscardo and Pearce 1986; Pearce and Lee 2005) that the Maslow theory is explicitly mentioned. Pearce's travel career ladder adopts Maslow's hierarchy as a theoretical framework and is predicated on the belief that a person's travel experience influences their travel needs. He concludes experienced travellers are more concerned with self-esteem and self-actualisation, whereas inexperienced travellers search for their needs for safety to be met first.

In addition to the need-based theories, travel motivations can also be explained from the perspective of expectation-based theories. An expectation is the perceived likelihood that an action will produce a specific result (Vroom 1964). Witt and Wright (1992), building upon Vroom's (1964) seminal theory on work motivation and satisfaction, explained motivation as a function of expectation. For them, motivations are not only concerned with meeting needs but also a desire to attain an expected outcome (Witt and Wright 1992). Differently put, according to Witt and Wright (1992), motivations are created as a result of:

- Expectancy: the projection of achievement of an outcome;
- Instrumentality: the feasibility of the potential outcome;
- Valence: the attractiveness of the outcome.

While acknowledging the participation of needs in the formation of motivation, Gnoth (1997) explained expectations are mental anticipations of an outcome, and it is the importance attached to these outcomes that construct motivations.

Both need and expectation-based theories have been subject to criticism. Needs-based theories have been criticised for relying on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As Gountas and Carey (2000) highlighted, because needs are unstable and perceived (rather than actual), Maslow's taxonomy of needs fails to entirely explain the genesis and the process of motivations. It can also be added that the theories associating motivations and needs are too generic in that they fail to take into account some psychological aspects such as the impact of sexuality. Finally, that many of these theories are based upon binary constructs (pull and push factors, anomie and ego-enhancement, escaping and seeking) does not entirely explain the multi-faceted and fluid aspect of travel motivation. Expectation-based theories have the strength of viewing motivations from a more holistic viewpoint than need-based theories as the former aggregate to the formation of motivation the notion of values, and, thus, recognise motivation as being intrinsically linked with personality. Their theories, however, may be viewed as a deployment of the economic perspectives that regard human action as rational, utilitarian and target-oriented.

Indeed, there is more to motivations than binary constructs suggest. A more contemporary view of travel motivation acknowledges it is a multi-layered construct resulting from a combination of numerous factors such as personality, lifestyle, emotional states and time (Uriely *et al*. 2002; Pomfret 2006). Therefore, in addition to the dichotomies proposed by Crompton (1979), Dann (1977; 1981) and Iso-Ahola (1980), a more holistic understanding of motivations also ought to include other aspects that impact on personal choices. For instance, for this study on lesbian and gay parented families' motivations, two aspects directly related to the topic are of paramount importance as they are reported to impact travel motivations: sexuality (Pritchard *et al*. 2000; Hughes 2006) and gender (Collins and Tisdell 2002; Mottiar and Quinn 2004). Moreover, as previously stated, investigating motivations implies understanding the meaning people ascribe to them. This is especially true in the case of group motivations. The literature on travel motivation is mostly concerned with individuals, thereby overlooking that a very significant proportion of trips take place in groups (Carr 2011; Obrador 2012). Thus, for this study

on the travel motivations of gay and lesbian parented families, an approach that examines the complexities of family motivations is necessary. The meaning these families ascribe to their motivations can be attained only through methods that allow their voices to be heard.

Although it is not the aim of the present study to examine the interplay between lesbigay parented families' travel motivations and gender, it is worth mentioning research on family tourism and gay and lesbian tourism shares similar themes with gender-related scholarship. It is often the case that family holiday decisions (Mottiar and Quinn 2004) and lesbian and gay travel motivations (Poria 2006) are explained through the prism of gender. As stated above, travel motivations are impacted upon by several factors and gender was reported to be one of them. In their pivotal work, Kinnaird and Hall (Kinnaird *et al.* 1994; Kinnaird and Hall 1996) argued tourism relations are inevitably imbued with gender connotations. Because tourism is based on a purchase of social relations and these involve power and control, which in turn are reflections of a gendered society, tourism encounters and tourism-related work are both gendered (Kinnaird *et al.* 1994; Kinnaird and Hall 1996). In a similar vein, Pritchard and Morgan (2000) contended tourism is socially constructed and, thus, is shaped and informed by subjective aspects such as gender. Yet the gendered aspect of tourism is generally overlooked by research, and the industry often assumes men and women to have similar interests, needs and motivations (Pritchard *et al.* 2007).

Research on the topic of women's and men's motivations tends to be inconclusive. For example, Kimmel (2004) declared women's and men's motivations differ only slightly and, in general, they are more similar than diverse. Conversely, particularly as far as travel choices are concerned, men and women are reported to travel for different purposes and be motivated by distinct factors. Brownell and Walsh (2008, p. 119) report women travellers have needs and adopt behaviours that are "definitely" diverse from men's. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) posited women are more concerned with satisfying the needs of self-actualisation and, thus, the search for culture is an important travel motivator, a statement endorsed by Mottiar and Quinn (2004) in their investigation of the role of

women in family holiday decisions. For Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987), men and women have different perceptions of leisure. Collins and Tisdell (2002) suggested men tend to seek action and adventure while on holiday, whereas women are more driven by cultural or educational aspects. McGuiggan (2001) claimed men's holiday motivations tend to be competition-oriented while women's are more creativity-driven. For Ryan (2002), women on holiday seek knowledge more often than men.

When addressing women's and men's attitudes towards tourism, McKercher *et al.* (2011) use socialisation theory as a framework and air the possibility that potential differences may be due to men and women being socialised (raised to conform to cultural expectations) in distinct ways. They claim girls are socialised to develop an ethic of care whilst boys are expected to become independent and competitive. According to them, diverse experiences of socialisation might explain why women and men may have diverse travel motivations (McKercher *et al.* 2011). However, these arguments and distinctions are called into question as women commonly travel on their own as well as in groups of female friends, which both expresses and reaffirms their independence and empowerment (Harris and Wilson 2007).

Nevertheless, as Bowen and Clarke (2009) note, one consequence of women's increased participation in the economy is that more attention should be drawn to their travel choices (and, by analogy, their motivations). That the findings about travel motivations and gender are inconclusive indicates much is still to be found on this topic. However, as previously noted, an exploration of the impact of gender falls outside the scope of this study, aimed at contributing to an understanding of lesbigay parented families' travel motivations and destination choice. Therefore, following on from travel motivations, the next section investigates the relevant literature on destination choice.

2.1.2. Destination Choice

As noted earlier, push factors are related to the desire to travel and pull factors are the motivational components that make an individual choose a specific destination rather than others. Thus, destination choice is directly impacted upon by an individual or a group's travel motivation (Kim and Lehto 2013). As Moscardo *et al.* (1996) highlighted, destination choice is a function of both travel motivations and destination attributes.

Most of the theories on travel destination choice are based on the so-called grand models of consumer decision-making proposed by Nicosia (1966), Engel *et al.* (1968) and Howard and Sheth (1969). These models were designed for explaining the consumption of goods and assumed human action as linear and functional (Erasmus *et al.* 2001; Lye *et al.* 2005; Smallman and Moore 2010). As a consequence, destination choice set models are construed around the idea of logical steps, which are: recognition of a need, determination of goals, generation of destination sets, information search, judgment and preference, purchase and feedback (Decrop 2006; Hwang *et al.* 2006; Decrop 2010). Theories about destination choice can be categorised into two different types: those that highlight the importance of choice sets and those that emphasise the decision-making process.

Choice set models

Choice set models are based on the idea that, because people seek to reduce the complexity of decisions, they choose the best alternative by narrowing down their options. Woodside and Lysonski (1989) built their model around four different types of sets:

- Consideration: options taken into account in a decision;
- Inert: options rejected for being perceived as negative;
- Unavailable-awareness: alternatives dismissed for being unfeasible;
- Inept: choices to which the tourist is indifferent.

For Um and Crompton (1990; 1992), the initial awareness set, with all the alternatives that come to the tourist's mind, logically progresses into an evoked set, obtained after some possibilities have been eliminated, which, in turn, evolves into a late evoked set.

Decrop (2006) also conceptualises his choice sets as clear steps in the decision-making process. Although Decrop (2006) does not entirely challenge the idea of destination choice as a process with a utilitarian target, he acknowledges the hedonic aspect of holiday decisions through the inclusion of a dream set, namely the options perceived as ideal although permanently unavailable. According to Decrop (2006), choice sets are not stable and destinations migrate from one set to another. Decrop (2006) also concurs with Woodside and Lysonski (1989) and Um and Crompton (1990). Both of them argued destination choice sets are quite small in terms of the number of options and tourists seldom contemplate more than four alternatives per set. For Decrop (2006), this is because destination choice is secondary to travel motivations, corroborating Dann's (1981) claim that push factors prevail over pull factors.

Arguably, choice set models are often used to describe destination related decisions because they are relatively simple to understand and can be easily adapted. However, they are not without their critics. Goossens (2000), for instance, highlighted the emotional aspects related to destination choice. According to him, selecting a destination is a pleasure-seeking process rather than a purely rational and conscious activity (Goossens 2000). Tourism decisions are less involved with problem-solving than they are with emotion-seeking and are often characterised by impulsivity (Hyde 2000; Smallman and Moore 2010; Cohen *et al.* 2015). Moreover, these models neglect time and other situational constraints (Jang *et al*. 2007). Finally, tourists' decisions do not follow the linear idea according to which alternatives are funnelled as the decision-making stages progress (Tversky and Kahneman 1986); rather, tourists tend to aggregate alternatives to the initial choice set and deal with several choice sets at the same time, which makes the sets elastic and difficult to predict (Decrop 2010).

Process-based models

Process-based models focus on the decision-making process as a whole. Arguably one of the most influential paradigms in terms of tourism decision-making, Moutinho's (1987) model viewed the decision-making process as a sequence of three steps: decision (encompassing the pre-decision and the purchase moments), post-purchase and future decision. This model, clearly based on the grand models of consumer decision-making, has the strength of acknowledging destination choice in tourism is but one of the decisions to be made by the tourist. On the other hand, its highly positivist approach (using mathematical formulae to explain human attitudes) is a limitation. Furthermore, this model, whilst recognising the hedonic component of destination choice, also presumes tourism decision-making as a target-oriented process.

Mayo and Jarvis's (1981) process-based model used a simplified diagram to explain the mental processes undertaken by a tourist when making decisions. According to them, these mental processes result from a combination of internal factors, such as personality, learning and motivation, and external factors, such as group and family influences (Mayo and Jarvis 1981). In doing so, they recognised the influence of psychological factors in the process, thereby acknowledging the dynamic aspect of the decision-making process. However, because it does not entirely oppose the rational archetype, their model can be described as an example of the "bounded rationality" paradigm (Smallman and Moore 2010, p. 401).

Van Raaij and Francken's (1984) model was premised on the idea that tourism encompasses a series of sub-decisions, namely, the decisions that follow destination choice, such as the choice of accommodation and transport. Building upon this approach, Woodside and MacDonald (1994) proposed a model that repudiates the rational paradigm of the grand models. The strength of their model lay in not attempting to determine clear sequential steps in the process and not establishing causal relationships between the variables. Fesenmaier and Jeng (2000) and

Hyde (2004) adopted a similar stance and focused mainly on the differences between sub-choices, with particular emphasis on the distinctions between the decisions made prior to departure and those made during the trip.

What the van Raaij and Francken (1984), Woodside and MacDonald (1994), Fesenmaier and Jeng (2000) and Hyde (2004) theories have in common is that they all propose tourism decisions are not limited to travel destination choice. However, because their models are based on generic propositions, their operationalization is considerably impaired. As a response, a more current approach is the one proposed by Lye *et al*. (2005), whose model actually merges aspects of the choice sets and the process-based model. They allude to decision waves, which are impacted upon by the tourist's principles, goals and strategies. In other words, the choice is attained after the destination has been contrasted with each one of these elements and, hence, must be in accordance with the tourist's values, objectives and plans (Lye *et al.* 2005).

Nevertheless, as is the case of the literature on motivations, all these paradigms, with perhaps the exception of Moutinho's (1987) model, focus solely on individual decisions. As Decrop (2006, p. 115) states, holiday decisions are "hypercomplex" and cannot be entirely grasped by the rational models of destination choice. This is particularly true when it comes to group decisions, which involve a great deal of negotiation and concession (Schänzel *et al.* 2012). The family deserves special attention since it is the primary unit of leisure tourism (Carr 2006; 2011; Obrador 2012; Schänzel *et al*. 2012). Thus, more research on family destination choice needs to be conducted, a gap which this study intends to fill.

2.1.3. Destination Avoidance

Intrinsically linked with the notion of motivations and destination choice is destination avoidance. As Lawson and Thyne (2001) stated, motivation

explains why some destination options are excluded from consideration sets and others are not even taken into account. Destination avoidance is a topic that has received less attention from academia than motivation and destination choice. Yet, the literature on destination avoidance suffers from the same limitations that characterise the scholarship on motivation. When analysing destination avoidance, for instance, Lawson and Thyne (2001) did little more than enumerate a few reasons for avoidance, such as physical danger, political issues and climate.

The notion of destination avoidance, however, must be understood through the lens of travel constraints and perceived risks. McGuiggan (2003) argued constraints are modifiers of travel decisions in that they may engender cancellation of a trip, or they may restrict destination choice. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) classified constraints as intrapersonal (such as anxiety), interpersonal (such as the inability to find someone with whom to travel) or structural. Building upon this taxonomy, McGuiggan (2003) cited, among the structural constraints, time, money and the presence of children. Decrop (2006) also mentions children as examples of travel inhibitors, in line with Page and Connell's (2009) statement that the presence of children constitutes a holiday constraint. For Page and Connell (2009), not only do families have fewer destination alternatives to choose from but they also have time-related limitations. Their decisions are influenced by a number of aspects, such as school holiday periods.

Travel-related risk is another factor with high relevance for destination avoidance. Tourism, and leisure tourism in particular, tends to be viewed as a high-risk activity not only because of the high costs often involved in planning a trip (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005) but also because of the intangibility of services and the impossibility of trying a trip beforehand (Smallman and Moore 2010). Despite Bowen and Clarke's (2009) claim that risk may be attractive for some (which is the case in adventure tourism, for example), on most occasions, it reduces destination choice and restricts the type of information sought, the type of planning and the length of the trip (Money and Crotts 2003). Risk also causes the destination image to be perceived negatively by travellers (Frías *et al.* 2012).

As Bowen and Clarke (2009) explain, risk relates to a person's perception of the possibility of hazard or loss. The seminal studies conducted by Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) and Sönmez and Graefe (1998) attempted to establish a theoretical framework for travel-related risk. Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) argued travel risks are related either to the holiday itself or to the destination. Thus, they categorised people in three groups according to their perception of risk:

- Place risk: people who perceive the destination as being dangerous;
- Functional risk: persons who consider travel equipment and transportation as risky;
- Risk neutral: the group of people who do not find travelling a risky activity.

Roehl and Fesenmaier's (1992) theory is especially relevant for this study because they consider the effect of variables such as the size of the household on the perceived risk. They are of the opinion that, in families, children, particularly young ones, may act as barriers to leisure or "a form of inertia" (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992, p. 24). To put it simply, the safety of the children becomes the main concern of a family on holiday and, thus, children restrict the family's choices and activities, thereby impacting upon destination avoidance.

Drawing upon Roehl and Fesenmaier's (1992) classification, Sönmez and Graefe (1998) formulated their taxonomy to explain travel-related risk. According to their findings, the concept of risk is directly associated with safety protection and the main ones to be avoided during a trip are those related to health (illness) and the possibility of physical injuries and accidents (Sönmez and Graefe 1998). Within this context, safety impacts heavily on destination avoidance rather than destination choice (Sönmez and Graefe 1998). As Brunt *et al.* (2000) explained, a destination is not chosen for being safe but it is avoided for being unsafe. Significantly, Simpson and Siguaw (2008), when creating their own categorisation of travel-related risks, included not only the physical aspect, such as risk to health, well-being and risk of harm, but also two types of social risks:

concern *about* others and concern *for* others. Concern about others relates to the fear of mistreatment or discrimination while on holiday; concern for others is connected with other people's safety, a category in which children are included. These ideas are crucial to this research since the destination choice of same-sex parented families may be impacted upon by concerns both with the children's and the parents' safety (possibly due to their sexual orientation). In other words, both the parents' sexuality and the presence of children may be seen as risk generators, thereby influencing the final destination choice.

It is recurrent in the literature that travel-related risks need not be real. Rather, they are mostly perceived and it is this perception that actually impacts on destination avoidance (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992; Sönmez and Graefe 1998; Hughes 2002a; Law 2006; Kozak *et al.* 2007). As a subjective construct, perceived risk is influenced by personality (Reisinger and Mavondo 2005). As in the case of travel motivations, the interplay between perceived risks and gender has also deserved academic attention; yet, research on such interplay showed inconclusive results. Although studies conducted by Sönmez and Graefe (1998) and Simpson and Siguaw (2008) conclude gender as not affecting perceived risk, some scholarly findings indicate women perceive themselves as more prone to risk than men (Mitchell and Vassos 1997; Black 2000; Elsrud 2001; Carr 2001; Lepp and Gibson 2003). In the 1980s, Iso-Ahola (1980) concluded gender is a constraint since women discard the options that are viewed as risky to their physical integrity. Kozak *et al*. (2007) echo this argument, affirming men tend to be less concerned about risks than women when they travel. Brownell and Walsh (2008) report safety scores highly among women's concerns when travelling. For Wilson and Little (2008), women who travel alone are prone to perceived risks that relate to four types of fear: fear of other people's opinions, feeling physically vulnerable, having restricted access to places and attracting the attention of men. Harris and Wilson (2007) argue women's perceived risk may not constitute a travel constraint in that it does not lead women to cancel holiday trips. Conversely, it impacts on the way they organise and negotiate their activities while on holiday. For Wilson and Little (2008), women adopt

different travel behaviours and plan their trips more carefully than men so as not to be exposed to risky situations.

Tourism is often constructed as masculine (Kinnaird *et al.* 1994; Elsrud 2001). Harris and Wilson (2007), for instance, explain Western traditions portray tourism as a masculine activity, an idea that has its origins in the image of the male adventurers from the 16th century. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity prevails in most public spaces (Black 2000). This might cause women to see themselves as more vulnerable and to adopt protection measures that might shape their travel choices. A similar observation could be made about mothers. When discussing the experiences of women and children in relation to space, Lugosi (2010, p. 32) claims motherhood's "embodied nature creates specific subjectivities in women and thus specific subjective experiences of spaces."

There is no absolute consensus about whether women and men perceive travel-related risks differently, thereby avoiding (and choosing) different destinations on this ground. However, these debates are worth mentioning as they are directly associated with risk perceptions of lesbians and gay men, which are addressed in the next section about their travel motivations and destination choice.

2.1.4. Travel Motivations and Destination Choice of Lesbians and Gay Men

While lesbians and gays have always travelled (Clift *et al*. 2002; Waitt and Markwell 2006; Murray 2007), it was during the 1990s that their travel motivations and destination choice became of interest to academia. However, the main corpus of studies about the topic only came into existence during the 2000s. The first studies addressing gay and lesbian tourism emphasised the aspects of geographical mobility in association with sex tourism (White 1991; Aldrich 1993) or the search for an identity (Adler and Benner 1992; Valentine 1993; 1995).

Indeed, tourism as a vehicle to validate lesbian and gay identity has been a recurrent topic in the doctrine. Hughes (2006), for instance, suggests some men and women choose to have their first same-sex experience away from their home location. This equates traveling with *coming out of the closet,* a phrase commonly used to express assuming and disclosing one's homosexuality and viewed as the epitome of the "fulfilment of gay identity" (Hughes 2006, p. 51). Clift *et al*. (2002) affirmed gay and lesbian tourism is significantly linked with the search for gay enclaves. In this sense, space plays a crucial part in "learning how to be gay" (Cox 2002, p. 161) or "finding oneself" (Valentine and Skelton 2003, p. 849). Gay spaces are viewed by some lesbians and gays as sanctuaries where they become the majority and, thus, can be free to be themselves (Blichfeldt *et al.* 2013). Waitt and Markwell (2006), when analysing gay men's tourism, compare the search for gay space with a search for home, similar to the quest performed by Dorothy in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*[2]. Additionally, unlike many religious groups, lesbians and gays do not have a sense of homeland; thus, gay and lesbian meccas, such as San Francisco, Lesbos and Sydney, become places of pilgrimage (Howe 2001) and remain popular destinations among LGBT people (Gorman-Murray e*t al.* 2012).

However, gay and lesbian tourism as a way of seeking identity is a double-edged sword. As Cox (2002) explained, holidays centred on gay culture make reintegration to 'normal' life more difficult, especially for those who are still 'in the closet'. Further, lesbian and gay spaces were also viewed by some as ghettos or places of confinement, akin to larger closets (Duggan 1994; Sinfield 1997). The internal homogeneity of lesbigay spaces was also questioned (Weston 1991; Crang 2005), which means Oz, the metaphor for the perfect and safe space where one can have one's identity fulfilled, remains a fictional place.

A significant body of gay and lesbian tourism-related research has focused on its economic aspects since gays and lesbians are often described as an affluent market segment (Russell 2001; Stuber 2002). As Waitt and Markwell (2006, p. 8) highlight, the lesbian and gay community has shifted

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[2] *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is one of the most iconic symbols of gay culture. Gay men are humorously referred to as *friends of Dorothy* in the English language.

from being "deviant to [being] economic saviour." This has been reinforced by the idea of gay men as "hyperconsumers" (Pritchard *et al*. 1998; p. 280), "natural travellers" (Waitt and Maxwell 2006, p. 5) or by the DINK (dual income no kids) construct that links gay and lesbian couples with wealth and sophistication since they are perceived as being less likely to have children than their heterosexual counterparts (Hughes 2006). However, gays and lesbians may not necessarily be a homogeneous segment (Hughes and Deutsch 2010) and, thus, their affluence is put into perspective. Little is known about the diverse groups that exist within the lesbian and gay community and their consumption decisions (Hughes 2006; Waitt and Markwell 2006; Hughes and Deutsch 2010; Melián-González *et al*. 2011). Such is the case of the same-sex parented families, a group whose consumption behaviour deserves more scrutiny from academia, especially with regards to their travel motivations and destination choice. These families being ignored by market research contributes to them being alienated and an investigation of their travel choices allows them to gain their place in tourism research.

Understanding the travel motivations of same-sex parented families necessarily implies an investigation of what motivates lesbians and gays to travel. Graham (2002) classified the tourism of gays and lesbians into three types according to their motivations: homosexual, gay and queer. Homosexual tourism relates to the travels made with the purpose of finding sexual encounters, activities that, according to Graham (2002), are sought for mostly by closeted gay men. Gay tourism refers to trips that target to seek gay culture, such as attending Pride events or visiting gay and lesbian districts. Finally, queer tourism is characterised by an attempt to insert same-sex eroticism or gay culture in trips or activities where this would not normally be expected. However, Graham's (2002) categories are called into question by the prevailing conclusion among theorists that the motivations of gay men and lesbians do not differ significantly from those of heterosexuals (Clift and Forrest 1999; Pritchard *et al*. 2000; Hughes 2002a; 2005). Nevertheless, it was also reported that lesbians and gays may be driven by a specific need to escape and to 'be themselves' while on holiday (Hughes 1997; Pritchard *et al*. 1998; Hughes

2000; Pritchard *et al*. 2000). This need to escape is more than Iso-Ahola's (1980) concept of *escaping* in that it is inextricably linked with sexuality. In other words, the need to escape is related to a desire to avoid the heteronormative world or, in Waitt and Markwell's (2006, p. 5) words:

> Travel became positioned as a mechanism to escape the literal straitjacket of the everyday 'closet'. Encountering different people and places opens up an in-between space in which to explore alternative sexual identities than those assumed in everyday lives and routines.

Cox (2002) implied a holiday trip for lesbians and gays is an internal journey as, unlike other tourists, they do not travel to gaze at the 'other' but, rather, to see themselves. As overstated as this may sound, it appears as though the desire to be themselves and the need to escape heteronormativity are important components in gays' and lesbians' travel motivations. Arguably, the need to escape is more significant for those who conceal their sexuality at home (Hughes 2006; Waitt and Markwell 2006) but is not restricted to them. Hughes (2006, p. 56) posits there are several dimensions to "gayness" (the extent to which sexual identity is accepted and dealt with by oneself) and travel motivations may be impacted upon by this factor. For him, those who have difficulties dealing with their own sexuality make the need to escape and to be themselves a central aspect of their travel decisions. On the other hand, those who do not have such issues seek an environment where they can feel at least as comfortable and safe as in their home location (Hughes 2006).

Subscribing to Graham (2002), Hughes (2006) affirms closeted gays and lesbians are more likely to place sex highly among travel motivations. Still, the direct association between gay tourism and sex tourism (that is, tourism with the primary purpose of seeking sexual activity) has already been proved erroneous. Clift and Forest's (1999) study showed small proportions of gay men consider the possibility of sexual encounters as a motivation to travel. Yet the stereotype still persists in the tourism industry and in society, especially when it comes to gay men's (as opposed to lesbians') tourism. The imagery of the sexualised body remains central to marketing campaigns targeting gay men (Coon 2012), and destinations that target the lesbian and gay market are often compelled to review their

marketing promotions so as not to be associated with sex tourism destinations (Faiman-Silva 2009). Such association can be found in other places as well. It is often the case that gay and lesbian tourism-related books are displayed in the same section as sex-tourism books in libraries and bookshops. This does not mean, however, sex as a travel motivation for gays and lesbians should be entirely dismissed as the sex tourism of gays and lesbians also deserves academic investigation (Hughes *et al*. 2010; López López and van Broeck 2010; Mendoza 2013). However, gay tourism should not be automatically equated with the search for sex. This is but one of the possible motivations for gays and lesbians.

As travel motivations, the destination choice of gays and lesbians is influenced by their desire to escape and seek freedom to express their sexuality (Scholey 2002). Hughes (2006) categorises destinations as gay-centred (defined in terms of the focus on lesbian and gay activities and the presence of lesbians and gays) and gay-friendly (tolerant to the presence of the gay community). His suggestion that most of the gay-centred destinations are cities or beaches (for a detailed list of popular gay and lesbian destinations, see Hughes 2006, pp. 104 – 116) is now contested somewhat by the appearance of a 'new' cosmopolitan countryside (Gorman-Murray *et al*. 2012, p.69), which caters for lesbian and gay tourists by promoting the idea of a gay "rural idyll". This new trend consists of promoting the countryside as an appealing destination for lesbians and gays, a place where the rural tranquillity co-exists with the comfort of sophisticated accommodation (Gorman-Murray *et al*. 2012).

Lesbians' and gays' need to escape and be themselves impacts on their travel destination choice. However, destination avoidance has been reported to have a stronger influence on this choice. For instance, gay men have been found to avoid child-friendly destinations (Hughes 2002a; Want 2002; Hughes 2006), a consideration already aired by Clift and Forrest (1999), who analysed the discomfort experienced by single gay tourists when interacting with heterosexual tourists with children. If gay men (and, it is conjectured, lesbians) avoid child-friendly places and may feel uncomfortable in the presence of children, it is important to

understand whether and how these factors sway and affect their choices when they travel with their own offspring.

As already indicated, destination avoidance has a strong connection with perceived risk. In this sense, lesbians' and gays' holiday travel is concerned not so much with finding the optimal destination as it is with finding the least risky place to visit (Hughes 2002a; 2006). According to Hughes (2006), gays' and lesbians' sets of discarded choices are likely to be larger than those of heterosexuals since sexuality may restrict travel choices (places perceived as homophobic may be ruled out). In other words, consideration sets, namely the options that are taken into account when travel decisions are made, are likely to be similar for gays and 'straights' in terms of number of choices. In contrast, inert sets, containing the choices that are discarded, tend to be considerably larger for gays and lesbians. This is so because destination avoidance as a consequence of sexuality-associated risk plays a significant part in lesbians' and gays' choices (Pritchard *et al*. 2000). For gay men and lesbians, destination avoidance is as important as choice, and final travel decisions are achieved through elimination as much as evaluation of possibilities.

The perceived risk of discrimination, which can be verbal, physical or institutional (perpetrated, for instance, by anti-gay legislation) (Ryan and Berkowitz 2009), may affect not only gays' and lesbians' travel choices, but also their travel behaviour. Poria (2006) reports lesbians and gays may fear social interaction in environments with which they are not familiar. This is thus potentiated when they travel as they often have to come out in the presence of strangers (checking in to a hotel, for instance) (Poria 2006). Hughes (2006, p. 28) refers to this as "check-in phobia", namely the lesbian or gay couple's anxiety about having to ask for a double bed in a hotel. As previously stated, in the case of the same-sex parented families, it is of paramount importance to understand how, if at all, the perception of risk generated by the parents' sexuality interacts with the perceived risks posed by the presence of children (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992; McGuiggan 2003; Decrop 2006; Simpson and Siguaw 2008). It is also crucial to explore whether and how this interaction impacts on destination avoidance and, consequently, on destination choice. Would these risks be

compounded and the set of possible destination choice become narrower as a result, or would one of these perceived risks potentially eliminate the effect of the other?

Some research suggests travel motivations and risk perceptions of lesbians differ from those of gay men. For instance, Weeden *et al*. (forthcoming) argue lesbians may be more often driven by opportunities to see wildlife and nature whereas gay men may be more motivated by the nightlife at the destination. Risk was also reported to be perceived in distinct ways by gays and lesbians; yet, findings on this topic are rather ambiguous. For instance, Skeggs (1999) affirmed lesbians lack visibility because the gay space is predominantly masculine and, thus, lesbians feel more vulnerable than gay men in public. This statement was disputed by Poria (2006), who argues lesbians tend to feel safer than gay men in the public arena since the latter are more often victims of physical aggression. If lesbians and gays have contrasting risk perceptions, then these distinctions may be intersected or amplified by the potential differences between the perceived risks of men and women, as previously indicated. More importantly, it can be concluded from the review of the literature on gay tourism that much of the scholarship revolves around gay men. Lesbians' travel motivations and choices are less often the focus of scholarly debate. Indeed, Pritchard *et al*. (2002) and Hughes and Deutsch (2010) call attention to the dearth of tourism research on lesbians, which contributes to their invisibility. In giving voice to lesbian mothers in relation to their travel decisions, this study intends to help fill this gap and contribute to an enhancement of their visibility in academic research.

To secure a more comprehensive grasp of the gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations, the considerations made must be analysed in light of the scholarly debate about family travel motivations and destination choice. The next section, therefore, reviews the literature on family tourism.

2.2. FAMILY TOURISM

The aim of this section is to review the literature on family tourism and to explore its implications on lesbigay parented family holiday motivations and choices. Before this is done, though, a comment is worth being made. Much of the literature on family tourism uses outdated terms such as *husband* and *wife*. These words have considerably lost their meaning in view of the changes the family as a social arrangement has recently gone through (see 2.2.2. Changes in the Family, p. 50). However, as signalled in this section, these words were employed to reflect the ideas in the original publications. This does not mean they are endorsed in this project.

This section is structured around the main themes debated in the literature. The first part explores and critically analyses the importance of family tourism. The second part examines some of the social changes affecting the family in order to understand the impact these have had on tourism research. The third part discusses the decision-makers in the family when it comes to destination choice (with focus on gender roles, family lifecycles, income and power structure), while the fourth part addresses the influence of children on holiday decisions. The section concludes by discussing the recent scholarly debates on family travel motivations.

2.2.1. The Importance of Family Tourism

Although some studies have drawn attention to family decisions in tourism since the early 1980s (see, for instance, Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Wagner and Hanna 1983; Nichols and Snepenger 1988), tourism research still focuses on individual decisions and fails to address the intricate interactions among the members of a group (Kang and Hsu 2004). However, family tourism is an important market segment and family travels

are expected to increase more steadily than individual travels over the next few years (Carr 2011).

As previously stated, family tourism encompasses the trips made by a family group for the purposes of leisure, recreation and / or to visit relatives and friends, but also the activities made during these trips and the decisions that precede them. As Carr (2006; 2011) emphasises in his seminal work, the family is a primary unit of leisure. Family travels may shape the way children view tourism and influence their travel decisions and patterns as adults (Southall 2012). Holidays, during which families spend time doing activities that are not part of daily routine, are considered central to the maintenance of the family itself (Schänzel *et al.* 2012). In fact, family tourism plays an important role in improving communication among members (Kim *et al.* 2010) and enhancing connections (Thornton *et al.* 1997; Mottiar and Quinn 2004; Shaw *et al.* 2008). Further, family tourism is also deemed significant in creating memories (Shaw *et al.* 2008), developing cohesiveness (Bowen and Clarke 2009), solidify identities (Schänzel *et al.* 2012) and allowing mutual understanding within the family unit, thereby preserving family functionality (Kluin and Lehto 2012). No other author perhaps glorifies family holidays as much as Hazel (2005). In his study of disadvantaged families, he implies family holidays are crucial for a child's psychological well-being, mental health and personal and intellectual growth. According to Hazel (2005), all these benefits contribute to children developing strong bonds with their families, thereby becoming less prone to incur criminality.

Although these arguments are not entirely flawed, they portray an idealised view of family tourism. Family vacation decisions, however, are not without friction. In fact, as Decrop (2006) points out, it is a common misconception to presume groups, as decision-making units, have equal motivations. This statement does not hold true even where less heterogeneous groups such as families are concerned. Bieger and Laesser's (2002) affirmation that families tend to have less complex decision-making processes than other types of groups is also debatable since, as Decrop (2006) explains, decisions made by groups of friends are primarily concerned with the search for consensus and harmony. This may

not be case for family decisions, which may cause individual needs to be eclipsed, thereby generating conflict within the unit (Decrop 2006; Kluin and Lehto 2012; Schänzel *et al.* 2012).

Family holidays also encompass additional challenges, such as the work and stress involved in planning the trip (Bowen and Clarke 2009) and the amount of time spent together on holiday, which may lead to a rise in tension among the members (Schänzel *et al.* 2012). Further, tourism research fails to capture the pressure implicated in family holiday decisions (Carr 2011). In fact, because families spend less and less time together on a daily basis, they try to make the most of their holidays (Yeoman *et al.* 2012). As their expectations of the perfect holiday grow, so does their discontentment when they encounter intra-group difficulties. For Carr (2011, p. 21), family tourism is grounded in, and also helps perpetuate, the myth of the "happy family". He suggests many holiday decisions are dominated by the parents' desire to prove they are responsible and caring, and this desire is influenced by a fear of judgement and the social gaze. Arguably, this explains why, despite the stress involved, families continue to invest significant money and time on their holiday trips even if this means having to cut other types of expenditure (Southall 2012).

It is clear that tourism marketing and research remain focused on the traditional heteronormative nuclear family, namely, the triad of mother-father-children. Families that "stand outside", as Schänzel *et al.* (2012, p. 4) put it, when not ignored, tend to be associated with unhappiness. The notions of bonds and togetherness, and even Carr's (2011) notion of happy family, are constructed around the traditional family, which reinforces a stigma of deviance around the units that do not fit this model. More research should, therefore, emphasise the new forms of family (Chesworth 2003).

The family has indeed evolved from a rigid patriarchal structure to more flexible configurations. Therefore, before themes specifically pertaining to family holidays can be explored, an investigation of the changes in the

family as an institution is needed. The next section reviews these changes and explores the impact of these on the definition of family in this study.

2.2.2. Changes in the Family

A family has been traditionally defined as a group of people related by blood or marriage (Commuri and Gentry 2010). Hughes and Southall (2012) state families are traditionally perceived as the group consisting of two different-sex partners, bound by marriage, and their biological children. This view is very narrow in that it leaves out a myriad of kinships, such as adoptive, foster, monoparental and extended families. Such an approach can have a detrimental effect on the study of family tourism since, in ignoring the actual diversity of families, it may restrict findings in terms of their travel motivations and destination choice. As Kluin and Lehto (2012) explain, new family formations have appeared, changing the way family tourism is viewed, and, therefore, current tourism research needs to scrutinise further these contemporary families.

Families are malleable as their structures are constantly changing and becoming more diverse in industrialised nations (Rugh 2008). In their extensive study on the demographical changes in the family institution, Yeoman *et al.* (2012) note couples now have fewer children than in the past. Further, children take longer to leave the parental home (to form their own families, for instance), and so travel with their parents until an older age than was historically the case (Southall 2012). Due to an increase in their longevity and a steady improvement in their quality of life, grandparents spend more time (and travel more often) with their grandchildren (Yeoman *et al.* 2012), thereby contributing to the travel motivations and destination choice of the family as a whole. Moreover, with divorce and re-marriage becoming more common (Hughes and Southall 2012), the frequency and type of family holiday has also changed and people may wish to spend holidays with step-relatives in addition to their immediate family.

Decision-making processes with respect to holidays have also altered. Because of the amount of information to which children are exposed, some of their cognitive abilities are developed at an earlier age (Carr 2011), causing them to be more assertive in regards to their motivations than in the past. Children between eight and 12, in particular, are "becoming consumers in their own rights", and may, therefore, be vocal about their needs and wants in terms of holiday choices (Blichfeldt *et al.* 2010, p. 6). Moreover, families are gaining more egalitarian and democratic configurations, far from the authoritarian parent-centric models of the past, and, thus, children are more commonly encouraged to participate in family decisions (Hughes and Southall 2012). In addition, due to an increasing participation of women in generating household income, gender roles have become fluid and so decisions based on gender are less easy to define (Mottiar and Quinn 2004).

One of the most significant changes in the family, however, is the social recognition of lesbian and gay parented families (Patterson 1995), especially with the increase in birth and adoption of children by gays and lesbians, the so-called *gay baby boom* (Johnson and O'Connor 2002). Not only are such families considered by some as challenging dominant heteronormativity (Ryan and Berkowitz 2009) but they also put into perspective the principal foundations upon which the nuclear family is based. For example, they can be formed of same-sex parents who, despite the new trend of gay marriage legalisation in Western countries, are not always bound by marriage and may not necessarily have a biological link to their children.

Gay and lesbian parented families threaten to an extent the traditional perception of family as a heteronormative nuclear unit. Although some sectors of society (such as far-right political parties and religious fundamentalist groups) advocate the exclusion of gays and lesbians from forming families (Biblarz and Savci 2010), some industrialised Western nations and commentators in academia have attempted to achieve a more comprehensive definition of the family. Dumon (1997), for instance, advocated families be defined according to the relationships among their members. For him, families can be any network or support group. From

his definition, it can be apprehended that friends may also be perceived as family, with no need for biological connections (Dumon 1997). This is in line with Weston's (1991, p. xv) "chosen families", a term she coined to designate bonds that gays and lesbians form with friends. Likewise, Tuan (1998) claimed family members are bound by a common purpose, which goes beyond biological connection. Perlesz *et al.* (2006) argue families are less defined by institutions and genetic links than they are by practices and routines. These debates (which are further addressed in 2.3.1. The Place of Lesbian and Gay Parented Families in a Heteronormative World, p. 64) clearly illustrate the challenge and complexity of defining a family. This is complicated even further by families being embedded in cultural contexts (Carr 2011), with the notion of family varying considerably from country to country.

Families are indeed social constructs that are neither dependent on biological connections nor upon the institution of marriage, and there is a plethora of configurations that are considered families. However, for the purpose of this research, it was deemed important to make a clear distinction between families and other groups (such as friends) and some restrictive criteria had to be adopted. Because it was considered crucial to understand the impact of the presence of children on holiday decisions, this study uses an approach similar to that proposed by Schänzel *et al.* (2005) and Carr (2011). Their work considers family as a group of at least one adult and one child. As noted in the introduction and the glossary, this adult may be a biological, adoptive or foster parent, a guardian or a caregiver, provided that s/he has responsibility over the child, and, as such, is only referred to as *parent*, *father* or *mother*.

Following on from these considerations about the changes in the family, the next section examines the role of family members in travel-related decisions.

2.2.3. Holiday Decision-Makers in the Family Unit

Understanding destination choice in the family requires an analysis of how holiday decisions take place within the unit. In this vein, the identification of decision-makers is important information that has a direct impact on marketing campaigns and the promotion of products (Nichols and Snepenger 1988). Although the literature concerned with the identification of roles in family decision-making is based on the traditional nuclear definition of the family, it may be a relevant departing point for understanding holiday decisions in lesbigay parented families.

As far as holiday decisions are concerned, there is a relative degree of consensus around the conclusion that travel, unlike many other types of purchases, involves a significant deal of joint decisions. Several studies argue family travel decision-making is predominantly a joint decision process between "husband and wife", to adopt the terminology used in these investigations[3] (Jenkins 1980; Fodness 1992; Kang and Hsu 2004; Kozak 2010). Van Raaij and Francken (1984), on the other hand, explain holiday decision-making as a joint process among three parties: wife, husband and children.

However, the expression *joint decision* itself carries some ambiguity in that it can refer to the decision jointly made by the parties or parties having similar decision-making powers. Pahl (1990) affirmed even joint decisions may have some degree of power imbalance as one of the parties may be led to believe s/he has decision power while actually submitting to the dominant party. Furthermore, the scholarship on family decisions assumes people are capable of determining exactly their participation in the decision-making process as well as their willingness to acknowledge that participation. Bowen and Clarke (2009) also call into question the relative unanimity in the doctrine concerning family holiday decisions. For them, findings that explain these decisions as being jointly made may be due to

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[3] As noted earlier, much of the literature on family decisions uses outdated terms. In the studies mentioned, the husband is typically the principal income earner, and the wife, the caregiver.

these studies focusing on destination choice and less on the decisions made during the trip itself. Despite these considerations, that the findings suggest holiday decisions are jointly made points to their inclusive and democratic nature. This might be indicative of the importance of a holiday to family well-being.

Be that as it may, it is important to review what is known about decision-makers in the family as this information may provide useful insights into the decisions of lesbian and gay parented families. Traditionally, decision-making within the family is categorised around the themes of gender roles, family lifecycle and income / power structure.

Gender roles

Within the context of the traditional nuclear family (mother-father-children), the investigation of the role each partner has on the decision-making process has also led to the discussion of gender roles. As is often the case in tourism research on gender, studies on the role of men and women in family decision-making has yielded conflicting results, which sometimes contradict the notion of holiday decisions as jointly made. For example, Zalatan (1998) and Belch and Willis (2002) argued female partners are the main decision-makers when it comes to the destination selection. Conversely, Decrop (2006) states men make the final decision. Confirming Jenkins's (1980) findings, Kang and Hsu (2005) also affirm most decisions in the context of the family are husband-dominated, but when wives express their interest in the decision, a joint process occurs. From a perhaps more neutral point of view, Mottiar and Quinn (2004) argued husbands and wives have contrasting desires and needs with family holiday decisions having to be negotiated as a result.

Tasks undertaken by men and women when deciding on holiday destinations have also come under scholarly scrutiny. Zalatan (1998) affirmed women are actively involved in all the tasks prior to the destination selection. Mottiar and Quinn (2004) claimed women act as gatekeepers since they initiate the choice process and are responsible for

the information search. This conclusion, however, appears to overestimate functions that might otherwise be seen as merely operational as they do not necessarily reflect who ultimately makes the decision. Decrop (2006, p. 148), for instance, argues the tasks undertaken by wives are actually non-decisive, or, as he highlights, when quoting one of his interviewees, "the dirty work is for them [the women]."

However, as Kozak (2010) and Carr (2011) observe, as a result of women's enhanced participation in the workplace, the traditional gender-based division of roles is obsolete in many Western industrialised nations. Therefore, research on the interplay between gender and decisions is additionally challenged by not being restricted to outdated stereotypes. Furthermore, that lesbigay parents within a family are usually of the same gender makes this division even more blurred. Gender roles in same-sex parented families have been addressed in the literature on studies comparing these families with the ones headed by heterosexuals. Therefore, they are discussed in detail in 2.3.3. Comparative Studies between Lesbigay and Heterosexual Parented Families, p. 73.

Family lifecycles

The family lifecycle is also thought to impact on family decision-making. The main categorisation of the family lifecycle is rooted in Wells and Gubar's (1966) seminal work. They define family life stages through the key junctures in the history of a family, such as the birth of children, the children's departure from the parents' home or the death of one of the partners (Wells and Gubar 1966). The main assumption behind this line of reasoning is that different families in the same stage of their lifecycles share similar behaviours and consumption patterns.

Wells and Gubar's (1966) taxonomy has been adopted by many theorists who have focused mainly on the differences in decision-making roles between families with and without children. Here again, the results obtained are contradictory. For instance, Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980) found newly married couples made more joint decisions than fully nested

families (families in which the children still reside with the parents); in the latter case, the destination choice tends to be wife-dominated (Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980). This was challenged by Bronner and de Hoog (2008), for whom couples with children tend to make decisions together. Contradicting all previous studies, Kim *et al.'s* (2010) results do not support any significant differences in decision-making between families with and without children.

Because of their simplicity, Wells and Gubar's (1966) family life stages remain influential in academia. However, these fail to express the diversity of families nowadays. As Bojanic (2011) explains, whilst this taxonomy was relevant in the 1960s, families may no longer fit in Wells and Gubar's (1966) chronologically designed lifecycle. For example, after divorce, partners may form new families and adopt consumption patterns that relate to more than one stage. Furthermore, the lifecycle does not accommodate more modern cases, such as the 'DINKs' (dual income, no kids) or families whose children decide not to leave home (Backer 2012a). Also, some gay and lesbian parented families may not entirely fit the lifecycle model either since they may be formed of two couples of parents (two gay men and two lesbians) raising a child. Thus, family lifecycles, as a model to understand the new family's consumption behaviour, should be viewed with caution.

Family income and power structure

Family income and family power structure in relation to holiday decisions are also topics that have received particular attention from the doctrine. As emphasised by Mitchie (1986), family budget is the main factor affecting holiday choices. However, how the family income impacts on decision-making roles is not clear in the doctrine. A study conducted by Sharp and Mott (1956), for example, associated joint decisions with affluent families. In contrast, Wolgast (1958) found decisions in high-income families were husband-dominated. Nichols and Snepenger (1988) concluded wives dominate travel decisions in families with lower income. Middle-class families, Nichols and Snepenger (1988) argued, make more joint

decisions, whereas in high-income families, decisions are more likely to be concentrated on the husband.

More recent studies claim decision-making in families depends on internal power structures. For instance, for Decrop (2006), in families in which parental authority is strongly exerted, children have little say and are more likely to submit to their parents' will. Bowen and Clarke (2009) identify two types of families according to the power structure model: socio-oriented, in which children learn to obey rules, and concept-oriented, in which children are invited to participate in decisions. Some research on same-sex parented families indicates power in these families is more equally distributed than in heterosexual headed ones (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Perlesz *et al*. 2010; Hughes and Southall 2012). It is speculated that such configuration might impact on the family holiday destination choice processes since it is based on a more equitable power balance and so decisions may not be concentrated in the parents' (or one of the parents') hands.

2.2.4. The Influence of Children in Family Decisions

Tourism marketing is on the whole targeted at adults (Carr 2006); yet, understanding whether and how children influence family decisions with respect to travel destination choice is of value to tourism marketers and practitioners. As noted earlier, however, studies comparing families with and without children present a number of contradictions and no conclusive contribution is brought to the debate. Moreover, the way in which children's influence is manifested is a topic in need of further investigation. As Pearce (1989) explained, the mere presence of children may cause parents to decide not to go on holiday, which suggests children's influence is more significant than a simple reallocation of decision roles in the family. For Jenkins (1979), children's presence in a family is *per se* enough to change the distribution of decision power within the familial unit.

Children both influence and are influenced by their parents (Cullingford 1995). This is in line with Bohlmann and Qualls' (2001) classification of influences as normative and informational. Parents' influence could, therefore, be categorised as the normative type, with children being affected via a role model. Children's role, in contrast, could be considered as informational because they provide parents with information that might lead them to change their minds. Therefore, the influence of children must be understood in a wider sense, encompassing both the impact of their presence on their parents' choices (passive influence) and the strategies children use to shape their parents' decisions (active influence).

As with many studies already noted, scholarly findings concerning children's power in family decision-making in tourism are also inconsistent. Earlier studies concluded children have little impact on the process (Jenkins 1979; Fodness 1992). When describing the role children have in parental decisions, Ryan (1992) affirms that, while children's satisfaction has an important influence on parents' satisfaction, they merely have an incidental effect in the final choice. Seaton and Tagg (1995, p. 2) described the process in which parents make a decision based on children's needs as "paedonomic", a concept clearly grounded in the belief that children's influence on destination choice is passive.

More current research, on the other hand, perceives children's influence on family travel choices as active. For example, Kang and Hsu (2004) saw children as having an important voice in family travel decision-making. Decrop (2006) subscribes to this viewpoint, declaring children may not have decision-making powers but they affect parental choice in terms of destination. While arguing children may not have power over high-cost decisions, Thomson *et al.* (2007) affirm children are listened to when the decision is considered to affect them. In this sense, the influence they exert is sophisticated because it is based on previous knowledge, information search and the formation of coalitions among family members (Thomson *et al.* 2007). Research conducted by Blichfeldt *et al.* (2010) found tweens (children between eight and 12) to be proactively involved in holiday decisions. Lugosi and Harwell (2013), when discussing hospitality-

related choices, claim many of a family's consumption patterns are results of the interaction between the parents and the children.

The debate about children's influence is embedded in wider discussions about children's capabilities, which relate to two theoretical schools: developmental psychology, focusing on the potential evolution of a child's capability, and the sociology of childhood, more concerned with the child's current abilities (Kirk 2007; Duncan *et al.* 2009; Skanfors 2009). To quote Tisdall *et al.* (2009, p.3), the sociology of childhood regards children as "beings"; developmental psychology, in contrast, views children as "becoming beings" and argues children should be protected and taught rather than encouraged to voice their needs. According to Carr (2011), the debate on whether or not children exercise pressure on family decisions is inculcated in outdated dogmas of developmental psychology. For him, rather than discussing whether the influence exists or whether it is passive or active, theorists would better understand how children's influence changes as they grow (Carr 2011). These scholarly debates indicate the participation and influence of children in holiday decisions merit further scrutiny and should thus be taken into consideration in this investigation of lesbian and gay parented families' travel motivations and destination choice.

2.2.5. Family Travel Motivations

As stated earlier, because tourism research has placed emphasis on individual motivations rather than group, literature on family travel motivations is rather recent and scarce. Yet its critical review shows some topics have been consistently addressed. These topics relate to the families' desire for togetherness, and the needs to enhance family bonds and socially interact with other people. Each of these themes is now discussed.

Togetherness

The desire to spend time together, or *togetherness*, is perhaps the most recurrent motivation associated with family holidays (Bieger and Laesser 2002; Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011; Kluin and Letho 2012; Schänzel 2012). Larsen *et al.* (2007) argue a family's desire to be together is a more important driver than the desire to escape, which, as explained in section 2.1.1. Travel Motivations (p. 21), is commonly associated with travel motivations in general. Nevertheless, togetherness must be understood in a wider context. As Hazel (2005) and Southall (2012) explain, desire to spend quality time together is a result of the lack of time spent as a family on a regular basis. Moreover, daily family life tends to be highly structured (Schänzel 2012), which may lead to a level of anxiety. As Daly (2004, p. 9) highlighted, families, particularly those with multiple activities, suffer from what he calls "time famine". This suggests families, when referring to togetherness as a travel motivation, might be unconsciously alluding to a desire to escape time pressure and the stresses of daily life. This clearly contradicts Larsen *et al.'s* (2007) suggestion that such desire is a less significant motivation for families than togetherness. In other words, what is depicted as a positive motivation (family togetherness) might actually be just another way of expressing a desire to avoid the anxieties of daily life.

Carr (2011) also airs the possibility that togetherness might be actually concerned with the guilt that parents may feel as they are not always able to spend significant time with their children. Such guilt is a consequence of parental pressure to conform to society's expectations, which often leads mothers and fathers to make concessions and sacrifices on behalf of their offspring. This notion, termed by Carr (2011, p. 26) "good parent", causes parents to express their desires in a way to sound like they are prioritising their children's needs (desire to spend time together with the family rather than desire to escape everyday stress, for instance). This reveals the family's desire to spend time together is a multi-layered construct. Thus, this investigation of lesbian and gay parented families' travel motivations should use methods that explore in depth the meaning these families assign to togetherness.

Family bonds

Spending time together is also linked to a desire to enhance family connections. Being physically close to other family members is perceived as leading to emotional proximity. This can improve communication and enhance group cohesiveness (Shaw *et al.* 2008). This notion is linked to Olson's (2000) circumplex model of marital and family systems. To put it simply, Olson (2000) viewed the family as a system, namely a structure with an inner dynamic force that is influenced by internal and external factors. According to him, three dimensions work together to maintain the system's functionality: cohesion, namely, the existence of emotional links among members, adaptability, which refers to the flexibility to change roles, and communication, which moderates the two other dimensions (Olson 2000). The physical proximity generated by family holiday works directly on the dimensions of cohesion and communication, thereby helping preserve the family structure.

Family cohesiveness is not only heightened by physical and emotional bonds. It is also enhanced through visits to the extended family and through the generation of memories. Visits to relatives strengthen connections and provide a sense of identity (Carr 2011). Similarly, the meanings families attach to holiday memories help consolidate their identity (Shaw *et al.* 2008). These memories are extended in time through the use of photographs (Larsen 2005). Creating memories is a special motivation for parents, in particular those with teenagers, who may become less inclined to accompany their families on holiday as they grow older (Shaw *et al.* 2008). Holiday memories relate to the concept of parental generativity, defined by Snarey (1993, p. 19) as "the caring activity that contributes to the spirit of future generations." In other words, memories perpetuate family history, thereby impacting on future generations' behaviour. Conversely, Carr (2011) argues the needs to create family cohesiveness and memories are also attributes of the 'good parent' construct, since they express fathers' and mothers' desire to adjust to the social pressure of being caring parents. These debates also indicate

an exploration of family travel motivations calls for data collection techniques that capture the meanings families attach to notions such as family bonds and memories.

Social interaction

Although they aim to spend time together as units, families also search for social interaction with other people while on holiday (Crompton 1979; Bieger and Laesser 2002; Hazel 2005; Kluin and Lehto 2012). This apparent contradiction might be explained by Bowen and Clarke's (2009, p. 169) claim that families need a combination of three pairs of opposing forces to exist: "stability and change, structure and variety, and familiarity and novelty". Thus, the stability produced by the family being together must be juxtaposed to the novelty of meeting new people. Social interaction on holiday is often initiated by children (Carr 2006; 2011) but is also encouraged by parents as it is perceived to play an important part in children's socialisation (Schänzel 2012). The search for social interaction is sometimes associated with parents' desire to expose children to sports (Schänzel 2012) or education (Rugh 2008; Yeoman *et al.* 2012) on holiday. Again, this desire might be justified by parental needs to meet societal expectations. In this sense, both sport and 'edutainment' tourism (combining education and entertainment) are bound up with 'good' parenting, concerned with parents' desire to appear as competent carers.

