

Emergence of a new type of family?

Parenting intentions of homosexual women and men

Christian Haag



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„Unser Traum von der Zukunft trägt uns weit mit sich fort,
bahnt sich hier neue Wege, er durchströmt diesen Ort.
Seht die Wunder des Fortschritts sich der ganzen Menschheit
unaufhaltsam nah'n.

Unser Weg in die Zukunft hat sich vor uns aufgetan. [...]
Längst schon ist es Zeit! Seid ihr denn bereit?
Geh'n wir diesen Weg und unser Traum wird Wirklichkeit!
Haltet nicht mehr still, lasst jeden sein was er will!
Schafft mit mir eine neue Welt der Freiheit!“

*Rudolf – Affaire Mayerling. Ein Musical von Frank Wildhorn und Jack
Murphy. Auszug aus dem Lied „Der Weg in die Zukunft“.
Originaltext: Jack Murphy, deutsche Übersetzung von Nina Jäger.*

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1 Introduction

Homosexual parents have been increasingly present, both in the media and in scientific research, in the last decades. Several processes that started overseas have had their impact in Germany as well. The gay rights movement, the fact that homosexuality is no longer regarded as a mental illness¹, and the ultimate decriminalisation of homosexuality in Germany² led to a process of normalisation for homosexual individuals.

The status of same-sex couples has been issue of debate and legislation in most industrialised countries in recent years. In general, there seems to be a trend of liberalisation of homosexual unions and growing societal acceptance (TNS Opinion & Social and Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers - DG JUST, 2015: 48f). Legal unions or even marriage between two partners of the same sex are instituted in more and more (western) nations. On 22 May 2015 a majority of Irish citizens voted for marriage equality in a referendum, which was the first time ever that the people of a state decided on this issue and not the government. The US Supreme Court decided on 26 July 2015 that the exclusion of “same-sex couples from marriage [...] conflicts with a central premise of the right to marry” (US Supreme Court, 2015: 15). Greater acceptance and also legal recognition generally allows homosexual women and men to engage in couple relationships in a relatively open way. Within such frameworks that do not necessitate hiding one’s sexual orientation or the fact that one is engaged in a same-sex partnership, certain goals and desires might be expressed for homosexual women and men that are similar to other individuals living within a stable and secure partnership and social environment.

Parenthood and the desire to have children can be regarded as a common shared value (Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010: 20). Data of the German *Familien*survey (family survey) suggests that there is a general desire among

¹ Statements issued: 1973 American Psychiatric Association, 1974 American Psychological Association (cf. Conger, 1975: 633).

² Abolition of section 175 German criminal code in 1994 (cf. Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 86).

Germans to have children. This desire, however, follows the traditional ideal of the family: Women with lower education degrees state a desire for children more often and men seem to be focussed on securing their professional career before parenthood (Onnen-Isemann, 2008: 142f). Furthermore, it could even be argued that the increasing popularity of artificial reproductive techniques (ART)³ can be seen as an indicator that parenthood remains an important goal in people's life courses, because the desire to have children can be stronger than the particular circumstances hindering a smooth achievement of parenthood. It has also been suggested that fertility intentions must be considered as a dependent rather than an explanatory variable, assuming that values in particular are much more influenced by conditions of living than is usually considered (Birg et al., 1991: 358).

1.1 Relevance of the topic

This dissertation is driven by several goals. The topic of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men is highly relevant for society and for the social sciences for the following reasons:

1. Same-sex couples with children are part of society. Research will provide a description of social reality and the variety of different types of families.

Estimates based on the official German Microcensus data from 2011 indicate that there were between 67,000 and 185,000 homosexual couples in Germany at that time. An estimated 7,239 children were living together with same-sex couples in that year (Rupp and Haag, 2016: 2f).

³ The increasing number of cycles performed in fertility clinics as reported by the German IVF Register (D.I.R) (2014: 10f) serves as measurement for this argument. Even after a stark decline in Germany caused by a legal change in the subsidisation of the costs (*Gesundheitsmodernisierungsgesetz* 2004), there is an increase in the number of cycles performed 2004-2015. The European registers also show a continuous increase in the number of cycles (Kupka et al., 2014: 2109).

2. Same-sex couples with children are a new type of family and can thus be compared to other different types of families.

Same-sex couples with children are different to heterosexual couples regarding the composition of the parental couple, and their family history (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009). They share common patterns with step families, families with adopted children or families with foster children, for instance. Therefore they are a new type of family and can be studied in their own right but also in comparison with other types of families.

3. Same-sex couples pursued parenthood in the past and they still do. Research can investigate the practices of a societal subgroup.

Concerning same-sex parenting, there are two types of families that can be distinguished regarding their family formation: (1) same-sex couples with children from a previous (heterosexual) relationship (such as a marriage), and (2) couples who make the transition to parenthood within the context of a homosexual relationship.

This distinction is also visible among the respondents of the most extensive German study to this date on same-sex couples raising children (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 86). In the past, homosexual women and men who became parents often decided to marry and have children within a heterosexual union, because they did not see any other way of being a parent; others even gave up on the idea until they were convinced at a later time in their life courses that homosexuals could in fact become parents (Patterson and Chan, 1997: 246; Berkowitz and Marsiglio, 2007; Eggen, 2009: 18; Patterson and Tornello, 2011; Stacey, 2006: 32; Mallon, 2004: 24f, 29ff). There seems to be evidence, however, that couple and parenthood biographies become more linear (Sbordone, 1993: 1; Eggen, 2009: 18; Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 86; Regnerus, 2012: 756), meaning that there will be fewer heterosexual episodes in the life courses of homosexual individuals today, replaced by parenthood biographies that occur within the context of homosexual relationships.

Thus the investigation of same-sex families not only sheds light on the practices of a subgroup of society, and particularly a subpopula-

tion of sexual minorities, but also allows investigating changes in their practice over time.

4. Same-sex couples face severe challenges on the way towards parenthood. The pathways they choose could also be an alternative for other individuals in the pursuit of parenthood.

The planning of parenthood is particularly interesting in the case of homosexual women and men, because they have both limited and manifold opportunities for achieving parenthood. Due to the fact that they have to find bypasses to the traditional biological way of achieving parenthood, they can choose from a wide range of options a heterosexual couple usually would not consider. Thus their intentions but also the actual pathways into parenthood are all the more interesting, particularly as third party individuals are involved in the realisation of a homosexual couple's intention of having a child. The pathways chosen by homosexual couples could potentially be utilised by other individuals as well, e.g. heterosexual couples dealing with sub- or infertility, or single individuals who wish to have children. Thus the investigation of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men can be seen as an entry point into a shared space of options independent of sexual orientation.

5. The pathways chosen by same-sex couples to achieve parenthood affect the way families are formed. Those choices further affect family patterns on a micro-level as well as the concept of the family on a macro-level.

In contrast to a first generation of homosexual parents, who had children from a heterosexual union or marriage before their coming-out, there are now an increasing number of same-sex couples who become parents in the context of their homosexual partnership (e.g. Rupp, 2009; Eggen, 2009: 18; Stacey, 2006: 32; Mallon, 2004: 2). This hints upon an important shift in the self-concept of homosexuals today, but also concerning societal acceptance of 'lifestyles,' life choices, and families that deviate from the ideal of the heteronormative male-breadwinner nuclear family. With increasing prevalence

and visibility of families that diverge from the heteronormative concept of a dyadic parental couple with biologically related children, the concept of the 'family' itself is challenged by actual practice of a societal subgroup. This has influences on a greater level concerning what is defined and understood as a family, but also in terms of interactions among the actors within a family and between family members and other parties in the social environment such as the state.

6. Having two parents of the same sex might also have an impact on the children raised in such families.

Many scientific publications were concerned with the outcome of children growing up with same-sex parents (e.g. Brewaeys et al., 1997; Golombok et al., 1997; Gartrell et al., 2006; Rupp, 2009; Crouch et al., 2014; Baiocco et al., 2015). So far there is no profound research that withstands scientific scrutiny concerning its methods that has found evidence that children raised by same-sex couples would suffer in their development in the comparison to children in similar circumstances but raised by different-sex couples⁴.

7. There are similarities between couples in fertility treatment and same-sex couples who plan to become parents.

Some of the pathways and methods used or deliberated by same-sex couples are from the catalogue of assisted reproductive techniques and are thus similar or identical to those used by heterosexual couples suffering from sub- or infertility. Gamete donation (i.e. sperm and egg donation), medical assistance in fertility clinics, and surrogacy can be available to heterosexual and homosexual couples – depending on the legislation of the given state where the practice is to be carried out⁵.

⁴ Regarding the study design, results, and conclusions of the critical work of Regnerus (2012), Perrin et al. (2013) is a strongly recommended reading.

⁵ Some methods might be prohibited by national laws. This is the case, for instance, for surrogacy and egg donation in Germany. There could also be restrictions in the access of services. For example, the German Medical Association advises in its directive on medical-

Assisted reproductive techniques allow sub- or infertile couples to achieve their goal of parenthood. Depending on the reasons for the sub- or infertility, solutions can include the involvement of other individuals in the artificial procreation process. That way the child has at least one biological parent that will not be involved in the child's upbringing, and the couple raising the child might not have any genetic link to 'their' child at all.

Given that same-sex couples can officially make use of assisted reproductive techniques like gamete donation or surrogacy⁶, they are a clientele just like any other couple requesting such services. There may be differences, however, regarding access and funding, even though the procedure itself is practically the same. Other than heterosexual couples, however, same-sex couples cannot simply conceal the fact that a third party was involved in the conception and birth of the child. Research can compare practice of hetero- and homosexual couples to investigate motifs, experience with the processes and effects on family life. Common issues are social parenthood and the handling of custody or contact between child and the adults involved in the procreation process. Questions concerning the child's right to be informed about its origin, the legal recognition of only two parental figures and thus a potential disregard of genetic links by authorities etc. apply to homosexuals and their children, too.

Lately research has started to investigate not only the actual familial situation of same-sex couple families, but took a step back in the family timeline to take a look at parenting intentions of homosexual women and men⁷. This research can be seen as support for the notion that, be-

ly assisted reproduction, that single women and lesbian couples should not be treated with reproductive techniques (German Medical Association, 2009: A1400).

⁶ Cross border reproductive services, often termed 'reproductive tourism', could be a solution even if certain options are not accessible at the residence of a given couple. By travelling abroad, legal restrictions can be bypassed. A couple could decide to commission a surrogate mother in India, for example. They would still need to have the child acknowledged as their own in their home country, but that is a legal matter besides the fact that they would have a child.

⁷ For a basic overview cf. the meta analysis of Kleinert et al. (2012a).

sides the body of research on homosexual parenting, the question needs to be explored whether parenthood is even a desired event in the lives of homosexual women and men today, how it is (planned to be) achieved, and what the consequences are.

1.2 General research questions

This dissertation aims to provide information on the parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, and the family patterns which underlie those intentions. It is driven by the following research questions:

1. How can parenting intentions of homosexual women and men be delineated?

A fundamental aim of this thesis is the extensive description of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men.

2. Which factors influence the homosexual individual's intention to parent?

The answer to the question "Do you wish to have children" may be influenced by a variety of variables. This thesis is devoted to finding influences on the individual's intention to parent and aims to investigate potential influences driven by a theoretical approach.

3. Which are the intended pathways of homosexual women and men for the transition to parenthood, and what are the implications?

Exactly how do homosexual women and men plan to achieve parenthood? What are the implications of the intended pathways concerning the structure of the family and the normative concept of 'the family'?

This thesis is devoted to describing and explaining parenting intentions of homosexual women and men in a structured, theory grounded approach. Placing the intention as the focus, this thesis will provide information that precedes the first step in the decision-making model for parenthood among lesbian (and similarly gay male) individuals as sug-

gested by Chabot and Ames (2004). Their model, however, should only be seen as one example for making the complex decision-making process that precedes parenthood, particularly for homosexual women and men, more accessible. Given the research questions, this thesis is directed towards a micro-perspective in its design.

The structure of this thesis is composed as follows: First the framework conditions will be discussed (chapter 2) followed by a description of data and methods used for the analyses (chapter 3). A descriptive analysis of parenting intentions is presented in chapter 4. Chapter 5 is devoted to determinants of parenting intentions and includes the state of research, theoretical framework and results from the original analyses, while chapter 6 presents intended pathways into parenthood. A summary of the main findings (chapter 7) and a concluding discussion (chapter 8) are presented subsequently.

1.3 An introduction into conscious phrasing

Throughout this thesis I will be referring to familial ‘constellations’. The word constellation is used meaning to describe a certain arrangement of individuals as a group. Particularly the reference to ‘the family’ means that these groups are perceived within the framework of a given societal understanding in reference to normative images of ‘the family’. It is not possible within the scope of this argumentation to lead a debate about the ideal family, however it should be noted, and aspects in following sections will add to this, that the core ideal of a family in Germany is that of a heterosexual married couple, even though same-sex couples with children, patchwork families and single parents are also considered to be families (Henry-Huthmacher, 2014: 6). Nonetheless it seems that ‘traditional’ relationships are desired and achieved by a majority of Germans. A major prerequisite for starting a family seems to be a stable long-term relationship, with parenthood based on principles of responsibility, a stable life plan and commitment and responsibility of the prospective parents (ibid.: 7).

Same-sex couples, however, diverge from the heteronormative ideal of the nuclear family to greater or lesser degree, particularly when various possibilities of achieving parenthood and involvement of various relevant individuals in the upbringing of the child are considered. Therefore, in light of many potential possibilities in starting and ‘doing’ a family, regardless of sexual orientation, I am inclined to speak of ‘familial constellations’ in order to prevent a direct association with the heteronormative family ideal. This pays tribute to the fact that the idea and the concept of ‘the family’ is a social construct and thus variable over time and in accordance to the societal framework of attitudes, politics, customs and laws (cf. Lück and Diabaté, 2015).

The same basic idea is to be employed for all kinds of parenting constellations, may they be joined with attributes like queer, collaborative, traditional, or other. The specific meaning will be discussed in the corresponding sections. Before getting started, however, I feel the need to note that possibilities to achieve parenthood and to enact ‘family’ are to be considered in a most unrestricted fashion, not least because this thesis is concerned with ideals and desires of parenthood. Thus I feel that all options that are theoretically possible should be considered in their own right, regardless of social and legal framework conditions and actual realisation. By using the term ‘parenting intentions’ I mean to subsume all references to possibilities, options, ideals and desires of an individual related to having and caring for children.

Furthermore I wish to employ the terminology of Johnson and O’Connor (2002: 59), who refer to “primary lesbian families” as “families that were begun within the context of a lesbian relationship”. For sake of simplicity and clarity, this term shall be adopted for this thesis, therefore primary same-sex families refer to same-sex couples who plan and achieve their transition to parenthood together within their same-sex couple relationship, as opposed to ‘secondary’ same-sex families, whose children derive from a previous heterosexual relationship. Secondary same-sex families are by this definition stepfamilies with the experience of relationship dissolution and the starting of a new same-sex relationship of the parent-couple.

2 Framework descriptions

Western societies have become more liberal and welcoming for homosexual women and men as compared to the end of the 20th century. The de-criminalisation and de-medicalisation of homosexuality in many of these societies⁸ have contributed to the current situation. The fact that civil unions or even marriage of two partners of the same sex are now legal in several states can be interpreted as a signal of a broader societal acceptance of homosexuality, in addition to attitudinal data from surveys claiming growing acceptance of sexual minorities (TNS Opinion & Social and Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers - DG JUST, 2015: 49).

This section will provide the relevant information concerning parenting intentions in general and in terms of the framework conditions regarding homosexuality in Germany. The state of research concerned with parenting intentions of homosexual women and men and specific pathways into parenthood will be reported in the corresponding other sections of this thesis (chapter 4.1 and chapter 6.1).

2.1 Parenting intention – a conceptualisation

The modern idea or the concept of a ‘parenting intention’ (German: *Kinderwunsch*) should be considered as a rather recent social construct. It has only been possible with the advancement in medicine that allowed individuals to control their fertility, i.e. contraceptives and in particular the contraceptive pill, that was introduced in Britain and the United States of America in 1957 (Marks, 2010: 5) and in Germany in 1961 (Silies, 2007: 189). The detachment of sexuality from conception enables parenthood to be planned more precisely, but it seems that parenthood also needs to be planned in many cases. Furthermore the concept raises questions concerning the motivation to parent, the timing for

⁸ For more detailed information cf. International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) (<http://ilga.org/>) and ILGA Europe (<http://www.ilga-europe.org/>).

parenthood and the size of families, both on an individual and on a scientific level. Today individuals first usually try to avoid pregnancy until they find the right circumstances in which they then change strategies in order to achieve pregnancy. This is the frame to keep in mind when speaking of a parenting intention.

Along with the increasing popularity and use of contraceptives in the second half of the 20th century, there has been an increasing trend of childless married couples and fewer births (Lesthaeghe, 2014: 2; Peuckert, 2012: 251f). Being childless, however, cannot simply be equated with a lack of intention to have children or even a motivation against them. It is more likely that other factors, as referred to above, led to the resulting decrease in actual births. Childlessness stands in correlation, for instance, with educational attainment, homogamy within couple relationships, labour market engagement, allocation of household labour, etc. (Peuckert, 2012: 256ff). Childlessness can be a desired and chosen pattern (ibid.: 264ff), it can be due to sub- or infertility of one or both of the partners, or an unintentional result of a continuous postponement of the transition into parenthood (ibid.: 266f). The latter is of particular importance, because it shows that childlessness or the decision if and/or when to have children can be influenced by decisions in other domains of an individual's life (cf. ibid.: 261).

Individuals may have the more or less abstract wish to become a parent at some point in their life course, but the actual realisation is then again a completely different matter⁹. Because now that sexuality and procreation can be separated for heterosexuals, heterosexual individuals need to desire and intend to become parents and turn those intentions into action (cf. Rost, 2007: 78). Therefore the concept of parenting intentions itself allows studying incentives, ideas, aspirations, and current perceptions of parenthood. This is particularly interesting in the case of homosexual women and men because they have only recently started to pursue parenthood in the open.

⁹ This is particularly the case for same-sex couples (Bergold et al., 2015; cf. Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 87; Chabot and Ames, 2004; Touroni and Coyle, 2002).

It has been suggested that fertility intentions must be considered as a dependent rather than an explanatory variable (Birg et al., 1991: 358). Parenthood and the desire to have children have also been regarded as a common shared value (Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010: 20). The focus of having children is no longer under the major influence of socio-economic factors (Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004: 53). Postmodern parenthood is not motivated by material rewards as it had been prior to the modern welfare state (Stacey, 2006: 29); there has been a shift to more immaterial motives (Peuckert, 2012: 237f; Onnen-Isemann, 2008: 121). Children now serve as psychological and emotional goods for their parents, they are an exchange of warmth and affection and seen as a source of joy, spontaneity, creativity and new experiences besides giving meaning to the parents' lives (Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004: 53; Stacey, 2006: 29; Eckhard and Klein, 2007: 280). In addition to this change in functions and motivations, parenthood is a long-term irreversible biographic fact with far-reaching consequences and opportunity costs (Peuckert, 2012: 224). Fertility behaviour has substantial consequences on an individual's life course, requires individual decision-making and is a personal commitment for a longer timeframe (Lüscher, 1990: 31).

The idea of family and children is important to the German population nonetheless (Henry-Huthmacher, 2014: 6; Peuckert, 2012: 213f), even though it seems that children become somewhat more optional, because a decreasing number of people believes them to be necessary in order to be happy (Peuckert, 2012: 213f). Childlessness can be seen as the result of a series of biographical decisions, which are themselves influenced by the external framework conditions, individual resources, and subjective aims in an individual's life (Kreyenfeld and Konietzka, 2007: 15). Existential decisions that used to be motivated by tradition, conventions, and institutionalised life trajectories, like the decision to have or not to have children, nowadays demand individual decisions which usually take a longer period of time in the making (Lüscher, 1990: 31). This means that "[a] birth is not an event that simply occurs at a moment in time and is explained by circumstances before and about that point in time" (McDonald, 2000a: 431). The decision to have a child tends to be careful-

ly thought through and deliberated, especially by young people today, who have to deal with many insecurities in their lives, particularly regarding their professional careers (Blossfeld, 2009; Peuckert, 2012: 26ff; Rost, 2007: 78; Brose, 2008). Thus life course events become determinants in the deliberation of parenthood (Peuckert, 2008: 122).

Even though there is a trend of decreasing fertility in many western nations, the family is still relevant. Eighty-five percent of respondents from a representative German sample state that it is important or very important to them personally to have children (Dorbritz and Ruckdeschel, 2015: 141). Sixty-three percent of youths aged 12-25 from the most recent Shell Youth study are of the opinion that one needs a family to be happy (Leven et al., 2015: 56). These figures are proof of the importance of family and parenthood for the lives of individuals today. However, the circumstances have changed considerably in their influence.

“The more traditional social norms lose in importance and parenthood becomes an individual and dyadic decision, the stronger is the influence of biographic experiences, situational characteristics of the life situation and the societal framework on the decision-making process in a way that the idea of a rational timing of parenthood is only applicable in a strongly restricted understanding” (Peuckert, 2008: 121f; translated by the author)¹⁰.

From a life course perspective, there has been a fundamental reorganisation in terms of family and fertility. Particularly in Germany, there are long episodes of education and training leading into late transitions into employment. Thus the individual experiences a compression of various

¹⁰ Original quote: „Je stärker die traditionellen sozialen Normen an Bedeutung einbüßen und Elternschaft zur individuellen und partnerschaftlichen Entscheidung wird, desto stärker wirken biografische Erfahrungen, situative Merkmale der Lebenssituation und gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen auf den Entscheidungsprozess in einer Art und Weise ein, dass häufig nur sehr eingeschränkt von einem rationalen Timing der Elternschaft gesprochen werden kann“.

aspects and transitions, including the establishment of a professional career and the development of plans for relationship and family (Peuckert, 2012: 231ff). Other influences on fertility and, in consideration of the framework described above, also on parenting intentions seem to be found in discrepancies between individual preferences and aspirations, institutional development (Aassve et al., 2013), and potentially in family related guiding images (cf. Schneider et al., 2015).

Since the decision to have a child seems to be the result of a longer process of deliberation, perceived costs and benefits would be expected to have some importance in trying to understand an individuals' motivation towards parenthood. Even without concrete plans for parenthood, individuals may have certain attitudes towards children which have to be reconciled with the personal environment and potentially the intentions of the partner in an attempt of realisation. Those attitudes can influence the choice itself, the timing, and methods used to achieve parenthood (cf. Nauck, 2006). Furthermore, generative decision-making usually occurs within a couple relationship, thus it could be argued that parenting intentions and specifically the transition to parenthood are dyadic phenomena (Bauer and Jacob, 2010: 32f; cf. Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004: 44).

Research on parenting intentions of heterosexual individuals is rather plentiful, even though the focus lies mostly on women, and information on the male perspective is not as common (cf. Diefenbach, 2005: 117ff; Eckhard and Klein, 2007: 275; Helfferich and Fichtner, 2001: 7f; Rost, 2007: 78; Marbach and Tölke, 2014: 282). The parenting intentions of homosexual women and men have only recently come into the focus of research, however. The concept of parenting intentions can be utilised in scientific research to investigate the desires of individuals and their connection to actual fertility behaviour, particularly under restrictive environments. Questions as to when, how, and why individuals intend to become parents, the factors influencing the decision to have a child, or the translation of intention into actual behaviour are particularly relevant in the context of modern life courses and decreasing fertility.

2.2 The German framework concerning homosexuality

Homosexuality, or at least homosexual behaviour, seems to have been a phenomenon in many, if not all, cultures and throughout history around the globe (cf. Aldrich, 2006; Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 20). Homosexuality, however, seems to have been a predominantly male phenomenon, particularly regarding the historical sources (Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 20). The following sub-section will provide a brief overview of the legal development and current legal situation concerning homosexuality and same-sex partnerships in Germany. Since this dissertation uses data collected in Germany and thus presents a German view regarding parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, a short outline of the German framework seems necessary.

2.2.1 Criminal law and the punishability of homosexuality

The criminal law of the German Reich from 1871 penalised homosexual acts among male adults under § 175, also known as section 175. Despite scientific efforts against discrimination of homosexuals by the scientific humanitarian committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee WhK*) which was founded by sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld in 1897, attempts of a decriminalisation of homosexual acts were unsuccessful (Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 25). Under the Nazi regime, homosexuals were branded as state enemies (ibid.: 27) and persecuted (ibid.: 28) based on an extension of § 175.

In 1949 the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany adopted § 175 without any changes into the new German criminal code (ibid.: 80), a decision that was supported by the higher regional courts because they did not find the paragraph to contain any Nazi specific provisions (ibid.: 80f). Even the Federal Constitutional Court confirmed § 175 in a ruling in 1957 (ibid.: 81). In 1969, under the first reform of the German criminal law, homosexual acts among consenting adults were decriminalised. With a new focus on the protection of youths and adolescents from homosexual acts, § 175 remained on the books. In 1973 homosexual prosti-

tution was decriminalised and the age of consent was lowered from 21 to 18 to protect male adolescents from potentially traumatising disconcertion or even seduction to homosexuality (ibid.: 85). With the abolition of § 175 in 1994, all references to homosexuality have been eliminated from German criminal law, which means the complete decriminalisation of homosexuality in the law (ibid.: 86). The rulings based on § 175, however, are still effective and there are ongoing efforts to have them revoked.

2.2.2 Public and private law

In 2001 a civil union concept was created specifically (and only) for two individuals of the same sex; legal foundation is the LPartG¹¹. Due to conservative political disapproval, the civil union was not equipped with the same rights as marriage (Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 114). Several court decisions, however, triggered changes in the law¹² so that women and men in registered same-sex partnerships would have most of the rights and advantages that heterosexual married couples have. In 2005 the LPartG underwent a major reform resulting in a far-reaching harmonisation of the same-sex civil union with marriage (ibid.: 131). One of the new features was the possibility of second-parent adoption. In 2014 the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*)¹³ was implemented, granting successive adoption also to same-sex couples in civil union. This means that a non-biological child, previously adopted by one of the partners, can now also become a legal child to the other partner by way of second parent adoption. Yet there is no possibility for joint adoption.

¹¹ The civil union for two individuals of the same sex is called *Eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaft* (registered life partnership). LpartG = *Gesetz über die Eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaft* (Act on Registered Life Partnerships).

¹² Major changes towards equalisation were implemented with the *Gesetz zur Überarbeitung des Lebenspartnerschaftsrechts* [Registered Life Partnership Law (Revision) Act] in 2005, and the *Gesetz zur Umsetzung der Entscheidung des Bundesverfassungsgerichts zur Sukzessiv-adoption durch Lebenspartner* (Act for the implementation of the Decision of the Federal Constitutional Court concerning Successive Adoption by Partners in a Civil Union) in 2014.

¹³ BVerfG ruling: 1 BvR 3247/09.

In October 2015, a bill was passed in order to revise civil union law (German Bundestag, 2015a). With this revision partners in a civil union are now equal to married couples in the majority of laws and regulations; however, some legal discrimination for partners in civil union still remains compared to married couples. The most relevant aspect regarding discriminatory treatment of civil union partners compared to spouses is the (lack of) access to joint adoption.

The latest initiative concerning equal rights for same-sex couples is a draft bill from November 2015 aimed to extend the definition of marriage in § 1353 *BGB* (civil code of Germany) as a union between two people of different or same sex (German Bundestag, 2015b). The reasoning in the draft bill is parallel to the report prepared by Wapler (2015) and even refers to the decision of the German *Bundesrat*¹⁴ from 2013 to the implementation of marriage for same-sex couples, which fell victim to discontinuity due to the end of the legislative period (German Bundestag, 2015b: 6).

2.2.3 Other regulations and particularities of procedures¹⁵

The realisation of parenthood within a homosexual relationship in Germany has some boundaries. Focussing only on primary same-sex families where the children are born within the context of the existing same-sex relationship, there are three major pathways: (1) adoption, (2) foster care, and (3) having biologically related children.

Joint adoption for both partners in a civil union is not yet possible in Germany. Same-sex couples thus usually opt for international adoptions. This means, however, that only one of the partners can legally adopt the child. Adoption of a child within Germany is practically impossible be-

¹⁴ The Federal Council is a legislative body, representing the federal states at national level.

¹⁵ The information of this section is based on a guidebook issued by the Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany (LSVD), prepared by (Jansen et al., 2014), and the information and experience gained while working for the *ifb*-team who conducted the study on “The living conditions of children in same-sex civil partnerships” (Rupp, 2009; Rupp and Bergold, 2010).

cause the youth welfare offices that are in charge aim for a best fit of parents for the children they have to accommodate. Same-sex couples, however, cannot guarantee the same security married couples can, due to legal discrimination: unlike married couples, only one of the partners can adopt the child initially. Furthermore, the relevant actors in the agencies would need to be open about placing a child with a homosexual couple. In the end, adoption remains a lengthy and expensive way to have children and is often an option for homosexual men, who choose to adopt from overseas.

Foster care is similar to adoption in the way that the youth welfare offices allocate children to parents where they deem a best fit for the child. Unlike with the placement of adoptive children, however, there are several offices that place foster children in the care of same-sex couples or homosexual individuals. This option is a lot more popular among gay men than lesbian women, however.

For homosexual women, becoming parents by becoming pregnant and having their own biological children may be the easiest way. Even though the German Medical Association recommends that female homosexual couples should not be treated with assisted reproductive techniques (German Medical Association, 2009: 1400)¹⁶, most of the biological children in primary same-sex families seem to have been inseminated in Germany and not abroad (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 89). Insemination is not restricted to medically assisted procedures, however, meaning that home inseminations are another possibility for homosexual women to become pregnant. Such procedures are not influenced by the legal framework or ethical guidelines of specific professions (*Standesrecht*) per se and they could be an alternative if those guidelines prohibit treatment. However, other questions, for instance concerning the legal status of private sperm donors, remain unanswered (Steininger, 2013). For homosexual men, it is far more difficult to have biologically related children because egg donation, surrogacy and all such arrangements are

¹⁶ The same applies to (heterosexual) women who are not in a relationship.

illegal in Germany. However, there are other options which lead to biological children: queer constellations with male and female homosexual couples are one of them. These are arrangements between male and female homosexual individuals or couples who choose to have children together via (home) insemination.

2.2.4 Changes in the legal situation

Changes in the legal framework have roughly been described above. Because the data to be used for the analyses of this thesis has been collected in 2009/2010, it is necessary to point to the fact that some significant changes in the law have occurred since¹⁷. It is important to note that, while step-child adoption and successive adoption have been made available for partners in a civil union, the exclusion from joint adoption remains. The enabling of successive adoption by partners in a civil union is probably the most important change in the German legal landscape concerning same-sex unions. No other major legal changes have occurred. The latest legal changes due to the bill from October 2015 are only concerned with minor regulations and are of no major influence in terms of pursuing parenthood. The debate and major political trends have been outlined. Thus the frame should be clear. If changes in the legal situation are relevant in the course of data analysis, this will be specifically noted in the corresponding sections.

2.2.5 Valuation of the German approach

The German way of dealing with the institutionalisation of same-sex unions and legal discrimination of same-sex couples is a mix of competing ideologies. When the civil union law was adopted in 2001, a separate institution was created only (!) for same-sex couples due to political opposition from side of the conservative parties (CDU/CSU). By creating a new institution granting legal status to couples, this meant that other

¹⁷ Manuscript completed December 2015 and edited in August 2016.

documents and laws had to be updated where couple relationships are concerned. This is exactly what happened in response to several court rulings which found that same-sex civil unions were unlawfully discriminated against. The measure to remedy discrimination was basically to add the word “*Lebenspartner*” (which refers specifically to the partners in a civil union) after the word “spouse” in those laws that were concerned, in those cases where court rulings have been issued. The political approach by the government is one of waiting for judicial decisions to make the mandatory changes required by the ruling. This unaccommodating approach regarding same-sex unions is characteristic for Germany, even though opposition parties, particularly “*Bündnis90/Die Grünen*” and “*Die Linke*”, have continually tried to dismantle discrimination and to create equality. The German Federal Council decided on 22 March 2013 on a draft bill for marriage equality, which was referred to the government (German Bundestag, 2015b: 6). On 19 December 2013 German parliament dealt with a legislative draft in a first reading with the question whether or not homosexual women and men should have the right to marry. The draft submitted by “*Die Linke*” was remitted to the corresponding expert committees for further consultation (German Bundestag, 2013; Golze et al., 2013).

Even though opposition parties have officially inquired to the government about discrimination of same-sex civil unions and the topic of marriage equality, the societal discourse gained speed only when the Irish referendum on 22 May 2015 came out in favour of marriage equality. In intensive media coverage, individual politicians from several parties as well as the Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany provided controversial comments, while an open letter signed by German celebrities addressed to Chancellor Angela Merkel personally requested her to enable marriage equality. Even the German *Bundesrat*, demanded the government to enable marriage equality. Further fuel for the debate came with the decision of the US Supreme Court on 26 June 2015 in favour of marriage equality.

On Friday 10 July 2015 Chancellor Angela Merkel, as head of the government, was interviewed by the German YouTube personality Florian

Mundt, alias LeFloid¹⁸, who is extremely popular for providing his view on news and current (political) issues for an adolescent audience (LeFloid, 2015). One of his questions was concerning marriage equality and Merkel's answer is her most recent statement on the issue. This is also interesting because it is her party (CDU) in union with the conservative Bavarian party (CSU) that to this date opposes every effort towards marriage equality and dismantling discrimination. Merkel states that she feels very strongly for removing all kinds of discrimination. She sees an advancement regarding the fact that 25 years ago many individuals were afraid of disclosing their sexual identity and she perceives the same-sex civil union as a positive development. She continues to explain that in her opinion marriage means the cohabitation of a man and a woman. She is against discrimination in taxation, and she says that discrimination will be removed when it is discovered¹⁹. A brief discussion is concluded by Merkel, saying that she believes it is necessary to accept diverse opinions, hers being that marriage means the cohabitation of man and woman. She points out that differences in opinion need to be endured for a while²⁰.

This interview stands representative for the German approach towards equality and (anti-)discrimination of homosexual women and men as pursued by the government. Even though there is active support among opposition parties, the current government is characterised by the restrictive opinions of the conservative parties CDU and CSU. This is evident in the latest legal patching of the civil union as of October 2015.

¹⁸ <https://youtu.be/5OemiOryt3c>; URL last validated 2016-08-22.

¹⁹ This is a striking choice of wording, because the government really does only remedy discrimination of same-sex unions when it is inevitably 'discovered' with the help of a federal court ruling.

²⁰ Merkel: "Ich möchte keine Diskriminierung und eine mögliche Gleichstellung, aber mache dann eben an einer Stelle einen Unterschied [...] Darüber gibt es halt in der Gesellschaft unterschiedliche Meinungen. Selbst bei mir in der Partei, in der CDU, gibt es unterschiedliche Meinungen. In der Regierung gibt es dazu unterschiedliche Meinungen. Das muss man eine Weile dann einfach auch aushalten" (LeFloid, 2015: 5:53-6:13).

2.2.6 Public opinion

It is difficult to find reliable representative data on the support of same-sex unions and marriage equality from the German population. The two polls that were cited in the discussion of the Irish referendum and providing information of a population in favour of marriage equality²¹ were in fact far from representative and one of them was actually two years old. Data from the European Values Study²² show that the tolerance of homosexuality in Germany in 2008 was more or less in the middle between the opinions that homosexuality is never vs. always justified (Slenders et al., 2014: 360). More recent information is provided by the survey on family-related guiding images (*Leitbilder*) (Lück, 2014: 453; Schneider et al., 2015) from 2012, based on a representative sample of 5,000: 88 % of the respondents are of the opinion that a homosexual couple with their own children is a family (Gründler and Schiefer, 2013: 20). This evidence can be interpreted in the way that by defining a homosexual couple with children as a family, particularly under the German fixation with the family being protected under the constitution, also speaks for tolerance if not acceptance of homosexuality. Adding to this, the Special Eurobarometer 437 reports that 70 % of the Germans are of the opinion that “Gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people”, and 66 % think that “Same sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe” (TNS Opinion & Social and Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers - DG JUST, 2015: 50).

These findings give reason to believe that there is a consensus among the German population regarding tolerance of homosexuality and same-sex relationships, support for marriage equality, and acceptance of same-sex families.

²¹ Poll results at:

<https://yougov.de/news/2015/05/29/mehrheit-der-deutschen-fur-ehe-fur-alle/>

<http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/stern-umfrage-deutsche-sagen-ja-zur-homo-ehe-1976664.html>

URLs last validated 2016-08-22.

²² European Values Study (EVS): <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>

3 Data and methods

3.1 Data

In order to find answers to the general research questions posed in chapter 1.2, appropriate data is needed. The data used for the analyses of this dissertation is an original dataset of the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (*ifb*)²³ and results from the project “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany²⁴.” This project was the second of two major research projects dedicated to homosexuality and the family which were recently conducted at the *ifb*.

3.1.1 Project history

The first project was conducted from 2006 to 2009, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Justice, and concerned with “The living conditions of children in same-sex civil partnerships” (cf. Rupp, 2009; Rupp and Bergold, 2010). While accessing the target group (cf. Dürnberger et al., 2009: 37ff), there was an overwhelming response from homosexual women and men throughout Germany who were eager to participate in the study. The target group, however, had been restricted due to methodological reasons to homosexual individuals cohabiting with a partner and a child. Therefore many individuals who did not meet these criteria were thus screened out and could not participate in the project. Besides the general willingness to be part of a study on the living conditions of homosexuals on the side of the individuals who were contacted, there was a general interest among the team members in researching additional aspects concerning homosexuality and the family that were not included in the first project. It was decided to start a new project concerned with “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany” to exploit the

²³ Staatsinstitut für Familienforschung an der Universität Bamberg: www.ifb.bayern.de

²⁴ Publications are available from the team members Pia Bergold, Andrea Buschner (née Dürnberger), Christian Haag, and Marina Rupp.

available contacts of those individuals who had already agreed to being interviewed. More than 3,000 homosexual women and men had given their consent to be interviewed but did not match the criteria of living together with a partner (some had none) or a child (some were childless, some were single-parents, others had children who were living elsewhere, mostly with the other parent) to be part of the first study.

The second study, "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," was planned to be conducted via CATI-interviews (only the existing phone contacts) and via online questionnaire with a parallel structure to invite a greater number of respondents for participation. The goal of the parallel design was to be able to easily merge the data into one dataset. Despite several attempts, it was not possible to secure any funding to pay for a service provider to conduct the interviews. After much deliberation it was decided to solve the problem through teaching assignments. In the winter term of 2009/2010 three practice seminars were offered, one at the University of Bamberg (by Andrea Buschner) and two at the University of Aachen (coordinated by Heather Hofmeister, Carmen Lubberich, and Celina Proch). During the course of these specifically designed seminars, students were first trained as interviewers before they interviewed respondents from the pool of residual phone numbers. The students were provided access to a version of the online questionnaire with wording to be read directly to the respondents/interviewees and either selected the answer options chosen by the respondents or typed the answer of open ended questions. This means the students were completing the online questionnaire with the respondents on the phone. Only the phrasing of the questions and the answer options was changed, so that, when reading them aloud, the respondents would be addressed properly. At the end of the CATI version of the questionnaire the students had a unique additional page on which they provided notes about respondent behaviour and interruptions or other incidents during the interview. This setup provided a maximum of information in order to evaluate the quality of the interview data. Out of the original pool of 3,107 phone numbers (Dürnberger et al., 2009: 44) 418 interviews could be completed.

Respondents for the online questionnaire were recruited via the existing (and updated) mailing lists and list of disseminators from the first project,²⁵ with the support of an online community website for gay men,²⁶ and with support of the Lesbian and Gay Association in Germany (LSVD), all promoting the study. At the end of the questionnaire and if rejected due to methodological reasons, respondents were asked to pass knowledge of the survey to friends and acquaintances. In the end 1,279 respondents completed the online questionnaire. Thus the final dataset holds the information of 1,697 respondents (56 % male, 44 % female) who participated in the study between October 2009 and March 2010.

The topics covered by the survey are devoted to several aspects of experiences made by homosexuals in their everyday life and in the context of the family. The questionnaire began with a set of questions used to assess relevant information for filtering and displaying appropriate phrasing and options in questions and answer categories. This was necessary because some variables would contain the answers of respondents who are single and ones who are in a relationship, or who have or do not have children, for instance. The wording of the questions was applied by the online survey system²⁷ according to the filter variables.

In the screening section basic information was gathered on relationship and parenthood (e.g. respondent is in a relationship, sex of the partner, shared accommodation, number of children, biological/social parenthood, birth year and place of residence of the children). Furthermore sex and sexual orientation of the respondents were recorded.

Screening was applied for respondents with living arrangements identical to the sample of the earlier *ifb* study (cf. Rupp, 2009) (i.e. respondents who share accommodation with a partner and at least one child), but also for respondents who were not homosexual or, if bisexual, were in a

²⁵ This list included special interest groups, clubs, and societies with homosexual target groups.

²⁶ www.planetromeo.com ran an advertisement banner on the website to promote the survey.

²⁷ Questback (formerly Globalpark) Enterprise Feedback Suite (EFS).

heterosexual relationship or who were engaged predominately with partners of the opposite sex at the time of the data assessment.

The first thematic section of the questionnaire is concerned with information on children of the respondents and the couple relationship of those who have a partner. This includes information on current and past relationships, marital status, and reasons concerning joint or separate accommodation. Furthermore custody and alimony arrangements, contact to the children and involvement in the upbringing of the child were captured in a multi-focus structure: information was captured for underage children living with the respondent or with somebody else, and participation of the partner was captured for children living in the same household.

The second section is devoted to parenting intentions and is thus the main source of information for this thesis. In the third section the focus lay on the allocation of household chores²⁸. The following sections were devoted to sexual identity, disclosure, Coming-Out, and discrimination (of the respondent and children younger than 28). A socio-demographic section concluded the questionnaire.

3.1.2 Regarding representativeness

Every study with a homosexual target group has the problem that it is not possible to make any judgement concerning the representativeness of the data. This is due to the fact that access to the target group is challenging. It is difficult to access samples based on criteria that have been and are still basis for discrimination (Umberson et al., 2015: cf. 100). Volunteer samples and self-identification as homosexual have been used for most nonprobability studies, with the effect that “individuals who are open about their sexual orientation” and who are often “socioeconomically privileged” are more likely to be represented in those samples (ibid.: 99). Using probability data to gain information on homosexual

²⁸ The data of this section contributed to the dissertation of Andrea Buschner (2014).

individuals or same-sex relationships has the disadvantage that they “were not originally designed to identify people in same-sex relationships and do not directly ask about the sexual orientation or sex of partners” which often makes it necessary to find solutions to identify the target group in the data (ibid.).

Since the exact number of homosexual individuals or same-sex couples cannot be accessed, there is no way of comparing the sample to the basic population of homosexuals. It would be possible to acquire the number of individuals registered in civil unions via registry data (Dürnberger et al., 2009: 38ff), but this would still be a time consuming and costly approach and would leave homosexual individuals who are not registered or who don't have a partner out of focus.

