

Identity transmission in a (trans)national context

A comparison between parents in mixed couples in Quebec and Morocco

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Based on two ethnographic studies, the goal of this chapter is to compare the parental identity transmission projects of mixed couples (the couple's conscious decisions about their child's identity) in two different countries. The differences between Quebec (a secular society of immigration) and Morocco (a Muslim country of emigration) offer an interesting comparison with respect to transmission issues and how mobility and transnational relationships intervene in this process. In a previous article we showed that while national context must be taken into account in the study of identity transmission, its influence should be nuanced. A political context that promotes interculturality (Quebec) legitimises the pluralistic nature of parental identity transmission projects and facilitates its expression, whereas a context regulated by a dominant religion (Morocco) produces parental identity transmission projects that serve as a social display and places mixed identity projects in the private sphere (Therrien & Le Gall, 2017). In this chapter, the comparison between these two different contexts will not only highlight the effects of the national context on the choices the parents make in terms of identity markers, but also the influence of their transnational practices on identity transmission.

Before presenting the methodology of the two studies, we start with a literature review of identity transmission within mixed families with a specific focus on transnational practices. In order to better situate our data, we then provide a comparison of the two specific contexts. Next, we discuss the parental identity transmission projects in both contexts, focusing on different identity markers. The analysis of the observed similarities and differences allows us to highlight the constraints and enablers of the different national contexts and to show how cross-border relations and mobility not only influence these choices but also how they are mobilised by the parents to transmit multiple affiliations to their children.

Identity transmission in a transnational world

The notion of mixedness takes on different meanings according to the time, the place and the context in which it is found (Varro, 2008). In mixed

families, transmission is a matter of reflection and negotiation between partners (Edward et al., 2010). Parents need to choose what to transmit and how to do so. Meintel (2002) developed the concept of a 'parental identity transmission project' to show that parents make choices that aim to guide the identity construction of their children when they possess several possible ethnic or national affiliations—whether by ancestry or for socio-historical reasons (like migration). These choices, which include values, tradition, practices, commensality, celebrations and holiday destinations, also involve several identity markers. Names (e.g. Cerchiaro, 2017; Collet, 2019; Le Gall & Meintel, 2005), languages (e.g. Joshi, 2014; Varro, 1984) and religion (e.g. Arweck & Nesbitt, 2010; Mathieu, 2010) are among the most frequently analysed identity markers in studies on transmission within mixed couples.

Some studies have highlighted the different models of transmission adopted by parents in mixed unions (Song, 2017). Some families opt to transmit the identity references associated with both cultures. This refers to the mixed approach of Caballero et al. (2008). In other cases, a preference for identity markers in favour of the culture of one of the spouses (either the minority or the majority society) is observed (Collet, 2019). With these two models, a multitude of familial arrangements is possible (Varro, 1995). For instance, the multiracial parents studied by Song and O'Neill Gutierrez (2015) opted for the transmission of a 'cosmopolitan ethos'. They use the term 'cosmopolitan' to refer to the ways 'in which these parents spoke of ideals around the appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity in contemporary British society' (2015, 14). Other parents decide to build their daily life around the transmission of a common faith (Therrien, 2014).

Different factors influencing identity transmission have been suggested. Some studies have shown that the transmission of identity markers is considered a challenge in the conjugal relationship and is often analysed as a revelatory element of the power relations between the spouses (Varro, 1984). Gender has also been highlighted as a significant factor in the transmission process. As mentioned by some scholars, women play a crucial role in passing on cultural heritage (Edward et al., 2010; Seiger, 2017). Identity transmission can also be influenced by the migratory history of the spouse and their family (Unterreiner, 2015) and by the country of residence, aspects that have been overlooked up until now. Few authors have used international comparison as a research method with the goal of highlighting the impact of national context on various aspects of the life of mixed families (Chito Childs, 2018; Rocha et al., 2019; Unterreiner, 2015). This comparative chapter will integrate a transnational approach to the analysis of identity transmission.

