

Between Struggles and Expectations

Queer Experiences within Immigrant Families

How do LGBT+ people with immigrant background make sense of and navigate their relationship with their parents in relation to their sexual identity?

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to furthering our understanding of how marginalized communities navigate multiple intersecting identities. By examining LGBT+ people with immigrant backgrounds, I aimed to reveal the complex nature of balancing race and sexuality in a political landscape characterized by rising xenophobia and the growing momentum of LGBT+ rights movements. In an effort to transcend simplistic victimhood narratives often attributed to racialized queers, I delved into their own accounts and narratives and found a multitude of factors that shape their realities, beyond being deemed victims of their families' non-acceptance of their sexualities. The central focus of this study was my informants' portrayal of their families and their process of coming out to them. This study shows that navigating intergenerational relationships, as an LGBT+ person with immigrant background, means navigating the struggles and expectations of their parents. My informants employ different strategies to renegotiate their place within the family, particularly in relation to their sexualities. Their sexual orientation serves as a catalyst for the renegotiation of parental struggles and expectations, ultimately transforming the family unit into a dynamic arena in which a moral economy operates.

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Chapter 1 Research design

Introduction and motivation

In this thesis, my aim is to delve into the relationship between queer individuals with immigrant backgrounds and their parents. By exploring the complexities of intergenerational relationships within immigrant families, I seek to gain a more thorough understanding of how queer people navigate these relationships and the factors they consider when reflecting upon them.

As an employee of Sabaah, a small organization dedicated to improving conditions for Queer and Trans Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (QTBIPOCs) in Denmark, I have witnessed the challenges faced by the target group at the intersection of their LGBT+ identities and immigrant backgrounds. While Sabaah is dedicated to combatting racism and promoting inclusivity for queer individuals, it also operates within a political landscape marked by increasing xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments, and the stereotyping of ethnic minority communities as perpetrators of homophobia. As part of Sabaah's efforts to secure funding, the organization engages with various state officials and politicians. Through my involvement in these engagements, I have become aware of a recurring pattern where Sabaah employs a one-sided narrative around immigrant QTBIPOCs and their relationships with their families. These narratives tend to portray immigrant communities and the families of the target group as the primary perpetrators of harm against LGBT+ individuals, consequently positioning the target group as victims within their own families. Sabaah's approach is largely influenced by what society at large deems important, wherein gender and sexual identity assumes a prominent position, while race is rendered comparatively less significant. I suggest, that the victim narrative oversimplifies the experiences of queer individuals within immigrant families. As they are victimized, they are reduced to their LGBT+ identities, and their relationship with their families is framed solely as a matter of clashes between race and LGBT+ identities.

This observation raises important questions about how members of the target group themselves make sense of and navigate their family dynamics in a context of sexuality disclosure. Thus, my aim with this thesis is to embark on a nuanced exploration of the intricate dynamics shaping the lives of queer individuals within the context of immigrant family environments, with a specific focus on the narratives and self-portrayals of the target group.

I hope that this research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by QTBIPOCs and thereby inform the work of organizations such as Sabaah in creating more inclusive and supportive environments. Furthermore, I to contribute to understanding sexuality and race, not as two distinct constructs, but rather as intertwined and mutually reinforcing constructs. Understanding the interweaving of diverse identities gives rise to new unanswered questions about how QTBIPOCs make sense of and navigate their relationship with their parents while disclosing their sexuality to them. In order to capture the dynamic interplay between these dimensions, it is crucial to engage with them simultaneously, moving beyond simplistic victim narratives and acknowledging race and sexuality as mutually important factors in shaping their trajectories.

Against this backdrop, I pose the following research question:

Research question

How do LGBT+ people with immigrant background make sense of and navigate their relationship with their parents in relation to their sexual identity?

Research outline

In the following chapters I will review the literature surrounding LGBT+ individuals with immigrant background and their family dynamics to situate my research in the field. Then, I will focus on the methodological considerations that guided this research, offering insights into the research methods and early trends identified in my data. Then, I will embark on situating QTBIPOCs in a political field with conflicting political agendas, This exploration will establish a crucial framework from which the subsequent analysis will derive. Then, the analysis of the data will commence, unraveling the multifaceted experiences of LGBT+ individuals with immigrant backgrounds as they navigate their relationships with their families. The analysis will be related to theoretical frameworks and key concepts, that provide a deeper understanding of the narratives at hand. Finally, I will conclude my thesis, presenting the findings throughout this process.

Towards a conceptual framing

It has been found that there exists a considerable body of literature on the intergenerational relationship between immigrant youth and their parents as well as a series of recent studies related to (mostly white) LGBT+ youth's relationship to their parents and 'the trope of coming out'. This

section reviews the literature related to intergenerational relationships in immigrants families at a time of sexuality disclosure. The subsequent section are divided into two parts, on the one hand the intergenerational relationship in immigrant families and on the other intergenerational relationship in (mostly white families) at a time of sexuality disclosure.

Intergenerational relationships in immigrant families

Studies on intergenerational relationships within migrant families are well-documented, and in recent decades, social scientists have paid increasing attention to the micro-level social processes shaping those relations. (Kalmijn, 2019; Rumbaut and Portes, 2001; Turjanmaa and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2020, Falicov, 2007; Antonucci, T.C. et. al. 2007). It has been found that the existing literature on intergenerational relationships in immigrant families rotate around several predominant topics. First of all, several scholars have paid attention to the ways in which immigration can have a negative effect on familial relationships by exploring for instance parent-child gaps in values, norms and traditions, sometimes called ‘dissonant acculturation’, (Kalmijn, 2019; Rumbaut and Portes, 2001). Other scholars explored how other factors than acculturation gaps or difference in values and norms, affect the intergenerational relationship in immigrant families, such as feelings of indebtedness can challenge the intergenerational relationships within immigrant families (Turjanmaa and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2020). A significant body of literature on the intergenerational relationships of Asian immigrants revolve around notions of filial piety, reciprocity and parental sacrifice, where Asian immigrant youth internalize their parents’ expectations of them due to exposure to their struggle, such as downward mobility, financial strain or emotional distress (Guo, 2013; Taylor and Krahn, 2013; Moon and Ruiz-Casares, 2019). A study on immigrant communities in Canada showed a connection between exposure to parents’ post-migration hardships and a strong intergenerational obligation to succeed (Taylor and Krahn, 2013).

Another branch of studies within this field, deals with the positive effects immigration can have on intergenerational relationships within immigrant families. Some scholars conceptualize immigration as a ‘family mobility project,’ (Heath, Rethon and Kilpi, 2008) while others explore multiple dimensions of family solidarity and cohesion in immigrant intergenerational relationships (Baykara-Krumme and Fokkema, 2019) which also include perspectives on intergenerational social, practical and emotional support both ways (de Valk and Bordone, 2019). Some scholars, furthermore argue that children’s development of a dual identity has a positive effect on the intergenerational

relationship in immigrant families (Vermeulen and Kranendonk, 2021). It is, thus, argued that the psychological, social and economic difficulties connected with the process of immigration might actually strengthen the intergenerational relationship, rather than challenge it.

In addition to exploring the micro-level social processes within immigrant families, many scholars point to the social and cultural dimensions of integration, adaptation and assimilation into the receiving society (Albertini et. al., 2019; Turjanmaa and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2020; Falicov 2007) viewing the intergenerational relationship in migrant families *in relation* to a receiving society. In those cases the intergenerational relationships are assessed in a context of ‘successful integration’, however, what constitutes a successful integration is not clearly stated, (Kalmijn and Kraaykamp, 2018; Turjanmaa and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2020), nevertheless, several scholars agree that a ‘successful integration’ is the key to the prosperities of European societies (Albertini et. al., 2019; Turjanmaa and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2020) and that family can play a problematic role in terms hindering individuals' chances of integrating into society (Kalmijn, 2019).

While studying the social processes of integration and their impact on immigrant family dynamics has provided valuable insights into the interplay between family and society, it is necessary to move beyond the binary assessment of successful or unsuccessful integration. This assessment tends to overlook the normative notions of integration as an end goal and fails to consider the interpersonal aspects of navigating dual identities, parenthood, love, and aspirations within the normative framework of the receiving society. Therefore, the literature holds unanswered key inquiries that are essential for understanding the multifaceted dynamics at play in intergenerational relationships within immigrant families. Looking through a different lens than integration might reveal different ways in which society at large affect intergenerational relationships in immigrant families.

The existing literature on immigrant family relationships has significantly advanced our understanding of the microlevel social processes within such families. However, the majority of scholarship in this field has primarily focused on heteronormative and gender conforming individuals, leaving important questions and concepts unexplored. This underscores the need for new avenues of inquiry that address the gaps in our understanding of the experiences of intersecting identities within intergenerational relationships in immigrant families.

By examining not only migration, displacement, and assimilation but also incorporating an analysis of sexuality and gender, new and undisclosed findings may emerge regarding the target group's navigation of familial dynamics. The present study builds on the vast body of research concerning intergenerational relationships in immigrants family, to explore the dynamics of sexuality and gender within this frame. Thus, I aim to explore the relationships in their full complexities and situate them within the broader political landscape of normative understandings of race, sexuality and family. This interdisciplinary approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between race and sexuality in the context of immigrant family relationships.

Intergenerational relationships between LGBT+ individuals and their families

Previous studies examining the experiences of LGBT+ individuals within a family context have provided valuable insights into the impact of disclosing one's sexuality on familial relationships, as well as the various reactions exhibited by parents in response to such disclosures. (Tyler & Abetz, 2022; Chrisler, 2017). A range of studies have conceptualized the moment of gender and/or sexuality disclosure and its effect on family relationships. Ritch Savin-Williams explored in his study that parental reactions to children's sexuality and/or gender disclosure shared similar symptoms with that of mourning and loss. (Savin-Williams, 1998). Willoughby et. al. explored through family stress theory how sexuality and/or gender disclosure can cause disruption on the family (Willoughby et. al. 2008). In these bodies of literature the families' reactions whether it is acceptance or rejection, are the focus. However, there exists another body of literature that deals with the experiences of the LGBT+ youth such as Bates et. al. (2019) who suggest that LGBT+ youth navigate various narratives concerning their identities and how they relate to a wider LGBT+ community. Schmitz et. al. (2020) who argue that their LGBT+ youth participants navigate their own mental well-being through family pressure and derogation.

While, race and ethnicity are often mentioned in the literature as influencing factors when it comes to familial relationships it is rarely discussed in depth and most studies do not take into consideration how e.g. migration experience might affect families' intergenerational relationship in relation to 'coming out.' (Katz-Wise, et. al. 2016; Ryan, 2010; D'Augelli, 1998). Thus, few reports delve into the intersectional location of being an immigrant, queer and navigating family relationships. One should note, that the scholarly work found on racialized queer bodies in Western societies deal mostly with Black communities as well as Latino/a youth in the US, (Toomey, et. al., 2017; Schmitz, et. al.,

2020; Miller & Parker, 2009) leaving unexplored questions of how queers with immigrant background navigate family relationship in Denmark.

The limited diversity within the existing literature on LGBT+ individuals navigating family relationships impedes a comprehensive analysis of how various racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural factors intersect and influence these relationships in relation to gender and sexuality. This limitation inadvertently reinforces the normalization of certain queer experiences while rendering others invisible and marginalized, perpetuating the notion of "lagging development" (Luibheid, 2008).

Elaine Luibheid discovered in her scholarly work that looking at the intersectional location of 'queer' and 'migrant' enabled an understanding of "sexuality as constructed within multiple, intersecting relations of power, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, citizenship status, and geopolitical location." (Luibheid, 2008, pp. 170). Additionally, considering post-colonial critiques, it becomes evident that the conventional trope of "coming out" is often co-opted within neoliberal frameworks that prioritize an idealized, self-realized gay subject. Conversely, those who challenge or deviate from this normative model of coming out may face perceptions of being "backward" or lacking liberation, particularly within communities of color (Luibheid, 2008). By employing these perspectives we can delve into challenging the dominant ethnocentric narrative that portrays being both 'migrant' and 'queer' as a linear progression from repression to liberation.

The current study builds upon the work of scholars like Luibheid and other post-colonial researchers who critically examine the power dynamics that shape prevailing narratives surrounding queer individuals, migrants, and those with migrant backgrounds. By delving into the intersectionality of sexuality and race, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the dynamics within immigrant family relationships during the pivotal moment of sexuality disclosure.

Grounded theory approach

I conducted five semi-structured interviews with LGBT+ individuals with immigrant backgrounds to gain insights into their experiences of navigating their relationship with their parents during the process of coming out. In the following, I delve into the methodological considerations that guided this study and reflect on my own position as a researcher. Additionally, I provide an overview of the coding process of the collected data.

Given that my research question is centered on individuals' narrated experiences, I aim to employ a method that is highly detailed and context-oriented, with a particular focus on the statements of the participants. Thus, I have adopted a grounded theory approach, which entails that the analysis is "grounded" in the data collected from the participants and that the data provides the foundation from which theoretical meaning emerge, rather than applying theories and ideas to the data from relevant literature. I find this method suitable for two reasons: First of all, I want to recognize the significant diversity of the individuals I study. Even though I study people within a certain identity category, I am very cautious about generalizing them in this process, and I want to center each individual's experiences and narratives. A grounded theory approach is a way to respect each individual's life courses, stories and experiences, and avoid imposing preconceived notions and hypothesis onto them. Secondly, grounded theory approach enables a sensitivity, not only towards the statements of each individual, but also the identities that emerges from them. In this way grounded theory allows for an intersectional feminist awareness concerning gender, race, culture, class, sexuality and age, and how these might inform the analysis.

Entering the field, I apply grounded theory method in order to let my informants' narratives speak for themselves. This is not to say that I have no presuppositions or ideas of what this study deals with, quite the opposite. I am doing research in a place where I have a personal life and a sense of community. Furthermore, I analyze my data with the knowledge I have developed on the target group, working with Sabaah for a duration of two year. Thus, I am positioned as an intimate insider, through my workspace and through my community and our shared experiences.