German census data is no reliable source either, because the question concerning respondent sexual orientation is optional, and same-sex unions, if not disclosed by the respondents, are only estimated based on the living arrangements of the respondents. This means that households with at least two non-related cohabiting individuals of the same sex, aged 16 or older without other spouses or partners of the opposite sex living in the same household are considered as residence of a same-sex couple. According to this estimation there might have been as many as 185,000 same-sex couples in Germany in 2011 (Federal Statistical Office, 2012: 985). Furthermore, it is to be noted that the microcensus, which is often used for analyses, is only a 1% representative sample of the German population and weights are used in the statistical analyses. For the year 2011 the conservative microcensus estimates result in about 67,000 same-sex unions in Germany. However, the total number of same-sex partners, who live together without children, that are present in the data without weights, is only 498 (Rupp and Haag, 2016: 329). Thus it is not possible to actually refer to the concept of representativeness in a realistic manner when it comes to homosexuality in Germany.

It has been noted that convenience samples have major issues regarding representativeness. For the US it has been reported “that the young-adult children of parents who have had same-sex relationships (in the NFSS) look less like the children of today's stereotypic gay and lesbian

couples – white, upper-middle class, well-educated, employed, and prosperous – than many studies have tacitly or explicitly portrayed” (Regnerus, 2012: 757)²⁹. It would certainly be necessary to include other respondents than the white middle-class who is relatively visible, meaning engaged in the public sphere and therefore more likely to be responsive to studies (cf. *ibid.*). The approach by Regnerus to select the target population can be viewed critically, however (cf. Perrin et al., 2013).

Ideally representative or at least random samples should be used. However, the access is very difficult, both practically and ethically. If a person chooses not to disclose his or her sexual orientation in a representative study, the data will be incorrect and it would possibly not even be noticed. If this should happen systematically, maybe due to the fact that it is a governmental study, like a census, or among groups of people with a particular educational degree, or social or ethnic background, it makes matters only more complex. Even if registry data of civil unions were used to access respondents, this attempt would fail to reach all same-sex couples who are not registered, which again could have systematic reasons. And, of course, single individuals would also be left out of the picture.

Consequently other kinds of sampling strategies are necessary to reach sexual minority respondents, and it seems that particularly in the case of sexual minority groups the willingness of the respondents to be identified and to cooperate remains a vital factor in achieving samples that include the variety of characteristics among the target group. Nonetheless, and with these restrictions and challenges in mind, many studies, even though not conform to the methodological ideals, will provide additional information that can be used as a fragment of a bigger picture and can thus extend existing knowledge.

The original *ifb* data that is to be used for the analyses of this thesis is a unique cross-sectional dataset, and even considering the challenges

²⁹ Data from the New Family Structure Study, Population Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

described above, it is valuable. It is one of the most extensive German surveys to date dealing with homosexual women and men and several aspects of their lives. A non-random volunteer and convenience sample, also based on snowballing, was used for recruitment. The starting point was registry data of individuals who had entered a civil union but did not meet the criteria for participation in the study on the living situation of children (cf. Bergold and Rupp, 2011; Rupp, 2009). Thus it can be said that a full-survey of registered same-sex couples is the foundation of this data. Based on this foundation, the final number of cases was achieved through snowballing and advertising the survey through appropriate channels. Even though it is not possible to contrast the results with a representative comparison group of homosexuals, the large dataset provides heterogeneity within this selective sample. It is a unique source to obtain information on homosexual women and men based on a large number of cases, which should make the statements more resilient than results from smaller studies, and furthermore it provides information in an area that is still lacking systematic research. Therefore the data allow unique analyses, even though caution needs to be taken when interpreting the results and transferring them to other populations or homosexuals in general. Nonetheless the results will provide information in an under-researched area and can also be a good starting point for future systematic research.

“Indeed, it is important to triangulate a range of qualitative and quantitative research designs and sources of data in efforts to identify consistent patterns in same-sex relationships across studies and to draw on innovative strategies that add to our knowledge of same-sex relationships” (Umberson et al., 2015: 99).

In the future, particularly probability-based research should strive for a non-discriminatory option to access sexual minorities in order to be able to provide better information regarding representativeness of samples. And furthermore, systematically structured, resilient large scale samples of sexual minority individuals, or at the least appropriate participation of such individuals in longitudinal surveys, should be aimed for.

3.1.3 Description of the dataset

A description of this unique German data provides an overview of selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the complete dataset. Differences between men and women will be reported when significant in order to contribute towards a better understanding of characteristics of homosexual women and men.

The complete dataset holds the information of 1,697 respondents. Among them are 932 men (54.9 %) and 765 women (45.1 %). Regarding sexual orientation, most of the respondents self-identified as homosexual ($n = 1,574$; i.e. 92.8 %) and only a minority in the data identified as bisexual ($n = 123$; 7.2 %). Due to the screening process those who stated to be bisexual had a partner of the same sex at the time of the interview or were engaging predominantly in same-sex sexual behaviour at the time. The proportion of bisexuals is higher among females (12.0 %) than among males (3.3 %). The age of the respondents ranges from 15 to 81 with the median at 37 years. The median is higher for men (38) than for women (36). The responses concerning how long respondents engage in homosexuality range from between three months and 60 years (missing $n = 12$). The median reports that the coming out occurred within the last 14 years for half of the respondents.

The majority of respondents hold medium or high educational degrees. According to a three-categorical CASMIN-classification of education³⁰, 51.2 % have an academic degree (university or technical college diploma), 43.8 % have medium or high educational degrees with or without vocational training, and only 4.9 % of the respondents have a lower educational attainment.

This characteristic of highly educated respondents in the samples of studies on homosexual women and men has been reported by other scholars (Black et al., 2000; Bos et al., 2003; DeMino et al., 2007; Dürnberger et al., 2009; Rupp and Bergold, 2010; Herek et al., 2010: 182;

³⁰ Instrumentalisation based on Lechert et al. (2006).

Hertling, 2011: 182; Patterson and Tornello, 2011; Kleinert et al., 2012b: 312; Regnerus, 2012; Wall, 2013; Crouch et al., 2014; Fischer, 2016: 60). Considering the challenges of sampling sexual minorities and convenience samples in general (cf. chapter 3.1.2), it is all the more interesting to see that even analyses of US census data find that “[t]he gays and lesbians in the census sample appear to be highly educated” (Black et al., 2000: 150). The authors describe “that same-sex partners generally have achieved higher levels of education than other individuals” and that “[t]he GSS-NHLS data reveal a very similar patter” (ibid.)³¹. It has been assumed that “[t]he high educational levels of gays and lesbians in the census data may reflect poorly educated gays’ and lesbians’ relative unwillingness to indicate an unmarried partnership status on the census form” (ibid.: 151). However based on a series of hypotheses tested with the GSS-NHLS data the authors come to the conclusion “that the gay men in fact accumulate more education than other men”³² (ibid.). Thus higher levels of education might well be an aggregate characteristic of homosexual women and men. Nonetheless this should be investigated in more detail in specifically designed studies.

The majority of the respondents in the *ifb* data stated to be in employment (71.2 %), 18.1 % in education (including universities), 7.4 % retired (n = 117), 2.2 % unemployed (n = 34), 15 respondents stated to be homemakers, and two are on parental leave. Half of the respondents work up to 40 hours per week. This median is the same for women and men. The mean value is slightly higher for men (38.2 hours vs. 36.5, this difference, however, is statistically significant at p = 0.022). The median monthly household income of homosexual women and men without a partner lies in the range of 1,300 to 1,499 €.

Almost 20 % of the respondents live in their own house and 14.1 % in their own apartment. 5.0 % rent a house and 61.4 % rent an apartment. While half of the respondents live in communities with a population of

³¹ The US data used by the authors are the General Social Survey (GSS) and the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHLS).

³² Due to the small number of cases the authors could not test their hypotheses on women.

100,000 or more, many also live in smaller towns and cities. Ten percent live in a community with a population less than 5,000 and 11.4 % in a city with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. Eight percent live in a city with 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants and 11.3 % are part of a community with a population between 50,000 and 100,000.

Among the respondents there are 203 who are parents (12.0 %), together with a total of 359 children. About half of those parents are women ($n = 106$; 52.2 %). Of the 34 single parents in the data, 21 are women. The data show that if children live with a homosexual parent it's mostly a lesbian mother (31 children, vs. three children living with their gay father). Among respondents who stated to have children that live with the other biological parent, 20 were lesbian mothers and 41 were gay fathers.

Only a minority, 365 of the respondents, are single (21.5 %). The majority has a partner ($n = 1,332$) and most of the respondents in a relationship also share a household with that partner ($n = 1,012$; 76.0 %). Half of the respondents have been in the relationship with the current partner for at least eight years. The relationship duration ranges from new relationships that began within the year of the data collection up to 55 years. Only a fraction of the couples, 607 respondents (35.8 %), have registered a civil union. Within the majority of the couples, both partners are in employment (62.4 %; $n = 775$), in about a quarter of them only one partner is employed (25.1 %) and in 12.8 % of the couples both partners are not employed. In 90 cases a description on the couple level is not possible due to missing data. In couple households, the median income lies at 3,200 to 4,500 € for male and 2,600 to 3,200 € for female couples.

3.2 Considerations on case selection

For the purpose of studying parenting intentions it seems plausible to restrict the analyses to a sample of the data. In order to achieve a best fit of the respondents regarding the research questions, a selection of cases will be made for the further analyses. Thus the core analyses of this thesis will be based on subsamples of the *ifb* data. The selection is main-

ly driven based on practical considerations concerning the research questions to select cases regarding the age of the respondents and whether or not they are already parents.

In regard to the research questions, it has been decided to focus on idealistic parenting intentions. It follows that those respondents who already have children will be excluded, because they have active experience with parenting. It is likely that they will understand and interpret questions differently than others who have not had experience as a parent. Particularly questions regarding specific statements about children are expected to be affected in that regard. Furthermore, the cases of respondents who have children are rather selective and not too plentiful. Among them are single parents and parents whose children live someplace else, or of children who are already adults. Thus, in order to achieve a sample that has similar basic conditions, only childless women and men will be selected for the analyses and descriptions of this thesis.

Because parenting intentions are the core of the research questions, the aim is also to use only data of respondents who can (still) achieve parenthood. Therefore older as well as younger respondents should be excluded from the core analyses and descriptions. It is hypothesised that younger individuals are still more concerned with other domains of their lives and will have a less realistic idea about parenting, also considering that, particularly while going through the educational system, many changes occur that usually have greater influences, for instance job selection, place of residence and vocational mobility, access to partnership markets, and so on. This assumption is partly driven by findings from existing research on the influence of education and career paths on fertility behaviour (cf. chapters 2.1 and 4.1). Furthermore homosexual individuals, in particular, have to deal with issues concerning their sexual identity and their minority status within society which seems to precede parenthood.

Older respondents, on the other hand, should be excluded because from a certain age it is unlikely to become a parent. This can be due to the fact that the age discrepancy between parents and children might be considered too big by the individual her-/himself, or that societal norms are not

in favour of parents of a certain advanced age. The desire to have children seems to decrease with age (cf. chapter 4.1). Additionally, but disregarding potential options of reproductive techniques, it could be the case that, when reaching an age when biological parenthood used to have its limits, individuals know that becoming a parent is unrealistic but cling to the never realised dream of having children. In such cases answers would likely be more romanticised and more importantly will lack the foundation of the individual knowing and believing that parenthood could be an option in the life course.

Therefore it seems necessary to exclude certain cases in order to generate a sample of respondents who are at an age where parenthood usually occurs. Defining that sample should be motivated by solid arguments. Such arguments, however, proved to be difficult to establish. Some studies merely mentioned a 'certain age' (Hertling, 2011: 284) or set an age limit reasoning that it must be possible that the intention can be realised (Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010: 23). Other research has respondents of limited age ranges due to the general research design of the data used (Eckhard and Klein, 2007; Marbach and Tölke, 2014; Riskind et al., 2011). In most of the studies investigated there was no reasoning whatsoever about limiting the age of the respondents (Riskind et al., 2013; Riskind et al., 2011; Onnen-Isemann, 2008; Eckhard and Klein, 2007; Baiocco and Laghi, 2013; Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004), even when presenting analyses of parenting intentions based on a relatively large sample (Kleinert et al., 2012b)³³. In some cases a lack of age limits seems plausible and acceptable because of qualitative designs and difficulties in the recruitment of respondents (Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004; Kapella and Rille-Pfeiffer, 2004; Švab, 2007).

Empirical evidence for an upper age limit could be based on declining parenting intentions as stated by respondents (Haag, 2013: 410; Dane et

³³ In another article the authors decided only to exclude respondents below 18 and analysed cases with an age range from 18 to 75 concerning "Motives and Decisions for and Against Having Children Among Nonheterosexuals and the Impact of Experiences of Discrimination, Internalized Stigma, and Social Acceptance" (Kleinert et al., 2015).

al., 2010; Švab, 2007). A lower limit could be oriented at the increase of births with increasing age of young women. Another possibility would be to look at how federal institutions define age limits. The German Federal Institute for Population Research defines women of childbearing age to be between 15 and 49 (Federal Institute for Population Research, 2015). A data collection of the German Federal Ministry of Justice regarding exclusion criteria in state adoption agencies provides a very scattered picture and reveals age limits that are seemingly not based on any specific guideline or argument. In some cases the age difference between parents and child seems to be the decisive argument, in other cases it's the possibility that a parent-child-relationship can be developed (whatever this might mean; a definition is lacking). The age difference between the partners is stated among the criteria as well, arguing that the individual case needs to be considered specifically. When certain age limits are provided the many different numbers and roughly defined guide values all range between 40 and 50³⁴ (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, 2012). Another official measure is the social security statute book of Germany (SGB) as the foundation of national health insurance. It defines age limits for subsidies for artificial insemination in § 27a. Compensation of services can only be claimed by citizens who are at least 25 years old. National health insurance will not subsidise any treatment of women 40 or older and of men starting at the age of 50 (Federal Republic of Germany).

This brief summary shows that age limits regarding parenting intentions and the evaluation of parenting capabilities by state authorities differ to a large degree, if they are discussed at all. A work group at the fourth national 'family seminar' of the Lesbian and Gay Association in Germany (LSVD) also came to the conclusion that the cooperation with lesbian and gay clients in the youth welfare offices depends on the political setting of the municipality and the personal attitude of the adminis-

³⁴ In the most recent position paper on adoption placement from November 2014, a 'natural' age difference between adoptive parents and child is recommended (Federal Working Group of the State Youth Welfare Offices, 2014: 53).

trators (Bohrer et al., 2005). It could be possible that this position of power of the administrators over the clients regarding relative flexibility in deciding on drop-out criteria is similar concerning the age of clients.

In order to select a sample that should deliver most reliable results regarding parenting intentions, the analyses of this thesis will be conducted with respondents who are 25 to 50 years of age.

3.3 Description of the samples used for the analyses of this thesis

Two subsamples of the *ifb*-data will be used in this thesis. The first subsample (thesis sample) builds the foundation of this thesis. It provides all descriptive information. A second subsample (model sample), based on the thesis sample, will be used in the analytical part. The model sample was constructed to avoid missing cases in the relevant variables and to provide a fixed selection of cases to be used for analyses in different software packages. The samples and differences among them are described in this section. Differences between men and women have been tested for all variables to provide more information about homosexual women and men given the lack of data based on large samples, but are only reported when significant.

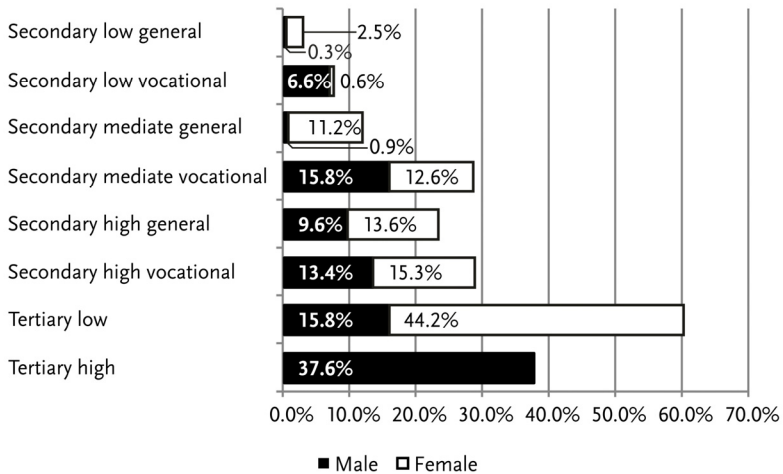
3.3.1 Thesis sample

The thesis sample contains 1,114 of the original 1,697 cases, roughly 66 % of all cases, restricted to 513 women (46.1 %) and 601 men (53.9 %) who are childless and aged 25 to 50. Within this subsample 6.3 % of the respondents are bisexual ($n = 70$), most of which are women ($n = 56$). The age median of the sample is at 35, though men tend to be a little older (median age 36) than women (median age 34).

The majority of the respondents in the sample are highly educated. More than half (56.2 %) have a degree from a university or technical college. About a quarter (24.5 %) has advanced school leaving certificates (*Abitur/Hochschulreife*) and 14.5 % intermediate leaving certificates, i.e.

Mittlere Reife. Only 4.9 % have the lowest educational degree available in Germany (*Hauptschule*). These numbers show that the respondents in the thesis sample more often have an academic background and less often have lowest educational degrees, compared to the homosexuals in the German Microcensus data (Rupp and Haag, 2016: 330).

Figure 3.1 Educational attainment of women and men



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Figure 3.1 shows a more detailed classification of the educational attainment according to the CASMIN scheme (Lechert et al., 2006: 4). Secondary education is distinguished into low, intermediate, and high qualification corresponding with general elementary education (i.e. compulsory schooling), intermediate general education, and full maturity certificates at the high level. Tertiary education differentiates between low (lower-level tertiary degrees) and high (traditional, academically-oriented university education) attainment (cf. *ibid.*). Furthermore, the display of secondary educational degrees distinguishes between general education and additional vocational qualifications.

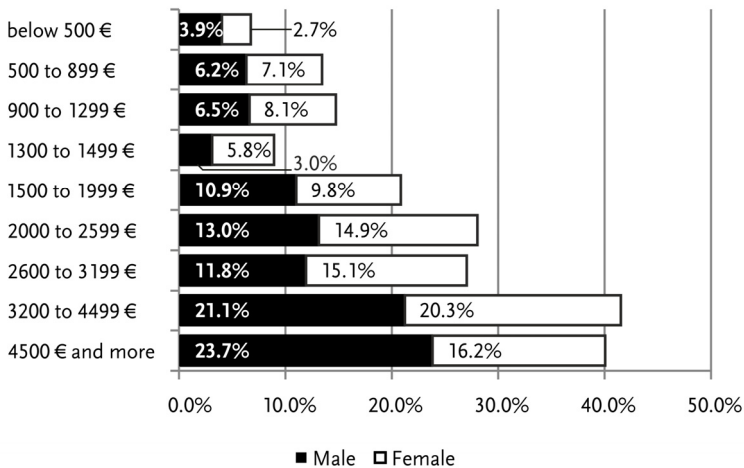
The figure shows that university degree tertiary education is only held by male respondents, while the female respondents with tertiary education hold degrees from universities of applied sciences. It also shows that male respondents with low or mediate secondary education more often have vocational qualification in addition to their general school education.

The time of coming-out predates the data collection as long as 36 years. For 50 % of the respondents from the thesis sample their coming-out has occurred 14 or more years ago. Only 6.7 % had their coming-out within five years of the data collection. There is a significant difference between male and female respondents in that males had their coming-out earlier than females (Mann-Whitney U $p = 0.000$). The mean age at coming-out is 20 years for men and 21 for women. There is a significant but weak effect of an earlier coming-out for the respondents 35 (age median) and younger, with a mean age at their coming-out of 19, compared to the respondents above 35, who came out at 22.

The large majority of respondents are (self-)employed (80.1 %), 14.6 % attend some form of educational training or professional (re)training (12.5 % attending university), 2.7 % are unemployed, 1.5 % are in early retirement, and 1.1 % self-identified as homemakers. The range of work hours per week of those who are employed lies between 3 and 80 hours with the median at 40. An analysis of variance indicates significant differences between women and men ($p = 0.032$) with slightly higher mean working hours among men (39.5) than among women (37.8).

Half of the respondents in the sample have a household income of 2,600 € or more per month (missing $n = 63$) with significantly higher incomes for male than for female respondents (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.015$). As displayed in Figure 3.2, there is a majority of men in the upper income categories. The median household income of singles lies in the category 1,300 to 1,499 € and increases for respondents in a partnership to 2,600 to 3,199 €. Fifty percent of the couples have a monthly net household income of 3,200 € or more.

Figure 3.2 Household income of women and men, net/month



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$.

There are 228 singles (20.5 %) and 886 respondents who are in a relationship (79.5 %). Most of the respondents who are in a relationship share accommodation with their partner (74.9 %), 25.1 % have separate residences. Half of the couples have been together for seven years or longer (max = 31 years). The official relationship status, however, is single for most of the sample (67.1 %) while 29.8 % are in a civil union with their current partner and 1.1 % in a civil union with a former partner. Only 37.5 % of those who have a partner are also in a registered civil union. The Phi value shows significant differences between women and men ($p = .071$) regarding the status registered civil union. This means men tend to have their relationships more often officially and legally acknowledged than women. In 70.4 % of the couples both partners are employed.

3.3.2 Differences in the samples

Cases for the model sample were selected to avoid missing data in any of the independent variables for the statistical modeling. This decision was made in order to avoid discrepancies in the results when different software solutions were used and because of software issues in handling missing data. The model sample consists of 618 cases drawn from the thesis sample by avoiding missing data in a listwise selection (cf. chapter 5.4.2).

It has been stressed that due to the difficulties of accessing respondents and the lack of representative data, interpretations must be taken cautiously. In order to provide information as to whether and how the different samples used in this thesis are different from one another, the following overview is provided.

Table 3.1 shows a comparison of selected variables for the full dataset and the samples used for this thesis. This overview provides information on central characteristics of the respondents to explain differences in the samples. Significant differences after selection from full dataset to thesis sample and from thesis to model sample are marked in the table. A series of changes is obvious between full dataset and thesis sample which can be attributed to the theoretically driven selection of childless respondents with specific age limits. There is an overrepresentation in the thesis sample in terms of tertiary education, employment, higher income, living in a city with a population of 500,000 or more, and a more recent coming-out in comparison to the complete dataset. After the second selection process the model subsample overrepresents respondents in a relationship, with a higher income and with a parenting intention. The significant differences for household income and population are manifest in the distribution within the categories of these ordered categorical variables, however, without contributing to changes in the median.

Table 3.1 Comparison of central variables used for analyses in dataset and samples

| No. of cases | Full <i>ifb</i> dataset | Thesis sample | Model sample |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 1,697 | 1,114 | 618 |
| Sex | | | |
| <i>Male</i> | 54.6 % | 53.9 % | 54.7 % |
| <i>Female</i> | 45.1 % | 46.1 % | 45.3 % |
| Age | | * <i>sig. diff. full</i> | |
| <i>Min.</i> | 15 | 25 | 25 |
| <i>Max.</i> | 81 | 50 | 50 |
| <i>Median</i> | 37 | 35 | 35 |
| Relationship status | | | * <i>sig. diff. thesis</i> |
| <i>Single</i> | 21.5 % | 20.5 % | 17.8 % |
| <i>In relationship</i> | 78.5 % | 79.5 % | 82.2 % |
| Level of education | | * <i>sig. diff. full</i> | |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | 4.6 % | 4.7 % | 4.5 % |
| <i>Medium/higher secondary</i> | 40.9 % | 37.0 % | 37.1 % |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | 47.8 % | 53.4 % | 58.4 % |
| <i>Missing</i> | 6.7 % | 4.9 % | 0 % |
| Employment status | | * <i>sig. diff. full</i> | |
| <i>(Self)employed</i> | 68.4 % | 79.4 % | 81.2 % |
| <i>Missing</i> | 3.7 % | 0.7 % | 0 % |
| Household Income (monthly) | | * <i>sig. diff. full</i> | * <i>sig. diff. thesis</i> |
| <i>Min.</i> | below 500€ | below 500€ | below 500€ |
| <i>Max.</i> | 4,500€ | 4,500€ | 4,500€ |
| <i>Median</i> | 2,600-3,200€, | 2,600-3,200€ | 2,600-3,200€ |
| <i>Missing</i> | 7.9 % | 5.7 % | 0 % |
| Population at place of residence | | * <i>sig. diff. full</i> | |
| <i>Min.</i> | less than 5,000 | less than 5,000 | less than 5,000 |
| <i>Max.</i> | m. t. 500,000 | m. t. 500,000 | m. t. 500,000 |
| <i>Median</i> | 100-500,000 | 100-500,000 | 100-500,000 |
| <i>Missing</i> | 1.5 % | 1.5 % | 0 % |
| Parenting desire | | | * <i>sig. diff. thesis</i> |
| <i>Yes</i> | 33.9 % | 38.9 % | 54.2 % |
| <i>Undecided</i> | 18.1 % | 22.3 % | – |
| <i>No</i> | 35.8 % | 38.7 % | 45.8 % |
| <i>Missing</i> | 12.2 % | 0.2 % | 0 % |
| Time since Coming-out (years) | | * <i>sig. diff. full</i> | |
| <i>Min</i> | | | |
| <i>Max</i> | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| <i>median</i> | 63 | 36 | 36 |
| | 15 | 14 | 15 |

Source: Original analyses based on *ifb*-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010.

4 Delineating parenting intentions of homosexual women and men

After a lengthy period in which research on homosexuality was predominantly focused on the outcomes of homosexuality on the development of children growing up with gay or lesbian parents (Marks, 2012; Bozett, 1987; Brewaeys et al., 1997; Bigner and Bozett, 1989; Rupp, 2009; Hicks, 2005; Sbordone, 1993: 11), there seems to be a process of normalisation in scientific interest, too, away from a problem-oriented approach concerning homosexuality towards researching various phenomena in the context of homosexuality. There has actually been an increasing body of publications on the subject of parenting intentions of homosexuals in recent years, providing valuable new contributions.

The descriptive results which will be presented in this chapter provide new information and extend the existing body of research. They will contribute to a better understanding of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, and thus a domain which is quite self-evident for a great number of individuals in society. Particularly concerning the difficulties regarding data collection and biased samples, a detailed description of parenting intentions represented in the *ifb* data can help to achieve a better understanding of intentions and practice of homosexual women and men, and it can contribute to an adequate design of further studies. The results from the *ifb*-study will be presented after a review of the state of research concerning parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. Due to the lack of comprehensive information on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, the descriptive analysis is based on the thesis sample of 1,114 childless respondents aged 25 to 50.

4.1 State of research on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men

The literature review has provided a surprisingly large body of publications dealing with parenting intentions of homosexual women and men.

The findings will be presented chronologically according to publication. Many studies, however, are based on small samples, many of which are biased, and mostly don't provide an extensive view on parenting intentions.

An unpublished dissertation from the early 1990s finds that 53 % (n = 43) of the childless homosexual men, who were recruited as control group to gay fathers, wish to have children. Those men have been found to be younger than those who did not want to have children (Sbordone, 1993: 71).

An early German survey restricted to homosexuals from North-Rhine Westphalia found that a parenting intention was articulated by 40.4 % of male and 31.2 % of the female homosexual respondents. It was especially pronounced among the younger respondents below 20 years of age (46.6%), but also in the age group from 20 to 35 (Scharmman, 1998: 9). This early study is quite impressive because of the comparably high number of respondents (N = 955), however there is no detailed information available on the recruitment of what is most likely a convenience sample or characteristics of the respondents other than their age distribution (*ibid.*).

Kleinert et al. (2012a) have conducted a systematic literature review of studies concerned with parenting intentions of homosexual individuals published between 2000 and 2011. They find five qualitative and nine quantitative studies with very heterogeneous study designs and often with a relatively small number of cases, which makes a comparison of the results rather difficult. Nonetheless they show that the subject of a parenting intention of homosexuals has moved into scientific focus. Studies that stand out due to a larger number of cases find varying degrees of the wish to have children. The general findings of these studies will be mentioned chronologically.

The German study conducted by Buba and Vaskovics (2001), also with a substantial number of cases, included questions on parenthood. The authors report a parenting intention in 23 % of the 581 homosexual respondents. The proportion seems to be even higher among the young-

er ones; however the exact number is unspecified (Weiß and Becker, 2001: 127).

The results of a US study on self-identified homosexual youths (n = 133) provide strong evidence that long-term monogamous relationships and parenthood are desired by and important aspects for a majority of the respondents (D'Augelli et al., 2007). Findings of analyses of a representative sample of US residents from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth also show that a considerable proportion of homosexual women (41 %) and men (52 %) desire to have a child (Gates et al., 2007: 5). Another analysis of the same data supports the findings. The analyses show that intentions are principally lower in comparison to heterosexual respondents (Riskind and Patterson, 2010). Furthermore it is found that, if the idea of permanently remaining childless was considered, distress was less intense for homosexual in comparison to heterosexual respondents. Nonetheless, the authors find "that lesbian and gay individuals endorsed the value of parenthood just as strongly as did their heterosexual peers" (ibid.: 79ff, quote: 81).

Another German study of homosexual men also finds references for a family-orientation involving long-term partnerships and parenthood (Hertling, 2011: 289) as well as evidence of 18.3 % of childless homosexual men who completely agree and 25.5 % who somewhat agree that they wish to have children at one point during their life (ibid.: 280). The study itself has its disadvantages in terms of design and respondent access, however it adds to the existing body of literature.

An Australian study reports 19.4 % of the female and 13.1 % of the male homosexual participants planning on having children (Dane et al., 2010: 55).

The German survey on family-related guiding images (*Leitbilder*) (Lück, 2014: 453; Schneider et al., 2015) provides recent information based on a representative sample, it needs to be considered, though, that there are only 20 women and 55 men in that data who are in a same-sex relationship. 38 % of the male and 75 % of the female homosexual respondents stated it was important to them to have children of their own. Another

recent German study, however with a larger dataset of 1,283 non-heterosexuals, reports 43 % of the childless respondents with an intention to have children, 11 % had decided against parenthood and 23 % were undecided (Kleinert et al., 2015: 179).

Recent studies also report an intention to parent among homosexual women and men in countries that are not particularly supportive of homosexuality³⁵. Research from Slovenia announces 39 % of male and female respondents with a desire to have children (Švab, 2007: 218), and according to a study from Italy, 52 % of male and 61 % of female homosexual respondents wish to have a child (Baiocco and Laghi, 2013: 91).

This summary of quantitative research provides enough information to conclude that parenting is definitely an important aspect among homosexual women and men, also internationally, but to varying degrees. It has been found that there is an association between sexual orientation and the desire to have children, with heterosexual respondents being much more likely to desire parenthood (Riskind and Patterson, 2010: 81; Riskind et al., 2011: 8). Even though many studies find support for a desire to parent, Riskind et al. (2013) note that “a substantial minority did not see parenthood as an option” (ibid.: 233), next to those who generally perceive parenthood as an option, but who see obstacles, meaning “that they probably or definitely would not be able to become parents even if they wanted to do so” (ibid.).

Studies with a qualitative design and thus often small samples also support the notion that homosexuals want to become parents (e.g. Johnson and O'Connor, 2002; Kapella and Rille-Pfeiffer, 2004; Mallon, 2004; Stacey, 2006). More importantly they shed light on the specific challenges experienced and/or anticipated on the way to parenthood, which will be referenced in chapter 6.1.

³⁵ For a European comparison cf. Special Eurobarometer 437 (TNS Opinion & Social and Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers - DG JUST, 2015: 50).

4.2 Descriptive results from the *ifb*-data thesis sample

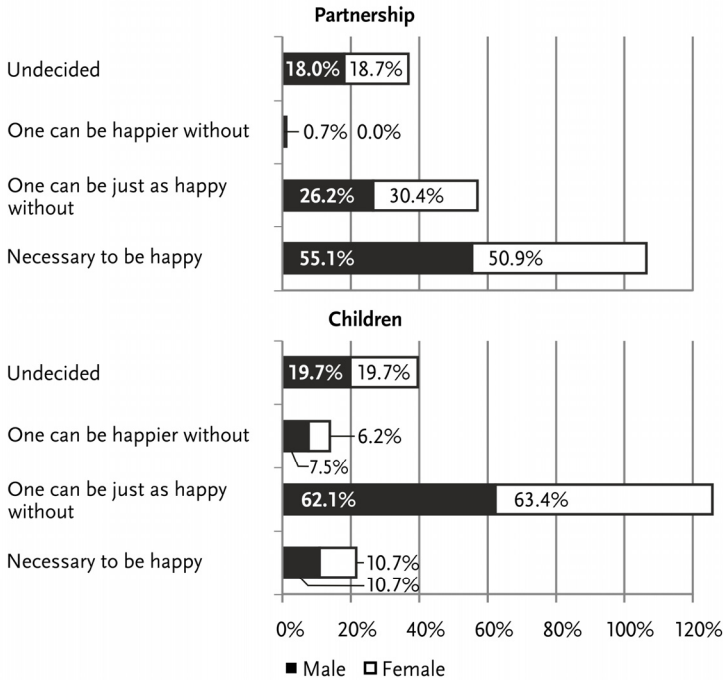
In the following this chapter will present descriptive information about the parenting intentions of homosexual women and men from the thesis sample, based on the *ifb*-data. The number of cases may vary depending on the structural design of the questionnaire; some questions were not shown to respondents who do not want to have children. A set of questions was only directed to respondents who intend to have children or who are undecided, which then results in a reduced number of 681 cases. Initial descriptions will be extended by more detailed observations of differences between homosexual women and men. Significant differences will be noted and discussed. The same applies for comparisons between groups of respondents based on their relationship status, educational attainment, and parenting intention. These variables have been chosen because they have shown to contribute to variance in the investigation of parenting intentions (cf. Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004: 53ff).

4.2.1 General relevance of parenthood

In order to determine to what degree partnership and parenthood are of importance to homosexual women and men, two questions are analysed providing information concerning the importance of having a partner and having children to lead a happy life. The results are displayed in Figure 4.1.

A relationship is seen by 53.1 % of the respondents as a necessary source of happiness. 28.1 % were convinced that one could be just as happy without a partner and only four respondents (0.4 %) believed one would be happier without a partner. Significant differences prevail between the responses of singles and respondents in a relationship regarding a partner being a source of happiness or not (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.001$).

Figure 4.1 Percent agreeing on the importance of partnership and children to be happy



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Further significant differences concerning the rating of a relationship to be happy are detailed in Table 4.1. Answer patterns vary according to the parenting intention of the respondents. Those who want to have children are more likely to state a relationship to be necessary to be happy, mirroring respondents who don’t want to have children being more likely to disagree that one needs a relationship to be happy. The ones who are undecided in terms of their parenting intention are also more likely to be undecided regarding the importance of a relationship.

The significant differences give reason to believe that parenthood is commonly a goal to be achieved within a relationship. It may be that

those who don't intend to have children and also disagree that a relationship is needed to be happy may have a conception of life which is not so much set on close familial relationships.

Table 4.1 Percent agreeing on the importance of partnership to be happy by demographics & parenting intention

| | Relationship needed to be happy | | | | Total n Total % |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| | necessary | just as happy without | happier without | undecided | |
| Sex | | | | | 1,112 |
| | 261 | 156 | 0 | 96 | 513 |
| <i>Female</i> | 50.9 % | 30.4 % | 0 % | 18.7 % | 46.1 % |
| | 330 | 157 | 4 | 108 | 599 |
| <i>Male</i> | 55.1 % | 26.2 % | 0.7 % | 18.0 % | 53.9 % |
| Relationship status | | | | | 1,112 |
| | 93 | 78 | 1 | 56 | 228 |
| <i>No relationship / single</i> | 40.8 % | 34.2 % | 0.4 % | 24.6 % | 20.5 % |
| | 498 * | 235 * | 3 | 204 * | 884 |
| <i>In relationship</i> | 56.3 % | 26.6 % | 0.3 % | 18.3 % | 79.5 % |
| Level of education | | | | | 1,057 |
| | 24 | 13 | 2 * | 13 | 52 |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | 46.2 % | 25.0 % | 3.8 % | 25.0 % | 4.9 % |
| | 216 | 122 | 0 | 73 | 411 |
| <i>Medium / higher secondary</i> | 52.6 % | 29.7 % | 0 % | 17.8 % | 38.9 % |
| | 318 | 166 | 1 | 109 | 594 |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | 53.5 % | 27.9 % | 0.2 % | 18.4 % | 56.2 % |
| Parenting intention | | | | | 1,110 |
| | 262 * | 109 | 0 | 62 | 433 |
| <i>Yes</i> | 60.5 % | 25.2 % | 0 % | 14.3 % | 39.0 % |
| | 131 | 57 | 0 | 59 * | 247 |
| <i>Undecided</i> | 53 % | 23.1 % | 0 % | 23.9 % | 22.3 % |
| | 196 * | 147 * | 4 | 83 | 430 |
| <i>No</i> | 45.6 % | 34.2 % | 0.9 % | 19.3 % | 38.7 % |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Note: Pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction.

* indicates significant difference between categories of groups (rows), p = .05.

Table 4.2 Percent agreeing on the importance of children to be happy by demographics & parenting intention

| | Children needed to be happy | | | | Total n Total % |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | necessary | just as happy without | happier without | undecided | |
| Sex | | | | | 1,112 |
| Female | 55 10.7 % | 325 63.4 % | 32 6.2 % | 101 19.7 % | 513 46.1 % |
| Male | 64 10.7 % | 372 62.1 % | 45 7.5 % | 118 19.7 % | 599 53.9 % |
| Relationship status | | | | | 1,112 |
| No relationship / single | 19 8.4 % | 144 63.4 % | 15 6.6 % | 49 21.6 % | 227 20.4 % |
| In relationship | 110 11.3 % | 553 62.5 % | 62 7.0 % | 170 19.2 % | 885 79.6 % |
| Level of education | | | | | 1,057 |
| Lower secondary | 4 7.7 % | 30 57.7 % | 5 9.6 % | 13 25.0 % | 52 4.9 % |
| Medium / higher secondary | 38 9.3 % | 253 61.7 % | 31 7.6 % | 88 21.5 % | 410 38.8 % |
| Tertiary | 70 11.8 % | 380 63.9 % | 35 5.9 % | 110 18.5 % | 595 56.3 % |
| Parenting intention | | | | | 1,110 |
| Yes | 109 * 25.2 % | 198 * 45.8 % | 15 3.5 % | 110 * 25.5 % | 432 38.9 % |
| Undecided | 4 1.6 % | 164 * 66.1 % | 8 3.2 % | 72 * 29.0 % | 248 22.3 % |
| No | 6 1.4 % | 334 * 77.7 % | 53 * 12.3 % | 37 8.6 % | 430 38.7 % |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$.

Note: Pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction.

* indicates significant difference between categories of groups (rows), $p = .05$.

Other than with a relationship, respondents are convinced to a smaller degree that one needs a child to live happily, as depicted in Figure 4.1. While only 10.6 % think a child is necessary, the majority thinks that one can be just as happy without a child (62.7 %) and 6.9 % say that one can be happier without children. Significant differences are detected between respondents who say they want to have children and those who don't (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.018$).

Table 4.2 shows that individuals with a parenting intention are more likely to think children are needed to be happy, just as respondents without parenting intention are more likely to state one can be happier without children. There are significant differences among all respondents as grouped by parenting intention regarding the statement that one can be just as happy without children. These patterns can be seen as a hint towards other relevant variables in terms of influences determining parenting intention. Respondents without the intention to have children are less likely to be undecided concerning the importance of children to be happy than ones who are undecided or who want to have children.

These results show that there are influences between considering a partnership and children to be necessary to be happy and the parenting intention in particular. The causality, however, cannot be determined with the data. Developing a parenting intention is not necessarily connected with the conviction that children are needed to be happy.

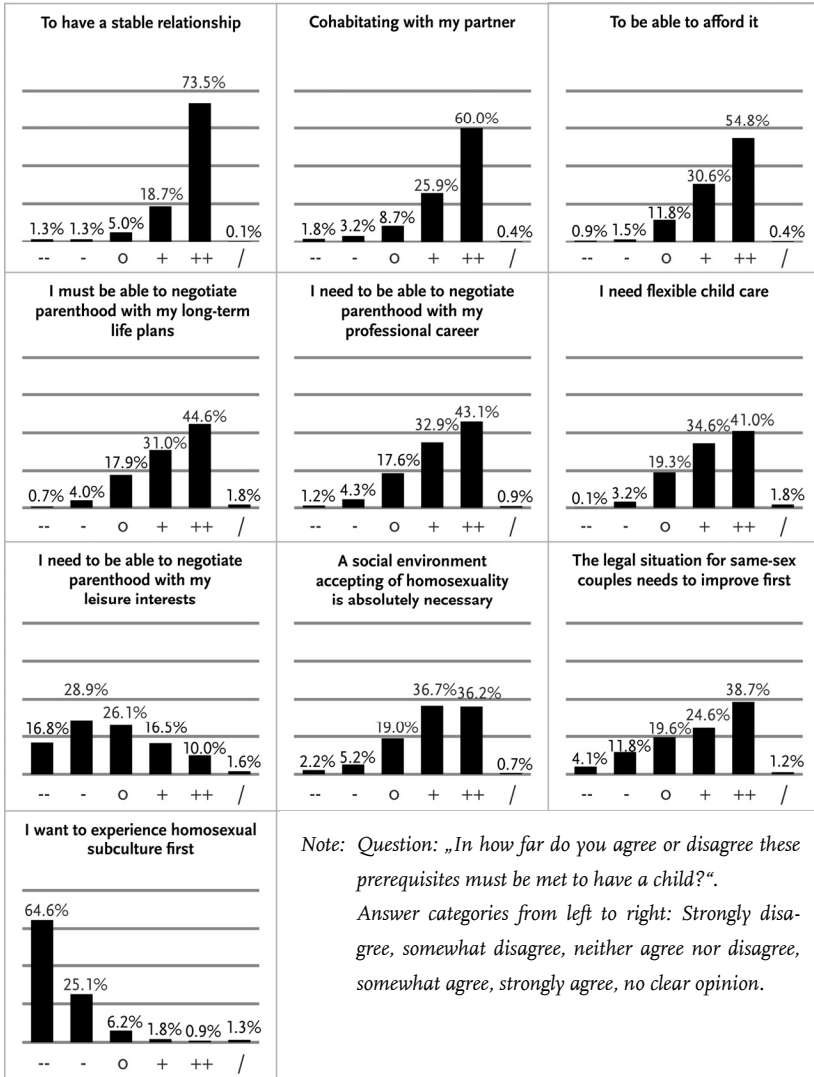
4.2.2 Prerequisites for the transition to parenthood³⁶

As detailed in chapter 2.1, parenthood for homosexuals usually does not occur out of the blue. Many individuals might feel that certain prerequisites must be fulfilled in order to facilitate their transition into parenthood. The *ifb*-data includes questions about such prerequisites.

Figure 4.2 presents the answers to a set of statements that were shown to those 681 respondents who intend to have children or who are undecided. A stable relationship and a shared residence with the partner are prerequisites for a great majority of the respondents, the relationship *per se*, however, to an even higher degree. Another important factor is the financial background to afford having a child.

³⁶ Group differences reported are based on pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction, $p = .05$.

Figure 4.2 Prerequisites for parenthood for those with a parenting intention, part I, from disagree (left) to agree (right)



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114 (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: n = 681).

The other statements show a less skewed distribution in the answer categories, however there is still a majority who thinks it necessary to negotiate parenthood with long-term life plans as well as with the professional career. Access to flexible child care is another important aspect for the majority of respondents. Leisure interests are somewhat less important and only seem to be of relevance for the considerations about parenthood for a smaller group. An accepting social environment and a better legal situation for same-sex couples is overall rated as important, however there is a less pronounced trend in terms of strongly agreeing to the statements as compared to the ones about relationship and being able to afford a child. The last statement about wanting to experience homosexual subculture before being ready to transition into parenthood receives strong disagreement, which means that those respondents who intend to have children and those who are uncertain don't seem to feel the need to engage with the homosexual community very much before becoming parents. These findings may suggest that either the community is not important to them at all or that they don't think that having children would interfere with being active or present in the community.