While transnational practices have been examined by scholars interested in family migration, they have rarely been explored in studies on mixed families. Some research has shown that transnational links can impact different aspects of mixed individuals' lives (Chito Childs et al., 2019; Rocha, 2016;

Slany & Strzemecka, 2017; Tanu, 2017; Unterreiner, 2015). However, less attention has been paid to how transnational ties impact parental transmission and, even when highlighted, rarely form a central element of the analysis. Arweck and Nesbitt (2010) for example, stressed the significant role of the extended family living abroad in religious transmission. The notion of transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2001) was at the heart of the two research studies on mixed couples that are the subject of this chapter. Therrien showed that the sense of 'home' of foreigners in mixed couples took on an affective, plural and deterritorialised configuration because of the family, social and professional connections that were formed and maintained in the country of origin, and the host country. She argued that the concept of a transnational home conveys a sense of attachment and continuity in the construction of self, and not a fragmentation or an uprooting (Therrien, 2014). Le Gall and Meintel (2011) showed that mixed couples in Quebec maintain intense contacts with their family members living abroad and that these contacts participate in strengthening the parents' project of transmitting a mixed heritage. They emphasised the importance of transnational links in the socialisation of mixed individuals and highlighted some factors that may negatively impact the maintenance of cross-border links, such as disagreements with the extended family, economic difficulties, political instability and the lack of language skills.

Methodology

The data we analyse in this chapter comes from two ethnographic studies (Le Gall & Meintel, 2014; Therrien, 2014). The Quebec research was carried out in Montreal and other regions¹ of the province while the Moroccan research took place in various cities. In-depth interviews were carried out in Quebec, while ethnographic observation, biographical interviews and the anthropology of a shared experience were at the heart of the Moroccan study (Therrien, 2017). The focus of the study in Quebec was specifically on parental identity transmission projects whereas in Morocco it was one of several topics explored. In both contexts the choice of name, language, educational system, religion, nationality and transnational links were discussed with the parents.

In Quebec, the couples interviewed represented three types of conjugal mixedness: unions between a Francophone Quebecer and a person born abroad (Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East and South America); between a Francophone Quebecer and a partner from a different ethnic background but born in Quebec; and between individuals born in Quebec but from different ethnic backgrounds (from over 40 countries). In Morocco, one of the partners was Moroccan and the other was an immigrant originally from Europe, North America, Asia, or Sub-Saharan Africa. Individuals from 15 different countries were interviewed but the majority of the

couples were European-Moroccan. More specifically, one third of the couples was composed of French and Moroccan individuals, thus representing the most common type of conjugal mixedness in Morocco.

The Quebec study was composed of 80 couples (60 in Montreal and 20 in the provincial regions), married (slightly more than half) or cohabiting, aged 25–40 years old, and parents of at least one child. The interviews were simultaneously carried out with both partners in 37 cases. The research includes the experiences of 73 women and 44 men. The majority of the spouses were raised in the same religion. They belong primarily to the middle class, and have completed post-secondary studies. About three quarters of the couples met in Quebec while the other quarter, in particular those who chose to live in provincial regions, met in the country of origin of the immigrant partner or in a country other than Canada. They had chosen to live in Quebec for the various work opportunities but also because they saw it as a better environment for raising a child with respect to educational opportunities. Analysis of personal backgrounds shows that these people lived in relatively heterogeneous social universes prior to their union. Many had travelled or stayed abroad over the course of their life. Several had been in mixed relationships in the past, or had parents, siblings or other family members in mixed relationships as well.

As for the Moroccan study, 31 couples were formally interviewed (52 people, 31 women and 21 men). Twenty-one of the interviews took place with the two spouses together and 10 women were interviewed alone. The participants were aged between 27 and 69 years old. Twenty-eight couples were married or had been married, three were cohabiting and 26 out of 31 couples had children. This chapter is based specifically on the experience of these parents. The majority of spouses were raised in different religions. Most of them belong to the middle or privileged social class. Some of the Moroccan partners came from modest families, but their individual journey helped them acquire significant social and economic capital. This included completing post-secondary studies, and (for the majority) studying, travelling, or working abroad. We note that 16 of the 31 couples met in the foreign partner's country, nine in Morocco, four in a third country, one in a plane and one on the Internet. The couples interviewed had chosen to live in Morocco for the different work opportunities (possibility of setting up a business, experience of working abroad) and for the quality of life (sun, slower pace of life, etc.). Some Moroccans experienced discrimination abroad and came home for professional reasons.