Two final comments are needed about family travel motivations. The first refers to children themselves as motivators in relation to family holidays. The second relates to the potential for gender-based differences in fathers' and mothers' motivations.

As noted earlier, parents may choose to verbalise their motivations in ways to conform to social expectations. In contrast, some factors that are considered as limiting travel motivations and destination choice may actually be perceived in a positive manner by parents. For instance, children are often described in the tourism scholarship as travel inhibitors (Decrop 2006) or constraints (McGuiggan 2003; Lugosi and Harwell

2013). In fact, as Siegenthaler and O'Dell (1998) reported, parents may actually be excited by the idea of travelling with their children. Thus, it may be that, for some families, children themselves constitute travel motivations rather than constraints. Moreover, it is also possible that many of the family travel motivations are actually manifestations of the parents' desire to live experiences through their children. As Carr (2011) implies, some parents may use family holidays as justifications to visit destinations and do things they had not been able to in their own childhood.

The doctrine on family tourism also suggests fathers and mothers may have slightly different travel motivations. Lugosi and Harwell (2013) argue parenthood is a negotiated construction, with fathers and mothers having different perceptions of (and, by analogy, distinct motivations regarding) the experiences of leisure with their children. Even though the binary principal income earner / caregiver to designate men's and women's roles is no longer the norm, fathers and mothers still seem to have some of their motivations shaped by their traditional roles. For instance, although it is reported that fathers spend more time with their children than previous generations (Gauthier *et al.* 2004; Schänzel 2012), Such (2006) argues undertaking leisure activities with children scores highly among fathers' holiday motivations. Mothers, on the other hand, act as caregivers even on holiday (Berdychevsky *et al.* 2013). Lugosi and Harwell (2013, p. 2) subscribe to this viewpoint when affirming "discourses of motherhood blur the distinction between work and leisure", which implies women's socially constructed duty to care for their children is also taken to holidays.

According to Such (2006, pp. 193 - 194), fathers' motivations relate to "being there *with*" their children, whereas mothers' motivations are concerned with "being there *for*" their children. Schänzel (2012) argues men, in addition to a search for relaxation, like to engage in leisure and recreation with their children while on holiday. The motivations of mothers might be slightly different from those of fathers. As family trips may involve work especially for women (Mottiar and Quinn 2004; Decrop 2006; Bowen and Clarke 2009; Lugosi and Harwell 2013), they are reported to prioritise activities with the children that do not involve much energy (Schänzel 2012).

The review of the literature indicates research on family tourism should be concerned with the sense that families make of their travel motivations. Moreover, as already indicated, the literature also shows family tourism studies focus mainly on the traditional mother-father-children structure. Gay and lesbian parented families might, however, have specific travel motivations and make their decisions in ways that might not be contemplated by the doctrine. It is therefore crucial to delve into a closer examination of the particularities of these families. The next section thus reviews the literature on same-sex parented families.

2.3. GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTED FAMILIES

This section of the literature review is divided into three parts. Firstly, it discusses how same-sex parented families can be understood in light of heteronormativity. Secondly, it presents an overview of some of the challenges faced by these families and explores some of the potential implications to their travel motivations. Finally, it reviews the main studies comparing lesbigay and heterosexual parented families in relation to parents' capabilities, children's development and family power structures.

2.3.1. The Place of Lesbian and Gay Parented Families in a Heteronormative World

As early as the 1970s, Warren (1974) affirmed sexualities were becoming fluid. As a result, social arrangements traditionally perceived as prevalently heteronormative, such as marriage, have been appropriated by the gay community. For Roseneil (2002, p. 34), the "decentering of heterorelations", namely the enhanced challenge to heteronormativity, will continue to have an impact on social institutions. In a similar vein, Dempsey (2010) states the family (particularly in Western nations) will

become less and less dominated by heteronormative conventions. Within this context, the social phenomenon of lesbian and gay parented families and same-sex marriage / civil unions has gained force. Yet, the way in which gay and lesbian communities and academia perceive these families is not without its challenges (Stacey 2005).

Scholarly debates about where lesbian and gay marriage and families sit are polarised around two main streams of thought: assimilationist and liberationist (Stacey and Davenport 2002). The former position posits lesbian and gay marriage and parented families are attempts to conform to society and its heteronormative presumptions. For instance, Krieger (1983) believed the family imprisons homosexuality. Rubin (1984) and Epstein (1987) suggested gay and lesbian parented families actually attempt to mimic the traditional heteronormative family. From a more cynical perspective, Troiden (1988) viewed lesbian and gay marriages as an aftermath of capitalism; because lesbians and gays constitute a significant and growing market, conferring them access to civil rights facilitates their integration into society, which, in turn, amplifies their buying power. More recently, Hughes and Southall (2012) adopt the position that gays and lesbians being allowed to marry and form families contribute to the normalisation and acceptance of homosexuality by society. Behind this line of reasoning is the idea that, by assimilating the institutions of marriage and family, lesbians and gays are embracing heteronormative practices and eroding the transgressive trait of gay culture.

Opposed to this is the view that lesbian and gay parented families are a challenge to and liberation from, rather than assimilation to, heteronormativity. For Stacey (2004), in threatening family values, gay and lesbian parented families are disruptive to heterosexual norms. Heteronormativity is intertwined with the concept of neopatriarchal society, in which, although women may not be directly oppressed, the figure of the father remains central as the family authority (Stein 2005). For Stein (2005), the traditional nuclear family and marriage, more than being simple manifestations of heteronormative values, are institutions that strengthen heteronormativity and repress women by assigning them specific gender roles. Thus, the emergence of lesbian marriage and lesbian families in

particular is viewed as liberating to women because it contests gender conventions (Stoller 1995, Perlesz *et al*. 2010). For Stein (2005), gay marriage helps to demolish the common belief that male sexuality is repressed by heterosexual marriage (in that men's sexual drive is restrained by women). Gay and lesbian marriage and families are therefore regarded as liberating because they free women from gender-based assignments and men from sexual repression. They ultimately imply men and women can live without one another.

Some scholars go so far as to affirm that not only do lesbian and gay parented families challenge heteronormativity and gender oppression but they also call into question aspects of gay culture itself. For example, after coming out, gay men tend to believe they will never have children (Brinamen and Mitchell 2008). However, the possibilities of forming a family (for example, through adoption or *in vitro* fertilisation), particularly amplified by recent legal recognition, leads them to review this position (Murphy 2013). Stacey (2006) also suggests gay parenting subverts the idea of gay men as ineffective carers and nurturers. Echoing Weston's (1991) argument that lesbigay parented families are formed of pure love (rather than social pressure), Stacey (2006) claims gay men's desire to have children is based solely on emotional needs. According to her, the challenges gay men face to have children, such as the processes of adoption and surrogacy, prove fatherhood for them is a demonstration of resistance and real love, not a desire to conform to social rules (Stacey 2006).

Same-sex parented families are also considered liberation from heteronormativity because they may exist in different configurations, like open or polyamorous relationships, which are commonly frowned upon in most Western societies (Stacey and Meadow 2009). Weston (1991) had already referred to this in her studies about the families which gays and lesbians form. For her, because some lesbians and gays are marginalised by their own relatives, they tend to form networks of friends that are similar to families in that they guarantee emotional support and financial assistance (Weston 1991). The notion of a fictive kinship, namely the family that is not formed by marriage or blood connections, is later

rekindled by Perlesz *et al.* (2006), who claim gay and lesbian parented families are made of both kin (members related by blood) and kith (members related by friendship).

These statements are clear idealisations of the lesbian and gay parented family and marriage. It is simplistic to believe there is no social pressure involved in a gay man's desire to have children, as inferred by Stacey (2006). Many gay fathers may actually be driven by a need to conform to society. Moreover, to assume there is no repression of sexuality in a relationship between gay men, as Stein (2005) implies, or there is no oppression in lesbian marriage due to the absence of male dominance, as indicated by Stoller (1995), seems to suggest these families are better than straight parented ones. Such arguments do little to challenge heteronormativity. Rather, they reinforce the stigmatisation of lesbigay parented families since they are premised on the belief that these families are necessarily different. Finally, Stacey and Meadow's (2009) statement that lesbigay parented families are liberationist because they exist in a number of configurations overlooks diversity as a characteristic of the modern family in general (including many heterosexual marriages). Open and polyamorous relationships, for instance, are not exclusive to same-sex parented families. The debate between assimilation and liberation is important not only because it contributes to a critical understanding of the nature and place of lesbigay parented families in heteronormative societies, thereby informing their everyday practices (Nordqvist 2012), but also because, in the case of this study, it may provide insights into their holiday motivations and choices.

Recent research emphasises the processes within lesbian and gay parented families rather than their structures (Perlesz *et al.* 2006; Clarke 2008; Perlesz *et al.* 2010; Hughes and Southall 2012). As Gabb (2005, p. 419) puts it, "families are what families do", an approach further developed by Perlesz *et al.* (2006, p. 176), who contrast "the family" with "doing family". While the former refers to family as a social institution, the latter refers to the processes that construct (and therefore differentiate) individual families. Although it is clear that a family cannot be defined simply on the grounds of its structure, it is also true that a family

configuration may affect decision-making (a single-parent or a single-child family may have fewer difficulties deciding where to spend the holidays than a family with two parents and three children, for example). Therefore, while acknowledging families are not equated with, nor limited by, their structures, this study will also critically explore the family configuration to understand the potential implications it has on family travel motivations and choices.

2.3.2. Challenges Faced by Gay and Lesbian Parented Families

As Gabb (2005, p. 426) explains, "individuals' conformity is established through the marginalisation of all 'other-ness'." In other words, to feel they are part of a social group, human beings tend to discriminate against those they perceive as different. Therefore, in addition to the everyday challenges faced by families in general, lesbigay parented families may also be affected by homophobia, defined as "the fear and loathing of those identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual accompanied by feelings of anxiety, disgust, aversion, anger and hostility" (Perlesz *et al.* 2006, p. 183). Despite evidence that homophobia has decreased particularly in Western nations (McCormack and Anderson 2010), it still affects the lives of lesbians and gay men around the world. In the specific case of same-sex parented families, homophobia is partly attributed to an assumption, long reinforced by psychoanalytical dogmas, that children should be exposed to the influences of a father and a mother to grow up psychologically and mentally healthy (Stein 2005). The idea of same-sex parents raising a child is perceived by sectors in society to be anomalous or, at best, excessive. As Hughes and Southall (2012, p. 129) put it, critics of gay and lesbian parented families may regard children as the "ultimate gay accessory [...] when everything else has been acquired".

Although discrimination more commonly targets parents, who have their sexualities and parental abilities submitted to public scrutiny (Gabb 2005), children and even grandparents may also be victims of stigmatisation. As

Perlesz *et al.* (2006) explain, younger children may be less vulnerable to homophobic comments than adolescents, who are likely to be familiar with the concept of the nuclear heteronormative family and might, thus, feel embarrassed if their own families are regarded as 'unnatural' or 'abnormal'. In such case, it is not uncommon for older children to hide their parents' sexuality while among friends (Demo and Allen 1996). Grandparents may also suffer from similar problems or they may themselves be agents of stigmatisation. They might, for instance, have difficulties reconciling a son / daughter's sexuality and an apparently contradictory idea of parenthood (Perlesz *et al.* 2006). The fear of anti-gay sentiment might thus affect both parents and children. This, it is conjectured, might impact on lesbian and gay parented families' holiday behaviour and choices.

Homophobia may be one the main challenges encountered by lesbians and gays in daily life. In the case of same-sex parented families, two other challenges, which may in turn enhance, or be enhanced by, homophobia, are also common: the legal and biological connections between parents and children, and the way parents negotiate their sexuality in the public arena.

Legal and biological connections between parents and children

Homophobia is explained as a consequence of heteronormativity, which is the assumption of heterosexuality as the norm (Stein 2005; Perlesz *et al.* 2006). Heteronormativity is expressed in two dimensions: interrelational, manifested in everyday social interaction, and institutional, disseminated through public and private institutions (Ryan and Berkowitz 2009). Instances of institutional heteronormativity with which gay men and lesbian parents may have to deal are the legal issues involved in adopting or fostering a child. Goldberg *et al*. (2013) mention joint adoption is not legal in every country, not even in those where adoption by a single gay parent is allowed. When the second parent has no legal rights over the child, tensions may arise within the family, and, as Goldberg *et al*. (2013) suggest, this may even have an impact on the parents' mental health.

If heteronormativity impacts on the legal links between children and parents, the lack of biological connectedness may further aggravate stigmatisation. As Ryan and Berkowitz (2009) explain, the non-biological family is still generally perceived as deviant by society and the absence of a biogenetic link may be more detrimental to gay and lesbian parented families than the parents' sexuality. This may explain why gay fathers and lesbian mothers may prefer to use artificial insemination, surrogacy or even sexual intercourse with the opposite sex to produce children (Baetens and Brewaeys 2001). Physical similarities enabled by parent-child(ren) biogenetic connections may help gay and lesbian parented families blend into society, which could be interpreted as a way of seeking tolerance or integration. An instance of such an attempt is the case of lesbian partners who both decide to get pregnant and use the same sperm donor as a way of guaranteeing biological connectedness between the siblings, or the case of lesbians with different ethnic backgrounds who use sperm whose donor has the same ethnicity of the non-biological mother (Jones 2005).

Apart from reinforcing stigmatisation, the lack of biological links between parent and child may also sway a family's dynamics. For instance, in a lesbian relationship, the birth (biological) mother is equated with being the 'real' parent (Perlesz *et al*. 2006). This may generate jealousy and insecurity in a co-mother (the non-biological mother) (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). The biogenetic connection may also impact on the division on roles within the family. However, there is no agreement in the doctrine on how exactly this impact is manifested. Perlesz *et al*. (2010), for example, state non-biological mothers tend to be very influential in the child's education as a compensatory system. Biblarz and Stacey (2010), conversely, argue biological mothers are the ones who tend to concentrate on caregiving functions at home. According to Parke (2004), when the child is biologically related to one of the parents, the relationship with the co-parent tends to be more volatile.

The absence of biological connectedness causes lesbian and gay parents to resort to legal protection. For instance, lesbian mothers who have been artificially inseminated may attempt to protect themselves from potential

legal complications involving the sperm donor via the use of a number of mechanisms. They may want to use a completely anonymous donation so children do not have access to the biological father's identity, or they may do the opposite and look for the donor among their male friends, whose participation in the childrearing would be negotiated in advance (Dempsey 2010). Supposing the mothers opt for co-parenting with the biological father (namely, sharing the same duties and responsibilities with him) and this father is a partnered gay man, the family layout would include the presence of two couples of parents (two mothers and two fathers). The family configuration is likely to play a very important role in the way relationships are shaped. Patterson *et al.* (1998) argued lesbian and gay parented families are frequently formed of extended relationships and the upbringing of children quite often involves people other than the biological parents. Moreover, children do not always live with their gay or lesbian parents, which may be the case when the parent 'came out' as gay or lesbian after the children had been born (Lambert 2005). Within this context, family holidays would have to be carefully negotiated and travel-related decisions might be lengthy and complex processes.

There is a dearth of literature on gay (as opposed to lesbian) parenthood; yet Stacey's (2004; 2005; 2006) work informs much of the scholarship on the topic. She classifies gay men according to their reactions to having children. She calls "refuseniks" men who are totally opposed to the idea and, "predestined", naturally paternal men who prefer to have children than partners (Stacey 2006, p. 33). Gay men encounter even more difficulties and more opposition to forming families than lesbians since the absence of a female figure as a caregiver in a family is commonly frowned upon by society (Biblarz and Savci 2010). Therefore, having children may be an act of resistance by a gay couple (Stacey 2006).

The search for biogenetic links also poses an issue for gay fathers. While adoption is considered gay men's preferred method to have children (Gianino 2008), when biological reproduction is selected, then gay fathers may have to find not only an egg donor but also a surrogate mother (in case the egg donor decides not to get pregnant), a process which can prove costly and time-consuming (Murphy 2013). These issues are not

exclusive to gay couples as heterosexual families can face similar challenges. However, in the case of gay couples, this is complicated by two additional factors. First, men in general are not encouraged to learn the nurturing rituals associated with having and raising children (Pritchard *et al*. 2002; Stacey 2005). Second, gay men are discouraged from forming their own families because of the norms of gay culture (Stacey 2006). If men relate to parenthood in ways that differ from those of women and if gay parenting is marked by resistance, then it is important to investigate whether and how the bonds formed in a gay-fathered family impact on their travel decisions and behaviour.

Public spaces and heteronormativity

Discrimination in the public arena is also an example of the challenges faced by same-sex parented families. Public spaces are predominantly heteronormative (Valentine 1996; Skeggs 1999) and the feeling of insecurity often perceived by gays and lesbians in the public sphere (Pritchard *et al*. 1998; Pritchard *et al*. 2000; Poria 2006) may be impacted upon by the presence of children. In Gabb's (2005, p. 420) words, "the presence of children affects how parents manage their sexual-parental identity and the ways that families are (re)presented in public / private space." Some lesbians and gays may find it difficult to negotiate their sexuality in public when accompanied by their children as these may inadvertently disclose their parents' sexuality in public spaces Gabb (2005). Likewise, when discussing gay fathered families, Gianino (2008) explains the enhanced visibility generated by the presence of the children as potentially leading to an increased feeling of insecurity. Managing sexuality in public may be further complicated by the presence of children of different ages in the family, some of whom may be aware of the parents' sexuality and others not. This creates diverse layers of visibility (Demo and Allen 1996) with parents' behaviour in public spaces being dictated by the children with whom they are.

How gay fathers and lesbian mothers (and their children) negotiate sexuality in public is an issue that deserves further investigation,

especially when it comes to their holidays. As Gabb (2005) implies when citing the case of campsites, holiday spaces are often dominated by the traditional heterosexual parented family, which might be particularly intimidating for gay and lesbian parents. Moreover, as previously stated, it is reported that families (and children in particular) tend to look for social interaction while on holiday (Crompton 1979; Bieger and Laesser 2002; Carr 2011). Thus, it is worth investigating whether the desire to interact with other people causes them to feel insecure in social situations. Furthermore, the fluidity of the disjunction between public and private spaces, which, as suggested by Perlesz *et al*. (2006), happens as a consequence of the family's high visibility, could be further enhanced while on holiday due to the intense contact between the family and other tourists. Within this context, given that social interactions are an important part of a family holiday, the boundaries between public and private spaces may become blurred, which could affect the family's travel behaviour and destination choice.

2.3.3. Comparative Studies between Lesbigay and Heterosexual Parented Families

A significant body of the scholarship about gay and lesbian parented families actually addresses comparisons with heterosexual parented families. These comparative studies revolve around three main themes: gays' and lesbians' capabilities as parents, the division of tasks within the family and the impact of lesbigay parenting on children's development. Each of these themes is now addressed.

Parenting capabilities

Despite Wardle's (1997) conclusion that lesbian mothers suffer from more psychological issues than heterosexual mothers, a significant corpus of the literature claims they are as psychologically healthy (Chan *et al.* 1998,

Baetens and Brewaeys 2001) and as competent as straight mothers (MacCallum and Golombok 2004; Bos *et al.* 2005). In her insightful review of studies comparing lesbian and heterosexual mothers, Clarke (2008) explains treatment given to lesbian mothers has shifted from the view of lesbians as psychologically ill or sexually immature to a perception of lesbians as healthy yet promiscuous. In both cases, the main conclusion reached by such studies is that lesbians should not be allowed to have children (Clarke 2008). According to Clarke (2008, p. 118), the trend of considering lesbians as equal to straight women (which she terms a "liberal equality perspective") is a relatively recent phenomenon. Effectively, studies conducted in the past two decades tend to depict lesbian mothers as better than straight ones. For instance, lesbian mothers were found to be more educated (Baetens and Brewaeys 2001), more satisfied with their partners (Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; Bos *et al*. 2005) and to have a better relationship with their children than their straight counterparts (Flaks *et al*. 1995). Similarly, co-mothers (not biologically related to their children) were found to know their children better (Chan *et al*. 1998) and have a closer relationship to them (Tasker and Patterson 2007; Crowl *et al.* 2008) than heterosexual fathers.

As previously indicated, there is considerably less research on gay fatherhood; however, results also indicate positive aspects. Gay fathers are reported to be more open to alternative forms of discipline that do not involve physical punishment (Johnson and O'Connor 2002) and more likely to focus on parental responsibilities (as opposed to work duties) than straight fathers (Bergman *et al*. 2010).

Task division and power distribution

Among the studies comparing gay/lesbian and straight parented families, much attention is given to the division of tasks between partners. The consensus here seems to be that gay and lesbian parented families are more democratic than straight ones and parenting and home-related tasks in general are equally divided among same-sex partners (Dunne 2000; Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; Khor 2007; Biblarz and Savci 2010; Perlesz

et al. 2010). As noted before, in a lesbian parented family where the child is biologically related to one of the mothers, the caregiver may not necessarily be the birth mother (Perlesz *et al*. 2010). Perlesz *et al*. (2010) suggest the co-mother might want to compensate for the absence of a biogenetic link (and hence, a perception of diminished identity as a mother) through enhanced nurturing and caring. Stacey (2006) reports gay fathers raise their children in a way that is more similar to lesbians than to straight couples in that both fathers tend to be equally present in the child's upbringing.

Different explanations are given to the egalitarianism in gay and lesbian parented families. Weeks *et al*. (1999), for example, argued the equal division of tasks in these families is due to the parents' conscious refusal to reproduce the power imbalance that is typical of straight relationships. For Perlesz *et al*. (2010), egalitarianism in lesbian parented families is a consequence of the partners' desire to repudiate roles that are stereotypically feminine (namely childrearing and nurturing), and, thus, contribute to women's oppression. This explains why lesbian mothers are more inclined to make arrangements and decide to work part time so that neither of them would have to sacrifice their careers (Perlesz *et al*. 2010). All justifications seem to converge to the idea that same-sex parented families are egalitarian because there is no gender difference between partners and, therefore, without a gender-based division of roles, tasks tend to be equal.

Nevertheless, this is a rather simplistic, not to mention idealistic, view of the question. As Biblarz and Savci (2010, p. 480) highlight, lesbigay parented families might be less "genderless" than usually portrayed. It is a common misconception to regard gay and lesbian parented families as egalitarian on the grounds of gender sameness; however, as gender is less a biological assignment than it is a social construction, same-sex partners may adopt gendered roles. As Clarke and Peel (2007) and Perlesz *et al*. (2010) explain, lesbians also perform gendered activities such as domestic labour, which puts the argument of lesbian and gay parented families' egalitarianism as an escape from female oppression into perspective. Finally, that gay and lesbian parents may want to expose

their children to the influence of the opposite sex (Parke 2004) problematises the matter even further. For example, lesbian mothers may decide to involve a grandfather or a male friend in the upbringing, which makes the gender-based role division even more fluid and difficult to grasp.

The idea of egalitarianism within same-sex parented families is, *per se*, also debatable. Several factors other than the parent's sexuality may affect the family power (im)balance, such as the partners' social and cultural backgrounds (Stacey 2006), the existence of a biological link between one of the parents and the child(ren) (Biblarz and Savci 2010), the children's ages (Dunne 2000) or the potential presence of more than two partners / parents in the family layout, as in the case of a group marriage (Stacey and Meadow 2009). Despite these considerations, the debate whether or not same-sex parented families are marked by egalitarianism may be of importance when it comes to family tourism and should not be prematurely put aside. In this sense, some of the travel-related decisions, and perhaps the destination choice itself, might be influenced by some traits of equity among the members.

Children in lesbigay parented families

One of the main homophobic claims against gay and lesbian parented families is the concern that the children's psychological and mental health might be affected by the parents' sexuality. The arguments used to justify such concern are numerous. Some lesbigay parented family opponents, based on the assumption that the parents' genders have precise and stable roles (namely, the disciplinarian father and the nurturing mother), argue children should be raised by a man and a woman (Biblarz and Stacey 2010). Nonetheless, this argument is outdated since it is now understood that the processes within the family matter more than its structure, and, thus, single parents (heterosexual or not) may, for instance, perform both roles. In other words, whilst genders, as social constructions, may be considered to have an impact on subjective aspects of personality,

they cannot be used to underpin and corroborate stereotypical divisions of roles.

Other anti-gay arguments suggest lesbian and gay relationships are unstable and children might suffer from the consequences of the parents' separation (Baetens and Brewaeys 2001). This claim is equally defective in that it assumes heterosexual relationships as stable simply because they have the benefit of institutional legitimacy. It also ignores scholarly findings (e.g. Giddens 1992; Stacey 2006; Johnston *et al.* 2010; Titlestad and Pooley 2014) that argue lesbian and gay parented families are particularly resilient as a protection from stigmatisation, and, therefore, their ties may be harder to break than straight ones. However, perhaps the poorest argument used against these families is the idea that children of gays and lesbians might themselves turn out to be gay or lesbian (Stacey and Biblarz 2001). This claim is flawed for two reasons. Firstly, it assumes a causal relationship between being raised by a gay person and being / becoming gay. Secondly, it is grounded in the erroneous and redundant belief that being gay is negative in itself, and, thus, lesbigay parents should not be allowed to 'perpetuate homosexuality' by having children that might also be gay.

In light of these arguments, it is not surprising that much of the research comparing lesbigay and heterosexual parented families actually focuses on the children. Most results point to no significant differences between children of gay/lesbian families and those of heterosexual ones in terms of intellectual development (Patterson 2000; Crowl *et al.* 2008), gender development (Golombok *et al*. 1983), psychological well-being (Golombok and Badger 2010) or sexual orientation (Golombok and Tasker 1996; Crowl *et al.* 2008). Nonetheless, a few differences are noted. Children of gay and lesbian parented families, for instance, are found to be more open to gender flexibility (Goldberg 2007; Sutfin *et al*. 2008), more tolerant to non-heterosexual orientations (Golombok and Tasker 1996), more academically skilled (Gartrell and Bos 2010) and more emotionally attached to their parents (Dempsey 2010). On the other hand, they are more prone to bullying by their peers in school (Tasker and Golombok 1997; Ray and Gregory 2001). In general, however, conclusions of these

studies indicate the most significant difference between children of lesbigay parented families and those of other families (regardless of configuration or biological relatedness) is that the former may be victims of homophobia (Ryan and Berkowitz 2009; Titlestad and Pooley 2014).

If these children are susceptible to bullying, then it is possible that this affects the lesbian and gay parented families' perception of risk and, consequently, their holiday destination choice. For example, parents concerned with the possibility of discrimination might choose destinations where they have privacy and little social interaction is required. Moreover, this might affect the way these parents negotiate their sexualities in public spaces and the family's social interaction while on holiday. Whether or not this actually happens is also worthy of investigation.

Considerations on comparative studies

Critics of the comparative studies draw attention to some of the methodological limitations in those comparisons. Stacey and Biblarz (2001), for instance, claim the criterion used to sample parents is too restrictive in that it relies on the parents' self-identification as gay or lesbian. Marks (2012) questions the lack of a control group and representativeness in most of the studies and calls for further longitudinal research to identify potential differences that would only emerge in the children's adult life. However, the most vigorous critique of the comparative studies refers to the assumption behind their reasoning that heterosexual parented families are the norm to which same-sex parented families are compared, which perpetuates heterocentrism (Lambert 2005). In Perlesz *et al.'s* (2006, p. 178) words, these studies use the "heterosexual family formation as a 'benchmark' for 'normality'" and, thus, fail to comprehend the intrinsic characteristics of the lesbian and gay parented families.

However, the critical analysis of the literature on family tourism in general raises an interesting dilemma. As previously explained, most of the scholarship on the topic revolves around the traditional heterosexual

nuclear family and the findings of this study on lesbian and gay parented families' travel choices draw upon some comparisons with families previously contemplated in the literature. Nevertheless, it is not the aim of this research to support heteronormative assumptions or to place same-sex parented families in a position that might be considered second best to heterosexual parented families. Yet, while acknowledging that straight parented families should not be viewed as the norm, it is argued that light must be shed on some of the particularities of lesbigay parented families, especially in relation to the impact of homophobia on their travel motivations and decisions. In focusing on the meaning these families attach to their experiences, this study intends to amplify their voices rather than make comparisons that might perpetuate gay men and lesbians' invisibility and, thereby, reinforce any stigmas or anti-gay sentiment.

2.4. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to contribute to an understanding of gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations and destination choice. An investigation of same-sex parented holidays should begin by trying to understand two basic aspects: what motivates these families and what destinations they choose. Thus, it should start by answering one key question:

What are the travel motivations and destination choice of lesbian and gay parented families?

However, when discussing the main debates about these families, about travel motivations, destination choice and family tourism, the literature review has raised additional questions that are linked to the main one and are also relevant to this inquiry.

The first section of the literature review discussed travel motivations and destination choice. Theories about motivation, the force behind behaviour

that compels individuals to action, can be divided into two types: need-based and expectation-based theories. Need-based theories view motivation as a result of a need; that is, something that is missing. Most of these theories use binary constructs to attempt to explain what motivates people to travel: push / pull factors (Crompton 1979), seeking / escaping (Iso-Ahola 1980) and anomie / ego-enhancement (Dann 1981). By contrast, expectation-based theories regard motivation as a consequence of expectations, which encapsulate the projection of a desired outcome, the likelihood of its achievement and its attractiveness (Witt and Wright 1992). Conversely to need-based and expectation-based theories, contemporary theories about travel motivations regard them as multi-faceted constructs and thus also take into account factors such as lifestyle and emotional states (Uriely *et al*. 2002; Pomfret 2006). This points to the conclusion that, for a holistic understanding of travel motivations, tourism research should not be limited to binary notions and should also contemplate factors such as sexuality (Pritchard and Morgan 2000; Hughes 2006).

Studies about travel destination choice can also be conceptualised into two types: choice set models or process-based models. Choice set models view holiday decisions as a result of a filtering of options and converge around the idea that some of the alternatives are dismissed for being unfeasible or for evoking negative feelings (Woodside and Lysonski 1989; Um and Crompton 1999; Decrop 2006). Process-based models depict decisions as the result of a chronological sequence of steps and attempt to establish causal relationships among variables (Mayo and Jarvis 1981; van Raaij and Francken 1984; Moutinho 1987). Both choice-set and process-based models, however, view tourists as rational and holiday decisions as utilitarian. Moreover, as is the case of theories on travel motivations, they give little attention to group decisions, thereby failing to address the particularities of the family as a primary unit of leisure. This notable scholarship gap also justifies the need for this study to be conducted.

Central to holiday choices is destination avoidance, a notion related to travel constraints (factors that cause trips to be cancelled or altered) and

perceived risks (linked with the possibility of hazard or loss). In this vein, children are considered by some commentators to be travel constraints as their presence reduces destination options (McGuiggan 2003; Decrop 2006; Page and Connell 2009). Perceived risks are connected not only with physical safety but also with the concern *about* other people (locals and other tourists), and *for* other people, like children in a family (Sönmez and Graefe 1998; Simpson and Siguaw 2008). As a consequence, gay and lesbian parents may have their destination choice impacted by all these factors, since, along with worries about physical safety, they may have to take into consideration aspects such as fear of discrimination for themselves and for their children.

As far as LGBT tourism is concerned, lesbians and gays were found to be motivated, in the main, by the same factors as their heterosexual counterparts when deciding where to go on holiday (Clift and Forest 1999). Nonetheless, their sexuality may play a part in their decisions in that they may be driven by a specific desire to escape the pressures of a heteronormative world and be themselves (Hughes 2000; Pritchard *et al.* 2000). Their destination choices were also reported to be similar to those of straight people; yet they tend to avoid destinations perceived as unfriendly or unsafe to gays (Hughes 2006). Additionally, gay single men were found to avoid children-friendly destinations (Hughes 2002a; Want 2002). This means the set of choices that are discarded tends to be larger in size than that of heterosexual people.

Therefore, taking into account the considerations above, it is concluded that further attention should be given to the question as to whether, and how, parents' sexuality influences same-sex parented families' travel motivations and choices. For instance, are family-friendly destinations still avoided when gays and lesbians go on holiday with their own children? Is the concern for their children compounded with the concerns about other people, for instance, the possibility of being victims of discrimination?

The subsequent section discussed the literature on family tourism. Family holidays are important because they are considered critical to maintain the family unit (Thornton *et al.* 1997; Mottiar and Quinn 2004; Shaw *et al.*

2008). However, tourism research still focuses on the heteronormative nuclear family composed of mother-father-children and overlooks the social changes that have affected the family as an institution, particularly over the last decade (Yeoman *et al.* 2012). These changes have re-shaped family processes and called into question extant theories about holiday decision-making. The emergence of same-sex parented families as a consequence of the legalisation of gay marriage and joint adoption in many Western industrialised countries is a significant instance of these societal changes. Yet, these families' decisions and choices are under-researched.

One of the main motivations for families to go on holiday is the desire to spend time together, which is a response to the families' lack of quality time (Hazel 2005; Southall 2012). Enhancing family connections, which can be manifested through visits to relatives and the creation of memories (Shaw *et al.* 2008), is another important motivational factor as it is considered to improve communication and cohesiveness (Kluin and Lehto 2012). Finally, social interaction with locals or other tourists, another significant travel motivation, is often initiated by the children (Crompton 1979; Carr 2006; 2011) and encouraged by the parents (Schänzel 2012). Because, as signalled by recent scholarship, these motivations are multi-layered, an understanding of such constructs should be based on an exploration that goes beyond a superficial reading. Consequently, the methods used to investigate family travel motivations should delve into the meanings families attach to them.

The review of the literature on family tourism indicates there is a significant dearth of research about the families that 'deviate from the norm', hence, this study's contribution to fill this void. Holiday decisions of non-nuclear families may substantially differ from those of the nuclear families of the past, and this might particularly affect their travel choices. Moreover, social interaction is an important motivator for families, especially when children are young. Given that lesbigay parented families might have concerns about other people while on holiday for a potential fear of discrimination, understanding how they deal with social interaction is worthy of investigation.

The final section addressed the social phenomenon of lesbian and gay parented families. Opinions about the nature of these families are divided into two opposing poles: assimilationists, who argue same-sex parented families do little to disrupt normative conventions, and liberationists, for whom they actually transgress heteronormativity (Stacey and Davenport 2002). This debate is important as it may inform not only lesbigay parented families' everyday practices but also their holiday choices.

Families parented by lesbians and gays may have additional challenges to those of heterosexual parented ones. For example, one of the main issues that emerged from the literature is that same-sex parents may have to learn how to negotiate their sexuality in public spaces, considering these are predominantly heteronormative (Gabb 2005). Further, children may make the parents' sexual orientation more visible to the public eye, which may lead to and / or amplify feelings of insecurity and perceived risk (Gianino 2008).

A significant corpus of the literature on lesbigay parented families is formed of comparative studies between them and straight parented families. Parental capabilities (Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; MacCallum and Golombok 2004; Bos *et al.* 2005) and children's health and development (Patterson 2000; Golombok and Badger 2010) in families headed by homosexual parents are mostly reported to be similar to those parented by heterosexuals. Some of these studies also compare power division in lesbigay and straight families and conclude same-sex parented families tend to be more egalitarian in terms of decision-making (Dunne 2000; Perlesz *et al*. 2010), which might affect the ways these families make and negotiate holiday decisions.

Finally, throughout the review, potential gender-related differences emerged. For instance, women and men were reported to have slightly diverse travel motivations (McGuiggan 2001; Collins and Tisdell 2002; Ryan 2002; Mottiar and Quinn 2004), a difference that might be due to their socialisation process (McKercher *et al.* 2011). Men and women were also found to perceive travel-related risks differently as women may regard themselves as more vulnerable, which impacts on their travel plans and

choices (Kozak *et al.* 2007; Wilson and Little 2008). As far as sexuality is concerned, gay men and lesbians are considered to negotiate the heteronormativity of public spaces in different ways (Skeggs 1999; Poria 2006). Likewise, in relation to families, men and women may have different perceptions of parenthood (Pritchard *et al*. 2002; Stacey 2005). Mothers and fathers were also reported to have different holiday motivations, with mothers more likely to look for relaxation and fathers prioritising fun activities with the children (Such 2006). Although these debates about the interplay between gender and tourism are not within the scope of the present study, they are raised here because they inform much of the literature on family holidays and gay and lesbian travel choices.

In conclusion, in addition to the main research question about the gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations and destination choice, this project also intends to answer the following additional questions, emerging from the review of the literature:

- How, if at all, does the parents' sexuality impact on the travel motivations and destination choice of the same-sex parented families?
- How do these families make their decisions concerning destination choice? How, if at all, do the children influence this process?
- How, if at all, does the heteronormativity of public spaces affect the lesbigay parented families' social interaction while on holiday? How, if at all, does this factor impact on the family's travel motivations and destination choice?

For the research questions to be answered, qualitative methods were used. The following chapter outlines and justifies the methods employed while exploring the ontological and epistemological positions adopted by this study's researcher.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study intends to answer one main question:

What are the travel motivations and destination choice of gay and lesbian parented families?

Attempting to answer this question inevitably leads to the choice of the appropriate research design, that is, the conceptualisation of the research process that links the research questions to the conclusions (Yin 2003). This chapter identifies and critically justifies the methods that have been adopted to meet the research aim and answer its questions. The methodological choices stem not only from the nature of the research questions but also from the researcher's philosophical stance (Blaikie 2007; Bryman 2008). Therefore, before the methods are explained and defended, it is important to critically review the methodological considerations associated with this particular research.

A review of the literature on methodology points to an ambiguous use of nomenclatures. For instance, terms such as *theoretical orientation* (Patton 2002), *paradigm* (Phillimore and Goodson 2004; Blaikie 2007), *theoretical perspective* (Crotty 2003), *knowledge claim* and *worldview* (Creswell 2007) are used by different authors to express similar ideas. To avoid such confusion, it is important to clarify the taxonomy adopted in this study to make sense of the large variation of terms used in the literature.

Methods are defined as the techniques used to collect data (Crotty 2003; Carter and Little 2007). Methodology is the conceptual logic behind the choice of the methods adopted (Creswell 2007) and is concerned with the practice involved in knowing the world (Liburd 2012). Explaining and justifying this logic necessarily implies understanding the strategies in which methods are embedded. Strategies are underpinned by research paradigms, which are in turn informed by the researcher's epistemological position. Epistemology is linked with the inquirer's ontological stance.

Figure 1, an adaptation of Crotty's (2003) and Blaikie's (2007) models and Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) research phases, aims to make the structure of methodological constructs clearer to the reader. The arrows represent the idea that each of these notions informs and underpins the term immediately below.