Significant differences have been found concerning males being more likely to somewhat agree that cohabitating with the partner is a prerequisite for parenthood than females. They are also more likely to strongly agree that an accepting social environment is needed before having children. Female respondents are more likely to disagree and less likely to agree that the legal situation for same-sex couples needs to improve in order to facilitate having children. Concerning the statement that experiencing homosexual community and subculture is a prerequisite before having children, male respondents are more likely to disagree.

The finding that males are more likely to wish for a shared apartment before having children may be an indicator for a desire to adapt to the ideal of the nuclear family. Those who strongly agree that a shared residence is a prerequisite are more likely to live together with their partner, so this could also be an effect of their habitual experience and that they could not imagine parenting any other way. The fact that female respondents are less likely to be dissatisfied with the legal framework

could be due to the fact that they have relatively good chances of becoming parents also without legal support. Particularly male homosexuals are restricted by the current legal framework because they cannot adopt jointly and need to make use of services outside of Germany in most cases. Females, however, do find support even within Germany. This is not to say that the legal framework conditions are accommodating; however homosexual women do have better options. The finding that male respondents are more likely to disagree that engaging with the homosexual community is a prerequisite for parenthood is quite interesting. Maybe they do not see the community as a beneficial network supporting parenthood, maybe they do not feel attracted to this subculture at all, or maybe they are more likely to see the community and parenthood as easily compatible, perhaps based on positive network experience in general. Additional data would be needed.

Significant differences concerning the relationship status of the respondents have only been found for the statement concerned with experiences in the homosexual community; those who are in a relationship are more likely to (strongly) disagree and less likely to agree. Perhaps the importance of the community is changing due to the greater level of tolerance within society. With greater tolerance and a greater implicitness of same-sex relationships being visible, the support of the community in order to help support and legitimate the relationship may not be as necessary as it once was. Maybe the relationship itself provides the necessary support for a project like parenthood and thus the community may serve other functions.

Without a tertiary degree, respondents are more likely to strongly agree that the legal situation needs to improve. Respondents with an academic degree are more likely to strongly agree that it is necessary to be able to financially afford having children compared to respondents without an academic degree. They are more likely to disagree and less likely to agree that children need to be compatible with leisure interests. Individuals with an academic degree more likely agree that an accepting social environment is a prerequisite for parenthood.

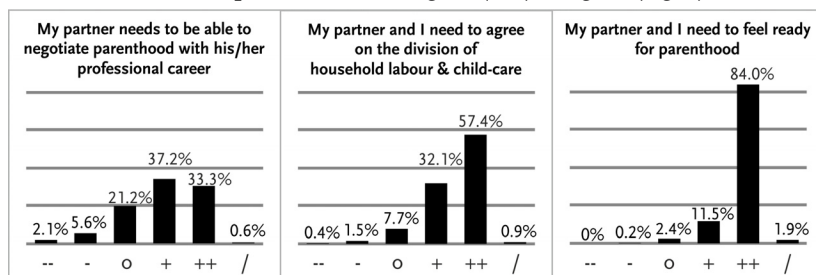
The focus of respondents with an academic degree on financial aspects and affordability may be higher because they are likely to earn a higher income and therefore able to afford more expensive pathways into parenthood, e.g. foreign adoption, treatment with assisted reproductive techniques in another country, surrogacy, etc. Being informed about the cost of such pathways may strengthen the belief that an appropriate financial background is necessary to have children. Of course, other aspects like providing an environment for the child from the perspective of a highly educated parental view and corresponding to the established life-style of a highly educated respondent may also involve the idea of a greater importance of monetary resources than for someone who is used to a different life-style characterised by lower educational attainment and lower income.

Further significant differences concerning the prerequisite statements have been found in terms of the stated intention to parent. Respondents with the intention to have a child compared to those who don't intend to be parents are more likely to (strongly) agree that a stable relationship is needed first. The analyses by further individual characteristics show bimodal or U-shaped distributions at times. Respondents, for instance, are more likely to both strongly disagree and to agree that cohabitation is a necessary prerequisite for parenthood. Those who intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) agree that it's necessary to be able to afford having children first. They are also more likely to strongly agree to be able to negotiate children with their long-term life plans. Furthermore they are also polarised regarding the idea of negotiating parenthood with their professional career in that they are more likely to both disagree and to strongly agree. Respondents who intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) disagree and to somewhat agree that their leisure interests must be compatible with having children. An accepting social environment is a prerequisite which respondents who intend to have children are more likely to strongly agree with. They are also more likely to (strongly) disagree and to strongly agree that improvements in the legal situation are needed to have children. Those who intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) disagree that

experiencing homosexual community and subculture is necessary before having children.

The differentiation between respondents who intend and those who do not intend to have children reveals a focus on facilitating parenthood for those who plan to have children. Their answer patterns correspond to getting everything ready to facilitate parenthood in terms of a parental couple with ordered living, financial, and employment arrangements. Leisure interests seem to be less important than the intention to have a child. Particularly those respondents who intend to have children wish for an accepting social environment and an improvement in the legal situation. This wish for a positive environment and structural framework may be due to existent disadvantages and the prospect of equal treatment, or it could be motivated by the desire to not have their children being negatively affected directly or indirectly through rejection or (structural) discrimination.

Figure 4.3 Prerequisites for parenthood for those with a parenting intention, part II, from disagree (left) to agree (right)



Note: Question: „In how far do you agree or disagree these prerequisites must be met to have a child?“.

Answer categories from left to right: Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree, no clear opinion.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114 (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: n = 681 → only respondents with a partner: n = 534).

Figure 4.3 shows the distributions concerning prerequisites that are concerned with the partner for respondents in a relationship. It is evi-

dent that there is agreement that the partner needs to be able to negotiate having children with his/her professional career and that the division of household labour and childcare needs to be sorted. Furthermore there is strong agreement that both partners need to feel ready to have children.

Female respondents are significantly more likely than males to strongly agree that the division of household labour and childcare needs to be agreed upon before having children. This is an interesting finding in that it corresponds with general gender differences in the allocation of household labour. Particularly in lesbian families, it has been found that the status of the biological parenthood determines the engagement in household tasks and the labour market. Buschner (2014: 209) suspects that the decision which of the partners will become pregnant is linked with the decision about labour market engagement. Buschner (2014: 145f) also finds that about a quarter of same-sex couples actually achieve an equal division of household labour. It is particularly interesting that even lesbian couples with small children who were borne by one of the partners achieve an equal distribution of household tasks in 27 % of the families (ibid.: 146). These findings provide evidence that the division of household labour, the arrangements concerning employment and housework, and particularly the idea of equality are important for lesbian couples. The significant difference to gay couples found in this regard supports this idea.

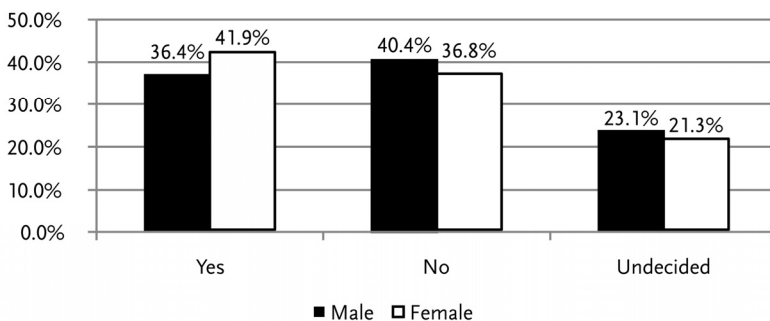
The idea of equality is reflected in the polarised answer patterns of respondents with an academic degree, who are more likely to strongly disagree and to (strongly) agree that their partner needs to be able to negotiate having a child with his/her professional career. They are also more likely to agree that a solution for the division of household labour and child care is a prerequisite for parenthood.

Distinguishing between respondents with and without a parenting intention, those who intend to have children show a bimodal distribution and are more likely to neither agree nor disagree and to strongly agree that their partner needs to be able to negotiate having a child with his/her professional career.

The strong focus on reconciliation for the partner may be seen as a reference to a dyadic process, an idea of equality or finding a reasonable solution for both partners in terms of negotiating parenthood and career particularly for those who intend to have children. They might be already more concerned with the actual realisation and may have encountered these issues in considering plans and options.

4.2.3 Parenting intention

Figure 4.4 Parenting intention



Source: Original analyses based on *ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010*; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$.

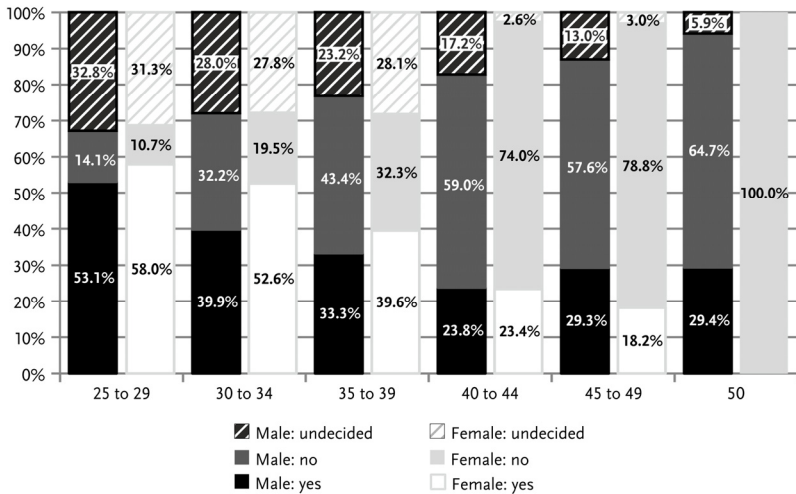
The thesis sample of the *ifb*-data shows that a substantial number of homosexual women and men wish to have children. The sample average of 38.9 % shows that having a child is something that certainly is desired by homosexual women and men. There are some differences between female and male respondents³⁷, with a greater number of females who wish to become parents. While 36.4 % of the male respondents want to have children, 41.9 % of the women do (cf. Figure 4.4). Some more men

³⁷ Difference between women's and men's responses are significant; Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.087$.

than women are convinced not to have children (40.4 % vs. 36.8 %), 23.1 % of the men and 21.3 % of the women are undecided.

The shares of both women and men who state to want to have children as well as those who are undecided continually decrease with rising age (cf. Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Parenting intention across age groups



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Starting at 53.1 % (men) and 58.0 % (women) among the respondents aged 25 to 29, the wish to have a child drops to 29.4 % for men aged 50 and to 0 % for women. The ‘no’-votes go into the other direction and continually increase over the age categories. It is quite interesting that, starting at age 40, there are considerably more women than men who do not have a parenting intention. This might be due to the fact that around that age it is rather unlikely to become pregnant and give birth to a child, but it’s also the upper age limit for reimbursement of assisted reproductive techniques (ART) through health insurance in Germany. Furthermore, youth welfare offices also seem to consider this limit in adoption and foster placement (cf. chapter 3.2). Men do not have the strict biolog-

ical restriction; however, in terms of adoption and foster parenting they may also be considered to be too old. In the end, it seems that male homosexuals may (wish to) pursue parenthood even in their forties to a greater degree, while this seems to be less important for homosexual women. The direction of the effect, however, is unclear. It could be that women are more inclined to have 'their own' biological children, which becomes more difficult with advancing age. Therefore their parenting intentions around and above forty might be influenced or controlled by the perceived chance of a successful pregnancy and birth. Due to the fact that men are affected to a lesser degree by these restrictions because they would need to find a suitable gestational mother, their own age is relatively less important. Collaboration with another female (couple) or surrogate is also possible if the men are older.

Table 4.3 shows that respondents who are undecided about their parenting intention are significantly more often in a relationship. This is an interesting finding considering that a relationship is usually seen as a prerequisite for a parenting intention (Rost, 2007: 93). If the transition to parenthood is seen as a dyadic process, however, there might be differences in opinion among the partners. These could be related to a general disagreement regarding parenthood as a shared goal, or maybe a hint towards an ongoing process within that relationship. Another explanation could involve specific other aspects, for instance the living environment, professional careers, and so on. The framework conditions might not be ideal yet in terms of specific expectations that would lead some respondents to state a clear parenting intention. And within a relationship there are potentially more aspects that need to be sorted out, for example the career paths of both partners.

Another effect which becomes visible in Table 4.3 is concerned with the educational attainment. Respondents with a parenting intention are significantly more likely to have an academic degree. This could be an artefact in the sense of education being a proxy for other characteristics, for instance more liberal views, or individuals who are more daring to be progressive and deviate from traditional social norms.

Table 4.3 Parenting intention by demographics

| | Yes | Undecided | No | Total n Total % |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Sex | | | | 1,112 |
| Female | 214 41.9 % | 109 21.3 % | 188 36.8 % | 511 46.0 % |
| Male | 219 36.4 % | 139 23.1 % | 243 40.4 % | 601 54.0 % |
| Relationship status | | | | 1,112 |
| No relationship / single | 79 34.8 % | 68 30.0 % | 80 35.2 % | 227 20.4 % |
| In relationship | 354 40.0 % | 180 * 20.3 % | 351 39.7 % | 885 79.6 % |
| Level of education | | | | 1,058 |
| Lower secondary | 12 23.1 % | 11 21.2 % | 29 * 55.8 % | 52 4.9 % |
| Medium / higher secondary | 156 38.0 % | 99 24.1 % | 156 38.0 % | 411 38.8 % |
| Tertiary | 245 * 41.2 % | 130 21.8 % | 220 37.0 % | 595 56.2 % |

Note: Pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction.

* indicates significant difference between groups (rows), $p = .05$.

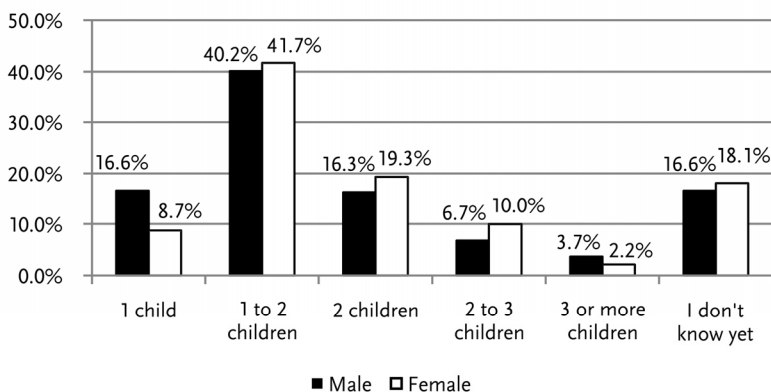
Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$.

Figure 4.6 shows the responses in terms of family size. It is obvious that the majority have intentions towards a family with one to two children. It is particularly interesting that the intermediate category receives the majority of responses. Rost (2003: 10f) has already shown that respondents make use of such categories if they are provided. This gives reason to assume that there are less concrete parenting intentions in terms of family size than often predicted. Particularly concerning the insecurities of modern life courses, it is more than plausible that individuals are not so much set on an exact number of children they wish to have, but rather have a more flexible idea about a range.

Out of the 681 respondents in the thesis sample who want to have children or who are undecided, women seem to want more children than men (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.034$), even though the majority of male and female respondents states to be desiring one to two children (40.2 % men, 41.7 % women). The answer options two, two to three, and three or

more children, however, are more often chosen by female respondents. These numbers predict that primary same-sex families will not be characterised by a large number of children. Even though the preferences for heterosexual couples cluster around a family with two children, the results from the homosexual respondents show that they tend to state lower numbers concerning intended family size than heterosexuals (cf. Rost, 2007: 83).

Figure 4.6 Number of children intended



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany”, 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$ (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: $n = 681$).

Given the specific difficulties for homosexual women and men to achieve the transition to parenthood (cf. chapter 6), the effort to have one or two children may be as much as respondents are willing to take. Going through an adoption process or requesting services of a surrogate several times might not be considered worthwhile, even though the respondent would have specific expertise due to the first experience. Therefore the intended number of children as reported in Figure 4.6 may reflect what they consider realistically achievable.

Table 4.4 Number of children intended by demographics & parenting intention

| | How many children would you like to have? | | | | | | Total n Total % |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| | 1 child | 1 to 2 | 2 | 2 to 3 | 3 or more | don't know | |
| Sex | | | | | | | 677 |
| Female | 28 8.7 % | 134 41.7 % | 62 19.3 % | 32 10.0 % | 7 2.2 % | 58 18.1 % | 321 47.4 % |
| Male | 59 * 16.6 % | 143 40.2 % | 58 16.3 % | 24 6.7 % | 13 3.7 % | 59 16.6 % | 356 52.6 % |
| Relationship status | | | | | | | 677 |
| No relationship / single | 11 7.5 % | 71 48.3 % | 9 6.1 % | 14 9.5 % | 3 2.0 % | 39 26.5 % | 147 21.7 % |
| In relationship | 76 * 14.3 % | 206 * 38.9 % | 111 * 20.9 % | 42 7.9 % | 17 3.2 % | 78 * 14.7 % | 530 78.3 % |
| Level of education | | | | | | | 649 |
| Lower secondary | 4 17.4 % | 9 39.1 % | 5 * 21.7 % | 0 0 % | 1 4.3 % | 4 17.4 % | 23 3.5 % |
| Medium / higher secondary | 43 * 17.1 % | 106 42.2 % | 31 12.4 % | 13 5.2 % | 10 4.0 % | 48 19.1 % | 251 38.7 % |
| Tertiary | 37 9.9 % | 150 40.0 % | 78 * 20.8 % | 39 10.4 % | 8 2.1 % | 63 16.8 % | 375 57.8 % |
| Parenting intention | | | | | | | 677 |
| Yes | 57 13.2 % | 196 * 45.4 % | 98 * 22.7 % | 48 * 11.1 % | 18 * 4.2 % | 15 3.5 % | 432 63.8 % |
| Undecided | 30 12.2 % | 81 33.1 % | 22 9.0 % | 8 3.3 % | 2 0.8 % | 102 * 41.6 % | 245 36.2 % |
| No | | | | | | | |

Note: Pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction.

* indicates significant difference between groups (rows), $p = .05$.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010;

Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$ (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: $n = 681$).

Table 4.4 reports that respondents who desire only one child are significantly more likely to be male. This finding could be related to the specific costs of children, particularly the greater difficulties for homosexual men.

Significant differences between singles and respondents in a relationship occur for most categories. Those respondents who intend to have more than two children don't seem to be influenced by their relationship status, however. A concrete parenting intention is also a significant predictor for stating a desired number of children greater than one.

4.2.4 Negative parenting intention

As reported above, not all respondents state a parenting intention. The 431 individuals (188 women, 243 men) who don't intend to have any children were asked about their reasons. The written answers provided through an open response text field were recoded, analysed, and grouped. This allowed presenting 486 reasons against parenthood in Table 4.5 based on a multiple answer frequency analysis.

The majority of 19.4 % of all reasons is related to the respondents' age or they consider themselves to be too old to have any children (68 respondents); sixty-four of these respondents are 40 or older. Some responses state that there is simply no desire to have any children at all (14.6 %), and 14.3 % of all responses relate to restrictions and independence. The responsibility as a parent is a concern in 12.3 % of the cases and the argument that the life concept is not compatible with or does not include parenthood in 11.7 %. Some respondents do not perceive themselves as 'the parental type' (8.9 % of all reasons provided). Work or career related conflicts make up for 8.3 % of all statements.

The other explanations deal with general stress and burden through parenthood, financial reasons, the societal framework, or the reason that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children. Few respondents claim to have alternatives for parenthood (e.g. community work or taking care of children in the extended family).

Table 4.5 Reasons provided for negative parenting intention

| Reason | Responses | | % of cases |
|--|------------|---------------|---------------|
| | n | % | |
| Age/too old | 68 | 14.0% | 19.4% |
| Do not want any children | 51 | 10.5% | 14.6% |
| Restrictions/independence | 50 | 10.3% | 14.3% |
| Responsibility | 43 | 8.8% | 12.3% |
| Life concept | 41 | 8.4% | 11.7% |
| Not parental type | 31 | 6.4% | 8.9% |
| Career/work related | 29 | 6.0% | 8.3% |
| Stressful/burden | 18 | 3.7% | 5.1% |
| Financial reasons | 17 | 3.5% | 4.9% |
| Societal framework | 17 | 3.5% | 4.9% |
| Difficult for homosexuals | 16 | 3.3% | 4.6% |
| Alternatives | 15 | 3.1% | 4.3% |
| Homosexuals no fit parents/ children might suffer | 11 | 2.3% | 3.1% |
| Content without children | 11 | 2.3% | 3.1% |
| Abandoned/resigned | 10 | 2.1% | 2.9% |
| Uncertain/undesirable future | 9 | 1.9% | 2.6% |
| Health | 8 | 1.6% | 2.3% |
| Homosexuality | 7 | 1.4% | 2.0% |
| Discrimination | 5 | 1.0% | 1.4% |
| Egoistic | 5 | 1.0% | 1.4% |
| No partner | 5 | 1.0% | 1.4% |
| Negative experience in/with own childhood | 5 | 1.0% | 1.4% |
| Overpopulation | 4 | 0.8% | 1.1% |
| Partner does not want children | 3 | 0.6% | 0.9% |
| Personal reasons | 2 | 0.4% | 0.6% |
| Never happened | 2 | 0.4% | 0.6% |
| Current situation | 2 | 0.4% | 0.6% |
| Pressure to perform | 1 | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| Total | 486 | 100.0% | 138.9% |

Note: Multiple response question; 486 responses of 431 respondents.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$ (only respondents without parenting intention: $n = 431$).

Eleven reasons provided to explain a negative parenting intention deal with concerns about the fitness of homosexuals to parent or the welfare of children raised by same-sex couples. This notion includes the uncertainty about reactions from the social environment, however also translates to internalised homophobia (cf. chapter 5.1.2.6). Some respondents are content without children; others have abandoned their intention to

become parents. Health reasons are mentioned next to general arguments about homosexuality and discrimination. A lack of a partner has been noted as well as a lack of a parenting intention of the partner, which relates to different aspects of the importance of a relationship in terms of parenthood. Other explanations reported for not wanting any children are selfishness, overpopulation, or negative experiences in the respondents' childhood, next to personal reasons, the fact that it never happened, the 'current situation,' and a pressure to perform.

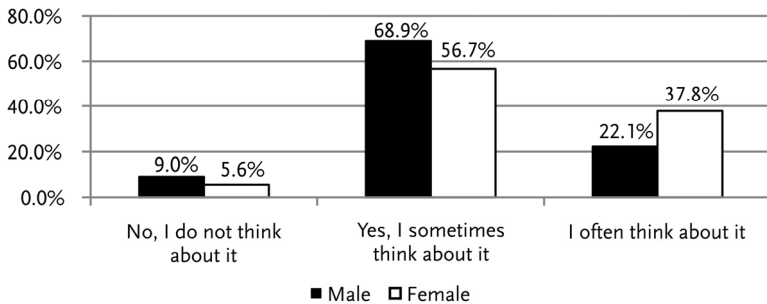
This list of reasons why respondents don't intend to have children is quite heterogeneous; however, it includes some more general reasons also attributable to different-sex couples as well as specific aspects homosexual women and men have to deal with. Even though no further analysis will be conducted here, the overview of these reasons can be fruitful for future research on parenting intentions, particularly of homosexual women and men.

4.2.5 Everyday relevance of parenthood

In order to find out in how far respondents' thoughts are occupied with the idea of parenting, we asked them how often they think about it. Their responses are displayed in Figure 4.7. The data show that women more often think about having children (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.000$): 37.8 % of women frequently think about having children compared to 22.1 % of the men, while men more often report occasional thoughts about parenting (68.9 %, vs. 56.7 % of the women).

This finding implies that parenthood in the context of homosexuality is a relevant aspect in the lives of homosexual women and men nowadays. Parenthood may be considered as an option in the life course of an individual or a couple, or it may already be planned or pursued.

Figure 4.7 Frequency of thinking about parenthood



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$ (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: $n = 681$).

Table 4.6 shows that respondents who often think about parenthood are significantly more likely to be in a relationship. Those who sometimes or never think about parenthood are more likely to be single. If they often think about parenthood they are also significantly more likely to have an academic degree. Respondents who don’t think about parenthood are more likely to be undecided in terms of their parenting intention; if thinking about it, they are more likely to state a parenting intention.

The relevance of a relationship for the development of parenting intentions is known from the literature (cf. Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter, 2004; Kapella and Rille-Pfeiffer, 2004). The fact that respondents with an academic degree more often think about parenthood might be associated with the reflectiveness of individuals with higher educational degrees. The difficulties of achieving the goal of becoming parents as a same-sex couple call for intensive research into options and consequences of a great number of decisions involved in the pursuit. Furthermore, an academic degree and the usually related higher income might only facilitate many costly options of becoming parents, e.g. treatment with assisted reproductive techniques or foreign adoption.

These findings, in addition to the results from above, may suggest that a certain degree of ‘readiness’ is relevant in terms of developing the intention to have children. The frequency with which parenthood occurs among everyday thoughts, thinking about and discussion prerequisites, etc. may be episodes in a process that leads to the development of a positive or negative parenting intention.

Table 4.6 Frequency of thinking about parenthood by demographics & parenting intention

| | No | Yes, sometimes | Yes, often | Total n Total % |
|---------------------------|--------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Sex | | | | 680 |
| | 15 | 183 | 122 * | 323 |
| Female | 5.6 % | 56.7 % | 37.8 % | 47.5 % |
| | 32 | 246 * | 79 | 357 |
| Male | 9.0 % | 68.9 % | 22.1 % | 52.5 % |
| Relationship status | | | | 680 |
| | 18 * | 114 * | 15 | 147 |
| No relationship / single | 12.2 % | 77.6 % | 10.2 % | 21.6 % |
| | 32 | 315 | 186 * | 533 |
| In relationship | 6.0 % | 59.1 % | 34.9 % | 78.4 % |
| Level of education | | | | 652 |
| | 3 | 13 | 7 | 32 |
| Lower secondary | 13.0 % | 56.3 % | 30.4 % | 3.5 % |
| | 25 | 174 | 56 | 255 |
| Medium / higher secondary | 9.8 % | 68.2 % | 22.0 % | 39.1 % |
| | 22 | 223 | 129 * | 374 |
| Tertiary | 5.9 % | 59.6 % | 34.5 % | 57.4 % |
| Parenting intention | | | | 680 |
| | 16 | 237 * | 179 * | 432 |
| Yes | 3.7 % | 54.9 % | 41.4 % | 63.5 % |
| | 34 * | 192 | 22 | 248 |
| Undecided | 13.7 % | 77.4 % | 8.9 % | 36.5 % |
| No | - | - | - | - |

Note: Pairwise comparison of proportions using the *Bonferroni* correction.

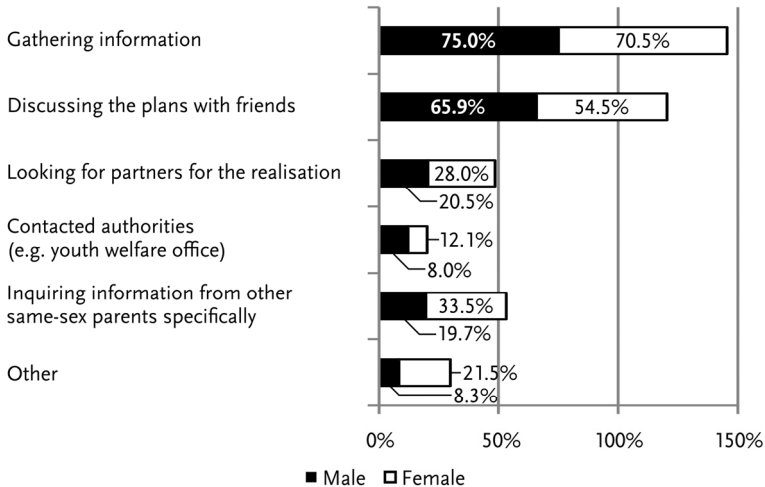
* indicates significant difference between groups (rows), $p = .05$.

Source: Original analyses based on *ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010*; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$ (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: $n = 681$).

4.2.6 Steps towards realisation³⁸

Figure 4.8 shows the response set to a multiple answer question regarding which steps towards the realisation of parenthood the respondents have already taken.

Figure 4.8 Taking action towards parenthood



Note: Percent of cases, multiple response question; 267 responses of 133 males (total % of cases: 201,5 %) and 432 responses of 202 females (total % of cases: 216 %).

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$ (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: $n = 681 \rightarrow$ only respondents who have already taken action: $n = 335$).

Half of those 681 who intend to have children or who are undecided have done nothing so far to pursue parenthood ($n = 346$). Male respondents are far more likely to be among those who have not yet done anything, as are singles and respondents with lowest educational attainment. Those who have the intention to have children are also less likely

³⁸ Group differences reported are based on pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction, $p = .05$.

to be in the group that has not yet done anything to achieve this goal. Those who have already gathered information are more often female, in a relationship, and want to have children. The ones who contacted authorities are more likely to be in a relationship and intend to have children. Respondents who have been looking for potential partners for a realisation of the intention to have children are also more likely female, in a relationship, have an academic degree and the intention to have a child. Those who talked to friends about their intention to have a child are more likely female, in a relationship and not uncertain about their parenting intention. 16.3 % of the cases represent other options which were provided by the respondents in an open answer text field.

Among the open answer questions were 18 cases where the respondent (couple) was already in treatment, usually in a fertility clinic. At times respondents detailed that this happened abroad. Singular mentions are concerned with foreign adoption or home insemination with a private sperm donor. Six times contact has been established to fertility clinics, but treatment had not yet begun. It was reported that a partner was already pregnant three times, in another three cases partners had been found for the 'further process' (implies home insemination) and further three responses show that the intention was abandoned, presumably in the process of realisation. Other – singular – responses show that individuals have relocated in order to avoid the responsibility of a specific authority or they provide the opinion that the legal situation concerning the civil unions does not support parenthood.

These results show that homosexual women and men who intend to have children are pursuing their goal by various means. Information gathering and discussions with friends are among the most common forms of action taken towards the transition to parenthood. The importance of information and conversations should not come to much of a surprise considering that access to parenthood is rather restricted, often involves legal issues and medical treatment, perhaps even abroad. Thus it is necessary to be informed about the specific procedures and the opportunities and costs involved.

4.2.7 Motivation towards parenthood – ‘Value of Children’

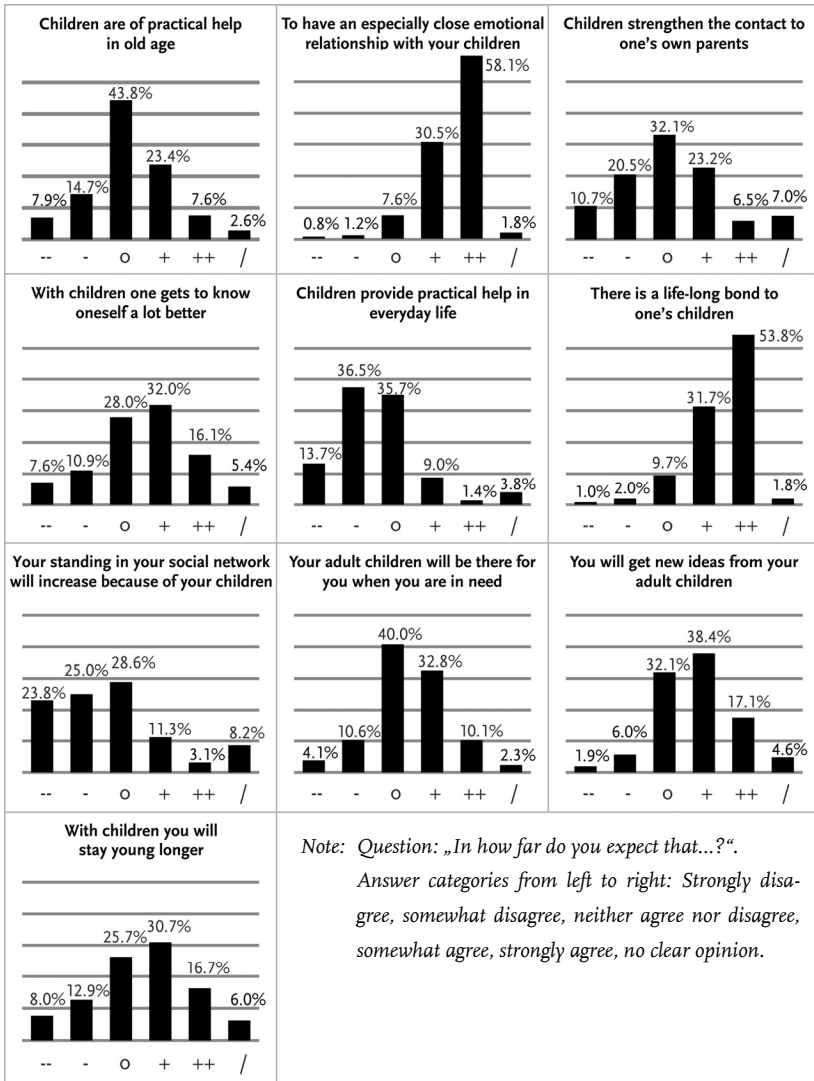
So far the descriptive results of this thesis were concerned with the general intention of the respondents to have children, attributed prerequisites and the action that was taken towards the transition to parenthood. The following section is devoted to motives underlying the parenting intention of homosexual women and men. The items used to capture those motives are applied from the ‘Value of Children’ (VoC) concept, originally developed by Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) and recently extended by Nauck (2005) to combine the concept with social production function (SPF) theory.

The implementation of the VoC approach within the framework of social production function theory is meant to close the gap due to a lack of “*bridging hypotheses* connecting the levels of social context to the level of individual action” (Nauck, 2005: 185). Thus children “become intermediate goods in their (potential) parents’ social production function by optimizing their social esteem and their physical well being” (ibid.: 186). Under the assumption that individuals cannot directly enhance physical and social well-being, children are seen as context-specific production factors. Therefore the VoC approach is useful in understanding motives of individuals towards parenthood. The VoC concept proposed by Nauck was incorporated into the design of the German *pairfam* family panel (Klaus, 2007; Wendt et al., 2011), and the *ifb*-survey used all VoC items that were used in the *pairfam* minipanel and the main waves to capture information.

4.2.7.1 Perceived benefits of children

Figure 4.9 shows that some statements are characterised by a distribution with little pronounced agreement or disagreement, with many respondents in the intermediate category neither agreeing nor disagreeing (quasi undecided). Other statements show more pronounced disagreement or agreement, sometimes in bimodal distributions.

Figure 4.9 Perceived benefits of children, ‘Value of Children’ items



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Particularly the two statements concerning an especially close relationship to children and a life-long bond to children show strongly skewed

answer patterns in terms of agreement. More than 80 % of the respondents (strongly) agree with these statements. These two items were meant to capture 'affection' as one dimension of the social welfare production function of children as proposed by Nauck (2005) (Wendt et al., 2011: 13). Among all statements concerned with perceived benefits of children, the affection-items show the most uniform positive responses. These particularly strong reactions could be understood as an affirmation of the perceived positive emotional value and expectations of parenthood.

Significant findings in the differentiated inspection will be highlighted in order to gain more substantial understanding about differences regarding the motivational aspects of parenthood as captured with the VoC items³⁹.

Male respondents are significantly more likely to strongly agree that children are of help in old age. They are more likely to strongly disagree that there is an especially close bond to one's own children, that one gets to know oneself better, and that there is a life-long bond to one's children. Men are less likely to somewhat disagree that children will be of practical help in everyday life, but more likely to neither agree nor disagree in the matter. Males are less likely to (strongly) disagree and more likely to agree that the standing in the social environment will increase with children. They are also less likely to disagree and more likely to strongly agree that children will be there when one is in need.

It seems that while men don't respond so much to perceptions of emotional aspects of parenthood, they react to some functional and practical aspects. It is particularly interesting to see that they strongly respond to the idea that the reputation in the social environment will increase as parents.

The relationship status of the respondents only proved to result in a significant difference concerning one statement: Respondents in a rela-

³⁹ Group differences are based on pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction, $p = .05$.

tionship are more likely to somewhat disagree that children strengthen contact to one's own parents. This could be due to a smaller importance of the family of origin if the relationship takes the place of the primary source for familial functions like emotional exchange, security, and so on. The item itself is rather interesting, considering that homosexual women and men may experience rejection from their own parents (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 149) and might hope to reconnect or improve the quality of this relationship by giving them grandchildren.

The educational attainment showed to contribute to significant differences regarding several statements. Respondents with an academic degree are less likely to believe that children strengthen contact to their own parents. They are also more likely to strongly disagree or to have no opinion whether or not children will be of practical help in everyday life. They are also less likely to strongly disagree that there is a life-long bond to children; however, they are more likely to have no clear opinion in this matter. They are less likely to (strongly) disagree and more likely to agree that one will get new ideas from adult children. It seems that higher educational attainment results in a greater perception of children as stimulants in terms of providing new ideas and perhaps new impulses for life in general. Higher education of prospective parents doesn't seem to be associated with a focus on practical and functional aspects of children.

Whether or not respondents intend or don't intend to have children proved to be significant for the answer patterns to some statements. Those without a parenting intention are more likely to strongly disagree that children are of help in old age, and that there is an especially close bond to children. Respondents without a parenting intention are also more likely to have no clear opinion about how children affect contact to their own parents, about them offering practical help in everyday life, and to strongly disagree that one gets to know oneself better with children.

Respondents without the intention to have children are more likely to disagree and less likely to (strongly) agree that adult children will provide new ideas. They are also more likely to (strongly) disagree and less likely

to (strongly) agree that with children one will stay young longer. Respondents with the intention to parent are less likely to disagree and more likely to (strongly) agree to the statement that the relationship between parents and children is characterised by a life-long bond. They are less likely to agree that children strengthen the standing in the social environment.

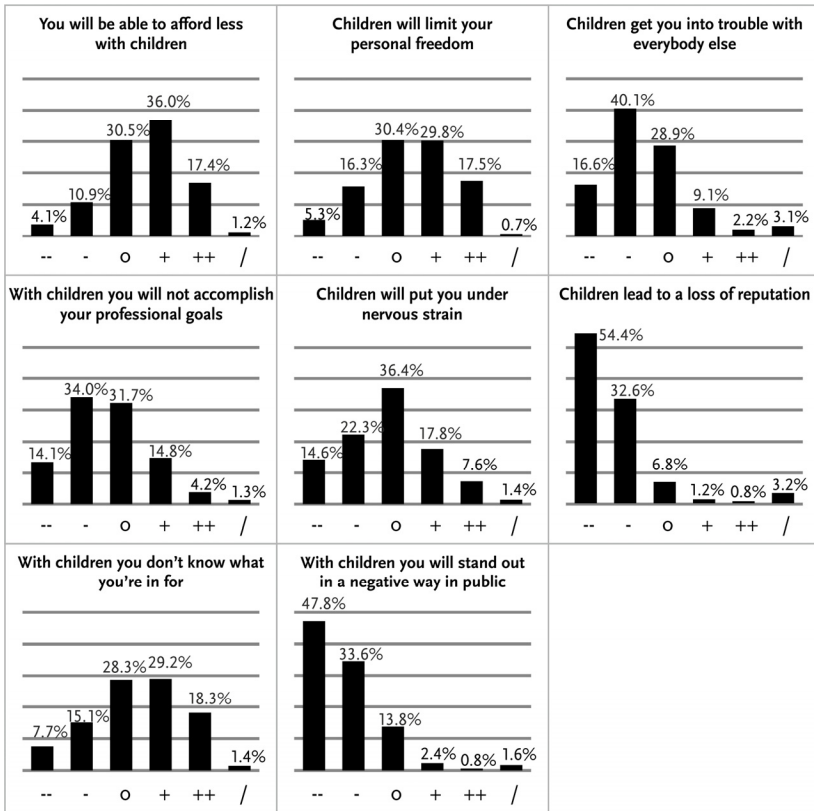
These group differences seem obvious but may be seen as a confirmation of the parenting intention per se. The direction of the causality of the effect, however, cannot be explained. Those who don't want any children don't see any particular benefit or even disadvantages. Respondents who intend to have children are characterised by an overall greater perception of benefits and significant differences towards an emotional and close connection between parents and children. The fact that they don't perceive children as enhancing their social standing might be evidence for a greater influence of emotional aspects among the factors that result in their intention to have children.

4.2.7.2 Perceived costs of children

The items used to measure perceived costs of children are depicted in Figure 4.10. The figure shows peaked distributions for the statements that children cause trouble with everybody else and that it will not be possible to achieve professional goals. Particularly skewed distributions are obvious concerning the statement that children will lead to a loss of reputation and that one will stand out negatively in public.

Significant differences have been found for female respondents, who are more likely to strongly disagree to the statement that children can cause trouble with everybody else. Male respondents are more likely to disagree while female respondents are more likely to (strongly) agree that with children one will not accomplish one's professional goals.

Figure 4.10 Perceived costs of children, ‘Value of Children’ items



Note: Question: „In how far do you expect that...?”.
 Answer categories from left to right: Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree, no clear opinion.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Males are more likely to disagree and less likely to agree that one doesn't know what one is in for with children. Furthermore, male respondents are more likely to strongly agree that one will stand out in a negative way in public with children. It is evident that men and women perceive different aspects of uncertainty or difficulties related to parenthood.

These results provide evidence that the women from the sample don't seem to perceive or be concerned with potential difficulties by having children, besides the aspect of suffering negative consequences in terms of their professional development. Motherhood still seems to be a threat for women's careers, as evidenced by their perceptions. Men, on the other hand, seem to be more concerned by the uncertainties of parenthood and the potential for social disadvantages.

The relationship status shows more importance in distinguishing response patterns for the perceived costs of children than for their benefits. Respondents who somewhat agree to the statement that with children one can afford less are more likely to be in a relationship. Strongly disagreeing to the statement that children limit one's personal freedom is also more likely for respondents in a relationship. Being in a relationship makes it more likely to strongly disagree or to neither agree nor disagree to the statement that children will hinder the accomplishment of one's professional goals.

It is quite interesting to see that a relationship seems to cushion perceived negative effects in terms of personal freedom and the professional career while perceived restrictions concerning the available income for expenditure and consumption are more momentous for partnered respondents. While the relationship seems to provide some support, the importance of the financial situation may be an effect of the highly educated respondents pooling their economic resources in the relationship and who might thus be accustomed to a more luxurious lifestyle which may or may not be compatible with children, but certainly seems to instill the fear of experiencing cutbacks in terms of that lifestyle.

Significant differences concerning educational attainment provide additional evidence for perceived costs of children. What has been reasoned above in terms of lifestyle and expenditure seems to correspond with the finding that respondents without an academic degree are more likely to somewhat disagree that one will be able to afford less with children. Those with an academic degree seem to think more often that children will be an economic strain. An academic degree results in a greater likelihood of disagreeing to the idea that children cause trouble with every-

body else. Respondents with an academic degree are less likely to strongly agree that children lead to a loss of reputation. Without an academic degree, respondents are more likely to strongly agree that, with children, one will stand out in a negative way in public.

Tertiary education brings along greater opportunity costs; however, not necessarily in terms of the professional career, but rather concerning the financial situation. Highly educated respondents seem to be less concerned with their overall perception in their social environment.