The two studies differ in terms of the types of mixedness, migratory motives of the partner who has an immigrant background, participants' age and social class (mainly due to the much greater gap between social classes in Morocco). However, similarities are found in terms of ethnic and religious diversity (even if the couples in Morocco were more religiously heterogeneous), educational background, socio-professional status, and 'mobility

capital' (Alemand, 2004). The next section aims to describe the specifics of the contexts in which the two studies were carried out.

Comparison of Quebec and Moroccan contexts

As a result of Quebec's immigration flows since the 1960s, 13.7 per cent of its population is immigrant. Of all immigrants, 85.8 per cent live in the greater Montreal region, the rest of the province remaining largely ethnically and linguistically homogeneous (MIDI, 2019).² While the majority of people who settled in Quebec in the 1960s were of European origin, the recent migratory flux is very diversified. Central to the Quebec government's diversity management policy adopted in the 1980s, known as interculturalism, is the idea that immigrants must participate in democratic life and adopt communal values. In return, Quebec must ensure the integration of immigrants and promote a positive attitude towards diversity. This pluralist policy aims to promote contact and dialogue between citizens of all ethnicities and encourages immigrants to preserve their cultural heritage. It also establishes the primacy of French as a public language (Rocher & White, 2014). The concern for the preservation of French, the language spoken by the majority of the population, has always been an issue in Quebec. Since the adoption in 1977 of the Charter of the French Language, also known in English as Bill 101, French is the official language of Quebec and the mandatory language of instruction from kindergarten to secondary school.³ Children can attend a private school (some of them serve particular religious or cultural groups such as Armenian, Protestant Christian or certain types of Jewish and Muslim faiths) as long as they are recognised by the Quebec government.

Although the number of immigrants who speak French is increasing as a result of this legislation, the retention of mother languages (but also religion and other ethnic identity markers) is noticeable, particularly in Montreal where the population is increasingly bilingual and trilingual.⁴ According to Lamarre (2013), this unusual language dynamic has its roots in a colonial past, a history of language contact between two strong language communities, and is also being transformed by the forces of globalisation and post-modernity.

Quebec experienced a secularisation of its institutions during the early 1960s.⁵ The reform of the Civil Code at that time resulted in the adoption of a new code that created a separation between the religious and civil dimensions of marriage. Changes made in 1981 to the Civil Code allow parents to choose first and surnames. Whereas traditionally the surname was transmitted through the paternal lineage, parents can now give the surname of either one of them or a name consisting of two parts from the surname of both parents, in the order desired by the parents. A child can have the mother's surname, the father's surname or a hyphenated name made up of both. As for first names, parents can choose one or more. Under Quebec's civil code a woman's maiden name remains her legal name after marriage

and cannot be changed without the authorisation of the court. In addition, marrying a Canadian citizen does not automatically give citizenship. To obtain it, a person must be a permanent resident and have lived in Canada for at least three of the five years prior to their citizenship application. While interreligious marriages between Catholics (mostly French) and Protestants (mostly English) constituted the most widespread mixed union several decades ago, mixed marriages today are defined in terms of ethnic and linguistic differences. Despite a decrease in religious practice almost everywhere, Quebec remains the only province in Canada with a Catholic majority. This majority is weaker in the Montreal region where new religious trends and places of worship have emerged and where the population reporting religious affiliations other than Christian is on the rise (Mossière & Meintel, 2010).

Morocco, on the other hand, constitutes a real ethnic, social, cultural and linguistic mosaic, inhabited by Moroccan Arabs, Berbers, Jews and foreigners. During the second half of the 20th century Morocco became one of the world's major emigration countries, with a diaspora evaluated at 4 million Moroccans (Berriane et al., 2015). Since the mid-1990s, Morocco has also become a destination for migrants from Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. The total number of immigrants, however, constitutes less than 1 per cent of the entire population.⁶ Morocco's history, which includes slavery, invasions, colonisation⁷ and an opening to the 'Western world' by various migratory waves and present-day globalisation, explains the prevailing complexity of relations between different ethnic groups.