Existing literature on boundaries in the field attends to researchers who, in their work, started as 'outsiders' and then developed relationships while in the field. However, there is a lot to be discovered when the researcher is *already* an insider (Cuomo and Massaro, 2016). Jodie Taylor (2011) suggests the term 'intimate insider' in order to capture the relationship between the researcher and the friend or community that is being researched. On the one hand, as Taylor suggests, the intimate nature of an interview can elicit more detailed responses, making the role of "intimate insider" researchers valuable in generating insightful data (Taylor, 2011, pp. 13). As a member of the community being studied, my involvement potentially positions me as a friend or someone who can better understand the language, struggles, and experiences of the interviewees. This closeness may help lower the

defenses of the interviewees and encourage them to open up more authentically. In fact, one of my interviewees expressed that they would not have participated if it were not "someone from Sabaah" conducting the interview, emphasizing the importance of a shared connection and trust.

There are however some pitfalls when doing research as an 'intimate insider.' Breaking down boundaries in this way is not inherently good, rather, boundaries can play an important ethical role in keeping researcher and participants safe, both emotionally and physically, which is why I am cautious to privilege my position. As Taylor (2011) points out, insider research carries the risk of "insider blindness" and "knowledge distortion." Insider blindness refers to the tendency of the researcher to perceive observations with analytical qualities as banal or unremarkable. (Taylor, 2011, pp. 6, 15). "Knowledge distortion" refers to the researcher's lack of objectivity and their tendency to generate their own epistemological problems and apply them to their data.

To establish clear boundaries in my research, I have implemented measures to ensure a level of objectivity and maintain professional distance. One key measure I did was that I avoided conducting interviews with close friends or individuals with whom I have a personal relationship. This helped maintain a more impartial and unbiased approach during the interview. Additionally, I have made a conscious effort to keep the interview sessions relatively short. By setting a specific time limit for each interview, I aimed to create a structured and focused environment constructing myself *explicitly* as a researcher in the eyes of the participants, which allowed for efficient data collection while minimizing the potential for over-involvement or blurring boundaries.

As an intimate insider in the field, I cannot obtain true objectivity. However, Kathy Charmaz who is one of the scholars associated with grounded theory, suggests, it is naïve to think that the researcher has no assumptions or ideas before entering the field. In fact, the analysis is a result of continuous interplay between researcher and data, where the researcher is encouraged to draw on their own experiences when approaching the data. (O'Reilly, 2013, pp. 94). I adopt a constructivist approach to grounded theory, which entails that "conceptualizations of data result from researchers' interpretive frames as well as what happens during their research and what they learn about their topics." (Charmaz, 2015, pp. 404). It is crucial for the researcher to be transparent about their standpoints and subject them to rigorous scrutiny. (Charmaz, 2015, pp. 405).

I was initially surprised by the significant diversity present in the narratives of my informants. I found myself feeling overwhelmed at how much they differed from each other. This presented a challenge at first, as I grappled with seeing patterns and developing themes. In response to the diverse data set, I started developing themes from what made sense *to me*, attempting to make everything fit those themes. However, I recognized the importance of setting aside my own preconceptions and allowing the informants' narratives to shape the research findings, embracing the diverse perspectives and experiences within the data. The process of setting aside my own experiences and presuppositions has facilitated a data-driven approach to my research. By continuously revisiting my data, new perspectives have emerged, enriching the analysis and contributing to a deeper understanding of the trajectories of my informants.

In the following, I will consider the analytical steps taken to find meaning in the early qualitative data. First, I will elaborate on the method of narrative analysis, and then I will describe my sampling process and introduce my informants one by one. Lastly, I will proceed to my coding process, where I draw attention to the early identifications of trends in the data.

Narrative analysis

The narrative analysis approach is suitable for answering my research questions as it discloses my informants own renditions of their experiences and their sense-making processes. A narrative approach entails recognizing that the data is not neutral or objective, rather, it is shaped by the perspectives, positions, experiences and values of the narrator. As Catherine Riessmann, whose work revolves around narrative analysis, suggests: “In personal narratives it is precisely because of their subjectivity – their rootedness in time, place and personal experience, in their perspective-ridden character – that we value them.” (Riessmann, 1993, pp. 5).

However, it is important to acknowledge that the narrative analysis approach also has limitations. First of all, it requires me to confine my analysis to the renditions provided by my informants, without assuming or inferring beyond what they have shared. While this limitation aligns with the purpose of my study, which is centered on their reflections and experiences, it means that my findings may not capture every aspect of their narratives.

Second of all there is a tension between reality and representation, which underline that narratives are not 'transparent renditions of reality', rather narratives serve as a way to analytically distinguish between "life as lived," "life as experienced" and "life as told" (Bruner, 1986). Furthermore, Eastmond (2007) suggests a fourth level: "life as text," (Eastmond, 2007, pp. 249), where the researcher interprets the narratives and produces new written narratives. Nasheeda et. al. (2019) even goes to suggest that the researcher *retells* the stories of the participants. The process of, what they call, 'restorying' include transcribing an interview with the intention to inductively develop thematic elements across participants' narratives, and ultimately create new stories (Nasheeda, et. al. 2019). As a researcher, I engage with the narratives of my informants to find patterns and themes, to gain insight into their underlying meanings and expose their sensemaking processes.

As I delve into the analysis of my data, I construct narratives or, as Riessmann suggests, I establish order. (Riessmann, 1993, pp. 5). I construct the analysis around themes that I have developed through a coding process of my informants' narratives. Thus, the themes present as the structure of the analysis, providing order.

Sampling

The sampling process for this study was conducted through my own network in Sabaah. I wrote a post on our internal Sabaah Facebook group, requesting participants for interviews. First of all, I did not anticipate a lot of response, which is why I had no pre-established criteria for participating other than being part of the QTBIPOC community. Furthermore, the project description was kept intentionally broad, with the topic being the participants' relationship to their families. Any form of relationship was welcome to participate. Upon posting my enquiry on Facebook, my colleague Ari offered me her participation in an interview. The interview with my colleague, who is an adoptee from Korea made me realize that my initial broad target group was perhaps too broad, since most interviews consisted of individuals who had either migrated themselves or had parents who migrated to Denmark. I realized that my colleague's experiences as an adoptee did not align with the other participants' backgrounds, which presented a challenge for the study. The recruitment was so broad and the respondents presented such a diverse group, that I had to make some decisions on who to include to have a coherent study. However, that being said, Ari's contribution served to nuance my perspectives on considering the diverse experience within the QTBIPOC community. What surprised me with Ari's interview was that her view on her relationship to her ethnic Danish adopters had

similarities with the other participants especially concerning dealing with shame concerning one's ethnicity and sexuality and gender identity. In her case, it involved pressure to conform to a specific understanding of Danish identity ('Danskhedsforståelse') that she did not personally identify with. Thus, her contributions opened up new inquires to study once looking at race and sexuality simultaneously in intergenerational family research. Making this decision allowed me to narrow down the focus of study significantly to concern LGBT+ people with immigrant backgrounds, which still presented a diverse range of individuals, both in terms of age, gender and country of origin, but also in how they are at different stages of revealing their sexuality to their families. The final sample of interviewees consisted of individuals who all identify as homosexuals, and with most people identifying as male. Two of the four have disclosed their sexuality to their parents. Three of the four interviewees were born and raised in Denmark. One migrated to Denmark at age 13.

The overall sampling process have raised significant questions regarding the potential influence of gender non-conforming perspectives on the study's outcomes, as well as adopted queers. However, considering the final sample, it is outside the scope of the project, but suggest inquires for further studies.

I conducted four narrative-form semi-structured interviews where I focused on speaking with the participants about their family relationships and their sexuality and/or gender identities. (See interview guide, Appendix A). The interviews were divided into two parts, one part concerned the interviewee's perception of their parents' migration experiences and experiences of coming to Denmark. In this part I was interested in exploring how the interviewee's portrayed their parents, and what experiences and stories they grew up with. The second part was in regard to the interviewee's relationship to their gender and sexuality. This phase, was preoccupied with the interviewee's process of coming out and their experiences of coming out to their parents. For those of the interviewees who hadn't disclosed their gender and/or sexual identity, I explored with them their expectations about coming out to their parents and their fears and hopes in relation to the disclosure.

Given my interest in understanding how QTBIPOCs with immigrant background make sense of their family's reactions to their sexual and gender identities, I note that the families' reactions are not what is the focus of the study, rather, what interests me, is how the interviewees express and narrate their parents' reactions. This entails that the parents' actual life stories, reactions and emotions towards

their children and their queerness is unavailable to me, and that I can only contemplate on how the interviewees' perceive these reactions.

Coding process

The interviews were recorded, and the transcriptions were made shortly after each interview. During the transcription process each quote was tagged with keywords which were constructed based on my interpretation of their statements. The interviews were analyzed using a narrative analysis approach to each individual's personal stories. Their recounted experiences were then compared and contrasted through thematic analysis to identify shared narrative themes. The narrative analysis approach allowed me to expand on what was explicitly stated. For instance, one of the interviewees never told me in direct terms that he was ashamed of being brown, however, my interpretation the following statement indicated otherwise:

In public school. I may have had more of a desire to take my mother with me than my father. My mother has light skin. And it's those kinds of things... yeah. I know. However, my mother doesn't speak Danish as well as my father does. But then again, I knew it [the language]. (Nirved, 00:37:27)

This statement can be interpreted as indicating a sense of shame associated with brown skin tone. The interpretation is based on the interviewee's admission that he preferred to have his mother, who has a lighter skin complexion, accompany him to the school event rather than his father in spite of the fact that his dad is better at speaking Danish. His experience of navigating his preferred parent based on skin color as a child supports the notion that he was aware of race and being othered. Therefore, the keywords 'shame in school', 'racial awareness', and '(fear of) being othered in school' were tagged to this statement. In this way, the development of keywords is based on topics that surfaced in the interview.

Another example of how keywords were applied to statements is demonstrated in the following, where the keywords "shame within family," "regulating behavior" and "support," were derived from the following statement:

I once did some dance moves in front of my family. Then there were some aunties who made fun of me. Where my mother was like ‘okay, it’s my son, what’s your problem.’ And then afterwards, she didn’t directly tell me not to do it, she said, ‘you can do whatever you want, but when you’re with those losers, you should tone it down a bit.’ (Samama, 00:45:32)

In this quote, the interviewee shared a childhood experience, where he was regulated because of his dance moves. I have interpreted this story to indicate workings of shame and the family judging a certain behavior, which I will get back to in the analysis. In addition to shame and behavior, the interviewee drew attention to his mother’s response as a protection of him, and as an ally. This suggests that the story also highlights the significance of support. This quote demonstrates how different, at times contradicting keywords can be extracted from the data. By acknowledging the nuances of my informants’ accounts ensure a thorough and thoughtful examination of the data.

After systematically tagging the data with various keywords, I began sorting the keywords in clusters based on thematic similarities. The first process with thematically organizing the keywords, involved writing up all the keywords and collecting the keywords in clusters based on their similarities. The first draft of uncovering the visualization of my data is depicted in Figure 1:

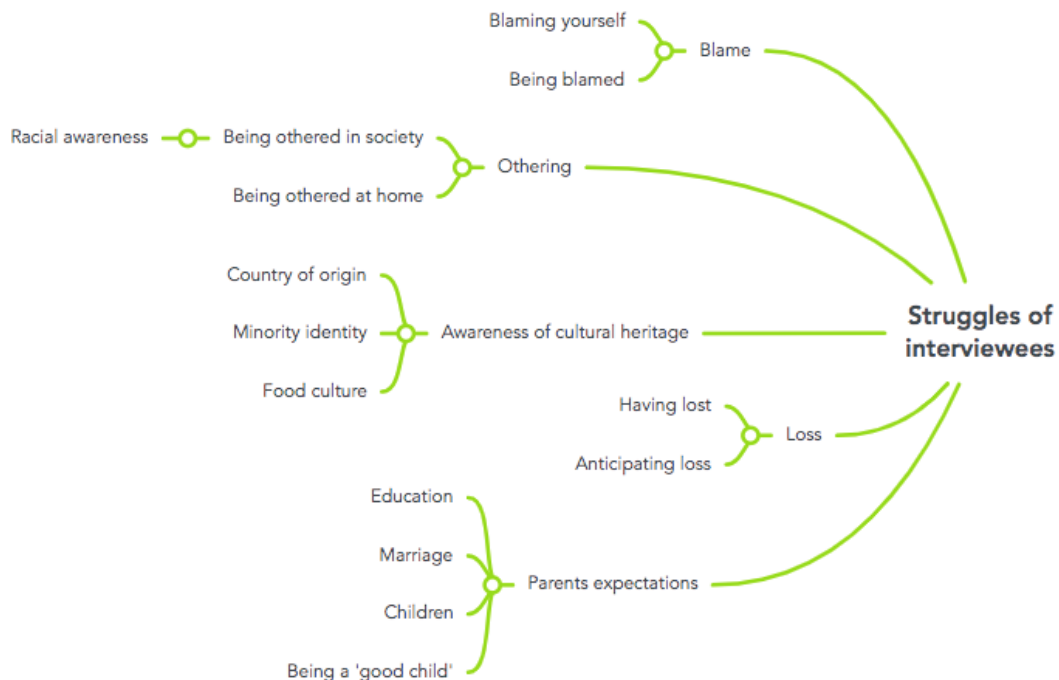


Figure 1

The initial organization of keywords, as depicted in the accompanying figure, centered around the interviewees' struggles. By "struggles," I refer to the topics that featured prominently in the interview indicating importance to the interviewee's story. It is not unexpected that the interviewees' parents played a significant role in the interview, given that I specifically inquired about their perceptions of their parents. However, I was surprised to find that the *parents' struggles* emerged from the narratives of the interviewees' as a distinct and extensive topic for exploration:

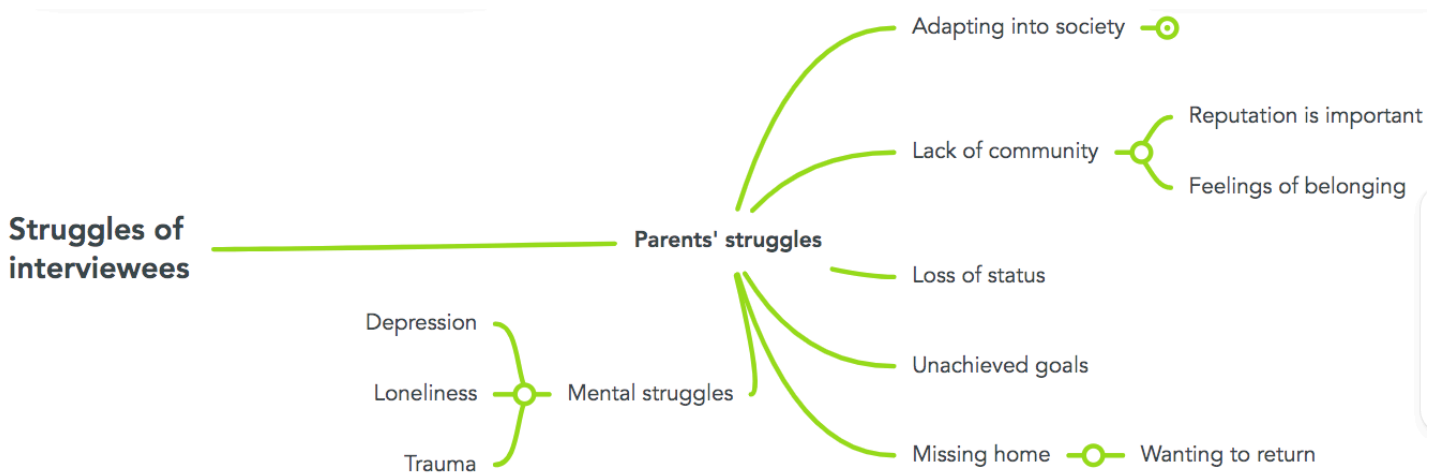
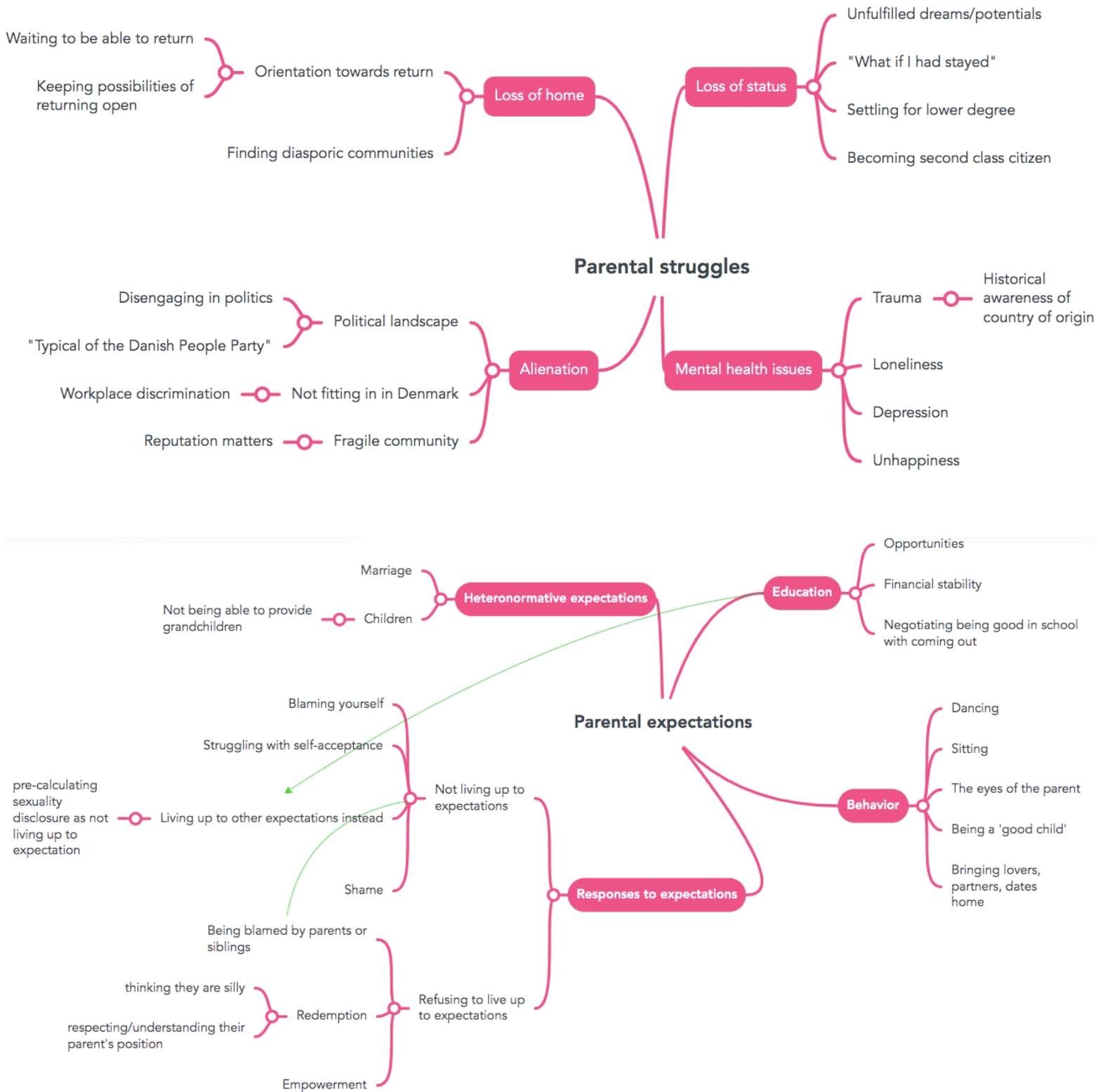


Figure 2

While analyzing the narratives of the interviewees, I noticed that two overarching themes emerged: the struggles of the interviewees themselves and the struggles of their parents. However, I felt that these themes did not fully capture the complexity and interconnectedness of the content. It became apparent that the struggles of the interviewees were not separate from their narration of their parents' struggles, but rather intertwined with them. The theme of "struggles of interviewees" encompassed their own self-perception, life journeys, choices, and aspirations. However, even within this theme, the influence of their parents was still evident. Moreover, I observed a prevalent sense of shame and blame in the data, which often involved external sources, including the family. This led me to realize that the agency demonstrated by my informants was intricately shaped by their parents' influence.

To delve deeper into this dynamic, I revisited the data and examined how the parents' influence manifested in my informants' narratives on their decision-making, behavior, and future ambitions. It became evident that the narratives implicitly conveyed the presence of *parental expectations*.

I then structured the key words around these two themes, parental struggles and parental expectations, to create order in their narratives. The new structure of keywords came to look like the following figures.



The themes I have chosen to focus on in my analysis are “parental expectations” and “parental struggles.” Parental expectations refer to the narratives in the data that relate to the interviewee’s agency, such as how they speak of their dreams for the future, and how they navigate their parents’ expectations of them, both on a structural level, like education and lifestyle choices, but also on a bodily level such as how they behave and simple bodily gestures. I argue, that when interviewees discuss topics concerning their opportunities to exercise agency, parental expectations are influencing the conversation on different levels. Examples of topics that have parental expectations in the narratives are for instance education, decisions on coming out, how they act, and their efforts to be ‘good children.’ The parental expectations I identify in the narratives, derives from the data, thus I am in no position of knowing my informants’ parents’ actual expectations, not to mention if there even are any.

Parental struggles refer to instances where parents are not only mentioned, but related to a struggle. It covers the part of the interviews where the interviewees’ perception of their parents’ struggles are present in their narratives. That could for instance be the keywords of ‘loss of status’, ‘mental health of parent’ or ‘lack of community’, thus it encompasses different struggles the interviewee take up when speaking of their parents.

While many of these keywords are present in a lot of the interviews, it is of course not all keywords that apply to all individuals. The themes are therefore not exhaustive, nor do they represent all group members or can say something general about being a racialized LGBT+ person. However, it can exemplify and tell us something about what *can* be prevalent in people’s minds when they navigate coming out to immigrant parents. And it is a window into understanding the complexities of not only coming out, but navigating familial relationship as a queer person of color.

Chapter 2 Situating QTBIPOCS

This thesis is set to explore how LGBT+ individuals with immigrant backgrounds make sense of and navigate their relationship to their parents. It recognizes that these relationships do not exist in isolation but unfold within a socio-political context where multiple forms of oppression operates on a structural level. The current chapter aims to contextualize the analysis of the intergenerational dynamics between QTBIPOCs and their parents within a political landscape shaped by forces of xenophobia that pose ethnic minority communities as threats to the LGBT+ community on the one hand and LGBT+ emancipation movements on the other. The dichotomy of queer liberation and anti-immigrant sentiments leaves QTBIPOCs in a state of ‘impossibility,’ between racialization and queer liberation as if those two categories could never meet. By situating QTBIPOCs within a broader political field, we can gain insights into how my informants navigate their ethnicities and cultural heritage on the one hand and sexualities and gender identities on the other. This allows us to not only grasp the broader implications and contextual factors that influence their experiences, but also to review the political and interpersonal as intrinsically connected.

In order to capture the interplay between the conflicting agendas of LGBT+ and anti-immigration politics, I will examine the political advocacy work carried out by Sabaah. This exploration serves as a crucial step in setting the scene for the analysis. Subsequently, I will introduce my informants individually, providing preliminary insight into their stories.

The politics of race and sexuality

Having conducted the majority of my research through the organization Sabaah, I aim to examine their political advocacy work and explore the interplay between the forces of anti-immigration sentiments and queer liberation as it constitutes the political field surrounding QTBIPOCs. Sabaah endeavors to balance the demands of anti-racist sentiments and LGBT+ emancipation in their work, while also, not only navigating, but *relying* on powerful political representatives perpetuating anti-immigrant agendas. Thus, in the following, I reflect upon Sabaah’s political advocacy work to bring forth how the organization navigates the intricacies of forces in this political field. I hope to shed light on the conflicting dynamics at play and how it can serve as analytical backdrop in understanding my informants narratives.

As an employee at Sabaah and having done my internship in their political department, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand the political advocacy work Sabaah engaged in. Sabaah regularly engages in direct meetings with politicians and other state officials as part of ensuring a continued flow of government funding to sustain their work. However, within the context of these meetings with politicians conflicting agendas often arose.

On one hand, Sabaah actively strives to improve the living conditions of LGBT+ individuals. However, on the other hand, they engage with politicians who hold biases against ethnic minority communities perpetuating their stigmatization. To maneuver this conflict of interest a narrative is constructed that victimizes QTBIPOCs and villainizes their communities and families. In these narratives the LGBT+ youth of Sabaah are positioned as victims of their families' non-acceptance of their sexual and/or gender identities. It is noteworthy that the 'victimhood' category takes on a political dimension in the context of negotiating state funding, as both Sabaah and politicians adopt this narrative to serve their respective agendas. Sabaah utilizes the victimhood narrative to garner political support and legitimize their ongoing work, while politicians adopt it to justify anti-immigrant sentiments, such as attributing cultural differences as the cause, depicting immigrant families as predators of LGBT+ individuals or as resistant to adopting Western values, such as liberation of LGBT+ people. Such narratives contribute to the reinforcement of the perception of cultural insubordination, portraying immigrant families as unwilling to conform to the prevailing societal norms. (See internship report for the case study, Appendix B, pp. 11).

Employing these narratives, not only oversimplifies the complex realities of QTBIPOCs, reducing them to a simplistic clash between race and sexuality, but it also makes QTBIPOCs, who subscribe to the narrative, complicit in their own racialization. Sara Ahmed fittingly wrote “To achieve true inclusion, (...) a gay man of color must learn to love the nation which stigmatizes him.” (Ahmed, 2014). Thus, following Ahmed's perspective, there is an implicit pressure on QTBIPOCs to conform to victim narratives and detach themselves from their ethnic minority background in order to attain a sense of true inclusion.

This highlights the problematic nature of reducing QTBIPOCs to mere victims of their families. It disregards the nuanced and multifaceted nature of their familial relationships and reduces their

identities to solely their sexual and gender identities, neglecting the myriad of other factors that shape their navigation through life.

There is a demand and a need to view the realities and trajectories of QTBIPOCs in a more intersectional manner, recognizing that marginalized positions are interconnected and mutually informing. This perspective should extend beyond the political realm and delve into the micro-level social processes within families as well.

It is crucial to acknowledge that LGBT+ individuals with immigrant backgrounds' relationships with their parents extend far beyond the realm of sexuality alone. These connections encompass a multitude of intricate factors, experiences, and emotions, where also race and heritage play a role. However, societal narratives often limit and reduce their multifaceted identities to a singular focus on their sexuality.

Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework of the relationship between structure and agents, has deemed valuable to understanding the politics of sexuality and race. Following Bourdieu's theory individuals occupy *positions* within a political *field*. The field refers to a social space in which different agents interact and compete for different roles and positions. The dispositions of the agents determine their ability to attain and operate within these positions, but also to keep the positions they occupy. Thus, the field is a field of possibilities. (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 64). When QTBIPOCs adopt the victimhood narrative, they occupy a possible position, from where they can negotiate and influence the political field. Thus, the distancing from their ethnic communities acts as a strategic way of considering the dispositions that give access to more possibilities.

The possible positions within a field are perceived and appreciated through schemes. The function of the schemes are as Bourdieu argues, "the fundamental divisions of the field of positions - "pure art"/"commercial art", "bohemian"/"bourgeois", "left bank"/"right bank", etc. - [which is] one of the mediations through which dispositions are adjusted to positions." (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 64). In this sense, the position of 'racialized LGBT+ person' is a less favorable position than 'LGBT+ person' as it depends on "advocations" and "aspirations" toward the position. In the context of my thesis, I apply this mechanism to explore the politics of race and sexuality within a context where political attitudes perpetuate anti-immigrant sentiments.