While respondents with a parenting intention are significantly more likely to (strongly) disagree that one will be able to afford less with children, those without a parenting intention are more likely to strongly agree to this statement. Those who intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) disagree that children will result in a limitation of personal freedom. Being undecided about the intention to have children or having a negative parenting intention makes it more likely to agree to the idea of a limitation of personal freedom, and respondents with a negative parenting intention are more likely to strongly agree. Respondents who don't intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) agree that children will cause trouble with everybody else. A parenting intention makes it more likely to (strongly) disagree to the statement that with children one cannot accomplish one's professional goals; a negative parenting intention makes it more likely to (strongly) agree. The same is true for the statement that children are a cause for nervous strain. A parenting intention makes it also more likely to (strongly) disagree to the statement that children lead to a loss of reputation. Concerning the statement that one doesn't know what one is up for with children, respondents with a parenting intention are more likely to (strongly) disagree, while those without a parenting intention are more likely to strongly agree. Without a parenting intention, respondents are more likely to strongly agree to the idea that with children one will stand out negatively in public, while those with a parenting intention are more likely to (strongly) disagree.

Overall the significant differences among respondents with and without the intention to have children correspond with the theme found for per-

ceived benefits of children. Those who wish to have children are overall more positive and disagree to negative aspects or don't regard them as relevant, while those who don't intend to have children more strongly agree to the perceived negative aspects resulting from parenthood.

4.2.8 Statements concerning parenthood in the context of homosexuality⁴⁰

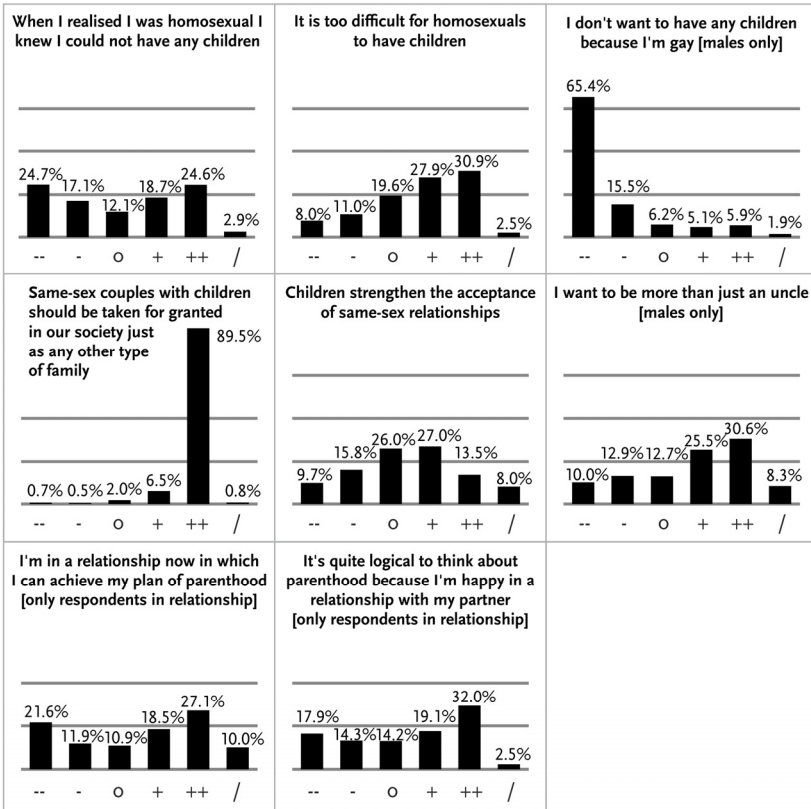
The respondents provided additional information on a set of statements concerned with parenthood. Two are dealing with parenthood and homosexuality in particular, two are concerned with same-sex families in society, two with parenthood as a logical development in the course of a relationship, and two with specific aspects of homosexual men.

While equal proportions of respondents agree and disagree concerning the statement that when they realised they were homosexual they knew they could not have any children, there is a greater proportion of respondents who (strongly) agree that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children. However, a considerable proportion of homosexual women and men don't believe that parenthood and homosexuality are incompatible, probably acknowledging the fact, that achieving parenthood as a homosexual woman or man is going to be difficult.

The statement that same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted just as any other type of family receives almost unanimous agreement. The distribution concerning the idea that children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships is more heterogeneous, with a slightly greater number of respondents in agreement than in disagreement.

⁴⁰ Group differences reported are based on pairwise comparison of proportions using the Bonferroni correction, $p = .05$.

Figure 4.11 Agreement to statements concerning parenthood



Note: Question: „In how far do you agree or disagree that...?“. Answer categories from left to right: Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree, no clear opinion.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114; males: n = 593; respondents in relationship: n = 873.

Around half of the respondents who are in a relationship agree that they are in a relationship in which they can achieve their plan of having children, and that it is a logical next step to be thinking about parenthood when one is in a happy relationship. This reflects an image of a certain normality of having a family within a stable and balanced relationship.

The vast majority of male respondents (strongly) disagree to the idea that they don't want to have children because they are gay males. More than half of the males (strongly) agree that they want to be more than just an uncle. This indicates that parenthood means more to them than just fathering a child in the biological sense and should involve more or stronger parental features.

Female respondents are more likely to disagree and male respondents are more likely to strongly agree that children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships. Males are also more likely to (strongly) agree that same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted just as any other type of family. Females are more likely to strongly agree that it's quite logical to be thinking about parenthood because they're happy in a relationship with their partner. Male respondents show a bimodal answer pattern and are more likely to (strongly) disagree and to (strongly) agree that when they realised they were homosexual they thought they could never have any children. Male respondents are less likely to (strongly) disagree and more likely to strongly agree that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children.

These significant differences concerning the sex of the respondents show that males in particular seem to place relevance on certain aspects of parenthood that are related to subjective norms and social status. It is interesting to see that they are more likely to believe that children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships. This idea corresponds with the finding from above in terms of perceived benefits of children.

The fact that homosexual men are more likely to believe that same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted as any other type of family in combination with the previous results creates an image that homosexual men seem to perceive their social status with room for improvement. The fact that they are more likely to either disagree or agree to the statement that they thought parenthood was out of the question when they came out may contain the conviction that homosexuality and parenthood are either not compatible at all, or the certainty that there will be a possibility to have a family as a gay male. It is interesting to see

that female respondents are less likely to agree or disagree to this statement, which may indicate that parenthood in the context of homosexuality may not be such a clear cut matter in the perception of lesbians. The fact that males are also more likely to believe that it's too difficult to have children reflects the actual challenges homosexual men have to face and thus comes as no surprise. It is interesting, however, to note that females are more likely to agree to parenthood as a logical next step in a relationship.

Respondents who are in a relationship are more likely to (strongly) agree that same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted just as any other family. They are also more likely to (strongly) agree that they thought they could never have children when they realised they were homosexual. However, many respondents in a relationship are also older, which could explain this finding. Respondents in a relationship are more likely to (strongly) agree that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children. This last finding might be the result of considerations about parenthood and how to achieve it.

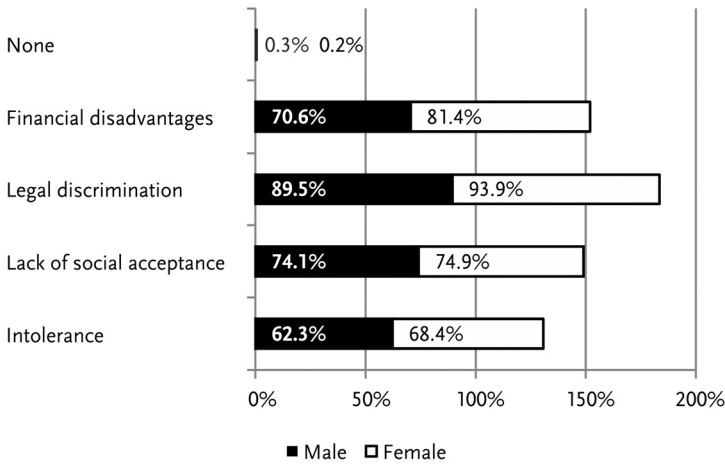
Respondents with an academic degree are more likely to strongly disagree but also more likely to strongly agree with the statement that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children as opposed to those without an academic degree. This divide is quite interesting. It may reflect certain capital, knowledge and pioneer spirit and the ambition to achieve the goal of having children. On the other hand, it may be a more austere view on the challenges on the way towards parenthood. Males with an academic degree are less likely to strongly disagree with the statement that they want to be more than just an uncle. This gives reason to believe that particularly men with an academic degree might be willing to facilitate parenthood of a lesbian couple by donating sperm.

The following paragraph concludes the differentiated inspection of the statements regarding the respondents' parenting intention. Males who don't intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) disagree to the statement they want to be more than just an uncle, whereas males with the intention to parent are more likely to (strongly) agree. Respondents without the intention to have children are more likely to (strongly) dis-

agree and less likely to (strongly) agree that children improve the acceptance of same-sex relationships. Those who intend to have children are less likely to (strongly) disagree and more likely to (strongly) agree to be in a relationship in which they can achieve their plan of parenthood and also the statement that it's quite logical to be thinking about parenthood due to the happy relationship. The respondents who do not intend to have children are less likely to strongly disagree and more likely to strongly agree that when they realised they were homosexual they thought they could never have any children. The male respondents who don't intend to have children are also more likely to (strongly) agree to the statement that they don't want children because they are gay, while those who intend to have children are more likely to (strongly) disagree with this statement. Respondents with the intention to parent are more likely to strongly agree that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children.

These results give further proof to the connection between parenthood and the relationship. Homosexual men seem to want to participate as active fathers raising children in a committed relationship with their partner. Particularly the finding that those respondents who don't intend to have children are more likely to have seen homosexuality and parenthood as incompatible when they first came out could mean that they abandoned the idea of parenthood under this very specific belief. It has been reported, however, that this belief has been proven wrong to and by homosexuals in the last decades. These findings indicate, however, that the respondents who now say they don't intend to have children might have come to a different conviction under the current circumstances and larger numbers of primary same-sex families. There seem to be male respondents in particular who don't think that homosexuality is compatible with parenthood at all. This can be deducted from the significant link between a negative parenting intention and the male-only statement "I don't want any children because I'm gay". The fact that respondents who intend to have children are more likely to agree about the difficulties of having children may well be grounded in their experience.

Figure 4.12 Major issues of same-sex families in Germany



Note: Percent of cases, multiple response question; 1,778 responses of 601 males (total % of cases: 296.8 %) and 1,626 responses of 513 females (total % of cases: 318.8 %).

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114.

Figure 4.12 shows the agreement of the respondents to five statements concerning the major issues of same-sex families in Germany. It is obvious that practically all respondents see problems for homosexual women and men, their partners and their children. The statement with the highest number of responses concerns the legal situation in Germany and financial disadvantages of partners in a civil union vs. married couples. It has to be noted that between the time of the data collection and the writing of this thesis, some adjustment has been implemented (cf. chapter 2.2). The figure shows the importance of actual and perceived discrimination, nonetheless, particularly when families are concerned. Perhaps even more striking is the large number of respondents who state that major problems for same-sex families are intolerance and lack of social acceptance. Those who state that lack of social acceptance is a major problem for same-sex families are more likely to be in a relationship than to be single. This might be due to greater potential for difficult

situations, conflict or discrimination because a same-sex couple attracts others in the social environment to the discursive subject of homosexuality, while a single individual may be more invisible in this regard. Intolerance as a major issue has been more often stated by male respondents, confirming the notion that particularly male homosexuals are under more scrutiny due to their sexual orientation.

4.2.9 Summary: parenting intentions

The descriptive results of this chapter have shown that parenthood is a part of the lives of contemporary homosexual women and men. Some of them want to have children, and others don't, but in either case, parenthood seems to be an option in their life courses, an option which hints towards a normalisation of homosexuality. Children may be a way to enrich one's life or partnership, but the majority don't consider children necessary to be happy. The reasons respondents gave against a wish to have children are mostly concerned with arguments independent of their sexual orientation.

Respondents who want to have children and who are undecided described more or less concrete ideas about parenthood and how to achieve it. The apparent prerequisites to parenthood that found the most agreement among respondents are concerned with the couple relationship, feeling ready to become a parent, the financial and professional situation, and the availability of childcare. Many also agreed that an accepting social environment for same-sex couples with children and an improved legal situation were important, however to a lesser degree than the personal and couple readiness dimensions. This might reflect that the situation in Germany is comparatively welcoming for same-sex parents, although there is room for improvement.

The presence of the theme of parenthood in daily life is illustrated by the fact that the majority of those who want to have children or who are undecided think about it sometimes or often, reflecting more than 90 % of homosexuals in the study. Particularly for those who are in the pur-

suit of parenthood, the prospect of having children and the efforts to achieve this goal become part of their everyday life.

The statements relating to perceived benefits associated with children a vast majority of respondents agree on are strongly related to emotion and affection. Strong disapproval of respondents is evident concerning perceived costs of children represented by the idea that children lead to a loss of esteem. In terms of costs, respondents perceive children as limiting both, financial leeway and personal freedom, and as a source of uncertainty, because one never knows what one is up for.

Finally, the respondents provide insight into the compatibility of homosexuality and parenthood by degree of (dis-)agreement to specific statements concerned with homosexuality. Particularly striking are the results that homosexual men strongly disapprove that one legitimate reason for not wanting children is because they're gay. Most respondents agreed that same-sex couples with children should be seen as just another 'normal' type of family. The results hint towards the specific challenges of (achieving) parenthood in the context of homosexuality. A majority of respondents agree that legal discrimination, financial disadvantages, lack of social acceptance and intolerance are major issues of same-sex families in Germany.

5 Determinants of parenting intentions

This chapter is devoted to exploring determinants of parenting intentions for homosexual women and men. It starts with a review of the literature in terms of potential influences, followed by a description of the methods used for the analyses before results are presented and discussed.

5.1 State of research on influences on parenting intentions

The following section aims towards providing a thorough overview of the state of research concerning aspects which have been found to impact parenting intention. While the extent may not be fully necessary for the subsequent modeling, the compilation may provide a foundation for further research. It has been reported that childlessness is related to a series of biographical decisions influenced by the external framework conditions, individual resources, and subjective aims in an individual's life (Kreyenfeld and Konietzka, 2007: 15). It would seem plausible that the same is true for an individuals' reasoning in favour of parenthood. The presentation of the state of research will include these spheres, however the structure will distinguish between attitudinal aspects, normative influences, and obstructive aspects.

5.1.1 Attitudes driving a wish for parenthood

In reviewing the literature on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, similarities to the conceptualisations of parenting intentions can be found in that the desire for children is more driven by emotional than economic and instrumental aspects (cf. chapter 2.1). Strong motifs for parenthood among lesbian mothers have been found to be the anticipated "feelings of affection and happiness in the relationship with children" and "the expectation that parenthood will provide life-fulfilment" (Bos et al., 2003: 2218f, 2222; quotes: 2218). Gay fathers seemed to have similar reasons for having children as heterosexual fathers. Even though disagreeing to children's function regarding attain-

ing social status in a community, the degree of disagreement was significantly lower than for heterosexual fathers (Bigner and Jacobsen, 1989: 169f). Gay men striving for adoption were found to be motivated by aspects of psychological or personal fulfilment through parenthood, a love for children, raising children as part of life, to help a child have a better life, and the desire to shape and teach a child. While some were motivated by the partner's wish to become a parent, there were few who saw the option of personal security in a child (Goldberg et al., 2012: 163ff).

An analysis of lesbian and non-lesbian mothers found significant differences in the motivation to have children only regarding goals and incentives. Corresponding items refer to children as a "special incentive to succeed in life," as one of the "highest purposes in life," and as facilitators of a "stronger bond between parents" (Siegenthaler and Bigner, 2000: 84).

By use of an instrument developed at the University of Leipzig (*Leipziger Fragebogen zu Kinderwunschmotiven*, LKM), Kleinert et al. (2012b) measured motifs underlying the desire to have children of a sample of heterosexual and non-heterosexual participants. The mean values of the four measurement scales were lower for non-heterosexuals than for heterosexuals (ibid.: 314f). Emotional aspects, social approval, and witnessing a child's development have been identified by the authors as the three underlying dimensions of motivators for parenting. The motif with the greatest influence for a parenting desire was found to be "the desire for emotional stability and life meaning" (Kleinert et al., 2015: 179). Fearing financial and personal constraints continued the ranking of motifs, however opposing a desire to have children. The desire for social recognition, a last motif for having children, ranked with lowest mean values among the non-heterosexual respondents (ibid.).

Children have been found to be associated also as facilitators for a better relationship between respondents and their own parents. A great majority of homosexual men who achieved parenthood via surrogacy reported a closer bond and increased contact to their own parents after the birth of the children, which corresponded with the respondents' expectations (Bergman et al., 2010: 125ff).

5.1.2 Normative influences concerning parenthood

Under the assumption that the individual is influenced by its social environment, social norms, roles, and role expectations as well as attitudes towards children and parenthood need to be regarded concerning the parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. An individual's beliefs about "normative expectations of relevant referents" (Ajzen, 1985: 14) have been theorised as a fundamental part in the process of forming an intention. Literature on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men finds several aspects of the social environment that have an effect in the decision-making process.

5.1.2.1 Social norms and family-related guiding images (*Leitbilder*)

An influence on fertility and parenting intentions can be socially mediated. Transition rates to first pregnancy have been found to increase under certain conditions after a work colleague gave birth (cf. Pink et al., 2014). Besides such an effect, which was found to be mediated by social learning in the analysis of Pink et al. (2014), there may be influences on a greater societal level: social norms and values should be taken into consideration in this regard. The concept of family-related guiding images (*Leitbilder*) (Lück, 2014: 453) seems most applicable in this concern. They can be viewed as internalised "frequently unquestioned notions of normality that are perceived as a matter of course" (ibid.: 454) in regard to the family. Furthermore

"[t]hey can vary from one person to the next and hence can basically explain individual behavioural differences. They tend, however, to be collectively shared within societies, regions, milieus and generations so that they can also be drawn upon, for example, to explain national differences and form an element of a culture" (Lück, 2014: 454).

Thus it seems plausible that general societal guiding principles or images that are connected with norms and values are relevant concerning parenting intentions in terms of subjective norms. This should be all the

more true for homosexual women and men as members of a deviant group within society regarding their sexual orientation and sexuality.

However, Kleinert et al. (2012b) have found that homosexual women and men are less motivated through social expectations, norms, and social conventions in their desire to have children than heterosexuals. Furthermore they find that a desire for social recognition was the least important motivational factor for non-heterosexual respondents (Kleinert et al., 2012b: 314ff; Kleinert et al., 2015: 179). The international comparison between lesbian couples in Ireland and Sweden carried out by Ryan-Flood (2005), however, showed that societal stances regarding parenting roles seem to have an influence on female same-sex couples and their decisions about donor choice.

This evidence suggests that social norms and guiding images are theoretically relevant and should thus be part of the explanatory approach in trying to understand parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. Particularly given the few and partly ambiguous results in the literature, the influence of social norms should be looked at in more detail.

5.1.2.2 Age

It should be considered that age could have an effect on parenting intentions via social norms. Research has shown that particularly young homosexuals think about parenthood and some desire to have children in the future (Haag, 2013: 412f; Hertling, 2011: 281; D'Augelli et al., 2007; Weiß and Becker, 2001: 127). Considering the more welcoming social environment regarding sexual minority groups, this could be an explanation for higher levels of parenting intentions among adolescent and young homosexual women and men today. Thus age could be a proxy for the younger generation of homosexuals, who grew up and were socialised in a more liberal social environment.

Furthermore, a connection between parenting intentions and age could be related to social norms regarding 'adequate' age limits for parenting. In April 2015, for example, German media stirred a debate about upper

age limits for parenting, among other things, when reports of a 65-year old woman made the headlines, who was pregnant with quadruplets after treatment with assisted reproductive techniques in Ukraine⁴¹. It has been reported that the age limits for subsidisation of ART in Germany range from 25 to 40/50. The importance of a person's age in connection with the intention to have children is also relevant for youth welfare offices in considering age limits between prospective adoptive or foster parents and the children placed for assignment (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, 2012). Therefore it could be argued that age could also be relevant as a normative factor regarding limits for parenting. It should be expected that the individual would consider this particular information on normative boundaries in its decision-making process regarding a transition to parenthood.

5.1.2.3 Legal framework

A given legal framework can set boundaries to or complicate individual behaviour. Given that surrogacy, for example, is illegal in Germany, this means that it is either disqualified as an option or, if it still is to be pursued, solutions need to be found to accomplish it elsewhere. Cross-border reproductive treatment would be a solution in this case. Besides concrete effects on the individual via restrictions or opportunities, the legal framework also influences a given population in providing a normative continuum of acceptable and punishable behaviour. Thus it provides a social norm regarding adequate behaviour. Therefore the legal framework in Germany concerning parenthood of same-sex couples, as briefly outlined above, could be considered as a social norm for German citizens, including homosexual women and men.

⁴¹ <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/panorama/kuenstliche-befruchtung-jaehrige-bringt-vierlinge-zur-welt-1.2491967>; URL last validated 2016-08-22.

5.1.2.4 Personal identity as a member of a sexual minority group and re-definition of identity in the context of parenthood

The social environment is based on certain principles, for example that there are only two sexes and appropriate genders and gender roles, that heterosexuality is the predominant normative sexual orientation, and so on. According to Hanssen (2012: 239) “heteronormativity pervades any meaning and behaviour in cultural and social institutions and in notions of ‘a normal life’”. Referring to Foucault (1990), Hanssen (2012: 239) argues that the heteronormative normality is a social construct which is reconfirmed by deviations from this norm. The author argues that “[b]ecause of this dominant logic, children and young people growing up in rainbow families are frequently reminded of their otherness and incomprehensibility” (ibid.). The same should be true for the parents, however.

As a result, members of sexual minority groups are constantly aware of the predominant norm and ideal, and by expressing or openly demonstrating their deviation from the norm they reconfirm it. The situation gains more depth when norms and ideals regarding parenthood are added to this reflection. Particularly gay men seem to be subject to “Heterosexist Gender Role Strain,” which is a

“particular type of gender role strain in gay fathers who experience their gay and father identities as mutually exclusive, and who are constantly questioned by a society that believes in the primacy of women in child-rearing roles” (Bergman et al., 2010: 113).

Respondents from the qualitative study of Chabot and Ames also described difficulties in negotiating their lesbian identity with their new identity as mothers. Some felt marginalised and invisible, even more than they were as lesbians before (Chabot and Ames, 2004: 351). There seems to be less support for lesbian mothers and gay fathers both in the homosexual and the heterosexual communities “due to their marginal social status that is somewhat based upon their dual role as gay and

lesbian individual and their role as a parent” (Siegenthaler and Bigner, 2000: 80). In a more recent study, however, lesbian mothers seemed to feel rather welcome in the lesbian community (Gartrell et al., 2006: 183).

A failure to adhere to social norms may be uncomfortable for the individual, but it also offers “possibilities of making a meaningful life in spite of” the deviation from the norm (Hanssen, 2012: 240). It seems that the collective understanding of older generations, that homosexuality and parenting are irreconcilable, had to be proven wrong to homosexual women and men themselves (Chabot and Ames, 2004: 351; Mallon, 2000: 10; Touroni and Coyle, 2002: 199; Bigner and Bozett, 1989: 155; Bergold and Rupp, 2011: 132f; Berkowitz and Marsiglio, 2007: 372, 374f). This means, however, that nowadays homo- and heterosexuals have seen new options of partnership and parenthood that exist alongside with the traditional normative model of the family. The main aspect here is the visibility and tolerance of behaviour deviating from the predominant heteronormative social norm.

Building on these reflections, a homosexual individual is confronted with the necessity to restructure his or her identity as deviant from the heteronormative ideal. This is part of the coming-out process. This identity, however, generally seems to need to be redefined once more concerning a transition to parenthood (cf. Wall, 2013: 397; Bergold and Rupp, 2011: 133f). This redefinition is concerned with the individual’s sexual identity and the societal image of parenthood as a heteronormative construct (cf. Hanssen, 2012). The individual is confronted with multiple deviations, particularly the one as a homosexual parent.

This redefinition, however, also leads to another deviation from the norms among the subpopulation of homosexuals. References to this second type of redefinition are also visible in the reports of homosexual men who became parents via surrogacy. Quite interestingly their focus shifted towards social contacts who were also parents (and not necessarily homosexual) and thus particularly friendships with single male homosexuals were discontinued. This was attributed to practical reasons like common grounds and interests among parents, regardless of their sexual orientation, and differences in interests and priorities between

new parents and single friends from before the transition to parenthood (Bergman et al., 2010: 128f). While practical aspects are evident, a restructuring of social contacts might also be due to deviant behaviour regarding social norms, particularly among sexual minority groups. There has been evidence in data of older generation homosexual women of low support for same-sex parenting among homosexual peers (DeMino et al., 2007: 170).

Without conducting further statistical analyses or applying correlation measures, Hertling (2011: 284ff) describes that homosexual men below 35, who fully identify with homosexual subculture (e.g. establishments, bars, etc.), slightly less often state to desire parenthood. This is an artefact worth considering, however hard to assess. It is possible that preferences divide homosexual individuals into groups more drawn to or averted by homosexual subculture, which could also correlate with more general (potentially heteronormative) patterns for life plans, including parenthood. Another possibility would be that the knowledge of societal connotations of homosexual subculture function as social norms that exert an influence on homosexuals in certain life course episodes, for example when parenthood is desired, so that behaviour will be adjusted to fit the higher priority goal. This corresponds with the redefinition of identity.

5.1.2.5 Fear of discrimination

As a member of a sexual minority, discrimination is a potential experience (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 149ff). The following findings from the literature review focus on (potential) discrimination of homosexual women and men in connection with parenting.

The German Lesbian Family Study found that 76 % of the lesbian mothers had concerns during the planning process towards parenthood that the child might experience discrimination (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 18, 20, author manuscript). This fear does not seem to be a reason to abandon the idea of parenthood, however. The study shows that the mothers were particularly engaged in trying “to equip their chil-

dren with coping strategies for managing societal homophobia and discrimination” (ibid.: 37, author manuscript). Potential discrimination, particularly of the children, and corresponding coping strategies seem to be generally well considered and employed (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 37, author manuscript; Johnson and O’Connor, 2002: 126f; cf. Touroani and Coyle, 2002: 195).

Fear of discrimination regarding parenthood is also evident among the homosexual respondents of Hertling (2011). A majority of 91.1 % is not convinced that homosexual fathers are fully accepted in German society, 73.4 % believe that the children may encounter discrimination because they have a gay father and 53.0 % believe they themselves might suffer from discrimination as a gay father (ibid.: 292).

The same-sex parents from the study by Johnson and O’Connor (2002) also anticipated difficulties in achieving parenthood, particularly concerning the cooperation of medical personnel and authorities. While 11 % of the female and 20 % of the male homosexual respondents actually did experience difficulties, the majority of transitions progressed rather smoothly and difficulties were more often anticipated than actually experienced (ibid.: 117ff).

In the analyses of Kleinert et al. (2015), the scores for estimated acceptance of sexual orientation range relatively high, particularly for friends and family. But even community⁴² and public authorities received mean ratings not lower than 3 on a 5-point rating scale (ibid.: 180). This provides evidence that non-heterosexuals in Germany seem to perceive relative acceptance as a sexual minority group even in the social environment.

Perceived and experienced discrimination can thus be viewed as an indicator partly corresponding to social acceptance of homosexual women and men. Therefore perceived and experienced tolerance, acceptance, as

⁴² Unfortunately the authors do not provide a definition of the term community or how the concept was presented to the respondents. Therefore it is unclear whether it refers to a social community of homosexuals, or the community respondents live in, for example.

well as discrimination, could provide valuable explanatory power for social norms. They could, however, also be a more direct measure for control factors with a negative influence on an individual's intention to have children based on anticipated or experienced discrimination.

5.1.2.6 Internalised homophobia

“As social norms shape self-perception, the way one views oneself is largely dictated by what are understood to be socially acceptable beliefs and behaviors [...] When lesbians and gay men assimilate the prevailing societal bias against homosexuality, they experience internalized homophobia [...] Internalized homophobia is a multidimensional construct that encompasses feelings about oneself as gay or lesbian, perceptions about other's [!] views of homosexuality, connection with gay and lesbian peers, and disclosure of sexual identity” (DeMino et al., 2007: 165).

According to this definition, internalised homophobia is a result of the social climate regarding homosexuality, possibly bundled with perceived or experienced discrimination (regarding others' views of homosexuality). It is thus possible, that a (perceived) negative social attitude towards homosexuality is internalised as part of the self-concept of homosexuals themselves. They may carry aspects of homonegativity (cf. chapter 4.2.4). One possible connection is the fact that older cohorts of homosexual women and men could not imagine that homosexuals might be parents (cf. chapter 6.1). Concerning personal identity development, it has been found that “nondisclosure of sexuality identity has been associated with a high level of internalized homophobia [...] and less social support” (DeMino et al., 2007: 166). This suggests a correlation of the social climate and identity development, including re-definition of identity.

Sbordone (1993: iv) reports “significantly lower levels of internalized homophobia” but also “significantly higher levels of self-esteem” among the gay fathers in contrast to the gay non-fathers in his quantitative data

analysis (ibid.: 52). The author assumes that this is a result from fatherhood (ibid.: 82f).

Riskind et al. (2013) found no proof “for differences in parenting intentions or desires as a function of sexual identity” due to internalised stigma, however the authors suggest to consider that different sets of values might have been internalised providing positive aspects of homosexuality but negative values towards homosexual parents (Riskind et al., 2011: 9f). Homosexual respondents who had homosexual friends were found to be more likely to state a desire for having children. The authors can only provide assumptions on why that might be the case, however (Riskind et al., 2013: 9ff).

The analyses of a most recent large-scale study in Germany provide evidence that most non-heterosexual respondents “scored at the extreme low end of the response range for internalized stigma [...] indicating that they held mostly positive attitudes toward their sexual orientation and were firmly committed to their gender identity” (Kleinert et al., 2015: 180).

5.1.3 Obstructive aspects concerning parenthood

For a long time, being homosexual and being a parent have been considered to be incompatible, even by homosexuals themselves. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a desire to parent with some individuals in the awareness of their homosexuality. It is obvious that this conviction worked as a higher order control factor to abandon the idea of parenthood in some cases (Mallon, 2004: 24f, 29ff; Martin, 1993: 18f). This final section will present evidence from the literature regarding facilitating and challenging aspects concerning parenthood of homosexual women and men.

5.1.3.1 Pathways

Regarding specific challenges in context of the realisation of parenthood, Riskind et al. (2013) find that their respondents “were most confident

about overcoming barriers to adoption and foster parenthood and least confident about achieving biological parenthood without professional assistance” (Riskind et al., 2013: 229). Age, the prevailing attitude towards members of sexual minority groups in a given area, and concern about the outcome of the child are related to the confidence about realisation of parenthood (ibid.: 231). Overall the respondents’ mean self-efficacy shows that they believe to “probably” achieve parenthood (ibid.).

The intention to find a co-parenting gamete donor, i.e. someone who will also be involved in the child’s life, potentially engaged in raising the child, entails challenges in actually finding such a person and negotiating the process altogether. This implies a relatively lengthy process⁴³ and can even threaten existing relationships to friends (Touroni and Coyle, 2002: 201).

Reasoning against adoption and foster care produces arguments that deal with legal inequality, discrimination, or the logistics of the procedures. The bureaucracy can be discouraging, and it is foreseeable that an international adoption will be rather costly. The reason that a joint adoption by both partners is not provided by the law has also been mentioned as a reason against adoption. Furthermore the well-being of the child and potential discrimination due to the homosexuality of the adopting couple in addition to having a deviant cultural background have been considered by homosexuals (Bergold et al., 2015: 171).

5.1.3.2 Coming-out and disclosure

According to Herrmann-Green and Gehring (2007), acquiring an identity of the sexual minority (homosexual) during the coming-out process, including disclosure, is a prerequisite for parenting (ibid.: 7, author manuscript). This step is to precede the actual formation of parenting

⁴³ For example, Herrmann-Green and Gehring (2007) find that the process in lesbian donor insemination families took a mean of 2.1 years from first discussion about parenthood until first insemination (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 17, author manuscript).

(ibid.: 8, author manuscript). Thus coming-out and disclosure should be seen as relevant factors in an analysis of parenting intentions. Lesbians' life plans before and after coming out showed no difference regarding their intention (not) to have children (ibid.: 14, author manuscript).

Sbordone, based on his comparison of gay fathers and non-fathers, finds it "reasonable to continue to speculate that gay men who are more accepting of their homosexuality might also be less accepting of the restrictions placed on them because of their homosexuality by the society at large" (ibid.: 83). This would mean that, in connection with normative aspects, as discussed in chapter 5.1.2, acceptance of one's sexual identity could be a facilitating aspect even in opposition to normative beliefs in a given society. Coming-out and disclosure could be used as proxy measures for the strength of a person's sexual identity development, however disclosure could, of course, be influenced by other variables relative to specific contexts (e.g. social, spatial environment). Being a parent has also been found to be a facilitator for more disclosure (ibid.: 87).

5.1.3.3 Education and income

Education and income can be considered to be correlated. An artefact found in the literature is that practically all studies are based on samples with highly educated respondents. Only one analysis of US census data argues that same-sex couple households with children are characterised by significantly lower educational degrees of the parents than same-sex couples without children:

"Childrearing among same-sex couples is also substantially more common among those with lower levels of education. Among individuals in same-sex couples who have less than a high school degree, 43% are raising children. Only 15% percent of those with a graduate degree have children" (Gates, 2011: F3).

This finding, even though the only one based on a representative sample, stands alone, and thus it is absolutely necessary to strive for a better description of same-sex couples as a subpopulation. Based on the literature, it should be considered that the influence of education has not yet been fully determined.

The particularly high educational attainment in the samples throughout the literature, however, might also have to do with specific necessities of the transition into parenthood for same-sex couples. There are legal restrictions and boundaries, medical issues, and if the process is a transnational one, foreign language capabilities, dealing with authorities, agencies, notaries, and lawyers may be necessary. It is not to be said that this could be a general exclusion mechanism for individuals with intermediate or low educational attainment, however actors with higher education might have better chances to succeed in the process (cf. Buschner, 2013: 430).

Mean levels of self-efficacy showed that homosexual respondents were “not sure” about coping with the financial aspects of achieving parenthood (Riskind et al., 2013: 231), which can be seen as another indicator that income is a relevant factor in the realisation of parenthood for homosexual women and men (cf. Wall, 2013: 396). The cost of insemination has been perceived as an obstacle by 45 % of the respondents from the German Lesbian family study (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 25, author manuscript). Homosexual men from an explorative US study, who achieved parenthood via surrogacy, were considerably more affluent than the US household average, which is likely to correspond to the high cost of surrogacy (Bergman et al., 2010: 119).

Besides occasional mentions concerning the cost of specific assisted reproductive techniques (e.g. Oehler, 2015: 88; Humbyrd, 2009: 111, 115), there seems to be little quantitative information. Chambers et al.

(2013) have engaged to assess ART⁴⁴ costs in an international comparison. The authors find “that ART treatment is often expensive from a patient's perspective” (ibid.: 322) and estimate the “net cost of a fresh IVF cycle” (ibid.: 321) for Germany to be 10% of the “annual disposable income of a single person earning 100% of average wages with no dependent children” (ibid.). In numbers, the costs payable by the patient after deduction of national health service subsidisation amount to “~1500/1800 € per treatment cycle (IVF/ICSI)” (Rauprich et al., 2010: 1225)⁴⁵. Considering, however, that the direct costs are relative to the number of cycles and that there are also indirect costs involved (Chambers et al., 2013: 320f), it follows that classical ART procedures, like IVF and ICSI, require an appropriate financial background, particularly when practiced abroad and thus national health plan subsidisation is not applicable. The costs for surrogacy, depending on the sources, seem to be “ranging from \$40,000-\$120,000” (ibid.: 322) or even “\$50,000-\$250,000” in the US (Agnafors, 2014: 358), and in India, “arguably the largest provider of surrogates” (ibid.) between “US\$4,000 and US\$10,000” (Humbyrd, 2009: 111) or “\$22,000-\$35,000” (Agnafors, 2014: 358). These costs would be concerning any gay couple seeking the service of a surrogate.

5.1.3.4 Legal framework

The German legal framework has been described in chapter 2.2. Decision-making generally occurs in “an often unsupportive environment” (Chabot and Ames, 2004: 348) characterised by legal discrimination (also Downing et al., 2009: 251). The restrictive environment concerning sup-

⁴⁴ Assisted reproductive techniques include conventional IVF (in vitro fertilisation; the fertilisation of an oocyte with sperm in a lab environment) and ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection; the fertilisation by injection of a single sperm directly into the oocyte).

⁴⁵ Depending on the health insurance provider and the federal state where the primary residence is registered, there may be additional subsidisation applicable. The minimum subsidisation for individuals with German health insurance is 50 % coverage of up to three cycles under restrictive age limits, as determined by the fifth book of the social security statute book of Germany.

port for homosexual women and men is backed by experience, for example German lesbian couples having difficulties to find a practitioner/doctor for donor insemination (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007). This shows that the legal framework per se is challenging or even questionable. Particularly striking are aspects that are not (adequately) regulated (cf. Steininger, 2013) or that are regulated by authorities like the German Medical Association. This applies to donor insemination of homosexual women, for example. Also the handling of discrepancies between two types of institutionalised and officially recognised couple relationships that differ only regarding the sex of the partners is highly questionable. These circumstances create an environment that can be regarded as discriminatory and even hostile. Thus the legal framework does pose certain challenges and restrictions for homosexual women and men who would like to have children.

5.1.3.5 Age

When it comes to achieving pregnancy, age is a natural boundary, but it is also one set by authorities concerning subsidisation of assisted reproductive techniques through national health care funds (Gust and Kücking, 2015: 90ff), and concerning suitability for adoption and foster care (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, 2012).

Furthermore, evidence from the literature shows that the desire to have children diminishes with age. Results of a German study of bi- and homosexual men show decreasing numbers of respondents who articulate an intention to have children in the higher age categories (Hertling, 2011: 281ff). Age has also been considered particularly by lesbian couples striving for biological parenthood in negotiating who will become pregnant (first) (Chabot and Ames, 2004: 353; Bergold et al., 2015: 175). Riskind et al. (2013: 232) provide information that younger homosexual women and men state a higher overall confidence to overcome barriers towards parenthood, which they suggest might be due to greater “unelaborated optimism” (ibid.), whereas older respondents might have more experience with the actual process of realisation (ibid.). Even with-

out discussing causal influences, these findings indicate that age is a relevant factor for parenting intentions.

5.1.3.6 Sex

There is a profound biological difference in male and female homosexual couples regarding their opportunities and challenges to transition into parenthood.

“Gay men wishing to become fathers are limited by biological possibilities and therefore always require a ‘facilitating other’” (Norton et al., 2013: 272).

Women have better options of transitioning into parenthood because they can potentially carry out the baby themselves. Furthermore it is easier to find a sperm donor than to find a surrogate (Johnson and O'Connor, 2002: 97). But even regarding adoption, it seems that female homosexuals have better chances compared to men. Hiding a same-sex relationship and asking for (international) adoption, those supposedly single heterosexual women might be more successful than supposedly single men, because the latter seem to be considered more ‘suspect’ as potential parents, and there seem to be countries that no longer take single men into consideration as adoptive parents (Downing et al., 2009: 251). Resulting from this sex difference, it seems that the pathways into parenthood are influenced correspondingly. Evidence suggests that primary gay fathers significantly more often adopt than lesbian mothers (Johnson and O'Connor, 2002: 97; Buschner, 2013: 431).

Johnson and O'Connor (2002: 120) found that homosexual men “were more likely to encounter resistance from professionals in their quest for parenthood.” This means that in addition to the more restricted options and bargaining position, there seem to be attitudes or principles that make it even harder for gay men to find assistance for achieving parenthood than lesbian women.

Nonetheless, Riskind et al. (2013) find “[m]en and women were equally confident about overcoming specific barriers to parenthood [...] [which] may reflect differences in men’s and women’s accuracy in their assessments of biological and social barriers” (ibid.: 132). Thus the intended pathways, as stated by homosexual women and men, may well be grounded on adequate valuations of real chances, but may nevertheless include idealistic options. Nonetheless, “women reported higher self-efficacy about somehow achieving parenthood than did men” (ibid.). Regarding gay adoptive fathers, it has been found that “it seems likely that gay men’s status as sexual minorities, as well as their adoptive status, may ultimately shape how they understand and construct their parental desires and motivations” (Goldberg et al., 2012: 159). Concluding, these pieces of evidence may just reflect the reality-grounded approach to parenthood of homosexual women and men, due to the intense planning process with an assessment of chances for realisation.

5.1.3.7 Relationship status

There are individuals who always wanted to have children, and others whose desire to have children developed within a relationship (Bergold et al., 2015: 169; Johnson and O’Connor, 2002: 89; Touroni and Coyle, 2002: 198f). Nonetheless, having a child is something that needs to be agreed upon by both partners in a relationship, which stresses the importance of a relationship in general, but also the intra-couple dynamics regarding the transition to parenthood (cf. Bauer and Jacob, 2010: 32f). Research among heterosexual women and men has provided evidence that a relationship which is perceived as stable and a secure professional position are important aspects of a positive parenting intention; however, more so for men than for women (Rost, 2007: 93).

It could be assumed that the importance of a stable relationship is also high for same-sex couples, particularly regarding the comprehensive planning and transition process. Stressing the importance of the ‘right’ partner has also been found in the qualitative study of gay men seeking to adopt. This argument was particularly important concerning the wish

to have children besides a stable relationship, financial and career stability, but also regarding important life events. Some perceived the transition to parenthood merely as “the natural next step” (Goldberg et al., 2012: 166ff, quote: 169). This latter aspect of having reached an appropriate stage in one’s life has also been reported by Tourni and Coyle (2002: 198).

Therefore relationship status should be controlled for when aiming to explain parenting intentions.

5.1.4 Summary: potential influences on parenting intention

Concluding this compilation of influencing factors, it can be noted that existing research reports parenting intentions among homosexual women and men. In multivariate analyses, significant predictors for its development turned out to be a female gender identity, lower age, a desire for emotional stabilisation, and a reduced fear of personal constraints (Kleinert et al., 2015: 180). Male gender identity was a predictor for ambivalence regarding desired parenthood (ibid.: 182). Perceived social acceptance, negative experiences (quasi discrimination), and internalised stigma turned out to have no effect on the decision to have or not to have children (ibid.: 181).

It should have become clear that the social environment can be expected to have an influence on individual behaviour and perhaps even on its intentions. The same is true for a variety of potential aspects that either work against the development of an intention to have children or which make a realisation more difficult. Various aspects can be considered and may all be relevant to some degree. A selection based on theoretical considerations and available data is likely to be necessary.

Open questions in the existing research concern an influence of the possibilities of the realisation of parenthood on the parenting intention (Kleinert et al., 2012b: 317). Also, more basic information is called for on the frame conditions under which parenting intentions are developed, and on the underlying motifs and pathways that are favoured for a realisation of parenthood (ibid.: 220).

5.2 Theoretical approach to determining parenting intentions

In order to understand fertility and fertile behaviour, it is necessary to take a look at the influences involved. As detailed in the framework descriptions in chapter 2.1, the transition to parenthood does not occur automatically, and it is only one of many options in modern life courses. Therefore it is necessary to employ an adequate theoretical framework in order to understand and to model parenting intentions appropriately.