If racial categories contribute to delimiting the symbolic boundaries of the group identity (Therrien, 2020b), social cohesion in Morocco is first and foremost linked to the majority religion (Therrien, 2020a). Islam is the official religion of the state under the Constitution, and the majority population in Morocco is Muslim and practising. One of the aims of the Moroccan legislative system is to preserve the country's Arabo-Islamic character and patriarchal structure. The Family Code (the *Mudawana*) is a relevant example of the strong imbrication of state and religion. According to the Moroccan Family Code, the only form of union accepted socially, religiously and legally is the *adoulaire* marriage (an act authenticated by a traditional notary according to Muslim law). A Muslim man can marry a non-Muslim woman (Jewish or Christian), but a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man (foreign men therefore have no choice but to convert if they want their marriage to be recognised by the Moroccan authorities). A Muslim cannot inherit from a non-Muslim and vice-versa. With regards to religious transmission, Islam is the only religion that can be transmitted to children. Religion is transmitted by patrilineal filiation: the children of a Muslim father (converted or by birth) are Muslim in the eyes of the law.

The preservation of the Arabo-Islamic character and patriarchal structure is also defined by other codes of law. According to the Civil Record Law (37–99), the first name of the children must be Moroccan and children

should bear their father's name. However, Moroccan women who get married keep their birth name. There is no obligation to take their husband's name. Concerning the Nationality Code, the law has seen real progress in terms of gender equality since 2007, when women were allowed to transmit their nationality to their children.⁸ Morocco allows dual citizenship without the loss of Moroccan nationality. However, Moroccan nationality is really difficult, if not impossible to obtain for foreigners, even those who are married to a Moroccan citizen (Zeghib & Therrien, 2016).

Due to its colonial history, Morocco is a multilingual country. It is fairly common to hear illiterate people speaking two or three different languages. Both Moroccan and foreign schools have established bilingual, even multilingual syllabi. Besides public and private Moroccan schools, many foreign schools have been set up in the big cities (French, American, Spanish, Belgium, Canadian) (Pellegrini, 2019). There is no law defining the choice of a mandatory school system or a specific language in which to study like in Quebec. Depending on their financial means, parents can choose to educate their children in the system they prefer. However, the law requires foreign schools to teach Arabic to every Moroccan child who studies in Morocco.⁹

The parental identity transmission project

In Quebec, the parental identity transmission projects of the mixed couples interviewed were directed at multiple affiliations (Le Gall & Meintel, 2015). The partners valued the mixedness of their union and tried to articulate the multiplicity of references associated with their cultural heritages. It was presumed that as well as preserving one or more affiliations, their child would develop a feeling of belonging in Canada or Quebec. In general, the two parents unanimously considered their child's mixed origins as having several advantages, and that the culture of the country of origin 'belongs' to the child. They described it as a range of elements making up a part of the cultural capital that the child has a right to and which, in their own words, represents a number of 'symbolic resources' that can eventually be used, depending on the child's preferences.

In Morocco, the parents also valued their mixedness and wanted their children to develop a sense of belonging with both societies. However, we observed three different models of transmission. In the first one, similar to what was observed in Quebec, the parents had a keen interest in establishing a double affiliation in their children by transmitting the cultural resources of both parents. In the second model, the child was more involved in the culture of the foreign parent; the Moroccan parent in these couples having often distanced themselves from the references to their own socialisation. The third model, much less frequent, referred to the families whose daily lives were constructed around the transmission of a common faith. All the parents interviewed not only projected their child's future in a cosmopolitan, modern

and globalised world but also envisioned the fact that they would live or study abroad. Thus, they saw bi-nationality, the capacity to use several languages, and the ability to adapt to different reference frameworks as indispensable tools for easily navigating the contemporary world. To carry out their mixed identity transmission project, parents in both contexts put forward different strategies, including transnational practices, choice of a name, transmission of languages and nationality.