As Sabaah navigate the political landscape and engage with policymakers in positions of power, who may contribute to the stigmatization of ethnic minority communities, they occupy positions in the field that grants possibilities. However, while Sabaah gains opportunities when in occupying these positions, it is at the expense of their own community and the cultural heritage of their target group, oversimplifying their complex identities and how these interacts and inform each other.

The intertwining of different identities creates different outlets for navigating communities. It paves the way for a new conversation about the complex intersections of race and sexuality, which have often been silos of independent subjects of study. In order to capture the interplay between these dimensions, we must engage with them simultaneously, as they shape and influence each other.

In this thesis, my aim is not to display or showcase my informants' struggles, nor do I seek to perpetuate any narrative of victimhood. Instead, my goal is to contribute to our understanding of marginalized communities by centering their voices and to understand how LGBT+ youth of Sabaah, who are often portrayed as "victimized subjects," perceive their own coming out journeys and interpret their families' reactions to their sexual and/or gender identities. The thesis aims to broaden the narrative around QTBIPOCs, moving beyond the limited framework of victimization and sexuality and/or gender as their only identity. By exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of these individuals, the research seeks to uncover the complexities and nuances of their interactions with their families.

Introducing my informants

In the following section, I will provide a brief introduction of each informant. I will draw on quotes that help showcase them as individuals and provide a sense of character trait. These introductions serve as a preliminary sketch and do not fully encompass the complexity of each individual. The analysis will delve deeper into their narratives and offer a more comprehensive understanding of their narrated experiences.

Eylül (she/her)

Eylül is a young woman, aged 26, who just recently finished her studies as a civil engineer. She landed a job quickly after finishing her studies, and now works full time in Kalundborg, however she

lives in Copenhagen. Eylül describes herself as a very social person who spends a lot of time with her friends and is not often alone.

The interview with Eylül centered extensively on her bond with her mother, and what her coming out as a lesbian came to mean for her family relationships. During the interview, she expressed both anger and disappointment towards her family's reaction to her coming out, despite her anticipation of their non-acceptance of her sexuality. During the first few minutes of the interview she stated; "I caught myself saying it out loud for the first time. I don't think I love my mom anymore. She really hurt me when I came out to her." (Eylül, 00:28:04), signifying the ruptured relationship with her mother.

Eylül's parents are originally from Turkey – her father came to Denmark at a young age as a guestworker, and her mother, she recounts, was pressured into marrying her father and came to Denmark in the 90's. In Eylül's own terms her mom "is like really born and raised in Turkey, she has a deep sense of connection to Turkey" opposed to her dad (Eylül, 00:13:45). Eylül characterizes her mother as a person who is committed to achieve excellence as evidenced by Eylül's interpretation of her mother's statements and conduct. Eylül reveals that her mother tends to dwell on the past (Eylül, 00:19:30) and that she firmly believes that she could have attained significant success had she remained in Turkey and not married her father. In addition, Eylül's disclosure of her sexuality shattered her mother's idealized vision of a perfect family.

When Eylül disclosed her sexuality, first to her father, he was "actually pretty cool about it", she said (Eylül, 00:46:35). He even told her he loved her, but cautioned her to not tell her mother or bring any girls home. (Eylül, 00:46:58). Despite the warning, Eylül chose to tell her mother, fully aware that her response would be far from pleasant. Eylül recalled her mother's reaction in the interview—she would scream and shout at her, unleashing her frustration. The impact was devastating, leading her mother to resign from her job in a kindergarten. Since then, Eylül told me that her mother has been battling depression, relying on 15 antidepressant pills a day and expressing a deep hatred for her own life. Eylül even disclosed that her mother had made threats of self-harm. Throughout all of this, Eylül expressed that she had a feeling that her family held her accountable for her mother breakdown although no one had explicitly blamed her. However, she didn't believe that was true. But was overall just very disappointed in her family.

During the interview with Eylül, a prevalent attitude emerged—an underlying narrative of redemption and a notable absence of grief. Eylül consistently portrayed her experiences with phrases such as "whatever," "Like what the fuck (laughing)" or "it's all so silly really." (01:03:13, 01:00:53, 00:58:50, Eylül) These expressions in her stories, created a sense of detachment and minimized the emotional weight of her ordeal. This is not to imply that grief is expected or required in this particular context; rather, it is an observation that it appears to be absent.

Nirved (he/him)

Nirved is a 28-year-old medical student who is a child of a Sri Lankan Tamil immigrants who migrated to Denmark as a result of oppression by the Sinhalese majority. The interview with Nirved circled extensively around both the historical accounts of Tamil suppression, Sri Lankan history as well as the challenges his parents faced adapting into Danish culture and lifestyle.

The first part of the interview, Nirved was very preoccupied with explaining details of Sri Lankan history as well as the different ways in which Sri Lankan Tamils were suppressed, including the burning down of Jaffna Public Library, a crucible of Tamil literature and heritage. He explained the history in great detail and interwove it with the lives of his grandparents and parents. Nirved told me about his grandparents' life trajectories, including details such as their occupations, educational backgrounds, the name of their schools, where they grew up, their economic circumstances and so forth. The details provided indicates great historical awareness of the experiences of his grandparents and parents being Tamil in Sri Lanka and an awareness of his own heritage. This is encapsulated in the following passage:

The thing is... Okay, let me give you the backstory. Sri Lanka is divided into two main ethnic groups. The Tamils in the northern and eastern parts, who make up about 25% of the population, and the Sinhalese, who are the majority and comprise about 85% of the population. During the British Empire, well, even though they arrived in Sri Lanka in the year... First, the Portuguese came in 1400, then the Dutch in the 1500s... no, wait, yes, around that time, and then the British..." (Nirved, 00:06:15)

This quote illustrates Nirved's effort to provide a comprehensive account by including all relevant details and events leading up to the story he was narrating, indicating an urge to provide me the historical foundation for me to understand his narration. First, he spoke about the ethnic composition

of Sri Lanka, but then decided that I needed a prehistory to understand how this composition came to be the way it is, explaining to me the colonial history of Sri Lanka. Similarly, at one point in the interview, I asked him about his father's story and he began the story with his grandfather's childhood, and then suddenly digressed to mention his great grandmother on his mother's side (Nirved, 00:04:06), demonstrating his intention to convey the full context of his family's history.

During the second half of the interview with Nirved we delved into his recounts of his parents experience coming to Denmark. When I asked Nirved if he ever felt proud or ashamed of his parents, he responded emphatically that he feels proud of them to this day (Nirved 00:34:40). He explained,

All that they went through in the war, with the trauma and stuff, seeing tanks and soldiers walking with their 47's in their everyday lives, and then still seem normal and functioning today, and coming to a country such as Denmark trying to understand this society, this language. (Nirved, 00:35:16).

This quote implicates that his pride is rooted in his parents' experiences of being survivors of war and suppression, as well as their experiences with coming to Denmark.

After speaking about his parents the conversation turned to his sexual identity. Nirved recently disclosed his sexuality to his sister, indicating that he is amidst the process of coming out. He has still not told anyone else but his sister and his friends in Sabaah. It was prevalent in Nirved's interview that he had battled his sexuality for many years, and that he wished for it to go away. His struggles to come to terms with his sexuality lead to suicidal thoughts and behavior (Nirved, 00:40:50). He told me that he is certain that he will lose his family when he discloses his sexuality to them eventually. (Nirved, 00:51:39).

Majid (he/him)

Majid is a young adult, aged 20, with Moroccan heritage. He was born and raised in Frederiksberg, Denmark, in a neighborhood he describes as "ghetto-like."

Majid's interview circled extensively around his mother. His mother was born and raised in Morocco and came to Denmark when she was around 30 years old. Majid's father was born and raised in

Denmark with parents from Morocco. Majid lives with his mother and sees his father approximately every two weeks.

We talked for a long time about his perception of his mom's needs, ambitions, wishes and dreams. We talked about her career and also her wish to return to Morocco. When I asked him about his mother's thoughts of living in Denmark and how she speaks of Denmark, he answered abruptly: "My mom has always said, to this day, that the only reason she is in Denmark is for our sake." (Majid, 00:15:39), indicating that his mother's primary concern is for her children and to make sure they reap the opportunities given here. He elaborated on his mother's overall life plan: "She wants to move back to Morocco as soon as possible, which is why she is pushing me to finish my studies, so that I can, in some way, contribute to our economic stability here in Denmark." (Majid, 00:16:40).

Majid is studying pharmaceutical studies, but really, he wanted to study medicine. He began his studies without really wanting to, but figured that he might as well try it out. The first semester he wasn't very happy about it, and he considered dropping out. But he kept on going and is now on his third semester thinking that dropping out would be "a waste." These life decisions indicate that Majid strives to live up to his mother's wish to finish his studies quickly, so that she can be free to return to Morocco.

Majid has not disclosed his sexuality to anyone. He made connections with Sabaah last year, and the people from Sabaah are the only ones who know about his sexuality. When I asked him about his thoughts on disclosing his sexuality to his mother, Majid said:

I have decided to tell her when I finish my studies, get a job maybe even have my own place. I feel like, if I have those things she would be able to move back to Morocco, which I believe is what she really wants. Especially now that she won't get any grandchildren from me. I believe that she is thinking that she wouldn't want to stay here if that was the case" (Majid, 00:44:18).

Samama (he/him)

Samama, aged 42, was born in the UK but spent his formative years in Pakistan. Unlike the other individuals I interviewed, Samama is not born in Denmark. My conversation with him primarily centered around his experiences of immigrating to Denmark at a young age. For the majority of his

childhood, he resided in Pakistan under the care of his grandparents, as his father was frequently away for work and his mother had already migrated to Denmark. Despite the physical distance, Samama emphasized that his parents ensured his basic needs were met and provided him with an education at an esteemed school (Samama, 00:36:15).

However, when Samama reached the age of 13, circumstances demanded that he relocate to Denmark to live with his mother, who had married an Iranian man residing in Odense, Denmark..

Thus, Samama spent his teen years in the small city of Frederica. Samama's experiences with migrating came to mean a lot during the interview, where he contemplated on his memories of becoming a second-class citizen coming to Denmark (Samama, 00:39:38). Samama's arrival in Denmark was marked by disappointment, and his initial recollections of the country were less than favorable. In his own words, he described his experience as follows:

The first time I came to Denmark, well... I just remember it being cold and lacking color. All the buildings were just so cement-like. We came from... well, in Pakistan, the area we lived in was wealthy. And all the houses were new and very exotic. People built houses with palm trees, people built houses with huge columns in front, with gates and guards and everything. And here in Denmark, it was just apartments and cement (...) and everything smelled like beer in Denmark." (Samama, 00:23:24).

In this quote, there was a sense of class differentiation in regard to coming to Denmark, and it was clear throughout the interview that he considered his life in Pakistan rich and favorable.

Both Samama's parents are Pakistani and belong to a minoritized sectarian group called Ahmadiyya. As he explains being born into this group means being born into a constant state of flight or fight. In his own words: "I still hide my Ahmadiyya identity. I can comfortably tell people I am gay in Pakistan, but not Ahmadiyya." (Samama, 00:17:10).

Several years ago, Samama revealed his sexuality to his family when he was expected to enter into an arranged marriage with his cousin. He asserted himself and refused to conform to those expectations. He had tried on several occasions prior to tell his mother about his feelings towards men, but was met with dismissal.

Nevertheless, as time has passed, their relationship has evolved to a point where Samama believes his mother respects him for who he is, however his sexuality is still unspoken of. This unspoken agreement is, according to Samama, a way for him and his mother to mutually respect each other's boundaries. Samama does not push the issue, and his mother refrains from mentioning it, resulting in a form of silent agreement between them.

Concluding remarks

In answering my research question regarding how LGBT+ people with immigrant backgrounds make sense of and navigate their relationship with their parents, I found it crucial to examine the socio-political context in which these relationships unfold. The socio-political landscape is shaped by forces of anti-immigration sentiment and LGBT+ rights agendas, and their interplay gives rise to victim-villain narratives about QTBIPOCs as they are made victims of their families' non-acceptance of their LGBT+ identities. Following Bourdieu's framework, I argue that there is a struggle between positions of race and sexuality, since the two of them combined would be a bad position in terms of gaining power. Making the victimhood narrative a better position in the political field for QTBIPOCs.

The following analysis is divided into three distinct chapters, each exploring different aspects of the developed themes; parental struggles and expectations. The following chapter explores how my informants narrate the struggles of their parents in different ways. The section is concluded with a theoretical reflection on the concept of parental struggle as a form of post-memory of diasporic mourning. Moving on to the subsequent chapter, the focus shifts towards parental expectations. Here, the analysis explores the complex dynamics of expectations that circulates in the narratives of my informants. I finalize the section drawing on Sara Ahmed's conceptual framework of orientations and affective economies to examine the narratives in relation to workings of expectations and shame. Lastly, I delve into an analysis of how the narratives of parental struggles and expectations intertwine and complement each other. This chapter draws on both empirical examples as well as theoretical reflections.

Chapter 3 Parental struggles

In analyzing my data to address the research question on how LGBT+ individuals with immigrant backgrounds navigate and make sense of their relationships with their parents, several trends and themes emerged. One prominent theme that emerged from the data was the presence of parental struggles.

In the analysis I present narratives. Thus, before delving into this chapter, it is crucial to note that the information presented about my informants' parents is solely based on my informants' narratives and should not be interpreted as an accurate representation of the parents' actual emotions, struggles, or actions. To ensure clarity and prevent any misinterpretation, note that I do not explicitly state this in *every* sentence.

When talking about their parents, my interviewees revealed narratives of loss, regrets, orientedness towards home as well as alienation and depression. I conceptualize these narratives as *parental struggles*, which have shown to be a significant topic of in the narratives of my informants. I view parental struggles as a central aspect of my informants' narratives of their relationship with their parents.