There are a great number of aspects exerting an influence on fertility, some of which are concerned with modern lives, as mentioned above. Balbo et al. (2013) present an extensive overview of relevant aspects on three analytical levels. These aspects are also connected with parenting intentions, because, based on the idea that parenthood is planned, actors are bound to negotiate their desires and intentions with the environment they find themselves in and its corresponding influences. This includes, among other aspects, individual characteristics, the social network, and the broader social and legal framework.

This thesis is devoted to investigating parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, and it has been argued that intentions, as one of many micro-level determinants of fertility, can be seen as “effective predictors of actual fertility” (ibid.: 5). This should be particularly the case for homosexual women and men, but also for individuals or couples in fertility treatment, because they are exceptionally engaged in parenthood if they want to have children, because they cannot realise this goal as easily as the standard heterosexual couple without any fertility problems.

5.2.1 A theoretical approach for understanding and explaining parenting intentions of homosexual women and men

A great number of theories were developed in order to explain and understand the trend of decreasing fertility in the 20th century. This thesis, however, aims for something different. The research questions are concerned with fertility only indirectly; the actual area of interest lies in the

intentions which need to be seen as determinants of actual behaviour. For the purpose of this thesis, i.e. examining parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, a specific theoretical approach needs to be applied which is aimed towards explaining intention.

Many fertility theories, especially the ones focussing on macro-level aspects, don't satisfy in this regard, because in order to understand parenting *intentions*, it is mandatory to take individual level variables into consideration. Considering that the basic research questions formulated for this thesis lead to an explanation that is also derived from the micro level, a theoretical approach is needed that is based on micro-aspects but allows the integration of other aspects. Under these restrictions, a great number of theoretical approaches can be rejected.

Purely macro-level based concepts like the anthropological *theory of fertility and parental investment* (Kaplan, 1996), *economic theories* (Becker and Barro, 1986; Robinson, 1997; Becker, 1960; Easterlin, 1975; Leibenstein, 1957), the concept of *the second demographic transition* (van de Kaa, Dirk J., 1987), or *theories of economic uncertainty* (Easterlin, 1976; Oppenheimer, 1988) don't provide the necessary micro links.

Preference-based theory (Hakim, 2003) seems interesting, but lacks proper foundation⁴⁶. The '*Value of Children*' concept (VoC) with one of its aims being to "predict fertility motivations" (Hoffman and Hoffman, 1973: 20) was recently combined by Nauck (2005) with social production function theory. The VoC approach is useful in understanding motives of individuals towards parenthood; however it does not specifically model intention. The empirically grounded psychological theoretical model concerning the *transition to parenthood of infertile couples* by Sandelowski (1995) seems too specific regarding the target population.

⁴⁶ Hakim does not provide any explanation on how and why women actually develop a certain preference. She merely categorises behaviour based on empirical evidence and uses macro-level phenomena as an explanation for deriving these categories. The theory itself holds no proof or explanation that the pattern women are ascribed to has anything to do with their preferences on an individual level.

The *gendered fertility theory* of McDonald (2000a, 2000b) concentrates on the work-life-dilemma based on gender role expectations and societal norms regarding the family. Individual aspects are only considered regarding the individual choice to prevent births. Even though the societal influence on the actor is taken into account, many micro-aspects are not.

Life course theory (Elder Jr., 1998; Elder Jr. et al., 2003) is based on the “greater recognition that lives are influenced by an ever-changing historical and biographical context” (Elder Jr. et al., 2003: 7). However, it “is far from being fully theoretically developed” (Buhr and Huinink, 2014: 1). For the further development of life course related approaches to understanding fertility, it is deemed important to take “pre-decisional individual dispositions and behavioural intentions” into consideration (ibid.: 2). Furthermore, fertility is embedded in a changing context of “interdependent social relationships and social groups” which needs to be addressed more appropriately together with changing cultural and institutional framework conditions (ibid.). Life course approaches don’t match the research question of this thesis due to the focus on intention. The results, however, can provide information for further research based on life course approaches.

The *biographic approach* (Birg, 1987; Birg et al., 1991) is an integrative multidisciplinary approach building on the concept of the life-course and embracing the aspect of uncertainty, as considered in theories focussed on economic uncertainty. It seems too much focussed on labour market interactions, however, and doesn’t aim specifically towards understanding intentions.

The *Traits-Desires-Intentions-Behaviour-Framework (T-D-I-B)* proposed by Miller and Pasta (1994) was intended to explain “how reproduction-related motivations, attitudes, and beliefs are translated first into the desire and then into the intention to have a child at a certain time in the future” (ibid.: 242). The approach seems promising for explaining the development of desire and intention towards fertility behaviour. However, due to its specific framework, the application with empirical data is rather difficult, unless the questionnaire developed by the authors is used (cf. Balbo and Mills, 2012: 25).

The *theory of conjunctural action (TCA)* (Morgan and Bachrach, 2012) is a relatively recent approach aimed towards an interdisciplinary explanation of family variation and change, combining micro- and macro-level variables. It may well be a starting point of future multidisciplinary approaches and it may be a particularly good approach to model development over time with the appropriate data. Given the specific characteristics of homosexual women and men as objects of research, aspects of the social environment are not integrated well enough in the micro-macro layout of the approach.

Many fertility related theories were developed in order to explain and understand the trend of decreasing fertility in the 20th century. This thesis, however, aims for something different. In order to answer the research questions and examine parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, a specific theoretical approach needs to be applied which allows for a consideration of explanatory variables on several levels, but primarily on the micro-level. All of the theories described above can certainly be adapted to the fundamental research question to a greater or lesser degree. However, many of them, especially the ones focussing on macro-level aspects, don't satisfy. In analysing parenting intentions individual level variables need to be taken into consideration. Dealing with homosexuality, in particular, individual characteristics should not be ignored. Considering that the basic research questions formulated for this thesis lead to an explanation that is also derived from the micro level, including variables that are dealing with specific issues of homosexuality, an approach is needed that is based on micro-aspects or integrates micro-aspects with other factors. Therefore, I focus on the following concept.

5.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

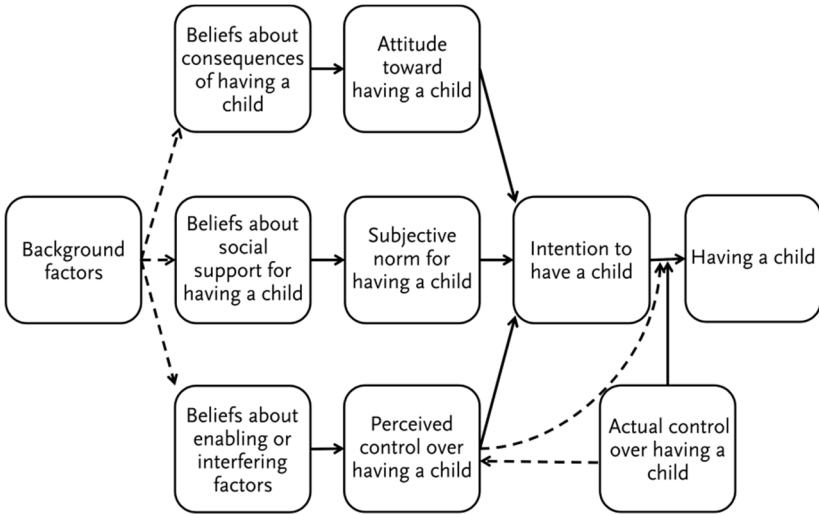
The *Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)* (initially Ajzen, 1985) is an approach based on the *Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)* (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), in an attempt to handle the shortcomings of the TRA appropriately. The core model of the TRA aims

to explain and to predict volitional behaviour as a result of behavioural intention. The TRA assumes that individual attitude and perceived subjective norms towards the behaviour in question influence intention (Ajzen, 1985: 12ff). Fundamental to these attitudes and norms are the individual beliefs regarding the behaviour: “beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour and about the normative expectations of relevant referents” (ibid.: 14). Factors like socio-demographic characteristics or personality traits are considered to influence behaviour only indirectly via “the beliefs that underlie the behavior’s attitudinal or normative determinants” (ibid.). Furthermore, the logic of the TRA implies that “a person’s *intention* to perform (or not to perform) a behaviour is the immediate determinant of that action” (ibid.: 12). Thus, within the framework of the TRA “[t]he relations of beliefs, attitudes, and subjective norms to intentions are more clearly delineated than are factors that determine whether or not the behavioural intention will be carried out” (ibid.: 18).

With proposing the Theory of Planned Behaviour (cf. Figure 5.1), Ajzen (1985) integrates a new component into the model to account for perceived control over one’s own behaviour (Ajzen, 1985: 30; Madden et al., 1992: 4). Thus actual behaviour is not simply seen as a volatile affair, but rather as restricted by the degree of control an individual has concerning “internal and external factors that may interfere with the execution of an intended action” (Ajzen, 1985: 35). This notion is important, because “intentions can only be expected to predict a person’s *attempt* to perform a behavior, not necessarily its actual performance” (ibid.: 29). Whether or not an individual succeeds in achieving a given behaviour depends “also on the person’s control over other factors, such as requisite information, skills, and abilities, including possession of a workable plan, willpower, presence of mind, time, opportunity, and so forth” (ibid.: 36). The TPB thus provides better explanatory power in situations where behaviour is restricted due to limited volitional control of the individual (cf. ibid.: 35). Within the framework of the theory, behavioural attempts are modelled through “beliefs about the likely consequences of success and failure, the perceived probabilities of success and failure, normative

beliefs regarding important referents, and motivations to comply with these referents” (ibid.: 36). Madden et al. (1992), based on their empirical analysis, come to the conclusion that the TPB, as a revision of the TRA, is a better approach to explaining behaviour.

Figure 5.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour



Source: Adapted from Ajzen and Klobas (2013: 206), own illustration.

Both, TRA and TPB, integrate individual characteristics, such as attitudes towards a specific kind of behaviour, and social influences on that behaviour into a theoretical model. Moreover, the TPB considers the subjective probability of a successful realisation of the behavioural intention. Thus the approach predicts what could be called reasoned intention and also allows for testing the influence of specific factors that correspond with the perceived behavioural control. Various background factors can be incorporated into the proposed model, however Ajzen and Fishbein (2005: 197) call for theoretical linkage concerning the integration of background variables. Therefore the TPB incorporates sufficient aspects for modeling intentions and their realisation (cf. Morgan and Bachrach, 2012: 16). The approach has previously been applied successfully to understand and model fertility behaviour (cf. Klobas, 2010; Ajzen

and Klobas, 2013; Caplescu, 2014; Dommermuth et al., 2015; Mencarini et al., 2015; Billari et al., 2009; Balbo and Mills, 2012).

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, the path from left to right shows how an individual's beliefs shape attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control, resulting in an intention which is the trigger for a specific behaviour. Background factors exert their influence via the beliefs.

Applied to fertility behaviour, the model reads as follows:

(1) Aggregated behavioural beliefs form the positive or negative *attitude* of an individual towards having a child. Beliefs represent “perceived positive or negative consequences of having a child and the subjective values or evaluations of those consequences” (Ajzen and Klobas, 2013: 205).

(2) Normative beliefs are “perceived expectations and behaviors of important referent individuals or groups, combined with the person's motivation to comply with the referents in question” (ibid.: 206). Together they form the *subjective norm* component of the approach. It refers to perceived social pressure concerning parenthood (ibid.).

(3) Control beliefs involve the internal and external influences limiting the volitional control of the individual. *Perceived control* is the result of the individual's assessment of potential influences and “the perceived power of these factors to facilitate or interfere with having a child” (ibid.). This can include personal health or employment status, for example (cf. Klobas, 2010: vii).

Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived control constitute the intention to have a child. The actual realisation of that intention into behaviour (having a child) is influenced by the perceived control and the actual control over having a child⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ Kuhnt and Trappe (2013: 5ff) have even suggested an extension to the TPB model that perceives subjective norms also as an influence on the actual control over having a child.

5.2.3 Theoretical application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to parenting intentions of homosexual women and men

The general theoretical model of the TPB has been proven functional in the research of fertility intentions of heterosexual respondents (cf. above). Before continuing, it should be debated whether or not the TPB framework is also applicable to homosexual women and men due to certain characteristics which make them different from heterosexual individuals, particularly in their pursuit of parenthood.

The concern of Morgan and Bachrach (2012), that a great number of births is unintended and the TPB, due to its focus on volitional behaviour, does not recognise this empirical truth, can be considered as irrelevant for the concerns of this thesis (cf. *ibid.*: 12f). Due to the fact that the research questions are concerned with parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, unintended pregnancies are practically impossible. Parenthood of homosexual women and men can be considered as a model example of planned behaviour. Extensive planning is a precondition for both homosexual women and men and actually supports the claim of the TPB that intention is the direct determinant of action (Ajzen, 1985: 12). Therefore the TPB might be particularly suited to analyse parenting intentions and fertility behaviour of homosexual women and men.

Besides individual attitudes towards children, the model also integrates subjective norms, which is an entry point for social norms, and behavioural controls. Since there are several aspects regarding the transition to parenthood of homosexual women and men that are concerned with social norms and control or constraints of individual behaviour, the TPB offers an appropriate framework for this thesis.

Attitudes towards parenthood have been found to differ between heterosexual and homosexual women and men (Kleinert et al., 2012b), but nonetheless, attitudes are still relevant for homosexuals' parenting decisions. This dissertation does not compare heterosexual with homosexual samples, but by application of the TPB, the relevance of attitudes within the mod-

el can be estimated. The same is true for normative social influences via the subjective norms component of the theory. In light of the reports of lower impact of social expectations and norms on the parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, as well as less pronounced desire for social recognition through parenthood (Kleinert et al., 2012b: 314ff; Kleinert et al., 2015: 179), this influence can be analysed. Specifically concerning homosexuality, the social framework and its (perceived) influence must be considered. Homosexual women and men, as deviants within a social environment that is characterised by heteronormativity, subject themselves to scrutiny if showing their sexual orientation in any way, for instance through open display of affection, their relationship, or parenting. Even though there have been advances in the living conditions of homosexual women and men and the acceptance of non-heteronormative sexualities, there are still differences for homosexuals in terms of social acceptance on a societal and individual level, as well as legally. Therefore the subjective norm component of the TPB seems adequate to include social norms into the modeling process, as they are perceived by and as they influence the individual.

Furthermore, the TPB framework even allows the incorporation of other theoretical approaches or parts of theoretical framework mentioned above. The 'value of children', for example, can be incorporated as measurement of the beliefs dimension forming the attitude towards having a child. Thus the explanatory power of the model could be even greater.

Therefore, the TPB promises to be an adequate theoretical framework for this thesis. It allows for analysing beliefs and related attitudes, norms and control concerning the intention to have a child. As a result this dissertation will investigate influences on the intention to have or not to have a child, based on a unique dataset with homosexual respondents from Germany.

Since parenting intentions of homosexual women and men have barely been researched comprehensively, it is both important and interesting to see which individual factors influence those intentions as compared to macro-level factors affecting both hetero- and homosexual women and

men practically to the same extent. Specific influences, like discrimination based on sexual orientation, are unique to homosexual individuals, so that a focus on individual aspects is necessary to gain reliable explanations. Therefore an approach concentrating on or incorporating individual factors is most adequate in order to answer the research questions of this thesis. The TPB framework allows for the integration of such relevant aspects. According to the theoretical model, individual, demographic and societal background factors have an indirect influence on three sets of beliefs: behavioural, normative and control beliefs. Particularly the respondents' education and income should be incorporated as background factors, because achieving parenthood for homosexual women and men is a lengthy process involving hardship, which can span the globe, and is often costly.

The TPB-framework generally suggests sociodemographic variables to be included as background variables influencing the beliefs of the individual; however, in this specific context, socio-demographic characteristics like education and income could also be functioning as perceived behavioural control (e.g. foreign adoption or ART treatment are unaffordable for those with low income, thus low income predicts negative parenting intentions). It has become evident that some background factors could be attributed to either subjective norms or perceived behavioural control. Theoretically, some of these variables could be a measure of both. According to the structure of the TPB, other theoretical conceptions or variables may be integrated, however proper theoretical foundation is needed. If such additional factors cannot be attributed to one of the main components, they would need to be integrated as background factors exerting their influence on the measured beliefs, i.e. the measurement variables in the model. This requisite works in favour of the TPB as a standard framework applicable to a variety of research questions. If additional aspects are meant to be included as background factors, the composition of the theoretical framework remains intact.

5.3 Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical considerations above, working hypotheses will be outlined in the following section to guide the actual data analyses. The hypotheses can be divided concerning (a) basic expectations that are directly derived from the theoretical framework, and (b) expectations that are relevant concerning the research questions but are not clearly defined in the context of the theoretical frame.

5.3.1 General Hypotheses

The first three hypotheses, which can be regarded as elementary components of the TPB framework, are meant to allow for an analysis of the individual paths within the complete model and aim towards understanding these components in the attempt to explain parenting intentions of homosexual women and men.

Hyp. 1: Attitude mediates the effects of behavioural beliefs on parenting intention

It is expected that positive beliefs towards children are a mediator for a positive parenting intention and negative beliefs function as a restraint. The beliefs combine as attitude of an individual concerning parenthood.

Hyp. 2: Subjective norm mediates effects of normative beliefs on parenting intention

Positive subjective norms regarding same-sex parenting are expected to mediate a positive parenting intention among homosexual women and men. This link would be expected to be significant according to the TPB framework. Evidence from research, however has found no influence of social expectations (Kleinert et al., 2012b). This dissertation will test the influence of these norms on parenting intention.

Hyp. 3: Perceived behavioural control mediates effects of control beliefs on parenting intention

Perceived restrictions to the transition to parenthood as pure volitional behaviour are expected to influence parenting intentions: individuals who perceive restrictions would be expected to have lower parenting intentions.

5.3.2 Further hypotheses derived based on the state of research

5.3.2.1 Sex

There are differences between homosexual women and men regarding their access to parenthood. Due to the fact that achieving biological parenthood is far more difficult for homosexual men and that other pathways into parenthood like foster care or foreign adoption are characterised by further difficulties, homosexual men have even more difficulties to achieve parenthood than homosexual women do. Furthermore, at least for different-sex couples, sex and gender are relevant variables in terms of parenting intentions and achieving parenthood, partly because of single-sided effects on employment, e.g. time spent out of the labour market and more difficult reconciliation of work and family (Klobas, 2010: 8). Same-sex couples have been reported to develop solutions for negotiating work and family in ways that are not characterised by specialisation but rather by ideals of equality (Buschner, 2014: 232ff). Therefore the biological sex of the respondents is expected to have an influence for the following analyses. Results, however, might not be conclusive. There could be a sex-effect, meaning that homosexual men less often intend to be a parent than homosexual women regardless of any other aspects. On the other hand, men could be less likely to develop an intention to parent regarding the stronger restrictions towards achieving parenthood. If sex should turn out as a relevant factor, this result could be used in future work to determine the influences more concretely.

Hyp. 4: Homosexual men are less likely than homosexual women to have a parenting intention.

5.3.2.2 Age

Age is expected to exert an influence on an individual's parenting intention. Theoretically, age could be a factor contributing to the latent construct of subjective norms as well as perceived behavioural controls (cf. chapters 5.1.2.2 and 5.1.3.5). Parenthood at a certain age (e.g. 15 or 55) is not particularly accepted within society. Therefore implicit but non-specified age limits concerning parenthood within the collective societal memory may exert an influence on the individual's perception and thus be manifest via subjective norms (also cf. chapter 3.2). Apart from this argument, there are obvious control-aspects of age regarding parenthood, because age "reflects both the physical limitations on having a child for older women and men with older partners and, for younger individuals, social life-style decisions about the age at which one wants to have their first child" (Klobas, 2010: 8). Age has been found to play a role in the decision-making process determining which of the partners in a lesbian couple would try to become pregnant (first) (Chabot and Ames, 2004: 353; Bergold et al., 2015: 175). Based on the results presented in Figure 4.5, the effect of age will be considered to be linear.

Hyp. 5: Increasing age will lead to a decrease in the probability to state a parenting intention.

5.3.2.3 Relationship status

Whether or not someone is in a relationship is expected to have an influence on parenting intentions. Even though an individual alone may express the desire to have children when being single, the standard pattern for parenthood usually occurs within a couple relationship. Research has shown that parenting intentions can also develop within a relationship due to the desire of one of the partners. Therefore "for people who do not currently have a partner, the decision to have a child is likely to be more hypothetical than for those who are married or cohabiting" (Klobas, 2010: 8). Furthermore, being single could be a choice away from a family and towards personal freedom. Thus an individual's

relationship status is a relevant factor to be considered in an analytical model.

Hyp. 6: Respondents in a relationship are more likely to express a parenting intention than respondents who are single.

5.3.2.4 Education & Income

Particularly education and income are expected to have an influence on parenting intentions, because of the extensive processes of foster parenting, (foreign) adoption, or biological parenthood via ART. This might have to do with the bureaucracy of proceedings, particularly those with international cooperation. Placement of children in adoption and foster situations is based on a sound environment so that higher income and higher education should be beneficial. Particularly ART procedures and foreign adoption are costly, and if services are used abroad, language skills and dealing with foreign authorities is required. Cross border reproductive care seems to be a phenomenon more common among individuals with higher education (Shenfield et al., 2010: 3) and among women with high occupational level (Rozée Gomez and Rochebrochard, 2013: 3106). Furthermore, most studies with homosexual target groups usually have respondents with high educational degrees. Controlling for education concerning the intention to have children may provide new results for discourse.

Hyp. 7: Higher education has a positive effect on parenting intentions.

Hyp. 8: A higher income has a positive effect on parenting intentions.

5.3.2.5 Population density

The living environment in terms of number of residents could also be an indicator for parenting intentions. While homosexuals have often tended to settle in larger cities (Aldrich, 2004) there are considerable numbers of homosexual women and men who live in more rural areas which are often characterised more by traditionalism than by tolerance of deviant life styles; however, they may provide other benefits or niches

of support particularly regarding raising children (Oswald and Culton, 2003: 76). Same-sex families in Germany seem to prefer urban environments, even though a considerable proportion also lives in more rural regions, as is typical for heterosexual couples with children (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 54). Another explanation for urban preferences besides a potential for greater tolerance could be a better supply in terms of childcare, schools, and with facilities for families with children. (ibid.: 72).

Hyp. 9: Residents in urban environments compared to rural environments are more likely to state parenting intentions.

5.4 Practical application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to parenting intentions of homosexual women and men

5.4.1 Practical considerations and modeling techniques

The TPB can be translated into statistical models to measure the influence of selected aspects. This has been done via regression models (Ajzen, 1985: 15). Therefore a first approach is to model parenting intentions of homosexual women and men with logistic regression models in order to identify relevant influences on parenting intention. Besides testing the influence of basic components of the theory, this is also an economical approach to testing which background factors may need to be included in a more advanced model. Subsequently Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to model parenting intentions.

SEM is an adequate method to apply concepts like the theory of planned behaviour which may be considered “too complex for full testing with traditional statistical techniques” (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014: 124). Other techniques can only test “‘parts’ of theoretical models without testing the ‘bigger picture’ of the underlying theory” (ibid.).

First-generation techniques,

“such as correlations, regressions, or difference of means tests [...] offer limited modeling capabilities, particularly in terms of causal or complex modeling. Specifically, 1G techniques either cannot, or are ill suited to modeling latent variables, indirect effects (mediation), multiple group moderation of multiple effects, and assessing the ‘goodness’ of the proposed (tested) model in comparison with the observed relationships contained in the data” (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014: 125).

SEM, as a second-generation technique, allows the simultaneous modeling of (causal) networks of effects and it provides the advantage to incorporate unobserved (latent) variables in the modeling (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014: 125). “Accordingly, 2G techniques are able to offer a ‘truer’ picture of the interdependent relationships in a complex theoretical model [...] [because they] can test the plausibility of an entire collection of propositions comprising a causal theory simultaneously” (ibid.: 126f). As referred to in the quote, another major advantage of SEM is that it is possible to measure and integrate latent variables or constructs. The main components of the TPB are essentially such latent constructs, because attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control cannot be measured in one respective item and are thus unobserved. Therefore subsequent SEM models can be seen as a validation process of the initial logit models.

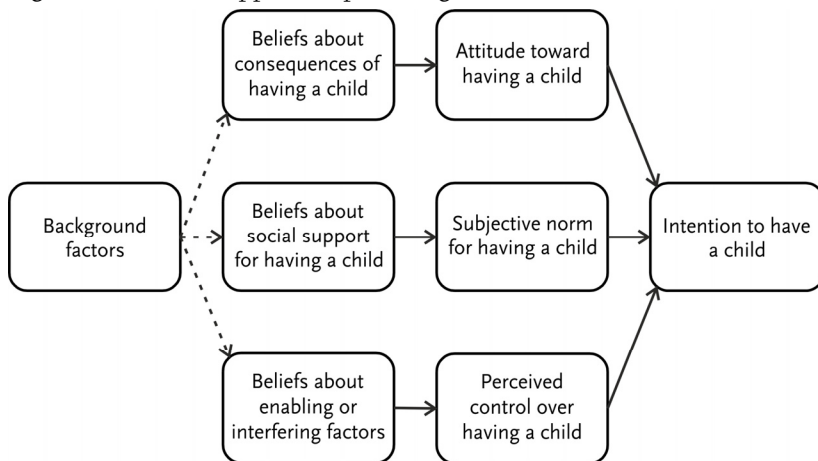
Regarding the goal to test the TPB in its application to model parenting intentions of homosexual women and men, SEM also is an appropriate method. Covariance-based SEM “is ideal for testing the full nomology of a known theory and testing general model fit” (ibid.: 130). However, it “should be used to test only well-established theories that are empirically validated” (ibid.). This is the case for TPB, which has been successfully applied to parenting intentions.

For the purpose of this thesis, the TPB framework will be adapted to model only parenting intentions and not actual behaviour. This means that the full explanatory power of the TPB will not be used.

The reason is that

“[a]lthough complete applications of the theory require assessment of all variables from beliefs to overt behavior, many questions can be answered by investigating a more limited set of relationships. Thus, it is often sufficient to obtain direct measures of attitudes and subjective norms without assessing the underlying beliefs. In other cases, the intention-behavior relation is of little immediate concern; instead, the theory’s ability to predict and explain intentions is at issue. In these instances, it is unnecessary to secure a measure of actual behavior” (Ajzen, 1985: 15).

Figure 5.2 TPB as applied to parenting intentions for this thesis



Source: Adapted from Ajzen and Klobas (2013: 206), own illustration.

The aim of this thesis is not to predict fertility behaviour, but rather to understand which factors influence the intentions of homosexual women and men to have children. This goal is achieved based on theory grounded analyses. Figure 5.2 illustrates the TPB framework applied to this goal. Actual control and actual fertility will not be part of the anal-

yses⁴⁸. The abbreviated model, however, corresponds with the core of the intentional (i.e. planned) component of the theory of *planned* behaviour:

“Strictly speaking, all an individual can say is that, as of now, he intends to perform a given behavior, and can assign a certain degree of confidence (subjective probability) to that intention. Assuming the behavior is under volitional control (and the person is prepared to exert maximum effort), failure to act in accordance with the intention would indicate that the person had a change of mind” (Ajzen, 1985: 24).

5.4.2 Data preparation

Ideally, data collection and the construction of the corresponding instruments (questionnaire, scales, etc.) should be driven by and adjusted to specific research questions, an appropriate theoretical framework, and suitable statistical methods for analysis. In the case of the *ifb* data and the research questions of this thesis, pragmatic compromises were necessary. The design of the data collection was not centred on the TPB. Due to the fact that this thesis is based on existent data and a carefully selected theoretical framework applicable to both data and research questions, several restrictions in terms of modeling and use of statistical approaches are implied.

5.4.2.1 Building the model sample – variable transformations

For the SEM processes the software package SPSS AMOS 22 was used with raw data input (linear probability model). Missing data needed to be dealt with because AMOS does not operate with missing values and due to the goal of having as many of the cases as possible available for the analyses. In the following, the construction of the model sample (cf. chapter 3.3.2) used for all analyses in this chapter will be described.

⁴⁸ This is also due to the fact that the data is cross-sectional and there is no possibility to gather or link data on achieved fertility of the respondents in the future.

Some variables had system missings to small degree, at times due to mishaps in the process of data collection. Other missings were due to a lack of source information in composed variables, for example concerning income or the categorised variable for educational attainment. Other missing data has been defined by the researcher. Some questions, for instance, had a residual answer category in the questionnaire titled ‘I have no definite idea’.

Table 5.1 Variable transformations

| Variable | Transformation | No. of cases affected/ gained for analysis |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Close emotion | No clear opinion recoded into “neither agree nor disagree” | 20 |
| Social network standing | | 89 |
| Adult caring | | 25 |
| Adult ideas | | 50 |
| Stay young | | 65 |
| Expense | | 13 |
| Limit freedom | | 8 |
| Goal hindrance | | 14 |
| Strain | | 15 |
| Stand out badly | | 17 |
| Accept same-sex | | 88 |
| Same-sex normalised | | 9 |
| No child possible | | 32 |
| Difficult realisation | | 28 |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$.

Specifically with the structural equation modeling in mind, some variables from the sample data were therefore transformed into new variables in order to provide for a maximum number of cases by reducing missing values. The transformations of the measurement variables are noted in Table 5.1. More detailed information and distributions of the variables listed in the table are presented in the following sections (cf. chapters 5.4.3.1 to 5.4.3.4).

The likert scale variables measure agreement on a five-point scale (strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree⁴⁹, somewhat agree, strongly agree). The residual category ‘no definite idea’ was recoded into the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ category. This appears legitimate because someone who does not have a clear conception, e.g. about whether it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children, would be forced to choose the middle option to avoid nonresponse.

The model sample was then constructed by selecting all cases without missing data in the variables relevant for subsequent SEM analyses.

Indicator variables for attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control were generated based on a sum score for use in the logit models (measures described in the following sections). The attitude component was split into two sum scores, one for perceived benefits and one for perceived costs of having children.

5.4.2.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable ‘parenting intention’ is originally an ordered categorical variable with three outcomes (desiring children, uncertain, not desiring children). In order to concentrate on the clear cut distinction between respondents who intend or don’t intend to have children, it has been decided to focus on these two responses and omit the cases in the uncertain-category from the analyses, which results in a binary dependent variable (cf. model sample of the *ifb* data, chapter 3.3).

5.4.3 Preparing the measurement model for SEM

The SEM modeling was conducted according to Weiber and Mühlhaus (2014), Grace et al. (2012), Grace et al. (2010), Lowry and Gaskin (2014), Garson (2015), and Kline (2011). In the case of this thesis, particularly

⁴⁹ Original German phrasing for this answer option read „teils, teils.“ This may be interpreted as a midway answer option when partly agreeing and partly disagreeing or neither agreeing nor disagreeing to the statement or conception.

the design of the measurement and structural model for SEM (Grace et al., 2012: 9) is determined by the TPB as designated theoretical approach. Thus the modeling process is partly determined by the TPB with the goal of testing the theoretical framework.

The variables used for the modeling process of this thesis are introduced in the following. All the models are based on the model sub-sample of the *ifb*-data (n = 618). Some parts of the models will use direct measures while others draw on sets of variables constituting latent variables as parts of the complete model. The dependent variable 'parenting intention' as used in the analyses provides two answer options: yes and no.

5.4.3.1 Measuring attitude based on behavioural beliefs

Behavioural beliefs represent "perceived positive or negative consequences of having a child and the subjective values or evaluations of those consequences" (Ajzen and Klobas, 2013: 205). "Behavioural beliefs lead to a formation of a positive or negative attitude toward having a child" (ibid.: 205f).

As a measure of those beliefs the 'Value of Children' scales from the *pairfam* project will be used (cf. Wendt et al., 2011: 12ff; Klaus, 2007). Due to the theoretical approach of the VoC as adapted by Nauck (2005), the items measure perceived benefit and costs of children, which corresponds to "a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior (*attitude toward the behaviour*)" (Ajzen and Gilbert Cote, 2008: 301), as it is part of the TPB. Based on these beliefs the individual forms an attitude.

"An attitude is a disposition – positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable – toward an object" (Klobas, 2010: 14).

Table 5.2 Measurement of the “attitude” component

| Variable | Item wording | Dimension | Factor Score | Mean / Median | Skewness / Kurtosis |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Stay young | With children you will stay young longer | Benefits | .508 | 3.37 / 3 | -.382 / -.542 |
| Close emotion | There is an especially close emotional relationship with children | Benefits | .338 | 4.45 / 5 | -1.630 / 3.015 |
| Social network standing | The standing in the social network will increase because of children | Benefits | .335 | 2.49 / 3 | .152 / -.646 |
| Adult caring | Adult children will be there for you when you are in need | Benefits | .546 | 3.33 / 3 | -.249 / .021 |
| Adult ideas | Adult children will be a source for new ideas | Benefits | .672 | 3.64 / 4 | -.324 / .099 |
| Expense | You will be able to afford less with children | Costs | .656 | 3.51 / 4 | -.423 / -.288 |
| Strain | Children will put you under nervous strain | Costs | .675 | 2.79 / 3 | .052 / -.673 |
| Goal hindrance | With children you will not accomplish your professional goals | Costs | .604 | 2.62 / 3 | .245 / -.561 |
| Stand out badly | With children you will stand out in a negative way in public | Costs | .399 | 1.71 / 2 | 1.045 / .686 |
| Limit freedom | Children will limit your personal freedom | Costs | .802 | 3.37 / 3 | -.250 / -.775 |

Note: Question: “In the following you are presented with some statements concerning children of your own. To what degree do you agree or disagree?”. Answer options on a five-point likert scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) neither disagree nor agree, (4) somewhat agree, (5) strongly agree.

Factor scores based on exploratory factor analysis, ML estimation, no rotation, 2 factors based on eigen value, KMO: .763, 35.95 % variance explained.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

This disposition can relate to “the extent to which individuals expect their personal situation will be better or worse if they have a(nother) child” (Klobas, 2010: 14). Thus the VoC items listed in Table 5.2. can be seen as behavioural beliefs and consequently as measures of an individual’s attitude towards having children⁵⁰. The items will be used as measures for the latent variable *attitude* in the SEM model.

The internal validity of the full set of 17 VoC items (cf. Klaus, 2007: 5f) as measured by cronbach’s alpha with a value of .420 points strongly against their use. The reduced set of items, as part of the *pairfam* panel, measuring perceived benefits and costs of children with five items each, has an alpha value of .582 for all items (representing attitude towards children). The values increase if the scales are evaluated separately: .613 for the benefit items and .776 for the cost-items. These values justify the use of the items for measurement. Due to the fact that the instrument corresponds to the one used in the *pairfam* panel it can be considered validated. The wording of question and items was adapted due to respondent feedback from the pre-test, so that the *ifb* data stays true to the original core of the items but assessed agreement and disagreement rather than a rating of expectance regarding the items⁵¹.

5.4.3.2 Measuring subjective norm based on normative beliefs

Normative beliefs are “perceived expectations and behaviors of important referent individuals or groups, combined with the person’s motivation to comply with the referents in question” (Ajzen and Klobas,

⁵⁰ When designing the *ifb* questionnaire the VoC scales were adopted from the German family survey *pairfam* (<http://www.pairfam.de>; URL last validated: 2016-08-22). This variable set can be seen as a reliable instrument for the measurement of behavioural beliefs. It has been tested and deemed sufficient (cf. Klaus, 2007).

⁵¹ The original *pairfam* question reads: „Please indicate how strongly you expect or worry the following things will occur as a result of having children.“ Answer options range from „not at all“ to „very strongly“, including the residual option „no clear idea“ (Wendt et al., 2011: 13). After pretesting, the question wording was changed to capture respondent (dis-)agreement to the statements, rather than focussing on their expectations and worries.

2013: 206). These beliefs “combine to produce a perceived social pressure or subjective norm with respect to having a child” (ibid.).

The two items available in the *ifb* data represent the respondents’ agreement to the statements “children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships” and “same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted in our society just as any other type of family” (cf. Table 5.3). Perceived expectations of important referents are embedded in the first item. The respondent evaluates in how far homosexuals as parents would contribute to more acceptance of same-sex relationships in society. The variable thus captures the perceived integrative function of children and society in general can be seen as collective of relevant others, because of the minority and deviant status of homosexuals in contrast to the heteronormative collective.

Table 5.3 Measurement of the “subjective norm” component

| Variable | Item wording | Mean / Median | Skewness / Kurtosis |
|---------------------|--|---------------|---------------------|
| Accept same-sex | Children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships | 3.21 / 3 | -.261 / -.695 |
| Same-sex normalised | Same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted in our society just as any other type of family | 4.86 / 5 | -3.967 / 17.689 |

Note: Question: “In how far do you agree or disagree that...”
 Answer options on a five-point likert scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) neither disagree nor agree, (4) somewhat agree, (5) strongly agree.

Source: Original analyses based on *ifb*-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Model sample: $n = 618$.

The second item carries the respondents’ agreement towards the normative notion of social acceptance of same-sex couple families within the heterogeneous landscape of family types within society. Thus it can be argued that the variable combines perceptions about attitudes, expectations, and potential behaviour of relevant others from within the social environment with a rating of agreement towards the validity of these perceptions. It could be argued that agreement implies inclinations towards compliance. Thus high scores on this item could mean, for exam-

ple, that the respondent agrees same-sex families should be accepted as equal within society and also is inclined to act like this was the case. This item has an extremely peaked distribution with a majority of 89.5 % strongly agreeing (cf. Figure 4.11, page 82) and thus poses considerable challenges for its statistical application. Without any intention of disregarding the requirements for statistical application, however, the specific distribution of the item can also be interpreted as a reality for the population of the sample. Therefore the information can nonetheless be important for the estimation of the statistical models. Due to the use of bootstrapping, the effect of the non-normality should be less severe in the resulting estimates of the modeling process and the use of the variable should thus be justifiable.

Given the fact that the questionnaire for the data collection was not constructed with the TPB framework in mind, it had to be expected that the application of the TPB would bear challenges. Unfortunately, this is particularly the case for the representation of subjective norms within the TPB framework in the measurement model. The reliability values of the variables bear strong evidence against their use as a measurement scale. The alpha values are below .22 and a trial of all modeling options only resulted in statistical evidence that the component of subjective norms cannot be measured as a latent variable in an SEM model with the variables available for measurement in the *ifb* data. Therefore the component will be represented by individual items in the logit and in the SEM models.

5.4.3.3 Measuring perceived behavioural control based on control beliefs

For the last aspect of the TPB framework, non-volitional aspects come into consideration in the analysis of determinants of intentions. Control beliefs involve the internal and external influences limiting the volitional control of the individual. There are measures in the *ifb* data directly relating to control beliefs, which are “concerned with resources and obstacles that can facilitate or interfere with having a child. The perceived power

of each readily accessible control factor to facilitate or interfere with having a child is assumed to contribute to perceived control in direct proportion to the person’s subjective probability that the control factor is present” (Ajzen and Klobas, 2013: 211).

The *ifb* data has information that can be used as measures of perceived control (cf. Table 5.4). The two available items capture the (dis)agreement to the statements “When I realised I was homosexual I knew I could not have any children” and “It is too difficult for homosexuals to have children”.

Table 5.4 Measurement of the “perceived behavioural control” component

| Variable | Item wording | Mean / Median | Skewness / Kurtosis |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|---------------------|
| No child possible | When I realised I was homosexual I knew I could not have any children | 3.03 / 3 | -.052 / -1.477 |
| Difficult realisation | It is too difficult for homosexuals to have children | 3.62 / 4 | -.579 / -.742 |

Note: Question: “In how far do you agree or disagree that...”
 Answer options on a five-point likert scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) neither disagree nor agree, (4) somewhat agree, (5) strongly agree.

Source: Original analyses based on *ifb*-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

As with the available items for measuring subjective norms, the internal validity of this group of items does not provide evidence for a perfect fit within a measurement scale. The two items have an alpha value of .415 which should not be regarded as sufficient. However, due to the lack of better options and because the measurement of the latent factor by two variables should come closer to the core of the theoretical construct, as opposed to a representation of only one selective item, perceived behavioural control will be measured by the two items “no child possible” and “difficult realisation”.

5.4.3.4 Background variables

Concerning the influence of background factors, “the TPB does not specify in advance which beliefs will be important for a given fertility-related decision nor does it specify what background factors should be considered” (Ajzen, 2012: 65). This study will include “one or more background factors that, for intuitive or theoretical reasons, are considered to be relevant to the behaviour under investigation” (Ajzen, 2011: 1123). Background variables have been selected according to the hypotheses: sex, age, education, relationship status, household income, population density at the place of residence, and the time since the coming-out of the respondent occurred.

The TPB framework ascribes direct influence of background variables only on the beliefs of the individual. Therefore background factors do not have a direct influence on intention or behaviour, according to the theory (*ibid.*). Hennessy et al. (2010) conclude that modeling background factors as controls, besides the integral theoretical components, is not permissible due to “the theoretical axioms of the reasoned action approach” (*ibid.*: 234). Therefore, in testing the applicability of the TPB, background factors shall only be linked with paths to the belief measures in the initial SEM model.

The three variables measuring education, income, and population density are pseudo-metric variables. In principle they are ordered categorical variables, nonetheless they represent increasing education, income, or population size with increasing value. Therefore they cannot be interpreted regarding their influence on the dependent variable concerning a specific increase in their value in a standard ML estimation, but it is possible to interpret their effect in terms of a gradual increase in the values themselves.

Table 5.5 Measurement of background variables

| Variable | Content | Variable properties and distribution | Skewness / Kurtosis |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Age | Age of respondent | Continuous, range 25-50, mean: 36.25, median: 35 | .193 / -1.197 |
| Sex | Sex of respondent | 0 = female: 45.3 %, 1 = male: 54.7 % | -.189 / -1.971 |
| Education | Education | Ordered categorical ⁵² : 1 = lower secondary, 2 = med./high secondary, 3 = academic degree. Median: 3 | -.842 / -.282 |
| Relationship | Relationship status | 0 = single: 17.8 %, 1 = in relationship: 82.2 % | -1.688 / .851 |
| HHincome | Household income, monthly | Ordered categorical: 1 = lower than 500€, 2 = 500-899€, 3 = 900-1,299€, 4 = 1,300-1,499€, 5 = 1,500-1,999€, 6 = 2,000-2,599€, 7 = 2,600-3,199€, 8 = 3,200-4,499€, 9 = 4,500€ and more. Median: 7 | -.771 / -.417 |
| Popdensity | Population density | Ordered categorical: 1 = lower than 5,000, 2 = 5-10,000, 3 = 10-20,000, 4 = 20-50,000, 5 = 50-100,000, 6 = 100-500,000, 7 = more than 500,000. Median: 6 | -1.075 / -.072 |
| Yearsout | Time since coming-out | Continuous, range 1-36, mean: 15.95, median: 15 | .376 / -.633 |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

⁵² The classification of the educational degree of the respondent was applied in accordance with Lechert et al. (2006). The classification scheme was then reduced to a three categorical variable for the application.

5.4.3.5 Constructing the SEM model

Building SEM models for the application of the TPB with the given data turned out to be challenging. While some issues can clearly be attributed to a lack of perfect measurement variables, other problems are more difficult to assess.

Specifically for conducting the SEM analyses, another set of input variables were recoded, reducing the range from a five-point likert scale to outcome variables with three categories. This measure resulted in considerably better fit indices in comparison to using the original variables in the structural equation models. The categories ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘somewhat disagree’ were collapsed and ‘somewhat agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ were combined for all likert-scale-variables.