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        │  Paradigms  │
        └─────────────┘
              ▼
        ┌─────────────┐
        │ Strategies  │
        └─────────────┘
              ▼
         ┌──────────┐
         │ Methods  │
         └──────────┘
```
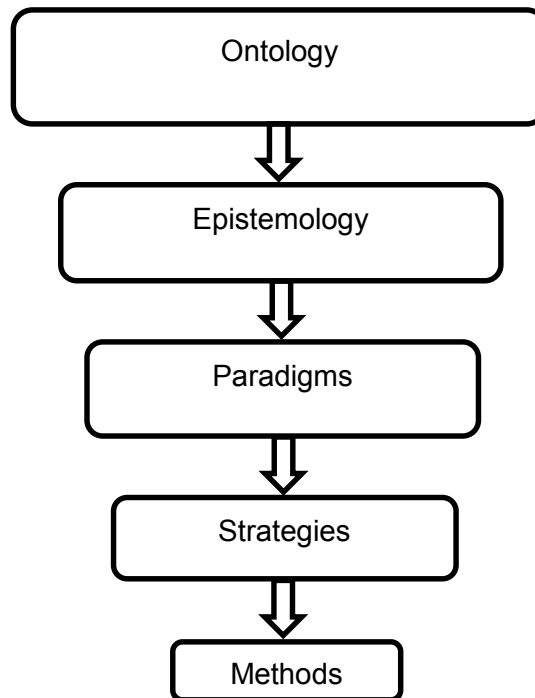
Figure 1: The structure of methodological constructs
(adapted from Crotty 2003, Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Blaikie 2007)

The researcher is relatively free to choose the most appropriate research design as long these notions do not contradict one another and do not fall out of the scope of the research questions (Crotty 2003; Creswell 2007).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first addresses the research philosophy and presents and explains the researcher's stance and choices made. The second explains the research methods employed and discusses issues relating to the research process in this particular study.

3.1. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy deals with the way the researcher views and understands the world and how this informs the research process as a whole (Creswell 2007). This section starts by discussing the main ontological and epistemological debates in the literature as well as the stances adopted by the researcher in this study. It then outlines the main discussions around research paradigms and provides a justification for the particular paradigm here. It concludes by addressing and justifying the adoption of a specific strategy for this project.

3.1.1. Ontologies and Epistemologies

Ontology is defined as the study of being (Goodson and Phillimore 2004) or the nature of what exists (Blaikie 2007; Latsis *et al.* 2007) and is concerned with discovering the nature of reality (Creswell 2007). For Denzin and Lincoln (2005), ontology relates to the claims made by research when attempting to grasp the nature of reality. Epistemology, on the other hand, is the theory of knowledge (Goodson and Phillimore 2004) and implies understanding knowing (Crotty 2003). Willig (2008, p. 2) defines epistemology simply as "how we can know". If epistemology is concerned with how the researcher comes to know the world (Liburd 2012), it involves, therefore, a relationship between the researcher and what is researched (Creswell 2007).

Here, the challenges of understanding ontology and epistemology start to emerge. If ontology is the study of reality, and epistemology the study of knowledge, these terms are unavoidably intertwined since *studying* reality necessarily involves *knowing* reality. In other words, it is extremely difficult to discuss the nature of being (ontology) without understanding the relationship between the researcher and being (epistemology), which explains why these concepts are so easily enmeshed. To help disentangle

these ideas, it is important to bear in mind that debates about ontology tend to be polarised around the dichotomy of realism / relativism (Crotty 2003; Blaikie 2007).

For realists, reality is 'real' or, in other words, what is seen is what exists (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Relativists, on the other hand, believe there are multiple realities (Guba 1990; Schwandt 2000; Crotty 2003). What distinguishes relativists and realists is not, as commonly believed, the question whether or not there is a material world (Blaikie 2007). Not all relativists challenge the existence of the natural world; some believe in the co-existence of a material world with other meaningful realities, which are constructed via social relationships, language and culture (Lincoln *et al.* 2011). *Relativism* is the ontological position adopted by this project's researcher, namely, the view that there is a physical (also called material or natural) world external to the human mind and another reality formed from mental representations (the domain of social reality). If social reality is part of the realm of ideas, social relationships depend on individual representations to exist (Guba 1990), a stance that fits well with this research, concerned with motivations, which are themselves mental representations, and family choices, which are fundamentally based on social relationships.

As previously indicated, distinguishing the *nature of being* from the *knowledge of being* is not an easy task. Understanding knowledge is linked with epistemology, which is concerned with how researchers relate to the object of their research. Although some authors adopt a binary approach to epistemologies, opposing objectivism to subjectivism (Hollinshead 2004; Lincoln *et al.* 2011), others also include constructionism (Shadish 1995; Patton 2002; Crotty 2003; Blaikie 2007). These three epistemological positions (objectivism, subjectivism and constructionism) differ according to the emphasis placed on each of the elements that participate in the formation of knowledge.

Objectivism is the epistemological view that knowledge emanates from the object being researched and the researcher is an observer simply discovering the truth that resides in that object (Crotty 2003; Blaikie 2007).

Objectivists argue researchers must be neutral and report solely what they observe (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Subjectivists, conversely, claim for knowledge as a product exclusively of the mind, which means knowledge emanates solely from the subject, and the object has no involvement (Crotty 2003).

Constructionism breaks with the object / subject dichotomy by claiming they are fused (Crotty 2003) and, therefore, knowledge is co-constructed between researcher and researched (Patton 2002)[4]. Although constructionism is sometimes viewed as the construction of realities, and, therefore, perceived as an ontology (as opposed to an epistemology), it actually refers to the construction of *knowledge about reality,* as Shadish (1995) clarifies. Merleau-Ponty (1962, cited in Macann 1993), for example, argues the interaction between known and knower is what produces meaning, which, thus, is not imposed by one of the knowledge constructors. It is, rather, an amalgamation, in line with what Gadamer (1976, p. 36) calls "fusion of horizons". In Blaikie's (2007, p. 23) words, knowledge is "the product of the intersubjective, meaning-giving activity of human beings in everyday life". If knowledge is a result of this intersubjectivity (or fusion), then it is necessarily implicated in a context, which implies there is no single truth but rather a consensus of truths between researcher and researched (Shadish 1995).

Such is the stance adopted by this study's researcher. In line with a *relativist ontology*, according to which realities are multiple, the researcher adopts a *constructionist epistemology*, which views knowledge as a co-construction. Knowledge is produced through an interactive process of a co-building of meanings which depends upon the knowledge constructors (subject and object, knower and known or researcher and researched). This process does not necessarily involve a conscious or even active contribution but can also involve an unconscious element where researcher and researched bring meanings together to form knowledge.

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[4] Some authors make a distinction between *social constructionism* (the collective construction of knowledge) and *constructivism* (the individual process in which the subject and object build knowledge) (Patton 2002; Crotty 2003). For the purpose of this research, the term *constructionism* is preferred as it is considered wider, encompassing both constructivism and social constructionism.

In this sense, it is this researcher's position that the search for a single truth is incompatible with knowledge itself. If realities are multiple and knowledge is constructed, then there is no single truth. These notions are of paramount importance to this inquiry, which is guided by the idea that knowledge does not emanate solely from research participants, nor does it originate only from the inquirer. Therefore, this project is not concerned with finding a unique reality or a unique truth. This epistemological stance is fundamental for the justification of the paradigm adopted in this research.

3.1.2. Paradigms

A paradigm is the view the researcher has of the world (Goodson and Phillimore 2004) and is, hence, also referred to as worldview (Patton 2002; Creswell 2007). The research paradigm expresses the researcher's place in the world and his/her relationship with it (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) and is a net or, to use Guba's (1990, p. 17) words, a "set of beliefs" that guides the researcher's actions by "providing a context for the [research] process and grounding its logic and criteria" (Crotty 2003, p. 3). Paradigms, thus, are the materialisation of a researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions in that they inform the strategies and methods chosen for a research design (see again figure 1, p. 80). As seems to be the norm in methodological scholarship, different authors use diverse taxonomies when categorising paradigms. A review and comparison of the literature (Patton 2002; Robson 2002; Crotty 2003; Goodson and Phillimore 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Blaikie 2007; Creswell 2007; Bryman 2008; Creswell 2009; Houghton *et al.* 2012; Phoenix *et al.* 2013) shows there are three major research paradigms: positivism, postpositivism and interpretivism. To underpin and justify this study's adoption of an interpretivist paradigm, each one of them is now discussed.

Positivism

Positivism emphasises knowledge that can be posited; in other words, only knowledge that is attained through empirical observation is considered valid (Patton 2002; Crotty 2003). Positivists fundamentally argue natural laws can be applied to social relationships (Crotty 2003; Liburd 2012). In line with a realist ontology and an objectivist epistemology, positivists argue events exist independently from the human mind and knowledge is originated in the object. As Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, p. 17) put it, the data the positivist researcher finds are "something that exists, is (already) there and the task of the researcher thus becomes to gather and systematize them". For positivists, therefore, the researcher is an instrument of discovery of the truth, research should be objective and value-free (Goodson and Phillimore 2004; Guba and Lincoln 2005; Willig 2008) and language should be used with the sole aim of describing findings (Blaikie 2007). If knowledge is value-free and natural laws can be applied to social sciences, then the researcher should be concerned with finding regularities that can be verified, repeated and generalised (Patton 2002; Lincoln *et al.* 2011). The search for verification and generalisability is linked with an attempt to reach measurable results (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009), which leads positivists to use predominantly quantitative methods, namely, techniques that are concerned with obtaining numbers and statistics (Golafshani 2003).

Although positivism certainly constitutes an evolution from previous religious dogmas (Liburd 2012), it has often been the target of strong criticism. For instance, the application of natural sciences and laws to society has been repudiated, with scholars claiming natural laws cannot be used to explain social relationships and mental representations (Shadish 1995; Crotty 2003; Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009; Liburd 2012). As human behaviour cannot be predicted, an investigation of social relationships cannot be reduced to the framework of natural reality (Patton 2002). Other criticisms to positivism refer to the assumption that reality and truth are unique (Guba and Lincoln 1994), the perception of the researcher as a neutral, distanced observer (Crotty 2003; Goodson and

Phillimore 2004; Lincoln *et al.* 2011) and the positivists' emphasis on quantitative methods (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

Postpostivism

Postpositivism rejects some of the tenets of positivism. While considering reality is single, thereby aligning themselves with a realist ontology, postpositivists recognise it cannot be apprehended with accuracy (Merriam *et al.* 2012). Therefore, postpositivists argue there are limits to the certitude of knowledge generated by empirical observation (Crotty 2003). Postpositivists believe the regularities inquirers look for are sometimes imposed and, thus, findings cannot always be generalised. They recognise scientific knowledge is not perfect or accurate and are aware research is not completely objective (Blaikie 2007). Thus, they tend to combine quantitative and qualitative methods (Golafshani 2003; Blaikie 2007) in an attempt to get closer to the truth (Patton 2002).

Critics of postpositivism hold that it does not really distance itself from positivism as it does not refute positivists' emphasis on the search for causal relationships (Patton 2002; Creswell 2007). Moreover, postpositivism is considered as not challenging the ontological idea of a single reality, not denying the assumption of the researcher's impartiality and keeping the researcher in control of the research process by excluding the voice of the researched (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Therefore, for those critics, postpositivism does not really differ from positivism in its essence.

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is the term often used to encompass several traditions that challenge positivist assumptions. In general lines, the interpretivist paradigm distances itself from positivism by being aligned with a constructionist epistemology (Crotty 2003) to the point that constructionism and interpretivism are sometimes used as synonyms

(Creswell 2007). Interpretivists believe knowledge is formed as a result of a construction of meanings (Schwandt 2000), and, thus, there is no single truth to be obtained (Shadish 1995). If knowledge is co-constructed and truth is multiple, then research is value-mediated rather than value-free, which implies the researcher is not a detached observer. Hence, natural laws cannot be used to explain the social world and research should not seek generalisability (Guba and Lincoln 2005).

As Schwandt (2000) and Blaikie (2007) clarify, the origins of interpretivism can be found in the discipline of hermeneutics. Therefore, to understand the main tenets of interpretivism, it is important to have a brief overview of hermeneutical principles. Hermeneutics, from the Greek *hermeneueien*, meaning *to clarify* or *to interpret,* (Lopez and Willis 2004), relates to textual exegesis, or the interpretation of (mainly religious and juridical) texts (Blaikie 2007). This concept was revisited by theorists such as Georg Ast and Friedrich Schleiermacher, who applied it to the social world (Palmer 1969). Simply put, if the social world could be compared to a text, then understanding human relationships would necessarily imply understanding the context in which these relationships take place and the language used by the people involved (Palmer 1969).

Understanding is, therefore, central to interpretivism. Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber and Alfred Schütz drew upon the idea of hermeneutical understanding to develop their interpretive theories about social reality (Crotty 2003). Dilthey worked on the concept of *Verstehen* (*to understand*) as opposed to *Erklären* (*to explain*) and claimed the social world cannot be *explained*, but, rather, *understood* (Crotty 2003). Explaining implies establishing causal relationships, in a process akin to that of the natural sciences, in which the researcher is an outsider (Blaikie 2000; Crotty 2003). Explaining, therefore, is equated with trying to find causal regularities that can be generalised. Conversely, understanding relates to revealing the meaning people attach to their actions (Blaikie 2000; Schwandt 2000). This implies the researcher takes the position of an insider, since the social world can only be understood from the perspective of those who are *in* it (Goodson and Phillimore 2004). For Dilthey, this meaning can only be understood through the researcher delving into the

human beings' lived experience (Crotty 2003). For Weber, as the social world is made of interactions, this meaning relates to human relationships, which necessarily exist in a context (Blaikie 2007). Such context, which Schwandt (2000, p. 192) terms "indexicality", encapsulates both known and knower, which means researcher and researched create a mutual understanding through the (not necessarily conscious) negotiation of meanings. This is in line with Schütz's idea of understanding as a construction between subject and object. For interpretivists, knowledge is a bridge connecting the meanings ascribed by the social actor and the social scientist in the research process (Blaikie 2007). This confirms the inextricable connection between the constructionist epistemology and the interpretivist paradigm.

Because interpretivists want to understand the social world from the perspective of the people who are in it, and because such understanding is reliant on the meanings people attach to their actions, then research should actually be concerned with listening to what people have to say. For interpretivists, this can only be attained through qualitative methods (Angen 2000). Moreover, as previously indicated, interpretivists do not believe in a single and indivisible truth. They do not agree human behaviour can be confined to natural laws and so are not concerned with generalisations (Lincoln *et al.* 2011). Rather, they look for the uniqueness of human behaviour and this is why quantitative methods, with their focus on establishing causal relationships and finding patterns of behaviour, are not deemed appropriate.

Critics of interpretivism contend it focuses too much on the researcher, the findings produced are viewed as too subjective and the research process as lacking scientific rigour (Guba 1990). Its qualitative methods are often considered "poor", "soft" (Phillimore and Goodson 2004, p. 4) or less credible, which calls into question their validity and reliability (Erlandson *et al.* 1993). Giddens (1984) also considered interpretivists' concern with the search for meaning as a utopian task as social actors are not always aware of the meanings they assign to their actions.

Interpretivism in this study

In line with the researcher's *relativist ontology* and *constructionist epistemology*, in this study, specifically aimed at understanding the travel motivations and destination choice of gay and lesbian parented families, an *interpretivist paradigm* is adopted. Motivations are subjective representations and family choices are inserted in, and shaped by, social relationships. As Weber (1978) highlighted, motivations and meanings are inseparable. Thus, investigating lesbigay parented families' motivations necessarily means investigating the meanings attached to them by these families.

Moreover, the literature review suggested travel motivations and destination choice of same-sex parented families may be linked with notions such as gender, parenthood and perceived risk, which are themselves subjective constructs (see, for instance, Rubin's (1984) and Greenberg's (1990) work on sexuality and Almond's (1994) research on parenthood and Lepp and Gibson's (2003) work on perceived risks). An attempt to understand these men and women's viewpoints through the meanings they attribute to these constructs led to the adoption of an interpretivist paradigm.

Furthermore, prior to this investigation, no empirical research on the topic of lesbigay parented families' tourism could be traced. Hence, this study is an exploration of these families' travel motivations and choices, which calls for the adoption of an interpretivist paradigm, supported by qualitative methods. Interpretivism is deemed more suitable to delve into the participants' thoughts, feelings and perceptions and allow for the emergence of their perspectives (Bryman 2008; Creswell 2009).

A positivist paradigm would do little to capture these families' viewpoints. The positivist (and, by analogy, postpositivist) paradigm, congruent with a realist ontology and an objectivist epistemology, is not compatible with the philosophical stances adopted by this researcher. Positivism, concerned with the discovery of a unique truth, is not suitable for a study in which reality is viewed as multiple and knowledge as co-constructed. Moreover, this inquiry is not concerned with identifying regularities in human

behaviour, establishing causal relationships (explaining) or searching for generalisations. It is the researcher's belief that social relationships cannot be framed by natural laws. In this study, human behaviour is viewed as unique, dependent upon the context in which it is inserted, and, thus, cannot be generalised to a wider population, as positivists would maintain.

As indicated, interpretivists' adoption of qualitative methods is often viewed as a limitation by some scholars as such methods are considered to lack scientific rigour, place too much emphasis on the researcher and weaken the reliability and validity of the research. However, that interpretivist methods follow a structured and systematic approach actually confers them rigour. Moreover, the researcher's participation as a knowledge constructor along with the participant is not only inevitable but also constitutes a strength in the research process as long as this participation is acknowledged and understood. Finally, because of the particularities of qualitative inquiry, the concepts of reliability and validity are pointless and should be judged to be a question of trustworthiness (trustworthiness is a topic that deserves further attention and will be discussed in the detail in 3.2.5. Trustworthiness, p. 125).

Giddens (1984) argued interpretivist inquiry can be misleading, imprecise and even unproductive since participants are often unaware of the meaning they attach to their actions. This position also ought to be viewed with caution. The claim that research may not capture the real meaning ascribed by participants to subjective constructs is not uncommon in academia. Another instance can be found in Dann's (1981) critique of research on travel motivations (as seen in the literature review). Here, the same reasoning applies. Research in general (and interpretivist inquiry in particular) depends heavily on the researcher's investigative capabilities and should not be simply dismissed on the grounds that meaning ascribed by individuals cannot be revealed. Further, such a claim assumes meaning and truth as unique, a viewpoint that is not corroborated in this project. Knowledge, as explained, is a co-construction of meanings and a single truth is a fiction. Thus, a critique of interpretivism based on the claim that it does not attain real truth is oxymoronic *per se*.

3.1.3. Strategy: the Use of Phenomenology

Now that the interpretivist paradigm used in this research has been explained and justified, it is important to discuss the strategy adopted. Research strategies (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) have also been called methodologies (Crotty 2003), theoretical orientations (Patton 2002) or approaches (Creswell 2007). They are aligned with the research paradigm and outline the plan of action or design adopted for data collection. In other words, they link the philosophical assumptions previously mentioned to the choice of methods and, in doing so, provide the framework that sustains the methodological structure of a research project (Crotty 2003). In Denzin and Lincoln's (2005, p. 25) words: "strategies of inquiry put paradigms […] into motion. At the same time, strategies also connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials."

As previously mentioned, the same strategy can be informed by different paradigms depending on the researcher's epistemological position and on the research questions (Crotty 2003; Creswell 2007). Strategies are distinguished not only by the methods they use to put research into practice but also by their history and underlying principles (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). The aim of this section is to discuss and justify the adoption of phenomenology as a strategy for this study by reviewing its key concepts and traditions and discussing some of the criticisms made of it.

The section on paradigms (p. 84) concluded interpretivists seek to *understand* the meaning people attach to their actions (as opposed to positivists' focus on *explaining* human behaviour). Meanings, as already indicated, are subjective: different people may ascribe different meanings to the same object. Phenomenologists go a step further and, drawing upon Dilthey's concept of *Verstehen* and the seminal writings of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, claim this meaning can be reached only through the researcher accessing people's individual lived experience.

Phenomenology, the strategy adopted for this research, as implied in the name, studies phenomena (Lopez and Willis 2004; Creswell 2007; Willig 2008). A phenomenon, as Heidegger (1962, p. 25) clarified, is something that "shows itself in itself". Macann (1993) affirmed a phenomenon has two dimensions: manifestation, the expression of its attributes, and intelligibility, which implies these attributes can be grasped. To put these complex ideas in simpler terms, everything that has manifestations that can be apprehended is a phenomenon. *Apprehended*, in this case, should not be considered as a synonym of *grasped through the senses*, as a positivist would maintain. Rather, it relates to the experience lived by human beings. A phenomenon is anything that can be experienced and understood, and, therefore, parenthood, family holidays, travel decisions and even sexuality are all examples of phenomena.

Most definitions draw upon the notion that phenomenology aims to discover the meaning people assign to the individual lived experience of a phenomenon (Miller and Salkind 2002; Patton 2002; Creswell 2007). The goal of research, phenomenologists argue, is to allow the emergence of the phenomenon, an idea that led Husserl to use the word "phenomenology" to refer to all types of research (Creswell 2007). One of the most important claims of this strategy is that phenomena have an essence, or a set of shared attributes (Miller and Salkind 2002). This idea is predicated on Husserl's assumption that, although people are unique and experience phenomena in different ways, there are shared features to the experience they have lived. Thus, it is the phenomenological inquirer's task to discover the essence of a phenomenon through the commonality of experiences (Willig 2008). For this essence to emerge, Husserl (1931 cited in Willig 2008) advocated the use of description or eidetic reduction, which implies the researcher should be able to describe the participant's experience in full detail. This reduction can be attained through the concept of *epoche*, or bracketing, which is itself a very contested term in phenomenology. Most theorists, however, seem to converge on the idea that bracketing involves the researcher transcending, suspending, getting rid of or putting aside her / his own experiences, judgements, biases and /

or assumptions[5] to capture the essence with accuracy (Stewart and Mickunas 1990; Becker 1992; Miller and Salkind 2002; Denscombe 2010; Chan *et al.* 2013) as if s/he were able to take a photograph of the phenomenon.

The view of researchers as being able to detach themselves from inquiry, as implied by Husserl (and most of his interpreters), was firmly attacked by Heidegger (1962). For him, reduction and bracketing are counterproductive since people cannot be disengaged from the world, a notion he called *Dasein* (*there being*) (Heidegger 1962). Indeed, it seems utopian to expect researchers to be able to completely 'put aside' or 'get rid of' their own experiences. Researchers are part of the investigation and a total disjunction between inquirer and research contradicts the subjective nature of human beings. As Gadamer (1976) explained, understanding is a sort of mediation which necessarily creates a bridge between researcher and researched. Indeed, understanding is engaging with one's own biases, rather than transcending them (Schwandt 2000); thus, trying to get rid of one's own assumptions is highly unlikely. Rather, as Moustakas (1994) argues, researchers should be able to bring their own experiences to the research process. Furthermore, bracketing, as depicted above, also goes against the constructionist epistemology of this study's researcher. If, as Schwandt (2000) explained, meanings are mutually negotiated and created (as opposed to discovered), then the researcher's participation is not only unavoidable but also welcome, as long as it is acknowledged and understood.

Heidegger's theory has been denominated hermeneutic or interpretive and defined in opposition to Husserl's tradition, which has been called eidetic, transcendental or descriptive (Lopez and Willis 2004). However, to avoid confusion with the discipline of hermeneutics and the interpretivist paradigm, Heidegger's stream of thought is referred to in this research simply as Heideggerian phenomenology. Such is the strategy this inquiry adopts in its investigation of gay and lesbian parented families' holidays. In line with a *relativist ontology*, a *constructionist epistemology* and an

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[5] These words are being purposely used in this context to express the wide range of (and hence the lack of consistency in) definitions of *bracketing* in the doctrine.

interpretivist paradigm, this inquiry uses the *Heideggerian phenomenological strategy* to understand and reveal the meaning attached by these families to their lived experiences of phenomena such as family travel motivations and destination choice. During this process, the researcher in this study, rather than distancing himself from findings and participants or trying to get rid of his own assumptions, acknowledges and tries to understand the impact his subjectivity and his life experiences have on the research process as a whole (see more about this debate in 3.2.6. Reflexivity and Positionality, p. 127).

As is the case of the interpretivist paradigm, the phenomenological strategy, concerned with seeing the world through other people's eyes and understanding the sense people make of their individual experience (van Manen 1997), also relies on qualitative methods for data collection. As a consequence, like interpretivism, it has also been accused of lacking scientific rigour (Denscombe 2010). However, as van Manen (1997) pointed out, because of its systematic questioning and clearly articulated findings, phenomenology is undoubtedly scientific and, hence, applicable to academic research.

At the other end of the scale, phenomenology has been accused of endorsing the positivist dogma of a search for generalisation. Carter and Little (2007) state phenomenology, in trying to find the essence of phenomena, ultimately aims to attain findings that can be generalised. Van Manen (1994), however, clearly affirmed the opposite. According to him, one of the main tenets of phenomenology is that truth is not single and experiences are as diverse as human beings. As both Husserl (1931, cited in Macann 1993) and Heidegger (1962) explicated, phenomenology, undoubtedly aligned with an interpretivist paradigm, is not concerned with explaining the world through regularities of human behaviour, but rather understanding the sense individuals make of their experience. Hence, generalisations are not in the scope of phenomenology.

Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) claim phenomenology suffers from a lack of objectivity, an argument which is grounded in positivist premises. Rather, it is precisely its subjectivity that makes phenomenology so rich

since it allows the complexity of human experiences to be revealed. Indeed, the humanistic characteristic of phenomenology was an element considered at the choice of the strategy to guide this study on gay and lesbian parented families. A phenomenological strategy is necessary to allow the unique perspectives of these families to emerge so light can be shed on the sense these families make of their travel motivations and destination choice.

Having identified the philosophical stances adopted by this study's inquirer, the next section discusses the methods and process involved in the research.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESS

This section is divided as follows. First, it explains and justifies the methods employed. It then describes the data collection process while offering some considerations on the challenges encountered by the inquirer. Subsequently, the data analysis method employed is explained and justified. Ethical considerations relating to this inquiry are then made and the study's trustworthiness discussed. It then concludes by presenting the researcher's considerations about reflexivity and positionality.

3.2.1. Methods

This section describes and justifies the techniques used to collect data for this investigation of lesbian and gay parented families' travel motivations and destination choice. As can be observed from the discussion about the three paradigms, these debates are linked with the "great divide" in methodology (Crotty 2003, p. 14). This divide relates to the separation of research in two main types according to the methods used: qualitative, concerned with words and language, and quantitative, centred on

measures, statistics and issues of representativeness (Golafshani 2003). Here, links between methods and paradigms are elaborated: positivism is more commonly associated with quantitative methods, postpositivism with mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) and interpretivism with qualitative methods. Therefore, the adoption in this study of an interpretivist paradigm implies a clear choice of qualitative methods.

Apart from the already stated arguments that interpretivist (and, hence, qualitative) research privileges the respondents' voices, other reasons indicate that this investigation of lesbigay parented families should use a qualitative approach. These reasons relate to the use of methods in tourism research. Therefore, before the specific qualitative method selected for this research is fully explained, it is crucial to critically analyse and discuss the use of methods in tourism academia.

Methods in tourism research

Despite a shift towards interpretivist paradigms in the social sciences (Crotty 2003) and the recent popularity of qualitative methods in tourism (Xin *et al.* 2013), much tourism research is still heavily influenced by positivist assumptions (Phillimore and Goodson 2004; Decrop 2006; Tribe 2006; Liburd 2012). Therefore, tourism studies tend to prioritise quantitative methods. As Richards and Munsters (2010) put it, there is still room for improvement when it comes to qualitative research in tourism. According to Tribe (2004; 2006), the predominance of quantitative methods in tourism research is explained by it being fundamentally market oriented. However, Morgan and Pritchard (2005, p. 35) posit:

> The largely positivist perspectives which still dominate much tourism research cannot adequately explain the depths of meanings and behaviours which are so critical to industries and research fields concerned with people.

As indicated in the literature review, the economic perspectives that prevail in tourism in general are also observed in research on tourism decision-making, motivations and choices in particular, which explains the predominance of quantitative methods in these areas. The traditional

decision-making models commonly adopted to explain tourism consumer behaviour are predicated on positivist assumptions that regard consumers as rational and utilitarian (Cohen *et al.* 2015). This positivist perspective assumes decisions as objective and decontextualised. The quantitative methods used in positivist studies create a subject / object dichotomy that ignores the underlying subjectivity of tourism experience (Goodson and Phillimore 2004) but especially motivations and choices. In other words, to reiterate the arguments used when the adoption of the interpretivist paradigm was justified, a deep understanding of the motivations and choices of the lesbigay parented families should necessarily use qualitative methods.

Goodson and Phillimore (2004) argue quantitative research silences the voice of the researched. Quantitative methods create frames that do not allow for free expression, thereby contributing to oppression and perpetuating dogmas and discourses that represent a group of people. As Liburd (2012) suggests, the positivist assumptions that underpin quantitative methods are responsible for maintaining dominant views of the world. She implies the positivist paradigm (and, hence, quantitative methods) helps consolidate the "rational and masculine forms of knowledge which until recently have dominated tourism research" (Liburd 2012, p. 886). The same can be argued for research on gay and lesbian tourism, much defined "through economic possibilities" (Johnston 2001, p. 187) and therefore based on quantitative methods (Hughes 2006). However, these do not capture the meanings gay and lesbian tourists assign to their experiences (Pritchard *et al.* 2000). This idea is central to this study concerned with the meanings lesbigay parented families attach to their motivations and choices. Blichfeldt *et al.* (2013) suggest positivist research claims a distance between researcher and researched. It is argued here that such a distance alienates the researched, enhances the heteronormativity that dominates tourism research (Hughes 2006; Waitt and Markwell 2008; Lucena *et al.* 2015) and maintains the invisibility of not only gay men but also, and especially, lesbians (Hughes and Deutsch 2010). Therefore, an inquiry in which both researcher and researched are positioned in the centre of the process should adopt qualitative methods.

Likewise, as the literature review pointed out, tourism scholarship has so far failed to address the family perspective (Gram 2005; Carr 2011; Obrador 2012; Schänzel *et al.* 2012; Lucena *et al.* 2015) and most of the extant research on family tourism is market driven, which explains the prevalence of quantitative techniques in this field (Schänzel *et al.* 2005). However, the social world is messy and quantitative methods fail to address the diversity of human behaviour. Indeed, the 'chaos' that may characterise many families' holiday decisions (Decrop 2006) can hardly be framed by positivist traditions. As Schänzel *et al.* (2012) argue, this calls for the adoption of research techniques that allow family members' voices to be heard, which can best be attained through qualitative methods. Furthermore, tourism research has ignored 'new' family structures, thus leading to non-traditional families being alienated (Schänzel *et al.* 2012; Hughes and Southall 2012). As is the case for gay and lesbian tourism, it is argued that a qualitative inquiry, centred on understanding the lesbian and gay parented families' perspectives, is necessary to include, and give voice to, these families in tourism research. As noted earlier, the social world can only be grasped from the viewpoint of those who are in it. Numbers fail to address the meanings people attach to their individual experiences. Thus, quantitative methods would create a frame that would not allow the perspective of the researched to emerge.

Interviews

As previously stated, the interpretivist paradigm is associated with qualitative methods; consequently, so is phenomenology. As Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) explain, because of their focus on people, phenomenological inquirers prefer qualitative methods as they allow the subjective perspective of participants to emerge. Interviews are considered by phenomenologists as methods appropriate to capture the essence of the lived experience and also allow the researcher to understand the sense people make of their actions (Moustakas 1994; Willig 2008).

The interactive nature of interviews is indeed compatible with the exploratory aspect of this study, which explains why they were the data collection methods chosen. Interviews place meaning-making at the centre of the research (Warren 2002), and so are congruent with the constructionist epistemology adopted. They allow researchers to encourage participants to reflect on the meanings people attach to their lived experience (Johnson 2002). This is particularly relevant for this inquiry as motivations and family decisions are commonly taken for granted and not always reflected upon. Phenomenological inquiry often calls for an interview based on open-ended questions (Giorgi 1985). In the case of this research, it was found appropriate to have a set of questions to help guide the interview (see appendix A for interview questions). Following Johnson's (2002) suggestions, this guide consists of three types of questions: introductory (icebreaking), transition and key questions.

Here a comment is noteworthy. The interviews conducted in this study could be characterised as semi-structured, namely a form of data collection whereby the researcher engages with the participant via a set of initial questions, which can be adapted and modified according to the conversation (Smith and Osborn 2008). The use of semi-structured interviews in phenomenological studies has been the subject of much scrutiny. It has been argued, for instance, that the layout of semi-structured interviews may not be consonant with the phenomenological concern with the lived experience (Dowling 2007). According to this line of reasoning, unstructured interviews (without an interview guide) would be more appropriate as they would allow the dialogue to be entirely focused on and led by the participant's experience (Becker 1992; Koch 1996).

Nevertheless, phenomenological inquiries can use a broad spectrum of methods and procedures (Patton 2002; Willig 2008; Cronin and Armour 2015). Giorgi (1985) for, example, calls for a fixed sequence of steps in phenomenological research as a way of assuring scientific rigour. Indeed, as Ray (1994, p. 127) points out, "there are different ways to understand and capture the meaning of the experience", or, as Merleau-Ponty (1962, cited in Macann 1993) highlights, there is no uniform research protocol to attain the essence of human actions and experiences. In this sense, the

choice of methods in phenomenological strategies also stems from the research aim and the researcher's orientation (Ray 1994).

Semi-structured interviews are indeed a well-established method in phenomenological research (King and Horrocks 2010). Phenomenological studies adopting semi-structured interviews can be traced in fields / topics as diverse as sexuality (Kertzner 1999; Devine and Nolan 2007), parenthood (Current-Juretschko and Bigner 2005), psychotherapy (Binder *et al.* 2012), management (Crawford 2013) and leisure (Bidonde *et al.* 2009; Shehu and Moruisi 2010). When discussing phenomenological methods, Brinkman and Kvale (2015) claim semi-structured interviews revolve around themes proposed by the researcher, and, because they are neither rigidly constructed nor completely non-directive, they are suitable for understanding the participant's lifeworld. Brinkman and Kvale (2015, p. 31) further add:

> A semi-structured lifeworld interview attempts to understand themes of the lived everyday world from the subjects' own perspectives. This kind of interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees' lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena. It comes close to an everyday conversation, but as a professional interview it has a purpose and involves specific approach and technique; it is semi-structured – it is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire. It is conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on certain themes and that may include suggested questions.

Englander (2012) notes the choice of the type of interview in phenomenological research may be governed by the type and size of the project, with semi-structured interviews being particularly beneficial for small scale inquiries. In a similar vein, Wimpenny and Gass (2000) argue the use of semi-structured interviews can help the researcher keep the focus on the phenomenon studied, thereby optimising data collection.

Smith and Osborn (2008; see also Smith *et al.* 2009), in their work on interpretive phenomenological analysis (a method which, according to the authors, is phenomenological in essence as it delves into participants' lived experience), also evaluate the use and value of semi-structured

interviews. They claim these are "exemplary" methods to analyse the sense participants make of their experiences as they allow the researcher to modify their questions in view of the interviewee's responses (Smith and Osborn 2008, p. 57). Their claim echoes Langdridge's (2007) viewpoint; he argues phenomenological inquiry can effectively employ semi-structured interviews, which are an adequate compromise between consistency and flexibility.

Not only is flexibility a strength of semi-structured interviews, it is also a necessity of phenomenological inquiries; hence the fit between semi-structured interviews and studies looking into participants' lived experiences. Indeed, the phenomenological researcher must remain open to the participant's account so as to stay close to their experience (Starks and Trinidad 2007). In this sense, Chan *et al.* (2013, p. 4) highlight the adequacy of semi-structured interviews for phenomenological purposes claiming that "in the semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a set of questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it." This interview schedule, or guide, should be a loose agenda that helps the researcher prepare for the interview (Smith *et al.* 2009). The interview process should be guided by the interaction skills of the phenomenological researcher (Kvale 1983), who should be attentive to the interviewee's expression of their lifeworld (Macann 1993).

Such flexibility was adopted and observed throughout data collection in this study, with the interview questions serving as a guide rather than a frame. In other words, the researcher remained focused on and open to the participants' lived experiences, adapting and altering each interview accordingly. Indeed, data collection was characterised by an exploration of issues and questions, and this is reflected in the findings. Otherwise stated, had the interviews not emphasised respondents' lived experiences, some of the themes that inform this study's findings would not have emerged during data analysis (please see chapter five, Discussion of Findings, p. 162).

To this, it should be added that the interview questions were centred on travel motivations and choices. As such, they naturally led the participants to give detailed accounts of past family holidays (please see chapter four, Findings, p. 128, for some examples of their narratives). In other words, the interviews conducted necessarily revolved around participants' experiences. Moreover, during each interview, the sense participants made of their narratives was thoroughly explored and elaborated upon via probing techniques. Following the phenomenological tradition that views human experience as situated in a wider context, the researcher in this study placed particular emphasis on the meanings respondents ascribe not only to family holidays but also to phenomena such as parenthood, identity and sexuality. As a result, the interviews generated deep insight into these families' lived experiences.

The following sections describe the data collection and analysis used in this study. However, before this is done, as a brief and visual summary of the discussions outlined so far, Figure 2 summarises the methodological positions adopted and choices made in this project.

Ontology
Relativism

↓

Epistemology
Constructionism

↓

Paradigm
Interpretivism

↓

Strategy
Heideggerian phenomenology

↓
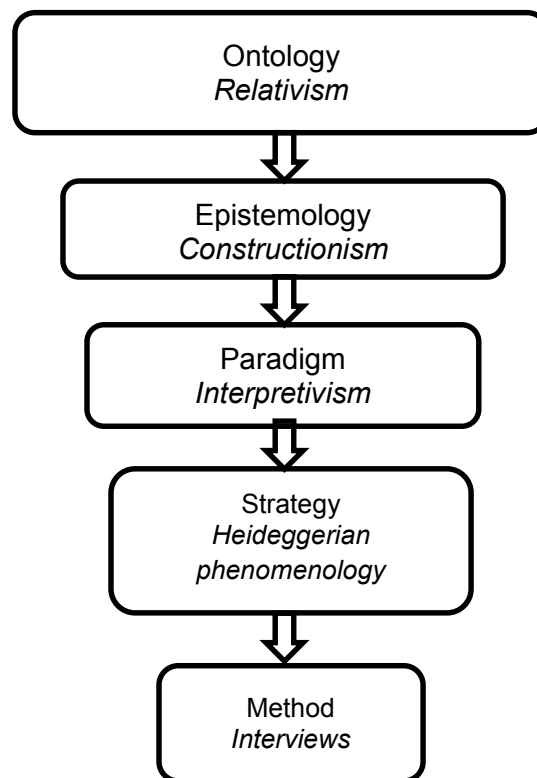
Method
Interviews

Figure 2: Methodological positions and choices in this study

3.2.2. Data Collection

This section describes and explains the data collection process: it addresses the sampling criteria used, describes the study's geographical setting, discusses the main challenges encountered and outlines the interviewees' profiles as well as the interview process.

Sampling criteria

In line with the interpretivist paradigm and phenomenological strategy, this research adopted a *purposive sampling technique*, aimed at finding respondents who have a shared experience (Creswell 2007), rather than looking for representativeness. According to Warren (2002, p. 87), in purposive sampling, the researcher looks for participants who are likely to "epitomize the analytic criteria in which he or she is interested". Respondents were then selected according to their experience with the assumption that this experience equips them with the capability of answering the research questions (Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

Therefore, criteria based on the research questions were established to define the sample. As recruitment targeted parents, sampling criteria were two-fold: 1. s/he should be a gay or lesbian *parent*; 2. s/he should have the *experience* of travelling with her/his child(ren). Crucial to the understanding of these criteria are the words *parent* and *experience*. As explained in the introduction and the literature review, a parent is an adult who has caring responsibilities over a child. Experience is of paramount importance because it is a concept which lies at the centre of phenomenological research.

Implicated in these criteria, however, are other aspects that deserve equal attention and reveal other layers of sampling. *Travel* here is inserted in the realm of family tourism and includes, as already stated, trips made for the purpose of leisure, recreation and / or to visit relatives and friends. It encompasses trips within and outside their home country. In accordance

with the literature review, which indicated more attention should be drawn to the diverse configurations of the non-traditional nuclear families, single-parented units were included. The word *children*, as indicated, was construed in its wider sense, namely a person of 17 years and under (Carr 2006). However, this information must be understood within the phenomenological context of the lived experience. In other words, participants were selected on the grounds of their experience of having travelled with their children while the latter were 17 and under regardless of their age at the time of the interview.

Gays and lesbians, in this case, were considered to be people who identify themselves as being attracted to people of the same sex. The main criterion involved here was self-identification, which is, *per se*, very restrictive (Alessi and Martin 2010). This technique excluded those who are attracted to the same sex but did not perceive themselves as being lesbian / gay and / or did not disclose their sexuality. As Blichfeldt *et al.* (2013) suggest, self-identification causes sampling to over-represent a certain type of lesbian or gay man. However, even though it is acknowledged that self-identification is a limiting criterion, for the purpose of this inquiry, it is believed that this may have been minimised by the research aim itself. In other words, it is conjectured that parents who are *out of the closet* may have their travel decisions and motivations impacted upon by their sexuality more often than parents who are closeted. A lesbian mother who is out, for instance, might prefer to avoid homophobic destinations whereas a closeted lesbian mother might be less concerned with the risk of homophobia since she hides her sexuality.

Another question raised by sexuality relates to parents who identify themselves as bisexual. As mentioned in the introduction, bisexual parents were not dismissed (and some of them accepted to be interviewed and only disclosed their bisexuality during the interview). In this case, interviews focused on their experiences travelling with their children while they were in a lesbigay relationship and whether and how bisexuality affected their holiday choices.

The recruitment process, however, was not without its challenges, and finding participants proved fairly difficult. For these difficulties to be understood, a brief explanation about the location where the study took place is essential.

A brief note on the research location

This research focused on the United Kingdom (U.K.). The University of Brighton, at which this Ph.D. project took place, has several campuses, all located short distances from the city of Brighton. Therefore, recruitment initially focused on the Brighton area, which encompasses towns and villages such as Eastbourne, Lewes, Littlehampton and Rottingdean. Later, because of the sample size difficulties encountered, recruitment was extended to two families from the North of England, found through LGBT associations previously contacted.

The U.K. is a sovereign state that consists of four units, namely, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Bowden 2005). In 2010, tourism accounted for 8.9% of the U.K. gross domestic product (Deloitte 2010). Families generate one fourth of all the holiday trips made inside the country (Schänzel *et al.* 2012). As far as LGBT tourism in the U.K. is concerned, no data were found that could be considered conclusive. However, in 2011, the marketing company Out Now (2011) reported 71% of LGBT people in the U.K. took more than one annual holiday break. In addition, according to the Gay European Tourism Association (GETA 2012), based on data also provided by Out Now, the expenditures of the British gay population with tourism in a year (within the U.K. and abroad) surpass 9 billion U.S. dollars. These figures might be indicative of the significance of gay and lesbian tourism both in the country and overseas. Although the U.K. has a somewhat contested history of support for gays' and lesbians' rights, recent progressive legislation in the country has recognised and amplified these rights. For example, the civil partnerships that came into being in 2005 can be considered almost equal to marriages (ILGA 2015), and up to 2010, 50,000 of these partnerships had been registered in the U.K. (Wainwright 2011). 2005 is also the year in which

joint and second-parent adoption became legal (ILGA 2015), entitling both parents in a same-sex relationship to have rights over their children. Marriage of same-sex couples was introduced in England in Wales in 2013 (Haigh 2014) and, within three months, more than 1,400 of these marriages took place, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS 2014). Strong organisations that support LGBT rights, such as Stonewall and the Lesbian & Gay Foundation, are based in the U.K. and many British cities have vibrant gay villages / commercial scenes.

Such is the case of Brighton & Hove, a city located in the South East of England, and formed of the amalgamation of the Hove and Brighton borough councils (Brighton & Hove City Council 2015). For the sake of simplicity, in this inquiry, the city is referred to as Brighton. With more than 270,000 inhabitants (Brighton & Hove City Council 2014), it is a seaside resort that has built a reputation as a gay-friendly place and is often called the "gay capital of the U.K." (Browne and Lim 2010, p. 619). Its LGBT population is estimated to be between 15 and 20% of the total number of inhabitants (Browne and Lim 2010). Brighton is also the most popular place in the U.K. for civil partnerships and, in 2010, more marriages between same-sex partners were celebrated in the city than anywhere else in the country (Wainwright 2011). The city was also one of the first places in the country to hold a same-sex wedding (BBC News 2014) and to convert civil partnerships into marriages (Withnall 2014). A survey conducted by the University of Brighton and Brighton & Hove City Council in 2004 (the most recent figures available) reveal 2% of gay men and 14% of lesbians residing in the city have children (Browne *et al.* 2005). That a minority of gays and lesbians in the city have children might partly help explain why locating lesbigay parented families was particularly difficult in this study. The next section discusses the challenges faced by the researcher when recruiting participants.

The challenges to recruitment

Gays and lesbians are considered a "hard-to-reach" population (Browne *et al.* 2005). The difficulties of finding lesbians and gays relate partly to the

unreliability of statistics (Sullivan and Behave 2003; Hughes 2006; Hughes and Southall 2012). As stated in the introduction, the exact number of people who self-identify as lesbians or gays is unknown, and estimates vary considerably (Banks 2003). In addition, not everyone is willing to reveal their sexual orientation in a survey or a census (Sullivan and Behave 2003; Alessi and Martin 2010). Also, sexuality is a fluid concept involving constructs such as sexual attraction, sexual behaviour, sexual fantasies and lifestyle (Sell 1997), which complicates the matter even further.

As stated above, the recruitment process mostly took place in Brighton. However, the existence of a visible gay culture in the city did not mean lesbian and gay parents were easily traced. Recruiting lesbigay parented families proved an extremely challenging task, arguably because of the aforementioned numbers of gays and lesbians with children living in the city (Browne *et al.* 2005). That the researcher himself is gay did little to help find these families. Families parented by gay males were particularly hard to find. Again, this may be due to the number of gay men raising children in Brighton (Browne *et al.* 2005), but also because many of the potential male respondents contacted did not reply to the emails sent by the researcher. Moreover, a few of them initially agreed to participate in data collection but later cancelled the appointment, stating they had busy schedules. Great efforts were also made to include children in data collection; however, in most cases, the children of the families who offered to take part in the study were too young to participate in the interview.

In accordance with the doctrine's recommendations (Herek *et al.* 2010; Sadler *et al.* 2010), elements of snowballing and self-selection were also used. The researcher made contact with numerous lesbian and gay associations (e.g. Stonewall, the Lesbian and Gay Foundation, BourneOut Group, Brighton Lesbian and Gay Sports Society, Rainbow Families, New Family Social, Gay Dads Scotland, to name just a few) and publications (e.g. Pink Parenting, Pink News) across the country. He also placed posters and leaflets in libraries, cafés and shops both in Brighton and Eastbourne (see appendix B for an example of a leaflet) and attended Pride events, where he introduced himself as a researcher and engaged in

conversation with people working at LGBT parented families' stands to promote his study. He published a note in both printed and online versions of GScene, a Brighton magazine targeted at a lesbian and gay audience, and gave an interview to Radio Reverb, a community radio in Brighton, during which he took the opportunity to promote his quest for participants. Most of the participants, however, were found through snowballing.

Interviews conducted

In total, twenty-two interviews were conducted, involving sixteen mothers, thirteen fathers and six children. When children participated in the interview, parents were present and encouraged their collaboration. Table 2 briefly describes each interviewee's profile. Informants' names were replaced with pseudonyms and the ages in the table below refer to the date when the interview was held. All interviewees were white with the exception of two parents who identified themselves as being of mixed ethnicity. The table highlights the range of family configurations among research participants, which reiterates the fluidity and diversity of the family as a social arrangement in the study's context.

Table 2: Interviewees' profile

Interviewees	Profile
Stephen and Bruce	Gay couple living in Brighton with two sons (1 and 4), both adopted. Stephen (41) is a teaching assistant from London. Bruce (43) is from Shrewsbury and works as a health emergency planning practitioner. Both have pre-university qualifications.
Mike	Gay single father, 41 years old, he runs a company and lives in Brighton with his son (2), conceived through *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) / surrogacy. He was born in Hampshire and has pre-university qualifications.

(continues)

Table 2: Interviewees' profile (continued)

Interviewees	Profile
Mia and Miranda	Lesbian couple living in Brighton with their son (18 years old), conceived via IVF (Miranda is the biological mother). Mia (57) is a consultant, born in Zimbabwe to English parents. Miranda (54) works as a business analyst and is from Bristol. Both have postgraduate degrees.
Donna, Lilly and Ross	Lesbian couple, living in Lewes with their son Ross (16 years old), conceived through IVF (Lilly is the biological mother). Donna (54) works as an IT manager and is from Salisbury. Lilly (55) works for the town council and is from Bournemouth. Both have postgraduate degrees. Ross's biological father is Lilly's gay friend who lives in Brighton with his partner; so the boy is used to spending holidays both with his mothers and his fathers.
Michelle and Rose	Michelle is a lesbian single mother from New Zealand. She lives in Lewes with her daughter Rose (14), conceived during a previous heterosexual relationship. Michelle (41) holds two undergraduate degrees and works as a decorator and painter.
Charlie, Jessica and William	Charlie is a bisexual mother from Oxford, a lecturer, holds a Ph.D. degree. Charlie (49) lives in Brighton with her male partner and two of her children, Jessica and William (18 and 20). Another son (22) no longer lives with the family. The three children were adopted when the mother was in a lesbian relationship.
Sandrine	Lesbian single mother, 47 years old, retired from the military forces. She has pre-university qualifications. She is from London but she lives in Todmorden with two daughters (22 months and 4 years old) conceived via double donor IVF (both egg and sperm were donated).
Gillian	A 41-year-old lesbian mother, interpreter with a postgraduate degree, from Leicester, where she lives with her partner, a son (4) and a daughter (16 months old) both conceived through IVF (Gillian is the boy's biological mother and her partner, the girl's biological mother).

(continues)

Table 2: Interviewees' profile (continued)

Interviewees	Profile
Elisa and Giuliana	Bisexual couple living in Brighton with their 4-year-old daughter (conceived via IVF; Elisa is the biological mother). Elisa (39) is from Buckinghamshire, works as a lecturer and is currently doing a masters. Giuliana (40) is from Ireland, holds a postgraduate degree and works as a management consultant.
Elizabeth	A 51-year-old lesbian mother living alone in Brighton. She is from Derbyshire, has a postgraduate degree and works as a manager for a first aid organisation. She has two daughters (24 and 11, both adopted when she was in a lesbian relationship). The eldest daughter is at university and is away from home. The youngest lives with Elizabeth's ex-partner. Elizabeth and her new partner sometimes travel with the children.
Doris	A 55-year-old lesbian mother living alone in Brighton. She is from Blackpool, holds a postgraduate degree and works as a social worker and a DJ. She has a daughter (18), whom she adopted while she was in a lesbian relationship. She also fostered seven other children while she was partnered and used to go on holiday with them.
Tina, Naomi and Ewan	Tina is a 47-year-old bisexual mother. She has a postgraduate degree and works as an educational manager. She is from Surrey and lives in Brighton with her daughter Naomi (16) and her son Ewan (13), both adopted while she was in a lesbian relationship.
Lynn	Lesbian mother from the U.S. She lives and works in Brighton as an artist. Lynn (43) has a postgraduate degree from the U.K. Her daughter (8 months old) was conceived through IVF by her partner. The girl's biological father is a gay friend who lives in London with his partner.
Freddy and Robert	Gay couple. They are both from London and hold Ph.D. degrees. Freddy (43) is a psychologist and Robert (46) a lecturer. They have two adopted daughters (3 and 5) with whom they live in Rottingdean.

(continues)

Table 2: Interviewees' profile (continued)

Interviewees	Profile
Bill	A 52-year-old gay father from London, currently living in Brighton with his partner. He works in social services and has pre-university qualifications. Bill and his partner have three sons. The eldest is 8 years old and Bill is the biological father. The mother is Bill's friend and the boy lives with her and her female partner. The other two boys (5 years old and 15 months) are biologically related to Bill's partner and were conceived by another couple of lesbian friends, with whom they live.
Abraham	Gay father from Manchester. He is a 52-year-old landscape architect who lives in London and has a 7-year-old son, conceived through artificial insemination by a lesbian friend. The boy lives with his mother in the North of England. Abraham holds a Ph.D. degree.
Luke	A 41-year-old gay father from Guilford who lives in Brighton and works for the city council. He has pre-university qualifications. His eldest son (4 years old) was conceived via artificial insemination by a lesbian friend. The youngest son (20 months) was conceived through IVF by the friend's partner. The boys live with the mothers.
George	Born in Malta to an English father and a Maltese mother, he has British nationality and spent most of his life in the U.K. He is a 56-year-old gay man but his three sons (30, 28 and 26) were born when he was in a previous heterosexual relationship. He works for an airline company, lives in London with his partner and has pre-university qualifications.
Rick and Ian	Gay couple (both 33), living in London with a 17-month-old son, who was conceived through artificial insemination by a surrogate mother. Rick is from London, and Ian, from the U.S. but has British citizenship. Rick has a university degree and Ian, two postgraduate degrees.
Shirley	A bisexual mother from Brighton, Shirley is a 34-year-old therapist with a university degree. She has both a male and a female partner. Her son (15 months old) was conceived with her male partner but the boy lives with Shirley and her female partner in Brighton. The father does not live with them but is considered part of the family.

(continues)

Table 2: Interviewees' profile (continued)

Interviewees	Profile
Caroline	A 49-year-old lesbian mother with pre-university qualifications. She works as an operations manager in a multinational corporation. She was born in Essex but lives in Brighton with her partner and their 5-year-old daughter. The girl was conceived via artificial insemination by Caroline's partner.
Graeme and Lawrence	Gay couple living in Littlehampton. Graeme (62) was born in South Africa, has a university degree and is a retired teacher. Lawrence (57) is from London, has pre-university qualifications and is a hairdresser. They have two sons (33 and 31), who were born when Graeme was in a straight relationship.

The interviews with Sandrine and Gillian, who live in the North of England, were conducted via Skype video, an effective and accepted alternative to face-to-face interviewing (Deakin and Wakefield 2013). Most interviews took place in respondents' homes, but also, at their convenience, in cafés, a pub, a fitness centre and one of the participants' workplace. The interviews lasted one hour, on average, with the shortest taking thirty minutes, and the longest, almost two and a half hours. After each interview, the researcher audio-recorded his first impressions about the interaction with the interviewee, his feelings and the challenges faced during the interview. After participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. This allowed for deepened familiarisation with the data (Braun and Clarke 2008) and also enhanced understanding of both the interview process and the interaction between researcher and participants. Following the literature's recommendations (Flick 1998; Poland 2002), interview transcriptions were *verbatim* and took into account both verbal and non-verbal utterances, such as pauses and body language.

See appendix C for an example of an interview transcription. Data saturation, namely the moment at which no new information emerges (McShane and Cunningham 2012), was reached at the twenty-second interview.

3.2.3. Data Analysis

As is the case with data collection, there is no uniform data analysis method in phenomenology (Van Manen 1997). Nevertheless, a review of the literature indicates phenomenologists tend to follow a structure of steps in which the stages adopted depend on the inquirer's phenomenological tradition (whether Husserlian or Heideggerian). According to Grbich (2013), as far as data analysis is concerned, the Heideggerian tradition places emphasis on the interaction between the researcher and the data. In other words, a Heideggerian approach acknowledges the impact of the researcher's positionality on both data collection and analysis. For this to be possible, Heideggerian phenomenologists add to the process reflections upon their personal experiences, *not* as an attempt to distance themselves from their own assumptions but to understand how these help construct the meaning of the essence (Miller and Salkind 2002). In this sense, van Manen (1997) emphasised the researchers' need to constantly write down their reflections as a way of making sense of the data collected. In this research project, reflective remarks were made during the interviews and transcriptions to keep track of the researcher's feelings and the impact of his life experience on the data collection and findings. These remarks were written in the researcher's notebook, his diary or were part of the researcher's impressions recorded after each interview (see appendix D for examples of reflective remarks from the researcher's notebook and appendix E for an entry of his research diary). Furthermore, drawing upon Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestions, each interview generated a contact summary sheet (appendix F). This sheet reports the main issues addressed and answers given to the research questions. More importantly, the contact summary sheet compiles the researcher's reflections on the encounter and interaction with participants as well as thoughts and ideas to be considered for the following interviews. Finally, not only did the researcher transcribe the interviews but he also analysed

the data manually, rather than using a qualitative analysis software programme. Although such programmes are considered to make data retrieval faster and help the researcher find the connection between codes more efficiently (Bryman 2008), they are also believed to fragment and decontextualise the data (Weaver and Atkinson 1994). Furthermore, the researcher's decision not to use a qualitative analysis programme in this study allowed him to deeply engage with the data, which facilitated reflexivity throughout the process (Creswell 2007; Braun and Clarke 2008).

As is often the case in qualitative research, data analysis did not follow a linear approach. Rather, it was an iterative and recursive process in which the researcher moved back and forth to the data to continuously contrast the emerging themes to the interview transcripts (Flick 1998; Patton 2002; Matthews and Ross 2010; McShane and Cunningham 2012). This cyclical process allowed interpretation to take place without being alienated from the essence of participants' lived experiences (Patton 2002). At early stages, codes were generated and then compared for recurring patterns, which were, in turn, contrasted for commonalities and relationships among and between them. The themes that emerged from this process were then reviewed for overarching themes, which were, at the end of the process, defined, labelled (Braun and Clarke 2008) and compared to the literature (see appendix G for some interview excerpts and the codes generated, and appendix H for the progression of themes during data analysis). This method to approach the data follows an abductive line of reasoning, aimed at discovering and understanding meanings ascribed by social actors to their behaviour and motives (Blaikie 2007). Rather than trying to build theory from the data (inductive approach) or using the data to verify theory (deductive approach) (Braun and Clarke 2008), abductive inference aims to make sense of the core processes that compose human action and is, thus, appropriate for providing insight into the new (Richardson and Kramer 2006). Not only did abduction allow for a greater understanding of the factors underlying participants' actions but it also suited the exploratory nature of this study. In this vein, theory was not used as a departing point for the generation of hypotheses; nor was its production the final goal of

this project. Instead, theory provided a conceptual framework against which the emerging themes were compared so that sense could be made of the study's findings.

Here, a comment is noteworthy. Following Boyatzsis's (1998) suggestions, rather than departing from a purely manifest level, analysis started with an investigation of the latent meanings of the data. In other words, rather than basing the aforementioned codes solely on the description of the data and moving to interpretation only at later stages of analysis, the researcher interpreted participants' accounts from the beginning of the analytical process. As Braun and Clarke (2008) explain, qualitative analysis involves the categorisation of meanings rather than words; thus, it should include interpretation from its early phases. Moreover, this approach allows for different levels of interpretation (Blichfeldt 2007), which generates continual insights, thereby leading to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny (McShane and Cunningham 2012). For example, underlying manifestations of sexuality-related shame emerged as an important theme in this study, thanks to this multi-levelled interpretative approach. Finally, it suits the constructionist epistemology adopted in this study, which views the construction of meanings via interpretation as an inherent and essential part of the whole research process.

3.2.4. Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research raises ethical issues involving the possibility of harm to participants, deception, anonymity, and confidentiality (Diener and Crandall 1978; Robson 2002; Creswell 2007). The idea underlying research ethics is that respondents should be protected from physical and emotional distress. Nonetheless, the topics addressed in this project did not appear to be regarded as sensitive by the families interviewed. Rather, the interviewees in this research seemed delighted to share their travel experiences with the researcher. On the other hand, because this study