The chapter is organized around various narratives that have emerged in my data regarding parental struggles. While these narratives are complex and multidimensional, I have structured them in this way to provide an overview and create order. Firstly, I will explore the *loss of home*, which entails the different ways in which my informants relate their parents to a home. Secondly, I explore the *loss of status*, which highlights different ways my informants consider their parents' potentials and opportunities lost in relation to migration, and thirdly, I look to *alienation and other struggles*, which include mental health struggles, adaptation efforts in Denmark and how the informants relate to their parents' otherness.

Loss of home

In his interview, Majid expressed awareness of his mother's desire to return to Morocco, which can be understood in the context of a loss of home. Her yearning for Morocco is not only related to missing her family, friends and homeland but also her dissatisfaction with living in Denmark. In

Majid's own words: "She always says, 'if I had been in Morocco, I would have definitely had a better life. But here, now, I am not even happy with my job and have never been happy here in Denmark.'" (Majid, 00:24:07, Mehdi). When I asked him about what he thought of his mother's unhappiness in Denmark, he answered:

"I think it is mostly because she is far away from her family, friends, and the whole of Morocco. Also, she got divorced shortly after coming to Denmark. She's been here without her parents. Three years ago, her mother, my grandmother, passed away. She just feels like she's wasting her time here. My grandfather was diagnosed with cancer shortly after my grandmother's death. She feels that... you know, she is not with her parents. They are dying, and she is not with them. She has a guilty conscience towards her mother." (Majid, 00:20:47)

In this quote, Majid reflects on his mother's motivations for wanting to return to Morocco. This includes her being far away from family, friends and Morocco in general which can be understood as a disconnection from her home. Furthermore, Majid draws attention to his mother's guilt concerning the death of her mother and her feelings of wasting time in Denmark, indicating that her wish to return goes beyond a physical reconnection to Morocco. Her mother's death and her father's cancer manifest the time that goes by. Majid portrays an eagerness in his mother to be around for important moments. Thus, Majid witnesses his mother's waiting, being stuck in Denmark, while life in Morocco goes by. Thus, in Majid's narration, his mother has emotional ties to Morocco and she wishes to be there both physically and temporally instead of being stuck in Denmark.

Nirved also mentions his family's orientation towards return. He explains how his father waited 10 years before applying for Danish citizenship, since he thought he would return to Sri Lanka eventually (Nirved, 00:40:20). In addition, he explains, that his mother to this day has not obtained Danish citizenship in order to preserve the possibility of returning. This narration by Nirved highlights his awareness of the long-standing desire of his family to return home. Although Nirved doesn't elaborate on the reasons behind their desire to return or any potential barriers to doing so, the orientation towards returning home underscores how the possibility of return is present in Nirved's perception of his parents. Whether it is about regaining lost connections, a sense of belonging or the physical return some day in the future, it shows that both Nirved and Majid are aware of their parents' loss of home and desires to regain it.

Another instance regarding loss of home is when Eylül speaks of her mother's regrets coming to Denmark, and how she frequently daydreams about what life she could have had if she had never left her home country. In Eylül's account, her mother's migration to Denmark was a result of an arranged marriage between her parents, which included pressure from Eylül's grandfather. Although her mother could have declined the proposal, she didn't, resulting in her mother coming to Denmark unwillingly (Eylül, 00:15:10). Eylül's narration portrays her mother as being unhappy and regretful about living in Denmark, with a strong attachment to Turkey and a reluctance to let go of her past. (Eylül, 00:13:45). The loss of home in this incident is not characterized by an explicit desire or imagination to return someday in the future, but rather by a sense of nostalgia for what once was and regret over the decisions made. Thus, while Majid and Nirved's parents are oriented towards a future, Eylül's mother is oriented towards a past. However in each examples what lies in the future or the past is the home.

Loss of home can manifest itself in other ways than the loss of a physical place or certain time. It can manifest in the narratives as loss of a community and loss of people who are similar to you. During my conversation with Nirved, he mentioned how his father found a sense of community within the Tamil diaspora in Denmark. When I asked Nirved about his father's experience of coming to Denmark, he initially mentioned how well-integrated he was, citing his father's consumption of beer and pork. (Nirved, 00:26:40). While Nirved believed, that coming to a new country meant adapting and integrating into it, he also stated an awareness of the complexities of losing one's country, food culture and identity, and that he knew there was a struggle connected to that. (Nirved, 00:27:30). Nirved noted how his father acted differently around other Tamil individuals. He said that he was more relaxed and more himself, indicating Nirved's perceptions of his father's Tamil community as something positive and a place for his father to relate to others with similar cultural backgrounds. When I asked him to elaborate his thoughts on the Tamil diaspora in Denmark, he said:

I think the thing with Tamils in general is, that they are quick to adapt to their environment. Maybe the reason is that they struggle with finding their identity. They don't really know who they are. They don't have a country, and their language is disappearing. So, yes, I think my father struggled with that. But because he had other Tamil friends who weren't necessarily from Jaffna, maybe from surrounding regions, but not from the same place he was born and raised, he had someone to mirror himself in and someone he could relate to. (Nirved, 00:26:40)

On one hand, Nirved's narration speaks to the loss that Tamils face as a result of being displaced from their homeland, losing their language and their sense of identity, which he deems a struggle for his father. On the other hand, this quote highlights, the Tamil friends his father has gained in Denmark, and that this meant that he had someone he could relate to. Nirved stressed that the people his father connected with were not necessarily from the same region, suggesting that it is then perhaps their relatable identities tying them together.

There was throughout the interviews different narratives from my informants on their parents relation to their country of origin. Whether it was a physical place to return to or a reconnection with friends and family or a longing for people who you can relate to and speak with, I argue that it speaks to a theme of loss of home.

Loss of status

Loss manifested itself in my informants' narratives in other ways than loss of home. Loss of status refer to narratives where my informants contemplated their parents' unfulfilled potentials and missed opportunities due to their migration to Denmark. The transition to Denmark emerged in my informants' narratives as a decline in their parents' social standing and status. These accounts were intricately connected to the informants' descriptions of their parents' careers, education, and overall status, illustrating the disruptions, transformations, and challenges experienced in relation to their migration, in my informants' views.

Samama was the only interviewee who didn't speak of his parents' loss of home. On the other hand, being 13 years and migrating to Denmark to live with his Pakistani mother, he talked about his own loss of status. He recounted his life in Pakistan living in a wealthy neighborhood, attending an elite school and having a private driver. When he described what it was like coming to Denmark, he noted that he felt poor and that he was angry with his mother for bringing him here. He stated,

[My parents] always made sure that there was enough money for us. They had rented a car with a personal driver who drove us to school. I was a bit spoiled. (...) Then, suddenly coming to Denmark, and you had to learn to ride a bike. I didn't know how to ride a bike in Pakistan, only poor kids do that, but I don't do that (laughs). (...) I blamed my mother a bit for taking me to Denmark. (...) I didn't get the same amount of money as I did in Pakistan. (...) I don't know if I

felt ashamed, but I had a feeling of "okay, now you are a second-class citizen." (Samama, 00:36:15)

This quote highlights that Samama experienced a significant decline in social status following his migration to Denmark. He reminisces about his privileged and affluent status in Pakistan, highlighting the stark contrast to his sudden feelings of being a second-class citizen.

In another instance, Eylül recounted how her mother's potential for great success was hindered by the circumstances surrounding her grandfather's persecution in Turkey, resulting in leaving behind opportunities. Eylül highlighted that had her mother remained in Turkey, she could have achieved remarkable accomplishments in the field of medicine. However, due to her grandfather's persecution, her opportunity to pursue a career in this domain was shattered:

“[My mother] actually talks a lot about how she could have been a doctor and studied medicine, but because of someone helping her with her applications, they fucked it up on purpose, because she was his daughter.” (Eylül, 00:19:10)

This quote indicates that Eylül's grandfather's persecution was in the way of her mother's success. Given that Eylül's narration was about her mother's aspirations of becoming a doctor, a prestigious degree in most places, there was an underlined loss of status in Eylül's story. She continues with explaining her mother's unfulfilled potentials in Turkey:

“On the other hand, I think she really misses being in Turkey. (...) Back then, I think she really enjoyed being there, because she had her life there as a midwife, and a job and a career. I also believe that if she had stayed there, she could have achieved much more. I think she often reflects on that, how... like where she would be if she hadn't married my dad. I think she thinks about that a lot.” (Eylül, 00:19:30)

This quote underscores Eylül's recognition that her mother's decision to leave her home country resulted in missed opportunities and unrealized potential, ultimately representing the loss that her mother grapples with in Eylül's narrative. Eylül perceived her mother's circumstances as a loss of greater personal fulfillment and possibly more success.

In relation to loss of status, Majid also told me about, his mother's lost opportunities, coming to Denmark at age 30.

In Morocco, she was a graduate economist, where she could have secured a job, a wealthier life, and probably even chosen her own husband. (...) In Denmark, her education was assessed as a bachelor's degree.(...) She could not pursue a master's degree since her language was Arabic and French, and in Denmark, it is either Danish or English.(...) So that's also why she has struggled with migrating to Denmark, she learned the language, but she could never finish a master's degree here. (Majid, 00:24:21)

In this example Majid sees a link between his mother's sadness and how she lost her degree coming to Denmark. He told me that his mother had tried various types of social work, before eventually pursuing becoming a kindergarten teacher. Not only did Majid's mother lose her graduate degree in relation to her migration, but she also had to start over in a very different field settling for a lower degree. Thus, Majid's narrative of his mother's career change not only signifies lost opportunity but also loss of status.

All of such instances, suggest a recurring theme of lost opportunities and how this can lead to loss of social status as well.

[Alienation and other struggles](#)

While loss of home and status can be seen as examples of parental struggles, the term can be expanded beyond these specific examples. This section delves into the various ways in which my informants express the challenges their parents have faced. Their expression of parental struggles also involved mental health struggles and struggles with adapting into Danish society, which highlights the constant awareness of general unhappiness in Denmark and a struggles of being here.

When I asked Majid to elaborate on what his mother did for a living, he answered the following:

She has just resigned her job as a kindergarten teacher. So she will be on unemployment benefits from next month. And that's just because she is not happy working as a kindergarten teacher. She has struggled with working here in Denmark. (Majid, 00:18:37)

In this quote it appears that Majid's mother not only faced difficulties finding a new field of career after having lost her graduate degree, but also in general struggled with working in Denmark. When I asked him about why he believed it was difficult for her to work in Denmark, he answered:

Of course she feels that she belongs in Morocco more. She is happy there. (...) She feels like she doesn't quite fit in here in Denmark and has also received criticism for it at work. A few months ago, when she was working in a daycare with two people who were Danish... If there was a problem at work, they would tell her that it was because "that's how it is in your culture." If a problem arose between her and her colleagues, they would blame it on culture and things like that. (Majid, 00:31:43)

Majid drew attention to his mother's experience with cultural difference in his narration of her work situation. This could be seen as a part of an alienation theme, where not fitting in due to cultural differences or others perceiving you in a particular way is recurring motif that echoes throughout their stories. Similarly, when Nirved talked about his father's experiences with being alienated, he stated:

He has probably experienced being discriminated against or looked down upon because of his dark complexion (...). I have never witnessed my parents being discriminated against, but I have experienced them being looked at or talked to in a certain ways. (Nirves, 00:33:22)

In Eylül's narrative, her mother's experience of alienation is highlighted, stemming from how Eylül portrays her mother's perception of Danish culture as something she dislikes. This perception not only contrasts her mother's Turkish identity with Danish culture, but also underscores the significant effort required for her to adapt and assimilate into Danish society due to this differentiation:

Mom is good at saying that Danish culture is gross - you know, like Christmas parties, there is this prejudice that everyone is cheating. She thinks that is so disgusting. (...) She is not so enthusiastic about Danish culture. Also, she was 25 when she migrated, which meant that the Turkish way of life had become deeply rooted within her. She had to make a great effort to let go of that in order to adapt. (Eylül, 00:22:06)

However, Eylül's mother's struggles extend beyond struggling with Danish culture, and can also manifest within her Turkish diasporic community. For Eylül, the community in which her mother found in the Turkish diaspora had a negative connotation. It appeared to be related to her mother's

concern about how others thought of her, especially in the case of Eylül's sexuality disclosure, which made her even more preoccupied with it. Eylül explained what the community, in her eyes, meant for her mother:

Eylül She is obsessed with what other people thinks. And she blames herself a bit. When she moved to Denmark. My dad's parents didn't treat her very well, so it's really important for her that her image is good. Because she also says that back when she lived in Turkey and wasn't married to my dad, she didn't care at all about what others thought. She lived the life she wanted. But it was only when she came to Denmark and started living here and somehow only knew other Turks... I think that's what has had a great impact on it. Like, okay, everyone knows who I am here, you know. Not the Danes, but they don't mean anything to her either. It's only the Turks who can badmouth her and spread rumors about her, because it's her circle, so that's what's important to her. So it means a lot.

Interviewer: Would you say that this circle is the only thing she has?

Eylül: Yes. Yes, yes! She doesn't have any others."
(Eylül, 01:01:05)

This excerpt from Eylül's interview provides valuable insights into the struggles that Eylül perceives in her mother's experience of living in Denmark. First of all, Eylül reveals that her mother does not place as much importance on the opinions of Danes as she does on the opinions of Turks. This not only indicates a preference but also emphasizes the power that her community holds in passing judgment. Secondly, Eylül observes that her mother has isolated herself within the Turkish community, lacking other social circles in her perception. This highlights the fragility of her mother's social life and sheds light on that maintaining a certain image holds significant importance to her. Thirdly, the quote also draws attention to a differentiation between the past and the present, as Eylül has observed, her mother's loss of home is also connected to a loss of the freedom and independence she once enjoyed in Turkey. This loss, coupled with her fragile social circle in Denmark, contributes to the struggles she faces in Eylül's narration. It suggests that Eylül perceives her mother as caught between not fully fitting into the Danish community and experiencing challenges within the Turkish

community as well, all the while being nostalgic about the life she had in Turkey. Overall, this quote reveals how Eylül perceives her mother as dealing with multidimensional struggles.