The measurement of two of the integral concepts of the TPB, i.e. subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, proved to be difficult with the given data. This did not come as a big surprise, given that the alpha values had already predicted the measurement of the latent constructs would not be perfect. It turned out that, while the latent construct ‘perceived behavioural control’ could be integrated in the measurement model based on the two measurement variables, subjective norm could not be designed as a latent construct. Goodness of fit and modification indices did not provide enough evidence for accepting a measurement model that would measure subjective norm as a latent construct. Thus the presented model uses a single variable to represent subjective norm. This, of course, has important implications for the interpretation of the results, as all results need to be interpreted concerning this singular belief item. Particularly it needs to be noted that the one item which would work within the context of the model and resulting in acceptable fit values is “Same-sex normalised”, the item with extremely skewed distribution. The use of this variable is to be understood as a compromise in order to fit a model with all components of the TPB.

The models constructed in SPSS AMOS to measure parenting intentions use ML estimation to estimate parenting intention, represented by a binary dependent variable. Ideally the link to the dependent variable

would be defined as a logit link, which calls for Bayesian estimation in AMOS. This, however, leads to a completely different approach of estimation based on an entirely different system of assumptions and shall therefore not be pursued. It still seems common practice to analyse ordered categorical data “by either assigning scores and using ordinary normal-theory methods or ignore the ordering and use standard methods for nominal variables” (Liu and Agresti, 2005: 29). It can be argued that the AMOS model with ML links to the binary dependent variable may be interpreted, under specific assumptions. These assumptions call for the interpretation of the model as a linear probability model.

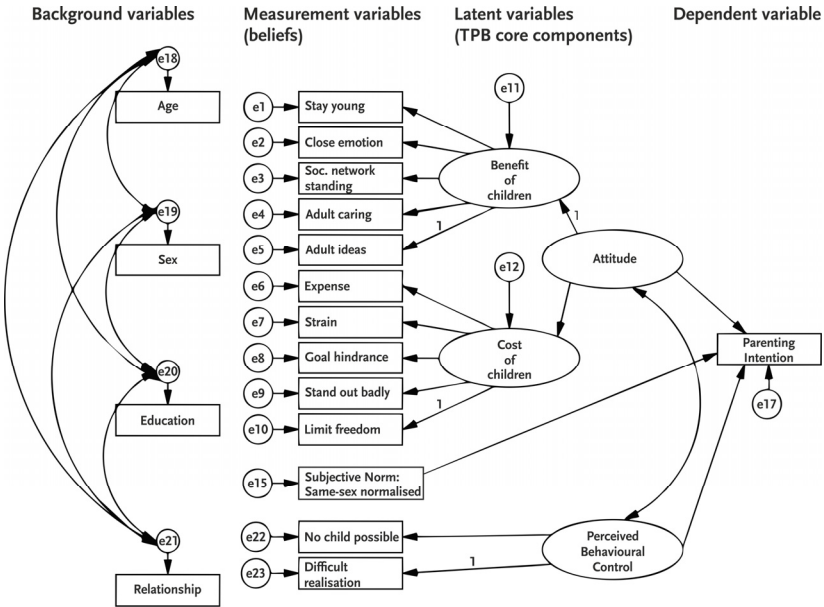
An Mplus-output⁵³ for the TPB SEM model under consideration of the ordered categorical characteristics of the variables provided information for an evaluation of the AMOS model. Concerning fit indices (cf. Weiber and Mühlhaus, 2014: 199ff), the Mplus results have identical RMSEA values (.055) and values for the chi square test of model fit divided by the degrees of freedom (2.863 in AMOS, 2.9 in Mplus). The TLI and CFI values, however, differ. The AMOS model provides a TLI value of .820 and a CFI value of .908, whereas Mplus estimates result to a TLI of .699 and a CFI of .779. Unfortunately there are no other comparable fit indices in the Mplus output to help evaluate whether the AMOS model could be interpreted as a reliable alternative to the Mplus model. Based on the TLI and CFI values alone, the Mplus model would need to be rejected. While the absolute fit indices RMSEA and χ^2/df are in a range of acceptable fit, TLI and CFI should be greater than .9⁵⁴. While the CFI in the AMOS model barely passes the threshold, the Mplus provided CFI does not. The question therefore is whether or not the statistically more adequate estimation in Mplus provides enough evidence to derive whether or not the AMOS results may be interpreted. As far as the p-

⁵³ <http://www.statmodel.com>; URL last validated: 2016-08-22. Since the software is not available to the author, the Mplus output generated by Dr. Katia Begall of the model constructed by the author is gratefully acknowledged.

⁵⁴ The fact that the TLI values are lower is likely to be due to the data. TLI is sensitive in that it assumes χ^2 distribution. CFI, however, considers distortions in the data and turns out with an acceptable value in this case (cf. Weiber and Mühlhaus, 2014: 216).

values and the direction and strength of the effects in the models can be compared, Mplus and AMOS come to similar results. Therefore the results from the SEM models that were constructed in AMOS shall be reported in order to extend the knowledge based on the logistic regression analysis.

Figure 5.3 SEM model according to the TPB



Note: In order to ensure visibility, the paths from the background variables age, sex, education, and relationship status have been omitted in this image of the measurement model. In the actual model these variables are connected to every measurement variable (cf. Figure A.1, appendix, page 214).

Model fit: SRMR: .0631; χ^2/df : 4.280; RMSEA: .073; IFI: .848; TLI: .684; NFI: .810; CFI: .841.

Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

Source: Own illustration, based on SPSS AMOS 22.

Figure 5.3 shows the working model. Only background variables with significant effects in the trial models are included. The link between the latent constructs, which is not included in the theoretical model of the TPB, had to be added because AMOS requires them to be uncorrelated. The non significant covariance of $-.01$, however, shows that the latent variables are virtually independent from another, coherent with the TPB.

Due to non-normality of the data the modeling process was based on bootstrapped ML estimation with 200 samples. Because nonparametric bootstrapping “assumes only that the population and sample distributions have the same shape” (Kline, 2011: 177), ML estimation may be used. The assumption, however, is that the sample itself is representative of the population. The challenges with representativity have been referred to in chapter 3.1.2. The decision to use bootstrapped ML estimation implies that the results have to be interpreted with the assumption that the distribution in the sample equals the population of homosexual women and men. This decision certainly implies the risk of drawing conclusions based on a sample that may not be applicable to the population of homosexual women and men. However, considering that there is no other data, cautious interpretation of the results can provide first insights, at the least to guide future research. The results of the structural equation model are presented and described in chapter 5.5.2.

5.5 Results from the *jfb* data

5.5.1 Influences on parenting intention

A first model of the TPB framework has been realised via logistic regression models (cf. Ajzen, 1985: 15). With the help of regression analysis, the variables representing components from the theory are subjected to a first test concerning their influence on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. The models include specific background variables based on the state of research. There were no significant interaction effects and therefore the interactions have been omitted from all final models.

The first approach was to test the applicability of the TPB based core model without any influence of background factors. For the sake of better interpretation, the attitude component has been split into a benefit vs. a costs aspect of children. Models 1a and 1b as displayed in Table 5.6 differ regarding the use of sum score variables vs. individual belief measures. Model 1a shows that both positive (benefits) and negative (costs) beliefs about having children are significant for predicting parenting intention. The effect size derived from the odds ratios, however, is considerably greater for the positive beliefs about children. The subjective norms component is also significant, however at a slightly decreased level, and has a strong positive effect on the parenting desire. Perceived behavioural control represented by the sum score is not significant. The results from model 1a point towards a great impact of positive beliefs regarding parenthood which outweigh the influence of perceived disadvantages or costs. Subjective norm as the sum score of the (dis)agreement of the statements “children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships” and “same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted in our society just as any other type of family” also has a strong impact on parenting intentions in terms of effect size. This could be interpreted as the importance of social acceptance of same-sex parenting and the acceptance of same-sex relationships in general. It also includes a notion of a normalising effect of children in terms of greater acceptance of same-sex couples with children as opposed to same-sex couples without children.

Using the individual belief measurements in the core component model leads to an increase in explanatory power. Model 1b achieves a correct classification of 77.7 % of cases. The model allows for a more detailed interpretation of the theoretical components, in that the effects of a variety of beliefs become visible.

The representation of *attitudes* measured by perceived benefits and costs through their individual measurement items reveals the relative importance of individual aspects. The beliefs that “with children you will stay young longer” and that there is “an especially close emotional relationship with your children” are the only items with significant effects

within the *benefit-component*. The former aspect is significant at the highest level. These two components prove to make up the textual dimension of benefits of children as part of attitudes towards having children.

Among the items measuring perceived *costs* of children, three out of five are significant at .00 level. Believing “that children will limit your personal freedom,” that “with children you will not accomplish your professional goals,” and “that children will put you under nervous strain” is the textual foundation of this component. The use of individual belief items provides evidence that the beliefs that one can afford less with children and that one will stand out negatively in public are of no relevance. It seems particularly interesting that the item concerned with economic cost is not significant considering the potentially great expense of achieving parenthood via ART or foreign adoption. Perhaps economic costs might not be considered as actual obstacles in the sense that the intention to have a child includes accepting such costs. The negative correlation between parenting intention and the belief item is significant at $p = .000$. This means that there is an influence of perceived economic costs on parenting intention; however this influence is not relevant in the context of the greater theoretical framework as reproduced in the model. The core of the cost component, as it turns out in the model, is composed of restrictions in the personal and professional domains and the idea of emotional strain.

The *subjective norm* component reveals to be based on only one of the two items used for measurement. The belief that “children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships” is highly significant, and has a rather strong impact on the dependent variable. The other belief item, stating that “same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted in our society just as any other type of family” is not significant. One of the measures for *perceived behavioural control* is significant at .10-level: “When I realised I was homosexual I knew I could not have any children”. The other item representing the belief that “it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children” remains without significant influence on parenting intention.

Table 5.6 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, logistic regression

| | Model 1a | | Model 1b | |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | OR | sig. | OR | sig. |
| Const. | 2.293 | .325 | 2.958 | .429 |
| Male | | | | |
| Age | | | | |
| In relationship | | | | |
| Household income | | | | |
| Population density | | | | |
| Years since Coming-Out | | | | |
| Level of education | | | | |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | | | | |
| <i>Medium / higher sec. (ref.)</i> | | | | |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | | | | |
| Attitude: benefit of children | 2.086 | .000 *** | | |
| <i>Stay young</i> | | | 1.628 | .000 *** |
| <i>Close emotion</i> | | | 1.382 | .029 * |
| <i>Social network standing</i> | | | .844 | .110 |
| <i>Adult caring</i> | | | .968 | .803 |
| <i>Adult ideas</i> | | | 1.106 | .463 |
| Attitude: cost of children | .164 | .000 *** | | |
| <i>Expense</i> | | | .933 | .582 |
| <i>Strain</i> | | | .634 | .000 *** |
| <i>Goal hindrance</i> | | | .639 | .000 *** |
| <i>Stand out badly</i> | | | 1.109 | .455 |
| <i>Limit freedom</i> | | | .534 | .000 *** |
| Subjective norm | 1.710 | .001 ** | | |
| <i>Accept same-sex</i> | | | 1.397 | .001 ** |
| <i>Same-sex normalised</i> | | | .962 | .860 |
| Perceived behavioural control | .920 | .353 | | |
| <i>No child possible</i> | | | .888 | .095 † |
| <i>Difficult realisation</i> | | | 1.096 | .289 |
| Log likelihood | -318.395 | | -292.506 | |
| McFadden's adj. R ² | .253 | | .278 | |
| Cragg & Uhler ps. R ² | .394 | | .469 | |
| Sensitivity | 79.40 % | | 82.39 % | |
| Specificity | 68.20 % | | 72.08 % | |
| Correctly classified | 74.27 % | | 77.67 % | |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

Table 5.6 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, logistic regression, continued

| | Model 2a | | Model 2b | |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | OR | sig. | OR | sig. |
| Const. | 332.452 | .000 *** | 326.679 | .000 *** |
| Male | .845 | .470 | 1.007 | .979 |
| Age | .883 | .000 *** | .874 | .000 *** |
| In relationship | 1.471 | .242 | 1.597 | .178 |
| Household income | .910 | .128 | .903 | .117 |
| Population density | 1.032 | .583 | 1.004 | .948 |
| Years since Coming-Out | .990 | .660 | .996 | .860 |
| Level of education | | | | |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | .595 | .338 | .604 | .368 |
| <i>Medium / higher sec. (ref.)</i> | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | 1.284 | .477 | 1.242 | .394 |
| Attitude: benefit of children | .584 | .003 ** | | |
| <i>Stay young</i> | | | 1.609 | .000 *** |
| <i>Close emotion</i> | | | 1.322 | .080 † |
| <i>Social network standing</i> | | | .858 | .198 |
| <i>Adult caring</i> | | | .838 | .225 |
| <i>Adult ideas</i> | | | 1.108 | .502 |
| Attitude: cost of children | .150 | .000 *** | | |
| <i>Expense</i> | | | .919 | .540 |
| <i>Strain</i> | | | .686 | .003 ** |
| <i>Goal hindrance</i> | | | .683 | .007 ** |
| <i>Stand out badly</i> | | | .938 | .681 |
| <i>Limit freedom</i> | | | .481 | .000 *** |
| Subjective norm | 1.885 | .000 *** | | |
| <i>Accept same-sex</i> | | | 1.451 | .000 *** |
| <i>Same-sex normalised</i> | | | 1.250 | .347 |
| Perceived behavioural control | 1.005 | .959 | | |
| <i>No child possible</i> | | | 1.043 | .617 |
| <i>Difficult realisation</i> | | | .960 | .669 |
| Log likelihood | -274.488 | | -252.441 | |
| McFadden's adj. R ² | .330 | | .351 | |
| Cragg & Uhler ps. R ² | .526 | | .575 | |
| Sensitivity | 81.19 % | | 84.78 % | |
| Specificity | 76.68 % | | 78.45 % | |
| Correctly classified | 79.13 % | | 81.88 % | |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

As shown in Table 5.6, models 2a and 2b combine the core components of the TPB with additional background variables. Adding the background variables shows whether or not the TPB variables remain significant. The inclusion of the background variables results in a decrease of the significance of some of the TPB components. The overall results, however, remain the same. Thus it can be argued that the theory components provide baseline explanatory power for the model. Model 2b shows slightly better predictive power in that it classifies 81.9 % of the cases correctly, based on the more detailed measurement of the central theoretical components.

From the additional background factors, only age proves to be relevant, while no other background factors have significant impact on parenting intention. The belief that “with children you will stay young longer” is the only significant aspect among all benefit items and exerts a rather strong influence on parenting intention. Under less restrictive considerations the belief that there is “an especially close emotional relationship with your children” is significant at .08-level. A look at the cost-items reveals that three items from model 1b are significant at least at .01-level. While the item concerned with economic cost of children has already been found to be not significant in model 1b, it seems interesting that the household income is also not significant in predicting parenting intention. Whereas the finding from model 1b already showed that the belief about economic restrictions due to parenthood does not explain the prediction of parenting intention in the model, the lack of significance of the household income may support the explanation from above.

Based on this evidence, parenting intention seems to be independent of income and perceived economic costs and thus seems to have more appropriate explanations through other aspects. The PBC measurement ‘No child possible’ suffers a major loss in significance; however age is correlated at .00-level, which shows that age has an important influence on the belief that it is or was not possible to have children as a homosexual at the time a respondent realised she or he was homosexual. In terms of the textual interpretation of the model, perhaps the most important difference is regarding the decision whether or not the benefit-

of-children-belief concerning an especially close emotional relationship should still be interpreted as influential with its decreased level of significance of .08.

Table 5.7 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, logistic regression, only significant effects

| | Model 3 | | Model 4 | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | OR | sig. | OR | sig. |
| Const. | 284.827 | .000 *** | 1299.655 | .000 *** |
| Age | .866 | .000 *** | .872 | .000 *** |
| Attitude: benefit of children | | | | |
| <i>Stay young</i> | 1.599 | .000 *** | 1.635 | .000 *** |
| <i>Close emotion</i> | 1.343 | .061 † | | |
| <i>Social network standing</i> | .868 | .223 | | |
| <i>Adult caring</i> | .819 | .166 | | |
| <i>Adult ideas</i> | 1.141 | .380 | | |
| Attitude: cost of children | | | | |
| <i>Expense</i> | .915 | .512 | | |
| <i>Strain</i> | .690 | .003 ** | .669 | .001 ** |
| <i>Goal hindrance</i> | .686 | .005 ** | .661 | .001 ** |
| <i>Stand out badly</i> | .957 | .774 | | |
| <i>Limit freedom</i> | .487 | .000 *** | .473 | .000 *** |
| Subjective norm | | | | |
| <i>Accept same-sex</i> | 1.455 | .000 *** | 1.425 | .000 *** |
| <i>Same-sex normalised</i> | 1.266 | .310 | | |
| Perceived behavioural control | | | | |
| <i>No child possible</i> | 1.042 | .605 | .960 | .669 |
| <i>Difficult realisation</i> | .951 | .595 | 1.043 | .617 |
| Log likelihood | -254.681 | | -259.221 | |
| McFadden's adj. R ² | .365 | | .375 | |
| Cragg & Uhler ps. R ² | .569 | | .558 | |
| Sensitivity | 83.88 % | | 83.88 % | |
| Specificity | 78.45 % | | 78.45 % | |
| Correctly classified | 81.39 % | | 81.39 % | |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

Models 3 and 4 in Table 5.7 were constructed to fit a parsimonious model in terms of avoiding redundant (i.e. not significant) variables. Model 3 omits the non-significant background factors while keeping all TPB-related measures, whereas model 4 retains only significant variables.

The overall fit of the model remains relatively high and only marginally below the completely fitted model with all variables. In the end the parsimonious model achieves a correct classification of 81.4 % of all cases.

To check for possible subtle gender differences, Table 5.8 provides an overview of models 1b and 2b in a grouped analysis for male and female respondents. The models represent the core explanatory solution with only the components of the TPB and the fully fitted model with all background variables derived from the state of research. The model for men has better fit when all background factors are included. The increase, for instance measured in correctly classified cases, is greater for males than for females when all background variables are included. This may hint upon the fact that there are differences in the influences of variables (in general and not necessarily only the ones included in this analysis) on parenting intention between homosexual men and women. The differences between the grouped models 1b and 2b are relatively small and manifest in slight changes in effect size and in some cases in the level of significance.

The core model reveals a different composition of the attitudes component between male and female respondents. Whereas for women there is only one variable with a significant effect within the benefit category, for men there are two items which combine as beliefs to form a positive attitude towards children. For female respondents, the benefit is only characterised by the belief that one will stay young longer with children. For male respondents this is enriched with the belief that there is a particularly close emotional connection to children, which gives the benefits-notion a different quality.

The cost of children also proves to have a different composition for women than for men. While for female respondents three of the five belief items turn out to be significant, perceived costs of children are represented by only two items for male respondents. Children as a source of nervous strain, as a hindrance to achieving professional goals, and limiting one's personal freedom form the cost-part of female homosexuals' attitude towards children. The effect sizes are relatively similar; the level of significance is below .01 for all of these three beliefs. The fact

that only for women the aspect of facing difficulties in their professional development turns out significant as a factor for decreasing parenting intention might be explained by the greater challenges women still have to face in the employment arena.

Evidence suggests that lesbian couples not only strive for equality in the allocation of household chores but that they actually find such solutions (Buschner, 2014: 166f, 195ff). Nonetheless, due to labour market discrimination of mothers, the professional career of both partners in a lesbian couple might suffer negative consequences, particularly if both share parental leave and temporarily exit the labour market. Whether or not this belief is substantiated by personal experience or a 'collective knowledge' remains unclear. Considering the sample of particularly highly educated women (61.8 % with an academic degree and 35.4 % with a medium or higher level secondary degree), this might be an explanation for the significance of fearing negative outcomes in the professional development⁵⁵. It is an interesting finding, however, because for the male respondents the fear of negative consequences in their career because of children is not a significant predictor of their parenting intention. Even if homosexual males plan to have children, they don't seem to believe this will hurt their career. What males believe to be costs of children is composed of fearing nervous strain and limits on personal freedom. Within the logit model, the 'threat' to personal freedom is significant on a higher level for males than for females. A simple analysis of variance, however, did not show significant differences of this particular item between the sexes.

Another interesting difference in the grouped analysis of model 1b can be found in the belief measures for subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. Subjective norm features one significant belief item,

⁵⁵ It has been shown that mothers returning to the labour market after parental leave state to have experienced disadvantages significantly more often when they are career driven (Buschner and Haag, 2013: 190f). This effect, however, could be a result of objective as well as perceived disadvantages.

Table 5.8 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, logistic regression, comparison between women and men

| | Model 1b | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| | Female | | Male | |
| | OR | sig. | OR | sig. |
| Const. | 1.073 | .979 | 2.878 | .524 |
| Age | | | | |
| In relationship | | | | |
| Household income | | | | |
| Population density | | | | |
| Years since Coming-Out | | | | |
| Level of education | | | | |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | | | | |
| <i>Medium / higher sec. (ref.)</i> | | | | |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | | | | |
| Attitude: benefit of children | | | | |
| <i>Stay young</i> | 1.630 | .006 ** | 1.595 | .001 ** |
| <i>Close emotion</i> | 1.168 | .551 | 1.518 | .030 * |
| <i>Social network standing</i> | .894 | .501 | .864 | .309 |
| <i>Adult caring</i> | 1.043 | .848 | .926 | .648 |
| <i>Adult ideas</i> | 1.268 | .298 | .981 | .914 |
| Attitude: cost of children | | | | |
| <i>Expense</i> | .927 | .707 | .948 | .757 |
| <i>Strain</i> | .539 | .002 ** | .679 | .008 ** |
| <i>Goal hindrance</i> | .517 | .001 ** | .770 | .146 |
| <i>Stand out badly</i> | 1.217 | .339 | 1.012 | .952 |
| <i>Limit freedom</i> | .575 | .004 ** | .495 | .000 *** |
| Subjective norm | | | | |
| <i>Accept same-sex</i> | 1.301 | .103 | 1.490 | .002 ** |
| <i>Same-sex normalised</i> | 1.354 | .495 | .895 | .669 |
| Perceived behavioural control | | | | |
| <i>No child possible</i> | .813 | .073 † | .960 | .695 |
| <i>Difficult realisation</i> | 1.217 | .133 | 1.017 | .892 |
| No. of cases | 280 | | 338 | |
| Log likelihood | -124.946 | | -163.277 | |
| McFadden's adj. R ² | .273 | | .237 | |
| Cragg & Uhler ps. R ² | .512 | | .454 | |
| Sensitivity | 84.52 % | | 79.44 % | |
| Specificity | 74.40 % | | 71.52 % | |
| Correctly classified | 80.00 % | | 75.74 % | |

Source: Original analyses based on *ifb*-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

Table 5.8 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, logistic regression, comparison between women and men, continued

| | Model 2b | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Female | | Male | |
| | OR | sig. | OR | sig. |
| Const. | 347.733 | .046 * | 190.685 | .011 * |
| Age | .815 | .000 *** | .920 | .027 * |
| In relationship | 2.233 | .184 | 1.485 | .369 |
| Household income | 1.036 | .739 | .832 | .033 * |
| Population density | 1.050 | .600 | .931 | .405 |
| Years since Coming-Out | 1.028 | .453 | .963 | .287 |
| Level of education | | | | |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | 1.010 | .992 | .501 | .302 |
| <i>Medium / higher sec. (ref.)</i> | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | 1.363 | .453 | 1.205 | .579 |
| Attitude: benefit of children | | | | |
| <i>Stay young</i> | 1.653 | .012 * | 1.618 | .001 ** |
| <i>Close emotion</i> | 1.084 | .776 | 1.425 | .091 † |
| <i>Social network standing</i> | .885 | .520 | .864 | .370 |
| <i>Adult caring</i> | .738 | .254 | .853 | .392 |
| <i>Adult ideas</i> | 1.383 | .219 | .974 | .897 |
| Attitude: cost of children | | | | |
| <i>Expense</i> | .931 | .747 | .905 | .599 |
| <i>Strain</i> | .635 | .041 * | .722 | .039 * |
| <i>Goal hindrance</i> | .550 | .008 ** | .808 | .268 |
| <i>Stand out badly</i> | .987 | .959 | .919 | .693 |
| <i>Limit freedom</i> | .510 | .003 ** | .458 | .000 *** |
| Subjective norm | | | | |
| <i>Accept same-sex</i> | 1.331 | .114 | 1.559 | .001 ** |
| <i>Same-sex normalised</i> | 1.643 | .264 | 1.238 | .453 |
| Perceived behavioural control | | | | |
| <i>No child possible</i> | 1.014 | .919 | 1.086 | .484 |
| <i>Difficult realisation</i> | 1.050 | .745 | .879 | .336 |
| No. of cases | 280 | | 338 | |
| Log likelihood | -103.658 | | -141.781 | |
| McFadden's adj. R ² | .342 | | .295 | |
| Cragg & Uhler ps. R ² | .629 | | .560 | |
| Sensitivity | 85.81 % | | 83.33 % | |
| Specificity | 79.20 % | | 77.85 % | |
| Correctly classified | 82.86 % | | 80.77 % | |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.

but only among males. They believe that children will strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships. It seems that the significance of this effect in the undifferentiated model 1b is due to the male population. The fact that only males believe a child might increase the acceptance of a same-sex relationship could be due to the fact that male same-sex couples are more visible and that societal approaches dealing with homosexuality have mostly been focussing on the male⁵⁶.

By having children, homosexual men might believe to shift the focus on their relationship away from them being a same-sex couple to the more fundamental aspect of them being a family. Various types of families are protected under the law and recently research on family-related guiding images (*Leitbilder*) (Lück, 2014: 453; Schneider et al., 2015) has shown that same-sex couples with children are also regarded as a family. The presence of children seems to be a major criterion for Germans for applying the label of the 'family' (Lück and Ruckdeschel, 2015: 65). Thus homosexual men, who have historically been under extreme public, social, and legal scrutiny (Gründler and Schiefer, 2013: 20f), might be more inclined to believe that being a family might help to improve their acceptance in their social environment.

The TPB component 'perceived behavioural control' shows another interesting aspect in the grouped analysis of women and men, in that the one item which turned out significant on a very low level in model 1b seems to be due to the female population. Again only on .10-level of significance, the belief that it would not be possible to have children at the time respondents realised they were homosexual turns out to have an influence for the prediction of (a negative) parenting intention of homosexual women.

This might come to a bit of a surprise because it seems that women have better options to have children because the ART industry makes it relatively easy for them to achieve pregnancy. This result corresponds with

⁵⁶ The law often dealt only with male homosexuality or with specific sexual acts, like anal intercourse, which applies above all to males. In Germany § 175, before it was completely revoked in 1994, criminalised only male homosexuality (Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 20).

hypothesis five, according to which it would have been expected that this belief would rather be a relevant factor for male respondents than for females. The positive and significant ($p = .000$) correlation between age and the measurement variable indicates that older women were more likely to believe they could not have any children as a lesbian. Since the analyses include women up to the age of 50 there might be some female respondents who would have liked to have children, but thought this was not possible and are now too old. This could explain the negative influence on the dependent variable.

One last finding from the grouped analysis is that income does have a significant effect on parenting intention; however it is only significant for male respondents and only when all background variables are included in the model. The negative effect is significant at .05-level. It is quite interesting that higher income is associated with a negative parenting intention, given that the pathways into parenthood for homosexual men can be considerably more expensive (for instance affording an egg donor and a surrogate vs. a sperm donor). It may be that other variables, which are unaccounted for in this model, have an influence, in terms of life and lifestyle preferences.

Analyses of the German family survey show that childless (heterosexual) men who wish to have children attribute great importance to their income in comparison to those who wish to remain childless. This seems to be an effect of their expected role as family breadwinner (Langfeldt, 2008: 90f). A high income can also imply a greater risk in terms of opportunity cost. There is evidence from heterosexual couples with educational homogamy and high educational attainment that opportunity cost is considerably increased for both partners, which results in a decreased probability to have a parenting intention (Wirth, 2007: 173f, 188). This could also be true for individuals who are oriented towards a certain lifestyle characterised by a high degree of personal freedom and pricey leisure activities. The particular effect found for homosexual men in this sample, however, cannot be explained with the available data.

The first results from the logistic regressions suggest that both attitudes and subjective norms are relevant aspects in predicting an individual's

parenting intention. The analyses have furthermore shown that there are differences between women and men, particularly concerning the influence of different beliefs on the outcome 'parenting intention.' The results provide evidence that the components of the TPB can be used to predict parenting intention among the sample of homosexual women and men. The prediction of the model, however, could be expected to be better. With a correct classification of 77.7 % by use of only the essential TPB measures and of 81.9 % with the integration of background variables, the models seem to have room for improvement.

The logit models, however, have some methodological disadvantages. The most important drawback could be seen in the fact that the influences between the measurement variables and the structural components of the theory cannot be adequately implemented. An interpretational problem regarding the influence of background factors in general is that, in the logit models, their influence can only be estimated within the context of the complete model. At which part of the process age is important, however, cannot be distinguished. In order to do so, other techniques must be employed. Therefore the results of the SEM models as a second analytic strategy will be reported in the following section.

5.5.2 Directionality of influences on parenting intention

In order to represent the TPB in a more accurate fashion, it is necessary to use a different kind of modeling technique. The regression analysis has provided evidence about the significance of individual aspects on parenting intention. The TPB, however, is also specific about the direction of effects on the outcome variable. SEM allows designing a model with the exact paths of influences as they are determined by theory. One inaccuracy that can thus be addressed is the influence of background factors.

As noted above, age had a significant effect within the logistic regression model on the outcome variable parenting intention. However it could not be determined how age affected the dependent variable or the measurement variables in the regression. With SEM the effect of age (and

other background factors) can be modelled as proposed by the TPB, namely to be directed to the beliefs and thus only indirectly to the dependent variable. Furthermore SEM allows more accurate estimation of the model altogether.

The AMOS model, as depicted in Figure 5.3 (page 138), adheres to the TPB framework and includes four socio-demographic background variables which are usually relevant in the context of studying fertility. Attitude has been modelled with a hierarchical confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) based on results from an exploratory factor analysis with eigen value selection. The subjective norm component is represented by one singular item 'same-sex normalised' (cf. chapter 5.4.3).

While the SRMR⁵⁷ value lies below the .10 threshold, it does not meet the more conservative .05-level. RMSEA⁵⁸ has reasonable fit with its value below .08, however does not reach 'close' fit. The other indices speak against the model as an adequate instrument for measurement of influences on parenting intention. The fit measures, particularly the incremental fit indices, are not good enough to allow an interpretation of the model. Therefore, this initial model which strictly obeyed linkage with paths as intended by the TPB cannot be used in the attempt to validate the initial results from the logistic regression nor to extend knowledge about determinants of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. This also means that the more adequate representation of the TPB framework in the SEM model does not provide evidence in favour of the applicability of the TPB with the given data. Of course, this deduction is so far only valid in terms of the data at hand. Whether an acceptable model could be constructed with better measures for subjective norm and perceived behavioural control remains to be seen. Future research might prove that the strict TPB framework is also applicable to homosexual women and men.

⁵⁷ Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. Cf. Weiber and Mühlhaus (2014: 209f).

⁵⁸ Root-Mean-Square-Error of Approximation. Cf. Weiber and Mühlhaus (2014: 204ff).

The TPB is rather constrictive in terms of the linkage of background factors in that they are defined to have an influence only on the beliefs and thus only indirectly on the dependent variable. This is a debatable assumption. The modeling of background factors to influence intention only indirectly via the beliefs is substantiated by the argument that

“[...] even when a background factor is found to explain additional variance in intentions or behavior, the amount of variance accounted for is usually very small, and rarely have investigators proposed that personality or demographic variables be considered proximal determinants of intentions and actions” (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005: 200).

There are, however, no concrete arguments by the authors that background factors must not be linked directly to intention. This also leads to the question of which aspect of the covariance lies in the focus of the research. If background factors are linked indirectly via the beliefs, as suggested by the TPB, this would mean that their influence is moderated by the theory-immanent features. Of course, this would speak for the integrity of the theoretical framework because it alone accounts for the variance of further variables. For the interpretation this means that age, for example, would have a direct effect on the belief that with children one cannot achieve one's professional goals. This effect of age would then be moderated via the beliefs exerting the influence of age indirectly on the parenting intention via the moderator 'attitude.' However, background variables could also have a direct effect on the dependent variable (i.e. intention to have children).

Even though these direct links are not explicitly supported by the TPB, which has been chosen for the purpose of this thesis, this adaptation is not specifically denied, either. As a matter of fact, Ajzen (2011) mentions that some research focusses on specific “background factors that, for intuitive or theoretical reasons, are considered to be relevant to the behaviour under investigation” (ibid.: 1123). This also leads back to the question of explaining variance. Of course, to stick to the example chosen above, age could be investigated as to its effect only on the beliefs

which ultimately result in behavioural intention. However, age could also be directly linked to that intention.

Without aiming to discredit the TPB in any way, it would be interesting to see which direct effects background variables have on intention itself. By modeling direct paths from background variables to the dependent variable it would be possible to see whether those variables have a direct effect on the outcome variable in addition to the mediated effect through the beliefs. It would mean, for example, whether age will have a significant effect directly on parenting intention when age is linked with the belief variables.

In order to account for this scenario, another SEM model was constructed in AMOS, building on the model from above by extending it with additional paths from the background variables to the dependent variable⁵⁹. It needs to be noted that this model does no longer adhere to the strict conditions of the TPB. It turns out, however, that the extended model with additional paths from background variables to the dependent variable has a considerably better fit than the conservative TPB model⁶⁰: SRMR is below the conservative cut-off value of .5 (Weiber and Mühlhaus, 2014: 210), χ^2/df is close the 2.5 criterion and RMSEA is on the edge of close fit (ibid.: 205f). IFI and CFI are above the .9 threshold (ibid.: 215). These fit measures provide sufficient evidence to attempt a closer look at the estimates and may add to the results provided by the logistic regression.

Table 5.9 lists the variables with significant effects from the extended SEM model. The variables without significant effects have been omitted from the table, except from the theoretical components. Attitude and perceived behavioural control turn out to be significant in predicting parenting intention, whereas variable “Same-sex normalised”, representing subjective norm, is not. This lack of significance may be explained

⁵⁹ Additional direct links from the background variables to the dependent variable were included, besides the links between background variables and to the measurement variables. Cf. Figure A.2, page 214 in the appendix.

⁶⁰ SRMR: .0413; χ^2/df : 2.579; RMSEA: .051; IFI: .931; TLI: .848; NFI: .892; CFI: .927.

Table 5.9 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, SEM results, standardised regression weights; significant effects only

| Parameter | | Estimate | Sig. |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------|---------|
| ATTITUDE | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .886 | .007 ** |
| PBC | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .185 | .035 * |
| SN: Same-sex normalised | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .029 | .314 |
| BENEFIT | → ATTITUDE | .277 | .020 * |
| COST | → ATTITUDE | -.558 | .020 * |
| Adult ideas | → BENEFIT | .621 | .006 ** |
| Adult caring | → BENEFIT | .448 | .003 ** |
| Social network standing | → BENEFIT | .243 | .002 ** |
| Close emotion | → BENEFIT | .360 | .009 ** |
| Stay young | → BENEFIT | .605 | .011 * |
| Limit freedom | → COST | .753 | .018 * |
| Stand out badly | → COST | .317 | .009 ** |
| Goal hindrance | → COST | .533 | .012 * |
| Strain | → COST | .582 | .006 ** |
| Expense | → COST | .626 | .025 * |
| Difficult realisation | → PBC | .481 | .007 ** |
| No child possible | → PBC | .461 | .011 * |
| Age | → Stay young | -.155 | .005 ** |
| Age | → Close emotion | -.110 | .015 * |
| Age | → Adult caring | -.188 | .018 * |
| Age | → Adult ideas | -.150 | .014 * |
| Age | → Expense | .132 | .015 * |
| Age | → Strain | .214 | .009 ** |
| Age | → Goal hindrance | .196 | .010 * |
| Age | → Limit freedom | .199 | .005 ** |
| Age | → No child possible | .182 | .012 * |
| Age | → Difficult realisation | -.083 | .058 † |
| Age | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | -.459 | .007 ** |
| Male | → Social network standing | .157 | .013 * |
| Male | → Adult caring | .125 | .011 * |
| Male | → Goal hindrance | -.135 | .056 † |
| Male | → Same-sex normalised | -.065 | .054 † |
| Male | → No child possible | .324 | .015 * |
| Male | → Difficult realisation | .140 | .006 ** |
| Education | → Adult ideas | .186 | .016 * |
| Education | → Strain | -.073 | .080 † |
| Education | → Stand out badly | -.112 | .008 ** |
| Education | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .078 | .041 * |

Table 5.9 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, SEM results, standardised regression weights; significant effects only, continued

| Parameter | | Estimate | Sig. |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------|---------|
| In relationship | → Expense | -.117 | .007 ** |
| In relationship | → Limit freedom | -.112 | .006 ** |
| In relationship | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .064 | .076 † |

Note: Dependent variable 'Parenting intention' in italics, latent variables representing core components of the theoretical model in capitals: cost and benefit as second order dimensions of attitude, and perceived behavioural control (PBC). Subjective Norm (SN) was measured with a singular item.
 Bootstrap ML estimation with 200 samples, bias corrected confidence intervals at 95% level, standardised regression weights.

Model fit: SRMR: .0413; χ^2/df : 2.579; RMSEA: .051; IFI: .931; TLI: .848; NFI: .892; CFI: .927.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: $n = 618$.

by the variable itself, considering that it is extremely skewed and also turns out not significant in the logistic regression. It remains unknown, however, why the SEM model with the alternative variable, which turned out to be significant in the logistic regression, shows considerably worse fit indices which would not allow for the structural model to be interpreted.

Other than in the logistic regression analysis, perceived behavioural control appears as a significant predictor of parenting intention in the structural equation model. The two variables used for measuring the latent construct both appear significant. This result provides evidence for the representation of structural components as latent constructs.

Attitude, as a higher order latent construct, has the strongest effect on the dependent variable. Cost and benefit have expectedly negative and positive effects; the effect size is bigger for the costs, though. This indicates that perceived costs of children have a stronger impact in terms of attitudes towards children. Nonetheless, attitudes as a latent higher order construct have a strong positive effect on parenting intention.

The SEM results provide some interesting information in terms of influence of the background variables, and thus advance the results from the regression models. While many of the beliefs are influenced by the background variables, as suggested by the TPB, there are also significant direct effects on the dependent variable by three of the background variables in the model.

Sex did not have a significant effect on parenting intention; however, age, educational attainment, and relationship status did. Age has a negative direct effect and is significant at .01-level. Education shows a rather small .05-level direct effect on the dependent variable and the direct influence of being in a relationship is even smaller and only significant at .10-level. If only standardised effects with an effect size greater or equal 0.2 were considered as meaningful (cf. Weiber and Mühlhaus, 2014: 229), the paths of subjective norm and perceived behavioural control would fail to be relevant in determining parenting intention with this measurement model. Attitude would remain with an effect on the dependent variable and as a second-order measurement. Cost and benefit also have considerable effect sizes on attitude. Under strict conservative considerations, the attempt to explain parenting intention with meaningful effect sizes according to a TPB derived framework would have to be considered unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the results do show effects and may improve with more adequate measures.

Concentrating on meaningful effects from background variables, the estimation reveals age as a relevant influencing factor on the belief that children create nervous strain, age as a direct influence decreasing the probability of a parenting intention, and respondent sex in terms of males more often stating the belief that when they realised they were homosexual they were sure they could never have children⁶¹. The esti-

⁶¹ This is an interesting finding in that it contradicts the result of the logistic regression where a low level significant effect of 'no child possible' was only found for females (cf. pp. 146ff and Table 5.8). The fact that there is a significant effect for men may be plausible considering their biological disadvantage of not being able to become pregnant and give birth to a child themselves, and that particularly male homosexuality was criminalised, besides the societal taboo.

mation results show no significant indirect effects of the background variables on the dependent variable.

An extended SEM model including all background variables (cf. Table A.2 in the appendix) had overall better fit indices but did not differ significantly concerning the main results. The additional background variables concerning years since coming-out, household income and population density do not have significant effects on the dependent variable. The only major difference is that the .10-level direct effect of the relationship status on parenting intention becomes even less significant. Grouped models for men and women were not possible due to nonconvergence issues. Therefore the SEM model presented above remains the best parsimonious solution.

5.6 Discussion

This chapter has provided results concerning analyses of determinants of parenting intention. Based on the TPB framework, specific determinants were tested. The logistic regression models have shown that some components of the TPB determine parenting intention of homosexual women and men. The relevance of attitudes can be seen as substantiated and confirmed. The logistic regression furthermore gave proof for the relevance of certain contextual factors in terms of perceived costs and benefits of children in determining parenting intention. The decomposition of the attitude component in the logistic regression revealed the importance of the idea to remain young by having children, a weaker influence of a factor of costs in terms of personal and professional restrictions including nervous strain, and the idea that children lead to a greater acceptance of same-sex relationships. The subjective norm measurement “children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships” turned out to be a significant determining factor for parenting intention. The differentiated model showed that this effect seems to come from the male population of the sample. It shows, nonetheless, that the idea of children contributing to greater acceptance of same-sex relationships is somehow important and even relevant in terms of form-

ing a parenting intention. The perceived behavioural control measures, however, only proved to be significant under certain circumstances and only with a greater margin for error.

The structural equation models support the finding of the importance of attitudes as determinants of parenting intention; however they provide contradictory evidence for the other theoretical components. While the TPB under its strict definition has not been found to be applicable for predicting parenting intention of this specific sample of homosexual women and men, the inclusion of direct paths from background variables to the dependent variable provided a linear probability structural equation model with good fit. This model showed that attitudes and perceived behavioural control have an influence on parenting intention besides direct effects from background variables. The SEM results provide evidence for a significant influence of all attitudinal belief measures. Even though perceived costs of children have a stronger effect in forming attitudes, attitudes have a positive impact in predicting parenting intention. The negative direct effect of age on parenting intention is supported by the SEM. Due to the methodological advantages of the SEM approach it can be concluded that perceived behavioural control does have a significant impact on parenting intention. The results also show that the inclusion of direct links between background variables and the dependent variable are relevant and necessary in this analysis. This contradicts the fundamental precept of the TPB framework concerning the linkage of background variables. In light of the more appropriate statistical application in the SEM, those results should be given more weight.

The parenting intention of homosexual women and men is determined by their attitude towards children and by control aspects in terms of their perception about difficulties in the realisation. There is some evidence that subjective norms may be relevant; however, with the available measurement variables there is no hard evidence in this regard. Based on the background variable "sex", a significant difference in the intention to parent between male and female respondents has not been found. The effect of age, however, is highly significant, particularly in its

direct effect on parenting intention itself. There is some evidence for an impact of the relationship status; however it is not sufficient to support the hypothesis that being in a relationship is a determinant for a parenting intention. Without aiming to discredit dyadic effects, this finding gives reason to believe that a parenting intention is, at least partly, determined within the individual and independently of a relationship. The results don't explain whether the respondents developed their intention to have children because of the relationship, or whether they are in a relationship because they intend to have a family. In order to fully analyse individual vs. dyadic aspects research would need to focus on these aspects specifically with appropriate longitudinal data. Education has proved to have a significant effect on the dependent variable, whereas income and population density at the place of residence don't determine parenting intention of homosexual women and men.