The choice of first and last name(s)

The choice of first and last name(s) shows how the legislative context in each society plays an important role, but also how the transnational space within which these families live or project the future of their children greatly influences it. In Morocco, to be registered in the *livret de famille*—which gives access to filiation—every child must have a traditional Moroccan first name as well as the father's last name. Taking this administrative restraint into account, the majority of parents opted for a first name of Arab or Berber origin, which at the same time reduces the stock of possible first names and, in a way, simplifies conjugal negotiation around the choice. However, two couples went to court to defend their child's right to a foreign first name, and won. It should be mentioned though that these children were born outside of Morocco, so the authorities accepted that they keep the first names written on their original birth certificate. The couples we met were frequently in contact with the family of the foreign partner abroad (through the maintenance of transnational relations and mobility). For this reason, they were particularly concerned about the first name being pronounced well in both languages used by the families:

We had to negotiate the first names because it was necessary that the first name be easy to pronounce in both French and Moroccan so that it would not be an obstacle to the child later on, if he decides to stay in France or live in Morocco. That's why we gave them fairly simple first names, easy to pronounce and without specific connotations to a particular religion.

(Laure, French woman, married to a Moroccan man, three children)

As also shown in this interview excerpt, many parents, bearing in mind that their children would probably study, work or live outside of Morocco and would be engaged in a transnational lifestyle, frequently opted for a Moroccan first name with a (more or less) international character such as Lina, Lara, Dina, Sofia, Leila, Nadir, Ryan, Tarik, Karim, or Yann.

Conscious of discrimination from 'Western' countries against Muslims, and the rise of islamophobia, most parents chose first names that do not carry a religious connotation.¹⁰

We didn't want the children to suffer from their first name. I believe that from the moment you opt for a mixed marriage, you must have an open mind and not be confined to a given model—that of the place where you live. Initially, you don't know how long you will live there, and you don't know the children's destiny.

(Mohamed, Moroccan man, married to a German woman, five children)

Other parents chose to give two first names to their children, a Moroccan one and a foreign one. They registered the Moroccan first name in the Moroccan *livret de famille* and the two first names in the foreign documents. However, very few of them used the two first names on a daily basis.

Most of the men (Moroccans and foreigners) held on to the idea that their children should have a first name whose resonance is tied to their origins, as well as their own last name. Contrary to Quebec's law, Moroccan legislation does not permit the mother to transmit her last name. Thus, the choice of an 'international' Moroccan first name followed by the father's last name (Sofia Tisserand, Lina Alaoui) satisfied foreign and Moroccan fathers equally by answering to a patriarchal social norm.

I personally wanted a Canadian first name but he [her husband] said: no, it has to be a Moroccan Arabic name. We're not going to call him Pierre, it has to be a first name that goes with his origins.

(Manon, Canadian woman, married to a Moroccan man, two children)

Interestingly, we observed that the social markers that visibly place children into a lineage (first and last name, religion, circumcision) belong mainly to the Moroccan majority group.

These results concerning the choice of first name contrast with those found in the study carried out in the Quebec context that shows how the parents in mixed couples searched for a 'balance' between the first and last name to reflect the multiplicity of the origins of their children. Almost all explicitly admitted choosing the child's name to be as much of a mark of ethnic status as a way to connect them with the two sides of the family. Because the Quebec legislation on the allocation of children's names allows choosing the first and last name(s), mixed couples have the opportunity to use several combinations of elements of the name to carry out their identity projects. Some couples chose to juxtapose the first and last name, each evoking a different lineage and cultural group:

It's a choice that we made, we wanted to have a Quebecer first name with the Chinese last name [...] It's like he would have the name of the two cultures.

(Beatrice, Quebecer woman married to a man with Chinese origins, one child)

Others gave their children multiple first names from various cultural heritages. The first might sound French, while the second might come from the language of the non-Quebecer parent. The allocation of multiple first names allowed the child and his entourage to use one or the other depending on the situation. However, the parents complained that the family abroad tended to change the child's first name rather than using the second one as they originally wanted. Alexandre Miguel for instance, was called Alejandro by his grandparents in Mexico. Another practice consisted in giving compound last names. Despite the possibility of giving the child two family names, many couples opted to simply transmit one last name. In almost all these cases, it was that of the father.