Struggles: Diasporic mourning and postmemory

The examples provided in this chapter show how loss and struggles become integral parts of Nirved, Majid, Samama, and Eylül's storytelling of their parents' experiences. Though we cannot understand the actual life courses, actions and emotions of the parents, we can reflect upon what it means that my informants bring up narratives of loss and struggles on their parents' behalf. In order to grasp more deeply how displacement from a home affects subsequent generations, I will turn to Sandra Kim's conceptualization of diasporic postmemory (Kim 2007). Kim's conceptualization of diasporic experiences and their transmission across generations provides a useful lens to examine the ways parental struggles appeared in the narratives of my interviewees and how it can be related to displacement.

Diaspora to Kim, is when displacement leads to the loss of an "origin." (Kim, 2007, pp. 337). For her, diaspora is a social phenomenon, often born out of loss and mourning. Kim argues that displacement, loss and mourning is transmitted through generations and that it can create memories in its own right in the second generation. Kim suggests that the concept of postmemory can grasp this process. Postmemory theory was first developed by Marianne Hirsch to describe: "the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right." (Hirsch 2008). Thus, post memory theory and diaspora theory are closely linked, in the sense that both concepts deal with displacement, mourning and loss. In continuation of diaspora theory, post memory refers to how aspects of diasporic experiences are transmitted through generations.

Although diaspora theory and the concept of postmemory have frequently been used to describe profound trauma, such as the Holocaust, Kim asserts that the intergenerational transmission of memory is always present to some extent within kinship structures, regardless of the presence or absence of collective trauma and regardless of silence (Kim, 2007, pp. 340). Majid, Nirved, Samama and Eylül touches upon their parents' trauma in varying degrees. Both Nirved and Samama expressed their families' experience with systematic violence and suppression in their home countries. For instance, Nirved talked for a long time about the historical circumstances of Sri Lanka and the

dehumanization and violence against the Tamil minority, both in relation to his parents, but also his grandparents and great grandparents. He also expressed how he was proud that his father “was normal,” considering the trauma he had experienced as a Tamil in Sri Lanka (Nirved, 00:34:46). Samama recollected that when his parents had to leave everything behind, a curry was cooking on the stove (Samama, 00:29:35). Eylül told me that her mother was raped as a child (Eylül, 00:35:19). All such stories of trauma, existed in their narratives, but mostly as small comments or anecdotes.

While mentioned, profound trauma experiences do not serve as a significant topic in their narratives. However, they still relate their parents to a loss and a struggle. In my data, the loss of home looks like a yearning for return, clinging to a lost community, and regrets of leaving. The loss of status looks like settling for lower degrees, clinging to ‘what-ifs’ and considering some’s status as lower because of migration. Postmemory can describe to us, how these narratives have come to exist through my informants experiencing the “post” of their parents’ experiences.

The traumatic experiences and struggles faced by their parents in their migration to Denmark, *live* in the narratives of the subsequent generation. Thus, in Kim’s framework, what is appearing is the transmitted post memory. The second generation cannot of course “remember” the experiences of their parents, but they narrate their parents’ story due to a categorically different kind of memory. This kind of memory “is constructed by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which the second generation grew up.” (Kim, 2007, pp. 339). Thus, they narrate their parents’ stories, carrying their struggles with them, carrying their mourning, loss, and regrets. But other than that, they carry their cultural heritage, they carry their language, food culture, national histories to some.

The transmission of diasporic mourning expands further than profound trauma in relation to displacement, and while I cannot know what trauma my informants’ parents have experienced, I can look to their narratives of loss and struggles and relate this to a reality of displacement which is passed down through generations. Additionally, Kim argues, that silence also transmits memories of displacement, and that simply the environment the second generation grew up in, affect their post-memory and ultimately their narration.

The concept of post memory can help give meaning to the narratives of my informants as actual memory, saying something about their own experience. Whether their parents have experienced

profound trauma or not their displacement and migration affect the intergenerational relationship through memory transmission. As my informants embark on recounting the life stories of their parents, the memories they convey are deeply influenced by their parents' experiences. This dynamic underscores how the presence of loss and struggles, as evident in their narratives, adds an additional layer of complexity to their relationships with their parents. It also creates a depth as to demonstrating that my informants carry not only their parents' struggles in their narratives, but their cultural heritage.

Concluding remarks

When exploring the relationship of LGBT+ people with immigrant background and their parents, narratives of parental struggles emerged as a distinct and extensive topic for exploration. I set out to unpack what these narratives consisted of, revealing a range of themes such as loss of home, loss of status, and experiences of alienation and difficulties settling in Denmark.

Within a theoretical framework of postmemory, I argued that the significance of parental struggles in my informants' narratives can be seen as a generational transmission of trauma, struggles and post-migration hardships. These experiences, combined with the environment in which my informants grew up, shape their narratives as memories in their own right.

I thus argue, that when my informants navigate and make sense of their relationship to their parents, they deal with their own heritage as it is transmitted down to them from their parents. Furthermore, I argue that they take into account their parents' life trajectories and wellbeing, which make navigating their relationship to their parents a complex myriad of mourning, loss and diasporic struggles.

Chapter 4 Parental expectations

Across my interviews, I found that 'parental expectations' was a reoccurring theme. Whether expressed directly or indirectly, I argue that it is an aspect of the relationship my informants navigate in relation to their parents and their sexuality. This chapter explores the various ways these expectations are expressed by the interviewees. The chapter is structured around two different forms of parental expectations found in my data. The first part deals with my informants' attempts to meet their parental expectations, which is to do with succeeding in school and living up to the idea of being a 'good child'. The second part deals with behavioral and heteronormative expectations. Heteronormative and behavioral expectations refer to parental expectations of my informants'

behavior that pertain to a heteronormative lifestyle. Finally, I delve into furthering our understanding of parental expectations by drawing on Sara Ahmed's conceptual framework on 'orientation' and 'affective economies'.

The parental expectations discussed in this chapter are interpreted from the interviewees' own accounts and does not necessarily reflect the actual expectations of their parents. Regardless of this, the accounts of parental expectations found in the data are considered a part of the interviewees' narrated reality, and as we discovered in the previous chapter, my informants narrated realities are intertwined with those of their parents.

Striving to meet parental expectations

On several occasions during the interview, Majid mentioned his mother's expectations of him and how he would fulfill her wishes. His mother expects him to finish his studies as soon as possible, so that she can return to Morocco. He centered the conversation around his plans for the future which were aligned with hers.

So she really wants to move to Morocco as soon as possible. (...) That's why she's urging me to finish my education quickly. (Majid, 00:15:30)

In the quoted passage, Majid indicated his awareness of his mother's expectations for the future. He also revealed to me that he had hoped to take a sabbatical year after finishing high school, but his mother convinced him that it would be a waste of time. This shows that he aligns his future plans with his mother's wishes and puts his own desires aside for the sake of meeting hers.

There seemed to be another reason as to why Majid spoke of fulfilling his mother's expectations. Other than wishing to fulfill his mother's expectations for the sake of her, his efforts seemed to be rooted in something else. The following statement, demonstrates that Majid is preparing for disclosing his sexuality to his mother:

I have decided that I will tell her at some point. I would rather fulfill the things she wants, what a good son should be, that is, compensate for it, get a degree, get a good job, what she wishes for. I have always been a good child, so that's why I can come out to her. (Majid , 00:27:57)

This quote highlights the interconnectedness of Majid's desire to live up to his mother's expectations and his considerations concerning the disclosure of his sexuality. His narrative indicates that fulfilling his mother's expectations of being a good son will compensate for any perceived disappointment caused by his sexuality. In doing so, he has pre-calculated an exchange between himself and his mother, in which he will fulfill her expectations in exchange for acceptance of his homosexuality.

At the end of our interview, Majid told me that the reason that he could answer all my questions in such precise manner and without any doubt was because he had thought everything through for so long. (Majid, 01:02:39) This demonstrates how his desire to fulfill his mother's expectations has been a prominent factor in his decision-making process regarding his sexuality disclosure and future-making. Furthermore, it illustrates how he strategically utilizes his mother's expectations as a navigational tool to maintain a positive relationship with her, as evidenced by his explanation of always aiming to please her:

My little sister is more of a rebel. She doesn't bother listening to Mom; she does what she wants. (...) I, on the other hand, try to please her because I know, and I feel sorry for her, but I also know that there will come a time when I will have to reveal this huge thing. (Majid, 00:36:43)

Nirved had similar calculations. However, his narrative was more filled with hopelessness. Everything he has tried to achieve, he fears will be rendered meaningless as soon as he discloses his sexuality:

I have mentally prepared myself for losing my family in some way. It was hard in the beginning. But I have learned to accept it. (...) I don't live up to their ideal of being a good son, which I had always been living up to. You know, being a good boy and all those things... To go back to my childhood, I wasn't the boy who played football or was good at sports at all. But I was good in school. I strived to be the first, the best, the quickest, and the smartest in my class. (...) This resulted in receiving acknowledgement and respect from my parents and other families and I was put on a pedestal where other parents looked to me as an example for their own children. (Nirved, 00:51:23)

Nirved told me that the reason he hadn't disclosed his sexuality to his parents yet was because he anticipated losing them and disappointing them regardless of his achievements. He spoke with pride

about his accomplishments, but also expressed anxiety about losing his status as the good son (Nirved, 00:52:00). Nirved made conscious effort to fulfill his parents' expectations, both by striving to be an ideal son, but also by selecting the education he pursued. He revealed to me that he had chosen to pursue a medical degree. Although, his parents had never explicitly pressured him into this field, he admitted that their expectations had influenced his decision-making process:

I was never pressured into choosing medical school. My parents always told me to choose what I wanted for myself, but... of course, I know what they think. On my behalf. Did I really do that? Take their expectations and make it my dream? Well...
(Nirved, 00:53:45)

This quote sheds light on Nirved's uncertainty regarding his decision-making process and the extent to which he had internalized his parents' expectations as his own aspirations. This suggests that even though they were never explicitly articulated and even though his parents encouraged him to choose for himself, their expectations carried weight and influenced his decision, which implies that parental expectations can manifest beyond explicit communication. Throughout his life, Nirved has made every effort to fulfill his parents' expectations and be a good son. However, he also revealed his apprehension that disclosing his sexuality would jeopardize all he had achieved, indicating that he sees his sexuality as a barrier to meeting their expectations. Unlike Majid, Nirved's decision to meet his parents' expectations was not explicitly linked to his contemplation of being homosexual. However, his perception of losing everything he has accomplished due to his sexuality disclosure indicates that his disclosure has a significant impact on his position. Nirved draws attention to sexuality disclosure as disruptive rather than an opportunity to renegotiate other achievements to outbalance the disruption. The strategies employed by Majid and Nirved to navigate their parental expectations highlight the complex give-and-take dynamic involved in balancing immigrant parental expectations with a concealable stigmatized identity. While Majid attempts to use his mother's expectations to gain acceptance, Nirved was more hopeless anticipating loss *due* to his sexuality, and that all he had achieved in his life so far would be rendered meaningless in the eyes of his parents.

Striving to fulfill their parents' expectations is connected to their decision-making process and their considerations regarding disclosing their sexuality. It can mean calculating the difference between acceptance and rejection and the risk of loss. In the case of Majid and Nirved their parents'

expectations become a part of an exchange mechanism, where loss and rejection is potentially part of the calculation.

Behavioral and heteronormative expectations

Another recurring narrative among my informants involves their parents' tendency to correct or comment on their behavior, urging them to conceal their sexuality or conform to a heterosexual lifestyle and behavior, including entering into heterosexual marriages and having children. It also includes how the interviewees react to and relate to those expectations of them.

Eylül disclosed her sexuality to her mother a year ago, and as she had expected, her mother didn't take it well. When I asked her to elaborate on her mother's reaction to her sexuality disclosure she said:

I think she was sad. Because then the perfect picture was ruined, because I feel like... She believes that she is perfect. That, I am pretty certain. On many levels at least. And then I just made it not-perfect (...). I also think she is sad that I won't live the traditional man-woman life with children and so on. (Eylül, 00:54:00).

This quote demonstrates Eylül's mother's expectations, namely that Eylül would fit into a heteronormative box and live a 'traditional man-woman life with children.' Thus, the expectation is indirectly expressed through her mother's sadness. However, her mother also expressed her expectations more directly. Eylül mentioned to me that her mother had tried to convince her to see a therapist to "fix" her sexuality, which Eylül refused. (Eylül, 00:58:01). Thus, examining Eylül's narratives of her mother's expectations indicate that those expectations pertain to a heteronormative lifestyle, but also that this is expressed directly and indirectly by her mother. Despite the pressures from her mother, Eylül acknowledges her own vision for her life and refuses to conform to her mother's expectations. Her refusal to undergo conversion therapy demonstrates her determination to make her own choices and not let her mother's expectations dictate her life.

My informants respond differently to the expectations they are met with. Unlike Majid's calculative approach to his mother's expectations and Nirved's hopelessness, the interview with Eylül was undermined by a refusal to conform to her parents' expectations of her.

When I asked her about her relationship with her mother, she told me that it was very bad: “I caught myself saying it out loud for the first time. I don’t think I love my mom anymore. She really hurt me when I came out to her.” (Eylül, 00:28:04)

This quote highlights the significant impact that Eylül's mother's reaction to her sexuality had on their relationship. The phrase "I caught myself saying it out loud for the first time" suggests that Eylül had been wrestling with her feelings towards her mother but had not yet fully acknowledged them. Her statement that she no longer loves her mother indicates a level of emotional detachment and distance from her, which could signify a sense of autonomy and the ability to choose her own path without being burdened by her mother's expectations. Thus, Eylül reacts with refusal and detachment to her mother's expectations of her.

Furthermore, Eylül expressed, when the interview was coming to an end, that she has a chosen family. When I asked her what that meant, she said that her chosen family consisted of people who love her no matter what and won't try to fit her into a box, in her own words. “Chosen family” is a term often used within queer and transgender communities to describe families that are created by choice rather than by biological or legal relations, and it can arise as a response to the rejection experienced by queer and/or gender minorities from their biological families. Furthermore, the concept of chosen families challenges the notion of families as limited to biological ties, as Janet Carsten, a kinship researcher, suggests, we need to look at ‘cultures of relatedness’ to fully capture families that exists beyond the (Western) notion of families as limited to biological ties (Carsten, 2000). Thus, when Eylül expressed that she has a chosen family, it can be understood as a response to her family's rejection and an attempt to develop familial ties with others than her biological family.