touches upon sexuality and involves families, some ethical considerations were addressed by the researcher when the University of Brighton ethical approval was granted. These considerations are now discussed.

Consent, anonymity and confidentiality

Deception, a false representation of the study by the researcher (Creswell 2007), was avoided by the researcher sending an email to the informant prior to the interview. This email described the research in detail, introduced the researcher and explained the interview process. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher verbally reinforced this information and highlighted the voluntary aspect of all interviewees' participation, their right to refuse recording and to withdraw at any moment. These aspects were also emphasised on the informed consent form, produced in accordance with the University of Brighton's guidelines.

After consent was given, the interview was recorded and later transcribed in accordance with Poland's (2002) guidelines. Anonymity was observed through the use of pseudonyms. To guarantee respondent confidentiality, all files pertaining to the interviews (including recordings and transcriptions) were securely stored in the researcher's personal computer (password-protected) and were handled by the researcher only.

Sexuality

As previously indicated, the main topics addressed in this study were not considered sensitive to the participants. Nevertheless, during interaction with the interviewees, the researcher utilised an approach which Skanfors (2009, p 9) terms "ethical radar": he remained attentive to all verbal and non-verbal signs given by respondents in case they felt uncomfortable, which, it is worth noting, never appeared to happen.

Issues relating to sexuality were also minimised by the researcher being gay and disclosing his sexuality to the interviewees prior to meeting them.

As the doctrine suggests, trust is facilitated when the researcher is an insider (Platzer and James 1997; Hayman *et al.* 2012), which, in this case, helped participants feel more comfortable discussing their homosexuality in relation to their travel choices. Moreover, increased acceptance of both homosexuality in general, and gay and lesbian parented families in particular, in many industrialised Western countries (Ryan and Berkowitz 2009; Hughes and Southall 2012) continues to lessen sensitivities towards the topic. In addition, as explained before, participants were recruited on the grounds of self-identified sexual orientation. Interviewees were people who have embraced their homosexuality and thus felt more confident to talk freely about their sexualities.

The guarantee that participants would be anonymous and information kept confidential also reduced potential ethical issues related to sexuality. Finally, as previously stated, the respondents' right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and to refuse to answer questions were reinforced both in writing and verbally.

Family research

Gabb (2010) mentions the lack of privacy and confidentiality as an ethical challenge in family research. However, as already explained, because the topics addressed revolved around holiday memories, which, as the literature suggests, help enhance family connections, the lack of privacy became less of an issue. Indeed, when interviews involved more than one person, participants were quite excited about the opportunity to talk about their holidays and their being together contributed to them reviving their experiences, thereby yielding very insightful information.

The same applied to interviews in which children participated; they all seemed thrilled to be able to contribute with their holiday stories. Moreover, when this was the case, parents were present and actively encouraged them to take part in the conversation. In addition to reminding them of their right to withdraw at any time, throughout the whole interview

process, the researcher remained aware of any potential signs of distress by the children, which, as pointed out, never occurred.

The lack of privacy in family research may also refer to the researcher's access to families' homes. As indicated earlier, according to participants' convenience, interviews took place in cafés, a pub, a fitness centre, one interviewee's workplace; yet most of them were conducted in the families' homes. According to Yee and Andrews (2006), when the interview takes place at the family's home, intrusion and constant interruptions may disempower the researcher and cause his / her role to become ambiguous.

In this study, the loss of power was indeed observed on a few occasions when the researcher felt he lost control of the interview process, sometimes simply because it was difficult to talk to more than one person at a time. A certain level of ambiguity in the researcher's role was also noted and, in some homes, the researcher was treated more like a guest. On the other hand, as MacDonald and Greggans (2008) explain, the 'messiness' of qualitative research is indicative of how rich this type of inquiry can be. The home as an interview setting can be beneficial for the research as it allows respondents to feel confident and helps the researcher gain the family's trust (Neill 2007), thereby acting as a "psychologically safe environment" (Blichfeldt 2007, p. 254). In this study, the family's home as the place for the interview also allowed the researcher to have a better grasp of the family's life. Moreover, on more than one occasion, interviewees used decorative photographs and souvenirs as a mnemonic aid or a way to make a point in their discourses. Throughout the interviews, the researcher never 'turned off' his ethical radar and was attentive to all potential cues given by respondents that might indicate their discomfort with the researcher's presence.

3.2.5. Trustworthiness

The quality of scientific knowledge is evaluated through three criteria: validity, reliability and objectivity (Angen 2000; Patton 2002; Bryman 2008). Validity relates to answering the questions whether findings really express the truth (internal validity) and whether they are applicable to other contexts (external validity) (Golafshani 2003). Reliability refers to the replicability of findings (Decrop 2004), and objectivity to the inquirer's neutrality (Angen 2000). These notions, however, are all implicated in a realist ontology / objectivist epistemology. They assume truth as unique and the researcher as unbiased, and are thus not applicable to interpretivist paradigms. Qualitative research, or naturalistic inquiry, should be evaluated according to trustworthiness (Erlandson *et al.* 1993). There are four components to trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. The mechanisms used in this study to enhance each one of these criteria are now explained.

Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity and relates to the correspondence between the respondent's reality and the representation of this reality by the inquirer (Erlandson *et al.* 1993). Credibility can be strengthened via member checks (Erlandson *et al.* 1993) which consist of double checking the information with the participants, an approach conducted in this study during the interviews via clarifying questions. At the end of some interviews, the researcher also summarised the main ideas discussed to check whether they were close to the interviewees' understanding.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also cited prolonged engagement with the participants as a way of gaining their trust and heightening credibility. In this research, because long engagement sessions with participants were not always feasible (interviews took on average one hour), the researcher acquired interviewees' trust through other manners recommended by the literature (Angen 2000; Erlandson *et al.* 1993; Decrop 2004), namely,

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personal presentation and the use of jargon-free language. Furthermore, the snowballing technique used was paramount to develop trust as most of the families interviewed had at least one common acquaintance with the researcher.

Transferability corresponds to external validity and relates to the possibility of transferring and applying findings to other settings (Golafshani 2003). Transferability implies naturalistic researchers must be able to provide descriptions of the research context so other researchers may judge whether or not findings can be applied to their own projects (Lincoln and Guba 1985). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained, purposive sampling, as used in this inquiry, is *per se* a technique that enhances transferability. Another technique suggested is the use of thick description, a contested term in the doctrine. In this study, thick description is understood as the thorough description of both the data (Decrop 2004) and the research context (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Erlandson *et al.* 1993). According to Erlandson et al. (1993), thick description should allow the reader to have a clear picture of the setting and people involved in the research. In this study, as noted before, the inquirer used a research diary, in which he noted everything that related to the interview, including the descriptions of the places. Below is the diary entry referring to the interview with Mia and Miranda.

> Last night I had an interview with a lesbian couple. Mia and Miranda are in their fifties and have an 18 year old son. Their son was not there though. Quite understandable since the interview happened on a Friday evening! I got there at least half an hour before the time set and had to go to a nearby café to kill time. It was a really cold night and doing a bit of people-watching before the interview helped me relax. They would be the first lesbian couple I would interview and I was quite anxious about the idea. Mia and Miranda, however, were both really kind and made me feel at ease as soon as I set foot in their house.
>
> They live in a typical Victorian house in Brighton, in a very calm neighbourhood on a lovely street that overlooks the wheel and the sea. When I got there, I had a moment of hesitation: it took them a while to open the door and I started to wonder whether I had got the date wrong. When Miranda came to open the door, she seemed quite confused. I had to explain to her who I was and then she let me in. Apparently,

> Mia, who I had been in contact with, had forgotten to tell her the day when I was coming.

> Miranda made me sit in a very warm (thankfully the fire was on!) and comfortable lounge while she went upstairs to call Mia. I took the opportunity to take all my material out of my bag and try to look like a professional researcher. The lounge was really well decorated and the lively red walls contrasted nicely with the clear furniture. I could see they had a very sophisticated taste for arts given all the sculptures on the shelves and paintings on the walls.

Dependability, the equivalent of reliability, refers to "trackability", or documenting the research process (Erlandson *et al.* 1993, p. 34). Finally, confirmability, which corresponds to objectivity, relates to the possibility of tracking down the interpretation of findings (Decrop 2004). In other words, dependability involves tracking down the research process as a whole and confirmability, the data analysis in particular. For dependability and confirmability to be enhanced, all the changes to the research design and data analysis must be registered in an audit trail (Lincoln and Guba 1985). In the case of this inquiry, the research diary has kept a trail of the changes that have happened since the beginning of the research process. Moreover, the adoption of contact summary sheets and reflective remarks, as discussed earlier, have contributed to enhancing this project's confirmability.

3.2.6. Reflexivity and Positionality

The Heideggerian phenomenological strategy, adopted in this project, acknowledges and encourages the inquirer's participation in the research process as long as this participation is understood. Therefore, phenomenological inquirers (and qualitative researchers in general) must consistently reflect on their relationship with the research as a whole. This section outlines the reflections made by the researcher on the impact of his own lived experience on the research (and *vice versa*).

As explained in the introduction, Feighery (2006) defines reflexivity as the researcher's ability to reflect on her / his own behaviour and values during

the research process. Reflexivity is the recognition that researchers cannot get rid of their baggage of knowledge, which allows them to gain their place in the research process (Feighery 2006). It involves a process of self-consciousness (Hall 2004), which makes the inquirer assume her / his position as an insider, not a detached observer (Phillimore and Goodson 2004; Blaikie 2007).

As Hall (2004) says, reflexivity is a practice rather than a theory or a model. Everett (2010) explains reflexive practices must address the researcher's positionality. For Deutsch (2004), positionality involves the inquirer being aware of the subjectivities and the power (im)balance involved in his / her relationship with participants. Everett (2010, p. 170) claims positionality refers to the acknowledgment of "what the intersection of factors including nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, class and age brings to the research process." Thus, reflexivity is a practice, and positionality a locatedness or situatedness (Woodward 2008). Reflexivity is a set of actions that lead to positionality, which is the awareness of the researcher's position in relation to research as a whole, namely, the process that includes the search for information, collection of data, generation of findings and interaction with participants.

Reflexivity suggests self-implication, which goes against the notion of the researcher as a "disembodied intellect" (Feighery 2006, p. 270). As discussed in the introduction, reflexivity may sometimes become a self-indulgent exercise (Pillow 2003; Sultana 2007; Santos 2012), in which "the researcher's voice may eventually overshadow the participant's" (Finlay 2002, p. 265). Nonetheless, when the inquirer is completely detached from the research, as Phillimore and Goodson (2004) posit, the richness of qualitative inquiry is dissipated. In this sense, Hall (2004) calls for the use of the first person, I, in every qualitative research as a rejection of the neutrality advocated by objectivists. Therefore, here, to fully explore my own subjectivity, demonstrate my reflexive skills and try to make sense of my positionality, I use the first person.

Before I proceed with my personal account, however, two comments are necessary. Firstly, although this narrative is entitled "My journey", it is not

my intention to produce an egocentric attempt of self-discovery. As I stated earlier, this thesis is about families parented by gays and lesbians and, while I am integral part of this study, it is not my purpose for it to become an exercise of self-absorption. Secondly, I do not engage in reflexivity to make my project more valid, realist or 'truer' or to establish for myself a position of authority. Rather, what drives me to write my personal account is an attempt to make sense of the complex relationship between my Ph.D. project and me, as a way of ultimately gaining an understanding of the research process and the social phenomena I propose to study.

My journey

My choice for the topic of the gay and lesbian parented families came as a consequence of my life experience. When I decided to apply for a Ph.D., my interests initially converged to hospitality related topics. Having worked in the hotel industry and holding a masters degree in hospitality management, it seemed natural to me that my Ph.D. would be in this field. However, my sexuality made itself felt and, while I was searching for a potential topic, my attention was driven to an article on gay tourism that had been recently published. It had not crossed my mind to conduct research on something that I actually *liked*, something with strong social implications as opposed to a theme that would interest and benefit the tourism / hospitality industry only. I immediately started to look for the literature on the subject and quickly came to the realisation that there was a very significant gap in knowledge in tourism: no empirical research had been produced on lesbian and gay parented families' tourism. I immediately fell in love with the idea. My contact with, and support from my supervisor, Dr Nigel Jarvis, was crucial as he encouraged me to write my research proposal and apply for the University of Brighton. Later, after I had already started my studies, in a casual conversation with a friend, I came to the conclusion that my choice for the lesbigay parented families' tourism was also a consequence of my (until then) unconscious desire to have my own children and constitute my own family. Additionally, while reviewing the literature, I had another insight: studying family tourism was also a nostalgic way of reviving my own childhood and remembering all the fascinating (and, in my little boy's imagination, magical) holidays I had had with my parents and siblings in our old red Dodge. I understand now that, in many ways, I started my study with a subconscious wish to come to terms with *my sexuality* and ended up coming to terms with *my family*.

So I can say this topic has a very personal, affective and emotional importance to me. This became quite clear when, after starting collecting data, I one day realised how much pleasure I had in conducting my interviews. Interviewing lesbigay parented families was more than simply meeting people, more than talking about my research and finding the practical implications of my study. It was about realising those families were real and did not only exist in the literature. They were people living in real houses, with busy lives and tight schedules, people who collected supermarket vouchers to travel, people with their very own needs and motivations. For a while, the idea that I would represent those people disturbed me. Who was I to speak on behalf of people I hardly knew? On the other hand, this gave me extra motivation as I started to believe I could not disappoint them. Those families had received me in their homes, told me their personal stories, offered me water, coffee and even dinner and I unconsciously felt I needed to do something in return. At a certain point, I realised I was really idealising those families and became so involved I began to refer to them as *my* families.

All these feelings were undoubtedly enhanced by the difficulties of finding respondents: after having been ignored or turned down by so many potential participants, those families had accepted to be interviewed by me, a virtual stranger, and I felt extremely grateful to them. As far as recruitment is concerned, I must confess I underestimated the hardships I would face. I thought, because I was a gay man, accessing LGBT associations would be simple and recruiting would not take long. As I concluded in fairly early stages of the process, however, not having children posed a bigger problem: for instance, one LGBT family association in Brighton refused my joining them on the grounds I did not have children myself. In other words, my positionality as a single childless man diluted the positive effects my sexual orientation might have had on sampling. Suddenly, being gay became far less important than not having children (at least as far as my research was concerned).

On the other hand, I do believe my positionality as a gay man made the interview process easier as it seems to have helped me gain the interviewees' trust: I imagine their realisation that we had something in common may have helped them feel more relaxed and confident. In the early stages of my research, I also felt inspired and encouraged by my respondents' demonstrations of pride and resilience. In my eyes, they were brave LGBT people who, in many ways, challenged both social conventions and gay culture when having children and forming families. Having been raised in a homophobic environment and having had some experiences of discrimination, I felt these gay and lesbian parents were role models, real examples to be followed. When I started

analysing and interpreting the data, it took me a long time (and some serious emotional struggle) to understand there was more to their pride than their words were telling me and, in several respects, they also had contradictory relationships with their sexualities.

Almost all the interviewees asked me if I had children. When I answered, some of them, assuming I had no experience with kids, were very didactic in their answers, for instance, explaining in detail all the 'tools' and objects they must carry when travelling with their babies. Many informants asked me if I *wanted* to have children, which I interpreted as their attempt to understand the motivations underlining my choice of research topic. Likewise, almost every participant asked me whether their answers were different from those of the families previously interviewed. I must say I found this rather amusing: it seemed to me that, more than simply being curious, they were looking for potential commonalities, as if trying to confirm or legitimise their parental skills or identities.

I also believe my age helped me gain the interviewees' trust faster. When the interviews were conducted, I was 40 years old, and thus in the same age group as most respondents. I wonder whether the trust they had in me and the answers they gave me would have been different had I been any younger or much older.

Before data collection took place, I was quite concerned about how my positionality as a Brazilian man might affect the quality of the interviews. Because English is not my first language, I was worried I might not understand the respondents or they might not understand my accent. More than that, I was concerned my coming from a different background might impact on their trust and answers. Apart from a few moments when I had to ask for language or cultural clarification and the fact that none of the interviewees cited Brazil as a destination to be avoided (which, I conjecture, might be a consequence of my nationality), I believe my background turned in my favour. Being Brazilian revealed to be a very nice ice breaker as some of the respondents seemed really interested in my country (particularly Brazilian football) and my experience of living in England. This helped me start most interviews in a very relaxed, smooth way.

Likewise, I believe my gender played in my favour. Before starting the interviews, I must admit I was quite concerned. Because I was going to interview women, I was aware of the potential effect my gender might have on accessing and interviewing them, as indicated in the doctrine (see Warren 2002 for a review of the literature on gender and interview). However, it turned out to be far simpler to have access to women. As I have said in this chapter, I do not intend to make any claims or generalisations, but one of the mothers I

interviewed made a very interesting comment in relation to my gender. She mentioned it was nice to find a man doing research on lesbians. I interpreted this as a suggestion that women (and lesbians in particular) are really under-represented in the doctrine. My desire to have their voices heard has given me further motivation to continue my study. On the other hand, I felt the derogatory comments about men (in particular gay men) made by some of my female interviewees were often followed by manifestations of embarrassment as if they were cautious not to offend or shock me.

Not only did my positionality have an impact on my research but the opposite also happened: my journey as a researcher affected my emotions and my personality. Doing a Ph.D. is never easy and the emotional labour involved in carrying out research sometimes made itself felt. The feelings of powerlessness, when I felt the research process was not as smooth as I expected, and isolation, in particular the intellectual isolation of not being able to talk about my research to many people, took their toll. Many times I wondered whether it was worth carrying on. More than anything else, I had my share of personal doubts, aggravated by my self-criticism and the fact that I had left my country and quit a fulfilling (and promising) job to engage in an extremely challenging new career. On the other hand, I believe I have gained confidence in many other aspects of my life, including my intellectual abilities, my communication and social skills and my relationship with myself. It was indeed, as the (academic) story goes, a roller coaster full of ups and downs but I now understand that, rather than the end, this is just the beginning of a very exciting journey.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the methodology and methods used in this investigation of same-sex parented families' travel motivations and destination choice. First, it looked into the researcher's philosophical positions, which informed the choice of data collection methods. It explained the researcher's ontological stance as a *relativist* (viewing realities as multiple) and his epistemological position as a *constructionist* (regarding knowledge as a co-construction between researcher and researched).

This chapter also explained the adoption in this study of the *interpretivist* paradigm, aimed at finding the meaning social actors ascribe to their

behaviour. As motivations cannot be separated from meanings, interpretivism is ideal to enlighten the drive that compels lesbian and gay parented families to go on holiday. Then, the use of *Heideggerian phenomenology* as the research strategy was justified. This strategy aims to reveal the meanings assigned by these families to motivations and choices through their lived experiences and acknowledges the researcher as a participant in the construction of knowledge.

The chapter then focused on research methods and the practical aspects pertaining to data collection in this study. The choice for *interviews* as the most appropriate methods to capture the individual experience of research participants was then justified. The chapter also described the data collection process while highlighting the challenges of recruiting families parented by lesbians but especially gay men. Because of such challenges, sampling in this project was mainly done via snowballing. A profile of research participants was provided along with a description of the context in which this study took place.

The data analysis method, which emphasises the researcher's reflexive practices and multiple levels of interpretation, was then described. Considerations on the ethical aspects involved in this study were then made and the techniques used by the researcher to address the themes of confidentiality, sexuality and research with families were explained. These techniques refer to the inquirer observing ethical guidelines and procedures but also being attentive to participants' potential signs of discomfort.

The methods used in this study to enhance trustworthiness were then discussed. Some of these include, for instance, the use of thick description and a research diary. Finally, the chapter concluded with considerations on the researcher's reflexivity, his positionality as a gay childless man and the impact of this on this study.

The next chapters present the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This Ph.D. contributes to an understanding of gay and lesbian parented families in relation to their travel motivations and destination choice. For this aim to be reached, this study delves into the decisions of these families and explores how, if at all, the children participate in the process. It also investigates whether, and how, the parents' sexuality impacts on these families' travel motivations and destination choice. Finally, it explores how these families navigate the heteronormativity that characterises most holiday spaces while investigating whether and how this affects their social interaction on holiday as well their motivations and choices.

The findings of this study are presented in two chapters. The first (chapter four) describes the data that emerged from the phenomenological qualitative interviews conducted, whereas the second (chapter five) analyses and interprets these data while contrasting them to the literature and offering wider theoretical implications of their meaning. Three main reasons explain the option of organising the data this way. The first is didactic. Rather than presenting the answers to the research questions enmeshed in a profusion of themes, it was deemed important to provide the reader with a clear view of how the participants responded to these questions. This is consistently done in chapter four. The second reason relates to the research methodology. As explained in chapter three, this study adopted an interpretivist paradigm and a phenomenological strategy, aimed at unmasking the meaning social actors ascribe to their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Miller and Salkind 2002; Patton 2002; Creswell 2007). In other words, revealing such meaning is central to this investigation and, thus, it was considered appropriate to do so in a separate chapter. The third reason is concerned with the trustworthiness of the study. Following the doctrine's recommendations (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Erlandson *et al.* 1993), both chapters provide a thick description of the data, which enhances the study's transferability. Chapter five,

however, strengthens its confirmability by offering the reader the opportunity to track down the interpretation of findings as recommended in the literature (Erlandson *et al.* 1993; Decrop 2004).

At this point, a few comments are worth being made about the presentation of the findings. Whereas, in chapter four, findings are categorised under *topics*, in chapter five, they are presented under *themes*. A clarification here is necessary, particularly because these terms are often used inconsistently in research (Sandelowski and Barroso 2003). A topic is understood here as a subject addressed by research participants in their replies to interview questions. A theme is a category which, in line with the interpretivist paradigm adopted, uncovers the latent meanings from within the data (Boyatzis 1998). Themes capture the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Braun and Clarke 2008) and move away from the participants' language to reveal the subtleties and contradictions of their lived experiences (Sandelowski and Barroso 2003). They imply a transformation of data through interpretation and are, thus, central to qualitative research. Because they emerged throughout data collection and analysis stages, the themes discussed in chapter five not only illuminate the research questions but also contribute to a theoretically informed understanding of same-sex parented families in relation to aspects that relate, but are not limited to, their travel motivations and destination choice.

Another noteworthy comment relates to the verb tense used to present the findings. Both past and present tenses are used in these chapters. The former is used to recount participants' narratives, thereby emphasising the past in their lived experiences. The present is utilised in the analysis and interpretation of participants' actions and to compare findings with the literature. This is because the present brings the meanings of participants' accounts back to the time of the writing; in doing so, it conveys continuity, hence extending these meanings into the future (Thody 2006; Smith 2007).

Finally, it is important to note the quotations chosen to support the arguments through both chapters are by no means exhaustive. They have

been chosen because they are deemed fully illustrative of the points being made.

Chapter four groups the key findings in different sections. The first presents the findings about respondents' travel motivations; the second section delves into their choices of destination. In the third section, findings concerning family holiday decisions are described while the final section presents those that relate to these families' possibilities of social interaction whilst on holiday.

4.1. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS

This section presents the responses yielded by respondents about motivations to go on holiday as a family unit. In this section, findings are presented in order of frequency of mentions, with the most recurrent motivations listed first.

4.1.1. Relaxing and Taking a Break from Routine

When asked what motivated them to go on holiday with their families, the most common answers related to a desire to rest and relax, often referring to a search for beach or nature, sports or adventure and the sun or fine weather. For example, Lynn described her family motivation via her daughter's needs: "All she wants to do is play, be out in the nature." Naomi, Tina's daughter, stated "we've always done sport holidays." In another interview, Mia declared "we always look for the sun no matter where we go." When asked to explain why these aspects were important, participants often referred to enjoyment and relaxation. For instance, when asked to expand upon his preference for beaches, Ian stated: "For me, one of the things that is different is the appeal to do something that sounds and feels potentially relaxing, it's something much more appealing."

Likewise, Elizabeth explained her choice of caravanning with the family by saying: "It was just more relaxing."

The desire for relaxation was many times associated with the need for a break from routine, which was consistently mentioned by the interviewees. For example, for Tina "it [holidays] is about doing something different to what you do every day." For Stephen and Bruce, the desire to take a break from routine led the family to prioritise unstructured activities while on holiday: "When we go on holiday, we don't want any more routine than we already have." In turn, the desire to rest from routine was linked with a need to be away from home, where home was associated with duties. Lynn explained the importance of going on holiday through a desire to be away from her daily responsibilities at home:

> I have dogs and cats, so to be away from the responsibility of picking up dog poo (laugh) and walking the dog, I mean, I love my animals, but to be without them, to have a lie-in, to not have the responsibility of looking after things… You know, when you're in your own house, you're just reminded of the bills and the things that need to be done.

When expressing their need for relaxation and a break from routine, interviewees often referred to a desire to escape the pressures of their personal lives. As Bill stated: "What we like to do when we go away, because our work is quite a lot of pressure, we just like to go and relax and just do nothing." Doris narrated her family holidays when her partner and she were still together, and claimed: "Getting away was important to us [her and her partner] because we both did quite stressful jobs."

It should be noted that, while for the majority of the parents interviewed the desire to take a break from routine was cited as an important travel motivation, some families expressed a desire to keep their routine and home environment while on holiday. This was especially the case of families with babies and / or toddlers. Gillian said: "We do like places with self-catering. We can kind of have our own environment and that helps for the children's routine as well." In a similar vein, when justifying the choice of self-catered houses as holiday accommodation, Lynn stated:

It's very simple, she [her daughter] gets up, you play with her, you feed her, you change her clothes, you feed her, you play with her, she naps and the big highlight of the day is taking a hot bath (laugh). She loves the bath, it doesn't matter if you're in a five star hotel. She doesn't care. She knows that 5:30 is bath time! And then she drinks a bottle and goes to bed! And so it makes sense to stay in a house.

Similarly, in Mike's case:

I like the cottage because we normally have a proper bathroom. When we stayed in Weymouth, we rented a mobile home, caravan thing. One of the rooms had an en-suite bathroom. It was quite a decent size but it was still a shower and Alan [his son] doesn't like showers. So I couldn't bathe him all week and that's very much part of the bed routine: 'so, okay, you watch television for 20 minutes, then we go and have a bath, then we have stories, then we go to bed.' So it's nice to keep to those sorts of routines really.

Another comment here is noteworthy. While, for the majority of the interviewees, holidays were equated with break from routine and relaxation, a few respondents also emphasised negative aspects involved in holidays. For some, family travels were stressful as parental duties were also taken on holiday. As Lynn pointed out:

It's quite stressful having a baby. The day to day is tiring and stressful. And it wouldn't be any different if it was in a [holiday destination]… Me, Sigourney [her partner] and Lizzie [their daughter] in a beautiful luxurious house… there'd still be dirty nappies, temper tantrums, getting up in the middle of the night, so it's hard work.

Similarly, for Luke, spending time with his two little boys (4 years old and 20 months old) was a draining experience: "I'll say that straight away, at the moment, doing anything with them is a nightmare… with both of them."

4.1.2. Spending Time Together and Connecting

Holidays were also seen and described as opportunities for the family to spend time together and bond as a unit. For instance, for Caroline, "it's about being together 'cause we spend so little time together as a family." A

similar need was also expressed by Shirley, for whom "it [family holidays] is not about tourism, it's about spending time together. It's about making sure we're there for him [her son], you know, 'cause we're both very busy people." The need to spend time together shaped Stephen and Bruce's choices of holiday activities which, as they stated, "have to engage the whole family". For them, spending time together was also a strong motivation to choose self-contained facilities as opposed to staying in hotels since the former were considered to give the family an opportunity to be alone together. As Stephen declared: "It's just the four of us, it's more private, I think." For Elizabeth, holidays provided the family with opportunities for conversation: "We spend more time together, we talk more to each other." In George's words, "moments like family holidays, I treasure because to me it's kind of like a bonding experience, it's a family experience and we do something nice together."

Interviewees' statements also pointed to the wide range of connections family holidays create and / or consolidate. Such connections happen not only amongst immediate family members, but also with the extended family, and other groups, such as friends. During holidays, relaxation causes parents, for instance, to reconnect with children and regain or reinforce a parental position. Mike provided an example. He is a single father with one son; thus, most of his spare time is devoted to the boy. As such, he claims they already enjoy a 'close' relationship. Even so, he said holidays allowed for connection:

> I'm definitely very present in his life. But, you know, Tuesday, I say to him 'you've got to spend the day with grandma, Wednesday you've got to go to nursery.' He just loves having me around, he does love it when it's just us. So holidays are great for all that sort of thing really, when he gets up every day and knows it's just gonna be us.

For Luke, holidays allowed him to bond with his sons, particularly because they lived with their mothers, a lesbian couple:

> I travel in the U.K. mainly to do sort of camping holidays, those sorts of things, you know, activities for boys. Not that girls and boys are different, but, as a father figure, something you can do, that is quite sporty stuff anyway… The eldest one has got bags of energy and that sort of thing would be

good, discipline wise, for him. He needs a bit of structure. They [his mothers] are making him do things he doesn't necessarily choose to do. 'Cause all he wants to do is dress up and that's very much influenced by one of the mothers who wants him to be an actor. She's quite pushy. So I try and balance that out. So having him for full days, it's interesting to see the things he comes up with.

Family tourism also led to connection or reconnection with relatives and friends. George, for instance, made sure his family holidays included trips to visit his cousins in Malta. Rick claimed his visits to his mother encouraged a bond to develop between her and his son, who had been conceived by a surrogate mother with his partner's sperm. As Rick was not genetically related to the boy, it had taken his mother time to come to terms with being a grandparent. In this sense, his son and his mother spending time together on holidays facilitated the creation of a family bond. For Tina, connecting with friends was an important factor when deciding who to travel with. She explained why she decided not to go on holiday with one specific family:

> Tina: Our kids work quite hard [during holidays]. And this other family… I'd rigged the boats, I'd de-rigged the boats, and these two lads, my friends' children, hadn't even washed their wet suits, they were just not in tune with it. So it's easier to go away with my brother or my best friend, Becky, because we've known each other for years and we're all very experienced. And we just kind of fit into a kind of-
> Ewan [son]: We click.
> Naomi [daughter]: Yeah, rhythm.
> Ewan: Like clocks.

A similar sense of connection with a group was described by Gillian. Due to her partner being deaf, the family preferred to go on holiday with other deaf people:

> We have a lot of deaf friends. So we've been either to stay with deaf friends or there's a big camping festival that's on every two years that we go to and which is a big deaf thing. But the deaf community is very small and I think we were probably one of the first lesbian couples to have kids. So, you know, everybody knows us. It's really small and it's got a really strong, great vibe. There isn't anybody that we'd meet that wouldn't know us. It's like a family, really.

4.1.3. Introducing Children to Education, Culture and Physical Activities

Parents were keen to introduce their children to education and culture and described this as an important travel motivation. For Abraham, a holiday was an opportunity to "broaden his [his son's] horizons". When asked to explain this expression, Abraham declared taking his son to different places was a way of exposing him to the new:

> So I think it's good to take someone like that out of his surroundings, obviously make sure he feels safe and all that, so that, in his safety, he can open his eyes and look at different things, see different things.

For Tina, introducing her children to art and culture compensated for a perceived omission in their education:

> That [going to Amsterdam on family holidays] was actually my idea 'cause I feel they don't get much culture. We loved Amsterdam, we loved the art galleries. You know, we ought to do more of that.

A retired teacher, Graeme was conscious of the role holidays had, not only in his children's education, but also in his and his partner's personal growth:

> Travel is education, travel opens your mind. It wasn't designed to educate them but I know they always gained something from it. And taught us things as well while we were away! You know, they would discover things and point things out.

Another recurrent point among the respondents revolved around their need to keep children active during holidays. As previously mentioned, families claimed the need to engage in sports and adventure was a very important part of their motivation to go on holiday, and it usually engaged the whole family. Conversely, the desire to engage children in physical activities, which is discussed here, was solely directed at the offspring. This was particularly true for parents of younger children. For Mike, "it's about keeping him [his 2-year-old son] physically stimulated." Likewise, for

Luke, keeping his two boys (aged 4 and 20 months) busy was a way of making them expend energy:

> Or [we like] going to that type of place where there's all sorts of cycling, sports, things that keep them occupied. You know, they're both quite active boys, so, you know, keeping them busy is a good thing.

In a like manner, Ian, father of a toddler, explained: "We go to the [Royal] Horticultural Society, Wisley Gardens, and walk around there for several hours, have a meal. It's usually like anything that involves allowing him to walk around, see new things, tire himself out, basically." When discussing the importance of physical activities during holidays, Bill stated:

> So, Center Parcs, for instance… you've got swimming pool, you've got bowling, you've got tennis, you've got climbing, horse riding, cycling, it's more activities to entertain, it's more about entertainment. Because, you know, the worst thing is to have bored kids.

In a similar vein, for Mia, "keeping him [her son] busy when he was little was more of a necessity, really." For Charlie, the need to keep the children active and entertained determined family holiday choices. When explaining why she preferred to go to beaches rather than cities when her children were young, she said:

> Try tramping around the city with a kid, with a load of kids and then you have to keep them entertained all the time (laugh), while, when you are on the beach, they can run around with a ball. So city breaks were not breaks.

4.1.4. Taking a Break from Parental Duties

As Charlie's claim quoted above seems to imply, keeping the children entertained was connected with another important travel motivation, cited by most respondents: the desire to take a temporary break from parental duties. If children were busy, for instance playing among themselves, then parents were allowed to take a short rest. In most cases, not only did the desire to take a break from parenting affect holiday motivations but it also

had a two-fold effect. Firstly it impacted on destination and accommodation choices; secondly, it influenced the choice of the people invited to accompany the family on holiday. For example, some parents chose specific destinations and / or accommodation for their child-friendly facilities. Elizabeth, for instance, explained her reasons for going camping when her children were little:

> For us, that was ideal, 'cause we were looking for somewhere where we could have a holiday 'cause looking after our children was really, really hard work. So we [she and her ex-partner] were after a holiday as well. So this was ideal for us because there was a kids club, we could get up in the morning, have a coffee or they'd have their cereal, and off they would go to kids club. And they would be entertained, and, you know, we could just have a relaxing time.

For a few of the respondents, inviting close friends and / or relatives to go on holiday with the family gave them opportunities to spend time away from their own children. These friends / relatives were invited to share some parental duties, such as bathing the younger children, or to babysit the children for some time, thereby allowing the parents to spend some 'quality time' as a couple. As Lynn stated:

> So Monday we're going on holiday with Sigourney's [Lynn's partner] sister and her husband and their three children, aged six, eight and ten. And we're going to a place called Forest of Dean and it's forest holidays and there are really nice wooden cabins with hot bathtubs out on the deck, really nice! So Sigourney's mum and dad are coming as well. But virtually, by going with her sister and her mum, we get baby sitters (laugh). So hopefully there'll be a night we can go for a walk or do our thing without Lizzie [their daughter]. And vice versa, we'll probably stay in one night with the three children while her sister and husband go out one night and go to dinner or something.

These ideas were discussed in more depth during the interview with Ian and Rick, for whom taking a break from parenting was a fundamental travel motivation. Ian explained they were often accompanied on their holidays by young childless couples. The rationale for this lay in these couples being keen to spend a little of their time with the boy since they were themselves thinking of having children in the future. In Ian's words:

Say you're on the beach and you want to read a book or have a cocktail or something for an hour, then you can say 'okay, you guys, can you watch him for a little while?' These particular couples, because they don't have children, we probably wouldn't say this, but with other couples who do have children and we've spent time with, you know, we might say 'can we have a lie-in tomorrow morning? You watch the kids when they wake up at 6 and then, the following day, maybe we'll wake up early.'

In his speech, Ian illustrates the importance of the need to temporarily rest from parental duties and its influence on the couple's decisions concerning the people with whom they travel. The choice of who accompanied their family on holiday was far from being random; rather, it was a well-considered decision in which their need to take a break from parental tasks was carefully taken into account. Travelling with other people even determined whether or not the family would go on holiday:

Rick: It's actually not that coincidental that we're going with other people. I mean, I think we could do holidays on our own but actually it's nice to go on holidays with friends and, actually, it makes it a bit easier at this age.
Interviewer: Why?
Ian: You get to share a house and some of the responsibility of a very energetic toddler and it's not really a holiday for parents of toddlers unless you get an hour here and an hour there when you aren't parenting, basically, which is why we travel so much with our family as well.
Rick: You know, 'cause the fun bits are quite often the most tiring (Ian nods affirmatively). So it's actually quite nice to say 'well, you go and have fun with him.'
Ian: At seventeen months, it [going on holiday without friends] is *not* an option. So going to the beach for a week with your friends looking after him part of the time *is* an option! [original emphasis from Ian's speech]
Interviewer: So it's about keeping him busy and trying to relax?
Ian: Oh yeah, if you get that balance then you've done well.

4.1.5. Visiting and Meeting the Extended Family

Visits to relatives were often cited as key motivations to go on holiday. For some of the parents interviewed, rather than being pleasant, these visits

were perceived as duties that needed to be repeated with a certain frequency. This is perhaps the reason why some of them did not seem to regard such visits as holidays. In Doris's words: "We might have travelled to visit family members, *not* on holiday [emphasis added]." For Lynn, "there's something about going home [to visit her mother in America] which is not a vacation in the way going to the Canary Islands is."

Visits to the extended family were often made with the purpose of introducing young children to relatives. Quite often, as in Mike's, Rick and Ian's, and Stephen and Bruce's cases, the first trip with a newly born or newly adopted child was to meet the grandparents. The introduction of Lynn's daughter to the extended family involved several trips as the girl had two mothers and two fathers:

> We did a car journey to the Netherlands 'cause Tom, her papa, is Dutch. So we went over when she was 6 months old for his mother's 70th birthday, so we went to the house for a week. So that was nice, a little family trip. And that was five days, a long weekend. And the biggest trip was 17 days in New York City and the Hamptons and that was last month and then the four of us flew together and stayed together. Clark, the other dad, is American. So, Domburg, in the Netherlands, was to spend with Tom's family, New York was to spend with Clark's family so all the relatives could meet Lizzie. So she met all of her cousins. And my mum and my sister flew over for Thanksgiving. So we rented a house in Norfolk and we had a family trip with my family, Tom and Clark and a few friends to celebrate Thanksgiving. So she's had lots of trips! (laugh)

Some of these trips to meet relatives involved repetition. Rick and Ian, for instance, went to the same music festival every year with Rick's extended family.

> Rick: We've taken him [their son] twice to the music festival.
> That's kind of one of the big holidays of the year.
> Ian: It's very family oriented.
> Rick: I've done it since I was five with my family.
> Ian: Yeah, a lot of family members go as well.
> Rick: The people who always go are my uncle and aunt. So, on my dad's side, my uncle and aunt, and then some of my aunt's family can come and some friends of theirs who are our age-
> Ian: Kind of your cousins-

Rick: Yeah, kind of my cousins. My dad used to go before he died. And he's the reason I went.

In a similar vein, Tina, her son and daughter spent at least one of their yearly holidays at the same destination with their extended family.

Tina: And the other holidays we do quite a lot are what they love, it's where you do the same thing every year. So we used to go to the same place every year in Norfolk with the cousins, about 12, 14 of us, more, actually! Every year we go to the same place at Easter. And then in the summer we do a camping trip to… do you know West Wittering near Chichester? It's beautiful! Beautiful sandy beaches! We take 30 or 40 people and we just have a field, we set up like a big family camp and we go every year with friends and family. So they love doing stuff that is just-
Naomi [daughter]: Repetition.
Tina: Repetition.
Naomi: And things that we know.

4.2. DESTINATION CHOICE

As noted in Mia's previously mentioned quotation ("we always look for the sun no matter where we go"), and for all the families interviewed, the choice of destination was significantly connected to the motivation to travel. In a like manner, in Sandrine's case, her love for adventurous holidays determined the places she went to with her partner and children:

We then went to Bharatganj [India] to do some elephant trekking with the children, we did foot trekking with the children. Some of it was on elephant back, some of it was on foot. Same thing in Thailand: we did elephant trekking.

In Tina's family, holiday destinations were associated with their fondness for sports:

Naomi [daughter]: We've been everywhere basically! Scotland and Ireland, it was canoeing. Greece, sailing. Norway, skiing. We're going to Bulgaria in a week and a half to go skiing. So it's really like sport holidays.
Interviewer: So would you say that sports are an important motivation for you?
Ewan [son]: Oh yeah!

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However, as far as these families' holidays were concerned, one factor was central to parents when making destination-related decisions: the needs of their children, which explains why they prioritised family-friendly places.

4.2.1. Family-Friendly Destinations and Children's Needs

For the majority of parents, the interests and wellbeing of their children were at the core of family destination choice. This is illustrated in Bill's repetition of the expression "family orientated":

> And when we go with the kids, then it's obviously about the family, it's more about family orientation. So it'll be Center Parcs. We go to Edward's [his partner] family in Spain. That's their house but they've got a swimming pool but that's sort of a family thing. We still go to hotels but then they're family orientated hotels. That's very family orientated, we stayed in villas they provided for us. So, with the kids, obviously it is more family orientated.

In a like manner, Mike explained his choice of the beach as the destination of the family's next holiday as based on his son's needs:

> My sister in law said to me a long time ago 'if the children are having a nice time, you'll have a nice holiday, and if the children aren't enjoying it, you're gonna have a dreadful holiday.'(laugh) And I so believe that now! For my next holiday [to Weymouth], we said 'we need to be right on the beach' because put them on the beach, some sand, bucket and spade, the water… If they're happy, we're gonna be happy.

Similarly, when justifying why cities were not prioritised as destination choices, Elizabeth said:

> When you have children, your focus is on the children 'cause you want to find the best kind of holiday. Basically, all parents will tell you 'if the children are happy, they're having a nice time, then you are!' You know, there's no point walking around the city because you want to see lots of museums with two little children.

In this sense, children were sometimes perceived as reducing holiday possibilities. Elizabeth herself stated having a wider range of holiday destination choices before she and her partner adopted their daughters:

> When there was just the two of us, we used to go much further afield. I mean, we went to China, to the States, we went to lots of different places. Yeah, it was just the two of us, you know, we could do what we wanted.

In contrast, for a few parents, going to child-friendly places was considered fun:

> And Center Parcs is good, trust me. Because you have things to do! We've done it with Aaron [his son] a couple of times when he was younger. So yeah, Center Parcs is good. I'm quite looking forward to going back there myself (laugh). (Bill)

4.2.2. Restrictions to Destination Choice

Recurrent among interviewees was the statement that destination choice was restricted by a number of factors. Budget was the most frequently mentioned factor constraining choices. For example, Donna and Lilly had their holiday decisions heavily impacted upon by family budget, which was mentioned on several occasions during the interview: "We used to travel a lot more. We're a bit poor at the moment, so we don't travel that much (laugh)." When questioned about places they would not go to as a family, Lilly mentioned she would avoid Arab countries, as they were perceived as not gay friendly, to which Donna quickly replied: "Well, we haven't got the money anyway." Lilly then confirmed: "No, we haven't got the money to go there (laugh)." For Michelle, destination choice was centred on family budget. Visiting her relatives in New Zealand depended on financial support from her parents, and many holidays in the past had been booked through supermarket vouchers she had collected. A few months prior to the interview, Michelle and her daughter had had a holiday in Skiathos. She justified her choice of the Greek island with a list of priorities, in which budget occupied the most important position. Budget was cited as limiting

holiday choices more often by the mothers interviewed, with only two fathers referring to it as a special consideration.

For some parents, budget restrictions were directly related to the presence of children. For example, when asked to explain their option for France as a destination, Elisa and Giuliana referred to budget and their daughter's age:

> When we first met, as a couple, it was easier to travel, and then we had a daughter and it was still cheap to travel 'cause it was just the two of us and we didn't have to pay for Helen [their daughter]. But then, as Helen got older, we now have to pay for a flight for her; so there's that consideration.

For Robert and Freddy, the presence of children also affected the choice of holiday destinations, not because of budget restrictions but because time was now a concern:

> Now that Emily [his eldest daughter] is at school, everything has changed. We're not so flexible. If [before] I was going on a work trip, they'd just come with me. But now it's school holidays, so, we're incredibly limited now. We were very, very flexible. (Robert)

Children, therefore, restrict holiday choices in several respects. Not only are their needs are an absolute priority when travel choices are made but also the extra cost involved in taking another person (or more) on holiday must be catered for. Moreover, time must be based on the school calendar, which further inhibits the number of destination options.

Also cited by many respondents as restricting destination choice was safety. For example, personal safety was a significant issue for Michelle. She explained why she would avoid going back to China:

> They [the Chinese] are either hanging off your arm or they're completely ignoring you. It's really uncomfortable, it's really awkward. It's not nice, I didn't like it at all, the way Chinese people interact with their tourists. As a tourist, I didn't feel it was nice at all. Huh, I was either preyed upon… like, you know, really predatory people…

Likewise, Shirley avoided destinations that posed a threat to her safety:

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Shirley: I think, you know, if it was a war zone, and I was worried about my safety, I might not go.
Interviewer: And you're talking about your personal safety?
Shirley: Yeah, yeah, definitely, my personal safety.

For most of the parents, family-related safety played a crucial role in holiday decisions. Keeping the children safe was a very important concern that significantly shaped the family's destination choice. When asked which places they would avoid, Giuliana and Elisa replied:

Giuliana: As a family, definitely, anywhere that has a security issue. So, having travelled to Mexico on business, I wouldn't want to go to Mexico as a family. I felt it a very intimidating city, I didn't enjoy being there, and the high visibility, presence of the police, the level of guns. I wouldn't want to go there as a family. Yeah, I think, maybe destinations in Africa, parts of Africa, where there's trouble… Egypt, I wouldn't be that keen on, potentially.
Elisa: I think it's security, I think we have to be careful, you know, especially with a child. It does impact on your choices without a doubt.

Similarly, Michelle argued she did not want to submit her daughter to risks and, therefore, did not take her to places that were perceived as potentially hazardous to her health:

I would consider the immunisations. I wouldn't go anywhere I would have to vaccinate her in order to go to. Like, you know, when I was in Thailand, there were a lot of families there. All the children would've had to be vaccinated to get there, malaria and stuff. Now, no, I don't think so.

Finally, for many interviewees, holiday decisions were influenced by safety issues related to their sexuality. Therefore, they avoided destinations that were perceived as homophobic, unfriendly or unsafe to gays and lesbians, or where homosexuality was a crime. Examples given by respondents ranged considerably, with mentions of places as varied as Nigeria, Jamaica, Morocco, Turkey, Saint Martin and the English countryside, to name just a few. When asked what places they would avoid, Robert replied: "Probably Arab countries as a gay family." His partner, Freddy, promptly agreed. "Yeah, certain African countries. Countries that are openly hostile to gay families, because there are some countries where that would be really difficult and potentially dangerous." According to Bill:

There's some countries I wouldn't go because being gay is against the law. I wouldn't go to some of the African countries, I wouldn't go to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and all that. I would only go to places where being gay isn't a problem, where I wouldn't get arrested for being gay. If it's against the law, I wouldn't go.

When discussing how sexuality impacted on his travel decisions, Ian stated: "I wouldn't plan a trip to, you know, what's this Middle Eastern country that is hosting the World Cup? Qatar! I wouldn't plan a trip with my gay husband and my son to Qatar. Way too risky."

For some, avoiding homophobic destinations was more than simply a matter of safety. For Charlie, for instance, it was a choice of places where human rights were respected:

Charlie: I wouldn't really want to go to a country that is homophobic, whether or not I've got kids, to be honest, that was really antigay anyway. I don't like going to places where people are really horrible. I wouldn't have probably gone to Apartheid South Africa, you know, that sort of… I don't particularly wanna go to China.
Interviewer: Because of their human rights situation?
Charlie: Yeah, I'm not really keen.

Likewise, Lynn phrased her refusal to patronise homophobic destinations as a choice with political and economic connotations:

I don't wanna go to a place where you can't be out. You know, politically, I don't wanna support a country like that. And I wouldn't want my holiday to be ruined by the politics around me. That would really bother me! And I think there's plenty of places where it's more chilled and I should give them my money and kind of vote with my pink dollar or my pink pound.

Avoiding homophobic destinations was expressed by some parents as a way of passing on to children values such as honesty and pride. For example, when explaining why she did not go on holiday to homophobic destinations, Gillian stated she did not want to hide her sexuality in front of her children:

It is definitely about them, I think, and not wanting them to see us [her and her partner] behaving differently, as if they feel like we've got something to hide. I think that children made us a bit more conscious of where we've chosen to go.

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4.2.3. Destination Choice, Sexuality and Brighton

If, on the one hand, respondents avoided homophobic destinations, on the other, no interviewees claimed to choose gay–centred destinations for their family holidays. When asked whether lesbian-friendly places were attractive for family holidays, Miranda said she was not interested in those destinations. To support her argument, she then described Lesbos, a popular destination among lesbians, as "one of the most appalling things I've ever done in my life" and categorically rejected it as a destination for family holidays. Reinforcing her choices were based on her taste for sports as opposed to sexuality, Tina said about the same destination:

> You see, I've never been to Lesbos whereas lots of women choose to go to Lesbos. I'd probably choose to go to Greek islands where there's good winds (laugh). So I guess I'm the least guided by that [sexuality] because I'm more guided by other stuff.

Even parents who claimed to visit 'gay destinations' in the past emphasised they only did so when they were childless. As exemplified in Bill's words when explaining what determined the choice of destination:

> We [he and his partner] probably think less of gay destinations and attractions now when we're with the kids. Now, as we're going away with the children, it's about their holiday, we're there to make them have a good time, because it's about them.

Significantly, Bill also avoided going to destinations that catered only for same-sex parented families:

> I don't want it to be a ghetto thing. If there's gay families and straight families and everyone mixes really well, then I haven't got a problem with that... but if it's ghettoised, then no! There shouldn't be any difference where you go because you're there as a family, whether you're gay or straight, that's the important thing! It's about the family while you're away.

In a similar vein, Michelle also said she would avoid going to places targeted at lesbigay parented families only:

I get really turned off by *a* group of *a* particular type of people [emphasis from the original speech]. I don't particularly like the type of people that feel the need to hang around in *a* group of *a* particular type of people either. You know what I mean? (laugh) I'd be a bit worried about the type of people that would go into a gay family place, 'cause I'd [think] 'Oh, why do they all need each other? What's wrong?' (laugh)

Several participants made a link between *not* choosing 'gay destinations' and their home city of Brighton. As indicated in the methodology chapter, most informants lived in Brighton, which is reputed for being very gay friendly. Interviewees discussed Brighton inhabitants' generalised acceptance towards gays and lesbians and described the city as "gay friendly" (Stephen), "multidifferent" (Bill), "postmodern" (Charlie), a "bubble where everything is fine and relaxed" (Luke) and "the perfect place for lesbian and gay people" (Doris). Participants often affirmed this link by stating that, because they lived in Brighton, they were not concerned about finding destinations that were gay friendly. Because the city provided them with the lesbian / gay structure (businesses and nightlife) and support (community and relationships) they believed they needed, they did not find it necessary to seek 'gayness' when going on holiday. As Caroline put it:

> Caroline: I went with friends, gay friends, to a resort in Greece-
> Interviewer: That was lesbian oriented?
> Caroline: No, gay friendly. Half of our friends are gay men.
> Interviewer: And you said you didn't like it?
> Caroline: It's not I didn't like it, it was all right, but it was kind of Brighton at the weekend! (laugh) And I live here! I've done my years of clubbing and the scene, and it was like going to Brighton at the weekend for a holiday but with sun. It's not really what I look for in a holiday.

Likewise, when asked whether his sexuality came into play when choosing holiday destinations, Mike stated: "We're lucky enough to live in a place like Brighton, a place that is so accepting. So when I make holiday plans, when I book my hotel room, I don't really think about it [his sexuality]."

4.3. FAMILY HOLIDAY DECISIONS

For many participants, pre-trip decisions were a fundamental part of the holiday experience. For Stephen, planning had a crucial impact on the success of holidays: "I believe if you want it to work, you have to plan it." However, holiday decisions and planning were sometimes perceived as difficult, long and / or draining. Michelle, for instance, described family decisions prior to their trip to the Greek island of Skiathos as "five days' work." Gillian characterised holiday decisions as time consuming:

> We usually spend a long time looking online. I'm more inclined to lean towards sort of independent travel. So, I quite like the idea of booking a flight, finding somewhere to stay, organising all our entertainment, you know, places to visit. But that's a lot of work, that takes a lot of time.

For George, more than simply time consuming, making holiday decisions when his (now adult) sons were younger involved duties and responsibilities with financial and emotional implications:

> It was always me, financially, to go out and earn the money, to pay for the holidays, it was always me that booked the holidays, it always me that booked the car rental, everything was me in those days. And also being a father, it was also my responsibility [for the holiday] to be safe, and also I kind of felt myself responsible to make sure everyone had a nice time, and also, you know, that we had enough money to spend. So we wanted to take our boys away once a year. So, apart from paying the mortgage and the bills, and buying food, to go on holiday, in those days, in my situation, you had to save up hard for it. You know, I couldn't just say 'let's go away to Marbella', 'cause I didn't have the money. So, generally, you go to the travel agent in those days, you book the holiday, you pay a small deposit and then you've got like six months, you know, to think 'shit, I've gotta save X, Y, Z amount of hundreds of pounds.' So, as the head of the family, unless you've got a fantastic job… but if you've got a mediocre job like I did at the time, you have to save… So this holiday had to be nice, you know, 'cause you had to work hard to save for it and you wanted to give your family a nice holiday.

Participants also described how their decisions were made. For example, Michelle described the choice of Skiathos as the family's holiday

destination: "Well, first we looked for where was cheap. And then we looked further into those places, we looked for trees and we looked for hills and we looked for beaches… And that came up with Skiathos." However, in many families, the process was less structured, and it involved checking different media and consulting a range of people. For instance, when asked about how family holiday decisions took place, Tina stated:

> Tina: Websites, the Internet. So if we decide, like we did recently, we'll go to all the websites we already know like Mark Warner and Neilson's, and then we'll discover that they are too expensive, we'll get on the phone. Or if it's a big group of 11, 12 people, we need to speak to them. And then I just start poking around, really. This [last] holiday I don't remember how we got to this website but it's great-
> Naomi [daughter]: You just click the links, don't you? So, from one website-
> Tina: If I'm booking hotels for work, I might go to laterooms, but-
> Ewan [son]: Where do you go, mum?
> Tina: I might go to, say, Glasgow or Edinburgh and there are certain ones I might look for accommodation like laterooms. Yeah, so I suppose we're not very typical 'cause when we do adventure stuff, we look… So, for instance, I went on the British canoe union website, I spoke to them at the boat show and this led me to Poland, I went to an explorers' club and somebody's told about this great place to go canoeing in Poland. So it's word of mouth and just casting around on websites.

The remainder of this section incorporates two topics that emerged from the data regarding family holiday decisions: joint decisions between partners and the participation of children.

4.3.1. Holiday Choices as Joint Decisions between Partners

The majority of the interviewees declared holiday decisions were jointly made between partners. In Elizabeth's words: "We [she and her partner] used to talk about it. Very much, in my memories, it was a joint decision."

Doris had a similar recollection of family holidays that included her (now) ex-partner: "I think it [holiday decisions] would probably have been joint really 'cause we had travelled a lot before we looked after children." One exception was provided by Lilly, whose holiday decisions involved not only her partner but also their 16 year-old son: "Of course, now as Ross [their son] gets older, it's more of a three way decision." However, when asked to detail how choices took place, it became apparent that, in many families, decisions were dominated by one of the parents, often the one with more time, and, more importantly, taste and / or aptitude for research and planning. For instance, the above-cited Lilly's description of holiday decisions as jointly made was later in the interview contradicted by her partner, Donna. When asked to describe holiday decisions in the family, they stated:

> Donna: Lilly decides where we go.
> Lilly: It's true! (laugh)
> Donna: She researches and tells us what we are going to do. And then we do it! (laugh)
> Lilly: I do the research and the picking, yes. But if I didn't do it, we would never go on holiday! (laugh)
> Donna: I quite like to be organised for holidays and I like someone else to do the research.

In Donna and Lilly's household, agreement was reached not because holiday choices were thoroughly discussed but because Lilly was happy to search for information and Donna, to delegate the responsibilities over travel choices to her partner. A similar process happened in Elisa and Giuliana's family, where the former was in charge of searching and deciding:

> Elisa: I guess [it's] just because I have more time to do that. And it won't happen if it's left to Giuliana, 'cause she's just so busy.
> Giuliana: So I work five days a week. Elisa works two days a week and is the primary childcare person. So she's got more time. And she's got a higher propensity to research things that take [a] long [time]. I would probably choose the first one or two destinations I find, whereas Elisa would spend a long time researching it. Usually, she'll call me for a final decision.
> Elisa: It's not worth, you know, agonising over decisions.
> Giuliana: In the past, she would have given me lots of options and I would have been like: 'yeah that one, whatever.' But we know that Elisa picks good places.

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In her interview, Giuliana made an association between Elisa being the primary caregiver and having more time, thereby being more frequently in charge of holiday decisions. Although a similar link was not as clearly elaborated in the interview with Stephen and Bruce, there was also a division of tasks in place in their family. Stephen, who now worked part time to be able to spend more time with their two boys, was the one who did most of the holiday-related information searching and decisions. However, unlike Elisa and Giuliana, he justified taking over holiday decisions via a trait of his personality: "I always do the all the planning in the family, actually I'm a bit of a control freak."

Among the families interviewed, those with older children made comments that showed their holiday destination choice had changed as children grew older and the family layout evolved. For instance, Charlie claimed to shun family-friendly destinations now that her children were teenagers: "I do more now [avoid family destinations] because I've got grown up children, and sometimes I do want a bit of rest." Likewise, as her son was expected to leave home for university soon, Mia considered the possibility of adapting her destination choice to an empty nested household: "Now he's about to leave home, we [she and her partner] can start to think of romantic getaways again." While these families' destination choice was impacted upon by life stages, no conclusive answers were yielded as far as holiday decisions were concerned. For the parents interviewed, decision patterns seemed not to depend on family layout. Similarly, of the families interviewed, those with configurations that stood out from the 'traditional' model of two parents with children had decision patterns that revolved around the members of a single household. Donna and Lilly, for example, lived with their son Ross and their holiday decisions did not include the boy's fathers, who lived separately. In a like manner, Lynn and her partner did not consult Lizzie's fathers about travel choices unless they were traveling all together (the two mothers, the two fathers and the girl). Shirley and her son had separate holidays with her female and her male partners. Bill explained Aaron's mothers did not participate in the travel decisions made by Bill and his partner when they went on holiday with the boy. However, holiday timing had to be negotiated:

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> If Aaron is coming with us, not with them [the boy's mothers], then it's our choice. We go wherever. But we do talk about time. With the kids, obviously it has to be school time. So if we decide to take holiday at the same time and they want to go away separately, then actually we do it over a four-week period because that gives them a two-week holiday. So we negotiate that bit but they wouldn't tell us 'you can't take him there or you have to take him there.' If they want to take him somewhere, they'll go on holiday with him.

For these families, holiday decisions were made within the households, thereby not including family members who lived away. Thus, their family lifecycles bore no significant differences from those of the other families interviewed, and holiday choices more often consisted of joint decisions between the parents regardless of the family configuration.

4.3.2. Participation of Children in Family Holiday Decisions

For the parents interviewed, holiday destination choice revolved around the children's needs and making them happy was consistently cited as a key factor towards the success of holidays. In this sense, the mere presence of children determined the choice of the destinations. Nonetheless, respondents claimed not to include them in holiday decisions, especially at earlier stages of the children's lives. For instance, Tina's daughter, Naomi (aged 16), and son, Ewan (13), confirmed they had little input into holiday decisions. When asked about family holiday decisions, not only did Naomi and Ewan agree choices were centralised in their mothers' hands but they also seemed pleased with the arrangement:

> Interviewer: How do you decide where to go?
> Naomi: Mummy! (laugh)
> Ewan: We don't. She just picks!
> Naomi: And we just do it! (laugh) But we always enjoy it.
> Ewan: Yeah, like she picks the best holidays that we can go on. So we don't really mind what it is.

Although children were on the whole just informed where the next family holidays would be, their opinions mattered with regard to other decisions,

such as accommodation and activities. In a few cases, decisions were slightly altered or adapted to accommodate the children's desires:

> I know if I had said to Emma [her adopted daughter] 'where would you like to go?', she would've said 'Florida or safari in Africa', you know, quite adventurous holidays. So [instead] we said 'this is what's gonna happen, we're gonna stay in the caravan and we're gonna take the car and go to the zoo', [the children might say] 'oh that's OK, what about going swimming?', [Doris would reply] 'oh yeah, I think we can probably fit swimming in and some time on the beach.' (Doris)

An exception was provided by Bill who, while recognising his children did not make the final decision, claimed to involve them in holiday choices at very early stages in their lives:

> They're children yeah, but I think there's no harm in actually talking to them when they start communicating, when they understand what you're talking about. I think it's about starting communicating, I suppose when they're four or five. I think you have to take the child's view on board if you're going on holiday because you're going as a family! It's not like they're in total control but I think you've gotta ask them 'What do you think? Do you fancy doing this and this?' That's what you do. I don't think we can ignore them completely and go 'No, you have no say, so we're just going here, so deal with it!'

For most of the respondents, however, children were not involved until they were considered by parents as having the necessary capabilities to participate in decisions: "At an advanced stage, we probably started to involve children, probably at 11, 12, 13, when you know that they can make a sensible suggestion" (Doris). Graeme's sons also started to be consulted in their adolescence ("Maurice was 13 or 14, Kyle was 16"). Likewise, Mia and Miranda also began to include the son in holiday-related decisions when he was 12. Nevertheless, prior to that age, the child was given the opportunity to refuse the mothers' offers: "Before that age, he didn't know what he wanted, but he knew what he didn't want!"

Having described the answers given by respondents about their holiday motivations, destination choice and holiday decisions, the final section of this chapter now presents participants' responses to questions on social interaction while on holiday.

4.4. VISIBILITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Interviewees' narratives commonly suggested a feeling of standing out from other families in holiday spaces. This difference sometimes generated tension, which impacted upon two main aspects: the family's visibility and the possibilities of social interaction on holiday. The first two sections look at these aspects, whereas the last one explores the impact of the presence of children on the family's visibility and social interaction.

4.4.1. Visibility on Holiday

Some parents reported hiding their sexual identities while on holiday as an attempt to be less visible as lesbigay parented families. For example, Elisa and Giuliana had a very significant account from their trip to Dubai, a destination which, despite being perceived as homophobic, was chosen because Giuliana had relatives living in the city. At the immigration office at the airport, the mothers decided not to come out as a lesbian parented family:

> Giuliana: We wouldn't have chosen that as a gay family, definitely not. But we decided to go. I guess I was always a little bit nervous but, the night before, I started to research and then I became incredibly nervous about the decision that we'd made. As a destination, it's a country where being gay, I think, is illegal. So, when we got on the flight, we felt the need to be very… not separate as such, we travelled together, but to be very cautious. When we got into the airport, through customs, we split up, we split apart.
> Interviewer: On purpose or somebody asked you to do that?
> Giuliana: On purpose, on purpose. For our own safety, I guess, because we weren't sure of the ramifications of being caught. The complexity was that Helen's [their daughter] passport has both of our names on it. So we were afraid that if we walked together through customs, they would look at the passport and they might ask a question and that would become tricky. As a result, we split, Elisa went in one

direction and myself and Helen [the daughter] went in the other, didn't we? Myself and Helen played a game where we would hide from Elisa. And she shouted 'Mummy!' Nerve-racking, wasn't it?

Going through border control was also mentioned during the interviews with Freddy and Robert, and Charlie. For them, showing documents to the immigration officer was equated with having to 'come out' as a lesbigay family, and, thus, involved some stress. A similar situation happened at the hotel reception, and many couples experienced discomfort when offered a twin rather than a double bedroom. Asking for a change meant they had to disclose their relationships; hence, respondents adopted diverse techniques to cope with the situation. For example, Michelle prevented exposure by calling the hotel in advance and making sure they had a double room assigned for her and her partner. Shirley used her 15-month son as an excuse to ask for the beds to be put together: "Now we have the baby, we just say 'the baby sleeps in the middle so he doesn't fall out'. They accept that." Elisa and Giuliana had a more elaborate technique to deal with exposure at the hotel check-in:

> Giuliana: Well, that's a strategy we always do. We even do that when we're here [in the U.K.]. Less now. Before we had Helen, every time we went to a hotel, usually one of us would go and check in and the other person would wait outside… Because one of the questions that invariably arises, with two women, is 'oh sorry, do you want a twin room?' And then we have to say 'no, we'd like a double bed.'

While some respondents utilised strategies to avoid the potential tensions at the check-in moment, others simply accepted the twin rooms they were given:

> There was one instance, when we went to Scotland, where we were booked into a bed and breakfast, and had booked a double room, and, on arrival, the guy who owned the bed and breakfast, as he was showing us our double room, his wife intervened and said 'no, no, not that room, not that room.' And she offered a twin room with separate beds and we were kind of so thrown by this that we just went with it; I didn't challenge it. (Gillian)

Rick and Ian used their marriage and nationalities (Rick is British and Ian, American) to explain why they sometimes accepted twin beds.

Rick: Sometimes you might just want to move the beds together.
Ian: Like this isn't a battle I need to have. And, actually, now that we're a married couple, I'm quite happy to have a bed to myself. (laugh) I sleep far better with less snoring. (laugh)
Rick: I think a little bit depending on the situation, on the place, depending on how we feel about it, in terms of, you know, how much we're gonna be bothered to kind of make a-
Ian: Yeah, who's behind the desk that we have to ask-
Rick: It's not just that. For me, it's more a British thing, you know-
Ian: You just take what you're given.
Rick: Take what you're given. He's more American and he complains about things (laugh) and I'm kind of like, you know, 'oh well, let's not worry about it-
Ian: 'Oh well, rotten luck, just deal with it!'

The willingness to hide their sexualities also affected other aspects of the respondents' family holidays. Giuliana and Elisa claimed they felt more comfortable in large cities as opposed to small towns: "We're a bit more anonymous in a way when we go to bigger cities." In a like manner, Mia and Miranda did not enjoy staying in bed and breakfasts in the countryside as they believed their family stood out from locals and other guests. A similar desire not to be identified as a lesbian parented family led Elizabeth and her partner not to flag their sexualities while on holiday:

We weren't waving about saying 'we're a lesbian family, we're a lesbian family.' People might have thought we were friends sharing… You know, lots of people do, it's not unusual for two women to go on holiday together. We didn't wave about, talking about sexuality. You don't need to, do you?

Hiding sexualities for some respondents also involved showing no public displays of affection. Being discreet and not holding hands in public were recurrent techniques used by interviewees to hide their relationships while on holiday. For instance, Gillian stated:

I don't need to be somewhere where I could feel comfortable making a public display of affection. So I could quite happily walk down the street with my partner and not hold hands and that wouldn't spoil my holiday, and perhaps, for some people, it would. And we've been to places where, you know, we've booked a room, and people make assumptions of us just being friends and that's been fine.

In other instances, more than simply not coming out, interviewees preferred to 'pass as straight' and / or lie about their families. For example, Tina admitted to feeling anxious on a particular trip to Jamaica, a country she perceived to be homophobic. She and her children were in the country to visit a gay male friend. As they travelled around Jamaica, she and her friend disguised their sexualities by letting people believe they were a straight couple:

> Tina: We were touring around and we did some tourist stuff. But we were very, very well aware that we didn't tell people our sexuality so people assumed we were a couple and we just kept it that way. You just wouldn't do it [assume one's homosexuality], there's no need for that! That was one place I felt quite…
> Ewan [son]: Intimidated?
> Tina: Well, I would have been if I had been outed [if she had her sexuality disclosed] there.

In a similar fashion, when Abraham went on holiday with his son and the boy's lesbian mother, he did not contradict people who assumed they were a couple. Rather, he was amused by the situation: "If someone said that as an assumption, we'd both burst out laughing. I think both of us have exactly the same way of dealing with those sorts of things, we just find it funny that someone doesn't know." When Freddy and Robert were questioned about their adopted daughter's mother during a family trip to Africa, rather than assuming their identities as gay fathers, they preferred to resort to the lie that she had passed away:

> We just didn't talk about our family but people did ask questions and, at the end, I got tired of people asking [their daughter] 'where's your mum?' Lots of them kept saying 'Where's your mum? Where's your mum?' (laugh) And I said to them, just to shut them up, 'her mum is dead.' (Freddy)

4.4.2. Social Interaction on Holiday

As revealed in the literature review, the potential for interacting with other people is a very important travel motivation for families. In this vein, most

interviewees claimed to seek, or not to avoid, interaction while on holiday. In Tina's family, for instance, making new acquaintances seemed to be a very important part of the holiday experience. As her daughter commented:

> I remember specifically when we went to Norway, we met, strangely, some of mum's friends that we already knew but also we made friends with this family who had a girl my age and a boy, their mum and their dad and we made really good friends with them. They were staying in a different hotel but, as I said, we're quite a sociable family and we are all smiles. So yeah, we make friends quite easily on holidays. It's part of the fun, isn't it?

Some of the interviewees, however, admitted to shunning interaction with other people. Michelle declared about holidays with her daughter: "We're not very sociable when we're on holiday. We like to keep each other's company." During the interview with Donna and Lilly, the latter mentioned they hardly made acquaintances while on holiday. To this, Donna replied:

> Donna: That might be because we are also a bit cautious maybe… (pause)
> Interviewer: What do you mean exactly?
> Donna: Well, if you're travelling like that and then people ask lots of questions… for a heterosexual family it's easier to make contacts outside of the family when you're on holiday, I think because there're no assumptions made, it's just a normal thing. But if you are like us, then you may have lots of questions asked.

In a similar fashion, Mia claimed not to interact socially while on holiday; when questioned whether she and her partner engaged in conversations with other families in holiday spaces, she replied:

> We don't, actually. I think other families, straight families, don't feel mirrored (she puts her hands in parallel with palms facing each other as if she was trying to replicate an object and its image in a mirror). You know what I mean? A man and a woman on the one hand, two women on the other… A bloke doesn't know what to talk about with two women. Football? (laugh) No, I don't think so. So no, I don't think it's easy to start a conversation with another family.

Sometimes social interaction was not necessary for families to feel anxious in holiday spaces; just sharing public spaces with other people was enough to create some discomfort:

Elisa: So, for example, I would actively choose a house where there's not a shared pool. I just wouldn't feel comfortable sharing a house, sharing a pool with a family set-up.
Giuliana: Unless we're with friends.
Elisa: Yeah, 'cause you just don't know how accepting people are.

4.4.3. The Influence of Children on Visibility and Social Interaction

As noted above, some of the parents interviewed in this study chose to 'pass as heterosexual' and / or avoided social interaction with locals and other tourists whilst on holiday. From this, a few questions arise: how did children of the parents interviewed come into play in this scenario? Did the children help the parents blend in, thereby keeping them less visible in holiday spaces? Did they facilitate social interaction with locals and / or other tourists on holiday?

The parents interviewed had mixed responses to these questions. For a few of them, the presence of children made their sexual orientations less noticeable. For example, Gillian believed her relationship with her partner was not obvious when she went to a resort on holiday with their children:

> I don't really know how visible we were as a family. Because there were women there with their mothers or women there with their sisters and their kids, so whether people made assumptions based on that I don't know. And I don't really think it is that obvious to anybody else.

Donna and Lilly were of a similar opinion:

> Donna: Two women with a small child, they just assume it's two sisters or friends.
> Lilly: It's true, actually. People think you're sisters or friends. Yeah, I think that's different when you've got children with you.
> Donna: It's more relaxed with a small child.

Conversely, for some of the participants, the presence of children made it difficult for them to hide their sexualities. For Bill, the presence of his son facilitated both social interaction and enhanced visibility: "I think, with a

child, it's like an appendix. When you have a child, you start talking to everyone and you can't hide it [one's sexuality]. I think two blokes in a family place, they kind of stand out." Rick had a similar opinion: "With a child, it would have been much harder not to be obvious." This was corroborated by his partner, Ian: "It's so obvious that we are the two parents of this child that there's no other way of reading this situation really." They also provided an example of how their son, Drew, led them to interact with a lesbian parented family at a music festival while on holiday:

> Rick: We had a little sticker on his back saying 'My name is Drew. If I'm lost, my daddies' numbers are…' And details. So he's wandering off and… at the moment he'll just go up to anyone and start kind of-
> Ian: Chatting and waving-
> Rick: …looking at them and chatting at them. And we had one woman who said 'Hi, Drew, you have two daddies, we have two mummies!'
> Ian: And these two women, they had three children, yeah.

Doris recollected an experience in which her children drew other people's attention to her and her partner, creating discomfort:

> I can remember when we were in Wales, just the seaside, it was a, you know, a cheap restaurant. And there were people at the adjoining table, and, at the time, we were just fostering two younger children. And Jacky, one of the youngest children, was quite noisy and was kind of picking everything up and, in the end, I think that Charlotte [her ex-partner] just said 'Enough! We're here to eat! Come on.' And we must have said something that indicated that we weren't their natural parents, that they were foster children, and people at the next table just leaned over and said (in a reproaching tone of voice) 'Gosh, and they let people like *you* have children' [emphasis from the original speech], which we took to mean, 'gay people'.

Similarly, Abraham acknowledged how his son attracted other people's attention on holiday, thereby amplifying his visibility: "And he has a very loud mouth, like his mother, and he can shout very loud and people notice him." On a few occasions, more than simply enhancing the parents' visibility, children disclosed their sexuality. For example, Doris explained: "And I remember one time, she introduced me to this lesbian couple, saying 'here's my mum; she's a lesbian too!' That was awkward! (laugh)"

Summary

This chapter has presented and described the findings that relate to gay and lesbian parented families' travel motivations and destination choice. The most cited travel motivations related to a desire to relax and take a break from routine. This need was often referred to as counterbalancing the pressures respondents experienced in their personal and professional lives and was commonly equated with a desire to be away from home. Paradoxically, some participants, in particular those with younger children, also manifested a desire to replicate routine and home environment while away.

Spending time together and bonding were often cited by interviewees as important drivers for family holidays. In this sense, the physical proximity and the relaxation holidays generate were considered to facilitate bonding amongst family members. Holidays were also seen as opportunities to connect with extended family and friends. Several parents reported a desire to introduce children to intellectual activities as a way of enhancing their education and personal growth. In a similar vein, family holidays were also motivated by a need to keep children (especially younger ones) physically active. For parents, keeping children entertained or stimulated was a necessity that shaped family holidays and determined its outcome. If children were kept busy, then family trips were more likely to be successful.

For several parents, the desire to take a break from parental duties was also recurrently mentioned as affecting holiday experiences. Not only did this desire shape travel motivations but it also determined destination and accommodation options and influenced the choice of travel companion. For instance, several respondents reported a desire to spend holidays on the beach where children could play among themselves (or with other children), thereby allowing parents to temporarily rest from engaging in activities with them. In a similar vein, many parents also preferred to go on holiday with friends and relatives, in the expectation that some parental tasks (such as bathing younger children) might be shared.

Visiting extended family was also an important motivation for family holidays. For a few of the parents interviewed, more than simply a motivation, visiting relatives was a duty and, thus, not necessarily pleasant. For many of them, visits to the extended family entailed some repetition (like visiting the same places or taking part in the same activities) or involved the introduction of new-born children to the parents' relatives.

As far as destination choice was concerned, they were, first and foremost, influenced by travel motivations. However, following on just behind as a factor affecting the choice of the destination were the needs of children. In this sense, parents prioritised child-friendly (or family-oriented) destinations, such as beaches or resorts with kids' club facilities when deciding where to spend their holidays. Several aspects were considered to restrict destination options, with budget being the most recurrent mention. A few interviewees explained budget restrictions were accentuated by the presence of children and pointed out holiday trips became more costly as children got older, thereby limiting destination options. Safety also restricted destination alternatives, with parents claiming they would not spend holidays in places where children might be exposed to physical danger and hazards. Respondents also dismissed places that were viewed as hostile or unsafe to their sexualities. Conversely, no parents claimed to choose gay centred destinations for their family holidays, and those who did so in the past emphasised this was no longer the case with the children.

The chapter then presented the answers given by informants about their holiday decisions. These were described by the majority of interviewees as a jointly-made between partners. However, rather than results of a negotiation, most decisions were attained by a division of tasks, where one partner concentrated the choices and the other was happy to delegate decisions. All families had decision patterns that revolved around the household. Families that were composed of more than one couple of parents, such as a couple of gay men and a couple of lesbians raising a child, often made separate decisions, with the male couple choosing where to spend the holidays with the son without interference from the

mothers. With very few exceptions, in most families, children were invited to participate in holiday decisions only after a certain age (more commonly in their adolescence) when parents believed they could contribute with 'sensible' inputs.

With regards to the possibilities of socialisation on holiday, most research participants claimed to look for interaction with locals and other tourists. A few of them, nonetheless, avoided social contact or shunned accommodation choices with shared facilities. Some of them preferred to hide their sexual identities when away, 'passing' as straight or avoiding public displays of affection, hence, diminishing their exposure as same-sex parented families. Participants had mixed responses to whether and how children impacted on their visibility and social interaction while on holiday. For a few of them, the presence of children potentiated the feeling of standing out as it drew other people's attention to themselves, whereas for others, children made their sexual identities less noticeable.

The next chapter critically interprets these findings. In doing so, it reveals key insights into the meanings behind the data and conceptualises these by offering a wider theoretical understanding of these families' travel motivations and destination choice.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Chapter four presented the results of this study on same-sex parented families' travel motivations and destination choice, and highlighted, among other things, that sexuality impacts on avoidance of holiday destinations and children participate in family tourism decisions only after a certain age. It also showed some of the families interviewed avoid drawing other people's attention to themselves while on holiday, and their destination choice is sometimes made on the grounds of avoiding social interaction when away. Chapter five conceptualises these results by comparing them to the literature and moves on from the description of findings by revealing what the interviewees' answers have to say about their holidays and families. The interpretation of the data reveals the emergence of two main themes. The first, named *gay and lesbian parented family tourism: similarity and difference*, discusses and provides a theoretically informed critical understanding of the meanings respondents ascribe to their holidays. This theme is further broken down into three sections, namely, significances of family holidays; construction and reinforcement of family identity; and search for the 'perfect family portrait'. The second theme, *underlying expressions of pride / shame in gay and lesbian parented family holidays*, discusses and analyses in depth the influence of sexuality on respondents' holidays and lives. This theme is presented in two sections: expressions of a 'fractured' community; and the discomfort of 'being out'.

As explained in the methodology and methods chapter, phenomenology was adopted as the research strategy, and thus, in line with Heidegger's (1962) concept of *Dasein* (being in the world, or the view that the subject cannot be alienated from the world around it), everything was considered data. In this chapter, such inseparability is taken into account. In other words, not only did the data analysis and interpretation take into consideration the answers given by participants but also their tangential narratives, body language and even the interview setting (Patton 2002;

Denscombe 2010; Grbich 2013). To enhance trustworthiness of the study as a whole, as suggested in the doctrine (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Erlandson *et al.* 1993; Decrop 2004), these themes are supported by respondents' quotations and the researcher's remarks. Here, a clarification is necessary. Interviewees' quotations are used in this chapter not only to provide a 'thick description' of the data but also to illustrate and back up the arguments that constitute and support each of the themes. These quotations are important in this chapter because they heighten transferability whilst allowing the reader to keep track of the researcher's analysis and conceptualisation of the data (Erlandson *et al.* 1993). More importantly, they bring the voice of respondents to the fore while providing the reader with an interpretivist understanding of their narratives, actions and motives.

5.1. GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTED FAMILY TOURISM: SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE

The findings presented in chapter four reveal the importance assigned by respondents to family tourism is multi-faceted. This section discusses the multiple significances of family holidays, as well as the role of tourism in constructing and highlighting family identity and the influence of the 'good parent' construct in holiday motivations, choices and decisions. The section then compares the holiday motivations and destination choice of the families interviewed and those of the 'traditional' heteronormative families previously contemplated in the literature, concluding similarities far outweigh the differences.

5.1.1. The Multiple Significances of Family Holidays

As noted in chapter four, in spite of a few declarations that associate holiday with stress, holidays were represented and signified by participants as positive, even necessary. In this section, light is shed on the diverse meanings participants attach to family tourism. Some of these meanings relate to a desire to escape, a search for novelty and familiarity and also for a sense of belonging. This section also reveals the stress and the pleasure involved in family travel decisions, it illuminates the diverse layers of destination avoidance that involve lesbian and gay parented families' holidays, and provides insights into the role of sexuality in their travel choices.

Escape, novelty and familiarity

The answers yielded by interviewees in relation to their travel motivations confirm tourism scholarship. The desire to relax and take a break from routine, for instance, the most recurrent motivation among interviewees, was previously addressed by the seminal work of Crompton (1979). In his elaboration of socio-psychological travel motives, Crompton (1979) explained these desires as results of tourists' need to change environment, adopt behaviours that are distinct from those of everyday life and freed themselves from mental concerns. This was corroborated by respondents, for whom holidays were primarily opportunities to escape the pressures of their daily lives. While on holiday, respondents engaged in activities of interest, which allowed for mental relaxation. This is also consistent with Dann's (1977; 1981) classic construct of anomie, which leads people to go on holiday to escape the 'chaos' of life and restore meaning to it. It is also congruent with Iso-Ahola's (1980) concept of escaping, linking travel motivations to a need to get away from everyday troubles.

Associated with the desire to escape stress is the need to take a break from routine. Significantly, some parents expressed both a *desire to break from routine* (while getting away from the duties associated with home, for instance) and *to keep routine during holiday* (thus replicating the home environment). Such contradiction is not without precedents in the scholarship on family tourism. Indeed, it confirms Bowen and Clark's (2009) claim that families depend on opposing forces, such as novelty and familiarity, to exist. In this sense, holidays represent an opportunity for families to discover the unknown, thereby allowing for intellectual stimulation while breaking from the predictability that characterises many people's routines. Yet, they maintain the familiar, which brings emotional safety because it is recognisable. Routine can generate and maintain psychological stability for all family members, particularly for younger children. The reproduction of the family environment and repetition of routines thus create patterns that facilitate learning and foster the healthy development of children, who gain mastery of the situation around them and grow in self-assurance (Araujo 2010). Thus, replicating such patterns on holiday is desired and necessary because it creates an 'emotional bridge' between the travel destination and the home environment, thereby minimising the impact a complete break from routine might have on children's wellbeing.

Connecting and reconnecting: A sense of belonging

The desire to spend time together, or togetherness, which most families cited as an important travel motivation, is also well documented in the tourism literature (Bieger and Laesser 2002; Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011; Kluin and Letho 2012; Schänzel 2012). Larsen *et al.* (2007) claim togetherness is a more important family motivation than the desire to escape. However, when asked what moved them to go on holidays with the family, the majority of the interviewees first referred to a need to relax and avoid the stress of daily lives. Many of them explained this stress as a consequence of work pressures. This suggests togetherness is secondary to the need to escape, and is therefore linked to an individual, rather than

family-related, drive. Daly (2004) explained togetherness through the time famine construct, which refers to the anxiety parents suffer for not spending enough time with their children and leads them to compensate while on holiday. Leisure trips bring the family together and the time spent with the children helps parents compensate for the tension they feel for not being as present as they would like to (or believe they should) be in their children's lives (Daly 2004).

Togetherness is not only an expression of anxiety; it also helps maintain and strengthen family bonds. In this sense, interviewees' replies corroborate scholarship on family tourism (Shaw *et al.* 2008; Kluin and Lehto 2012). The desire to spend time together is also congruent with Olson (2000), who interpreted the family as a system functioning through the dimensions of cohesion (bonding), adaptability (flexibility) and communication (the medium between cohesion and adaptability). Togetherness and the physical proximity it creates generate communication, which in turn leads to intimacy and cohesion. In most cases in this study, connection involved what can only be described as belonging, a deeply intimate link that involves affiliation to a group but also emotions as varied as mutual identification, complicity, acceptance, inclusion and respect (Goodenow 1993). Family belonging equates with care and support, and, as McCarthy (2012) argues, it acts as a respite from everyday stress. Within this context, holidays are central to reinforcing a sense of belonging. More importantly, family holidays allow for multiple possibilities of escape; they not only imply getting away from routine, but also, thanks to the feeling of group membership they generate, foster emotional reassurance.

Togetherness, however, is a multi-layered construct. Indeed, here lies one of the key findings of this study: the interviews conducted revealed the diversity of connections which family holidays help enhance and preserve. Not only do holidays contribute to intra family cohesion but they can also reinforce connections with other relatives and friends. Such was the case with Tina's family, for whom the choice of travel companions determined the success of holidays. As described in chapter four, it was important that the friends chosen to go on holiday with Tina's family "clicked" with hers

and had the same "rhythm, like clocks", to use the family's expressions. Their choice of words suggests the family's need for synchronicity, which is also encapsulated in the construct of belonging (Goodenow 1993). As implied in Gillian's description of the group of deaf friends who went on holiday with her family ("it's like a family, really"), deaf friends were an extension of her own unit and holidays played an important role in enhancing these connections.

Holidays also allowed for a (re)connection with the self. For Sandrine, adventure holidays were an expression of herself: "I absolutely adore travelling. I don't specifically hunt out the risk but I love the stories that you can tell. That's when you can be yourself." Family holidays had a very special significance in George's life. It was during a trip with his ex-wife and children that he realised his need to reveal his (until then) concealed sexuality:

> I was about 35 and I was on the beach and there were these guys, these really fit Spanish guys playing volleyball on the beach. And I was wearing these kind of reflective sunglasses where you can't see where my eyes are looking. So my wife was on the beach and the kids were playing on the sand and my eyes were just looking at these guys all the time. And it wasn't just that. There was a bit of a build up to it which I had been kind of brushing under the carpet for a long time. But yeah, it was on that holiday that I decided 'You know what? I'm 35 and after this holiday, I'm gonna come home, and, before my next birthday, I'm gonna change my life.' That kind of made me think 'this is my life and I have got three lovely boys but I'll always be their dad and, you know, I want to be gay, and, unless I do this, I'm not gonna be free for the rest of my life.' So that holiday to me was very, very significant.

George's powerful story signifies holidays as a unique moment of change. Whilst reiterating his identity as a father ("I'll always be their dad"), he acknowledged his gay self ("I want to be gay"), an identity that he had carefully hidden "under the carpet". As repeatedly noted in this thesis, there is a paucity of research about the travel motivations and destination choice of families parented by lesbians and gay men. Yet, the literature on gay tourism indicates single gays and lesbians, in addition to other factors, may go on holiday motivated by a desire to express their sexualities (Pritchard *et al.* 2000; Scholey 2002; Hughes 2006). George's recognition

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of his sexual identity on holiday does not reflect these scholarly claims. In his case, that particular family holiday represented a personal journey. Rather than being motivated by a desire to *express* his sexuality, that holiday prompted George to *come to terms with* it, thereby giving him the opportunity to connect with his gay identity. This finding demonstrates the impact of holidays on the family has several layers, with family holidays having implications not only for the group as a whole but also for the members individually. The multiplicity of experiences involved in family holidays has, however, received scant attention in tourism research, which makes this finding particularly significant.

Some respondents used family holidays to project a certain lifestyle, which, in many cases, helped foster family connections. Sandrine, an enthusiast of adventure tourism, gave very detailed accounts of her holiday stories, which clearly depicted her and her family as independent and brave. Her love for travel was only surpassed by her passion for her holiday stories themselves, in which she constructed and reinforced the representation of their adventurous and carefree lifestyle. Similarly, in Tina's family, holidays were centred on sport and her narrative included details that emphasised the family's healthy way of life and their achievements in physical activities:

> Tina: Well, there's two women I used to sail with (she picks up a photograph from the shelf. The photo shows Tina's family with other people on a boat). This is a pic from last summer. This woman, Becky, is my best friend from sailing days, and my friend Catlin and her husband Thomas and her children. So these families go away a lot together. It was very funny 'cause we met some Army boys [during that holiday] and they couldn't believe that we were ahead of them [on the boat] with these tiny children.
> Naomi [daughter] (picking another photo): This is the size of the children who went with us. See those two? They were with us and they were really, really small.
> Tina: And these Army boys couldn't believe it. They thought we'd cheated.

Projecting a lifestyle corroborates Crompton's (1979) claim that tourists may also be motivated by a search for prestige when making holiday choices. Dann (1977; 1981) explained the need for prestige as an expression of ego-enhancement. According to him, recounting travel

experiences enables tourists to seek recognition for their accomplishments and status. This, he argued, boosts self-confidence (Dann 1977; 1981). This need to foster self-esteem is not only evident for individuals. Holidays, and the lifestyle they project, can also enhance group confidence and demonstrate and attest family pride, namely, "the degree of loyalty, optimism and trust in one's family" (Ford-Gilboe 1997, p. 207). Respondents' holiday tales often emphasised family strengths, achievements and character. In projecting family pride, holidays, as well as the narratives they produce, not only boost individual confidence but they also help enhance family cohesion, thereby contributing to a sense of belonging to the group.

Stress and pleasure of holiday decisions

As described in chapter four, research participants perceived travel decisions to be a central part of the holiday experience. For some, making holiday decisions was not always enjoyable. Confirming family tourism literature (Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011), it was considered by some a lengthy and laborious task. Also in accordance with part of the doctrine (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005; Smallman and Moore 2010), holidays were often depicted as high risk due to the financial and emotional investment they implied. As seen in chapter four, some parents described holiday decisions as a heavy burden that involved the responsibility of ensuring the satisfaction of every family member. This causes holiday decisions to be seen as potentially stressful, which also corroborates previous scholarly debates (Bowen and Clark 2009; Carr 2011; Backer and Schänzel 2012). As attested in the literature (Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011), the responsibility to ensure children have happy holidays may derive from parents' desire to conform to societal pressures that associate parenthood with a romanticised ideal of selfless devotion.

With the exception of visits to relatives, which were commonly characterised by repetition and were, thus, more predictable and less risky, holidays often demanded a great deal of budgeting and planning. This, however, does not mean travel decisions were always the results of

rational processes. When asked to discuss their holiday decisions, interviewees often attempted to explain them in a linear way. However, it became quite apparent that, in most cases, choices were less logical than they tried to convey. For example, Michelle and her daughter explained their choice of the Greek island of Skiathos involved a process consisting of rational steps and based on criteria thoroughly reflected upon. Nonetheless, when explaining it in detail, both mother and daughter admitted choosing the destination had been "messy but fun".

In this respect, these families contradict established research on travel decisions (Woodside and Lysonski 1989; Um and Crompton 1990; 1992), where positivistic models of decision-making processes (Nicosia 1966; Engel *et al.* 1968; Howard and Sheth 1969) adhere to the concept of bounded rationality. On the other hand, they corroborate scholarly arguments (Goossens 2000; Hyde 2000; Decrop 2010) that holiday decisions often involve a hedonistic component. For many families that participated in the study, deciding where to go on holiday was less a linear problem-solving process than it was a pleasure-seeking activity. Many times, it entailed consulting different sources, contacting diverse acquaintances to ask for recommendations, revisiting past decisions and incorporating new options rather than carefully funnelling down alternatives. In sum, rather than utilitarian processes targeted at finding the 'optimal' solution, for many interviewees, decision-making scenarios were characterised by fun and excitement. It should be noted, however, that, on most occasions, holiday decisions did not demand a great deal of negotiation as the family members' opinions converged. In this vein, interviewees often stated family members had common tastes and interests, which was perceived as facilitating travel-related decisions.

(In)Egalitarianism in family holiday decisions

While it is true that all respondents claimed to prioritise their children's needs when making holiday choices, most of the parents interviewed stated they involved their offspring in travel decisions only when they were considered to have the cognitive ability to give informed opinions.

Literature reveals families parented by gays and lesbians are more egalitarian and democratic in their division of tasks than those headed by heterosexuals (Dunne 2000; Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; Biblarz and Savci 2010; Perlesz *et al.* 2010). The rationale for this lies in these families' refusal to replicate structures and patterns that reflect 'traditional' patriarchal values such as gender-based task division (Weeks *et al.* 1999). Thus, it was conjectured, at early stages of this study, whether gay and lesbian parented families' alleged egalitarianism would impact on their decisions and whether parents would involve their children in their holiday choices as a consequence. This is not confirmed in this study. While the parents claimed to take children's needs into consideration and to be open to their suggestions in terms of holiday activities, destination decisions involved almost exclusively the partners, with children having input only after reaching adolescence. In this respect, the lesbigay parented families that took part in the study did not seem to be any more democratic or egalitarian than straight parented families researched in the past.

It is true that, as indicated earlier, holiday decisions often entail a division of tasks, with one of the partners commonly undertaking an information search and determining the destination choice. However, such division happens as a function of the partners' research preferences and capabilities; thus, findings are not conclusive as to whether interviewees replicate the gender-based tasks that are perceived as typical of heterosexual relationships and families (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Perlesz *et al.* 2010). Consequently, findings do not corroborate the idea that same-sex parented families are more egalitarian than straight parented ones.

In a similar vein, participants of this study conform to Wells and Gubar's (1966) family lifecycle model. This model has been criticised for being outdated and overlooking the changes which the family as a social arrangement has undergone (Bojanic 2011; Backer 2012a). Nevertheless, the families interviewed followed consumption patterns that much resembled those hypothesised by Wells and Gubar (1966). Of the parents interviewed, those with older children had consumption practices similar to Wells and Gubar's (1966) empty-nested families, for instance, prioritising romantic destinations when making holiday decisions. Even families with a

less 'conventional' layout centred their decisions around households rather than encompassing all family members. For instance, the holiday decisions of families formed of two couples of parents (two gay men and two lesbians raising one child) were often made separately and independently, with the fathers going with the child to different destinations from those chosen by the mothers. In these cases, while the choice of the destination did not encompass more than one couple of parents, the time of holidays had to be negotiated in advance between the couples so as to accommodate school calendar restrictions and the parents' availability. This finding confirms partners as the main decision-makers within the family unit. Arguably, this result also seems to suggest these families, in many respects, replicate patterns of more traditional 'nuclear' families, namely the units formed of two parents (mother and father) and their children living together (Bengtson 2001), as, regardless of the family layout, holiday decisions more often take place in individual households.

The diverse layers of destination avoidance in family holidays

From the literature review, it appears the choice of holiday destination must also be considered alongside destination avoidance. As stated in chapter four, interviewees' choices of travel destinations were limited by a number of factors, most of which, such as budget and time, can be categorised under McGuiggan's (2003) structural travel constraints. Corroborating Page and Connell (2009), the presence of children was considered by some parents as limiting destination options, particularly because it affected and / or conflated the above-cited structural constraints. As explained earlier, children are mostly perceived as restricting destination choice because their needs must be taken into consideration when holiday decisions are made, they impact on family budget and they reduce holiday time options. It should be noted, however, that, as indicated in chapter four, for a few parents, the presence of children actually encourages them to plan and purchase holidays rather than limiting travel options. Thus, in these instances, children act as travel

motivators (as opposed to *constraints*), a finding which confirms previous scholarly positions (Rugh 2008; Carr 2011).

Destination avoidance was also impacted upon by perceived risk. For interviewees, risks were mostly related to safety, which is concordant with previous research (Roehl and Fesenmaier 1992; Sönmez and Graefe 1998; Simpson and Siguaw 2008). Worries about safety expressed by research participants can be mainly classified under three dimensions: personal, family-related and sexuality-related. Personal worries include the possibility of hazards to individual health that are not associated with the interviewees' sexual orientation (for instance, Shirley's previously mentioned avoidance of war zones). Family-related issues concern safety of the family as a unit or the children in particular (as in Michele's refusal to take her daughter to destinations with a risk of disease contagion). Sexuality-related safety is linked with the fear of homophobia or discrimination. Simpson and Siguaw (2008) categorise two types of risks under travel-related safety: concern *for* others and concern *about* others. The risks reported by the lesbian and gay parents interviewed in this study related to both types of concern, namely, concern for others (their children), and concern about others, namely locals and other tourists who might express anti-gay sentiments. Therefore, the findings demonstrate the multiple overlapping layers of destination avoidance that influence the holidays of the same-sex parented families in this study. Within this context, their destination choice is affected both by restrictions that relate to family tourism in general and those that may affect the travel options of gays and lesbians.

The role of sexuality in family holidays

When directly asked whether being gay / lesbian had any impact on their motivations, parents downplayed the role of their sexual orientation: "I think still I'm governed about 'where do I want to go, what do I want to see?' It's my first one [priority]. Then, being a lesbian is not the most important thing" (Doris). The majority of studies on gay tourism pointed to gay men and lesbians being driven by the same aspects as 'straight'

people with regards to their travel motivations (see for instance Clift and Forrest 1999; Pritchard *et al.* 2000; Hughes 2005). However, in addition to these, holidays for some of them may be motivated by a desire to be free and escape social heteronormative assumptions and pressures (Hughes 1997; Pritchard *et al.* 1998; Hughes 2000; Pritchard *et al.* 2000; Cox 2002). Significantly, none of the participants reported a desire to shun heteronormativity as a motivation to go on holiday with their families.

Similarly, holiday destinations were not dependent upon the parents' sexuality. As Blichfeldt *et al.* (2011) point out, the option of a destination is shaped by personal interests; in this sense, aspects that relate to sexuality may not be as important as far as holiday choices are concerned. This was confirmed in this study, where interviewees claimed not to look for gay centred destinations for family holidays. As noted in chapter four, several of them elaborated a link between such a choice and Brighton, a city where most interviewees lived and which was perceived as friendly and accepting. Hughes (2006) argues holidays of gays and lesbians may be affected by the extent of 'gayness' in their lives, with those who hide their sexualities more likely to look for 'lesbigay' destinations. By analogy, those who are 'out' and / or more present in the gay scene may not be motivated by sexuality-related factors or attracted to gay-friendly places. This is corroborated in this study, where the choice of a destination based on its 'gay friendliness' was not common among interviewees because they did not have to hide their sexual orientation in their daily lives and, so, did not feel the need to express their sexualities on holiday.

It is worth noting at this point that, while interviewees' sexual orientation did not directly impact on destination choice, it did sway destination avoidance. In other words, it did not really influence the places interviewees chose *to go* to on holiday but it certainly impacted upon the destinations they chose *not to go* to. As explained earlier, participants shunned and discarded options for risks to their safety, particularly for fear of homophobia and / or discrimination, a finding that is pertinent with previous studies on gay and lesbian tourism (Pritchard *et al.* 2000; Hughes 2002a; 2006; Blichfeldt *et al.* 2011). Therefore, as far as family holidays are concerned, with the exception of destination avoidance, findings

indicate respondents' sexualities have no or little impact on motivations and choices.

This point must be understood in the light of the presence of children. In this vein, a few interviewees emphasised they chose gay-friendly destinations only when they were *childless*. As noted earlier, primary research on gay and lesbian parents' holiday choices could not be traced. However, previous studies claim the desires to express themselves and escape heteronormativity may contribute to single lesbians and gay men's destination choice, with some searching for a 'gay space' on holiday (Pritchard *et al.* 2000; Hughes 2002b; Scholey 2002). This does not seem to be the case with the gay and lesbian parents interviewed in this project, for whom their children's needs prevailed over other individual aspects, including their sexual identities. Caroline's comment about her experience as a lesbian mother illustrates this point well. When discussing the role of her sexual orientation in holiday destination choice, she explained why her daughter's needs predominated: "I'm Pollyanna's mom and that's all that matters! 'Cause I have someone to protect and look after now, that's my job! It kind of absorbs all the other things that go in the background." Very significant here is her word choice. In stating her other identities "go in the background", she demonstrates sexuality is not central to her holiday choices. More importantly, she implies, after motherhood, sexuality is put aside, with parenthood absorbing (even if temporarily) all other aspects of life.

The relevance of parenthood as opposed to the lessened importance given to sexuality in travel choices and motivations was corroborated in all interviews. Respondents often stressed parental duties take over other responsibilities and interests, with children being placed at the centre of their decisions and motivations. Lynn encapsulated the idea in a few words: "So, in a way, it's like sexuality has been taken out of the equation a bit. Now we're parents more than gay!" As Elizabeth pointed out: "So when you have children, the focus changes. So that kind of takes away from your sexuality in a sense." In a similar vein, for Graeme and Lawrence, sexuality did not play an important part in family travel motivations and choices:

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> Graeme: We never made them [their sons] feel like they were on holiday with gay parents. It [family holidays] wasn't 'we're gay by the way, look at us!' sort of thing. So we kept our sexuality quite low profile.
> Lawrence: It wasn't an issue, it didn't need to be an issue. It was just us taking the children on holiday.
> Graeme: Yeah, it was low profile.
> Lawrence: Yeah, very low profile because it didn't need to be emphasised.

As Huisman (2014) explicates, identities are not static structures. Rather, they are social processes and, as such, are dynamically negotiated and shaped through interactions (Suter *et al.* 2008). Not only are identities flexible, they are also multiple and mutually constitutive (Lawler 2008). When they become parents, lesbians and gay men acquire a new identity, or, to quote Caroline, a new "job" that may prevail over other identities. Confirming scholarship on lesbian and gay tourism (Blichfeldt *et al.* 2011; Therkelsen *et al.* 2013), the lesbian mothers and gay fathers interviewed demonstrate their sexual identities may not always be the salient aspect determining the choices of a holiday destination. When gays and lesbians decide to have children and form their families, their sexual identities occupy a new position, which is secondary to parenthood as far as travel choices are concerned. During the years that follow, the significance of sexuality ebbs and flows but it mostly remains in the background, at least as far as holiday choices are concerned. When children reach a certain age and parents are able to spend time on their own, sexuality may begin to affect their choices again. At this moment, as corroborated in many interviews, some parents may start to make decisions on the grounds of their sexual identities, thereby choosing gay friendly or romantic destinations for their holidays.

5.1.2. Construction and Reinforcement of Family Identity

A key finding of this study lies in the emergence of family identity as an overarching theme. While the interplay between family identity and tourism (Carr 2011; Schänzel *et al.* 2012) and family identity and consumption

practices (Epp and Price 2008) has been acknowledged in the literature, this study illuminates the extent to which such identity informs, and is informed by, family holidays. This section discusses how travel motivations, destination choice and holiday decisions strengthen and are informed by family identity.

Drawing upon Freudian concepts, Lawler (2008, p. 4) defines identity as the "narcissism of small differences", in which similarities are played down and differences are played up. Identity is thus formed through comparing oneself with others in an attempt to find what is unique about oneself. This is the case with both individuals and groups. Therefore, the identity of a family as a unit is produced through comparisons with other families. Family identity is thus what makes one family distinctive from another (Byrd and Garwick 2006; Huisman 2014). As Steel *et al.* (2012) point out, it is the external differences that ultimately identify a family. These differences are, however, highlighted by intragroup similarities and shared practices (Epp and Price 2008). Within this context, family identity both affects and is affected by holidays, which reinforce the uniqueness of the family unit through three main aspects: holiday rituals, memories and decisions.

Holiday rituals as drivers of family identity

The findings revealed that, for many parents, visiting friends and the extended family was an important holiday motivation. Visits to relatives are indeed very relevant to family travels. As such, they have been scrutinised by tourism scholars and are considered to play a significant part in enhancing family connections (Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011; Backer 2012a). However, more than strengthening bonds, visits to relatives are crucial to the creation and maintenance of family identity; yet such a link has not so far been addressed fully.

Visits to relatives reinforce, and are themselves, family rituals, which are central to rooting a family in its past and preserving its future (Imber-Black and Roberts 1993; Epp and Price 2008), thereby reaffirming family identity

(Suter *et al.* 2008). Family rituals are enactments through which family relationships are (re)built and membership is granted (Imber-Black and Roberts 1993). One of the main rituals involved in visits to the extended family is the previously mentioned introduction of young children to the relatives, cited by many interviewees as an important travel motivation. From the interviews, it became apparent that, when a new-born or newly-adopted child is presented to an extended family, not only is it welcome and acknowledged, but also exposed to the family culture (rules, beliefs and values), thereby gaining access to and membership of the unit. Findings indicate a child's first visit to relatives is a ritual of introduction in which the child is at the same time accepted, included in the clan and provided with a sense of heritage. Not only do these visits help form the identity of the child but they also reinforce and preserve that of the family.

Family rituals entail repetition, which is equated with familiarity (or, to quote Tina's daughter, as previously stated in chapter four: "things that we know"), and allows for emotional stability. Families may enact in their daily lives practices that provide members with a sense of continuity and safety, such as keeping very structured routines or maintaining traditions (for instance, Sunday lunch at the grandparents' home). For many of the families interviewed, repetition was also observed during holidays, with a few going to the same holiday destinations with the same people every year. Repeating holidays is not only easier to plan and execute (thereby involving less risk) but it is also reassuring as it generates a sense of psychological safety, especially beneficial for younger children (Araujo 2008).

Further, holidays may themselves become rituals even when they do not involve visiting the same people or the same destinations. As Blichfeldt (2007, p. 250) points out, family holidays may "qualify as institutions" in that they may become part of a family's routine. As Carr (2011) also highlights, parents may feel obliged to fulfil social expectations of taking their children on holiday, and family vacations may become a habit as a result. In this respect, repeated and habitual holidays solidify shared practices and foster family continuity. This is in line with Gabb's (2005) and Perlesz *et al.'s* (2006) concept of *doing family*, according to which

common activities ultimately form and define the family, or, in other words, families are what families do. If, as Epp and Price (2008) imply, in addition to everyday routines, family leisure experiences are central to defining the family, holidays are very significant instances of *doing family*.

Family rituals may also be linked with parental concern to create and pass on family culture to their children. This aim is related to Snarey's (1993) concept of generativity, according to which one of the main purposes of parenthood is the transmission of values to the offspring. Holiday rituals may provide such an opportunity. As stated in chapter four, Rick and Ian's family attended the same music festival every year. Later, during the interview, Rick described the people who attended that festival as "very liberal". Thus, going to the festival was more than a simple tradition in his family. Not only did it make the family connect but it also confirmed that the family's liberal values, initiated by his father, would be preserved and transmitted to their son, who, despite his young age (17 months), had already attended the festival twice.

Godwin (2004) explains generativity as an expression of parents' perception of the children as extensions of themselves. Thus, passing on values is explained by a desire for immortality; if one's values are carried on through the next generations, then one remains immortal. While this may be overstated, it is true that some of the parents placed great emphasis on the values they shared with their children. Holidays and the rituals they entail often emphasise these commonalities. For example, Graeme and Lawrence went on holiday with their (now adult) sons at least twice a year; hence, the children had extensive experience as travellers. The parents used these holidays to ensure the boys became confident travellers and learned the importance of independence:

> Lawrence: That's one thing we tried to sort of teach them, independence is quite important, because I was very independent as a child, (to Graeme) and you were as well and I think that sort of taught them a lot… [it was] easy to travel. When they grew up, the youngest one, he would just go off and take himself away, and, you know, no problem!
> Graeme: When he was at university, he went to visit a friend in Latvia and it didn't quite work out, so he just took off and went to Finland and travelled to the North! (laugh) I'm sure

the inspiration has come from the fact that 'hey it's good to travel.' I think it's fair to say they had a very good experience of travel and holidays. We knew they would be able to have their own identities while on holiday, they would be able to use independence and enjoy independence from quite an early age too. 'Cause, I mean, we made them, if you like, independent from quite an early age.

For this couple, holidays were more than simply an opportunity to educate their children; they were a guarantee the children would carry on values both fathers shared. As people who revered independence, it was natural for them to pass this value to their children. Graeme's anecdote about his son's holidays to Latvia was used to demonstrate their goal of perpetuating their value of independence had been achieved. These shared values unite the family and highlight the uniqueness of the group, thereby strengthening their identity.

Construction and preservation of family memories

Although not directly stated as a travel motivation, many respondents indicated a desire to have memorable experiences on holiday and maintain and prolong these experiences through memories. The wish to form family memories out of holiday experiences, however, has been largely overlooked by tourism research; yet, memories are central to family identity, which is preserved through recollecting and reminiscing (Lawler 2008). Family memories not only communicate and reflect but also shape family identity; they produce what Kellas (2005, p. 369) describes as "we-ness", namely, the members' self-identification with the family unit. Within this context, holidays are powerful generators of memories, since these are cherished and valued for a long time (Gram 2005; Shaw *et al.* 2008). For some parents, holiday memories were as important as the holidays themselves, a perception which shaped their choices. Mike explained his decision not to accompany his brother's family on their holiday:

> Next year, they're going to Disneyland, Florida, which obviously isn't a cheap holiday but I don't think Alan [his son] is ready for it yet. I mean, he won't be remembering it. So actually we won't be joining them on that holiday.

In Mike's narrative, it is implicit that a trip to Disneyland was only worthwhile if it could be remembered in the future; otherwise, it should be discarded as a holiday option. Charlie made this link more explicit. At the end of the interview, she, who struggled to remember her holiday stories, humorously commented:

> I'll tell you what I'm concluding with this interview. We wasted thousands of pounds taking all you people [to her children who were in the room] on holiday and we can't remember anything. You know what I'm thinking? 'Oh my God, I could have just given you a fiver instead.' (laugh)

Because they preserve family history, holiday memories are a worthy investment. They also have a fundamental role in a family's life as trips may mark key moments in their lives together. For example, Tina celebrated her children's adoption anniversary by taking them on holiday. Likewise, Bill had a clear recollection of a holiday trip during which his son learned to cycle: "It was funny, he couldn't ride before, you'd be thinking 'should he need stabilisers?' and just that holiday he started cycling!" Graeme and Lawrence had a very similar experience with their sons, who learned to drive during their holidays abroad:

> Lawrence: So when we were on holiday, Graeme would let the boys drive the car! That was their time with their dad in the car kind of thing. And I was left with one of them, one or the other. 'I can't wait to learn to drive with dad!' (he appears to impersonate one of the sons) (laugh)

For Bill, Graeme and Lawrence, these holidays will be forever remembered; they may mark symbolic rites of passage, which sealed not only father-son bonding but also the boys' evolution into manhood. However, on many occasions, respondents' accounts showed holidays need not mark a celebration or a rite of passage to be remembered. Small instances of affection exchange among members also gain special relevance during holidays and are therefore included in the repertoire of family memories. Graeme narrated with tenderness an unforgettable moment during holidays with his teenage son:

> We were walking to the village one day and he saw a father with a child on his shoulders and he said 'I wish I'd known when it was the last time that I was gonna have a shoulder

ride on your shoulders. I wish I'd known because then I would really have enjoyed it 'cause I would've known it wasn't gonna happen again!' And I said 'it hasn't happened yet!' and put him on my shoulders (laugh). You know, we would have a lot of fun together on holidays. And this is something he'll never forget.

What these stories have in common is the fact that holidays have become part of the history of the family as they flag special occasions and / or generate narratives that will be remembered and repeated for years. They demonstrate and reinforce love among members. More importantly, because family identity is negotiated through interactive processes among family members (Huisman 2014), there is a continual need for families to revisit and preserve the past. Memories are crucial in preserving not only family identity but also the family itself (Kellas 2005; Bietti 2010; Huisman 2014).