In contrast to several Moroccan couples who gave neutral first names, the Quebecer parents in mixed unions preferred to make the difference quite visible (e.g. Laurent Gonzalez, Giovanni Leblanc). However, we note that in the choice of first name, parents in Quebec expressed the same worries as parents in Morocco and were afraid that a marked name would bring prejudice against the child. They wanted to facilitate his/her life in their place of residence, as well as in the country of origin of the immigrant parent where they would perhaps settle down one day. Some couples also looked for names easily understood around the world (like Sophia) to facilitate the child's future international mobility. To accomplish this, the parents considered the pronunciation and spelling of the name:

The name that I had actually wanted was Chiara, except that [...] my husband said that pronouncing it like it was written wasn't very attractive, it makes you think of a rat. We thought about writing it with a 'k', [but] I said no because with a 'k' in Italian, it isn't pronounced the same. There wasn't a disagreement, we just abandoned that name and searched for a name that sounded just as good in Italian as in French, one that the two families didn't have difficulty pronouncing.

(Aura, woman of Italian origin married to a Quebecer man, one child)

Like this Italian woman who gave up an Italian name she had chosen for her daughter because it was not pronounced well in French, the parents looked for names that were phonetically compatible with several languages and therefore easily pronounceable in different countries and by both families.

The choice of language(s) and educational system

The choice of language(s) to be transmitted to the children as well as the place of schooling indicate the elements that constrain or facilitate the project of transmitting a multiplicity of references linked to each context. It also reveals the fact that many of the choices made by parents were guided by the desire to facilitate transnational contacts and mobility. For the couples

interviewed both in Quebec and Morocco, the opportunity for children to master more than one language was seen by mixed families as a fundamental factor not only in belonging to a group but also as a source of richness in an interconnected world. In fact, globalisation redefines how individuals perceive their linguistic resources in relationship to linguistic markets, 'allowing for the possibility of using what is already learned beyond the constraints of the local context' (Lamarre, 2013, 3).

In Quebec, all the parents interviewed said that they were concerned about the languages being passed on to their child. Such concern extended far beyond the desire for the child to master the French language. The majority of them wanted their child to express himself or herself in French, but also in English and the language(s) of the immigrant parent. The Quebec spouse put as much, if not more value on the children learning the immigrant parent's language as did his or her partner. In the eyes of these couples, the knowledge of several languages promotes communication with the extended family. For example, one immigrant man said he and his spouse were working hard to ensure that their two children spoke Spanish:

We have history books in Spanish, we read them stories in Spanish [...]. If one day our children want to communicate with their grandparents, I would find it so sad if they couldn't communicate with each other because of a language barrier.

(Miguel, Chilean man, married to a Quebecer woman, two children)

In addition to the practical value of languages, parents attributed an economic value to them, especially when the language of the immigrant spouse has international status, such as Mandarin or Spanish. Above all, parents saw language as part of the child's heritage and as a cultural resource. The learning of other languages corresponded to the parents' plan to enhance the child's cultural diversity and mixedness. According to them, language enabled the child to reclaim his or her origins:

It's really for the roots too. I think it's important, it's part of who he is, even if he was born here.

(Nathalie, Quebecer woman, married to a Venezuelan man, one child)

As Nathalie suggested in the previous excerpt, parents used a variety of means to ensure the transmission of a language other than French, which is compulsory at school. In some cases, the couple spoke the immigrant spouse's language at home. In others, the immigrant spouse used his or her language with the child, while the other spoke with the child in French. This strategy, called 'One Person, One Language' (OPOL) (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004), was a common practice. Parents often mobilised the extended family (mainly grandparents) to help them transmit the language associated with the

immigrant parent's origins, especially when both spouses were born in Quebec (in two of the three types of conjugal mixedness studied).