Samama also experienced being pressured into a heteronormative lifestyle. He recounted his several attempts to communicate his sexual orientation to his mother, but experienced dismissal. Samama recalled in the interview how he had mentioned to his mother, that he didn't have feelings for women. When he was 17 years old, he recalled saying the following to her:

‘It’s a problem I don’t have feelings for girls. (...). I think there is something wrong with me that I don’t have feelings for women, because all my friends have girlfriends, and I don’t.’ Then my mom said, ‘you are still young, it will happen one day. Don’t push it.’ (Samama, 00:58:00).

On another occasion, Samama was caught in bed with his friend Alaa where his mother confronted him with questions about what he was doing. Samama recalled the episode in the following quote, where he answered his mother's confrontation with:

'I think there is something wrong with me, I don't feel safe around women. I like men. I like Alaa.' His name is Alaa. Then my mom went like, 'you should stay away from him, he is bad company, he made you like this. You will find your place, it's okay, you made a mistake.'
(Samama, 01:03:00)

In these examples, Samama narrates his process of disclosing his sexuality to his mother. The narrative reveals Samama's recollection of being dismissed despite having tried to talk to his mother. In his story he portrays his mother as having discomfort with his sexuality and having a desire for him to conform to a heterosexual lifestyle in time. Despite the dismissal in his mother's reaction, she ultimately embraces him for the mistake he made, which underscores the complex nature of him being partially accepted for who he is. It was only when faced with the prospect of an arranged marriage to his cousin, that Samama finally asserted himself and refused to comply with the heteronormative expectations placed upon him by his family.

Nirved also faced pressure from his family to marry a woman, and at age 28 he felt that they were becoming increasingly frustrated with his reluctance to do so. He recounted an incident where his dad called him on the phone with a marriage proposal, and pleaded him to agree: "Why can't you just say yes?" My dad said. 'Why can't you just say yes? Just say yes,'" in Nirved's own recollection. (Nirved, 00:45:13). He continued the story with his sister calling him urging him to accept the proposal as well:

She said, 'can you please just marry her? Do it for me. Can't you just do it for me?' And I said, 'no I can't do that.' And I know why she wants me to... like why she's calling me all torn up and upset to tell me this. It's because [my dad] pushed her to do it. (Nirved, 00:45:38)

This story highlights Nirved's struggle with, not only parental expectations but family expectations, as the sister is 'recruited' to pressure him to align into a heteronormative lifestyle, which he just can't conform to. Furthermore, in the following quote, we gain insight into *how* Nirved navigates these

heteronormative expectations and the potential consequences of not living up to them. When asked about the possibility of his parents eventually accepting sexuality, he expressed that it would be impossible and that attempting to convince them would be futile. He stated that disclosing his sexuality to them would make him relieved even if they remained angry with him for the rest of their lives: “that is okay,” he said. The conversation continued as followed:

Interviewer Why do you say that it’s okay?

Nirved It's okay because they don't understand it. And I don't know if they'll ever understand it. And because... In terms of their worldview, it's a no-go, and yeah. It's okay. I mean, it's a no-go, not just for my parents, but there are also others who think it's a no-go. I can't do anything about it, I can't convince them.
(Nirved, 01:01:09)

The conversation with Nirved sheds light on how he handles the pressure to conform to heterosexual norms imposed by his family. His response is imbued with a sense of hopelessness and a conviction that his parents will never understand him. However, it's noteworthy that Nirved also demonstrates a degree of empathy towards his parents. He recognizes that their outlook on life, which aligns with that of many others, is a product of their environment. Moreover, he even accepts their perspective and declares that it's alright. This reveals that Nirved, when confronted with his parents' expectations, reacts with a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness, but also with indulgence and acceptance towards their views.

In addition to the heteronormative expectations surrounding major life-course decisions, such as marriage and conforming to a heteronormative lifestyle, there are also micro-level behavioral expectations placed on my informants, as evident in their narratives. These behavioral expectations manifest as comments or corrections regarding simple bodily gestures and behaving "gay." In the following sections, I will delve into how these expectations emerge in my data and how my informants navigate them.

When Eylül recalled her experience of disclosing her sexuality to her father who, to her surprise, took it well, he cautioned her to not bring girls home (Eylül, 00:46:58). This shows that while he may have been accepting, he still had some behavioral expectations for her, urging her to hide her sexuality.

Furthermore, her mother also cautioned her to behave in the streets of Copenhagen, fearing people would recognize her. Eylül explained that what she meant was to not “act gay,” publicly, which also suggests a correction of behavior (Eylül, 01:11:10). Within this quote lies a prejudice of ‘the gay’ as a certain character and type, which implies that Eylül must act a certain way on many levels publicly to not be recognized as a stereotypical homosexual.

Other incidents with behavioral correction was told to me by Nirved, when his father corrected the way he was sitting, with one leg crossing the other. “Don’t sit like that, dangling with your leg,” Nirved recalled him saying when I interviewed him. (Nirved, 00:03:28).

These examples show that when my informants don’t live up to their parents’ behavioral expectations they can be corrected or policed. However, there are also incidents with Samama and Majid, where their parents defend their behavior, or even encourages it, indicating that behavioral expectations are not so black and white, and that in some cases my informants feel accepted for who they are.

Majid recalled an episode where his sexuality was questioned by his sister in front of his mother. He was very calm when he recounted the story to me. He said:

“I have had people say to me... for instance my sister, because I am not very masculine, the way that I present is perhaps a bit feminine, so I have had for instance my sister say to me, ‘are you gay or something? Why do you speak like that? Are you gay?’ In front of my mother. Where my mother was like “why are you talking to him like that,” scolding her. (...) Because.. I have always just been myself, also after that incident. (...) That’s just who I am. I have always just been myself” (Majid, 00:46:54)

Similarly, Samama told me about how his mother never expected him to be “the man of the family,” because he never fit into that normative role. He said:

I don't think she ever had an expectation for me to be "the man of the family." Because I have never been the man of the family, I was a little dancing boy. (...) When I was little, I wore nail polish and my mother bought nail polish for me. (Samama, 01:10:37)

The recounted scenarios from Majid and Samama demonstrate how certain, perhaps norm diverting, behaviors may not always be corrected or commented on, but even defended or encouraged, which illustrates the complexities of behavioral norms and how to navigate those boundaries with a stigmatized identity. Such expectations are not always clear-cut, and in these examples, Majid and Samama experience being accepted for who they are, since Samama's wish to wear nail polish and Majid's femininity do not trigger any policing of their behavior, on the contrary. The uncertainty surrounding the boundaries of acceptable behavior can add further complexity to navigating expectations while disclosing one's sexuality, as the line between what is acceptable and what is not can be blurred and subjective.

In this section I explored how behavioral and heteronormative expectations are placed upon my informants in different ways by their parents, and that responding to such expectations can vary from interviewee to interviewee. Whether it is through refusal, like Eylül or with varying degrees of hopelessness and acceptance like Nirved, it has shown that heteronormative and behavioral expectations are something my informants navigate through in relation to their sexuality, representing a significant topic in my informants' narratives.

Expectations: Shame before the other

The analysis thus far has revealed that a significant aspect of navigating the relationship with immigrant parents as an LGBT+ individual, involves navigating parental expectations. On one hand, expectations were calculated and negotiated, such as seeking to compensate for sexuality disclosure with achieving in school and live up to being a 'good child'. And on the other hand, the boundaries of expectations were not always clear-cut. In certain instances, acceptance was granted when for instance, Samama received nail polish from his mom, but experienced rejection and dismissal when he attempted to disclose his sexual orientation to her. This inconsistency in response highlights the complex nature of expectations when my informants prepare for sexuality disclosure, or in Samama and Eylül's cases deal with the aftermaths of disclosing their sexual orientation. All such instances have manifested how expectations are something to be navigated in terms of disclosing sexual identity. However, it is important to delve deeper into what it means to navigate these expectations and the stakes involved.

In the following, I will revisit my data through the conceptual frameworks of Sara Ahmed on *orientation* and *affective economies*, to further understand the relationship between my informants and their families.

Sara Ahmed suggests that bodies are *oriented*, meaning that we all start from a point and proceed from that point (Ahmed, pp. 545). If life is to be rendered a good life, it must take on "the direction promised as a social good, which means imagining one's futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life course" (Ibid, pp. 554). The paths we take or "the line" in Ahmed's vocabulary, are shaped by what appears relative to us or within reach, in other words, what is given to us by the family. To Ahmed, the family is a space of imposing a shared line. The line of the family emerges in instances such as shared laughter at a family gathering, since "shared laughter, which is often about returning laughter with laughter, involves sharing a direction, or following a line" (Ibid, pp. 556).

These lines hold heteronormativity in them, with the presumption that the child must inherit the life of the parent. Following this, the child must inherit (heteronormative) objects that are within reach and that are given in the family home. Thus, "subjects are brought into line, by being given a future in line with the family line" (Ibid, pp. 557), and in this sense, taking up space in the family means taking a space that is *given* (Ibid, pp. 559).

In relation to my analysis, my informants navigate expectations from their parents, ranging from expectations concerning major life decisions to minor bodily gestures. In line with Ahmed's conceptual framework, the expectations serve as a form of alignment, as evidenced by their significance in my informants' narratives. This awareness of the line, as argued by Ahmed, reflects an orientation towards a future marked by promised goods within the family dynamic.

In this sense, they don't navigate their parents' expectations of them, but the line. When they fulfill their parents expectations of them they take a space in the family that is given. When Majid calculated his life course decisions in order to compensate for being a homosexual, he is aware that homosexuality deviates from the line, the space that is given. When Nirved anticipates the ultimate loss it is, similarly, in the awareness that he deviates from the line. Eylül's reaction to rejection of her mother, causes her to find a new line, a "chosen family," that provides another futurity of promised goods. Samama has disclosed his sexuality, deviating from the line, however his mother and him

have a silent agreement that they don't speak of his deviance in respect of each other's boundaries. Thus Samama is brought into the line in the eyes of his family, while his family knows that he deviates from it. The expectations my informants navigate are oriented towards a family line and their place in the family is given.

Navigating the line consists of navigating conformity or deviation. On the one hand, the inability to conform to group norms can lead to the risk of loss and rejection, as seen in the cases of Nirved and Majid. On the other hand it also can lead to having your deviance recognized, but then being subjected to discrimination or insubordination, such as in the cases of Eylül and Samama. Eylül being cautioned not to bring girls home, or Samama being required not to dance in a certain way in front of his family members or having his sexuality silenced.

My informants balance acceptance and rejection in relation to their parents' expectations of them. The striving for meeting their parents' expectations is an attempt to be accepted and recognized for an insider of the group despite deviating from the line. The social group of the family, thus becomes a complicated site of the two potentialities: rejection and conflict versus acceptance and recognition for who they are or both simultaneously.

Another crucial aspect of navigating the line while disclosing one's sexual identity is the emotional burden of shame that accompanies it. Sara Ahmed's concept of affective economies sheds light on the intricate dynamics at play in the experience of shame. To her, the double play of concealment and disclosure is a crucial aspect to the 'work of shame' (Ahmed pp. 104). The concealment also relates to the desire for acceptance within a group. Shame, to Ahmed is a social phenomenon that exists in relationships where there is an orientedness towards an ideal, in this case the family's futurity of promised good. It emerges when individuals are perceived as failures in the eyes of the ideal other (Ahmed, 2014, pp. 106.). Shame is thus, oriented towards concealment, as something to be hid. The ideal other, in this case the family unit, is a place in which my informants strive to be included and accepted, while anticipating or dealing with loss and rejection, this dynamic generates an economy of shame between my informants and their families.

In the following examples I draw attention to the workings of shame in connection to the concealment of a stigmatized identity.

Majid recounted to me a story where his family was gathered around the dinner table and had a conversation about homosexuals:

So my family began discussing homosexuality (...) It came to the point that my family said that homosexuality is a sickness that needs to be cured. They didn't know if it was innate or a choice, but it needed to be cured. (...) And my mother was part of the conversation and agreed. (Majid, 00:51:08)

In Majid's narrative, his family's discussions about his hidden stigma became an indirect exposure of his own stigma in the eyes of the "ideal other," represented by his family, especially his mother. Passing judgement on that which is concealed reinforces the shame before the other, contributing to further concealment. Shame works without Majid's sexuality is exposed, but in the anticipation of the stigma.

Shame also emerged in Nirved's narrative, even without his stigma being explicitly mentioned, pointing to a shame from within. He told me an anecdote to explain his thoughts on being the one bringing shame to his family:

My parents were in Paris once, and they went to see a fortune teller. (...) She said 'one of your children will disappoint you at some point in your life.' And when [my mother] came home and told us about it, my sister and I thought: it must be our little brother. My little brother has always been a troublemaker, always been on the go. He's also the youngest, you know, he has always been allowed a bit more. (...) But back then, deep down, I knew it was me. (Nirved, 00:54:28)

This quote highlights how the workings of shame exists within Nirved, without the exposure to the eyes of the other, but also without the stigma being mentioned, like in Majid's experience. The shame within Nirved indicates that the anticipated stigma also play a role when navigating his parents' expectations when failing to conform to the established 'line' of the family, causing his fear of disappointing them.

This analysis underscored the challenges and internal conflicts individuals experience as they navigate the delicate balance between their authentic selves and the expectations imposed upon them, often with the consequence of shame.

Concluding remarks

I have revealed another aspect of navigating parental relationship as an LGBT+ individual with immigrant parents. This analysis has unpacked the various ways in which parental expectations surfaced in the accounts of my informants. My informants employed different strategies to navigate their parents' expectations of them, whether it was through refusal, negotiations, hopelessness or outright defiance.