Concerning the hypotheses, the following conclusions can be drawn from the results of the analytical models as presented in Table 5.10. The TPB inherent aspect of attitude mediates the effects of beliefs to form intention. However, even though the effect of costs on attitude is stronger than the effect of benefits, attitude has a positive effect on parenting intention. Therefore Hypothesis 1, that attitude mediates effects of beliefs, holds true, but the underlying expectation is not substantiated that a greater influence of costs will lead to a negative parenting intention whereas a greater influence of benefits would lead to a positive parenting intention. The fact that the negative effect of cost-beliefs of children does not translate into a negative parenting intention is somewhat of a surprise from the perspective of a rational decision-making process. This might be explained, however, in the way that a rational consideration about having children might focus more on costs and potential disadvantages of parenthood. The resulting attitude, however, including all beliefs about limitations and concerns, still drives the development of a positive intention to have children. This would be plausible if the negative outcomes or byproducts are accepted by the individual in order to achieve a higher order goal, i.e. parenthood. Thus the even stronger

effect size of attitude makes sense in comparison to the smaller effect size of the costs.

The influence of subjective norms cannot be confirmed based on the data and models presented in this thesis. There is evidence, however, from the regression models that subjective norm may be relevant, even though Hypothesis 2, that subjective norm mediates normative beliefs, must be discarded. More accurate measures may lead to more conclusive results.

Table 5.10 Overview of hypotheses and results from logistic regression and SEM models

| Hyp. No. | Claim | Result |
|----------|---|--|
| 1 | Attitude mediates effects of beliefs | Partly confirmed |
| 2 | Subjective norms mediate effects | Evidence from logistic regression, Not confirmed by SEM |
| 3 | Perceived behavioural control mediates effects | Not confirmed by logistic regression Evidence from SEM |
| 4 | Homosexual men are less likely to have a parenting intention | Not confirmed |
| 5 | Negative effect of age | Confirmed |
| 6 | Individuals in a relationship are more likely to have parenting intention | Not confirmed by logistic regression Evidence from SEM |
| 7 | Education has a positive effect on parenting intention | Not confirmed by logistic regression Evidence from SEM |
| 8 | Income has a positive effect on parenting intention | Not confirmed |
| 9 | Residents in urban environments are more likely to have parenting intention | Not confirmed |

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany", 2010; Model sample: $n = 618$.

Hypothesis 3 regarding perceived behavioural control cannot be confirmed, but is backed by evidence from the structural equation model results. The latent variable is significant but has an effect size below .2, which may not necessarily be considered to be meaningful.

Concerning the core components of the TPB, the results do not confirm the applicability of the approach under strictly conservative standards. Only a model extension including direct links between background vari-

ables and dependent variable resulted in acceptable fit measures of the overall model, yet still not all core components proved to have meaningful significant effects. Nonetheless, the model presented here provides strong evidence that with more appropriate measures the TPB may well be applicable to modeling parenting intentions of homosexual women and men.

Hypothesis 4 cannot be confirmed because there are no significant direct effects of sex on the dependent variable. There is, however, a significant effect found in the SEM results of male respondents being more likely to believe that it is too difficult to have children. This corresponds with their overall chances of achieving parenthood. Given that age is controlled for in the SEM, the significant and meaningful effect for males on the control-belief that when they realised they were homosexual they knew they could not have any children is quite remarkable. Together with the belief that it is too difficult to have children (even though it has a smaller effect), these beliefs may be underlying factors that lead homosexual men to a denial of a parenting intention or to the development of a negative parenting intention, respectively.

A negative effect of age on parenting intention has been found in the logistic regression as well as the SEM results. Therefore Hypothesis 5 is confirmed. Due to the difficulties with representing subjective norms in the model, an evaluation concerning the influence of age on subjective norms vs. perceived behavioural control cannot be conducted.

The only evidence of an effect of a partnership on an individual's parenting intention is found in the SEM results. The effect, however, is small and significant only at a very low level. Therefore Hypothesis 6 is rejected.

Hypothesis 7, concerning the influence of education, cannot be confirmed, however there is some evidence from the SEM results of a small but significant direct effect on parenting intention.

Hypotheses 8 and 9, regarding the influence of income and population density, find no evidence in the results of this thesis and therefore have to be rejected.

6 Intended pathways into parenthood

There is a great variety of pathways that result in families consisting of same-sex couples with children. These pathways can be categorised concerning whether or not the children are biologically related to one of the partners, according to the involvement of reproductive techniques or self-administered insemination, whether or not the procedure follows or breaches legal boundaries, regarding the involvement of international actors or institutions, or whether the children were born within a previous (heterosexual) or the current (homosexual) relationship (cf. Bergold and Rupp, 2011). The most extensive German study on children living with same-sex couples finds that about half of the children in same-sex couples with a biological relation to one of the partners have been born within a previous heterosexual relationship or marriage, the other half was conceived by and born to both same-sex partners in the context of their same-sex relationship and thus qualify for the label of primary same-sex families (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 86f). The fact that the children from a previous heterosexual relationship are older and the ones born to same-sex couples are infants (ibid.: 86) is another piece of evidence of a shift in the origin of children in same-sex couples and thus an indicator for change in the pathways that lead same-sex couples towards parenthood.

Nonetheless, same-sex couples face severe challenges on the way towards parenthood. The planning process is particularly interesting because they have both constrained and manifold opportunities of achieving parenthood. Due to the fact that they have to find bypasses to the traditional biological way of achieving parenthood, they can choose from a wide range of options a heterosexual couple usually would not consider. Thus their intentions and desires but also the actual pathways into parenthood are all the more interesting, particularly as third party individuals are involved in the realisation of a homosexual couple's intention of having a child. The pathways chosen by homosexual couples could potentially be utilised by other individuals as well, e.g. heterosexual couples dealing with sub- or infertility issues, or single individuals who wish

to have children. Chapter 4 has already shown the state of research as well as original results of the *ifb*-data concerning parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. Chapter 5 has provided information on facilitators and constraints for parenting intention and parenthood. This chapter extends the earlier findings with a focus on the intended pathways into parenthood and their implications.

6.1 State of research on pathways into parenthood

In 1993, gay men becoming fathers “while maintaining their identities as gay men” have been termed a “new phenomenon emerging in the gay community,” similar to lesbian women accomplishing motherhood, which had preceded the gay male trend (Sbordone, 1993: 1). Literature finds that an increasing number of same-sex couples segue to parenthood in the context of their homosexual partnership (e.g. Sbordone, 1993: 27; Rupp, 2009; Eggen, 2009: 18; Stacey, 2006: 32; Mallon, 2004: 2). Thus it can be assumed that coming-out and consequently the individual’s coming to terms and coming to realise its sexual orientation nowadays precedes parenthood (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 7f, author manuscript). There seems to be a general change in the composition of life courses of homosexuals in what appears like a generational divide (cf. Rupp and Haag, 2016: 333; Eggen, 2009: 17; Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 352). In the past, the decision to marry and to live according to the ideal of a heteronormative different-sex relationship could occur without any thought about or unaware of the individual’s sexual orientation. On the other hand, such a life course could be chosen notwithstanding the individual’s knowledge about his or her sexual orientation, but under the conviction that there was no other possibility to have children as a homosexual (Chabot and Ames, 2004: 351; Berkowitz and Marsiglio, 2007: 372; Tourni and Coyle, 2002: 199; Bigner and Jacobsen, 1989: 169; Bergold and Rupp, 2011: 132f).

“While all individuals are socialized by the society in which they live, the notion of generativity is a presumptive, heterosexual concept”
(Siegenthaler and Bigner, 2000: 85).

Today's young homosexuals, however, are experiencing a rather liberal environment, thanks to the efforts of older generations of homosexuals, and with less visible crises characterised for instance by constant hate crimes or the AIDS epidemic. Thus they have a greater sense of normality as compared to earlier cohorts of homosexual women and men (D'Augelli et al., 2007: 4; cf. Sbordone, 1993: 94). In return, this perceived normality may well lead to a development of typical desires – that are comparable to the heteronormative design – for the individual life course, because homosexual youths are socialized the same way their heterosexual peers are (cf. D'Augelli et al., 2007: 2). Socialisation in a more liberal social environment would mean that young homosexual women and men, unlike their older homosexual peers, would not negate the possibility of experiencing parenthood as one of many potential episodes in their life courses while being open about their sexual identity. The results of Riskind et al. (2013) seem to back this reasoning in finding “that lesbian and gay adults who were most confident about achieving parenthood were younger, reported less concern about children with lesbian or gay parents, and enjoyed more socioeconomic privilege” (ibid.: 232).

Besides,

“beliefs about the possibility of becoming parents were linked with qualities of the social climates in which participants lived. Lesbian and gay adults who lived in favourable social climates were more likely than others to report that they could overcome barriers to parenthood” (Riskind et al., 2013: 232).

In the understanding that homosexual women, men, and couples perceive parenthood as an optional part of their homosexual identity, the need to engage in a heterosexual marriage or relationship as a possibility to achieve parenthood becomes irrelevant. There is evidence that this particular pathway into parenthood via heterosexual relationships was an option in the past for older generations of homosexuals, but is no longer relevant (Rupp and Haag, 2016: 333; Gates, 2011: F2; Regnerus, 2012:

756). Typical pathways into parenthood in the context of a same-sex relationship nowadays are adoption, in-vitro fertilisation, and surrogacy. Regnerus (2012), however, notes that the latter two options will be more dominant, because “[t]oday’s children of gay men and lesbian women are more apt to be ‘planned’” (ibid.: 756).

The realisation of parenthood usually implies a lengthy process for homosexual women and men because many decisions need to be made until a first attempt to have a child can be started. Parenthood of homosexual women and men is meticulously planned (Chabot and Ames, 2004; Bergold et al., 2015; Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007; Johnson and O’Connor, 2002: 88ff; Touroni and Coyle, 2002).

6.1.1 Parenthood via institutional options: adoption and foster care

Reasoning for and against adoption and foster care reveals varying attitudes. Evidence has been found that these options for achieving parenthood could be seen as a logical outcome because a same-sex couple cannot procreate, they could result from the conviction that there are enough children in the world who are in need of parents, or they could simply be a last resort if it should not be possible to have a child that is biologically related (Bergold et al., 2015: 171; Chabot and Ames, 2004: 352; Johnson and O’Connor, 2002: 95f, 98f). In a survey on homosexual masculinity in Germany, 84.4 % of the respondents could imagine adopting a child in Germany and 65.3 % could imagine to adopt a child from another country via international adoption (Hertling, 2011: 294). Among the reasons stated against adoption or foster care is the potential risk of child trafficking, legal and bureaucratic hurdles, and discrimination, but also the desire to have a biologically related child and to experience pregnancy (Bergold et al., 2015: 172; Chabot and Ames, 2004: 352; Johnson and O’Connor, 2002: 91f; Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 17, 20f, author manuscript). An analysis of a non-representative sample of homosexual website visitors “who chose to complete the sexuality Implicit Association Test” (Riskind et al., 2013: 225) provided evidence that the transition to parenthood via institutionalised pathways seems to

be perceived as realistic, because “many participants reported confidence about achieving adoptive and foster parenthood” (ibid.: 231).

6.1.2 Biological parenthood

The reasoning concerning biological parenthood is also multifaceted and the decision is not least dependent on the intended concept of a family (Bergold et al., 2015: 176; Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Touroni and Coyle, 2002; Buschner, 2013: 432ff; Jadvá et al., 2015: 2; Goldberg and Allen, 2007). Gamete donors and surrogates play a role for lesbians and gay men, respectively.

6.1.2.1 Lesbian families and the role of the donor

When choosing insemination as an option to have children, it needs to be decided what kind of donor should be part of the process. It could be an anonymous donor or one who is quasi-anonymous because only marginal information on appearance and interests might be available. Another option are identity-release donations that provide information about the donor to the children once they reach a certain age. Donor sperm could be acquired from a sperm bank or from an acquaintance.

Lesbian couples deciding against an active involvement of the donor may be motivated by the wish to secure the couple dyad from any influence of others who might want to ‘intrude’ or may be perceived as intruding on the parenting (Bergold et al., 2015: 177; Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007; Chabot and Ames, 2004: 352; Dalton and Bielby, 2000: 47; Touroni and Coyle, 2002: 201). At times there is a concern about potential competition between the sperm donor and the social mother. However, the decision to use an anonymous sperm donation can also be a last resort, if all other options fail. If the couple initially decides to use the sperm of an acquaintance, but does not succeed with this plan, the only option left to achieve parenthood at all might be to purchase an anonymous sperm donation from a sperm bank (Touroni and Coyle, 2002: 202f; Ryan-Flood, 2005: 195).

On the other hand, there are lesbian couples who explicitly aim for someone who is more involved. This is also obvious in their choice of words, describing their intentions (Buschner, 2013: 432). Other than a mere ‘donor,’ some couples seek to find a man who will donate his sperm and who will also serve as a relevant figure for the child as a ‘father’ of some sort. The intended involvement of this person also varies, but his existence, or at least information about him, is of great importance to those couples (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007; Tournoni and Coyle, 2002: 201; Ryan-Flood, 2005; Goldberg and Allen, 2007: 359f; Bergold and Rupp, 2011: 136f).

Most of the respondents from the German lesbian family study who achieved parenthood via insemination (80 %) had planned for a two-parent familial construction, similar to the nuclear family, but consisting of the two mothers and the child or children (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007: 18, author manuscript). Evidence from the qualitative work of Dalton and Bielby shows that the implications of various family constellations are considered and the perceived well-being of the child may call for a change in the original plans (ibid.: 48f). The analysis of motives from Irish and Swedish female homosexual couples further suggests that societal norms regarding family ideals, quasi *~Leitbilder*, have an influence on the decision-making regarding donor choice and involvement (cf. Ryan-Flood, 2005).

6.1.2.2 Gay men and biological parenthood via surrogacy

Biological parenthood is also something considered by homosexual men, even though for them it is a goal more difficult to be achieved. They either need the cooperation of a female who is willing to give birth to a child and then give it up to the homosexual man/couple, a female who will give birth and raise the child together with the man/couple or they need to find a professional surrogate. Even though surrogacy is illegal in Germany, there is evidence that homosexual men consider this option. More than half of the respondents from a German survey (55.9 %) could imagine surrogacy as an option to have a child (Hertling,

2011: 294). Further results show that the preferred parenting constellation is one where the homosexual man together with his partner raises the child without the involvement of the biological mother, and that co-parenting constellations with a lesbian or with a heterosexual mother are considerably less popular (ibid.: 296). A survey of fertility clinics in the UK shows an increase in surrogacy enquiries between 2010 and 2012 for most clinics, with male homosexual couples as the second largest group interested in these procedures (Norton et al., 2015: 9). It should be noted, however, that surrogacy arrangements are usually rather costly, with a minimum of tens of thousands of dollars (cf. ch. 5.1.3.3; Agnafors, 2014; Chambers et al., 2013; Humbyrd, 2009).

6.1.3 Summary: pathways

There is a crucial distinction between homosexual women and homosexual men regarding the availability of options. Whereas homosexual women can achieve pregnancy with a sperm donation, which can either be bought from a sperm bank or be acquired from a man of their acquaintance, homosexual men are reliant on a great deal more cooperation (e.g. from authorities, agencies, gamete donors, and/or surrogates). Therefore homosexual women have better options of having their own (i.e. biologically related) child and have potentially greater control of their transition into parenthood. Homosexual men, on the other hand, are dependent on cooperation to a higher degree because the male part in conception and birth is rather limited and so a male homosexual couple needs to find the right partners (agencies or acquaintances) for the successful realisation of parenthood. Thus there is an imbalance in the starting position between homosexual women and men. Speaking in terms of bargaining theory (cf. Ott, 1989), homosexual women and men have different bargaining power when it comes to achieving parenthood, and, more specifically, living together with a child.

The body of research shows that biological parenthood is important to homosexual women and men. This holds true seemingly more so for women, however they also have better options of achieving biological

parenthood. Both, homosexual women and men, who pursue biological parenthood automatically engage in a redefinition of parenthood, including the concepts of motherhood and fatherhood (cf. Dunne, 2000; Ryan-Flood, 2005). Similar to ‘doing gender’ (cf. West and Zimmerman, 1987) one could speak of ‘doing parenthood.’

There is heterogeneous evidence on the attitudes towards and the importance of specific pathways into parenthood. Particularly the decision-making in lesbian couples provides evidence both for pathways that preserve the couple dyad due to anonymous gamete donation but also for options that include full disclosure of the biological ties between the child and all parental figures (biological and social parents). Also, various reasons can be found for the desire to have a biologically related child, for instance the desire to experience pregnancy or the perceived importance of the blood-tie.

Homosexual men and women who opted for co-parenting arrangements ranked reasons like wanting to know the gamete donor and wanting the child to know both biological parents highest. Other reasons also with high ratings concern co-parenting as an ‘ideal’ situation for bringing up a child and the desire to have the gamete donor involved in the child’s life (Jadva et al., 2015: 5). Women more often than men stated the desire that the child should live with them (ibid.: 8).

6.2 Results from the *jfb*-data

6.2.1 Pathways into parenthood

As previously reported in chapter 4.2.3, 36.4 % of the male and 41.9 % of the female respondents provided a clear response that they want to have children. Having a family thus seems to be one part of the life concepts of homosexuals today. Results also provide evidence that thoughts about parenthood occur at times frequently, but also occasionally for a substantial number of respondents.

Among those respondents who say they want to have a child or who are undecided (n = 681) 359 have conceptions about how to make the transition to parenthood. There are significant differences between women and men (Mann-Whitney U, p = 0.000): 63.0 % (n = 203) of the women vs. 43.8 % (n = 156) of the men know by what way they want to achieve this goal.

Table 6.1 Intentions of women and men how to achieve parenthood

| Intention how to achieve parenthood | Women | Men |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| (International) Adoption | 24.1 | 70.0 |
| Foster parenting | 15.1 | 43.3 |
| Participating in raising the child of my partner | 17.9 | 12.2 |
| Together with a homosexual couple we're friends with | 31.1 | 26.1 |
| Females: Artificial insemination Males: Together with a woman | 65.6 | 28.3 |
| Other | 20.3 | 11.1 |
| Total N of responses | 369 | 344 |
| Total % of cases | 174.1 | 191.1 |

Note: Question: "For the realisation of my wish to have a child I have the following plan: ...".

Percent of cases, multiple response question; 369 responses of 212 female and 344 responses of 180 male respondents.

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114 (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: n = 681).

Table 6.1 shows distinct differences in the pathways that are considered by women and men. While (international) adoption and foster parenting have been most often selected as an intended option to have children by the male respondents, women's most preferred pathway into parenthood is via pregnancy through artificial insemination. For some respondents, participating in raising the child of the partner is an option for active parenting, however never the only option chosen. All respondents chose

more than one pathway they're considering, which hints to the fact that the challenges and benefits of those possibilities are likely considered⁶².

Among the residual category 'other,' respondents submitted a variety of 60 personalised options in text form which can be sorted into the following categories: Two female respondents mention the wish to have a child 'naturally,' which could mean achieving pregnancy via intercourse with a man. Other than the provided answer option to have a child with a befriended couple, 26 respondents chose to specify that they want to pursue parenthood with a single individual (a friend or an acquaintance who might be specifically sought for that purpose). Even though surrogacy is illegal in Germany, there are seven specific mentions in the open category. Home insemination was mentioned nine times and three respondents referred to alternatives where they would be actively engaged as a social parent, not concerning a partner's child, but to children of other relatives, friends, or acquaintances.

The notion that homosexual women and men would help out as a social parent for friends or relatives in need (i.e. unwanted pregnancy, support after the death of a spouse, and honorary guardianship instead of fostering) opens an area of parenting that goes beyond the borders of the normative nuclear family that consists only of the parental dyad and the child or children.

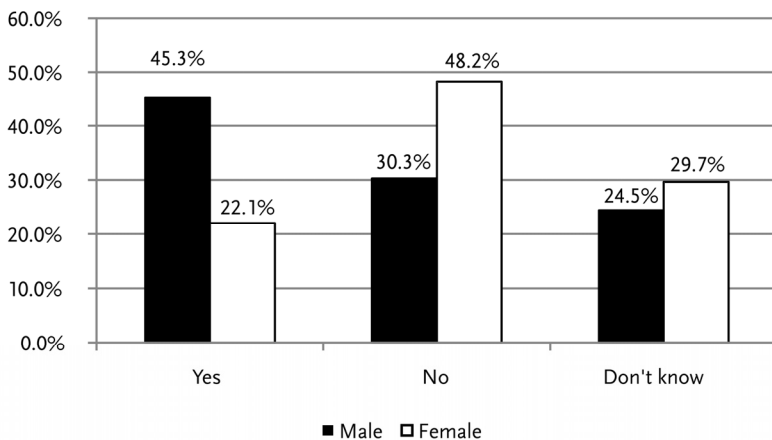
6.2.2 Collaborative parenthood

The results above have already introduced the idea of achieving parenthood as a project between more than two individuals (i.e. usually the two partners that form a couple relationship). In the *ifb*-survey, all participants were asked whether they could imagine helping another homosexual individual to achieve their goal of having a child. A positive answer was provided by 34.6 % of the respondents (n = 385), 38.5 %

⁶² It is known that homosexual women and men take a lot of effort in evaluating potential solutions for having children (cf. Bergold et al., 2015; Chabot and Ames, 2004; Tourni and Coyle, 2002).

reject the idea ($n = 429$), 26.9 % are undecided ($n = 299$). Almost half of the male respondents (45.3 %) would help while 22.1 % of the women are open to an arrangement of shared parenthood to help out. The differences in the answer patterns between men and women are highly significant (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.000$). These results indicate that the men in the sample are more likely to consider having a child together with another homosexual person.

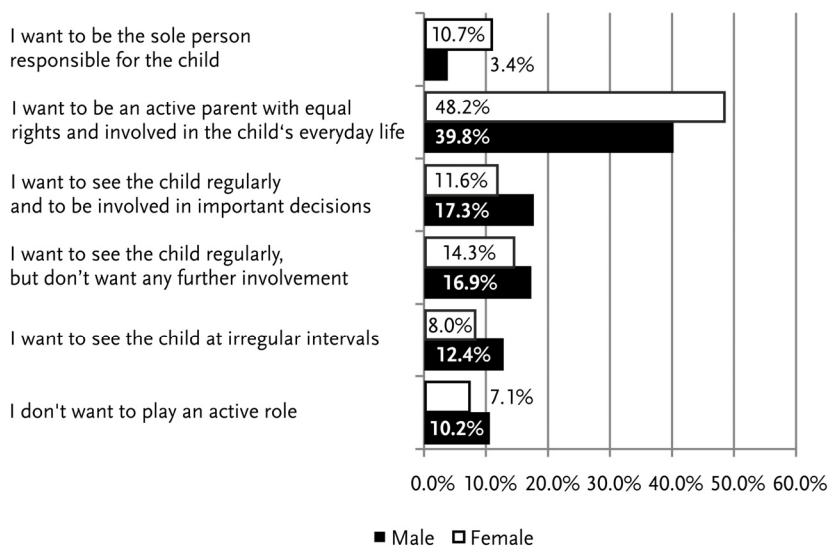
Figure 6.1 Willingness of helping another individual to achieve parenthood



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: $n = 1,114$.

If the respondents were to help another person to have a child, they would want to have a certain involvement in the child's life. Among those 385 respondents who said they would help another person, 378 provided information about their intended involvement in such a case. It is evident from Figure 6.2 that women tend to desire a greater involvement than men do. This finding is also statistically significant (Mann-Whitney U, $p = 0.003$). It might be due to the fact that women, if helping a gay man to have a child, have a much greater involvement in the process until birth than vice versa.

Figure 6.2 Intended parenting involvement if helping another homosexual individual to achieve parenthood



Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset “Same-sex lifestyles in Germany,” 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114 (only respondents who would help another individual to achieve parenthood or undecided: n = 378: 266 men, 112 women).

The results above were in regard to the respondent helping another person to become a parent. Even more interesting are the patterns concerning the respondents’ wishes on achieving parenthood themselves. The intended ‘pathways into parenthood’ (cf. Table 6.1) have shown that some respondents consider collaborating with another person or couple in order to have a child. Everyone who opted for any such constellation was asked to complete two questions on parental involvement. The answer categories are identical to those in Figure 6.2, the questions were with regard to the parental involvement of the respondent her-/himself and to the third party that would be involved in the realisation of parenthood as the other biological parent of the child.

Table 6.2 Intended participation of respondent for her-/himself and for the other biological parent in parenting constellation with a third party

| Parenting constellations | Men | | Women | |
|--|-----|--------|-------|--------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| <i>I want to see the child regularly, but don't want any further involvement</i> | 5 | 6.7 % | | |
| He/She should be the sole person responsible for the child | 5 | 6.7 % | - | - |
| <i>I want to see the child regularly and to be involved in important decisions</i> | 9 | 12.0 % | 3 | 1.8 % |
| He/She should be an active parent with equal rights and involved in the child's everyday life | 5 | 6.7 % | 1 | 0.6 % |
| He/She should see the child regularly and be involved in important decisions | 4 | 5.3 % | - | - |
| He/She should see the child regularly, but should not be involved further | - | - | 1 | 0.6 % |
| He/She should have no active role at all | - | - | 1 | 0.6 % |
| <i>I want to be an active parent with equal rights and involved in the child's everyday life</i> | 38 | 50.6 % | 78 | 46.8 % |
| He/She should be an active parent with equal rights and involved in the child's everyday life | 28 | 37.3 % | 15 | 9.0 % |
| He/She should see the child regularly and be involved in important decisions | 7 | 9.3 % | 24 | 14.4 % |
| He/She should see the child regularly, but should not be involved further | 2 | 2.7 % | 20 | 12.0 % |
| He/She can see the child at irregular intervals | - | - | 6 | 3.6 % |
| He/She should have no active role at all | 1 | 1.3 % | 13 | 7.8 % |
| <i>I want to be the sole person responsible for the child</i> | 23 | 30.7 % | 86 | 51.5 % |
| He/She should be an active parent with equal rights and involved in the child's everyday life | 2 | 2.7 % | 1 | 0.6 % |
| He/She should see the child regularly and be involved in important decisions | 2 | 2.7 % | 6 | 3.6 % |
| He/She should see the child regularly, but should not be involved further | 7 | 9.3 % | 23 | 13.8 % |
| He/She can see the child at irregular intervals | 1 | 1.3 % | 11 | 6.6 % |
| He/She should have no active role at all | 11 | 14.7 % | 45 | 26.9 % |

Note: Crosstabulation, n = 242: 75 men and 167 women who are open towards a coparenting constellation (cf. Table 6.1).

Source: Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Thesis sample: n = 1,114 (only respondents with parenting intention or undecided: n = 681 → only respondents considering parenthood with another person: n = 243).

Table 6.2 shows that while 30.7 % of the male respondents desire to be the main parent with varying degrees of involvement of the biological mother, this is the pattern chosen by the majority of women (51.5 %). About half of the men who consider a collaborative approach towards parenthood desire to be actively involved with equal rights, which is the preference of 46.8 % of the women. Any involvement to a lesser degree is almost exclusively found among the male respondents. Some envision constellations where they father a child and see it regularly with or without further involvement in the child's life (12.0 % and 6.7 %).

The answer combination of male homosexuals who want to be the sole person responsible for the child while the other biological parent (i.e. mother) does not play an active role actually implies surrogacy. Besides the seven men who explicitly mentioned surrogacy in the open answer option concerning the pathways into parenthood, there are eleven more who express their desire for a surrogate implicitly here, through their desired parenting pattern in a collaborative parenthood arrangement. This shows that, even though illegal in Germany, surrogacy does play a role in the intended pathways into parenthood and the idealistic family planning of homosexual men. By way of cross-border reproductive services, male homosexual couples from Germany could nonetheless proceed if they really intended to have a child via surrogacy.

6.3 Discussion

This thesis supports the evidence that a substantial number of homosexual women and men wish to have children. These results suggest a growing number of primary same-sex families in the future and greater visibility of such families. Particularly the intended pathways to parenthood and the openness towards collaborative forms of parenting offer new contributions to the research on family formation of homosexual couples.

There is evidence that some individuals more than others intend to have a child that is biologically related to them or desire to experience pregnancy and give birth to a child. Thus, one decision that needs to be made

by homosexuals who want to have children is whether they want 'their own' biologically related children. Results show that biological parenthood is more often intended by homosexual women, but they have better options of achieving this goal, too. Correspondingly, homosexual men more often state adoption and foster care as intended pathways to parenthood. The fact that surrogacy, even though illegal in Germany, has been explicitly mentioned and also referred to implicitly can be seen as a hint towards gay men also intending to have biologically related children and possibly aiming for a type of family corresponding to the ideal of the nuclear family (Norton et al., 2015: 9). This idea is also supported by those men who wish to have a greater involvement in the life of the child than the biological or gestational mother. Besides, Figure 4.11 has already shown that the majority of 56 % of the male respondents (strongly) agree that they 'want to be more than just an uncle' and thus clearly wish for an active role as a father.

By choosing gamete donors (and surrogates) who might be anonymous or who will not play an active role, if any at all, a family corresponding to the ideal of the nuclear family is accessible for homosexual women and men. The results have shown that parenting intentions imply such excluded third party biological parents in some cases. On the other hand, there are couples who want the other biological parent to be actively involved in the child's life.

The legal situation in Germany, particularly concerning ART and legal issues of paternity in the context of donor insemination (Steininger, 2013; Schumann, 2015; Thorn, 2015b), affects homosexual couples even more than heterosexual couples, because same-sex couples do not have the option to legally acknowledge parenthood of an unborn child (Helms, 2015: 54). An additional restriction is the recommendation of the German Medical Association not to treat lesbian couples with ART. This recommendation, even though not legally binding, can, in the worst case scenario, lead to a doctor losing his or her admission if he or she disobeys. As a result, the chances of treatment of same-sex couples within Germany are decreased due to the fear of sanctions among professionals through professional associations and due to the characteris-

tics of the greater legal framework. The legal situation concerning surrogacy is even more complex, particularly considering various regulations in foreign countries where the services of surrogates are available to homosexual men (Steininger, 2015). In certain circumstances, however, the current legal situation in Germany does make it necessary or at least seem more favourable to seek ART treatment or adoption abroad.

The results of this thesis indicate that a high proportion of homosexual women and men have preferences for a variety of family patterns. Among them are collaborative forms of parenthood which are considered by some homosexual women and men who wish to have children. This can be seen as an extension of results from qualitative research and as an indicator that in the future more primary same-sex families might be composed based on such collaborations. The implications are important because, aside from the legal situation in Germany with its particular deficiencies (e.g. ascription of parental status, custody, and right of access to the child), their recognition as families and lacking social scripts as guidelines for behaviour are relevant in the social environment of same-sex families.

This chapter has shown that those who consider achieving parenthood with another person or couple mostly intend to have inclusive family arrangements, characterised by an active involvement of the other biological parent of the child. Only a minority consider the option or intend to seek the collaboration of a third person in order to achieve parenthood as a makeshift solution without any further involvement of that person. The dominant intended family model is nonetheless restricted to two parents, and thus similar in structure to the ideal of the nuclear family. Women intending a greater parental involvement might be explained by the fact that they have a much greater involvement in the process until birth than men altogether. Another explanation for men opting for less extensive involvement may be the mere knowledge about what one would demand of a woman and the assessment on how realistic that would be. This might lead men to express desires that are shaped by their perceived success. In other words: men might express to desire a parental role with equal rights more often than a more exclusive role,

because they perceive that finding a woman who would give up the child is unrealistic (corresponding to perceived behavioural control).

This thesis has furthermore shown that the intentions of homosexual women and men are not generally a perfect fit for having children together in collaborative forms like the so-called 'queer families,' because the intentions regarding the parental roles diverge. The results provide information that a greater share of homosexual women and men will need to deal with the issues concerning elective co-parenthood, simply because they consider collaborative forms of parenthood. These issues include designing a specific pathway, finding a collaborating partner or couple, negotiating the further proceedings and involvement of everybody participating in the process, and finally managing every day family life. In the end, however, when it comes to collaborative parenthood, the biological parents and potentially their partners need to be in agreement about the whole project over a longer period of time, and the child itself will become a fifth actor shaping the relationships. Thus, such family concepts, even though they may promise (easily) achievable solutions for homosexual women and men who intend to have children, also hold potential for difficulties and disagreement calling for sensitive and comprehensive planning and continuous handling of family life.

The fact that concepts of collaborative parenthood are embedded in the intended pathways for achieving parenthood will inevitably lead to more complex families that are in their structure not unlike patchwork families, however, with the difference that these structures in same-sex families are actually intended and planned for from the beginning. Thus they breach the boundaries of normative notions of the family and particularly the ideal of the nuclear family. A major point of interest about the whole idea of collaborative parenthood is that, on the one hand, individuals assist one another in order to achieve the goal of parenthood. On the other hand, the person who would be otherwise nothing more than a gamete donor to heterosexual couples in ART treatment is actively involved in the everyday life of the child. This solves the problem of disclosure about the child's biological origin, provides the child with a role model of male and female gender, and allows for an integrative 'donor'-

role as an active parent. Theoretically, such collaborative forms of parenthood are open to everybody, yet there seem to be stronger challenges for heterosexuals to consider or even opt for such a solution than for sexual minority individuals, who already deviate from gendered norms regarding hetero-normative sex, gender, and parenting roles (cf. Jadvá et al., 2015).

With greater social exposure of same-sex parenting, the issue of fragmented parenthood is also likely to be more apparent. Fragmentation in this sense means that parenthood can potentially be split into a genetic, a biological, a legal, and a social fragment (cf. Vaskovics, 2011: 14ff). With every family led by a same-sex couple there will be a visible fragmentation of parenthood. Same-sex couples will, as a matter of fact, always be characterised by an imbalance in biological parenthood because only one partner can be a biological parent, the other can 'only' be a social parent. This problem seems to be a major point in the decision-making of lesbian couples, but more in terms of the involvement of the non-biological parent (Herrmann-Green and Gehring, 2007; Buschner, 2013).

In the case of collaborative parenthood, the traditional construct of the nuclear family as a heterosexual dyadic relationship is furthermore breached by a fragmentation of parenthood. There are even family constellations (cf. Table 6.2) in which the biological parent who does not belong to the couple dyad is part of the family and has an active involvement in the child's life to a certain degree. By doing so, homosexual couples who become parents might be perceived to challenge the traditional understanding of parenthood, based on the ideal of the nuclear family, even more than by just being a same-sex couple raising children (cf. Folgerø, 2008: 142ff). Important in this regard, however, is that fragmented parenthood is also inherent in heterosexual families that achieved parenthood with help by ART. Yet in those families the fragmentation usually remains invisible to the social environment, and only if the two primary parents who raise the child decide to disclose information will the child and/or others in the social environment learn about that fragmentation. In contrast to heterosexual couples, the fact

that a third party was involved in the conception and birth of the child cannot simply be concealed by same-sex couples.

On a theoretical level, the concept of fragmentation helps to understand how different aspects of parenthood are attributed to a number of actors in various family constellations. It allows seeing how different functions of parenthood are defined and how they are enacted. It is important to note that the legal framework with its specific regulations is essential in defining certain roles, but also in attributing roles to actors. According to § 1591 of the German civil code, legal motherhood is defined by giving birth to a child. § 1592 primarily applies fatherhood to the man who is married to the birthmother at the time of birth⁶³. Therefore the legal fragment of parenthood is certainly relevant in cases where the birthmother is not married, which also applies to women in a civil union. In traditional ART treatment the sperm donor has no interest in being part of the family and raising the child. In these cases there is no conflict of interest in the fact that there can only be two legal parents. For collaborative parenting constellations which may also apply to heterosexual couples after separation, the law does not provide appropriate solutions to attribute a legal status to all individuals involved. This results in states of insecurity in which all parties concerned need to find bypasses to secure their interests and create a safe environment for the child.

While in the past the fragmentation of parenthood resulting from assisted reproductive techniques was “assisted or even encouraged” (Riley, 2012: 70) to be kept secret by experts, clinicians, and legislature “to preserve the illusion of male fertility and the hetero-normative family construct” (ibid.: 69f, quote p.70), nowadays it has become accepted and good practice to advise parents to disclose to their children information about their biological origin (Blyth, 2012: 2054f). Heterosexual couples who have children via help of new reproductive techniques used to (Brewaeys et al., 1997: 1351) and still can practice fragmentation invisibly, hiding the true biological origin of the child (Wyverkens et al., 2015).

⁶³ Other options to be awarded legal fatherhood are to acknowledge paternity or to be established as the father by a court of law.

It still seems to be true that in most of the cases children of heterosexual couples are less often informed about their origin (e.g. gamete donation) (Golombok, 2013: 62; Sawyer et al., 2013: 444; Wyverkens et al., 2015) as compared to children of same-sex couples; at least the latter tend to be younger at the time of disclosure (Golombok, 2013: 63f).

With same-sex families, however, the deviation from the heteronormative ideal of the nuclear family is rather obvious and thus questions about the biological origin of the child arise automatically. A major problem remains in the legal situation of private sperm donors in Germany, due to the lack of a legal framework (cf. Steininger, 2013), but also regarding parental rights and duties of parents (biological and social) in families of collaborative parenting. This makes collaborative parenting constellations quite difficult in terms of legal rights of the biological parents and the actors involved in raising the child. If, for instance, a biological father is not mentioned in the birth certificate so that the process of second parent adoption for the social mother is less complicated, the father has to rely on the goodwill of the female couple to retain contact with the child. If a man has agreed to donate sperm for a home insemination, but does not want to be involved in parenting, besides an option for the child to see him, this can still result in him having to provide maintenance for the child if the female couple does not complete a second parent adoption process.

Generally speaking, collaborative parenthood, meaning various forms of non-traditional parenting constellations as described above, and same-sex couples raising children could be seen as a visible manifestation of the fact that “[p]aths to parenthood no longer appear natural, obligatory, or uniform, but are necessarily reflexive, uncertain, self-fashioning, plural, and politically embattled. So too are parenting structures, unmoored from marriage, coupling or even biological reproduction” (Stacey, 2006: 29). Stacey’s statement about gay men seems to be applicable to sexual minorities in general, because “[b]y choosing to become primary parents to children, [...] [they] challenge conventional definitions of [...] [parenthood] and even dominant gender and sexual norms of gay culture itself” (ibid.: 29f).

7 Summary of main findings

This thesis was devoted to delineating and analysing parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. Structured by three major research questions, the *ifb* data has provided new information about parenting intentions of a (sexual) minority with increasing public awareness, particularly concerning parenthood. This is a summary of the main findings of this thesis according to the original research questions.

Research Question 1: How can parenting intentions of homosexual women and men be delineated?

The descriptive part of this thesis has provided a large body of results concerned with several aspects in relation to the intention to have children and parenthood in general. In terms of relevance for a happy life, the results have shown that, while half of the respondents think it's necessary to be in a relationship in order to be happy, only one tenth thinks children are necessary in the same sense. In terms of prerequisites for starting efforts to build a family, a stable relationship and a cohabiting partner can be seen as most important, in terms of the percent in general agreement. The same has been reported for a representative sample of heterosexual respondents (Henry-Huthmacher, 2014: 7).

The responses in terms of prerequisites for parenthood show that an ordered environment seems to be of great importance: a stable relationship with a cohabiting partner, arrangements for and reconcilability with the professional career, flexible childcare, an adequate financial background, but also an accepting social environment and improvements in the legal situation are necessities for the transition to parenthood for the (great) majority of respondents. In terms of specific prerequisites involving the partner relationship, the idea that the partner needs to be able to negotiate parenthood with his/her professional career seems to be least important while still earning agreement of more than two thirds of the respondents. Considerably more homosexuals find that an agreement on the division of household labour and that both partners need to feel ready to have children are important before having children.

The descriptive analysis of the actual parenting intention shows that 39 % of all respondents intend to have children and the same proportion of respondents do not intend to have children. This leaves 22 % who are undecided. The intention to parent declines with increasing age; however, there is a considerably greater proportion of men aged 45 and above who state an intention to have children compared to women. Respondents with an academic degree are more likely to state an intention to have children. Most respondents intend to have one to two children. Only three percent want three children or more. This finding gives reason to believe that primary same-sex families are unlikely to be particularly large in terms of the number of children. However, this is also plausible given the challenges and costs that are associated with the transition to parenthood for homosexual women and men. Reasons that were provided why respondents do not intend to have children were manifold; mostly related, however, to age, a fundamental lack of desire to have children, the life concept not being compatible with children, not being a 'parental type,' or career related conflicts. Frequent and occasional thoughts about parenthood do occur in everyday life, however to varying degrees among homosexual women and men.

The descriptive analyses further show that half of the respondents who intend to have children have already started to pursue this goal by gathering information, discussing their plans with friends, and acquiring information from other same-sex parent couples. Others have started to look for potential partners to achieve pregnancy, either with assistance of reproductive techniques or via home insemination, or have even engaged in achieving pregnancy.

By use of the 'Value of Children' scales, it was possible to gather information on motivational aspects regarding parenthood. Aspects related to affection have shown to receive especially strong responses among the respondents. This shows that particularly emotional aspects of parenthood lead to the strongest positive responses. Only the idea of children providing practical help in everyday life, or leading to an increase concerning the social standing in the social environment, receive disagreement by a majority. Concerning the other statements associated

with benefits of children, the majority of respondents agree or are undecided. Male respondents in particular seem to relate more to functional and practical aspects of parenthood.

Perceived costs of children reveal strong disapproval to the ideas that children lead to a loss of reputation and to standing out negatively in public. Female respondents are more likely to (strongly) agree that accomplishing one's professional goals will be more difficult with children. This corresponds with the finding from the female population in the logistic regression. Homosexual women, if not anticipating such an outcome based on hard evidence, at least think that it will be difficult to advance a career as a mother. This finding is particularly interesting because it corresponds with the effect of motherhood on heterosexual women. The homosexual men from the sample don't seem to consider parenthood as a threat to their professional career. They seem to be more concerned with aspects of uncertainty in connection with parenthood and potential social disadvantages.

Further statements about homosexuality and parenthood reveal that half of the respondents did not think that parenthood was incompatible with homosexuality at the time they came out. Still, the majority agrees that it is too difficult for homosexuals to have children. While the respondents are split concerning children as facilitators for greater acceptance of same-sex relationships, the vast majority agrees that same-sex couple families should be considered and dealt with just like any other type of family. There is evidence for a connection between parenthood and a couple relationship, which gives reason to believe that there are homosexual women and men who aspire to the ideal of the nuclear family and see parenthood as a self-evident part of a same-sex relationship.

Major issues of same-sex families in Germany have been identified in terms of legal discrimination, but also concerning social acceptance and intolerance. The latter two aspects are particularly relevant for individuals who intend to have children, because lack of acceptance and open intolerance and discrimination will most likely affect their children. Regarding the general topic of this thesis this finding should be stressed.

There are several pieces of evidence throughout which give reason to consider a hypothesis of normalisation of same-sex relationships by the presence of children⁶⁴. Male respondents are more inclined to think that their standing in the social environment will increase with children and that children strengthen the acceptance of same-sex relationships. They are also more likely to agree that same-sex couples with children should be taken for granted as any other type of family; however it has been shown that homosexual men in particular perceive a lack of social acceptance and lack of tolerance. The lack of significant difference between the sexes and the strong disagreement concerning the statement that children will lead to a loss of reputation might be interpreted in the way that children are perceived to have a positive effect for the family in any case. Believing that children will improve the social standing of same-sex couples might be understood in terms of the differentiation between couple relationships vs. families. It would be far-fetched to believe that same-sex couples, or homosexual men in particular, would intend to have children in hoping to increase their social standing. The evidence makes sense, however, given that the family is protected under the constitution and remains as a major focal point in Germany. Therefore the reasoning that, by having children and transforming a couple relationship into a family, one might pass over into a socially well-accepted in-group and away from a stigmatised minority group might not be too far-fetched.