Confirming Larsen (2005), for many respondents, keeping memories alive was a crucial aspect of the holiday experience. Mia and Miranda, for example, kept a collection of souvenirs acquired during family trips around the world. Their holiday narratives were supported by their pointing to the artefacts, which provided veracity to their stories. More importantly, these objects occupied a very significant position in their lives since they were displayed in their entrance hall and living room. More than simply suggesting their desire to convey an image of a well-travelled family, this indicated the centrality of holiday memories in the family's life. Some of the interviewees who did not keep physical memories of their holidays resented their lack. Ian, for instance, found it particularly difficult to recollect his trips with his husband and son and concluded: "I wish I had taken pictures."

Memories are also kept and reinforced through storytelling (Epp and Price 2008; Lawler 2008). However, rather than being carefully preserved, memories are constructed and reconstructed as they are recounted (Kellas 2005). In addition to family identity, memory production is itself a continued process of cooperation with the other, or, to quote Bietti (2010, p. 500), "memory is an action-oriented reconstruction of the past, which is highly dynamic and malleable by means of communication." In several

interviews, narratives were created as they were told. For example, as Charlie had difficulties remembering her holidays with her children, she asked for their help. Thus, most of the family travel stories were put together by all members, similarly to a collage process, to which each contributed with a small piece. Eventually, after some negotiation, the family seemed to arrive at a consensus and formed a unified recollection of their holidays, with which everyone appeared to be pleased. Nevertheless, on more than one occasion during this interview, one of the family members (more commonly Charlie herself) seemed to impose his / her view:

> Charlie: We've been twice to Gran Canaria. Sometimes my mum and dad would look after them. [to Jessica, her daughter] They took you to the parrot park. Remember, you've got the parrot picture?
> Jessica: Oh yeah.
> Charlie: You did that, didn't you [to William, her son]? Do you remember?
> William: I don't remember. You told me about the parrots before but I don't remember.

Or later in the interview:

> Charlie: Then we went to Disneyland Paris and we stayed in the Smiths' [their friends] house, they have this house in France.
> Interviewer: How long ago was that?
> Charlie: [to Jessica] Oh, you were tiny! You must've been around five. Do you remember it?
> Jessica: No, all I remember is you saying that I'd been to Disneyland Paris.

Charlie's narratives attest to what Bietti (2010, p. 506) terms "implanted memories", which are a result of one of the family members enforcing their own impressions on the formation of family recollections. This demonstrates holiday memories, rather than representations of an objective and unique reality, are often the result of an amalgamation of the members' multiple realities and suggests family memories are modified and remade.

Because of such fluidity, memories are constantly re-signified. For example, the memories of family holidays that surfaced during the interviews were, by default, happy ones. It is, however, implausible to

assume all interviewees have only positive stories to tell about their family trips. It could be thus conjectured that any unpleasant holiday experiences are forgotten. An indication of this was also observed in Charlie's interview, when she claimed she had never suffered from sexuality-related discrimination while on holiday. However, a few days later she emailed the researcher to amend her declaration with two stories of homophobia she had experienced. Very few interviewees spontaneously remembered any negative experiences while on family holidays. Yet, on many occasions, these stories were re-signified and recounted in ways to appear happy or successful. Among the interviewees, for instance, Donna and Lilly reconstructed negative holiday memories through laughter and humour:

> Donna: And then one of us would usually get a bit ill…
> Lilly (laugh)
> Donna: … and then you need to see an osteopath or something while you're away. [That person] would be lying on the ground in a constant level of-
> Lilly: (laugh) But that was normally Ross [their son]! It should be us who are getting older! That's normally Ross!
> Donna: No! It was you a few times!
> Lilly: Yeah, true, it was me! (laugh)

Lilly's illness during holiday was incorporated into family folklore; it had become a funny anecdote that was retold as a way of showing intimacy among members. Families manage their negative experiences by transforming them into positive stories (Huisman 2014) as happy memories strengthen family relationships (Shaw *et al.* 2008). This is even more apparent in the case of family holidays. As Carr (2011) highlights, because they distance themselves from the triviality of routine, and because of the emotional investment they entail, holidays are expected to generate happy moments; hence, the need to (re)construct holiday memories as positive ones. The willingness to keep and reconstruct happy memories is also consistent with Carr's (2011) concept of "happy family", which is further examined in 5.1.3. The Search for the 'Perfect Family Portrait', p. 197.

The role of family identity in holiday decisions

As discussed in chapter four, interviewees' holiday decisions were often jointly made between partners and involved no participation of the children. Indeed, while previous studies on family tourism reached contradictory results about the exact role of members in travel choices, there is a relative degree of consensus in scholarship that the selection of the holiday destination involves joint decisions (Jenkins 1980; Van Raaij and Francken 1984; Fodness 1992; Kang and Hsu 2004; Kozak 2010). This is confirmed by the findings in this study. However, as demonstrated in the literature review, the term 'joint decision' is ambiguous as it may refer to partners participating equally in the decisions or simply having similar powers (without necessarily taking part in the process). What this study unveiled is that, for the parents interviewed, rather than negotiated processes, joint decisions involve a division and, more often, a delegation of tasks. In this type of agreement, decisions are centralised in the hands of one of the partners while the other simply acquiesces to delegate the responsibility over holiday choices and eventually condones and validates the final decision. This arrangement was often used by interviewees to explain why holiday decisions were described as 'straightforward' processes that did not generate tension among family members.

It became apparent through the interviews, however, that holiday decisions did not often demand a high degree of discussion and negotiation because many choices seemed shaped by the family's shared tastes. Put differently, there was little intragroup disagreement because members had similar interests. Mia encapsulated these ideas in a few words: "We never argue because we all like the same thing, we always do the same thing. We always look for the sun no matter where we go." In Tina's family, consensus around holiday choices was also reached through shared interests. According to her daughter: "We're never forced to do anything, but most of the times, the holiday ideas Mummy comes up with are things we'd all enjoy anyway. So, most of the times it's a 'yes' because we all enjoy the same thing."

In a similar vein, Caroline explained why choosing destinations that pleased the whole family did not pose major difficulties:

> We all love a day on the beach, including Pollyanna [her daughter]. We take her to farm parks. We do conservation centres, we're all quite interested in animal conservation, forest walks and stuff. We're outdoor people, so we like not to be in the hotel or the accommodation until it comes to an evening meal and going to bed. We get up and we stay out all day. We're big day trippers. So it's nice for us if there are things like farm parks or wildlife centres or nice beaches, things that we can go to for the day.

Caroline's emphasis on their common tastes ("we all love", "we're all quite interested") is indicative of her perception of the family as a cohesive unit, corroborating the aforementioned concept of "we-ness" by Kellas (2005). Shared tastes and interests form family character, which is a fundamental component of family identity (Epp and Price 2008). As noted earlier, if identity is attained through a comparison with 'the other', as Lawler (2008) suggests, then what makes a family different from other families is precisely what members have in common among themselves. Shared tastes and interests, in addition to shared practices, are part of what makes a family unique. What the narratives above-cited suggest is that, confirming Epp and Price (2008), family identity may ultimately mould consumption patterns and experiences. It acts as an entity guiding families to make decisions, which, in consequence, are relatively uncomplicated; if the members are united by common tastes and characteristics, there is virtually no space for disagreement. In that respect, holidays are particularly relevant because not only are they governed by family character but they also reinforce family traits and practices. By spending time together on holidays, family members perform rituals and solidify similarities, which, in turn, enhance the identity of the unit.

To affirm family holiday decisions are moulded by family identity does not mean such identity is a monolithic construct. Rather, it is formed of a 'package' of individual identities that shape, and are shaped by, the identity of the family (Epp and Price 2008). Family identity emerges, therefore, not only as the result of comparisons with other families but also through the negotiation and interaction of individual identities within the

unit. Previous research found leisure to reconfirm identities (Warren 1974; Markwell 1998); in this respect, leisure practices and experiences may both mirror and strengthen the dynamic interplay of identities within the family.

Among research participants, at times one individual's identity (more often a parent's) shaped that of the family as a whole, thereby affecting holiday motivations and choices. This was certainly the case in Tina's family, whose members claimed to have a common liking for sports. However, during the interview it became apparent that the taste for sports, rather than naturally shared, had been acquired by the children through living with Tina. As a result, Tina's tastes and choices moulded those of her family. When comparing holidays with Tina and those with Tina's ex-partner, her daughter said:

> So this side of the family, with mummy Tina, is more like adventure holidays, like sailing or walking or stuff like that, or something like nuts basically (laugh). And with the other mum, it's more… We went to Portugal and all we did was lying there sunbathing the whole time. So it's really, really different.

In comparing the holiday choices of her two families, Naomi constructs family travel as a function of her mothers' personal tastes. However, not only do parents' individual identities mould family identity; children's identities also sway it, thereby impacting on travel choices and arrangements. Elizabeth and her ex-partner had fostered four children in the past, all of whom had been described as having behavioural issues: "They had a lot of problems as you can imagine. They had been in care for a reason and they had suffered as young children, had a lot of behavioural problems, suffered attachment problems." Because of such issues, the mothers preferred holiday destinations where there would be little interaction with other families.

In some cases, the relationships formed between children and parents constructed new individual identities. Such is the case of families with adopted children in this study. When one adopts a child, more than simply becoming a parent, arguably one also acquires the identity of an *adoptive* parent. This shapes the family self-image and influences many aspects of

the family's life as a result. Charlie's identity as an adoptive parent prevailed over her identity as a bisexual mother and, thus, going on holiday with other adoptive families was more logical than being among lesbian parented ones:

> We did a gay parenting group for a bit but our greater affiliation was with the adoptive parents rather than lesbian or gay parents, 'cause it was a much bigger deal for us, the adoption thing, it's much more complicated. I've got more in common with the adoptive parents than with lesbian parents. I did go on one holiday with the National Adoption group. We went to the New Forest. There was a caravan park and we had to caravan with all kids. There was lots of adoptive parents there. 'Cause we were so identified with the adoption issue, the lesbian and gay thing wasn't such a big deal.

As Charlie's speech suggests, being a bisexual mother, as opposed to an adoptive parent, was not paramount in the family travel decisions, confirming once again sexualities may become secondary to other identities as far as holidays are concerned.

A significant body of tourism research explained family decisions from the viewpoint of power relationships, focusing on the impact of family structures on power imbalance between family members (Decrop 2006; Bowen and Clark 2009; Kozak 2010). Participants described holiday decisions as jointly-made; yet, as explained earlier, this often meant one of the parents made the final decisions. However, an important finding emerged from this study: rather than an expression of power based on parental authority, the concentration of holiday decisions in the hands of one parent is actually the expression of the group identity. In this study, what the families described as a 'decision-maker' was more akin to a 'spokesperson' acting on behalf of family identity. Rather than making actual decisions, it seems as though this person was simply communicating to the group what had been implicitly decided. The group members' shared tastes and interests determined destination choice and holiday activities. As noted earlier, holiday decision-making was often described as easy and 'fun'. It is true that, as is often the case in qualitative research, interviewees' responses might have been affected by social desirability bias, namely, the "tendency of individuals to present

themselves in the most favourable manner relative to prevailing social norms and mores" (King and Brunner 2000, p. 80). However, that none of the families interviewed reported conflict among members while making holiday decisions might be indicative of the role of family identity in shaping holiday choices.

The next section explores how the interviewees' desire to provide children with happy holidays and to portray themselves as caring and responsible parents may affect family travel choices.

5.1.3. The Search for the 'Perfect Family Portrait'

Family holidays often reflect the social construct of the "happy family" (Carr 2011, p. 26), whose ramifications are two-fold. Firstly, it posits families go on holiday to fulfil a desire to be happy. Secondly, it purports that, aiming to fulfil societal expectations, parents often construct their travel motivations, choices and narratives around a need to depict themselves and their families as 'perfect'. The myth of the happy family is perpetuated in tourism, with, for instance, travel agencies producing brochures that emphasise the 'perfect family', invariably represented by the 'traditional' heterosexual parented unit (Hughes and Southall 2012). However, the interpretation of the data revealed the happy family construct as recurrent and significant in the narratives of many of the lesbian and gay parents interviewed. As previously noted, most of their holiday memories were (re)constructed as positive. A desire to display family harmony was also noted during the interviews. When these involved more than one person, quite often family members showed a need to seek mutual agreement, empathy or harmony. This was, for example, apparent in the interview with Freddy and Robert. Here are three different excerpts from that interview:

> Freddy [explaining why the couple had decided to adopt]:
> And we never really considered any other method than
> adoption, *did we*?

Robert: Yeah, it was adoption for us.

Freddy: We like to plan our own holidays so we do the research on the internet or we buy the *Lonely Planet* books. We often do that, *don't we*?
Robert: Yeah, we're independent travellers.

Robert: We had some good holidays in Las Vegas. But we're not doing that now, *are we*?
Freddy: No, but we'll go back when they're a bit older, *won't we*? 'Cause we love Las Vegas.

In their case, the frequent use of tag questions (italicised) aimed at seeking the partner's confirmation, not only to obtain reassurance of the accuracy of facts but also to demonstrate the lack of disagreement within the family unit.

One of the deployments of the happy family construct is the notion of the "good parent", which leads parents to verbalise family motivations and choices to portray an image of caring, nurturing and responsible parents (Carr 2011, p. 21). Similarly, many of the respondents' accounts were infused with expressions of "good parenting." The following section discusses how these constructs inform the travel motivations and choices of the families interviewed.

Holiday motivations and parental duties

As Steel *et al.* (2012, p. 122) state, "there have always been mothers but motherhood is invented." Indeed, motherhood, and by analogy parenthood, is a construct imbued in ideological expectations that causes mothers and fathers to both act and justify their actions to meet societal pressures (Steel *et al.* 2012). As explained earlier, for some parents, holiday decisions were seen as stressful because of the responsibilities they entailed. For many of them, holidays themselves were a type of duty. Confirmation of this comes from Abraham's account; during the interview, he referred to a previous holiday with his partner and son as an obligation: "So it was more the thought of 'I have to go' because I'd been very disengaged for a year and I just felt like I needed to go and be around them." These remarks support Shaw *et al.'s* (2008, p. 21) conclusion that

a family holiday is a "job and definitely a parental responsibility." Eager to fulfil social expectations of good parenting and provide their children with happy memories, fathers and mothers organise family holidays, which, in consequence, become both habitualised and idealised (Blichfeldt 2007).

The perception of holiday as parental duty is often aggravated by a parent being financially, operationally and emotionally responsible for the success of the holiday experience. Not only are parents expected to take their children on holiday but they also have to make sure the family experience is successful (Carr 2011). This is also confirmed by the findings in this study. Further, everyday duties are also taken on holiday. This is especially the case with mothers, who, due to an ethic of care, are expected to perform caregiving duties even on holiday (Decrop 2006; Bowen and Clarke 2009; Berdychevsky *et al.* 2013). In this study, this was confirmed by (both male and female) interviewees, in particular those with younger children.

As seen in chapter four, parental desire to expose children to learning, culture and physical activities was a very recurrent travel motivation among research participants. This is in direct contrast to the scarce attention given by the doctrine to the subject (for a few exceptions, see Rugh 2008; Schänzel 2012; Yeoman *et al.* 2012). As Carr (2011) conjectures, a desire to expose children to learning could be partially explained through the lens of the good parent construct. According to him, good parenting often involves parental sacrifice for the children and implies casting aside one's own preferences and desires to the benefit of the offspring. Donna, for instance, seems to substantiate Carr's (2011) argument. When explaining their motivations to opt for cities on holiday, she partly contradicted her partner Lilly, who had claimed the whole family liked to go shopping. Donna stated: "… and also generally it's sort of educational." By reinforcing the educational aspect and motivation of city holiday trips, Donna positions herself and her partner as good mothers, more concerned about their son's personal growth than their own personal pleasure.

Significantly, as previously mentioned, several parents cited among their travel motivations a need to take a break from parental duties. However, as with the desire to offer children educational and physical opportunities, this need has also received scant attention from the doctrine. The need to take a break from parenting suggests being a full-time parent is not an easy task. Moreover, it indicates being a 'good parent', namely a fully committed and self-sacrificing mother or father, is not always feasible as parents' individual wishes may sometimes prevail over the children's. For example, after stating she did not leave her children with babysitters or strangers on holiday, Charlie concluded: "But I think we'd have liked to get away from the kids more often." Later, she drew upon this desire when explaining why she did not enjoy going on holiday with other parents: "I like going with my gay boyfriends down the karaoke. That's good 'cause when you need to get out of that, you get a real break from it all. It's nice!" When explaining their desire to take a break from parental duties, some research participants broke with the image of good parent they were arguably trying to convey, and, when doing so, often expressed guilt. Lawrence and Graeme, for example, explained their sons' biological mother would sometimes take the children on holiday without the fathers:

> Lawrence: In the school holidays, 'cause Graeme is a teacher, the boys were with us 90% of the time, and, when she [their mother] was on holiday, she would take the children, so that would give us a break… (looking at Graeme) that sounds like the wrong word-
> Graeme: No, sure, it would give us some time on our own.
> Lawrence:… yeah, we would go for some time alone, you know.

Lawrence's reference to a "break" is immediately followed by a demonstration of guilt ("that sounds like the wrong word"). For a good parent, admitting the need to take a break from the children generates self-reproach. It is very significant that, after Lawrence's realisation and declaration of guilt, Graeme reassured his partner by rephrasing the sentence to emphasise the romantic need for the couple to spend time *on their own* as opposed to the selfish desire to spend time *away from the children*.

When discussing the pressures society places on mothers, Rotkirch and Janhunen (2009, p. 102) explain "motherhood myth" as the "idealised view of mothers as exclusive caretakers who are universally present, nurturing and kind". The motherhood myth presupposes some degree of sacrifice, which affects all aspects of a mother's life, including her work (Sutherland 2010) and leisure behaviour (Thompson 1998). The realisation that such romanticised expectations of mothers as flawless and inherently selfless people can never really be fulfilled creates frustration, and guilt may arise as a result. Indeed, mothering and guilt are inextricably linked constructs, with mothers often feeling inadequate for not being able to fully perform the role of the full-time caring mother (Sutherland 2010). This is particularly the case with mothers who must balance their domestic roles against their professional careers (Guendouzi 2006) or who raise their children alone (Boney 2002). The social pressures placed on fathers have received considerably less attention in academic research than those put on mothers. However, the literature highlights mothers and fathers may be affected by similar feelings. As Carr (2011) notes, fathers are also under pressure to conform to societal expectations of care towards their children. Martínez *et al.* (2011) explain the social changes that have reshaped the family have also caused fathers to experience higher levels of guilt than in the past. More importantly, as a result of gender roles becoming more fluid, the type of guilt that affects fathers has also changed. Fathers are increasingly more concerned with childcare and, thus, their guilt arises when they believe they do not to fulfil "the new expectations of paternity that require more attention and involvement with the children" (Martínez *et al.* 2011, p. 822). In view of these considerations, it may be more appropriate to refer to a *parenthood myth*, with the guilt that derives from it affecting both mothers and fathers. It is acknowledged here, however, that the extent to which this myth can be universal and used to explain fathers' and mothers' guilt equally should be submitted to further scrutiny.

Rotkirch and Janhunen (2009) explain guilt also plays a role in family survival in that it prevents negligent parenting. In feeling guilt, parents repress any potentially negative sentiments towards their children and thus focus on their duties of care (Rotkirch and Janhunen 2009). Findings

in this study suggest the good parent and the happy family concepts could be understood as the later stage of this process. In other words, parents' negative emotions about motherhood, fatherhood and about their children are repressed by guilt and concealed under the mask of 'perfect parenting and family'. Demonstrating good parenting skills, and, more importantly, depicting oneself as a perfect parent both disguise and counterbalance potentially negative thoughts about the children, the family or parenthood.

Given the above, parental guilt and the desire to fulfil social pressures to be a good parent may affect holiday choices as mothers and fathers vocalise their motivations as selfless and children-focused. For instance, the desire for togetherness, previously explained as a function of parents' anxiety to compensate for the little time spent with their children, could arguably be an expression of parental guilt, which, as pointed out in the literature (Decrop 2005; Klammer 2006), can be lessened through family holidays. In sum, the need to meet societal expectations and the guilt generated when these are not met may themselves act as holiday motivations, with mothers and fathers taking their children on holiday in the belief this will benefit their development and growth.

Destination choice, happy family and good parenting

Consistent with the literature (Moscardo *et al.* 1996; Kim and Lehto 2013) is the finding that, for all the families interviewed, the choice of holiday destination was primarily a function of their travel motivations. Many interviewees, for example, related a desire to relax whilst bonding with the family to holidays in a beach resort. However, as noted throughout the findings chapters, destination choice was explained as a function of the children's needs; thus, family-friendly places were prioritised over other types of destinations, in particular by families with younger children. Repeated like a mantra by almost all parents, the adage "if children are happy, we are happy" highlights children's centrality in holiday-related choices and echoes scholarship on family tourism (Gram 2005; Blichfeldt *et al.* 2010). Furthermore, the findings show destination avoidance is also impacted upon by a concern about children's safety, with parents refusing

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to take their offspring to destinations perceived as hostile or hazardous to the children's health, which is in line with the work of Simpson and Siguaw (2008). For some, the presence of children constrained travel options and curtailed their freedom of choice. For others, children were reasons for the family to go on holiday. For a few of the parents interviewed, destination choice incorporated their nostalgic desire to revive childhood, or to live their dreams through their children. This is also consistent with previous scholarly claims (Gram 2005; Carr 2011).

Be that as it may, parents place children's needs highly when choosing holiday destinations. The priority given to children could itself be another expression of Carr's (2011) good parent construct. In putting their children's wishes and needs at the centre of destination choice, parents might be sacrificing selfish desires to maintain an image of the happy family. More significantly, in explaining destination choice as a function of their children's needs, parents might be attempting to portray themselves as good carers. This desire could be linked with a wish to adjust to the social expectations of being caring parents.

As clarified above, guilt inhibits selfishness and causes parents to place children at the centre of their lives (Rotkirch and Janhunen 2009; Sutherland 2010), and, when parents expressed a desire to take a break from parenting, they often manifested guilt. A similar situation was observed with parents who voiced a wish to choose destinations based on their own needs as opposed to those of their children. For instance, Charlie expressed guilt about not considering her daughter when deciding where to go on her next holiday. She, who is now in a relationship with a man, told the researcher she had recently received a trip as a gift from her boyfriend, and they would soon be going on a cruise to the Greek islands: "Stewart has just bought me an amazing gift. He's bought us a cruise for my fiftieth birthday. And we wanted a cruise with no children. [to her daughter Jessica] Sorry, is that bad?" The expression of her desire to spend holidays away from her children immediately gave way to guilt, which culminated in an apology to her teenage daughter. Her body language (she frowned and pressed her lips) seemed to convey regret and reinforce guilt. At times, basing the choice of the destination on children's

needs was not enough to liberate parents from guilt. Gillian, for instance, explained she had chosen a Spanish resort because of the kids' club facilities. However, when time came to leave her son at the club, she hesitated:

> The first time I took him [to the kids' club], he was a bit like 'I'm not really sure I wanna be left here, thanks, mum.' He was a bit reluctant to be left. I mean, we did leave him but I felt bad about it. And also, we weren't doing anything else. I mean, when we're at home, he goes to nursery, or school, preschool so that we can get on with doing something else like working. But we were on holiday! So we sent him to the kids club and we were like 'so what do we do?' 'Cause that's what we do, we play with the kids! We kind of missed him, I suppose, so we went to fetch him. I think we're a bit nerdy, we don't leave our kids much.

Arguably Gillian's words ("I felt bad about it") reveal guilt for leaving her child to be looked after by other people. Confirming the relationship between guilt and good parenting, she quickly complemented her arguments by reinforcing her caring duties. Her final statement ("we went to fetch him, we don't leave our kids much") restates her self-identity as a perfect, caring and conscientious mother, incapable of 'abandoning' her son.

The findings of this study reveal, in several respects, the lesbian and gay parented families interviewed mirror the literature on family tourism, which, as argued before, places emphasis on the heterosexual parented family. The travel motivations of same-sex parented families, such as their desire to relax and take a break from routine, to spend time together and bond, do not stand out as different from those of the families researched in the past. Likewise, the destinations these families choose for their holidays do not significantly differ from the tourism literature. When deciding where to spend holidays, participants prioritise their children's needs. The incessant repetition of the motto "if the children are happy, you're happy" by many participants also echoes scholarly findings. This chapter has aired the possibility that these parents might actually be vocalising their children's needs as a priority to portray themselves as good and caring parents; yet, even this also corroborates previous research on the topic. In a similar vein, these families' decisions do not fundamentally diverge from those

reported in scholarship, with parents dominating destination choice, and children more commonly participating in holiday decisions after adolescence. Likewise, as noted earlier, although some of the families interviewed had configurations that stood out from the 'conventional' model 'two parents with children', their decisions were made in household units (involving only one couple of parents), thereby replicating much of previous scholarly findings.

It was conjectured in the literature review that holidays could have a special significance for lesbigay parented families, who might use holidays to create and reinforce intra-connections as a protective mechanism against discrimination. This was not confirmed by respondents. As noted, family holidays provided an opportunity for families to bond, create a sense of belonging, generate positive memories, and enhance their identity as a result. Yet, family identity, which governed many of their holiday motivations and destination choice, was never expressed in terms of, or associated with, sexuality. During the interviews, the importance parents attributed to their sexual identities was commonly minimised. None of the parents interviewed verbalised a desire to express their sexuality or escape the pressures of a heteronormative society as a travel motivation. Similarly, few of them manifested a preference for gay and lesbian-centred holiday destinations, and those who did so highlighted their rejection of those places after becoming parents.

As pointed out earlier, sexuality was, in the words of the interviewees, "kept low profile", taken "out of the equation", as if it had been put aside or 'suspended', with the parental identity transitorily taking over the sexual identity. Indeed, identities in general can be volatile. They can juxtapose, add to and / or interact with each other (Blichfeldt *et al.* 2011), with one identity sometimes temporarily prevailing over others (Von Busekist 2004). This was certainly the case with the parents interviewed. Their sexual identities were left in the background for a certain period after they decided to have / raise children. Heterosexual men and women may also temporarily put aside their sexual identities, as well as the importance they ascribe to them, when they become parents (Berdychevsky *et al.* 2013). Nonetheless, what is striking about the interviewees' narrative is that many

of them often seemed to downplay the importance their sexual identities had in their lives and their families. For instance, several families who participated in this study refused to label themselves. In the early stages of this Ph.D. project, the researcher struggled to find a term to designate families parented by gays and lesbians. Therefore, at each interview, he asked the interviewees' opinions about the most adequate term to denominate their families. Some of the answers given were: "I don't feel the need to have a label for us really" (Freddy), "none of the labels really fit" (Shirley), "why label? We are a family!" (Mia).

What these findings seem to reveal is that, in many respects, the families interviewed do not fundamentally differ from other families, not only when it comes to their travel motivations, destination choice and holiday decisions, but also possibly in relation to other aspects of their lives. For example, Folgerø (2008) argues lesbigay parented families challenge the social perception of children as the products of romantic love. He takes the stance that children of gay and lesbian parents are more commonly the result of negotiations and discussions than romance *per se* (Folgerø 2008). Many of the parents interviewed clearly contradict this argument, claiming to have rejected forms of conception that might involve any relationships other than love-based ones. For example, when recounting, at the beginning of the interview, how they decided to have a child, Rick and Ian emphasised the selfless and humanitarian aspect of the process. They suggested the type of surrogacy chosen (with no financial transaction involved) was indicative that the baby had been conceived out of friendship and love, and this was reiterated a few times during the interview. However, when narrating the decision-making process to have a child, Rick compared it to a project:

> The actual decision was in Argentina. We went to live in Argentina for six months… We knew we were going back so it was kind of 'What are we gonna do now? Are we going to buy a house and try to, you know, do up our house?' You know, what was our big project?

Rick's reference to the baby as a project disrupted the image the couple had tried to construct by associating their son's conception with love. As

an immediate response to Rick's declaration, Ian declared the idea to have a baby had always been part of the couple's story:

> But, you know, we'd always said we wanted to have a kid. We talked about it. We talked about both being interested in having kids the night that we met through friends. So it's always kind of been there as a background and as a baseline of our relationship.

Ian's narrative brought romance back into the decision to have a baby, which broke with the rationality Rick had introduced into the story.

Quotations like these illustrate how 'average' gay and lesbian parented families can be, as their families echoed and replicated, in many respects, patterns and models of 'conventional' heteronormative ones. That the same-sex parented families in this study can be in many ways 'ordinary' puts in perspective previous research on the topic. A significant body of literature portrays same-sex parented families as different from others, either because of their diverse configurations (Weston 1991; Stacey and Meadow 2009) or because of their democratic processes, characterised by a fair task division among members (Weeks *et al.* 1999; Dunne 2000; Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; Biblarz and Savci 2010; Perlesz *et al.* 2010). These somehow idealised and rather naïve views that seem to place lesbigay families on a pedestal of egalitarianism and modernity are not corroborated in this study. During the interviews, not only did respondents' answers negate these stances but also highlighted (and seemed proud of) their sense of 'averageness'. Rather than being associated or categorised according to the parents' sexualities, they rejected any labels that might identify their families through their sexual identities. This does not mean, of course, that parents denied their (homo)sexualities, but, in many instances, they minimised the importance of the impact of being gay in their holiday choices and other aspects of their lives.

At this point, a comment is noteworthy. To affirm lesbigay parented families are, in several aspects, not substantially different from more 'traditional' heteronormative ones should not be interpreted as equating the latter to benchmarks while placing the former in a second-best position. Indeed, as noted earlier, this study does not condone the

heteronormative stance that 'traditional' straight parented families are reference points to which all other families should be compared. Rather, the 'averageness' commonly showed by gay and lesbian parented families in this research demonstrates they are part of a wide myriad of families, thereby revealing the diversity and fluidity that characterises the family as a social institution in the U.K., where the study took place. It indicates same-sex parented families are, first and foremost, *families*.

5.1.4. Gay and Lesbian Parented Family Holidays: Sexuality as the Difference

That the same-sex parented families in this study have so many commonalities with those investigated in the tourism literature, however, does not mean they are the same in every respect. At least two very important aspects distinguish the families interviewed from those contemplated in the literature. The first, as previously indicated, relates to destination avoidance. The parents' sexuality did have an impact on the choice of places they *rejected*, with all the interviewees claiming to shun destinations perceived as hostile to gays and lesbians. As a result, their choices of destination underwent multiple layers of avoidance, with sexuality exerting a very restrictive influence on the holiday choices of all respondents.

The second aspect relates to the possibilities of social interaction while on holiday. In this sense, the qualitative interviews provided valuable insights into the mechanisms parents used to navigate their sexualities in holiday spaces. The interviews showed how, on some occasions, heteronormative conventions shaped the ways lesbian and gay parented families socialised with locals and other tourists at the travel destination. As noted in chapter four, some participants claimed to avoid interacting with people outside the family unit whilst on holiday, with a few of them prioritising destinations where there would be little opportunity for social interaction. In addition, many parents reported feeling uncomfortable when having to share

facilities with other people. In many instances, they managed this fluid separation between private and public by avoiding scrutiny, hiding their sexualities and / or projecting heterosexual identities.

These considerations are important because they reveal the paradoxical nature of the relationship respondents have with their own sexual orientation. In this vein, while sexuality was not perceived as defining their family or individual identities, parents claimed to be proud of their sexualities. Yet, in many instances, the interpretation of their narratives unveiled a sense of discomfort with their own sexual identities, indicating their pride sometimes gave way to, or was superseded by, shame. Indeed, the continuum pride / shame emerged as another critical theme in this study and is now examined in detail.

5.2. UNDERLYING EXPRESSIONS OF PRIDE / SHAME IN GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTED FAMILY HOLIDAYS

One of the most strikingly recurrent comments made by parents during the interviews related to their pride in being gay / lesbian. All parents, with no exceptions, described or depicted themselves as 'out and proud' and told the researcher they had acknowledged, disclosed and were open and happy about their sexualities. Most interviewees' comments and narratives conveyed ideas of openness and strength. For instance, Doris and Elizabeth, who had adopted their children while in lesbian relationships, highlighted their experiences of prejudice and stigmatisation during the adoption process. Their stories, however, invariably concluded with a similar sense of achievement and resilience. Pride was also expressed on family holidays. When explaining why she had never experienced homophobia while travelling with her ex-partner and children, Charlie said:

> I'm very competent. Alanis [her ex-partner] is really competent. People are not gonna say to us really very easily 'oh, you dirty "lez" [lesbians], what a dreadful life you live.' They're just not gonna do that. Whereas more timid people

might have tricky experiences. We're just very confident with our sexuality.

Some adopted an unapologetic or even aggressive attitude towards discrimination. When talking about her sexuality, Mia explained her motto was "don't apologise, don't explain." Sandrine expressed these ideas even more vehemently:

> I'm very out. If people don't like it, then they just have to stay out of the way. You don't have to approve of it. Everywhere we went as a family, we were out. So we were out as lesbians. If they didn't like it, my answer is 'tough shit.' If anything, my appearance would put people off sort of crossing me anyway. I actually look like I can beat the crap out of them. My Mohican hairstyle shaved side, I've had that for years. It's just who I am. And I think it just says to people 'I've got attitude, don't piss with me.'

The unapologetic and confrontational attitude found in the examples above is often a form of resistance among lesbians and gay men (Ravel and Rail 2006) that helps challenge the construction of homosexuality as a stigma (Broad 2001). It also partly reflects what Beasley (2005, p. 132) terms "libertarian individualism", encapsulated in the motto "do what you like, be what you want to be", which characterises part of gay pride and liberation movements. Indeed, for Barbone and Rice (1994), coming out, often perceived as the epitome of gay pride, is an act of individualism as it improves self-esteem, thereby fostering personal growth. However, for some interviewees, pride sometimes had implications that involved more than individual choices. Within this context, forming and having a family reinforced pride, with several respondents purporting to be positive role models for their children. For Lynn, more than simply enhancing pride, having a baby forced her, and particularly her partner, out of the closet:

> So I remember early on in our relationship talking about having children and I said [to her partner] 'you know, I want you to be out, 'cause what if we have a baby and you're at the playground to pick her up and she says "I've two mummies", what would you say? Would you get embarrassed?' She got really mad at me and said 'Just because I'm not out to my clients doesn't mean I wouldn't be out at the playground. I know that, when I have a child, I know how important it is that I'll have to show her that mummy is really confident with the life that she has.' And I would say this has definitely happened.

The formation of Lynn's family was, therefore, directly linked to a public disclosure of the mothers' sexuality. In Lynn's speech, being in the closet means being embarrassed and being out equals being confident, a feeling that is deemed positive and so should be passed on to their daughter.

Expressions of pride, however, may sometimes mask negative feelings towards one's own sexual orientation. The repression of such sentiments is described as shame, commonly regarded by society as the opposite of pride. Shame affects lesbians and gay men as it assumes homosexuality is a stigma (Warren 2010), which, as such, should be hidden (Munt 2000; Reilly and Rudd 2006). Shame may lead to internalised homophobia, namely the acceptance that being gay is negative, which may in turn generate low self-esteem (Weber-Gilmore *et al.* 2011) and even self-hatred (Irvine 2009). As Brown and Trevethan (2010) argue, shame may cause gay men and lesbians to develop difficulties in creating emotional attachments and may cause them to lead lonely lives.

However, as Munt (2000) clarifies, pride and shame, rather than diametrical, are closely interwoven constructs. Shame defines the formation of the homosexual identity (Munt 2000), with the ashamed subject often unaware of their shame or incapable of ridding themselves of it (Sedgwick 2003; 2009). Same-sex desire provokes feelings of marginality and exclusion, and gay subjects learn, in early stages of their lives, to be ashamed of their sexuality (Munt 2000; 2007). With time, most enter a cyclical process in which they learn shame should itself be hidden and, thus, become ashamed of their own shame (Davidson 2006). Shame may be repressed via the manifestation of pride, which becomes the mask under which negative sentiments are concealed. Therefore, pride and shame are two sides of the same coin, or, to quote Sedgwick (2009, p. 51), "different interlinings of the same glove". Shame is not the antithesis of pride; rather it is its genesis. In this sense, pride is initiated by, grounded in, tied to and dependent upon shame (Giffney 2007), or, in Munt's (2007, p. 4) words: "shame is transmitted into pride as part of a strategy by individuals and groups to reverse the discourse; think of Foucault's famous example of such in which the pathologised homosexual turns himself into the out, proud gay man."

As indicated earlier, all participants portrayed themselves as out and proud. Nonetheless, thanks to the interpretivist paradigm adopted in this study, several indications of subconscious shame were found in their narratives. Because the ashamed subject aims to deflect the view of the other (Butler 1997), s/he hides both him/herself and his / her shame (Shallcross 2011). Indeed, shame is a private sentiment (Irvine 2009), or, as Britt and Heise (2000) suggest, while pride 'inflates' and is thus openly shown and expressed, shame 'deflates' and is thus concealed. In that sense, language is often used to disguise shame (McDermott *et al.* 2008). Several interviewees carefully phrased their sentences to stress their sense of pride and minimise expressions of shame. Elizabeth, for instance, narrated a trip she went on with her ex-partner:

> Elizabeth: I've got a daughter who lives up North and we went up North to see her and we stayed in a bed and breakfast. We just chose one from the Internet and we had the conversation, you know 'will that be OK?' Well, it has to be, doesn't it? People are not allowed to discriminate but we had that conversation and, when we got there, we discovered it was a gay men's couple running it and we were so thrilled, they were so lovely, we've been back there. It was lovely! You know, we just felt totally accepted, there weren't people wondering about us or looking, it was just great.
> Interviewer: But is it [the possibility of discrimination] a concern?
> Elizabeth: It's something I'm aware of. Not a concern. A consideration, I suppose.

In replacing "concern" with "consideration" and "awareness", Elizabeth attenuates her worries of being discriminated against. By claiming "people are not allowed to discriminate", she demonstrates knowledge of her rights, which is indicative of her pride. In contrast, she does not conceal the relief and excitement she felt for discovering the B&B was actually run by a gay couple ("we were so thrilled, they were so lovely"). Similarly, Donna and Lilly also preferred nuanced terms to express their concerns prior to checking into a hotel together: "just anxiety" (Donna), "just a little bit of unpleasantness" (Lilly). The subtlety of the words used, reinforced by "just" and "a little bit", arguably aim to convey the image that they were not entirely concerned about prejudice or discrimination, which enhances their

discourses of pride. Other manifestations of shame were, however, more emphatic and are examined in detail in the next sections.

5.2.1. Expressions of a 'Fractured' Community

LGBT people often refer to themselves as a community. However, the use of the term is not without its critics. Traditionally, community is defined by elements such as territorial boundaries, a common culture and the existence of a power system (Murray 1979), or a social structure that encompasses enduring inter-member relationships (Lesnoff and Westley 1956; Krieger 1983). Nevertheless, current understandings of community adopt a more fluid perspective and define it from the viewpoint of the existence of shared characteristics (Holt 2011). Rather than a structure, community is a group in which belonging is premised in shared features. From this stance, as LGBT people share the characteristic of having non-heteronormative sexualities, they all belong to a network which can be designated as a community. Ultimately, a community is a group of people that, due to their shared characteristics, name themselves as such. As Holt (2011) explains, the gay community differs from the gay scene, which relates to the existence of commerce and businesses catering for lesbian and gay markets in a limited area. He concludes his reasoning by affirming the gay scene is a place and gay community, a network. Kelly *et al.* (2014) corroborate this argument and affirm the relationships that compose this network reinforce gay identity.

Nevertheless, gay identity is a rather vague construct. A simple excursion to a Gay Pride Festival leads to the conclusion that a single gay identity is a myth. Rather than monolithic and uniform, the LGBT community is diverse, pluralistic and heterogeneous. LGBT people may have in common their non-heteronormative sexual orientations but this seems to be the *sole* characteristic they *actually* share. Queens, bears, butches[6]

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[6] The term *queen* is often used by gays to refer to effeminate men. *Bear* commonly designates hyper-masculine gay men, often characterised by large /

and bisexuals, to name just a few of the subgroups within the community, all have different characteristics and proclivities and may themselves be subdivided into other smaller segments. More importantly, quite often the relationships between and / or within these groups are marked by tension or friction, with, for instance, gay men segregating lesbians (or vice-versa), 'bears' discriminating against 'queens' or transgendered and HIV positive people being ostracised by other factions. Interviewees' accounts indicate the LGBT community, an umbrella term supposed to be inclusive and accepting, rather than a solid construct, is actually fragmented, or 'fractured'. The internal friction and tension within a community that is presumed to have similar goals and fight for similar rights may also be indicative of shame.

These frictions were consistently observed during the interviews. Some respondents referred to other LGBT people or groups with contempt or irony. At times, the supposedly 'humorous' comments reinforced stereotypes. For instance, gay men were described as 'party animals' who were not interested in children. As Tina stated when explaining why she did not go on holiday with her gay male friends: "It probably wouldn't work. 'Cause they have a very… they've got a very… (laugh)… I'm a horribly stereotyped lesbian, but they're very gay male. (laugh) There'll be lots of hung-over men in the morning walking around the pool." Tina seems to understand her comment might be perceived as derogatory to gay men, hence her hesitation and her attempt to minimise it by labelling herself a "stereotyped lesbian". Charlie constructed gay men as fun and not family-oriented and explained why she preferred to go on holiday with them: "That's why I like gay men, actually: because they are not really interested in children. They ask you about the kids but they're not really interested." A similar opinion was held by Elisa: "Gay destinations aren't generally that family friendly (laughs and looks at her partner), especially because they're mainly dominated by gay men, who, you know, are essentially less interested in children." On these occasions, through their body language,

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muscular bodies and / or abundant body and facial hair. *Butch* refers to women with traditionally masculine traits and / or mannerisms.

participants often showed embarrassment, perhaps conscious of the fact that the researcher was himself a gay man.

Another trait often attached to gays and lesbians was hyper-sexuality. As Graeme explained:

> We [he and his partner] never made them [their sons] feel like they were on holiday with gay parents. We didn't take them to Sitges[7] and say 'we're gonna lie naked on the beach and you'll have to find something that you wanna do.' (laugh)

Sandrine seemed to associate lesbians with infidelity and disloyalty: "They [other lesbians] are all fucked up (laugh). They're either poaching each other's partners, shagging each other's partners, back stabbing each other's partners." For George, lesbians were synonymous with a lack of femininity and taste:

> I remember one occasion, I had two of my lads in the car and there were these two women, you know, really taking their time crossing the zebra crossing. And because they had track shoes on, I said 'oh come on, you two old lesbians' and the boys just, you know, just fell about laughing.

Sandrine also drew a link between lesbians and masculinity: "It's not difficult to suss me out. I'm a typical looking dyke. That's just it: I am. Body-wise, everything, the looks about me, you know, put me in a dress, I'm a man in drag." On the other hand, in many interviews, being effeminate was alluded to as a typical gay male characteristic. At times, the word *gay* itself was used as a synonym for *effeminate.* For example, when explaining why it was easy for him to 'pass as a straight man', Mike stated: "Hopefully, I'm not too gay, I don't act gay, you know what I mean? I don't stand out as a gay dad or a gay man." In his sentence, the use of the word "hopefully" is very significant as it reveals being gay is something to be avoided. In several instances, being camp (effeminate) was described or perceived as inadequate: "None of my gay friends are the ones who do all the campy camp stuff, you know what I mean? So they wouldn't say any inappropriate things in front of the kids or anything like

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[7] The Spanish seaside town of Sitges is a very popular holiday destination among European gay men.

that" (Luke). George's choice of words when describing one of his friends, with whom he and his sons often go on holiday, is quite relevant:

> But my friend is very openly gay. I mean, he's not a mincing queen but he's very openly gay and he says gay things in front of my boys. Somebody might say to him 'are you going out?' and he'd say (with an affected tone of voice) 'darling, I've always been out!' (laugh)

George describes his friend as open about his sexuality. His portrayal of his friend has, however, a caveat: he is not a "mincing queen", a term used to express a very effeminate gay man. Later in the interview, he offered:

> I include them [his sons] 160% in my gay life. What I wouldn't be comfortable with is exposing them to, you know, like the… the, you know… I suppose… I suppose parts of the gay scene I myself feel uncomfortable with. You know, I mean, if I had to go down to Soho and hang around during Gay Pride with all the, you know, queens camping up or being totally, ridiculously gay... Yeah, I can take some of that, I'm not much of a prude but I'm not totally comfortable with that myself. So I wouldn't particularly want to expose my sons to it when they're with me. I'm totally OK with sharing my gay life with them but there're some aspects that I would feel uncomfortable with.

George's speech reinforces stereotypes about gay men. The terms used ("totally, ridiculously gay") underline his derogatory ideas about homosexuality. For him, being camp equals being outrageous and laughable. Indeed, the extravagant camp gay man is often perceived by society as frivolous or ridiculous. However, as Johnston (2007) reminds, there is more to it than that; in deconstructing gender stereotypes and destabilising gender binaries, 'campiness' disrupts both heterosexuality and masculinity, hence, it dramatically transgresses heteronormative conventions. George's discomfort being around effeminate men reiterates shame as it demonstrates his rejection of what is perceived as 'typically' homosexual. As a consequence, George feels he should shield his sons from the 'negative' demonstrations of 'gayness', indicating shame ultimately shapes his parenthood, his relationship with his children and his choice of where to go on family holiday.

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The literature on prejudice against gays and lesbians is prolific; however, it predominantly focuses on experiences of discrimination perpetrated by society in general (for a few examples, see Forstein 1988; Sussal 1998; Rosik *et al.* 2007). Despite work on the extra layers of prejudice suffered by 'minorities' inside the gay community, such as ethnic groups (Harper and Schneider 2003; Balsam *et al.* 2011; Mollon 2012), gays and lesbians with health issues or disabilities (Bennett and Coyle 2007), little is known about manifestations of stigmatisation among and between LGBT people. Most studies on gay and lesbian-initiated homophobia look into its consequences for the self (low self-esteem and self-hatred), such as the emergence of mental health issues (Brown and Trevethan 2010; Newcomb and Mustanki 2010; Kappler *et al.* 2013), thereby failing to address the impact of internalised homophobia on the attitudes of one LGBT person / group towards others. Yet, as Gabb (2005) argues, marginalisation targets the other, who is perceived to be different and / or inferior. In this respect, it would be naïve to believe the diversity of subgroups within the LGBT community would not produce some sort of antagonism or friction amongst them. Further, internalised homophobia may be often translated into spite, which may in turn generate discrimination towards LGBT populations (Kappler *et al.* 2013). Finally, LGBT people have been raised and live in heteronormative societies and may, consciously or subconsciously, reproduce homophobia. If, as Weber-Gilmore *et al.* (2011, p. 163) state, homophobia is "the anxiety, aversion, and discomfort that some individuals experience in response to being around, or thinking about LGB behaviour or people", not only do the narratives mentioned above reinforce stereotypes commonly assigned to LGBT people but they also provide evidence of homophobia within the community. What the findings in this study seem to suggest is that, more than simply producing internalised homophobia, thereby affecting self-esteem, shame may impact on the ways non-heterosexual people perceive, and relate to, each other.

Such instances of stigmatisation may affect family holiday choices. When asked whether he would take his (adult) children to gay-friendly destinations, George replied: "I'm sure they would be OK with that but they

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don't need to see this kind of thing," possibly implying that gay centred places, or what he believes happens there, are incompatible with children. As seen in chapter four, Miranda described Lesbos, as "appalling" and added she would never return. When asked to elaborate on that, she replied "too many lesbians". In a like manner, when justifying why he preferred not to spend holidays in a gay centred destination, Luke stated:

> Luke: I find it a bit… intimidating, a bit… I don't know! Not my cup of tea, necessarily. It all just seems a bit full-on, a bit tacky!
> Interviewer: I'm sorry, I'm gonna go back to a word you used: 'intimidating.' Can you tell me why?
> Luke: Intimidating? I don't find it so much now. I think when I was younger, I found it more intimidating. But now, I just… Phew! Not intimidating… It's all that competition… Or [when he is] with a partner and there's all the jealousy or something. Again, that might not be a problem but I'd rather not deal with that. I find it all a bit, you know… There's a lot of gay men, I just think 'whatever', you know… I'm not very keen on them! They are very shallow, so-
> Interviewer: So you wouldn't go to gay centred destinations with the kids?
> Luke: No, definitely not. No, I wouldn't take the kids. I'd just rather do things that are kid-friendly, so you know, lots of drunk people staggering around, it's not really kid-friendly, is it? No, definitely not.

Luke construes gay destinations as inherently negative. Significantly he starts by describing them as "intimidating". However, when asked to elaborate on the word, he takes it back ("not intimidating") and reinforces he felt that way in the past, possibly suggesting he was too inexperienced to deal with the negative feelings this type of place evoked. The words he associates with gay places ("full-on", "tacky"), or with the people who visit and patronise them ("competition", "very shallow", "drunk people") demonstrate his derogatory preconceptions of gay men on holiday, which leads him to emphatically reject ("definitely not") this type of destination as a family holiday choice. This suggests, at least for a few parents, the reason behind their refusal of gay places as family holiday destinations, in addition to other factors, could be predicated in a negative perception of other LGBT people or homosexuality itself.

5.2.2. The Discomfort of Being 'Out'

As discussed in chapter four, interviewees sometimes managed their sexuality in public spaces on holiday by avoiding or restricting social interaction and / or avoiding drawing attention to themselves as a lesbigay parented family. Confirming the literature (Valentine 1993; Gabb 2005), this commonly involved negotiating heterosexual or asexual identities, with several 'passing as straight' and / or pretending not to be in a relationship. Children were perceived by some parents as facilitating the 'straight look' and, by others, as enhancing visibility, making them stand out, particularly in family-friendly destinations. Corroborating scholarship (Demo and Allen 1998; Gabb 2005), some of the parents interviewed reported their children, accidentally or not, 'outed' them on holiday, thereby drawing people's attention to their sexualities and amplifying their visibility. Although most parents claimed to seek, or not to avoid, social interaction on holiday, some declared to shun it on the grounds that they did not know how accepting people would be or how to approach straight parented families. While the discomfort of being around other people may also be an aspect of their daily lives, some parents described holidays as particularly problematic due to the high contact with other tourists and locals. Confirming Perlesz *et al.* (2006), these parents construed holiday spaces as characterised by a fluid separation between the private and the public spheres and, thus, had to adopt strategies to cope with the exposure this disjuncture generated.

As Sedgwick (2009) explains, shame leads the ashamed to reduce self-exposure. While the respondents' attempts to navigate their sexualities in the holiday arena by diminishing their visibility were normally explained by a fear of hostility and concern for the family's safety, some of their narratives revealed a sense of discomfort with their own sexualities, which is also indicative of shame. This discomfort was mainly expressed in two ways: avoiding conflict and seeking a 'cloak of invisibility'.

Confrontation avoidance

Arguably, shame was at times manifested through the avoidance of conflict. In many cases, participants provided accounts of moments in which their sexuality was questioned, scrutinised, disputed or ridiculed. Contradicting their 'out and proud' discourse, however, they did not oppose these instances of stigmatisation. This is how Graeme and Lawrence dealt with a negative experience while on a family holiday:

> Lawrence: When we were in South Africa, we had homophobic remarks (pause). Jokes were being said about us behind our backs but loud enough for us to hear. I suppose it was a motel really, a hotel, and the owner started telling homophobic jokes in the bar.
> Interviewer: And you could hear them and you think they were directed-
> Lawrence: Oh, directed at us! And Graeme's sister, being quite a gregarious woman to say the least, decided to put an end to it, you know. She actually said 'I find that hugely offensive!' You know, not directed at us but she said, you know, 'you can't say that about people, that's absolutely disgraceful and I find it very offensive!' The whole bar went quiet.
> Graeme (laugh): We didn't clap there, we clapped afterwards.

The couple reckoned the hotel owner's jokes were targeted at them, yet they preferred to remain silent. It was Graeme's sister who took the initiative of rebutting the owner's remarks. The couple did not support or show approval to the sister's attitude at the bar either; instead, they "clapped afterwards", indicating they avoided both confronting the owner and drawing attention to themselves. Their reaction substantiates Morrison's (2015) argument that shame and silence are intrinsically linked, with the ashamed subject often shunning conflict or exposure. The less verbalised and more repressed shame is, the more powerful it gets; in this sense, shame ultimately targets, and invariably leads to, conformity (Irvine 2009). In sharp contrast to the vocal and unapologetic proud subject, the ashamed self remains silent and perpetuates stigmatisation.

Evidence of the silence that shame can generate is found in the interview with Doris, who tried to rationalise her response to a homophobic

experience. She mentioned how locals had reacted to her showing affection to her partner during holidays in Australia:

> Doris: One time, we [she and her ex-partner] went in a bar. It wasn't a gay bar, it was a, you know, a bar for travellers maybe, and I think, I just reached her and squeezed my partner's arm, you know, a friendly gesture, and bang! They asked us to leave. They didn't like that sort of thing.
> Interviewer: And how did you react?
> Doris: My partner was like 'calm down' and I was 'no, I'm not putting up with this, I want to challenge.' And she was 'no, please.' But I've respect for her and we left.

In her speech, Doris manifests her willingness to resist, which demonstrates her pride; yet, because of her partner, she chooses not to put up a fight. Her shame is minimised by the "respect" she feels for her partner. As Irvine (2009) explicates it, to be kept secretive, shame is often disguised under, or expressed through, other feelings and emotions. Munt (2007, p. 534) suggests shame is often supported by "explanatory or justificatory frames". Doris's narrative indicates shame may produce cognitive dissonance (doing, or not doing, something that goes against one's personal beliefs), which is rationalised or re-signified to reduce shame and restore psychological stability.

As mentioned in chapter four, several respondents experienced anxiety or discomfort when checking into hotels with their families, especially when they were offered twin beds rather than double beds, a situation which Hughes (2006, p. 28) terms "check-in phobia". In a demonstration of pride, however, most declared they simply asked for a double room when offered twin beds:

> I went on a holiday with a girlfriend many years ago and stayed in a hotel in France and had quite a… (simulating the conversation at the hotel) 'you've booked a double room', 'yes, I want a double room', 'you shouldn't have a double room', 'well, I've booked a double room and I'm having one!' (Caroline)

Some respondents, on the other hand, described the hotel check-in moment as problematic or delicate, which is in line with Hughes's (2006) and Poria's (2006) claims that commercial situations may be especially difficult for gays and lesbians and even inhibit their consumption practices.

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Many participants claimed to shun conflict by accepting the rooms they were given. During family holidays, Graeme and Lawrence were often given a twin bedroom; the solution found by the couple was not to complain about it:

> Graeme: To be honest we've never made a fuss about it because-
> Lawrence: We just push the beds together. (laugh)
> Graeme: We push the beds together and get on with life. But, you know, purposefully, we push them apart when we leave.

In the case described above, the couple's concern to separate the beds prior to checking out (a technique also adopted by other parents interviewed) is significant as it suggests they wanted their sexuality to be secretive even after leaving the hotel. As explained in chapter four, participants often offered rational explanations not to refuse the twin beds. For Abraham, having separate beds was deemed more furtive, hence, more exciting:

> I never ask for any particular bed. I just got whatever bed came. I sleep anywhere, I don't care, I'm not really fussy and I think the people I've been with have been the same. So we find ways to get round it and it's kind of been secretive but that made it more fun for me. So we just work out how to put them [the beds] together.

Of all the negative hotel check-in experiences that interviewees brought up, George had perhaps the most distressing one. He and his partner were refused a room:

> George: We went to a bed and breakfast hotel and asked for a double room and the guy blatantly said 'No, we don't have any room for your sort here.'
> Interviewer: Oh, and what did you do?
> George: I mean, this was about 20-odd years ago mmm… when I was a bit more… not so savvy as I am now. I mean now I would have really contested it but at the time, we said 'Oh, OK' and we just walked away feeling quite shocked really but we accepted it and just didn't think any more about it.
> Interviewer: So you went to another hotel?
> George: We went to a different hotel and I think we got a double room there. Obviously life today is very different, I mean there's no tolerance for that kind of homophobic behaviour but I was younger, I felt a bit more sort of unsavvy

[sic] in those days so I didn't really do, we kind of didn't do anything about it. I certainly wouldn't accept it now.

Confirming the intimate relationship between pride and shame, George's story of shame is quickly concluded with a declaration of pride. By blaming time ("20-odd years ago") and his inexperience ("I was not so savvy") for his behaviour, and affirming he would not accept the same situation now, George both rationalises his shame and demonstrates he has overcome it. Indeed, the process of becoming proud often involves constructing logical justifications that aim to minimise shame (McDermott *et al.* 2008). George's account (as well as the aforementioned explanations provided by interviewees to avoid conflict) illustrates the mechanisms used by the ashamed subject to turn into the proud gay.

A question, however, arises from these remarks: does the presence of children impact on conflict avoidance? Parents responded differently to this question, with many claiming children did not affect their attitude towards discrimination. Giuliana, on the other hand, expressed a need to be a role model for her daughter and therefore ceased to employ the previously cited strategy (with one of the mothers staying outside the hotel) to shun exposure at check-in. Her partner, Elisa, promptly agreed ("We don't do it now. We don't do it any more"), suggesting an interesting connection between pride and good parenting. For the couple, being a good parent meant being a role model and teaching their daughter honour and self-respect by showing they were not ashamed of their sexual orientation / relationship. Conversely, other parents stated they would now avoid confrontation to protect their children. For instance, Caroline, who throughout the interview reinforced her status as a proud and unapologetic lesbian, offered the following account:

> I think [prior to having her daughter] I might have been inclined to be more confrontational and just go 'to hell with it; if I want to go to another hotel, I'm gonna go' because you know, in the back of my mind, I thought, 'if it gets difficult, then I'll just deal with it, there's no impact, because there's not a kid.' I would never do that [now], I wouldn't put Pollyanna in that situation. I wouldn't wanna be standing somewhere where I felt uncomfortable of how I was being received with Pollyanna holding my hand and having to kind of steer her away to deal with it.

