

## A beautiful lesbian morning: depicting intimate lesbian lives in the Global South

### A las disidencias que habitan el sur

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Illustration 1. The illustration shows, from the left to the right, Titi (Eliana and Rebeca's dog), Perlita (Rebeca's dog), Rebeca (Eliana's partner) and Pilo (Eliana and Rebeca's cat) in bed together. This is originally a family photograph taken and provided by Eliana, Rebeca's partner in their bedroom. The illustration was created by [Amy Rogers](#).

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## Critical commentary

Between 2016 and 2017, as a PhD student in the UK, I conducted fieldwork in Santiago, researching amongst different domestic arrangements what people think the term ‘family’ means to them, and whether family photography would play a role within families and close relationships. I took an intersectional feminist approach to research families (hooks, 2015; Collins, 2002; Kirkwood and Crispi, 1987; Barrett and McIntosh, 1982) and developed Morgan’s concept of ‘family practices’; social practices which drew people together and supported them to maintain material relationships and emotional connections (2011a, 2011b, 2004, 1996). In the summer of 2017, I visited the house of Eliana and Rebeca, a middle-class lesbian family in Santiago de Chile. During the interview, we shared meals, had long conversations and laughs in their home. The couple lived in a three-bedroom house with their animals, and they had a little garden wherein they grew some vegetables and flowers. They also ran a dog grooming business together and told me about what ‘family’ meant to them. In my postdoctoral project on making connections between the arts and sociology, I worked with Amy Rogers, who created the illustration above. She drew the original family picture (taken by Eliana) given by me and used the software Figma to add the original colour layers behind the scanned drawing. I created the idea of connecting an illustration, family photography and practices of care in the lives of Eliana, Rebeca and their animals.<sup>2</sup> The illustration shows us how the emotional and relational lives of Eliana, Rebeca and their animals are close to each other, all together in their intimate bedroom, being physically close, sharing a bed together and providing companionship. Companion, closeness, and sharing are all practices of care in Eliana and Rebeca’s multi-species household (Charles, 2014, Brannen et al., 2013, Weeks et al., 2001, Jamieson, 1998).

For Eliana and Rebeca, ‘family’ related to the practice of taking responsibility in caring for each other and their pets. This lesbian couple made connections between emotions and practices of care; emphasising the importance of ‘love’ and ‘care’ for each other in everyday life, by supporting each other’s decisions, and making a different way of living. By contrast, the straight couples that I interviewed did not mention emotions. Rebeca and Eliana worked hard to create a family in their home with their animals; having the freedom to enjoy life which, as a lesbian couple, in public is not always easy in Chile. They had a greater commitment to make their family life more egalitarian, primarily because the care responsibility is central to family practices. The illustration was chosen by both Rebeca and Eliana and represents the everydayness of a loving, intimate and caring family life. It is also a claim for recognition, making the lives of lesbian women visible, in a country which still marginalises LGBTQ+ people.

## Bibliography

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