Moreover, Sara Ahmed's concept of orientation and the idea of following "the line" given by the family provided a framework for understanding how my informants navigate expectations according to such line. Furthermore, I found that shame presented an emotional response to navigating the line and failing to fulfill the expectations in connection to it. The experiences of shame and the anticipation of stigma further complicates the navigation of parental relationship and sexuality disclosure. This analysis demonstrated how parental expectations play a crucial role in my informants' narratives of their family relationships.

Chapter 5 – Between struggles and expectation: a moral economy

Through my investigation into how LGBT+ individuals with immigrant backgrounds navigate and make sense of their relationships with their parents, I discovered that my informants actively navigate their parents' struggles and expectations, as those topics have showed significance in their narratives. After having thoroughly examined parental expectations and struggles, I now delve into exploring the dynamics, interrelationships and mechanisms that exist *between* such struggles and expectations. This chapter focus on the interconnectedness and mutual influence of parental struggles and expectations, highlighting that these themes do not exist in a vacuum, but rather shape and inform each other in complex ways.

In order to enhance the clarity and coherence of my analysis, I have examined the narratives of struggles and expectations as separate themes. Nevertheless, I recognize that these themes are deeply interconnected and interdependent, forming a complex web of forces that mutually influence and shape each other. This intricate web involve the considerations of sexuality disclosure and the role of the family. By recognizing the interplay between struggles, expectations, sexuality disclosure, and

the family, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex forces at play in my informants' narratives.

To capture the interrelationship between struggles and expectations on the one hand and family and sexuality on the other, I propose viewing the web as a *moral economy*. This concept, as articulated by Didier Fassin, refers to "the economy of the moral values and norms of a given group in a given moment" (Fassin, 2005, pp. 366). Fassin argues, that the moral economy serves as a conceptual framework for studying the governance of human life in its diverse manifestations, particularly within marginalized groups in a political or moral order, such as undocumented migrants, the undeserving poor, or criminal youth (Fassin, 2005, pp. 366). While Fassin's focus primarily revolves around refugees as "the suffering others" within France's immigration policies, my exploration takes a more interpersonal perspective on the term. I assert that by adopting the framework of moral economy, we can examine how parental struggles and expectations function as influential forces within the institution of the family. It is within this familial context that daily transactions involving norms, values, obligations, futurity and indebtedness shape the dynamics of the parental-child relationships. Expanding on Fassin's definition of moral economy as the transaction of norms and values within a given group and moment, I propose that the family can be seen as the given group and sexuality disclosure as the given moment. In the cases of my informants, the family unit becomes the arena in which the moral economy operates, with the disclosure of sexuality serving as a catalyst for the renegotiation of norms and values.

The following section will explore empirical examples that demonstrate the transactional nature of the parent-child relationship in my narratives of my informants.

In chapter one, Majid portrayed his mother's unhappiness with living in Denmark and her longing to return to Morocco, where she felt a greater sense of belonging. Building upon this, chapter two delved into Majid's alignment of his own aspirations for the future with his mother's desires, exemplified by his decision to complete his studies without taking a sabbatical year. While I explored these narratives as distinct themes, they are deeply intertwined and mutually influential. Majid's narrative demonstrates how he navigates his mother's expectations of him to finish his studies while also being aware of his mother's loss and longing. These two forces become the backdrop against which he

negotiates his own identity and desires. An example of how his mother's expectations and struggles play out as a transaction in a moral economy is expressed in the following:

Because she has had such a tough time, I feel like I owe her in a way. I would like her to have a better life. I don't know, I feel like I owe her a little bit. (...) So I want her to feel better. Also, because I'm going to have to tell her that she won't be having grandchildren from me anytime soon, so I don't know. I'm trying to be a good child because at some point, I'll have to tell her. And I feel like she has had a hard enough time already. (Majid, 00:26:01)

In this quote, Majid openly expresses a sense of indebtedness towards his mother, underscoring an asymmetrical exchange dynamic where he perceives his mother as providing him with more than he can reciprocate, resulting in a feeling of obligation towards her. Within this imbalanced transaction, homosexuality takes on the role of a currency that is negotiated. If Majid discloses his sexuality it will add to his mother's distress, on the other hand, succeeding in school balances out the imbalance. Moreover, the notion of 'being a good son' also functions as a form of currency, further contributing to the equilibrium of the family's moral economy.

Majid expressed a correlation between navigating his own trajectory in relation to his mother's struggle. Since she had been struggling so much, his sexuality becomes the reason why he felt indebted to her. Consequently, striving to succeed in school becomes an attempt to compensate for being a homosexual. This indebtedness serves as a crucial element in the transactional nature of their relationship.

Eylül told me about an experience she had with her mother. They were fighting and her mother tried to convince her to go to conversion therapy, and in that fight her mother told Eylül that she is probably a lesbian herself.

She was trying to force me to see that therapist in Turkey, where she told me that she most likely was a lesbian herself. So you know, it was all about internalized homophobia. She has forced herself out of those thoughts. (Eylül, 00:34:34)

In this quote Eylül revealed that her mother had suppressed her own diverting sexuality, and thus wanted Eylül to do the same. Pushing Eylül to go to conversion therapy was an attempt to make her

straight, so she could have the “traditional man-woman life with children” (Eylül, 00:54:00) The transactional nature of this story is that Eylül’s mother did everything in her power to maintain the heteronormative family order, and thus she expected Eylül to do the same. In Eylül’s narration the heteronormative family order, or “the line,” was the future her mother set out for Eylül. Her mother had repressed her own desires and conformed to societal norms, and now she expects Eylül to do the same.

Another manifestation of the economic aspect in my informants' narratives is through the exploration of blame. I have found that my informants not only bear the weight of shame, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also face blame for not conforming to the moral order of the family. While shame emerges when met with the eyes of an ideal other and is “the emotional cost of deviating from societal norms” (Ahmed, 2014, pp. 107), blame is more directed *at* someone from someone. Blame holds that someone is deliberately accountable for causing harm, injury or disruption. Sara Ahmed suggests that, queer desires are often understood as *an injury* to the family, (Ahmed xxx), and the blame becomes the response. In the narratives of my informants, many of them experienced being blamed for their sexuality. Moreover, the blame was often related to the struggles of their parents, highlighting the intricate interaction between blame and struggle, and the moral obligation to not cause further injury on the family, *because* of how much they have struggled already.

An example of how blame manifested in my informants' narratives is demonstrated in Samama's interaction with his sister after coming out to her. Instead of receiving support, he encountered blame:

I came out to my sister first, because she was close to me. And she said, ‘No, you can't do that. What if something happens to mom? She has been through a lot.’ Because my mom just got divorced from her second husband. So she went into a severe depression. She was very, very depressed back then. We have seen our mom on days where she would just stare at the TV all day, and feel lonely and things like that. So she said, ‘You can't be so hard on mom, you can't do that to her.’ She thought it was a betrayal, and that the whole family would fall apart. (Samama, 00:58:50)

This quote highlights the significant emotional weight placed on Samama when disclosing his sexual identity to his sister. Samama is blamed for causing further pain to his mother. The blame emerges in a context of sexuality disclosure, thus, in a context of failing to live up to heteronormative

expectations. Blame operates as a disciplinary mechanism, to align Samama in the heterosexual family order. The blame directed at Samama demonstrates how his sister uses their mother's struggles to justify demanding in return his alignment. It goes to show the complex web of expectations, struggles and potential consequences of disclosing sexual identity, and to carry the weight of being blamed for causing further pain to the family, all the while carrying the hurt of the parents to begin with.

Eylül's sister's reaction to her sexuality disclosure was similar. Her sister told her: "What the hell have you done? Mom just called me and she is devastated, she is crying none-stop at work" (Eylül, 00:54:47) and then later on, when she disclosed her identity to her mother, her response was "you cannot do that to me, don't do that to me" (Eylül, 00:51:17). In addition, Eylül shared with me that while no one explicitly blamed her, she nevertheless perceived a tangible sense of blame emanating from her family for ruining her mother's life by disclosing her sexuality (Eylül, 00:31:04). This blame signifies that when Eylül came out to her family it brought disruption upon them, leaving Eylül accountable.

The statements from Samama and Eylül show how sexuality disclosure, can disrupt the family's moral economy. The presence of blame in these narratives demonstrates how moral judgments operate within familial relationships as disciplinary mechanisms to regulate behavior and enforce conformity to norms and expectations. The blame becomes a form of currency in the moral economy of the family to maintain its order, or in Ahmed's vocabulary to bring them into the line of the family. Sexuality disclosure can be seen as a disruption of the family's moral economy, and how blame become the means through which they enforce a balance between parental expectations and struggles. *Because* of their families' struggles, they should *align* with what is expected. This interrelationship can be understood as a moral economy.

Furthermore, the blame in the provided examples indicate that sexuality disclosure can have detrimental effects on the family unit and cause hurt to loved ones, demonstrating that when my informants negotiate their sexuality disclosure with the moral obligations of the family, it can affect the entirety of the family. Sexuality disclosure is thus, not an isolated individual matter; it carries significant implications that extend beyond the individual and can profoundly affect the well-being of the parents, and the family as a unit. The disruption Eylül's disclosure caused on her family might

have affected her siblings as well. They may have been forced to witness the emotional and psychological breakdown of their mother as a result of the disclosure.

Each informant's story is emblematic of considering the family as a whole in relation to their sexuality disclosure: Nirved fears dishonoring his family, Samama is cautioned by his sister to spare their mother further distress, and Majid clings to the hope that his mother can find happiness even without the prospect of grandchildren. Their process of sexuality disclosure is intertwined with the family.

Sexuality adds another layer in the negotiations of the moral economy of the family. When sexuality becomes a part of this complex intergenerational transaction, it introduces new challenges and forms new strategies. My informants' sexualities are placed in a delicate balance between the forces of parental expectations and struggles. It is within this intricate balance that they not only navigate their parents' expectations and struggles, but also confront the looming presence of anticipated stigma, potential loss, and disappointing them profoundly with their sexuality disclosure, even being blamed.

By examining the themes that emerged in their accounts, I have shed light on how sexuality disclosure, expectations, struggles, and blame all act as elements within the family structure, creating a complex web that constitutes the moral economy of the family. As blame serves as a form of currency to restore equilibrium in the disrupted economy, so does the pursuit of success. The examples of Majid and Nirved demonstrate how their ambitions in career are intricately linked to their sexuality disclosure and acts as part of the moral economy. Thus, achievements function as commodities, exchanged to uphold the moral economy of the family.

Faced with these challenges, they employ various strategies to navigate this complex terrain and mitigate the potential outcome of sexuality exposure. Moreover, their journey of sexuality disclosure extends beyond their individual paths; it encompasses the trajectories of their entire families. As they carry with them their parents' life experiences and trajectories while also deviating from the line of the family and the space that was given, adds to the complex nature of navigating intergenerational relationships, as an LGBT+ person with immigrant background. As they navigate this terrain, they must grapple with the burdens of blame and disruption that can emerge within the family unit as a result of their disclosure. This awareness is expressed through being blamed for causing injury on the family and furthering already prevalent struggles.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

In this thesis I asked how LGBT+ individuals with immigrant background navigate and make sense of their relationship with their parents in relation to their sexuality. Motivated by a desire to challenge the prevailing simplistic narrative that portrays racialized LGBT+ individuals as victims of their immigrant families, I embarked on a series of interviews with LGBT+ individuals who have immigrant parents, asking them what they thought of their families in relation to their sexuality disclosure.

The analysis revealed that themes of parental struggles and expectations played a significant role in my informants' narratives, shaping their decision-making processes and their strategies for gaining acceptance. The struggles of their parents encompassed aspects of loss of home, loss of status, and experiences of alienation, which were evident in the narratives. I conceptualized the occurrence of parental struggle and loss within a theoretical framework of postmemory and diasporic mourning, which illuminated the narratives of my informants as influenced by the experiences and trauma of their parents, transmitted through their upbringing and the stories told in their environment.

The narratives of my informants also demonstrated a range of parental expectations, spanning from major life decisions such as education choices or conforming to a heteronormative lifestyle, to small bodily gestures and gender performances. I employed a theoretical framework of orientation and shame which not only elucidated the parental expectations as a disciplinary mechanism to maintain the family order, but also provided insight into how my informants used the expectations as a means to renegotiate their position within their families. Drawing on concepts of affective economies helped frame shame as connected to the anticipated stigma of my informants. This demonstrated yet another complex aspect of navigating parental relationships in immigrant families while disclosing ones sexuality.

To capture the interrelationship between struggles, expectations at a time of sexuality disclosure, the theoretical concept of a moral economy was adopted. The moral economy served as a framework to analyze how norms, values, obligations, and indebtedness shape the dynamics within the family unit. Viewing the family as a given group and sexuality disclosure as a given moment, allowed for an understanding of the transactional nature of parent-child relationships in this context. This highlights how sexuality can become the fulcrum of an economy of give and take, where fulfilling or challenging

parental expectations can be a balancing act. In this context, sexuality can play a decisive role in tipping the scales towards acceptance or rejection by one's family, prompting renegotiation of other factors to restore equilibrium. By recognizing this complex interplay, a more comprehensive understanding of the forces at play in my informants' narratives was achieved.

In conclusion, this thesis has delved into the intricate dynamics of intergenerational relationships within immigrant families and shed light on the experiences faced by their LGBT+ descendants. I argue, that the simplistic victim narrative, often associated with racialized LGBT+ individuals, fails to comprehend the multidimensional aspects of navigating intergenerational relationships within immigrant families as an LGBT+ individual.

Moreover, I emphasize the importance of viewing race and sexuality not as isolated constructs, but as interconnected and mutually influential of each other. It is crucial to explore these constructs simultaneously, as it may shed light on contradictory experiences of rejection and acceptance, pride and shame, and the complex anticipation of loss, while also revealing one sided narratives placed upon the racialized LGBT+ communities and their families by people in positions of power. By giving voice to the communities' own stories and self-portrayals, we have gained insight into the multifaceted ways they navigate their parental relationships.

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