Unlike Giuliana and Elisa, Caroline claims to avoid conflict in the presence of her daughter. Her rationale, namely to protect Pollyanna's safety and comfort, attests to her parenting skills and provides evidence that she puts her own interests aside for the sake of her child. Although Caroline's reaction to potential confrontation at the hotel check-in contrasts to that of Giuliana and Elisa, their accounts all display a strong element of good parenting. In the case of Giuliana and Elisa, good parenting is equated with being honest and open about their sexualities, thereby fostering the couple's gay pride. For Caroline, it implies prioritising her child's interest even if this means acting with shame, having to hide her sexuality and avoiding confrontation.

The 'cloak of invisibility' and the desire to blend in on holiday

The discomfort of being out was also revealed in some interviewees' desire not to be noticed and remain anonymous. For example, Graeme and Lawrence, who claimed to keep their sexuality "low profile" on holiday, explained how this was achieved:

> Lawrence: What we tended to do is we had a family room. And that sort of… I don't know... deflected suspicion, if you like, from people... (to Graeme) Is that all right?
> Graeme: Rather than us, consciously doing it… Yeah, quite often, that's very true, we would share a room for four people. We didn't do that consciously but it just made life easier to some respect.

Here, the link between the search for anonymity and shame becomes apparent. Lawrence's word choice ("deflected suspicion") reveals the sense of secrecy or even wrongfulness in being gay. One is suspicious of an illicit or immoral act; in Lawrence's narrative, the room choice seems to be aimed at covering up a crime. Not surprisingly, he hesitated in his demonstration of shame and appeared to ask for his partner's agreement ("is that all right?"). As if trying to minimise Lawrence's declaration, Graeme reminded their motivation for choosing family rooms was not conscious, and, therefore, not really planned and desired. His statement diminishes shame and brings pride back into the narrative.

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Hughes (2006) posits lesbians and gay men, in addition to other travel motivations, may travel to fully explore their sexual identities, with many of them revealing their sexualities for the first time on holiday. The conclusion in his reasoning is that, for many gays and lesbians, tourism is equated with coming out (Hughes 2006). As indicated earlier, sexuality did not play a part in the respondents' travel motivations and many preferred not to come out on holiday, which puts Hughes's argument in perspective. For Elisa, for example, holidays were not an opportunity to express her sexuality; rather, they were the chance *not* to have to come out. She said:

> I feel like, as well as now, actually, with Helen [her daughter], if you have to come out every time, it's the same old story with new people. And I can't be bothered on holiday. I'm just happy to just be chilling, relaxing, not to have to bare myself to anybody.

For Elisa, not coming out is perceived as an essential factor for the holidays to be enjoyable. Indeed, as explained by Dank (1971), coming out is a continuous process. It does not terminate when one realises and assumes one's sexuality to oneself and / or discloses it to relatives and friends. Rather, it may have to be repeated on a regular basis. As heterosexuality is perceived as the norm in society, lesbians and gays may have to come out at every new acquaintance made, which can lead to tension and anxiety. Such is the case with Elisa, who seems to regard the experience as the opposite of relaxing; for her, holidays and coming out are antithetical constructs. Holidays are only enjoyed when she does not need to bare herself to anyone, which possibly suggests her discomfort in disclosing her sexuality to strangers.

A similar anxiety was felt when participants believed their sexualities were in the spotlight. Some of them recounted experiences where locals tried to 'suss them out' on holiday as if trying to understand the make-up of their families. These narratives were often punctuated by apprehensiveness. For instance, Rick and Ian recounted the tension they felt during a trip with their son to Buenos Aires as a taxi driver enquired about their relationship. As indicated earlier, the anxiety Freddy and Robert felt during a trip to Africa when questioned about their daughter's mother led them to tell people she had passed away. Robert concluded the account by saying:

"Yeah, you've gotta stop people asking questions." Reconfirming the connection between pride and good parenting, however, both fathers reinforced their reaction would be different now that their daughter was old enough to understand the lie:

> Freddy: I wouldn't do that now 'cause she was only tiny at the time, but I would never normally do that.
> Robert: Yeah, she was too young to know what we were saying, we wouldn't do that now.
> Freddy: She wasn't even 2 years old at the time.

Being highly visible as a family caused embarrassment for Giuliana and Elisa. When recounting their trip with another lesbian parented family to Spain, they remembered an episode where they felt they were in the public eye.

> So we rented a really nice villa in Mallorca and it was the first time the woman [the villa's owner] had rented out. So we turned up with four women and three children and she just couldn't figure us out. She asked us a few questions to try and identify why four women would travel together and then it seemed like a penny may have dropped a little bit later in the conversation. But she asked enough to try and figure it out. People try to figure out if we're together. And then they start saying 'oh, where are your husbands then?' It was something like that, she said 'where are the men?' or 'where are your husbands?' She said something like that… Now that was awkward.

As noted in chapter four, many respondents also avoided drawing other people's attention to their sexualities on holiday by shunning public displays of affection. While straight couples may also avoid showing affection in public, in the interviewees' case, this was linked to a concern of having their sexuality exposed to the public eye. As previously noted, shame is more often a private sentiment, and the ashamed subject avoids being in the spotlight. In this respect, Lynn declared "we're not that into public displays of affection. I mean, Sigourney [her partner] is not. I've been out for quite a long time and I'm an out, open person. So I would hold her hands anywhere, [but] she's very self-conscious." Lynn's narrative is significant because her justification for not displaying affection lies in the other. In reinforcing she does not mind showing affection in public but refrains from doing so in consideration of Sigourney, Lynn

opposes her pride to her partner's shame. George's account of holidays with his sons and his ex-partners also demonstrates discourses of pride and shame are intertwined:

> The boys have grown up with me being gay and they have seen me with, to be honest, about three or four partners, and, on each occasion, I've introduced my partners to my boys always very comfortably. But the boys have grown up knowing me for what I am and they respect me and love me as their dad. I've always done things which I believe to be correct to them and to their lives. I have never done something affectionate with my boyfriend or argued with him in front of them or created any silly scenes.

George stresses he feels very comfortable around his sons and has never abstained from introducing his partners to them. However, in hiding both affection and arguments (or "silly scenes", as he calls them) with his partner, he avoids all signs of being in a relationship with another man. Very relevant here is the link he seems to make between hiding his relationship (hence his sexuality) and being "correct" to his sons, which suggests, for him, being gay, or being in a gay relationship, may ultimately be wrong.

Some interviewees associated their ability to keep their sexualities unnoticed with not fitting into clichés of gays and lesbians. For example, Bill claimed it was easier to 'pass as straight' as he and his partner were not effeminate:

> I don't know, I look and think, if we were camp or queens, that might've been different. I don't know, people like camp queens... If you're overtly more camp perhaps, then... That might be different, I don't know. But for us, we're just who we are and we just carry on that way. So we've never had problems on holiday.

In a similar vein, Giuliana stated when remembering her negative experience in Dubai (mentioned in chapter four, p. 148): "I think if we were incredibly camp men or very, you know, butch women, it might be a different story but I don't think we were on their radar; we weren't that noticeable particularly." Both Bill's and Giuliana's remarks draw upon and reinforce stereotypical representations of gays and lesbians. They also perceive themselves as fundamentally different from what they consider

the visible 'camp' men and 'butch' women, which confirms the LGBT community as diverse and fragmented. More importantly, their remarks reiterate their desire to keep their sexualities not 'noticeable' as an important aspect of the success of their family trip.

What these accounts seem to indicate is that being 'out' is possibly more difficult and stressful for the interviewees than their discourses of pride might suggest. Indeed, when they felt they did not have to reveal their sexualities, interviewees often reported a sense of easiness and relaxation. Doris, for example, recounted her experience going on holiday as a single mother for the first time after separation from her partner:

> I remember the very first time I took her [her daughter] on holiday. I hired a caravan and I had another [fostered] child with me at the time who was of a similar age. So that was fine and I didn't even have to be out and proud about being a lesbian, I was just a single woman that has got two kids.

When asked to elaborate on the differences between holidays with other lesbian parented families and with straight parented ones, Elisa commented:

> I guess one of the differences when you go with a straight family, you feel like they lead the way, nobody is really looking at… you know, it's just a bit simpler. I don't know if that makes sense, I don't know if I'm articulating it well enough but it suddenly feels like we're under scrutiny [when they travel with other lesbian parented families].

The significant choice of the expression "lead the way" suggests Elisa and her family are guided by straight parented families. More importantly, it indicates she feels more self-conscious, and thus more uncomfortable, when travelling with other lesbian parented families than going away with straight ones. In Elisa's speech is the underlying statement that remaining unnoticed ("nobody is really looking") is "simpler" because it means her family is not being scrutinised. In this respect, being with straight parented families provides both her sexuality and her family with a 'cloak of invisibility'; as they mix with the rest of the group, her family 'disappears', even if momentarily, from public attention, reducing tension as a result.

Indeed, gays and lesbians may often feel vulnerable in public spaces (Gabb 2005; Perlesz *et al.* 2006; Hughes 2007); yet, homophobia, which can partly explain such feeling, is not always explicitly stated. Thus, even being 'stared at' may be perceived by LGBT people as a risk or a threat (Gabb 2005). However, the interviewees' stories indicate that, rather than only aiming to avoid discrimination, some of these families may actually desire and look for invisibility whilst on holiday. Valentine (1993) suggests 'passing as straight' empowers lesbians who can choose when and where to come out and, thus, are able to navigate heteronormative spaces by projecting multiple sexual identities (or no sexual identity). A similar stance is taken by Gabb (2005), for whom invisibility challenges heteronormativity in that lesbians (and, by analogy, other GBT people) may negotiate multiple identities and, thus, simultaneously be 'insiders' (adjusting to normative conventions) and 'outsiders' (disrupting heteronormativity). Arguably, invisibility can be explained through the lens of shame. If, as Qian (2014) argues, public visibility creates embarrassment for gay men, then manifesting a need for invisibility may be an expression and / or a consequence of shame. As Shallcross (2011, p. 514) puts it: "shame and its subject demand not being seen, but hidden and invisible."

Shame emerges from the feeling of being 'out of place' (Johnston 2007). Invisibility, therefore, alleviates the stress of feeling different, and is achieved through blending in with other (straight) people. This link was elaborated on by Tina. When discussing the exposure she experienced on holidays with her ex-partner, she offered the following account:

> Being on your own has its advantages. I think the biggest thing in a way is the invisibility if you're on your own. If you travel alone you're assumed to be heterosexual; if you travel with a female partner, you're assumed to be lesbian. So I suppose that's the biggest thing for me travelling, that invisibility thing. When I was travelling alone, I suddenly felt straight because everybody assumed I was straight. Greta [her ex-partner] and I, we did a holiday… So I'd say, it was 99% heterosexual: consultants, dentists, those kinds of people. And Greta got on very well but we were the only gays in the village. They liked us very well, it was all fine, but we were like 'oh, that's the gay couple.' So if you're on your own, you're invisible, but if you're too in the limelight, you just don't blend ever.

The presence of children may amplify these feelings as parents worry about their fitting in:

> You get asked questions. I remember the first time we ever went on holiday, [to her daughter Naomi] and I remember a little girl coming up to you and saying 'where's your mum and dad?', and you said 'I've got two mums.' And I thought 'that's it, they're never going to blend in', people are always gonna be thinking 'oh, look at that family.' They'll just go 'oh, dirty family' and just move on. There'll always be questioning. And I wonder how much you two [her children] assimilate that and manage being aware of that. (Tina)

Blending in may be an important factor impacting on holiday decisions. As described in chapter four, several parents avoided destination and accommodation choices targeted at same-sex parented families only, places which Bill, for instance, characterised as "ghettoised." Arguably, the rejection of such places indicates not only these families' refusal to be segregated but also their aspiration to be integrated within a heteronormative environment. This desire may affect other aspects of family life, as further expanded in the interview with Lynn:

> I'm thrilled that she [her daughter] will grow up with little boys and girls that have mummies and daddies. I wouldn't want her to be only around gay families because that's not the world. You know, you can't say it both ways, you can't say 'I want to be accepted' and not be accepting of 85, 90 % of the population.

For Lynn, it is important that her daughter create bonds with children from families parented by heterosexuals. More than a desire to expose her child to a 'mainstream' world, Lynn's concern is for her daughter to mingle and be accepted by a society where the majority of people are straight, thereby subscribing to heteronormative conventions.

But what do these families' desires to seek invisibility and blend in both on holiday and in their daily lives actually say about them? As the literature review demonstrated, in addition to the everyday challenges normally encountered by straight parented families, lesbigay parented ones may also have to face discrimination (Perlesz *et al.* 2006), which can affect both parents and children (Demo and Allen 1996). Along with the awareness of heteronormativity that prevails in public spaces, this may

lead to apprehension and nervousness. Therefore, it is understandable that, within these conditions of adversity, they seek mechanisms to cope with the fear of marginalisation and / or stigmatisation. Projecting heterosexual identities in the public arena is a very effective technique to manage such fear. This is particularly true in the case of holiday spaces, where, as argued by Perlesz *et al.* (2006), the separation between the public and private spheres may be very volatile. For example, interviewees sometimes expressed anxiety when having to share facilities such as swimming pools and breakfast rooms with other tourists.

However, more than just escaping discrimination, these families express a desire to blend in, indicating a willingness to mingle and be accepted. It appears as though these families, rather than stressing and celebrating differences, wish to minimise, or even conceal them on holidays. As discussed in the previous section, the parents interviewed rejected labels based on their sexualities and emphasised the shared similarities of their families. Beneath their narratives is a desire to remain under a 'cloak of invisibility', thereby not standing out as a lesbigay parented family, particularly during their holidays.

These remarks clearly feed back into the scholarly debates about the nature of gay and lesbian marriage / families which oppose assimilationists to liberationists (Stacey and Davenport 2002). Assimilationists advocate lesbigay marriage and family are an assimilation of, and an adjustment to, heteronormative models. Assimilationist discussions sit in a wider debate that is related to Butler's (2004) understanding of regulation and normalisation. She contends social norms and mores regulate both individuals and their relationships, thereby determining what makes a life "bearable" (Butler 2004, p. 17). In other words, those who conform and fulfil certain normative conditions can lead what she terms a "livable life" (Butler 2004, p. 39). As a result, the individual is in a constant search for self-regulation, namely the attempt to adjust to the norms imposed by society (Butler 2004). The integration to heteronormative conventions was also the focus of Duggan's (2002, p. 179) work. She coined the term "homonormativity", described as the politics of lesbian and gay assimilation that maintain and reinforce

heteronormativity rather than contesting it (Duggan 2002). Homonormativity is perceived as inserted in a liberal agenda that leads to the establishment of the "normal gay" (Santos 2013, p. 54), namely the 'good citizen' who, aiming to conform to social regulations, does not challenge dominant structures (Ng 2013). In this vein, both lesbigay marriage (Ng 2013) and family (van Eeden-Moorefield *et al.* 2011) are perceived as homonormative institutions because they invest gays and lesbians with respectability (Ammaturo 2014). Robinson (2012) draws a link between gay men and lesbians' assimilation to heteronormativity and further stigmatisation. He suggests, in subscribing to heteronormative institutions such as marriage, gays and lesbians are pushed into domesticity, thereby 'disappearing' from the public eye. More significantly, in seeking normalcy, the 'normal gay' contributes to the social marginalisation of those who do not abide by normative conventions, and may even discriminate more transgressive LGBT subcultures as an attempt to 'purify' the community (Robinson 2012).

Conversely, for liberationists, in getting married, having children and forming their own families, lesbians and gay men break with traditions as they challenge some of the foundations of society and call into question the heteronormativity of institutions and practices (Stacey 2004; Stein 2005). Dempsey (2010) argues the family as a social arrangement has evolved to become less heterosexual. It is true that recent legal protections conferred on lesbians and gays in many Western industrialised nations have put into perspective the assumptions of marriage and family as 'man-and-woman only' arrangements. Such transformations contribute to the erosion of heteronormativity to a certain extent. However, the findings from this study suggest the families interviewed do not necessarily express the volition to disrupt norms or even the awareness of doing so. In other words, the parents in this study do not manifest a conscious decision to challenge normative conventions and practices during holidays. In this sense, at least as far as their holiday choices are concerned, they are more likely to represent an assimilation to, rather than liberation from, heteronormative presumptions. In many respects, the parents interviewed embody normative conventions. They do not overemphasise their

sexualities; rather, they tend to minimise their sexual identities on holiday. Similarly, their decisions do not fundamentally differ from those of the 'conventional' family. More importantly, they show a desire to blend in, be accepted, have holiday experiences and lead lives that, in many ways, are not substantially different from those of 'traditional' heteronormative families.

In this sense, the parents interviewed distance themselves from radical stances adopted by some LGBT activists, namely the emphasis on, appreciation for, and cult of difference. As Nordqvist (2012) states, since the mid-1990s, LGBT people have become more 'normalised' thanks to their increased acceptance in many parts of the world. These families' holiday motivations and choices and willingness to fit in and integrate appear to suggest both a desire and a need for 'normalisation'. While they adopt strategies to navigate a heteronormative world, the families in this study appear, in many senses, to replicate the 'conventional' nuclear family, to conform to normative traditions and reinforce their sense of 'ordinariness' (to repeat the words of one of the mothers interviewed: "Why label? We are a family!"). These conclusions call into question the perception of these families as necessarily different and transgressive.

Of particular relevance here is Robinson's (2012) previously mentioned association between gays and lesbians' will for assimilation and a stigmatisation of LGBT people who do not assimilate and / or who do not *want* to assimilate. According to him, a desire for normalcy may lead some gays and lesbians to marginalise those who stand out "because they fear that the stereotypical community members will be used as the example of the whole community" (Robinson 2012, p. 332). Robinson's (2012) claim is insightful because it establishes a link between a search for normalisation and shame. In addition, although it may not entirely clarify the tensions within the LGBT community, it can partly explain why an effeminate gay man and a butch lesbian may be stigmatised by other LGBT people, as seen in some participants' narratives.

On the other hand, the existence of same-sex marriage and families should not be considered as a retrogressive step in LGBT rights, as some

of the literature seems to suggest (Clarke and Kitzinger 2004; Robinson 2012; Santos 2013; Ammaturo 2014). The desire expressed by lesbigay parents for their families to blend in and be accepted, both on holiday and in their daily lives, ultimately stems from an attempt to "make sense of and function in a heteronormative world" (van Eeden-Moorefield *et al.* 2011, p. 565). Moreover, while these families may not consciously dispute normative conventions, their existence contributes to incremental social changes as they gain access to rights that were denied to the LGBT community until recent times. Robinson (2012) implies lesbigay marriage and families reinforces heteronormativity because LGBT people who decide to form families have their sexualities pushed to the private spheres of their homes, thereby remaining hidden from the public eye. Nonetheless, the opposite may apply, with gay marriage and family often enhancing their visibility. Thanks to legal recognition in many Western countries, same-sex couples and families must now be acknowledged and treated as such by all societies. Finally, in many ways, these families also subvert aspects of gay culture, in particular the assumption that gays and lesbians are naturally opposed to marriage and family. They demonstrate there are lesbians and gay men who, just like their straight counterparts, want to get married, have children, form their own families, go on holidays and carry on with their lives without the need to flag their sexualities.

One question, however, does remain unanswered: do these parents develop a need to mingle as a result of their having children or do they decide to form families as a consequence of their desire to fit in? It could be that, due to the caring duties involved in parenthood, these parents develop a concern for their children adjusting to society; consequently, they do what is possible for the family to integrate. In this sense, Tina's preoccupation about her children ("they will never blend in") or Lynn's desire to expose her daughter to a 'mainstream' world could be indicative of this process. On the other hand, it could be that these gay men and lesbians make the decision to form their families in a (perhaps subconscious) attempt to become 'normalised'. Stacey (2006) argues gay men and, by analogy, lesbians do not suffer from the same social pressure to become parents that heterosexuals do, and, thus, when they decide to

form their families, they do so out of love. This could be a very naïve perception of the challenges lesbians and gays face in their lives. Rather than being free from societal expectations, these men and women could actually be getting married and forming families because of a double pressure: to have children and to conform to the conventional heteronormative traditions that dominate society. Be that as it may, what this study seems to indicate is that their desire to blend in and be integrated into society ultimately affects their motivations and choices when they go on holiday with their families.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings presented in chapter four aiming to make sense of the meaning same-sex parented families ascribe to their holiday motivations and destination choice. The interpretivist approach adopted in this study revealed two significant themes. The first one illuminates the similarities and differences between the holiday choices of lesbian and gay parented families and those of the 'traditional' heteronormative families previously studied in tourism research. The second theme enlightens the underlying expressions of pride / shame in same-sex parented families' holidays.

The first theme is broken down into three elements: the multiple significances of family holidays; construction and reinforcement of family identity; and the search for the 'perfect family portrait.' The multiple significances of family holidays relate to the diverse representations family holidays have for respondents. For them, confirming family tourism research, holidays are synonymic with relaxation and fun but also a paradoxical search for novelty and familiarity. The study also revealed the diversity of (intra and extra group) connections holidays help to enhance; these connections reinforce members' sense of belonging and reiterate pride of the family as a unit. Holiday-related decisions are considered by respondents as sources of stress and / or pleasure, and for most families is not a linear process, possibly breaking with positivist models of bounded rationality previously contemplated in research. These processes,

particularly with respect to the participation of children and the concentration of decisions in the hands of partners, do not significantly differ from many past findings in family tourism scholarship. That children are not always included in the choice of the destination casts doubt on the literature that describes lesbian and gay parented families as more egalitarian and democratic than heterosexual ones. This study also unveiled the multiple layers of avoidance that affect these families' choices of holiday destinations. When deciding where to go on holiday, not only are interviewees limited by factors that affect most families, such as budget, time, children's needs, and safety, but they also have to consider the risks associated with the fear of homophobia. Finally, with the exception of destination avoidance, parental sexuality is described by respondents as having little or no influence on the families' travel motivations and destination choice. It appears as though, as far as holiday choices are concerned, the meaning assigned to their sexualities ebbs and flows for some time in particular when children are young. Then, when children reach a certain age, parents may start to make decisions based on their sexual orientations and relationships.

Construction and reinforcement of family identity demonstrates holidays as central in reflecting, producing and maintaining the identity of the unit. Holiday rituals, such as repeated practices (for instance, spending holidays in the same destinations with the same people) and visits to the extended family root a family in its past and preserve its future. Among these rituals, of particular relevance is the introduction of young children to relatives, as this is the moment where the child gains membership of the unit, and learns family culture. Holiday memories, kept alive through narratives, photographs and souvenirs, perpetuate family history and enhance identity. Yet, these memories are fluid and often constructed in negotiations among family members. Family identity has a very significant role in family holiday choices, acting as an entity that makes decisions for the members. It appears as if the 'decision-maker' in the unit, rather than actively making choices, does little more than speaking on behalf of the identity of the family.

The search for the 'perfect family portrait' reveals travel motivations and choices are, in many respects, guided by parents' desire to provide children with perfect holidays and memories. Within this context, family holidays are equated with parental duties, with mothers and fathers attempting to conform to societal pressures and taking parental responsibilities on holiday. Family travel also reflects parental desire to portray their families as happy and themselves as universally present, nurturing and selfless. As a consequence, some of their reported holiday motivations, such as the will to introduce children to learning opportunities, as well as the priority given to children's needs in relation to destination choice, might be attributed to a wish to project good parenting skills. When these expectations of perfect parenthood are not met, frustration and guilt may arise, and the combination of these factors may also sway family holiday choices.

The findings in this study reveal lesbigay parented families do not significantly differ from the 'traditional' heterosexual family previously investigated in the doctrine. Their travel motivations and choices, as well as the significance ascribed to them, mirror scholarly findings and position these as mostly 'ordinary'. In that respect, parents often downplay the role of sexuality in holiday choices. Nevertheless, their sexual orientation affects two important aspects of their holidays: destination avoidance, with all interviewees shunning homophobic destinations, and social interaction, with some avoiding socialising on holiday.

The second theme, underlying expressions of pride / shame among gay and lesbian parented families on holiday, unmasks the contradictory relationship respondents have with their sexualities. While all of them adopt discourses of pride, claiming to be out and happy with their sexual identities, in many cases, their narratives reveal an apparently paradoxical sense of shame. As demonstrated, however, shame and pride, rather than opposite constructs, have common roots, with the ashamed subject often using strategies to turn him/herself into the proud gay man or woman. Pride is, thus, predicated in shame, which is manifested in the interviewees' accounts in two main ways: through expressions of a 'fractured' community, and the discomfort of being out.

Expressions of a 'fractured' community relate to the derogatory manner in which some interviewees refer to other LGBT people or groups, sometimes with mockery or spite. Some of these expressions ascribe to lesbians and gays the notions of hyper-sexuality, disloyalty, at times highlighting the 'inadequacy' of the visible 'camp' gay man or 'butch' woman. This stigmatised representation of LGBT people seems to affect holiday choices, as gay-centred destinations are shunned and parents try to avoid exposing children to demonstrations of 'gayness'.

The discomfort of 'being out' highlights some participants are not always open about their sexualities while on holiday. At times, they avoid conflict and do not challenge homophobic remarks made by locals and / or other tourists. Significantly, some of them do not refuse twin beds offered at the hotel check-in, frequently using techniques to circumvent the impasse, or rational explanations to justify confrontation avoidance at the hotel reception. Many families also reveal a fear of exposure and, more importantly, a desire to be less noticeable, thereby remaining under a 'cloak of invisibility'. Such aspiration is connected with a desire to blend in, which not only informs their holiday choices and motivations, but also suggests their willingness for integration, acceptance and normalisation.

The next chapter presents the concluding remarks to this thesis.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes this Ph.D. thesis. First, it reviews the research questions and key results while discussing the complexities and value of qualitative research. It then highlights this study's invaluable contributions to knowledge, devises its practical implications and ends by making considerations for future research.

6.1. REVIEW OF THE STUDY AND CONSIDERATIONS ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The aim of this thesis was to contribute to a critical understanding of lesbian and gay parented families in relation to their travel motivations and destination choice. As such, it intended to answer one key question:

What are the travel motivations and destination choice of lesbian and gay parented families?

The literature review, however, raised additional and equally important questions:

- How, if at all, does the parents' sexuality impact on the travel motivations and destination choice of same-sex parented families?
- How do these families make their decisions concerning destination choice? How, if at all, do the children influence this process?
- How, if at all, does the heteronormativity of public spaces affect the lesbigay parented families' social interaction while on holiday? How, if at all, does this factor impact on the family's travel motivations and destination choice?

Here a comment is necessary. In consonance with the interpretivist paradigm and the phenomenological strategy adopted in this study, qualitative interviews were utilised as data collection methods to answer the research questions. As explained in the methodology chapter, qualitative research has complexities and raises issues that should be briefly reviewed and discussed before a summary of the findings is presented.

Qualitative inquiry does not produce objective findings, and, as a consequence, it is often accused of being counterproductive (Giddens 1984), Nonetheless, as argued throughout this thesis, reality is not unique; rather, the physical world co-exists with several social and (inter-) subjective realities (Lincoln *et al.* 2011). Therefore, research does not, and should not be expected to, reflect or (re)produce a single truth. Social research, in particular, causes the realities of the researcher to be fused with those of the participant (Gadamer 1976). The findings in this study were attained through a construction of meanings between the researcher and a specific group of people, situated in a particular context. As explained in the methodology chapter, most of the interviewees lived in an environment that was consistently described as accepting of non-heteronormative sexualities. It is conjectured and acknowledged that this 'gay-friendliness' may have impacted upon the interviewees' responses, which might have been different if respondents lived in homophobic places. In a similar vein, that the researcher is a Brazilian gay man without children may have equally affected his interaction with participants. As a result, their answers might not have been the same had the researcher had a different gender, nationality or been a father, for example.

Related to the issue identified above is another commonly critiqued characteristic of qualitative studies: the lack of generalisability. It is often argued that qualitative research is pointless since its findings are restricted to a specific sample of people (Patton 2002; Botterill and Platenkamp 2012). However, for the qualitative researcher, human behaviour cannot be apprehended through the same lens of the natural sciences (Shadish 1995; Crotty 2003; Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009; Liburd 2012). In other words, qualitative inquiry is not concerned with finding causal relationships

that explain human behaviour, nor does it seek regularities that can be generalised to a wider population (Lincoln *et al.* 2011). As a result, participant sampling in qualitative traditions does not seek representativeness (Bryman 2008). Such is the position adopted in this study: human behaviour is viewed here as unique, and, as such, each of the families interviewed has distinct holiday experiences. As noted above, this Ph.D. project adopted a phenomenological strategy, concerned with the essence of people's lived experiences. That the researcher in this study sought commonalities among participants' accounts does not mean the results obtained can be generalised to other lesbigay parented families. Rather, findings here refer to the select group of people who accepted to participate in data collection. In this sense, an additional note is important: later in this chapter, an attempt is made to provide the tourism industry with some practical recommendations deriving from the findings of this project. These should not be read as tentative generalisations; rather, they intend to draw attention to the industry about the possible nuances that exist in family tourism. Otherwise stated, these practical implications are written with the aim of developing an awareness that same-sex parented families *may* have unique needs and motivations that *may* have to be catered for.

These debates about the complexities of qualitative research lead to very important questions: if qualitative studies are not objective and cannot be generalised to a wider population, should they be conducted at all? What is the point of studying a specific group of people if results are confined to them? What is the importance of the knowledge generated by qualitative research? As explained in the methodology chapter, qualitative methods and the knowledge they create are important in their own right. They generate rich and deep insights into human behaviour (Bryman 2008; Creswell 2009). This cannot be attained via quantitative techniques, premised on the belief that human action can be expressed and framed by natural laws (Crotty 2003). Had a quantitative approach been used in this project, the themes that emerged during data analysis might not have been fully revealed, and the meanings the interviewees ascribe to their holidays and sexualities (in particular, in relation to the influence of pride /

shame) might have remained unexplored. The knowledge created by this Ph.D. thesis is important because it sheds new light on family tourism, sexuality and parenthood, while opening avenues for future research possibilities (these topics are further addressed later in this chapter).

Moreover, as argued throughout this thesis, the qualitative methods utilised here allowed lesbian and gay parented families to fully express their voices in relation to their motivations, needs, desires and choices. In doing so, this study placed these families at the centre of tourism research, thereby disrupting the heteronormative dogmas that have so long dominated this field (Hughes 2006; Waitt and Markwell 2008; Hughes and Deutsch 2010; Lucena *et al.* 2015). Quantitative methods might have done little to allow the research participants' voice to emerge (Goodson and Phillimore 2004), thereby further perpetuating dominant views of the world (Liburd 2012). Furthermore, as previously explained, the notions of objectivity and generalisability are predicated in positivist dogmas, which are not endorsed by this study. As Patton (2002) argues, the search for objectivity and generalisability is only relevant for those who believe in them. Likewise, Erlandson *et al.* (1993) remind even in positivist / quantitative studies, these concepts do not always hold. In other words, the knowledge created by qualitative research (and, by analogy, this study) should not be dismissed simply because its findings are not considered 'accurate', 'truthful' and generalisable. Finally, while the results of this study cannot be automatically *generalised* to a wider population, they can be *transferred* to other settings (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Erlandson 1993; Decrop 2004). Transferability, facilitated by thick description, is indeed an important principle of good qualitative research as it allows for findings to be used by and applied to other research projects in different contexts. All these remarks lead to the conclusion that the knowledge generated by this project is not only legitimate but also extremely valuable (the contributions of this study are further discussed in the next section, 6.2. Contributions to Knowledge).

The conclusions from this study reveal the multiplicity of significances that the lesbigay parented families interviewed attach to holidays. Their desire to relax and take a break from routine (whilst replicating it on holiday)

expresses not only their need to escape but also their search for familiarity and novelty, which concurs with the literature both on travel motivations (Dann 1977; Crompton 1979; Iso-Ahola 1980) and family tourism (Bowen and Clarke 2009). Also supporting tourism scholarship (Bieger and Laesser 2002; Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011; Kluin and Letho 2012; Schänzel 2012), the need for togetherness demonstrates these families' desire to create and enhance bonds while perpetuating a sense of belonging. Most notably, this study reveals the diverse types of (intra and extra group) connections and reconnections which family holidays create and enhance.

This study also concludes holidays have a critical role in expressing, building and strengthening family identity, which recalls the work of Shaw *et al.* (2008). Holidays create, solidify and / or constitute rituals that involve repetition, thereby facilitating members' emotional stability and group cohesiveness. These rituals, such as visits to family and relatives, foster the continuity of the unit as they ensure the transmission of family culture and values while reinforcing membership and adherence to the group. Holidays also generate memories that mark important moments in the family history while solidifying and perpetuating its identity. However, these memories are constantly negotiated and reconstructed, which highlights the fluidity of family identity.

This study has also revealed the important part played by tourism in generating the happiness of the family unit. In that respect, holidays may become a duty, with parents eager to fulfil the social expectations placed on them to provide children with happy memories, which corroborates Carr's (2011) constructs of "happy family" and "good parent". Such pressures may lead parents to overemphasise the positive aspects of holidays, thereby overlooking the family's negative experiences or reconstructing them to appear as funny, happy and / or successful. Similarly, parents describe destination choice as based on children's needs and emphasise the educational aspect of family holidays; yet, their narratives reveal a desire to take a temporary break from parental duties. The conclusions of this study suggest that, in vocalising their motivations and choices to appear as if they prioritise their children, mothers and

fathers may be actually reflecting a 'parenthood myth', which depicts parenting as a full-time and selfless task. The realisation that such expectations cannot be entirely met may lead to parental guilt, which may also inform family travel motivations and choices.

This doctoral thesis also concludes that, as is the case with other families, same-sex parented families' destination choice is a function of children's needs and a result of the family's travel motivations. Thus, a desire to relax and spend time together as a family may be associated with holidays on the beach, or a wish to engage in sports, with skiing in Norway, for example. More importantly, destination choice is also swayed by destination avoidance, which is in turn impacted upon by a number of factors. In the case of lesbigay parented families, these may relate, for instance, to budget restrictions, family safety and also parents' sexuality. In this vein, this study builds upon the work of Simpson and Siguaw (2008) and concludes gay and lesbian parents' concern *for* others (namely, the children) and concern *about* others (locals and other tourists) are conflated, with their destination options being further restricted as a result.

Same-sex parented families may, like other families, integrate (rather than discard) destination options as they make their holiday-related decisions. Arguably, this casts doubt on positivist decision-making models, which view consumer decisions as linear processes characterised by a funnelling down of alternatives (Nicosia 1966; Engel *et al.* 1968; Howard and Sheth 1969). Further, akin to other families' decisions, same-sex parented families' destination choice is often a pleasure-seeking activity viewed as a fundamental part of the holiday experience. Concurrent with a substantial body in the tourism literature (Jenkins 1980; Van Raaij and Francken 1984; Fodness 1992; Kang and Hsu 2004; Kozak 2010), holiday decisions are jointly made by parents. Nonetheless, this study has shown joint decisions are actually attained through a division of tasks, in which one of the parents appears to delegate power to the other. Such decisions take place within individual households, even when the families are formed of two (or more) couples of parents living separately. Children are described as taking part in holiday choices only from adolescence, a conclusion which disputes scholarship that depicts same-sex parented families as

more egalitarian and democratic than heterosexual parented ones (Dunne 2000; Baetens and Brewaeys 2001; Biblarz and Savci 2010; Perlesz *et al.* 2010).

Another important conclusion of this study is that, while sexuality impacts on destination avoidance, lesbian and gay parents downplay the role of their sexual identities not only in their holiday choices and activities but also in other aspects of their lives. To quote one of the mothers interviewed, "sexuality is taken out of the equation" after children are born / adopted, and parents refuse to categorise their families in terms of their sexualities. Confirming Lawler's (2008) claim that identities are multiple and may be transitory, parenthood seems to override other identities and govern most travel motivations and decisions. In this sense, with respect to family holiday choices, the meaning attached by lesbigay parents to their sexualities appears to ebb and flow. Thus, sexuality is 'put aside' and children's needs are prioritised when they are young. As children grow older, however, parents' sexuality may start to inform holiday decisions again, with some choosing destinations on the grounds of their sexual identities.

Nevertheless, to affirm parents' sexuality is 'left to the background' of other identities does not mean its impact on family holidays is non-existent. As indicated, destinations may be avoided on the grounds of parents' sexuality, with places being rejected for being considered homophobic. Moreover, lesbian and gay parents may avoid interacting with other people for fear of intolerance, and even prioritise destination and accommodation choices where they do not have to share facilities. Some may hide their sexual orientation (avoiding public displays of affection, for instance) or project heterosexual identities while on holiday in an attempt to avoid drawing attention to themselves. In this respect, this study did not reach conclusive results as to whether the presence of children impacts on the families' visibility on holiday. While for some parents, the presence of children amplifies the feeling of 'standing out', for others, children reduce the family's visibility and help the family mingle while on holiday.

Finally, another very significant conclusion of this study relates to gay and lesbian parents' somewhat paradoxical relationships with their own sexualities. If, on the one hand, they claim to be 'out' and proud of being gay / lesbian, on the other, their accounts sometimes uncover underlying expressions of shame. The sentiment of shame is manifested mainly through stigmatisation of other LGBT people (via the reinforcement of stereotypes) and / or a discomfort of being 'out' (for example, avoiding conflict with other people while on holiday). Shame may affect family holiday choices, with parents, for instance, rejecting gay-centred destinations for fear of exposing children to what is perceived as inappropriate behaviour. Expressions of shame are often interwoven with a desire to blend in, which is indicative of these families' aspiration for integration and acceptance.

6.2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

In giving voice to the underrepresented group of lesbigay parented families in tourism research, this study helps fill impressive gaps in knowledge about family tourism in general (Carr 2011; Obrador 2012; Schänzel 2012) and holiday motivations and choices of the non-heteronormative family in particular (Backer 2012a; Hughes and Southall 2012; Schänze*l et al*. 2012; Yeoman *et al.* 2012; Lucena *et al.* 2015). This *per se* justifies the existence and corroborates the value and significance of this study. Further, this study's findings have repercussions that far exceed the domain of tourism. As they touch upon topics as diverse as decision-making, sexuality and holiday spaces, results from this study are also relevant for disciplines such as psychology, sociology and geography. More importantly, this study further makes unique contributions in the following four areas:

- This doctoral thesis makes an invaluable contribution towards a broader understanding of the family in tourism research. A very meaningful conclusion from this thesis lies in lesbigay parented

families having more similarities than differences in relation to the 'conventional' heteronormative family previously researched in the tourism literature. Their travel motivations and destination choice do not substantially differ from previous scholarly findings. As noted, for instance, akin to the 'traditional' family contemplated in scholarship, they prioritise their children's needs when choosing holiday destinations, and their trips help enhance family identity. Yet, this identity is not expressed in terms of the parents' sexuality. Such a conclusion is of paramount importance because it demonstrates gay and lesbian parented families are ultimately *families.* In this respect, in allowing lesbian and gay parented families to express their desires and aspirations with regard to their holiday choices, this study does more than include the non-heteronormative family in tourism research. It reveals and recognises the diversity and fluidity of family configurations. This substantially contributes to extending what is known and understood about the family, thereby amplifying the parameters that have so far defined it in tourism academia.

- In providing insights into how lesbian and gay parents perceive and relate to their own sexualities, this study contributes to an understanding of the ramifications of pride / shame for same-sex parented families' holidays. Within this context, pride / shame may shape not only these families' travel motivations and destination choice but also influence other aspects of their holiday experience, such as family visibility and social interaction. Yet, the complementary and symbiotic relationship between pride and shame, and their interplay with holiday choices, had not been recognised in tourism scholarship in general, and in research on family tourism in particular. Furthermore, pride / shame may sway other aspects of these families' lives, including parents' perceptions of, and relationships with, other members of the LGBT community. As noted in chapter five, studies on homophobia have predominantly focused on anti-gay sentiments inflicted by society in general (Forstein 1988; Sussal 1998; Rosik *et al.* 2007). Many of

these studies have underlined the negative effects of discrimination on LGBT people's mental health (Brown and Trevethan 2010; Newcomb and Mustanki 2010; Kappler *et al.* 2013), thereby constructing LGBT populations as marginalised and adding to their sense of victimisation. While LGBT people still suffer from the effects of heteronormativity and homophobia in most countries in the world, this study offers evidence that shame can lead lesbians and gay men themselves to be agents of stereotyping and stigmatisation. Not only does this conclusion add to knowledge about discrimination within the LGBT community but it also illuminates the intricate link between shame and stigmatisation.

- This study also makes an essential contribution towards a critical understanding of the 'assimilationist' nature of same-sex parented families in relation to their holiday motivations and choices. This thesis has indicated lesbigay parents, when making travel-related decisions, do not place emphasis on the 'difference' of their families and do not express a desire to 'stand out' on holiday. Rather, sexuality is but one of the many aspects of their identities, interacting with, and being sometimes overtaken by their other identities. More importantly, the holiday motivations and choices of these families indicate they seem to be driven by an 'assimilationist' desire to integrate, blend in and be accepted. This conclusion sheds new light on the social phenomenon of lesbian and gay parented families. In this vein, although in essence the existence of lesbigay parented families may disrupt conventions that view heterosexuality as the norm, their holiday (and possibly also everyday) choices in many aspects attest to their desire for 'normalisation.' This study puts into perspective the view of some LGBT activists and theorists (Stoller 1995; Stacey and Davenport 2002; Stacey 2004; Stein 2005) who highlight the transgressive character of non-heteronormative sexualities, thereby contributing significantly to scholarly debates about the nature and place of lesbigay parented families in heteronormative societies.

- Finally, this study has notably advanced family tourism research, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between family holidays, on the one hand, and togetherness and family identity, on the other. In this sense, previous research had shown the importance of holidays as enhancing togetherness (Bieger and Laesser 2002; Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011; Kluin and Letho 2012; Schänzel 2012). This study complements and surpasses such claims by unmasking the multiplicity of connections and reconnections that holidays generate. As noted, not only does family tourism create and reinforce intra-member links but it also allows for connection and reconnection with friends and even with the self. This demonstrates the significance of family holidays goes beyond a group level as it affects members individually.

This thesis also provides valuable insights into the relationship between holidays and family identity, a theme that has so far received limited attention in tourism scholarship. Same-sex parented families' holidays are confirmed in this study as opportunities to create and strengthen the identity of the group (Shaw *et al.* 2008; Carr 2011; Schänzel *et al.* 2012). However, this Ph.D. also elucidates the diverse facets of family identity, highlighting, for instance, the role played by holiday rituals in the generation and enhancement of family culture. These rituals may include trips to spend time with the extended family, in particular with the aim of introducing the new-born or newly-adopted child, and, therefore, this research adds new knowledge to the literature on VFR (visits to friends and relatives) travel. Further, this study complements Epp and Price's (2008) work on family identity and consumption practices in that it positions this identity at the centre of holiday decisions and demonstrates how the traits and activities shared by family members ultimately shape their destination choice. These conclusions are of particular relevance to tourism research because they enable an enhanced understanding of the multiple angles and implications of the overlooked theme of family holidays.

6.3. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this study have ramifications beyond the academic domain. Its implications are very significant for the tourism industry, especially because, as stated in the introduction, same-sex parented families are likely to gain importance as a tourism market segment in the future. In this respect, this study's results provide invaluable information for tourism practitioners and marketers, particularly with regards to service quality improvement and product development and promotion. An improved understanding of what drives lesbigay parented families to go on holiday, what destinations they choose and how their holiday decisions take place will allow the tourism industry to develop products and refine operations to better satisfy these families' needs and wants.

For instance, a key finding from this study relates to lesbian and gay parents avoiding drawing attention to themselves on holiday. This study has also concluded they may shun social interaction during family trips. Further, it has indicated the apprehension generated by sharing facilities with other people can impact on the choice of their destination and accommodation. Likewise, same-sex parented families may experience tension at the hotel check-in because 'coming out' as lesbigay to strangers may provoke feelings of exposure. Therefore, tourism practitioners catering for same-sex families should ensure their spaces and procedures are not only family- but also gay-friendly. Staff, in particular, should be trained on how to approach and respond to these families' demands. As indicated earlier, the holiday choices of lesbian and gay parented families may be influenced by their desire for acceptance. Thus, gay-friendliness in holiday environments may facilitate these families' feelings of inclusion, thereby prompting comfort and relaxation. If adequately communicated, these features may encourage lesbigay parented families to prioritise destinations and accommodation that promote themselves as (both) family- and gay-friendly.

On the other hand, it should be noted these families' desire for inclusion and acceptance also reveals their refusal to be segregated. Same-sex

parents reject being "ghettoised" (to quote one of the fathers interviewed), refusing holiday choices catering solely for the 'gay family niche.' This conclusion is very important in that it indicates the tourism industry needs caution when developing and promoting 'gay family only' destinations and facilities. Similarly, as noted above, same-sex parented families highlight their 'averageness' rather than their difference, and their holiday choices are shaped by a desire to blend in. Thus, while procedures and staff in tourism destinations and facilities should be gay-friendly, marketing communications that overemphasise lesbigay parents' sexual identities may be counterproductive.

Further, as explained above, a very important holiday motivation for same-sex parents (and possibly for their straight counterparts) is the desire to take a break from parental duties. Same-sex parents make holiday decisions based on their children's needs and are driven by a need to spend time together with the family. However, they often prioritise destination and accommodation options where children can be kept entertained and busy, thereby allowing the adults to temporarily rest from the tasks involved in parenting. Such conclusions reinforce the need for family-oriented accommodation to offer both opportunities for the family to be together and services and facilities that satisfy parents' need for a break, such as kids' clubs and babysitting. Similarly, this study has underlined the importance of family tourism for strengthening relationships outside the family unit. Indeed, family holidays often include visits to, and trips with, relatives and friends. The significance of this type of travel (which, it is worth noting, is not restricted to lesbian and gay parented families) indicates the need for the tourism industry to better cater for the niche of VFR in a way to fulfil travellers' needs and maximise their holiday experiences.

Finally, this study has important practical implications outside the tourism arena. It has shed light on the ramifications of pride / shame for lesbian and gay parented families. Therefore, its findings are invaluable if disseminated in fora beyond tourism, such as same-sex parented families' organisations, other LGBT associations and / or related publications. An enhanced understanding of pride / shame is of particular relevance for

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LGBT people. Because shame may have profound detrimental effects on LGBT individuals' psyches and create / reinforce stigmatisation and tension within the community, it should not be ignored. Indeed, to quote Irvine (2009, p. 77), "the power of shame resides in the darkness and secretiveness"; thus, bringing shame into the spotlight is critical to non-heteronormative communities. If visibility weakens shame, then the solution is to regard shame as trivial, and openly debate it rather than conceal it. Such consideration is especially significant for lesbian and gay parents, for whom the feelings of parental guilt and sexuality-related shame may be interwoven and spiral together, interacting with, and building upon, each other.

6.4. FUTURE RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

This study utilised a phenomenological strategy, underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, concerned with understanding the travel motivations and choices of lesbian gay and parented families. Due to this approach, although research questions have been fully answered, data analysis and interpretation led to new questions being generated, as is often the case in qualitative studies. Therefore, this study opens avenues for various possibilities of future research.

This doctoral thesis encourages, for example, further research on family tourism. As discussed in chapter five, respondents in this project did not often include in their narratives negative experiences whilst on holiday, and, when doing so, reconstructed them to appear successful, humorous or happy. Similarly, they did not report conflicts among members during / because of holidays. While this absence of tension in family holidays might be explained by social desirability bias, it suggests possibilities for further studies on the 'less positive' and more stressful aspects of family holidays and travel choices. On the other hand, future research could further examine the role played by holidays in guaranteeing the survival and continuity of the family during or post traumatic moments in their history,

as in the case of divorce or death of a family member. This study has also shown how family identity shapes, and is fostered by, holiday motivations and choices, and how individual identities conflate to mould the identity of the unit. Research on the role of holidays in this web of interacting identities could also yield fruitful findings. For example, future research could scrutinise whether and how individual family members' identities produce and influence coalitions and negotiations in holiday decisions.

This project also inspires further studies on the holiday experiences of families parented by LGBT people. For example, this study has indicated lesbigay parented families may experience tension when they feel under public scrutiny while on holiday. This finding raises new questions beyond the scope of this study's aim. For instance, whether this tension is exacerbated or minimised by the presence of the extended family and friends deserves further academic attention. Similarly, this Ph.D. thesis has shown some lesbian and gay parents avoid challenging homophobic comments on holiday to protect their children whereas others openly confront these remarks as a way of demonstrating pride to their children. Whether and how exactly pride / shame interacts with parenting and whether this interplay affects holiday choices merits further investigation. More importantly, within the LGBT population, voice should be given to people whose sexual and gender identities are particularly transgressive to normative conventions, and who are thus further marginalised by society. Such is the case of transgendered people, who are notably neglected in academia in general and tourism research in particular. An exploration of the holidays of families parented by transgendered individuals would be crucial to help fill this gap in tourism studies.

With regards to methods, future investigations on lesbigay parented family tourism could also benefit from other types of techniques. Visual methods could, for example, facilitate the inclusion of children in data collection. Future studies could also involve participant observation, filming or recording of pre-holiday decision-making processes within the family unit. While these approaches may be time-consuming and not always easy to implement, they might allow for a deep examination of the dynamics that operate within the family with regard to holiday decisions. The use of travel

diaries, with participants keeping a written daily record of their travel experiences, could provide further insights into aspects such as the part played by travel activities in constructing family bonds, the role of children in family visibility or experiences of pride / shame during family holidays. Similarly, further research on family holidays could use longitudinal methods to examine how exactly holiday decisions evolve according to family lifecycles and children's ages.

This study also prompts research outside the tourism sphere. For example, this Ph.D. thesis has illuminated the mechanisms used by same-sex parents to navigate the heteronormativity that characterises most holiday spaces. This finding could be further expanded to other disciplines to investigate, for instance, the interplay between the heteronormativity of public spaces and these parents' everyday leisure and consumption practices. In addition, this study has revealed same-sex parented families' holiday choices are informed by an assimilationist desire for 'normalcy.' More studies are needed that examine whether and how their desire for 'normalisation' is manifested in, and affects, their daily lives. Further enquiry could also delve into the ways the desire for assimilation shapes, and interacts with, shame in lesbigay parented families, as well as the influence of shame on the upbringing of children and intra-family relationships.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that this project was embedded in a relativist ontology and a constructionist epistemology. As such, meanings were created as the result of a co-construction between respondents and an embodied researcher. As explained throughout this thesis, data drew upon participants' lived experiences and accounts of family holidays but were ultimately analysed and interpreted through the prism of a Brazilian childless gay man. As noted in chapter three and this chapter, the reflexive practices adopted by the researcher allowed for an understanding of the impact of his positionality on data collection and analysis. However, it is acknowledged that the conclusions of this research might not represent the meanings ascribed to holidays by all gay and lesbian parents. This study could be used to underpin future research drawing on the influence

of factors such as culture, social class and ethnicity on lesbian and gay parented family tourism.

GLOSSARY

Child

A person aged 17 years and under.

Family

A group consisting of at least one child and one parent (see *parent*).

Family tourism

Trips made by a family group for the purposes of leisure, recreation and/or to visit relatives and friends, but also the activities made during these trips and the decisions that precede them. The expression *family holidays* is also used interchangeably.

Gay Man

A male who is sexually or affectively attracted to other men.

Lesbian

A female who is sexually or affectively attracted to other women.

Gay and lesbian parented family / Lesbian and gay parented family

A family with at least one gay father or one lesbian mother. Other possible expressions used are lesbigay parented family and same-sex parented family.

Parent

An adult who has caring responsibilities over a child. The adult can be a parent (biological, adoptive or foster) or a legal guardian.

Nuclear family

The family formed of mother – father – children, who are normally biologically related and live in the same household. Often used with the expressions 'traditional' and 'conventional' to emphasise that this type of unit is no longer the only possible configuration of family.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Question	Objective
Introductory Questions	
What are your full names? Where were you born? May I ask your age? What is the highest level of education you have completed? How many children do you have? What are their names? How old are they?	To break the ice and gather demographic information
Transition Questions	
How often does your family go on holiday? Where did you last go? Do you have any holiday trips planned? (Bloy 2000)	To encourage the family to talk about their experience and try to identify potential issues / connections to the research questions
Key Questions	
What factors make your family travel on holiday? Why do you go on holiday? (Crompton 1979; Dann 1981; Bloy 2000)	To identify the family's travel motivations
What makes you choose a specific destination when you travel on holiday? (Um and Crompton 1990) Is there any place you avoid? Why? (Hughes 2002a)	To identify the family's destination choices
How do you make the decision concerning your holiday trip? Could you tell me how the decisions usually happen? (Kim *et al*. 2010)	To understand how the decisions are made and identify whether/how the children participate in the process
What factors does your family take into consideration when deciding where to travel on holiday? What types of activities does your family do while on holiday? Do you interact with locals and other tourists? (Kluin and Lehto 2012)	To identify whether heteronormativity affects the family's social interaction while on holiday

Leaflet

ARE YOU A GAY OR LESBIAN PARENT WHO HAS EVER BEEN ON HOLIDAY WITH YOUR CHILDREN?

If so, you may be interested in taking part in a University of Brighton study.

Rodrigo Lucena is a PhD researcher who is conducting a study of what motivates gay and lesbian families when they choose where to spend their holidays and how their decision-making processes take place.

If you are a gay or lesbian parent and have already travelled with your children (regardless of their age), Rodrigo would love to hear from you.

Please contact him via email on rldm10@brighton.ac.uk or by telephone on 07587 502840 so he can meet you for a **short and casual conversation**. Time and place will be set according to your convenience.

Notes:

1. *Some details have been omitted for anonymity. All the omissions are signalled with "(…)"*
2. *All the interruptions are signalled with "-".*
3. *Parentheses indicate an explanation or the interviewer's perception.*
4. *"(laughing)" indicates the person speaking is laughing. "(laughter)" indicates more than one person is laughing.*
5. *Brackets "[ ]"signal two people are speaking simultaneously.*
6. *Inaudible words are signalled with "xxxxxx".*

Elisa (who was talking about a bad experience she had had recording a focus group): (…) and two of the actual focus groups were recorded properly and the two main IT techie guys who were in their groups, they hadn't pressed up the buttons correctly, so they messed up. So it just looked so stupid. Because it was, you know, all IT based and they hadn't managed to press the button twice.

Rodrigo: But does it mean you completely lost the data?

Elisa: Yeah, we lost the data, yeah. Well, we got a sense of that, but you know it's not the same, is it, as having the actual-

Rodrigo: No, it's not. That's why I use two recorders. (laughing)

Giuliana: So we're live now, are we?

Rodrigo: Yes. Recording. So, I'd like to start… Well, this is a very… I don't like to call it an "interview", it's actually a conversation because I'm going to ask you questions about your travel behaviour, things you do when you travel but I would like to start by telling you who I am and what I'm doing. As I said, my name is Rodrigo, I'm from Brazil and I'm doing this Ph.D. research about gay and lesbian families and their travel behaviour. What do they do when they go on holiday? How do they choose the destinations? Does sexuality impact on that? So if there are any questions that you wouldn't like to answer, please feel free to tell me and we'll skip or we can stop recording, it's up to you.

Giuliana: Uh huh, OK.

Rodrigo: If you want to stop at any time, we can do that as well. There are no right or wrong answers, so feel free to talk as much as you'd like. It's not a test or anything.

Giuliana: (laughing) Is there only one answer? Because we might disagree at times… (laughing)

Rodrigo: Honestly, that would be wonderful for my research (laughter). Your names are not going to be used and your data will be only accessed by me. Nobody else will have access to it.

Giuliana: Oh that's a pity, I was hoping we might become famous really. (laughing)