Research Question 2: Which factors influence the homosexual individual's intention to parent?

The empirical analyses were based on the theoretical framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). In terms of the applicability of this framework, this thesis has found that strict application did not result in an adequate model to explain parenting intention. Adequate models were only found by including direct links from background variables to

⁶⁴ Earlier findings in this direction of gay fathers considering status increase and gaining acceptability have already been reported by Bigner and Bozett (1989: 158), however they seem to have a different quality considering the background of their respondents.

the dependent variable, which is a violation of the proposed linkage in the TPB. The results have shown that some of these direct links are significant in determining parenting intention of homosexual women and men. Particularly age has been found to have a strong direct effect on the dependent variable parenting intention.

The results have furthermore shown that the theoretical components 'attitudes' and 'perceived behavioural control' contribute to determining parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. Perceived costs of children have a stronger impact on attitudes than perceived benefits of children; but attitudes influence parenting intention positively, nonetheless.

Even though there are differences between women and men concerning singular measurement items, there are no significant differences between these two sexes in terms of predicting parenting intention per se. Both homosexual women and men may develop an intention to parent based on their attitudes, aspects they perceive to restrict their efforts, and their age. Age has both a direct effect determining the intention to have a child but also indirect effects mediated by beliefs regarding parenthood. The influence of the social environment and perceived subjective norms could not be supported in any of the analytical procedures; however there is evidence that these factors are also relevant in terms of influencing parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. There is some evidence of a connection between the relationship status and the intention to have children; however the direction of this effect cannot be determined. Education has been shown to predict parenting intention; the small effect size may be due to the sample with a bias of highly educated respondents. Both household income and local population density have not been found to have an influence on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men.

Concerning the hypotheses from chapter 5.3, there is support for the influence of attitudes and behavioural control in developing a parenting intention. The influence of subjective norms was not confirmed in the SEM model with the appropriated linkage; however there is evidence for such influence from the regression and the descriptive results. The hy-

pothesis that men are less likely to have a parenting intention cannot be confirmed by the models. The negative effect of age, as proposed in hypothesis 5, is confirmed. The hypothesis concerning the influence of the relationship status on developing a parenting intention cannot be confirmed, however finds evidence in the SEM results and in the descriptive analyses. Hypothesis 7 concerning the influence of education is confirmed by the structural model. Income and population density have not been found to have significant effects in the models, therefore hypotheses 8 and 9 cannot be confirmed.

The specific relevance for homosexual women and men lies in the fact that standard models seem to be applicable to them, too. Socio-demographic variables that have been hypothesised to have an effect did not turn out to be relevant. Certain aspects concerning social acceptance and the perception of a social climate concerning homosexuality and the legal framework, however, do have an effect on the parenting intentions of homosexual women and men.

Research Question 3: Which are the intended pathways of homosexual women and men for the transition to parenthood, and what are the implications?

The chapter on pathways into parenthood has provided an overview of the manifold motivational aspects which are relevant in the process of deciding how the goal of parenthood should ideally be achieved. It has also shown that there can be circumstances and events calling for an adjustment of these ideals. In the end, a very specific pathway to parenthood may well be a compromise; the only option left in order to have children that is still compatible with moral and ethical standards of the prospective parents.

The results of this thesis have shown that some homosexual women and men do have specific ideas about how they would like to achieve parenthood. Among them are collaborative forms of parenthood which involve actors from outside the couple dyad on a long-term basis, with specific preferences for the involvement of those actors. The implications of these collaborations are relevant from a legal point of view, but

also concerning their recognition as families in the social environment. In terms of a successful collaboration, the results have shown that challenges in the realisation of collaborative families are likely due to the differences in the intended parental involvement between male and female respondents.

Findings have shown that, besides collaborative forms of parenthood, the ideal of the nuclear family based on a couple dyad and their children is also a relevant guiding image among homosexual women and men. Considering the differences in access to children between female and male homosexuals, a nuclear-type family will be more difficult to achieve for homosexual men and only via pathways that are more complex, that involve more facilitating others, and at times challenge ethical and moral views or German legal boundaries, such as surrogacy.

Limitations

Some aspects should be noted regarding the limitations of this study and its results. First of all, the results are based on cross-sectional data and therefore allow no comparison to actual behaviour. Besides the results from the SEM, no causal links can be confirmed. The interpretations have been phrased to be plausible, but should not be considered to be deterministic. The results should be handled cautiously for two reasons: (1) the specific sample on which the data analyses are based and the unknown population of homosexual women and men, and (2) the actual models that were fitted.

Given that there is no information about the total population of homosexuals in Germany, there is no possibility to derive in how far the *ifb*-sample or the model sample used for the analyses are or are not representative of this population. Most conservatively speaking, it would not be permissible to apply the results of this thesis to any other sample or population. The *ifb*-data, however, is one of the largest data sources to date on several aspects of homosexuality and specifically on parenting

intentions. Therefore the results are most certainly helpful in light of the relatively scarce literature on parenting intentions of homosexuals in general.

Another concern is that the sub-sample for the analytical models is biased towards respondents in a relationship, higher income, and more respondents with the intention to have children. In how far the results are biased in comparison to the thesis sample is difficult to determine. Taking the findings from the descriptive section into consideration, it could be assumed that the determinants for parenthood are slightly biased towards perceived benefits of children and emotional aspects of parenthood.

Thus, instead of assuming identical or similar results or characteristics for other samples the aim should rather lie on a replication of results with other samples. This is particularly important given the lack of research and the specific issues with data collection and information of the population. Thus, with a greater number of results from independent studies, it would be possible to find similarities or differences in specific characteristics or patterns. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to have better measures available for the representation of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, if the basic TPB framework was to be employed.

In the past there have been scientific and non-scientific debates on how children raised by same-sex couples would develop. With more visibility of same-sex parent couples, the discussion might gain speed again. Because the results of this thesis provide evidence that in the future there will likely be more primary same-sex families, a brief comment concerning the debate on the welfare of the children seems legitimate. Naturally, the long-term studies on children growing up with same-sex couples so often called for should be conducted, if only to provide sound scientific evidence – whatever it might be. However, it would be preferable to conduct studies independent of respondents' sexual orientation, but controlling for it and including special sub-sections to collect all the necessary data concerned with specific familial situations. Among them should be, for instance, sexual orientation, relationship dissolution,

transition to patchwork families, or the involvement of more than two carers in raising the child – whether it is a biological parent after separation in addition to the other biological parent and the new partner, or a collaborative family as they are considered by the homosexual women and men of this study. Furthermore it would be helpful to have better selection criteria included in federal and regional statistical data allowing to identify homosexual individuals and same-sex relationships (Gates, 2011: F4; Umberson et al., 2015: 99; Fischer, 2016).

It cannot and should not be denied that there is critical research on same-sex parenting, critical not only in the sense of objective scientific scrutiny, but also in the sense of condemning homosexuality as source of various types of negative effects and offenses. Critical debates based on good scientific practice should be welcome, however. Some may still use questionable assumptions in defining the target population⁶⁵; others may draw conclusions which are faulty. Marks (2012), for example, takes great effort in criticising the statement authored by Patterson (2005) which provides concluding remarks in the APA brief on “Lesbian & Gay Parenting” (Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns et al., 2005), that “[n]ot a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents” (Patterson, 2005: 15). The questions posed by Marks (2012) are all valid in terms of a scientific investigation. The conclusions, however, are not always legitimate. While this is not the place to discuss that paper in detail, some aspects criticised by Marks deal with a problem which also affects this thesis: access to the target population.

There is no information about the total population of homosexual women and men because homosexuality in terms of sexual orientation is not easily identifiable. Therefore it is rather difficult to gain access to homo-

⁶⁵ Regnerus (2012) asks: „How Different Are the Adult Children of Parents Who Have Same-Sex Relationships“, however selects respondents according to their answer to the question „From when you were born until age 18 (or until you left home to be on your own), did either of your parents ever have a romantic relationship with someone of the same sex?“ (ibid.: 756). The further proceedings in order to increase sample size as well as the actual selection criterion are also debatable.

sexual respondents, which in return most likely results in biased samples. Even a biased sample, however, can provide valid information, and a great number of biased samples may even help to bring evidence together, not unlike pieces in a puzzle. Even though the bigger picture of that puzzle may remain somewhat blurred, this structural disadvantage should not be used in order to discredit findings of studies based on biased samples, if the research was conducted according to scientific standards and the results are not stretched in the interpretation. Under these conditions, a number of studies with similar results may well be seen as evidence of a general trend. For example, the overwhelming majority of scientifically substantiated studies simply do not find negative effects on the development of children raised by same-sex couples.

Another concern lies in the presence of comparison groups and the particular characteristics of those groups. If the criticism is mainly concerned with the fact that “many same-sex parenting researchers have not used marriage-based, intact families as heterosexual representatives” (Marks, 2012: 741), it needs to be said that there used to be a majority of children growing up with a same-sex couple who simply cannot be compared to an “intact” family, because of experience with separation, divorce, and the coming-out of the parent. Comparing those children with an “intact” family would most certainly lead to differences in the findings. However, it can also be argued that such a comparison is not valid and that only now, with an increase in primary same-sex families, a comparison with such ‘intact families’ can be pursued. It seems that the claim of Schneider et al. (2014: 32) to take ideologies out of the discourse about the family can be applied in this sense, too.

Even though this thesis and its results may be criticised for respondent bias, it provides new and valid information, nonetheless. Of course, the results need to be used cautiously and should not be generalised beyond the scope of this sample. However, if a number of different studies should produce similar results and come to similar conclusions, further conclusions might be drawn.

8 Concluding discussion

In the introduction to this thesis I have pointed out the scientific and social relevance of the topic. The research questions of this thesis have led to answers described throughout. Concluding this work it seems helpful to look back at the initial points of relevance of same-sex parenthood in light of the results.

1. Same-sex couples with children are part of society. Research will provide a description of social reality and the variety of different types of families.

This thesis provides original findings of the existence of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. It can be expected that there will be more same-sex families in the future than the current number of an estimated 7,239 from the German Microcensus (Rupp and Haag, 2016: 2f). Based on the intentions of the respondents, this thesis provides information on how same-sex families will be constructed.

2. Same-sex couples with children are a new type of family and can thus be compared to other different types of families.

It had been reported that same-sex couples with children are different to heterosexual couples regarding the composition of the parental couple, and their family history (Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009). The common patterns with step families, families with adopted children, or families with foster children are particularly relevant when considering the findings of this thesis suggesting openness towards collaborative parenting constellations and thus planned patchwork families. There are, however, also homosexual women and men who plan for families corresponding to the ideal of the nuclear family.

Most importantly it is to note that same-sex families in the future will be primary same-sex families. The findings provided here may be put in contrast to findings on parenting intentions of heterosexual women and men. Particularly the motives for parenthood, but al-

so the notion of collaborative parenting, may be relevant for future research, perhaps as an alternative for ART regardless of the sexual orientation of the actors involved.

This thesis has shown that there is an emergence of a new type of family in that same-sex couples achieve and enact parenthood in non-traditional ways. They also adopt traditional familial patterns (i.e. the nuclear family), but breach the traditional ideal by nonconforming to the inherent (gender) roles.

3. Same-sex couples pursued parenthood in the past and they still do. Research can investigate the practices of a societal subgroup.

The results from this thesis support the evidence that couple and parenthood biographies of homosexual women and men become more linear (Sbordone, 1993: 1; Eggen, 2009: 18; Rupp and Dürnberger, 2009: 86; Regnerus, 2012: 756). They provide insight into determinants of the parenting intention of homosexual women and men as a self-evident option for a substantial number of homosexuals. Motivational aspects and perceptions concerning parenthood and homosexuality have been described. This information helps to understand the desire for parenthood but also regarding specific challenges within a given social and legal framework and their implications on an individual level.

4. Same-sex couples face severe challenges on the way towards parenthood. The pathways they choose could also be an alternative for other individuals in the pursuit of parenthood.

It has been detailed that the planning of parenthood is particularly interesting in the case of homosexual women and men, because they have to find bypasses to the traditional biological way of achieving parenthood. In this necessity to find creative solutions, they can choose from a wide range of options a heterosexual couple usually would not consider. The pathways that are considered and intended by homosexual women and men have been laid out in detail. Their implications have been discussed and principally these pathways could be an option for other individuals, too, regardless of their sex-

ual orientation. Those pathways, however, are often connected with challenges and they may conflict with traditional norms and expectations concerning the family.

Thus the results on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men can be seen as an entry point into a shared space of options regarding non-traditional parenthood independent of sexual orientation. They make legal boundaries and issues visible that also concern heterosexual parents and their children with families created by way of non-traditional solutions, like gamete donation, surrogacy, or generally the use of cross-border reproductive services (cf. Thorn, 2016).

5. The pathways chosen by same-sex couples to achieve parenthood affect the way families are formed. Those choices further affect family patterns on a micro-level as well as the concept of the family on a macro-level.

There are changes in the self-concept of homosexuals today, but also concerning societal acceptance of 'lifestyles,' life choices, and families that deviate from the ideal of the heteronormative male-breadwinner nuclear family. Homosexual women and men consider parenthood as an option in their life courses in the context of a same-sex relationship (e.g. Rupp, 2009; Stacey, 2006; Mallon, 2004; Hertling, 2011: 289). Acceptance of homosexuality is relatively high and a majority regards same-sex couples with children as a family (TNS Opinion & Social and Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers - DG JUST, 2015; Lück and Ruckdeschel, 2015: 65).

Increasing prevalence and visibility of families that diverge from the heteronormative concept of a dyadic parental couple with biologically related children challenges the concept of the 'family' itself. It has been discussed that there are two major patterns for active parenthood as intended by homosexual women and men: collaborative parenthood or families similar to the nuclear family. Particularly collaborative families may experience scrutiny because they accumulate several aspects of deviation from traditional characteristics of

'the family.' Collaboration will also depend on the long-term quality of the relationships between all participants, including the children. On a greater societal level, the acceptance of such highly non-normative families may be challenging considering attitudes among the population but also in terms of legal recognition of parental rights and duties in the interest of the children.

These disruptions of social categories and ideals in terms of the family occur together with other major societal changes challenging traditional norms and patterns. Changing gender roles and expectations apply to (heterosexual) parents. Mothers are supposed to work and their reconcilability of family and work is supposed to be facilitated with political means, i.e. parental leave schemes. The same policy measures mean to activate fathers to be involved in their child's life. There are societal changes particularly concerning the family with a shift towards nurturing being integrated into role expectations of fathers (men) and women being provided with more measures for combining work and family. Thus it can be said that besides these changes to the family, particularly to the traditional ideal of the family, same-sex couples with children are yet another aspect of the changing family in the collective (macro) understanding.

6. Having two parents of the same sex might also have an impact on the children raised in such families.

Public debates and scientific publications were concerned with the outcome of children growing up with same-sex parents (e.g. Brewaeys et al., 1997; Golombok et al., 1997; Gartrell et al., 2006; Rupp, 2009; Crouch et al., 2014; Baiocco et al., 2015). Conservatively speaking, particularly because the debate about the best interest and best outcome of the child is often used to restrict access to certain services, it should be considered in how far a prospective assessment of the child's welfare is actually possible if the child is not yet in the family (either because it is not born yet, or perhaps because it has not been adopted yet) (cf. Stroop, 2013).

Evidence of negative effects on children growing up with same-sex parents based on research that withstands scientific scrutiny concerning its methods has yet to be presented. Nonetheless, actual and perceived wellbeing of children is and should be considered thoroughly. Notwithstanding scientific evidence, the fact that Germany does not allow same-sex couples to adopt may be the result of uncertainty in terms of the welfare of the child on side of legislative institutions. Homosexual women and men who intend to have children are directly affected in their pursuit of parenthood by legislature, but also by opinions and guidelines of individuals and other authorities and organisational bodies. In the end clear and binding rules and guidelines which don't facilitate discrimination based on personal beliefs would help homosexual women and men in their pursuit of parenthood.

Perhaps an objective focus on relevant concerns might help same-sex couples and their children. Besides being beneficiaries of a non-discriminatory legal framework to protect and support families in general, they also face issues common to families relying on ART. Therefore a focus on questions common in psychosocial support for people in ART treatment might help same-sex couples in essential questions arising in the pursuit of parenthood and may contribute to a further normalisation of same-sex couples as another type of clientele (cf. Thorn, 2015a). From what is known from the literature it is more likely that children will be affected by the way their parents deal with their biological origin rather than merely by growing up with a same-sex couple.

7. There are similarities between couples in fertility treatment and same-sex couples who plan to become parents.

Given that some of the pathways and methods used or deliberated by same-sex couples are from the catalogue of assisted reproductive techniques, same-sex couples are thus comparable to heterosexual couples suffering from sub- or infertility. They make use of gamete donation (i.e. sperm and egg donation), they seek medical assistance in fertility clinics, and they acquire the assistance of surrogates.

Users of ART are subjected to the same procedures regardless of their sexual orientation, however there are differences concerning access and funding based on sexual orientation (and the legal recognition of same-sex relationships). There are also different implications of using ART depending on sexual orientation. Some surrogates or gamete donors might not want to cooperate with a same-sex couple, however same-sex couples might use a broader scope of reproductive technology altogether⁶⁶. Same-sex couples are in a different position and mindset in terms of disclosing the biological origin of the child.

Therefore the findings of this thesis imply common grounds based on similar circumstances (i.e. medical assistance in achieving parenthood) for same- and different sex couples, but also differences based on the visibility of that assistance. Same-sex couples might help in changing the perception of sub- or infertility in contributing to a greater discussion of ART, perhaps challenging the social taboo connected with infertility. They are also a clientele for ART providers and practitioners, experts, and decision-makers should be aware of the fact that ART generally involves same-sex couples.

This thesis provides evidence that homosexual women and men plan to have families of their own. As Ajzen (1985: 29) writes:

“intentions can only be expected to predict a person’s attempt to perform a behavior, not necessarily its actual performance.”

Therefore, the results presented here may indicate under which conditions homosexual women and men develop the intention to parent and what they need to actually pursue this intention. Obviously there will always be far fewer same-sex families than different-sex families due to the smaller number of homosexual women and men alone. However,

⁶⁶ For example, ART allows shared biological motherhood in lesbian couples: one of the partners provides the oocyte and the other carries the child as gestational mother.

the proportion of same-sex families among same-sex couples may increase with easier or equal access to parenthood. The findings are therefore not only relevant in terms of new evidence in an area where there is still a lack of durable and extensive research, but also in providing information for the discourse on equal opportunities and the political and legal debate on equality for same-sex couples.

The current legal situation in Germany concerning adoption as well as the restrictive laws or lack of legal regulations in context with artificial reproductive techniques are generally challenging for homosexual women and men on their way to achieving parenthood. The legal framework, which does not provide for joint adoption by same-sex couples, facilitates discrimination by state authorities and their representatives against homosexual women and men who would like to adopt. This may lead to them pursuing alternative pathways to achieving parenthood, possibly abroad, or to abandoning their intention altogether. In any case it leads to additional hardships, particularly for homosexual men, for whom adoption is one of the options which is most often intended. The legal situation concerning ART provides challenges and uncertainties for homo- and heterosexual couples (cf. Steininger, 2013, 2015; Coester-Waltjen et al., 2015). The lack of regulation concerning the role of gamete donors in combination with the legal definition of motherhood and fatherhood provides potential problems, particularly for unmarried couples. A major problem remains in the legal situation of private sperm donors in Germany (Steininger, 2013). The practical relevance is concerned with rights and duties of parents (biological and social) in families of collaborative parenting. Specifically regarding the decision-making process and the 'balance of power' between homosexual women and men, it would be interesting to conduct more systematic analyses, for instance as a negotiation process modelled with regard to bargaining aspects. But also other specific aspects like discrimination, disclosure, internalised stigma etc. should be included in systematic research.

The greater societal question, however, concerns our family ideals. This means in particular the ideal of the nuclear family, which is still in 2015 a standard for policies and taxation, at least in Germany, and even

though lives differ quite remarkably from the time when that ideal, combined with the notion of the male breadwinner, was most prominent empirically. Therefore the question concerning what is considered acceptable as a family but also feasible in terms of actual family life, active parenthood, and work-life reconciliation among partners and children remains of major importance. On the one hand, same-sex couples and their children “transgress traditional family patterns and challenge normative family values; on the other hand, they partly adopt and reproduce discourses about biological kinship, gender complementary, and family life centred around the co-resident couple” (Folgerø, 2008: 146). The results have shown that for some the intentions concerning parenthood are similar to common normative social models of the family and for others they are more unconventional. This hints towards the relevance of certain life concepts (or maybe lifestyles) and the adaptation of hetero-normative social ideals by sexual minority groups; a topic which generally deserves more academic attention.

Homosexual couples with collaborative parenting arrangements in particular might be perceived to challenge the traditional understanding of parenthood, based on the ideal of the nuclear family, even more than by merely being a same-sex couple raising children (Folgerø, 2008: 142–146). The general idea of having a gamete donor involved in the child’s upbringing does seem rather provocative, given that “[t]he traditional, heterosexual, nuclear family is often used as the gold standard” (De Wert et al., 2014: 1862). However, by having a same-sex couple and the other biological parent involved in the actual parenting process and in the life of the child, homosexual women and men can fulfil the intention of three or four individuals to become parents, and at the same time provide the child with its biological parents, simply by extending the scope of actors involved in parenting.

It seems that homosexual women and men find themselves in a continuum between traditional norms, values, and patterns and a range of options far beyond. The findings of this thesis support the idea that homosexuals can choose but also have to choose whether to adopt or transgress certain patterns. Similar to the argument of Cherlin (1978)

about remarriages, the lack of institutional support forces the individuals to find solutions for their issues themselves. Not unlike the case of the allocation of household labour for same-sex couples (Buschner, 2014), the absence of social scripts and social norms regarding the family patterns of same-sex couples might be a chance to compose families and family life specifically according to their individual or dyadic intentions (Bergold et al., 2015: 183; Ryan-Flood, 2005: 200f). But while some could be considered pioneers in terms of clearing the way and showing options to solve problems, others may be more apt to adhere to more traditional solutions, as they are available.

“Many gays and lesbians are very happy with the security offered by the nuclear family – with its established roles, its domesticity and the chance it offers to integrate into the local community – and enjoy the pleasures of monogamy” (Hekma, 2006: 363).

As long as same-sex couples are forced to find alternative solutions because they are denied access to traditional institutions, there will be more or less evident aspects of transgression, however. And even with equal legal access, there might still be individuals and couples opting for unconventional solutions. Therefore society at large, with its cultural knowledge of established hetero-normative gender, family, and parenting roles may perceive those deviating families representative for the decline of paternity and parenthood as we know it (cf. Stacey, 2006). Homosexual parenting “potentially might have a destabilizing effect on concepts of fixed and universal categories” by challenging “concepts and identity constructions based on thinking in terms of dichotomies” (Folgerø, 2008: 147). Other than being a threat, those solutions found by homosexual women and men could also be seen as facilitators, however. By demonstrating unconventional solutions to achieving parenthood or allocating household labour and managing its reconciliation with paid work, same-sex couples might help to find alternatives for gender role-based challenges of couples and families in general. Thus the solutions found by homosexual women and men might be seen as a chance to overcome gender-based boundaries. Further research may provide in-

formation about nonconforming patterns and solutions for family issues in defiance of gender role related norms and expectations, as well as on social acceptance regarding unconventional behaviour.

The idea of homosexual parenthood, and particularly even more unconventional parenting patterns with the involvement of more than two parental actors, leads to the much more interesting notion of what is actually perceived and accepted as a family, particularly concerning the number and role of actors involved. What is provided for by current social and legal norms has been shown to be insufficient compared to the intentions and practices of homosexual women and men and potentially for couples in ART treatment. Alternative family constellations may be unfamiliar to a general public and to the social environment; however, they will be the norm within the boundaries of that specific family. Therefore, the way actors in the social environment deal with deviations from the social norms regarding 'the family' affects families themselves. There seems to be a consensus in Germany that every type of dyadic living arrangement that involves children is considered to be a family (Lück and Ruckdeschel, 2015: 64) and there also seems to be a greater level of tolerance and perhaps even acceptance of same-sex couples (Gründler and Schiefer, 2013; TNS Opinion & Social and Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers - DG JUST, 2015). There is great importance, however, in the quality of interactions experienced by family members of alternative family constellations in everyday life. Whether or not an individual feels accepted given its specific family characteristics will have an influence on its feelings and actions. Evidence has been found in this thesis for a connection between the idea of being a family and social acceptance. This seems to be relevant particularly for homosexual men, whose perception of parenthood seems to include aspects of a normalisation in terms of greater acceptance as a family vs. their status as a homosexual man or male same-sex couple alone.

The claim that a greater diversity of families needs to be acknowledged on a broader societal level (Schneider et al., 2014: 32) seems appropriate. There has been a call for taking ideologies out of the discourse about the

family (ibid.), which is a constructive suggestion in terms of adapting to the intentions and needs of (prospective) families today. Particularly with increasing visibility of same-sex families and families after ART treatment who now approach the actual parental roles much more liberally than in the past, deviations from the nuclear family, especially in terms of function and number of parental actors, are more prominent. The nuclear family based on a heterosexual married couple with children still seems to be the measure for classifying various types of relationships (Lück and Ruckdeschel, 2015: 68). Furthermore, the dissemination of family ideals and perceived models of parenthood should be a stronger focus in research. The efforts of Schneider et al. (2015) regarding family related guiding images have contributed in this regard. The APPARENT Project (cf. references), coordinated by Prof. Dr. Daniela Grunow, is also taking steps in that direction.

The findings of this thesis share some common ground with arguments in the debate about marriage equality in Germany. It has been argued, even by the German Federal Constitutional Court, that civil union and marriage are practically functionally identical (Wapler, 2015: 25). One controversial issue remaining is that marriage is argued to be a safe environment for the family in terms of having and raising children, and should thus remain unchanged – as an exclusive institution for heterosexual couples. Comparisons of the numbers of same-sex couples raising children vs. heterosexual couples in general or married couples in particular, however, cannot be seen as legitimate in this regard if the intention is to discredit (legal) equality based on a relatively small number of people affected.

Only recently same-sex couples have started to have families within the context of their same-sex relationship. It has been detailed earlier that changes in the attitudes of experts in legislation, jurisdiction and (mental) health professions have contributed to a general societal change. This change certainly has provided a social environment in which there are fewer constraints and restrictions and less fear of negative sanctions than before. It is not to be argued that this environment is perfect; however, it is considerably more open and accepting and provides protection

through certain regulations in terms of antidiscrimination legislation. Such a relatively secure environment for being in a committed relationship, however, is a rather new phenomenon. Thus it could be argued that basic prerequisites for starting a family have only been developed relatively recently for homosexual women and men. Therefore the divide in the number of families in heterosexual vs. homosexual couples should be rather obvious and not be used as an argument against the desire to having a family. Furthermore, under current legislation same-sex couples are still disadvantaged in the access to parenthood, most importantly by being denied adoption as a couple and because general access to and financial substitution of ART cost is not provided. Therefore, arguing that same-sex couples are often childless is somehow ignorant, considering the difficulties involved.

But is there an emergence of a new type of family? Not necessarily. There are homosexual women and men who intend to have children; others don't. There is also evidence for families according to the ideal of the nuclear family. In the end, same-sex families can be perceived on two levels: for what they appear to be and for what they are. In the social environment, the neighbourhood, in child day-care, at school, etc. the experiences with other actors and representatives of institutions in the social sphere are probably most relevant. In the sphere of the social environment, the appearance of same-sex families may be most important. Other individuals interact in their every-day setting based on their attitudes, and it is not so important whether the child of a lesbian couple has access to its biological father. The legal realm, however, is concerned with same-sex couples and families for what they are. In this case, norms and regulations apply which don't match the complexity of the familial reality. Same-sex couples are not married couples and therefore have to be treated differently in certain circumstances. Restrictions, for instance the fact that same-sex couples cannot adopt or the general ban of surrogacy, but also other quasi-legal restrictions, most importantly the official recommendation of the German Medical Association that lesbian couples should not be treated with ART, and the lack of financial support from health insurance for lesbian couples in ART treatment, can

create strong incentives to achieve parenthood via collaboration and thus avoid all those issues. Therefore, the fact that collaborative parenthood is even considered may have its origin in the considerable challenges for homosexual women and men to have children. The structural framework forces homosexual women and men to find their own alternative and to operate in legal grey areas where the interests of all parties involved cannot be legally secured. In case of a dispute, this will have consequences for those actors who have no legal status or who cannot claim rights, for instance a biological father who has not been listed on the birth certificate or whose child has been adopted by the partner of the birthmother.

The situation for homosexuals in Germany could be considerably more comfortable if they were allowed to marry. Even if equal rights were attributed to partners in a civil union, difficulties with authorities abroad are likely, because marriage is an institution that is internationally known and recognised. Civil unions, however, are not. Therefore only marriage can provide access to equal rights of German citizens all over the world.

Even though the makeup of same-sex families may be unfamiliar when viewed through the traditional normative lens of the nuclear family, there is a desire for the family. Extending the definition of marriage to couples regardless of the sex or sexual orientation of the two partners, as proposed by Wapler (2015) and the draft bill from November 2015 (German Bundestag, 2015b), will make everyday life less complicated for a number of actors. Marriage for same-sex couples would imply that these couples would qualify for treatment with ART and also reimbursement of part of the costs by health insurance providers as it is provided to married couples. This, however, would mostly be a benefit for lesbian couples. Due to the ban on surrogacy and egg donation, male homosexual couples would still be disadvantaged in terms of possible pathways to parenthood. With the right to marry, same-sex couples will generally have access to adoption. While they might still experience hidden discrimination in terms of negative evaluations of administrators or in the personal assessment of parental fit by case workers from the re-

gional authorities in charge of placement, they cannot be rejected purely based on the fact that same-sex partners could not adopt a child jointly. In any case, it should be easier for a gay couple to go through adoption or surrogacy arrangements abroad if they can actually register as married. Then, of course, German legislature would need to at least make a concession in terms of legally acknowledging a same-sex couple as parents of a child born abroad when this family is on its way back home to Germany. A married lesbian couple who is pregnant with a child after donor insemination will not have to wait until the child is born to go through a lengthy legal process of adoption to sort out legal parenthood.

Every argument about protecting marriage in the best interest of the child disregards the fact that a child is not under better protection when its parents are legally discriminated against and don't have equal rights or access (e.g. to financial benefits). A reminder, however, seems necessary, that regardless of an individual attitude towards marriage equality or homosexuality, the greater societal framework, the leading values of a nation, and the overall attitude of the population should be respected in a democracy but also reflected in the law. And most importantly: the central focus in any family should be the best interest of the children. It does not serve this best interest, however, if the parents of the child are in any way systematically disadvantaged, because this will have a direct effect on the family and the child.

It should have become obvious that more research is needed. Ideally such research should be thoroughly funded and designed in order to make it possible to access also respondents who are unlikely to participate in volunteer samples. As a matter of fact, the idea of a full census of homosexuals should not be pursued for ethical and security reasons, as long as homosexual women and men – and sexual minorities in general – still have to fear discrimination and disadvantages in any respect. It is in this sense that the German civil union concept is also to be strongly criticised, because due to its restriction to two partners of the same sex it leads to a forced outing in every instance when the official family status is enquired. In principle it could be worth considering in how far a focus on the heteronormative binary system, including as-

assumptions regarding sexual preference and sexual identity, meets the reality of individuals these days. This would also include researching sexual minorities beyond the dichotomy of hetero- vs. homosexual and not necessarily linking sexual acts or sexual preference to a dichotomous idea of sexual identity.

There seem to be two possible solutions in order to reach more substantial results concerning homosexual women and men; either by designing studies specifically to collect data on relevant groups of interest, or by achieving ongoing samples or panels to collect specialised thematic data⁶⁷. Conducting specific studies has the great advantage that the research questions and design can be placed into the focus, because the study itself would be specifically devoted to a set of research questions. It will be difficult, however, to access the target population. If it was possible to use an existing panel access or integrate specific sets of questions into a panel wave, the access problem would be partially solved. Of course it would then be necessary to identify the target population among the panel members and most likely to oversample in order to achieve a sufficient number of cases in the end. Furthermore, the possibility to collect information may be rather restricted, considering that it is not necessarily in the best interest of a panel to include larger sections of questions from external sources.

Returning to the question whether same-sex couples having children is the emergence of a new type of family, there are two answers. One answer would be: No; Same-sex families are far from being a new phenomenon. There is evidence of a change in the family origin towards primary same-sex families and perhaps there are an increasing number of collaborative families; however, the fact that same-sex couples raise children is not new. The other answer, referring to the legal framework and perhaps social norms, would be: Yes. Even though there has been progress in terms of providing legal security for children in same-sex families, there is still discrimination – in terms of different treatment –

⁶⁷ Fischer (2016: 72f) has some valuable suggestions for an improvement of identification and for reducing inflated numbers of homosexual women and men in survey data.

of same-sex couples and families. Therefore they are a new type of family for policy and legislation. This status of an emerging type of family may also be applicable in terms of social recognition; however, there seems to be growing tolerance and also acceptance of same-sex couples and families, either based on scientific surveys, a referendum on marriage equality, or constitutional courts dealing with issues of legal discrimination.

While homosexuality has become relatively accepted, other sexual minorities, for instance bi-, trans-, intersexual, or transgender individuals, are still marginalised in research as well as within society. Sexual minorities, their life plans, and the realisation of those plans, particularly concerning parenthood as a universal human goal (Müller-Götzmann, 2009: 11), seem to be logical focal points for future research, particularly in terms of challenges and support for those individuals who cannot achieve parenthood by themselves. These are common grounds with research on sub- or infertile couples as well as with counselling and psychosocial consultation of couples and individuals in fertility treatment or on the way towards parenthood. Non-heteronormative and non-heterosexual forms of parenthood call attention to new conceptions of parenthood as we know it. The focus, however, is the same in all cases: the family and our perception of the family.

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A.1 Logistic regression appendix

Table A.1 Influence on parenting intention according to TPB, logistic regression, background variables only

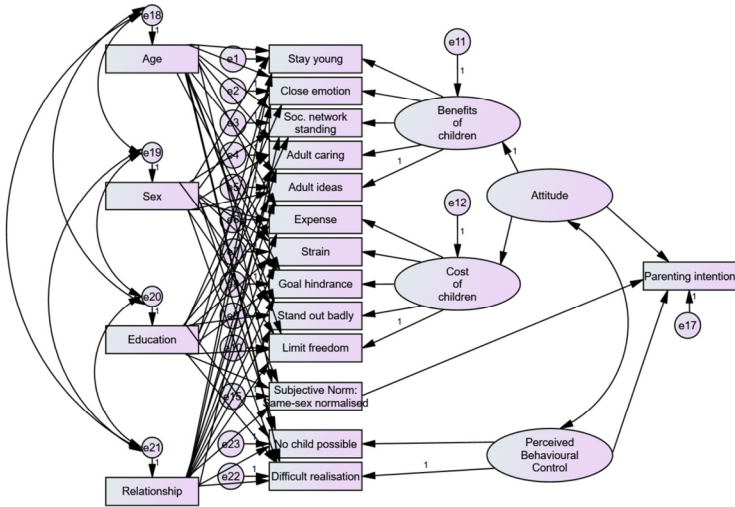
| | Model A.1 | | Model A.2 | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|----------|
| | OR | sig. | OR | sig. |
| Const. | 1.183 | .037 * | 117.419 | .000 *** |
| Male | | | 1.033 | .859 |
| Age | | | .876 | .000 *** |
| In relationship | | | 1.594 | .090 † |
| Household income | | | .986 | .774 |
| Population density | | | .996 | .941 |
| Years since Coming-Out | | | .984 | .396 |
| Level of education | | | | |
| <i>Lower secondary</i> | | | .775 | .592 |
| <i>Medium / higher second. (ref.)</i> | | | - | - |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | | | 1.420 | .078 † |
| Attitude: benefit of Children | | | | |
| <i>Stay young</i> | | | | |
| <i>Close emotion</i> | | | | |
| <i>Social network standing</i> | | | | |
| <i>Adult caring</i> | | | | |
| <i>Adult ideas</i> | | | | |
| Attitude: cost of Children | | | | |
| <i>Expense</i> | | | | |
| <i>Strain</i> | | | | |
| <i>Goal hindrance</i> | | | | |
| <i>Stand out badly</i> | | | | |
| <i>Limit freedom</i> | | | | |
| Subjective norm | | | | |
| <i>Accept same-sex</i> | | | | |
| <i>Same-sex normalised</i> | | | | |
| Perceived behavioural control | | | | |
| <i>No child possible</i> | | | | |
| <i>Difficult realisation</i> | | | | |
| Log likelihood | -426.175 | | -358.634 | |
| McFadden's adj. R ² | | | .135 | |
| Cragg & Uhler pseudo R ² | | | .262 | |
| Sensitivity | 100 % | | 76.72 % | |
| Specificity | 0 % | | 65.02 % | |
| Correctly classified | 54.21 % | | 71.36 % | |

Source: Original analyses based on *ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010*;
Model sample: *n* = 618.

Model A.2 in Table A.1 shows that age is highly significant in the prediction of parenting intentions of homosexual women and men from the sample. With increasing age the probability of having the intention to become a parent decreases. Other background variables are only marginally significant (i.e. household income and tertiary education) or not at all. If only background variables are used to predict parenting intention, relationship status and tertiary education are significant, however only within a .10 confidence level. The model with only background variables provides sufficient information for a correct classification of cases in 71.4 % of cases.

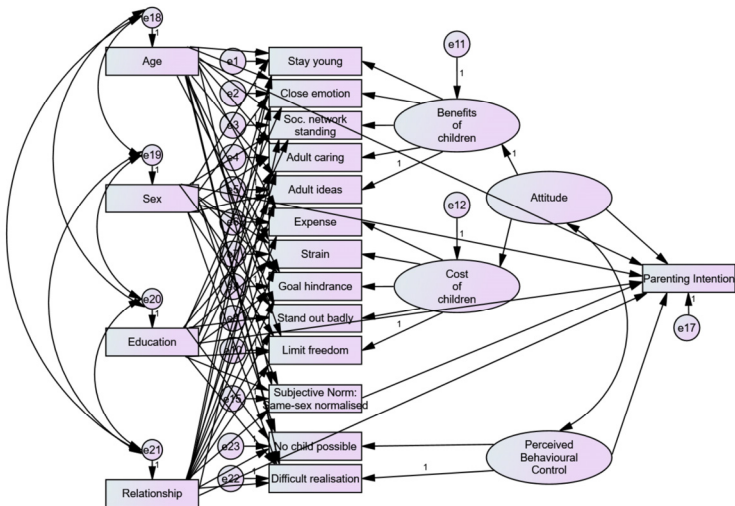
A.2 SEM appendix

Figure A.1 SEM model, strict TPB with all paths visible



Source: SPSS AMOS 22

Figure A.2 SEM model, extending TPB with all paths visible



Source: SPSS AMOS 22

Table A.2 Extended SEM with all background variables: only significant effects

| Parameter | | Estimate | Sig. |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------|---------|
| ATTITUDE | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .885 | .007 ** |
| PBC | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .180 | .038 * |
| SN: Same-sex normalised | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .029 | .384 |
| BENEFIT | → ATTITUDE | .276 | .018 * |
| COST | → ATTITUDE | -.559 | .020 * |
| Adult ideas | → BENEFIT | .618 | .006 ** |
| Adult caring | → BENEFIT | .444 | .002 ** |
| Social network standing | → BENEFIT | .241 | .002 ** |
| Close emotion | → BENEFIT | .358 | .006 ** |
| Stay young | → BENEFIT | .602 | .014 * |
| Limit freedom | → COST | .754 | .007 ** |
| Stand out badly | → COST | .310 | .009 ** |
| Goal hindrance | → COST | .529 | .009 ** |
| Strain | → COST | .575 | .005 ** |
| Expense | → COST | .632 | .010 * |
| Difficult realisation | → PBC | .475 | .010 * |
| No child possible | → PBC | .461 | .011 * |
| Age | → Social network standing | .176 | .009 ** |
| Age | → Adult caring | -.131 | .040 * |
| Age | → Expense | .191 | .020 * |
| Age | → Strain | .241 | .020 * |
| Age | → Goal hindrance | .156 | .034 * |
| Age | → Limit freedom | .233 | .013 * |
| Age | → No child possible | .242 | .016 * |
| Age | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | -.420 | .009 ** |
| Male | → Social network standing | .173 | .015 * |
| Male | → Adult caring | .128 | .012 * |
| Male | → Goal hindrance | -.139 | .030 * |
| Male | → SN: Same-sex normalised | -.066 | .064 † |
| Male | → No child possible | .331 | .015 * |
| Male | → Difficult realisation | .152 | .007 ** |
| Education | → Social network standing | .084 | .037 * |
| Education | → Adult ideas | .171 | .015 * |
| Education | → Stand out badly | -.103 | .023 * |
| Education | → <i>Parenting intention</i> | .078 | .052 † |
| In relationship | → Expense | -.127 | .012 * |
| In relationship | → Stand out badly | .089 | .041 * |
| In relationship | → Limit freedom | -.074 | .070 † |
| Years since Coming-Out | → Social network standing | -.115 | .083 † |
| Years since Coming-Out | → Goal hindrance | .061 | .342 |

Table A.2 Extended SEM with all background variables: only significant effects, continued

| Parameter | | Estimate | Sig. |
|------------------------|---------------------------|----------|--------|
| Years since Coming-Out | → Stand out badly | .114 | .068 † |
| Household income | → Social network standing | -.091 | .063 † |
| Household income | → Strain | -.099 | .029 * |
| Household income | → Limit freedom | -.100 | .057 † |
| Population density | → Goal hindrance | .074 | .038 * |

Note: *Dependent variable 'Parenting intention' in italics, latent variables representing core components of the theoretical model in capitals: cost and benefit as second order dimensions of attitude, and perceived behavioural control (PBC). Subjective Norm (SN) was measured with a singular item.*

Bootstrap ML estimation with 200 samples, bias corrected confidence intervals at 95% level, standardised regression weights.

Model fit: SRMR: .0352; χ^2/df : 2.591; RMSEA: .051; IFI: .956; TLI: .865; NFI: .930; CFI: .953.

Source: *Original analyses based on ifb-dataset "Same-sex lifestyles in Germany," 2010; Model sample: n = 618.*

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In this dissertation, Christian Haag contributes to the body of research in family sociology in providing original results on parenting intentions of homosexual women and men. Based on a quantitative German dataset from the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (*ifb*), the thesis delineates parenting intentions, finds evidence for influencing factors which are important in the development of these intentions, and furthermore describes and discusses intended family patterns of homosexual women and men. The implications are discussed at an individual and a societal level. Results throughout point towards the importance of the social and legal framework. Results and their implications extend to common issues and topics for all couples in treatment with assisted reproductive techniques.



Christian Haag holds a diploma degree in Sociology from the University of Bamberg and also studied at the National University of Ireland in Galway. He has taught and researched at the chair of Sociology I at the University of Bamberg, at the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (*ifb*), and at the Goethe University Frankfurt. His work is focussed on social inequality, life course research, and family sociology. Specialties include employment of women and mothers, reconciliation of family and employment, same-sex relationships and homosexuality, attitudes towards the family and normative images of the family, and parenting intentions, particularly in the context of artificial reproductive techniques.

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