Rodrigo: Well, who knows? (laughing) So I'm gonna start with some very straight forward questions 'cause I would like to know a bit more about you. Mmm, so Elisa, I know you're working at (…). Could you tell me what you're doing there?

Elisa: Yeah, I'm a (…) lecturer and I work at (…) and I teach mainly (…). At the moment I just work two days a week.

Rodrigo: Uh huh.

Elisa: And the rest of the week I look after Helen (their daughter).

Rodrigo: And that's… But you haven't been doing that for a long time, have you?

Elisa: No, I started in September, as a part time. I was teaching (…).

Rodrigo: And Giuliana mentioned you might want to do a Ph.D.?

Elisa: Oh, gosh, I don't know about that!

Rodrigo: (laughing)

Elisa: I've just been…They just agreed to mmm, to fund my master; so I'll just do that first and see how it goes.

Rodrigo: But you're doing that at (…)?

Elisa: Yes. At (…)

Rodrigo: OK. And Giuliana, what do you do?

Giuliana: So I'm a management consultant and I specialise in regulatory change, or large regulatory change in banking sector, so things like anti money laundering, tax evasion, knowing your customer, consumer protection, that type of thing. So my title in the industry is a programme director, so I direct large change programmes.

Rodrigo: Uh huh. Mmm… Do you both identify yourselves as lesbians? Is this a word you would use to describe yourselves?

Elisa: I think, uh, I think for the purposes of other people, that's more convenient, isn't it? Probably… I speak for myself but I see myself as a bisexual but, because we're in a relationship, I mean, we intend to be in this relationship for a long time, then it's easier for other people to sort of see us as lesbians.

Giuliana: Mmm… Yeah, probably the same answer, I guess. I probably identify as just, you know, bisexual... But yeah, I've been in female relationships for 15 years, so I suppose I would be branded as a lesbian but I'm not sure if I would identify myself as one, which is indicative of my sexuality.

Rodrigo: And how long have you been together?

Giuliana: Mmmm… 2005? So that's 7 years?

Elisa: Yeah, yeah, 7 years.

Rodrigo: Would you mind telling me a bit about your history, how your family was formed, how..? I'm sorry what's her name? (pointing to their daughter who was playing in the room)

Giuliana: Helen.

Rodrigo: How you decided to have her and…?

Giuliana: Uh huh. We met in 2005 and we moved in together in 2006 but we both recognized we wanted a family. So we talked about having a child through IVF and then we had Helen basically! I mean…

Elisa: Yeah, I mean, we decided that we wanted to… we didn't want anyone else to have an input. We had friends who could possibly have helped us… (Helen starts to speak with Elisa)… but we just wanted it to just be about us, our decision making. So huh we decided to get a donor, an anonymous donor.

Rodrigo: An anonymous donor. And who's the biological mother if you don't mind my asking?

(Giuliana points to Elisa)

Rodrigo: OK.

Giuliana: The woman who will make xxxxxx right now (laughing)

Elisa: xxxx (laughing)

Giuliana: I did not really enjoy it! (laughing)

Rodrigo: And how old is Helen now?

Elisa: (to Helen) How old are you?

Giuliana: (to Helen) Helen! How old is Helen? She's 4.

Elisa: 4.

Rodrigo: 4?

Giuliana: Yeah, she's a big girl.

Rodrigo: So do you travel a lot?

Elisa: Yeah, probably a holiday once or twice a year. (to Giuliana) I mean, you travel a lot independently.

Rodrigo: And what makes you travel-

Giuliana: I've travelled for business a lot of the last few years. Yeah, two family holidays a year probably.

Elisa: Yeah… You mean, what makes us go on holiday? I don't know, it's just, you know, like everybody else… relaxing and chilling out with the family really.

Rodrigo: And is there a specific place you go to?

Elisa: No. No. Well, I guess for a few years in the summer holidays, we've been to France and stayed in-

Giuliana: There's been reasons for that. Originally, when we first met as a couple, it was easier to travel, and then we had a daughter and it was mmm still cheap to travel 'cause it was just the two of us and we didn't have to pay for Helen. But then as Helen got older, we now have to pay for a flight for her; so there's that consideration. So at the time when we accepted we should really go on some of the more exotic holidays because we won't have to pay for Helen's flights, we were in a car accident and so we injured our legs. So it would've been really difficult for us to go on holiday somewhere exotic.

Rodrigo: Uh huh.

Giuliana: So we tended to focus on places that we could go to without having to carry bags and buggies and child. So we'd drive to France because it was the easiest option physically for us because we were both badly injured.

Rodrigo: Really? And you have completely recovered now?

Giuliana: No, I wouldn't say completely recovered but we're… we're able to walk again and stuff like that. But that's why we focus a lot of our holidays in France: because we can pack the car here and drive.

Rodrigo: So you take the boat to travel, you cross the channel and-

Giuliana: Yeah.

Elisa: And drive down, yeah. We'd usually, you know, rent a house or something, right? (to Giuliana)

Rodrigo: And where is the house located? Is there also a specific place in France or you've been-

Elisa: There isn't a specific… we've stayed somewhere…

Giuliana: We focus on areas that we know are going to be… I think this is because we're gay… but we do focus on higher density places in the… We don't really like going to local villages necessarily. We prefer to be in places like Saint Jean De-Luz or Nice etc.

Elisa: I don't know if that's true 'cause we stayed in that little village.

Giuliana: Yeah, but we didn't enjoy it as much. We enjoyed places like Saint Jean De-Luz more than we would some of the smaller places, didn't we, 'cause we're a bit more anonymous in a way when we go to bigger cities.

Elisa: Yeah yeah.

Rodrigo: So would you say you avoid small places?

Giuliana: Avoid is a strong word.

Elisa: I don't think that's true 'cause, we've stayed… if you think about the last three years, we've stayed in houses in small villages.

Giuliana: Yeah, but bigger… with bigger people (?)

Elisa: Yeah. So if we're going to a small village, then we'll go with friends or family so there's a bunch of us there, but we wouldn't go on our own, I don't think, necessarily… Well, we did actually.

Giuliana: Yeah, but we didn't enjoy it as much.

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Elisa: No, but that's not because we're gay. That's because we wanted some people around us. (laughing)

Rodrigo: There's another question I wanted to ask you. You said that you rented a house. Why the house? Is there any reason for that?

Elisa: I mean, well, we wanted to go somewhere with our family that was big enough for all of us, so my brother and his family, my other brother and my mum…

Giuliana: We do tend to travel often with friends.

Elisa: Friends and family.

Giuliana: (to Elisa) Like, if you think about Mallorca, we went to Mallorca, we went with another gay couple, we rented a big villa with the pool and it means, you know… just normal… you can still have an evening together, you can put kids to bed and still have an evening together with your friends.

Elisa: So, for example, I would actively choose a house where there's not a shared pool. We don't want people… I, I just wouldn't feel comfortable sharing a property and sharing a pool with a family set-up…

(Helen starts speaking with Elisa): Mummy, I want xxxx.

Giuliana: Unless we're with friends.

(Helen continues talking): No, no…

Giuliana: (to Helen) Helen, xxxx.

Rodrigo: And why is that?

Elisa: Yeah, 'cause you just don't know how accepting people are.

(Helen continues talking)

Giuliana: (to Helen) Helen, remember Rodrigo is recording.

Rodrigo: That's all right.

Elisa: So, I think that would be… We did a lot of city breaks as well

Giuliana: Yes, we did a lot of city breaks before we had Helen.

Rodrigo: So, basically, you have focused on Europe, you've been to Spain, to France.

(Elisa sneezes): Sorry.

Giuliana: And we went to Dubai on Christmas.

Elisa: Oh yeah, that was-

Giuliana: And that's a story, I think, from a gay perspective, definitely. So yes, we decided to go to Dubai. Mmmm my cousin lives there mmm with her family. And-

Elisa: We wouldn't have gone to Dubai.

Giuliana: We wouldn't have chosen that as a gay family, definitely not. But we decided to go. I guess I was always a little bit nervous but, the night before, I started to research and then I became incredibly nervous about the decision that we'd made. Mmm as a destination, mmm… it's not… it's a country… being gay, I think, is illegal, being in a relationship where

you're not married is illegal. We're not married and we are in a civil partnership and so… when we got on the flight, we felt the need to be very… not separate as such, we travelled together, but to be very cautious… we flew with Emirates… When we got into the airport, through customs, we split up, we split apart.

Rodrigo: On purpose or somebody asked you to do that?

Giuliana: On purpose, on purpose. For our own safety, I guess, because we weren't sure of the ramifications of being caught. The complexity was mmm that Helen's passport has both of our names on it. So she's Helen Bullock-Kennedy. Bullock is Elisa' surname, Kennedy is mine. So we were afraid that if we walked together through the customs, they'd look at the passport and they would say…. they might ask a question and that would become tricky. As a result, we split up, Elisa went in one direction and myself and Helen went in the other, didn't we? Myself and Helen played a game where she wouldn't… we would hide from Elisa. (to Helen) We would hide from mummy. And she shouted "Mummy", didn't you, Helen, over a xxxx xxxx? Nerve-racking, wasn't it?

Elisa: So that was really-

Giuliana: That wasn't comfortable, and, when we were there, I wasn't particularly comfortable either… (pause)

Rodrigo: Of course, it was a lot of stress but have you ever suffered from discrimination in the way that-

Giuliana: We would've if we had disclosed who we were. Absolutely. I mean, we could've been arrested and interviewed and things…

Elisa: Oh, you're assuming now.

Giuliana: Yeah, I'm assuming, yeah, but having researched it... When we got there, we got a hotel, a family room as well for two nights. So we stayed with my cousin for the week, but, for two nights, we stayed in a family room. But again we were quite cautious, we made sure that we had booked two beds, that it was-

Elisa: Well, you went in and booked it while we sort of waited around the corner.

Giuliana: Well, that's a strategy we always do. We even do that when we're here. Less now. Before we had Helen, every time we went to a hotel, usually one of us would go and check in and the other person would wait outside rather than two of us… Because one of the questions that invariably arises, with two women, is "oh sorry, do you want a twin room?" And then we have to say "no, we'd like a double bed".

Rodrigo: But is it something that you do now? Or have you always done-

Elisa: We don't do it now.

Giuliana: It's less obvious now that we have a child really.

Elisa: We don't do it now, we don't do it anymore.

Rodrigo: But you used to do it before? 'Cause you probably travelled before as a couple, before Helen was born.

Giuliana: Yeah. (pause) Yeah.

Rodrigo: Going back to the Dubai experience, you said your cousin was living there. Did he tell you anything about it or is it just something you researched yourself?

Giuliana: She had suggested originally that maybe we travel separate flights but then she said "it's not a problem, you won't be noticed". It wasn't that "if you do get noticed, you'll get in trouble. You won't be noticed. You won't be in their radar", it's how she put it, "because you're two women." I think if we were incredibly camp men or very, you know, butch women, it might be a different story but I don't think we were on their radar, we weren't that noticeable particularly.

Rodrigo: And you were saying that you stayed in a hotel…

Giuliana: We stayed for a week with my cousin but for one night, two days, we stayed in a hotel.

Rodrigo: And in the hotel, no problems, with the staff…?

Elisa: Yeah, it was fine.

Giuliana: We were in no way displaying, having an actual display of being in a relationship.

Elisa: Yeah, we were just very careful, cautious.

Rodrigo: But that was specific of Dubai. It isn't something that you do normally … I mean, being cautious, it's not something you do when you're traveling in England or in Europe?

Elisa: I think it just depends on our surroundings. I always assess to see, you know, how accepting I think that people around me may be. More than anything, I don't wanna be in a position where we feel compromised or that there's anything, you know… (pause)

Giuliana: Yeah.

Rodrigo: You mentioned that at first you didn't want to go to Dubai. Is there any other place that comes to your mind that you would avoid?

Giuliana: As a family, definitely, anywhere that has a security issue. So, having travelled to Mexico on business, I wouldn't want to go to Mexico as a family. I felt it a very intimidating city, I didn't enjoy being there, and the high visibility, presence of the police, and you know the level of guns, and stuff… I wouldn't want to go there as a family. But yeah, I think, maybe destinations in Africa, parts of Africa, where there's trouble… Egypt, I wouldn't be that keen on potentially-

Elisa: I think it's security, I think, you know… There's… I think we have to be careful, you know, especially with a child. It does impact on your choices without a doubt. We're planning to go to South Africa this year 'cause my brother lives there. But, again, I don't think we would've gone there as a family necessarily.

Giuliana: I wouldn't have thought that South Africa… that's interesting… but then I would've probably have researched and…

Elisa: It's really not very gay friendly at all.

Giuliana: Is it not?

Elisa: No. (pause)

Rodrigo: And do you ever go to places like Lesbos, places that are famous for being gay destinations?

Giuliana: In the past, as a single person, yes.

(Helen starts coughing)

Elisa: And, as a couple, we did Sitges, didn't we?

Giuliana: Yeah, as a couple, we did, Sitges, Nice… I travelled a lot to Lesbos. But as a family?

Elisa: No…

Giuliana: It's more about family destinations.

Rodrigo: So you think this has changed after Helen was born?

Elisa: Well, gay destinations aren't generally that family friendly (she laughs and looks at Giuliana as if she was embarrassed) especially because they're mainly dominated by men, who, you know, are essentially less interested in children. So…

Giuliana: Less tolerant. (laughing)

Elisa: It's more about the night scene than it is, you know, family stuff, so…

Rodrigo: And did you use to rent houses before Helen was born or-?

Elisa: Apartments. We rented an apartment in Nice, so…

Rodrigo: So you had done it before. It's not because of Helen.

Giuliana: No.

Rodrigo: And can you tell me a bit about your holiday decisions? Who normally comes up with the idea of going on holiday? (Giuliana points to Elisa) Is it Elisa? (laughing)

Elisa: I guess just because I have more time to do that. And it won't happen if it's left to Giuliana, 'cause she's just so busy.

Giuliana: So I work in (…) and five days a week. Elisa works two days a week and is the primary child care person. So she's got more time. And she's got a higher propensity to research things that take long… I would probably choose the first one or two destinations I find whereas Elisa would spend a long time researching it.

Elisa: And also, I like to sort of meet up with people, friends so we make decisions with them about, you know, going away as a group, things like that.

(Helen starts to talk)

Rodrigo: (to Giuliana) So would you say that Elisa filters the information and then she discusses it with you?

Giuliana: Usually, she'll call me for a final decision. (laughing)

Elisa: It's not worth, you know, agonizing over decisions xxxxx (laughter)

Giuliana: In the past, she would have given me lots of options and I would have been like: "yeah that one, whatever". But now it's really… we know that Elisa picks good places. So…

(they are both distracted by Helen, who is showing pictures in a book)

Elisa: (to Helen) I think it's a seal. (to Rodrigo) Yes, and quite often, like I said, it'll be a group of us that are going. So we find a particular place or something.

Rodrigo: So you are saying it's a group decision. Who do you go on holiday with normally?

Elisa: Mmmm, a mix, actually, a mix of gay families and straight families.

Giuliana: Or just our own families.

Elisa: Or just our own families.

Rodrigo: But it's always with families, you don't travel with single friends, for instance?

Elisa: We went to a few xxxxx with two gay friends.

Giuliana; Yeah, but Helen wasn't with us.

Elisa: But we wouldn't go with them away as a family. It just wouldn't work. (laughing)

Rodrigo: It would not? Could you tell me why?

Giuliana: It's just because of their personalities rather than their… They're just... One of them is less interested in children (Helen starts to talk again) and when the child is just doing this (points to Helen, who is now screaming), he would think that's naughty, so he would get a bit frustrated. And they're party boys and they want us to go out and stay out a little bit later whereas, when we're in a family environment, we'll probably do more during the day and less in the evening. So we'll have our tea together, we'll eat together as a family and then we'll go back to the apartment to maybe read or watch television… Whereas, with the boys, they'll sleep longer, they'll want to have drinks in the evenings… and that's just xxxxx with a child.

Rodrigo: And do you see any differences between traveling with gay families and traveling with straight families?

Elisa: No, I don't think so. (pause) (to Giuliana) Do you?

Giuliana: (pause) Mmm… I'm trying to think. When we travelled with your brothers-

Elisa: Do you know what? I'm thinking about when we went to Mallorca with Jo-Ann and Katherine. So we went with some friends who have two children, we rented out this villa in Mallorca and it was just, I don't know…(looks like she's trying to remember) Instantly you find you're being assessed on, you know, on the dynamics of your relationship by the woman who was there-

Giuliana: Oh yeah.

Elisa: Yeah, I feel like, when we go away with friends who are in-

Giuliana: She was trying to figure us out. So we rented a really nice villa in Mallorca and it was the first time the woman had rented out and she probably rented out at a lower budget than she should have. So she attracted our demographic rather than the families now who will go.

Because I think it's 5 or 7,000 a week now whereas, when we went, she'd done for the first time. So it turned up she's obviously a very well off, formerly well off English middle class woman and we turned up with four women and three children and she just couldn't figure us out and you can tell… She asked us a few questions to try and identify why four women would travel together and then it… it seemed like a penny may have dropped a little bit later the conversation. But she asked enough to try and figure it out.

Elisa: I guess one of the differences when you go with a straight family, you feel like they lead the way, nobody is really looking at… you know, it's just a bit simpler. I don't know if that makes sense, I don't know if I'm articulating it well enough but it suddenly feels like [we're under scrutiny.

Giuliana: People try to figure out if we're together].

Rodrigo: Uh huh.

Giuliana: And then they start saying (mimicking voice) "oh, where are your husbands then?" (laughing) It was something like that, she said "where are the men?" or "where are your husbands?" She said something like that… Now that was awkward…

Rodrigo: But do you get these questions asked a lot?

Elisa: Little bit.

Giuliana: Sometimes.

Elisa: Not so much anymore.

Giuliana: No, not so much anymore.

Rodrigo: And is it any different when you travel in the UK with Helen?

Giuliana: No, I mean, Dubai was an exception. But in the UK, not really.

Elisa: No, actually I think probably we've grown in confidence. We don't really care about what people…

Rodrigo: And what are the main reasons or what are the main motivations for you to choose a holiday destination? What makes you…? (pause) I know it depends-

Elisa: Yeah, I think it does.

Giuliana: (thinking) I think budget is a big player in it, isn't it? So where you go is determined by how much you're able to spend, I think.

Elisa: Yeah, but I think now we're a bit older, I guess financially we've got a better situation, so we do like nicer things. Mmm

(Helen starts talking): Mummy!

Elisa (to Helen): Mummy is talking to Rodrigo.

Giuliana: Yeah, we've got more choice. But it's definitely around the family though. So do they have a pool? Is it near the coast? Will there be sufficient kitchen facilities for cooking? Because we enjoy cooking.

Elisa: Is it safe for children?

Giuliana: Yeah, is it safe for children? Does it have a nice balance of urban interest and quiet?

Elisa: I would always avoid an option where we'd have to hang out with other people in the hotel. Or be a part of…That would never be an option, do you know what I mean?

Rodrigo: This is one of my questions as well. So-

Elisa: I think if it had to be like that, I'd feel frustrated. I just don't wanna go on holiday to make friends, I want a holiday to be on holiday.

Rodrigo: But would you say you avoid contact with other people?

Elisa: Yeah, I do.

Rodrigo: Both of you?

Giuliana: Yeah (laughing)

Elisa: And that's not who we are ordinarily but on holiday, I just think…

Rodrigo: And why is that so? Why is it different on holiday?

Elisa: (thinking) I feel like, as well as now actually with Helen, if you have to come out every time, it's the same old story with new people. And I can't be bothered on holiday. I'm just happy to just be chilling, relaxing, not to have to bear myself to anybody. It's more of that, really.

Giuliana (nodding): Yeah.

Rodrigo: So you've never met new people while traveling?

Elisa: No, never! (laughing)

Giuliana: No, never! (laughter)

Elisa: Oh my God, we sound miserable. (laughter)

Giuliana: No, we've never… I mean, we are friendly, we just like to keep it to ourselves. That's the way we like it.

Rodrigo: And I know Helen is quite young but children do have this tendency to get along with other children on holiday. Does it happen with her sometimes when you're away on holiday?

Giuliana: Mmm, because of the places that we choose… so either we choose to travel with friends and family, in which case she's got other children she knows and she plays with or we travel in a small nuclear group where she won't have the opportunity to interact really (laughing). So she doesn't have the opportunity really, unless we're with friends. I think that, as she gets older, that will change. That will definitely change as she gets older.

Rodrigo: And what kind of activities do you do when you travel? (they look puzzled) I know I'm being very specific but this is very important-

Elisa: No, that's OK.

Giuliana: I love cooking, which means I love going to the supermarkets and markets, local markets, I love it (yawns). So I find out where the local market is and try to go there and buy the local cheeses and stuff… So, for me, it's cooking and shopping for food. (laughing)

Rodrigo: But not going to restaurants?

Giuliana: Oh yeah, we like restaurants too. And the restaurant experience changes when you have a family.

Elisa: We might get cycling. 'cause that's what makes xxxxx

Giuliana: Mmmm, what else do we like to do?

Elisa: Swimming. Mmm, reading.

Giuliana: Movies! We've gone to the movies as a family together when we were in Saint Jean De-Luz, we had a rainy day, we went to the movies, it was really nice. It was in French, I didn't understand it (laughing) but that was fine. But Helen enjoyed it and Elisa speaks French.

Elisa: Yeah, I think it's just general normal holiday kind of things. We go and visit-

Giuliana: We like going for lunches.

Rodrigo: But it's more relaxed. You don't look for extreme sports or anything of the kind?

Giuliana: No, definitely not.

Elisa: Not at the moment.

Giuliana: No, not at the moment. And the whole skiing thing, with my leg, I guess, skiing isn't an option right now.

Rodrigo: Uh huh, you also mentioned that you prefer to be close to the coast. Any specific reason why?

Giuliana: Days on a beach, I guess.

Elisa: We just like to have days on a beach. And that's why we like to live here as well, we like to be by the sea.

Rodrigo: I'm sorry, I didn't ask you this: are you both from Brighton?

Giuliana: I'm from the West of Ireland, so I grew up by the coast and I've been here since I met Elisa in 2004. (to Elisa) And you're English but you're from… Where are you from?

Elisa: I'm from Buckinghamshire. (laughter)

Giuliana: So yeah, Irish and English.

Rodrigo: OK. You were saying before that, when you have kids, the restaurant experience is different. Why is that?

Giuliana: Oh, only because, at a certain period in the evening, the child starts to get really tired and their behaviour starts to go… She starts to get cringy and cry. So it's only because of her age; so we will go for earlier meals rather than later evening meals, so around 6 or 7. And what we'll do is we'll bring a little iPad or something, so we have dinner together, and, when we have a longer dinner, she'll switch it on and watch a movie or something like that.

Rodrigo: It's so much simpler now! (laughing)

Giuliana: Yeah (laughter) but that's the only reason. There's no other reason.

Rodrigo: When you travel with groups or with your families, do you have any days off? I mean, are there days that you take for yourselves as a couple and then Helen stays with somebody else or-

Elisa: Not really, just because of our set up. I mean, I know other friends who've got two daddies as well and they are quite often on their own, they want to have that kind of time, but we don't really get that, do we?

Rodrigo: So it's basically the three of you together all the time.

Elisa: Yeah, pretty much… But then we look-

Giuliana: Hey, hang on. When we were with your mum, we would go off for the day.

Elisa: Without Helen?

Giuliana: Yeah, we did, didn't we? We went to the market, into the women xxxxx.

Elisa: So, if we go away with the family, we do have the option of, you know, getting a few hours away, here and there or an afternoon and stuff. But not long periods.

Giuliana: But not with friends. We've done it with her mummy.

Rodrigo: OK, just one last question actually, I think we've covered everything. Many associations that gather gay and lesbian families call themselves rainbow families. What do you feel about it? What do you think about the term?

Elisa: The term?

Giuliana: I think I've heard the term "rainbow" in the context of a relationship where a man is gay and the woman is… I could be wrong… Where the man is gay and the woman is gay but they married together for a convenience. I thought that's what I heard, I don't know, I thought, I could be wrong.

Elisa: Oh yeah?

Giuliana: Yeah, I thought I heard before, a rainbow marriage was a marriage where both partners were gay and they were just together as a hetero-seeming couple.

Elisa: We're part of the rainbow families group.

Rodrigo: The one in Brighton?

Elisa: Yeah. We've been a couple of times.

Giuliana: Once maybe? Twice maybe?

Elisa: Twice maybe?

Giuliana: Twice… in how many years?

Elisa: We're on their Facebook group. So I keep posted to what they're up to and I think we'll xxxx xxxxx as Helen grows up.

Giuliana: The last time we went I was quite impressed. I thought they'd moved on. I found, the first time we went, it was quite a few years ago and it was just boring and I didn't find a particularly friendly environment. But this time I went, everyone was really friendly, it was as if they were more

(pause) socially mature and they were able to interact with people they didn't know. So they were more open to bring in new people and make them feel comfortable whereas, in the previous environment, people just kept talking among themselves. You'd just walk in and nobody would-

Rodrigo: A little bit cliquey maybe?

Giuliana: Well, people use the term "cliquey" but often it's because they don't have… they are not mature in their social interaction. So they don't recognise that, if a new person joins a group, that you should welcome them in and be friendly.

Rodrigo: And that's funny, isn't it? Considering that it's an association that tries to-

Giuliana: Yeah, I know. But now, they were a really nice bunch, really lovely. Does "rainbow families" do it for me as a name? Probably not, but I understand the concept.

Elisa: I don't mind it. I mean, I think different gay and lesbian groups now aren't just about being entitled rainbow. It doesn't really bother me. No, I don't know if that's really helpful but…

Rodrigo: The very last question: I forgot to ask you this in the beginning and I'm sorry if that's a little bit rude-

Giuliana: Our age?

Rodrigo: Yeah, may I ask your age? (laughing)

Giuliana; I was wondering, I was expecting that to happen. So I turned 40 this year, so I was born in 1972.

Elisa: And I am 39.

Rodrigo: So am I! (laughter) Thank you very much for this. It was lovely!

Giuliana: No problem.

Elisa: You're welcome.

Appendix D

Reflective Remarks

Interviews 1 (Stephen and Bruce), 2 (Mike) and 3 (Mia and Miranda)

- Some commonalities among the first interviews. Safety was only mentioned in relation to the place: it is supposed to be safe for the whole family. So far no mention to sexuality.

- The main concerns for the first two families when travelling relate to the place's infrastructure since the children are still quite young. So it is important to find a place where they can cook food.

- Motivations are children-centred: it is important to keep them entertained especially when they are little. Interview 3 gave me insights on the evolution of the travel habits in a family according to the child's age. Because the couple interviewed has an 18 year-old boy, they could compare holidays when he was a child and more recent holidays. The child being older opens possibility for new types of holiday, including couple holidays.

- Decisions in a couple are jointly made (confirming most of the literature on family holidays). However, families say they make decisions together but one of them centralises most of the process. This contradicts Decrop: it seems clear that the operational tasks one undertakes (finding hotels for instance) are decisive as they eventually determine where the family will spend their holidays.

- The fact that they live in Brighton might have an impact. Brighton is, according to them, extremely gay-friendly and they do not seem to be used to discrimination or rejection.

Interview 4 (Donna, Lilly and Ross)

- Budget was mentioned for the first time. The financial aspect seems to play the most important part in destination choices for this family (and especially destination avoidance).

- Family-friendly destinations started to be viewed as attractive only after their son was born but were not destinations the mothers particularly avoided as a couple.

- The family has changed their travel habits as the son grew older: in the beginning, the mothers were quite concerned about him being entertained (confirming the previous interviews). Could that be a "need for entertainment" as a potential motivation?

- When their son was a child, they chose the premises on the grounds of the facilities. Confirming all previous interviews, it was important to find a place where they could prepare the baby's meal. Could we be talking about a "need for infrastructure"?

- Sexuality is never mentioned as being a motivation or as influencing destination choices. However, when more directed questions are asked, they end up saying they avoid a specific destination because they don't want to stand out. This is the second family that mentions B&B's in the countryside as a place where they don't feel comfortable. Never found this in the doctrine. Are gays and lesbians "countrysidephobics"?

- Need for safety was not mentioned spontaneously (it never is). But it does seem to affect the contact they have with other people. This is the second family that mentions they don't like to interact with other tourists.

Interview 5 (Michelle and Rose)

- I didn't like this interview. I didn't get much information. Plus, I arrived a bit too early and had to wait outside for at least 30 minutes - in the cold and the rain.

- Sexuality has never been a motivational factor not even when the mother was single. When the girl was younger, infrastructure played an important part, confirming what everyone said.

- Weather is perhaps not a push factor; rather it is a factor that impacts on destination avoidance (they avoid bad weather. Of course! We're in England!).

- Important information is emerging: in all the interviews so far, they avoid places with British tourists. In this interview, the mother said they refused to be among people who don't want to change their habits when travelling. The same reason was used to explain why they would avoid gay and lesbian-parented families destinations: they don't want to be with "similars".

- This is funny: everyone says they look for the difference. So why is it that they eat fish and chips when they go abroad? Do they want fish and chips ONLY when they are away? Well, actually this seems to confirm rather than contradict the general rule: everyone does look for the difference. However, when they are away, the difference consists of eating food that reminds them of home. They always want what is missing. I'm sure I've read this somewhere. Where?

Interview 6 (Charlie, Jessica and William)

- Again the need for structure: it is important to make children comfortable. Their comfort comes first.

- Cottages! Again! What is this obsession with cottages? Is it because they want to spend time together? Is it because it replicates the home environment? Is it because they feel safer? Anyway, it doesn't seem to have any connection with sexuality.

- Again the Brighton factor: they refer to Brighton when explaining why they feel safe on holiday. But shouldn't it be the opposite? Shouldn't they be more concerned when they travel? After all they are going to "exotic" places. I would be concerned! Maybe "Brighton" should become a data code or even a theme.

Interview 7 (Sandrine)

- This interviewee replied to one of the messages I sent to several LGBT organisations across the country (this one is from York!). Hurrah! My hope to find new families still persists!

- That was one funny interview. She likes to talk, it's hard to keep her focused on the questions. She does have some interesting stories though. Very brave woman, admirable character. Hard not to be captivated by her charisma and her non-apologetic attitude about life.

- Lesbian friendly destinations have never been a major source of interest.

- She is very out and proud. She doesn't really seem to be bothered by what other people might think and thus sexuality doesn't have any impact whatsoever.

- The "bed impasse" (being offered two single beds instead of a double bed when checking in to a hotel with a same-sex partner. Just created this expression, I like it!) has never happened to her.

Interview 8 (Gillian)

- Another self-selected interviewee, who replied to a message I sent to an LGBT family group in Saint Albans. She was the first interviewee to spontaneously mention sexuality as a factor impacting on the choice of destinations after the children were born. I found this rather intriguing considering her age (one of the youngest interviewees so far).

- She also spontaneously mentioned that she now avoids muslin countries (e.g. Turkey and Morocco) because she does not want her children to see the mothers behaving differently. Could it be that she gave me all these answers because she thought that would please me?

- Again the structure factor: they choose where to spend holidays where there is a swimming pool. Also, "self-contained" places are an important factor for the family (because of the facilities included, the cost-benefit relationship and the sense of relaxation: "it feels more like a home from home"). "Structure" or "Facilities" is definitely a pull factor especially when the children are young. But what does that mean?

- They had the "bed impasse" in a B&B in Scotland when they were travelling as a couple. She also mentions "a pattern of raising eyebrows when we asked for a double room" in other situations. This is in line with Hughes and Poria: what matters is the perception of risk (and discrimination) not risk itself.

Interview 9 (Elisa and Giuliana)

- Security and safety were recurrent topics in the interview and one of the mothers said they avoided going to "intimidating" places. Safety here was not related to sexuality but to the general feeling of security and absence of crimes. Again: the children first. "Good parents"?

- They avoid gay destinations because these are male dominated. No one else had said that before. They seemed a bit embarrassed saying this (exchanging looks between themselves), maybe because I'm a man?

- Their Dubai story is really interesting and made me realise that one of the main problems for these families is that they are not legally recognised as families everywhere! So there could be legal issues involving their entry in foreign countries. This could affect their risk perception and destination avoidance.

Interview 10 (Elizabeth)

- Very nice interview although she seemed a bit suspicious at first. It took me some more time to break the ice.

- She used a very strong sentence. Something like "every parent will say the same thing: if the children are happy, you're happy". I'm seriously thinking of using this quote to open the findings chapter. It seems to me this summarises everything that has been said so far. Children do come first. Sexuality is not a major concern. Motivations are family related.

- Some trends are becoming pretty clear. Some parents used to like gay friendly destinations when they were single. Some didn't. Anyway, they *all* avoid these destinations now. So being a parent prevails over being gay. Your identity changes when you become a parent. You're first a parent. It reminds me what a friend of mine once said: "when you have a child, you're not a daughter anymore. So instead of being cared, you are the carer. You have to take care of everyone, including your parents".

- Being with children makes interaction easier. Children are always an easy topic to start a conversation with other tourists. They are an ice breaker and cause sexuality to be *eclipsed* (I like this term). So here is a question: what changes in people's mind when they have children?

Interview 11 (Doris)

- Sexuality is an important (yet secondary) factor: she says she would not go to places where her sexuality would not be tolerated. So sexuality is important in terms of destination avoidance confirming the lit review and all the other interviewees. It looks like they don't necessarily choose the destinations because they're gay but homophobic places are always discarded.

- She used a caravan to travel with her children (which in a way constrained her destination choices). The choice for the caravan was justified for being a type of contained holiday and for being cheaper. Is this an English thing to travel in caravans? Everyone seems to like this type of holiday here.

- Now that her child is not living with her anymore, she avoids family-friendly destinations. This confirms family lifecycle (same thing from interviews 3 and 4).

- She says that, whenever she travelled alone with the children (without her partner), she did not feel the need to be out as a lesbian. So being alone with the children reduces the impact of sexuality.

- Three interviews on the same day! It was great but, at a certain point, I was mixing their stories.

Interview 12 (Tina, Naomi and Ewan)

- Very relaxed interview, lovely family. I love interviewing, I love my families.

- It has always been a family's habit to meet other people while traveling (the children always engaged with other children). However, she also says that, as a couple, she and her partner liked to make acquaintances while on holiday (which may mean making friends or

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not actually depends on the parents' personality and not the presence of children).

- She claims she has never experienced real prejudice (however, she remembered having been expelled from the ladies' toilet in a restaurant in Turkey because she was taken for a man, a story that made the children laugh). That is interesting: interviewees never remember suffering from prejudice but when I dig in, there're always stories. Why is it that they forget? Is it because they're on holiday and they only want to remember the good bits?

- The children do not remember any experience involving prejudice or discrimination while on holiday. They do recollect though that some other children they made friends with during holiday had difficulties understanding their families.

- They are the first family to state it is more comfortable to go on holiday with other gay or lesbian parented families. They suggested the dynamics within the family are similar and this makes choices easier. This is important although not confirmed in previous interviews.

- According to the daughter, discrimination is less likely to happen now that her mothers have split up: there is less need to be concerned about other people's reactions since they are travelling with their single mother and sexuality is not so obvious (an opinion corroborated by the mother who said something like "you become invisible when you are single'") This confirms the previous interview.

Interview 13 (Lynn)

- This interview happened in a café, it was noisy but the interview turned out to be one of the best: both the mother and the child (an adorable baby) were really lovely.

- Sun, warmth, relaxation and contact with nature are significant factors.

- Again, homophobic places are avoided (E.g.: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Dubai). She is very politically engaged. This is an important sentence "There's plenty of places where it's more chilled and I think I should give them my pink dollar or my pink pound". Is gay pride always expressed as a political or economic choice / opinion?

- Safety of the child is the most important thing when choosing a place to go. I have definitely a pattern emerging here: children come first no matter what.

- The change of identity is another pattern. She confirmed what everyone says. When you're a parent, you're a parent, not a lesbian. Another important sentence: "in a way, sexuality has kind of been taken out of the equation: now we are parents, more than gay"

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- She clearly says that having a child makes her and her partner more confident and more assertive about their sexuality.

Interview 14 (Freddy and Robert)

- That was a bit awkward. The interviewees were very polite but I felt from the beginning they were in a hurry. Plus, although the interview took place in their home, there was no sign of children whatsoever: I didn't see the children, who remained in their bedroom, there were no toys anywhere and I could hear no noise of children. I found this very intriguing considering the children's ages. It looked like the house was empty.

- This was the first family to say the children did not make any difference in their lives (I believe it considering their house!). Would they be what Miles and Huberman call "deviants"? They reject going to "family hotels" or "family restaurants" because they perceive them as being poor quality.

- Camping with gay friends is also an important motivation (and they say this has not changed since the girls were adopted). So, differently from all the previous families, the presence of children does not seem to affect their motivations (they said they keep traveling to the same type of place as before).

- Apart from family-friendly destinations they also avoid homophobic places (Arab countries and certain African countries, such as Uganda). Arab countries are consistently mentioned by the interviewees as "popular" homophobic destinations.

- They lied about the girls' "mother" when they went to Botswana. This contradicts their discourse of pride and reminds of previous instances during the interviews where this also happened. It seems like interviewees always have stories where they had to hide their sexuality and felt (different levels of) discomfort when put in the spotlight.

- They did not have problems at the customs when arriving in Africa but had problems when coming back to the U.K. (and had to prove they were the legal parents). Legal issues seem to be one of the most important themes when travelling abroad. Maybe a good topic for a postdoctoral study???

Interview 15 (Bill)

- This interview happened in a pub and was disturbed by the background music (I had to ask the owner to turn down the music) and the outside noise (there was a parade on the street). Despite that, the interview was relaxed and easy as the interviewee was eager to talk. The interview lasted almost an hour and a half!

- His family has a very 'postmodern' type of arrangement. He fathered a boy with a lesbian friend. His partner fathered two boys with a lesbian couple. Both Bill and his partner consider all the boys their children. Bill seemed pretty proud of the 'uniqueness' of this arrangement.

- He was the first one to mention that he likes going to family-friendly destinations ("it's a lot of fun"). Does this mean he likes to revive his childhood through holidays with his boys?

- He and his partners were fond of gay destinations before the boys. Now holidays are family oriented. Again, this is in line with all previous interviews. Once you have kids, it's about the kids, not about you!

- Contradicting all other interviewees, he likes to include his boys in holiday decisions since early stages of their lives. Very interesting, I wonder whether he just does that for fun or he actually listens to what they have to say.

Interview 16 (Abraham)

- This interview happened in a café at the YMCA London. The place was terribly noisy at times, especially when a lady near us started to have an argument with one of the employees (oh the joy of qualitative research!). Plus, the interviewee seemed very distracted and did not answer my questions directly. I had to ask him several probing questions to get a bit more data. I wonder whether this was because of the place.

- He talked about family holidays as a type of a duty or even a burden. He did not make or participate in holiday decisions. It seemed to me that he has always depended on somebody else to make plans for him. As a matter of fact, at times it seemed like his main motivation to go on holiday was *not* having to plan for anything.

- Although he does not seem really comfortable with his sexuality (he said he and his ex-partner had to hide their sexualities and were constantly concerned about being outed in a trip to Cuba), he argues he has never suffered from homophobia on holiday. Plus, when I asked him about the "bed impasse", he said he never complains (about being given a twin bed). He just puts the beds together because he finds the secrecy exciting.

Interview 17 (Luke)

- That was a very very awkward interview. The participant was ill, coughing and sneezing all the time. When he opened the door of his flat, his first question was "Is this gonna take long?". So I decided not to extend the interview more than necessary. He wasn't particularly

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friendly and I felt like I was disturbing him. We didn't click at all, this interview was more of a torture session.

- His answers were very short and thus he did not give me much new data. He uses holidays to bond with his sons (who live with their mothers) and establish some sort of father (and in his mind, male) figure.

- He made some slightly sexist comments implying women are not good at disciplining children (hence, that was *his* role as a father) and some very strong (derogatory) remarks about gay men. It seems there is really no sense of unity in the LGBT community with gay men being very "bitchy" about lesbians and vice-versa. So much for inclusiveness and acceptance…

- He lives in a really tiny flat in a less affluent part of Brighton, standing out a bit from the upper middle class that dominates among my interviewees.

Interview 18 (George)

- Brilliant interview, perhaps because he is an older guy and has probably experienced the evolution of LGBT rights more than the previous interviewees. As a consequence, he seemed to reflect more on the role of his sexuality in his travel choices and his life in general. At first, he seemed a bit tense. However, during the interview, he relaxed and opened up, giving me some fantastic material!

- He confirmed most of my 'potential' findings. For example, he gave me some really good insight into gay shame. His story of coming out to himself during family holidays was very emotional and powerful and I will certainly use it in my findings chapter. His ambivalent relationship with his sexuality (which he says he is proud of but not really open about) is a very good instance of shame and how this shapes his family travel choices.

- Social desirability bias also came quite strong and he realized that himself when he said "I may have painted myself as a prude, but I'm not."

- His background shaped a lot of his travel choices with his family, especially because he was born in Malta and used the trips with his boys to reinforce his roots. More than national culture, we seem to be talking here about family culture and values. Maybe another theme is emerging here? Perhaps something along the lines of reminiscing and connecting with the family? Or reinforcing family roots and heritage?

Interview 19 (Rick and Ian)

- Very young couple (which is a change from my previous interviewees), living in a somewhat rough area of London. They looked very posh despite the neighbourhood. Their house was being refurbished and they were quite apologetic about it. Ian was preparing dinner during the interview. Their son was already asleep. Ian has a domineering personality and although he did not dominate the entire interview, his answers were definitely more assertive than Rick's.

- The couple complemented each other's answers, showing family harmony all the way through the interview. Although the interview was relaxed, at some moments, I tended to analyse the information they were giving me and I believe they reacted negatively to some of my questioning.

- They reinforced holidays as a type of ritual. They go to the same music festival every year, which caught my attention not only because it constitutes some sort of family tradition but also because it says a lot about their family values (they seem to see themselves as very liberal and open-minded, perhaps lefties?).

- This interview was very nice but it gave me very little new information. Am I getting close to data saturation????

Interview 20 (Shirley)

- This interviewee was self-selected. She saw a message I sent a long time ago to an LGBT association in Brighton and volunteered to be interviewed! However, the interview had to be short as it happened in a café and her son (15 months-old) was a bit irritable. She seemed a bit embarrassed as other people started looking at us.

- The main difference between her and the previous interviewees is her family arrangement. She has both a female and a male partner. She conceived the boy with her male partner but the child lives with her and her female partner. The father doesn't live with them but participates in the son's education and is considered part of the family. Even so, their decision-making processes happen within individual households and do not take into consideration the 'other partner'.

- Most of family holiday experiences revolve around visiting relatives (hers or her partners') and engaging in ritualized activities that involve the whole family. She also described herself (several times actually!) as very busy. So holidays are opportunities to bond with her son and partners.

- Sexuality is not an issue on holiday but it is not a motivating factor either. She seems to enjoy the invisibility she has: "I'm not read as a lesbian".

Interview 21 (Caroline)

- Another self-selected interviewee. She works as a manager in a multinational corporation and seems to be a very powerful and influential person within the company. However, she is really down to earth, very approachable and easy to talk to. The interview was excellent but it happened in her office on a Monday morning and was interrupted a few times by phone calls.

- She confirmed the role of parenting as taking over her sexual identity. I think the expression she used was something like "being a mum is a job that takes over all aspects of your life". She seems to be what Stacey calls a "predestined" (born to be a) mother and her daughter is at the centre of her holiday decisions and life.

- She avoids confrontation at the hotel check in when she is offered a twin room. This is specially the case now that she has a child and she wants to protect her from any source of anxiety.

Interview 22 (Graeme and Lawrence)

- Another self-selected couple. What a brilliant interview! It's also the longest I've had so far: 2 hours and 20 minutes! Graeme and Lawrence are a lovely couple, older than the average of my respondents. They live in a house in Littlehampton and were very warm from the moment I arrived. Graeme was particularly keen to talk about his holiday experiences. Although the interview didn't give me anything new, it was very useful because Graeme carefully reflected upon my questions, gave me thorough answers - and some fantastic quotes!

- As Graeme is a retired teacher, holidays for him were opportunities to broaden his sons' horizons (confirming other interviewees, e.g. Abraham) and pass on values such as independence. Some nice quotes for the theme of family identity!

- Shame also permeated some of their answers. The way they described 'typical gay holidays' (associating them with casual sex) and their story in South Africa (where they did not confront the homophobic remarks of a hotel manager) are very good examples of shame. I love interviewing people!

Appendix E

Research Diary Entry

Note: names have been replaced with pseudonyms; information that could identify interviewees has been replaced with (…)

09 August 2012

Today I had my first interview with a gay family: Stephen and Bruce (both white men around their thirties). They have two sons, Karl, 4 years-old, and John, 1 year-old, both adopted. They also have a dog and two cats and live in (…), an obviously affluent neighbourhood on the outskirts of Brighton's city centre. Their house is incredibly bright, spacious and modern, with a lovely garden and an inflatable pool and trampoline for the kids. Stephen described himself as being the caregiver and Bruce as the breadwinner.

I was very nervous before the interview. I got there two hours (two!) in advance and had to go to a park nearby to kill time and try to relax. I was also concerned I might not understand their English or they might not understand my accent. However, the fact that I'm Brazilian was quite helpful. Before the interview, we talked a bit about the Olympic Games[8] and they (particularly Stephen who is more talkative) asked me plenty of questions about the 2016 games in Brazil. That helped me (and perhaps them as well?) relax.

The interview was chaotic though: at a certain point I had the dog sitting on my lap, one of the boys trying to talk to me and the fathers calmly answering the questions. I had to stop the interview on several occasions because one of them (more often Bruce) would go to the garden to check on the children or to the kitchen to prepare dinner. I found it hard to make them focus on the questions with so much going on. Sometimes I felt a bit frustrated and I worried all the time about the quality of the recording.

But I loved every single minute of the interview. Some of the things that caught my attention:

- Even though they say it is not on purpose, they have always chosen to stay in places where they could have some privacy: a detached property, like, for instance, a cottage or a villa, which Stephen called "family accommodation". They said this had nothing to do with their sexuality.

- Likewise, the choice of the people they travel with has nothing to do with their sexuality. They tend to travel with relatives or straight families with children. They say it is important for them to know that

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[8] London was hosting the Summer Olympics when this interview took place.

somebody else can keep an eye on the children whenever the parents want to take a rest. Stephen said holidays tend to be really tiring when children are so young.

- The most important motivational factor for them is to take a break from routine. However, they both said that they try to replicate the atmosphere at home. This is also one of the reasons why they choose cottages and villas as opposed to hotels. The expression used was "to replicate home environment". Safety was only mentioned when they referred to the place: it is supposed to be safe for the whole family.

- Another important factor is to do activities that might involve the whole family while on holiday. The sentence "we want to keep the children entertained / occupied / stimulated" was repeated a few times. The important thing here is that they do not look for activities, but for simple things that can occupy the children.

- Funny thing: they said their travel behaviours changed more radically when they bought the dog than when they adopted the kids.

- Distance (closer destinations are preferred), familiarity with the place and word of mouth (friends and relatives' recommendation) are very important factors in their decision-making.

- Stephen said he likes to take care of all the holiday process himself and described himself as a control freak. He also does not seem to be keen on delegating to third parties, which is why he has never used travel agencies or tour operators. However, they agreed that the decisions are always joint (confirming most of the literature on family holidays). Interesting here to see this apparent contradiction: they say they make decisions together but Stephen seems to centralise most of the process. Stephen's participation in the decision-making contradicts Decrop (2006): it is clear that the operational tasks he undertakes (finding hotels for instance) are decisive as they eventually determine where the family will spend their holidays.

- Both parents agree that children have no influence in the process. However, it was also clear that the children's influence is more passive than anything else: children may not clearly state where they want to go but their presence clearly limits the family choices because their needs are a priority. Activities cannot be boring or tiring for children; so they discard any holidays that involve long walks. Instead, it is more important to take the children to places where they can play. Beaches and swimming pools are always welcome.

- Stephen claimed that, because of the kids, there is very little room for improvisation, and he prefers to have things sorted beforehand. They also mentioned that, as the children grow older, they will

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probably change their holiday choices: they would, for instance, consider going to EuroDisney or camping.

- Very important: there were some moments where there was a clear difference of opinion between Stephen and Bruce. Although Bruce had to excuse himself at several different moments to take a look at the children, at a certain point he was the only parent in the room and he clearly stated that, after the boys were adopted, he is no longer concerned with homophobia while on holiday. According to Stephen, homophobia has never been a real concern (it is important to say, however, that he later contradicted himself by affirming that, before the kids came, it was more important to find gay-friendly places and, as a couple, they have always avoided homophobic destinations). This might be worth investigating.

- The fact that they live in Brighton might have an impact on their answers. Brighton is, according to them, extremely gay-friendly and they do not seem to be used to discrimination or rejection.

- Both parents said they do not like labels and are not fond of the expression "rainbow family" (too "cheesy" they said – I learned that word today!).

I believe I engaged quite well with the fathers and extremely well with the children, who actually wanted to include me in their games. I felt really happy I chose gay families as my PhD topic. I love children and that will make data collection easier and more fun!

Contact Summary Sheet

Charlie

Date	12 January 2013
Duration of Interview	1:33

Comments on the Family / Interview
Mother (white, late forties, lecturer, based in Brighton) raised her three children (one girl, two boys) with a lesbian partner (now separated). Children are all grown up now (18, 20 and 22) but the family has always travelled together. Only the two younger children were at home (the eldest son no longer lives with the family). Children are all siblings (biologically related) and were adopted when they were fairly young (2, 4 and 6). The mother claims she was one of the first lesbian couples to adopt children in the U.K. The mother also said she and her partner were really "mainstream", reason why they never had any real big problems with other people.

Probably one of the best interviews so far as the mother was really relaxed, talkative and made an effort to try to describe her family trips with accuracy (she even rang the eldest son when she could not remember a specific detail). A few days after the interview, the mother emailed to complement her remarks. She seemed to be happy with the possibility of talking about her experience but it seemed sometimes that she was trying to give me the 'right' answers (and eager to recall any bad experiences she had ever had).

Sometimes it was hard to make the mother focus only on the questions as she was very keen to talk (she seems to be critical and defended her political opinions with passion). On the other hand, she seems to have a natural propensity to like and befriend gay men. This is probably the reason why she felt so comfortable talking to me (and I felt really comfortable talking to her). She knows a lot of gay / lesbian parents and said she would help me putting them in touch with me. At the end of the interview, we found out we both like going to the karaoke! |

Answers to Questions

Motivations and Destination Choice	Main motivation is to spend time away from home. Sun and sports (especially cycling) have been important factors even before the children arrived.

Answers to Questions	
Motivations and Destination Choice	Cities and hotels are avoided because of the 'logistics' involved in travelling with three children. Cottages are preferred as accommodation because they allow the family to spend time together. The family does not seem to have any preconceived ideas about gay tourism: gay friendly destinations are neither avoided nor prioritised (even though the mother joked about the fact that she would love to go to Ibiza with her gay male friends). Homophobic destinations are avoided as well as other places where human rights are not respected (the mother cited China as an example).
Perceived Risk / Heteronormativity	Contradicting the literature, need for safety does not seem to be a major concern. The mother repeatedly said it was important for her to have a nice structure that would allow her children to be comfortable. She could not recall any homophobic experience in her life. However, on the email she sent me, she said: *Good to meet you on Saturday. My friend came round later that day and told me about her experience somewhere. Made me recall a nasty experience we did have when taking the kids to Florida some years ago which might be worth you knowing about. The American passport officials were very scary and intimidating. They really grilled our daughter about myself and both Alanis (ex-partner) and myself being her mum - she was just on my passport, but when he asked her if I was her mum, she said both myself and Alanis were. He kept saying rather nastily, 'what, you've got two mothers?' She was only little, so she was rather intimidated by his tone, as were we, anyway, and we're not little. Alanis also recalled people on trams and buses in Munich looking at us in a very snooty way as we travelled around with our three kids. But I think that was probably coz we were quite scruffy looking compared to the Germans in Munich. They are very correct down there.* When asked whether sexuality related safety was an issue, the mother explained that, because she lived in Brighton, she did not really think about this as a major source of concern.

	Answers to Questions
Other Observations	When asked about the impact of sexuality on her travel behaviour with her children, the mother said that was not so important. Sexuality was "a minor issue" compared with the fact that the children were adopted. This explains why she found it more productive to spend holidays with other families with adopted children rather than gay and lesbian parented families.
	The mother is not really interested in travelling with other gay and lesbian families. She prefers to travel with gay single men as, according to her, they are not really interested in the children, and that makes her have a break from her children.
	She never interacted with other people (locals or other tourists) while on holiday as they were always busy with the children.

Considerations for next interviews
Do lesbian couples have fewer problems of acceptance when travelling together?
I should definitely inquire more about the use of "rainbow family" as the expression is not unanimous at all. I should also ask them which expression they would prefer.

Appendix G

Examples of Excerpts and Initial Codes

Interview	Excerpt	Initial codes
Stephen and Bruce	We want to be with other people because we don't want to feel the pressure of keeping the children occupied. (Stephen)	1. Social interaction on holiday 2. Holiday companions 3. Pressure of parenting 4. Keep children busy
Mike	But equally, he [Mike's friend's son] is growing up without a father figure at all, and Alan [Mike's son] is growing up without a mother figure, so you know, they will have things in common… So it [going on holiday] doesn't have to just be [with other] same-sex parents.	1. Holiday companions = identification 2. Parental figure 3. Role of sexuality
Mia and Miranda	There was this one time in Portsmouth, do you remember, Mia? I'd completely forgotten about that. This guy [at the hotel desk] hesitated to give us a double bed. But we just said 'we're paying for a double bed, we want a double bed.' (Miranda)	1. Holiday (negative) memories 2. Check in impasse 3. Pink pound
Donna, Lilly and Ross	Interviewer: So Ross also likes camping…? Lilly: No. Donna: No. (Ross, who is in the kitchen, mumbles something) Lilly [to Ross]: Sorry, you were saying… Ross: I don't mind it [camping]. Donna: Oh no? We'll go [camping] then… Lilly: We'll go next year then, Ross! (laugh)	1. Answering for another family member 2. Interview as the moment of the truth 3. Discomfort of the interview

(continues)

Interview	Excerpt	Initial codes
Michelle and Rose	We go [to New Zealand] to visit my parents; we don't go on holiday. (Michelle)	1. Visits to relatives = *not* holidays
Charlie, Jessica and William	Charlie: Oh, they [the children] did go to kids' camp. Oh, that was great! We [she and her partner] had the day for ourselves. William: That was like during the day. Must have been a morning or an afternoon or something. Charlie: Yeah, we wouldn't have left you there the whole day.	1. Kids away = freedom 2. Guilt for "abandoning" children 3. Good parenting
Sandrine	She [her ex-partner] wouldn't allow me to see the children anymore and it broke my heart absolutely, after being a mother to them for five years, two little boys…. So, I decided, once I'd get over the grief of losing her, that I would try and start my own family.	1. Forming a family out of grief (compensation?)
Gillian	[Talking about how she and her partner deal with their sexualities on holiday] It's very open, very very open about us and our relationship in the way that kids kind of out you without thinking about it.	1. Open about sexuality 2. The presence of children enhancing visibility
Elisa and Giuliana	Interviewer: So you've never met new people while traveling? Elisa: No, never. (laugh) Giuliana: No, never. (laugh) Elisa: Oh my God, we sound miserable. (laugh)	1. (No) Social interaction on holiday 2. Discomfort of the interview

(continues)

Interview	Excerpt	Initial codes
Elizabeth	Well, at the time, my partner and I, if we weren't the first out lesbian couple in this country to have children placed for adoption, we were one of the first. It's not something that, you know, the social services would flag up, they were not gonna talk about it very much but we could have been in the papers!	1. Pride of being a lesbian mother 2. Pride of being a 'pioneer' 3. Altruistic adoption = no need for recognition
Doris	[Talking about a specific holiday] We could have gone swimming and whatever. [And her daughter said] 'No, I just wanna watch the television.' And I was just thinking 'And I put all this money in' (laughter).	1. Holiday as a financial investment
Tina, Naomi and Ewan	Now that the children are a bit older, I've been trying to put back in a bit of what I used to do [on holidays]. I used to work on boats, I used to work on the sea; it's a big change being a parent.	1. Family lifecycle: children's age impacting motivations and choices 2. The 'duty' of parenting 3. Holidays as compensation for parenting
Lynn	I knew the clock was ticking, so I asked her [her partner] if she wanted children on our second date.	1. The importance (and urgency) of being a mother

(continues)

Interview	Excerpt	Initial codes
Freddy and Robert	Robert: We are very out [as a gay family] but, of course, going to an African country, two men with children, it's a bit of a problem, so we had to- Freddy: We had to be quite discrete. We didn't make up any stories, did we? But at the same time we were quite discreet. Robert: We had to be a little careful didn't we? Freddy: You know, it's illegal, not to be gay but to have gay relationships, isn't it? So you know, we were just quite careful.	1. Pride of being gay 2. Visibility on holiday 3. Safety related to homophobia
Bill	We always do one trip to Spain to his [Bill's partner's] parents. We do that every year, we kind of have to. But that's great, we just go and get spoiled and we have a great time and we meet his thousands of family members.	1. Visits to relatives as repetition 2. Visits to relatives as duty 3. Visits to relatives as relaxation 4. Visits to relatives as bonding
Abraham	[Talking about the decision-making process before a specific holiday] She [his lesbian friend, mother of his son] just made all the decisions and that was always agreed from the start: she would make all of the decisions.	1. Delegating holiday decisions
Luke	We live in this Brighton bubble where everything is fine and relaxed.	1. Brighton as a bubble of gay friendliness.
George	We're not sporty, so we don't do exciting things like diving, you know. So it's just being together and just doing normal things. You know, like beaching, chilling out, going places, things like that.	1. Holidays as bonding 2. Holidays as relaxation 3. Relaxation as normal

(continues)

Interview	Excerpt	Initial codes
Rick and Ian	Rick: Michael [a friend of the family] was gonna come [on holiday] with us and he said 'do you mind if a friend comes with us?' and we were like 'ok, fine'- Ian: We had never met him- Rick: Yeah, we hadn't met him- Ian: Like once we had met him; it was weird.	1. Holiday companion = intimacy 2. People from outside the circle = weird situation
Shirley	Usually if I go somewhere else, it's for work, but once I'm there, it's like a holiday. So I might take them [her partner and their son] with me.	1. Combining business and family leisure trips. 2. Spending time with the family
Caroline	[Explaining why she and her partner opted for an anonymous donor] It started to dawn on us that we wanted to parent, actually we really wanted to parent. And to bring in somebody else, it meant that we'd be three parents.	1. Desire / vocation for parenting 2. Desire to replicate a 'traditional' nuclear family?
Graeme and Lawrence	The youngest one [of his sons], when we were in Amsterdam, he said 'oh, this is a gay bar!' and he [pointing to Graeme] was like 'is it?' (Rory)	1. The role of sexuality on holidays 2. Sexuality as 'low profile'

Appendix H
Progression of Themes through Data Analysis

Table 1: Themes at initial stages of data analysis

	Prestige
	Sameness and difference
	Connection
Representations of family holidays	Escape and freedom
	Stress and duty
	Emotional and financial investment
	Sexuality and holiday choices
Memories and nostalgia	Pictures
	Storytelling
Perfect family	Good parenting
	Happy family
	Political
Homonormativity and pride	Economic (pink pound/"bed impasse")
	Moral (and children)
	Visibility and invisibility
Context	Time
	Space ("Brighton factor")
	Personal safety
Safety	Family safety
	Sexuality-related safety
	Interview as the moment of truth
Interview and researcher	Discomfort at the interview
	Researcher as a stranger
	Researcher as a guest

Table 2: Themes at intermediate stages of data analysis

	Escape and freedom
	Projection of a lifestyle
Representations of family holidays	Stress, duty and investment
	Sameness and difference
	Connection
	Sexuality and holiday choices
	Roots and heritage
Family identity	Repetition and traditions
	Memories
	Individual identities within the family
The perfect family	Displays of family harmony
	Displays of good parenting
	Phrasing pride and shame
	Time and space as the context of pride and shame
Gay pride / gay shame	Avoiding conflict
	Check in phobia
	Search for invisibility
	Stereotyping

Table 3: Themes at the final stages of data analysis

Similarity and difference	Significance of family holidays	Escape, novelty and familiarity
		Togetherness and belonging
		Stress and pleasure of holiday decisions
		Sexual identity as 'low profile'
	Construction and reinforcement of family identity	Holiday rituals
		Holiday memories
		Family identity as a decision-maker
	Search for the perfect family portrait	Holiday motivations and parental duties
		Destination choices, children's needs and good parenting
Underlying expressions of pride / shame	Expressions of a 'fractured' community	Stereotyping and stigmatisation
	The discomfort of being out	Conflict avoidance
		Invisibility and the desire to blend in