In a very large number of cases, parents considered travel as a reinforcement of learning a language other than French or English. Nancy, a Quebecer, met her Peruvian husband in Peru and they settled in Montreal. They talked to each other in French, even though Nancy spoke very good Spanish. During a six-month trip to Spanish-speaking countries, the children learned some basic Spanish and began to speak with their Peruvian grandmother in that language. The couple even thought about finding classes to help the children improve their Spanish skills. As in the previous example and Nathalie's above, Montreal parents are able to send their children to Saturday schools or to 'ethno-specific' schools (Jewish, Armenian, etc.). However, school-aged children of the parents we interviewed were mainly enrolled in Francophone public schools. In the regions, due to the lack of language schools, parents mainly relied on trips to the foreign partner's country to help them to learn the minority language.

Morocco is a country that promotes and values the learning of several languages (local and foreign). In this multilingual landscape, the mixed families we met exposed their children to two, three or even four languages. We speak here in terms of exposure, because not all children spoke these languages perfectly, but they understood them. Although they had grown up in Morocco, some children had only a basic grounding in dialectal Arabic (the common local language). Indeed, some mixed families chose a single language to be transmitted, often French. This configuration was mainly found in Franco-Moroccan families, with non-French-speaking foreigners often opting to learn and transmit the dialectal Arabic language in addition to the language of the foreign spouse. The children who were not fluent in dialectal Arabic mainly came from families who had chosen a family model dominated by French culture and language. It should be noted that the Moroccan spouses of these couples had often studied and/or lived in France.

If in Quebec, all French-speaking parents were keen to transmit their languages to their children, it is interesting to see that in Morocco, the transmission of dialectal Arabic was not always done by the Arabic-speaking parent. Some children learned the local language with friends or with staff who worked in their homes (cleaning ladies, nannies, drivers, etc.). While some families have opted for the OPOL strategy, as in the Quebec context, informal code switching was also used very frequently. This practice was not only common in mixed families in Morocco, but also in Moroccan society (Salia, 2011).

One of the differences between Quebec and Morocco also lies in the choices that parents made about the system in which their children were educated. Morocco, as we saw earlier, offers more options than Quebec in terms of foreign schools and the main language of study. With no obligation to study mainly in Arabic or in a Moroccan school, the parents we

interviewed had mostly enrolled their children in a foreign school (17 out of 22). Some parents had chosen to enrol their children in a private Moroccan school during primary school years to give their children a solid foundation in Arabic, but had made or wanted to make the transition to a foreign school at the secondary level. A small number of parents interviewed had enrolled their children in Moroccan public schools. These were the few families with a more modest standard of living. This was due to either the life trajectory of the Moroccan partner having been particularly difficult (life on the streets following family breakdown, participation in and desertion from war and so living a clandestine life for several years) or because the migratory journey of the foreign spouse was related to economic factors.

These choices (language and place of schooling) give an indication of the projections of parents settled in Morocco who from the start of schooling planned to send their children to study abroad. It also gives an indication of the socio-economic level of these families. Just as the French, American or Spanish diploma was seen as a passport to university studies abroad, learning a foreign/second language was perceived by parents as an indispensable resource for their professional and personal future. This multilingual socialisation was also put in place to facilitate children's communication with both their families in Morocco and abroad, and to help them navigate within this transnational space where most of them had lived since birth.

Nationality/nationalities and transnational practices

The decision of the parents regarding the transmission of a single or multiple nationalities, as well as the transnational practices of these families, indicate the differences between the two geopolitical contexts. If the families interviewed in Quebec and Morocco were all maintaining more or less frequent links with the country of origin of the immigrant parent, some differences were observed in the type and frequency of their transnational practice, including the transmission (or not) of a dual citizenship.

All the parents interviewed in Morocco had transmitted the nationality of the foreign parent. Many Moroccan spouses had also acquired the nationality of the country of their spouse prior to or after their romantic encounter (some had lived enough time abroad to be naturalised and some obtained it through marriage). Offering this foreign passport to their children was considered as a real opportunity because it greatly eases transnational mobility. In the contemporary world where freedom of movement is not equitably distributed (Gustafson, 2006), the Moroccan passport does not open as many doors as a Canadian passport. Traveling with a Moroccan passport means systematically having to ask for a visa to get out of the country and depends on the good will of the foreign embassies to evaluate whether travel is allowed or not and to determine for how long one can do so. It is not

surprising to note that parents living in Morocco had a pragmatic view on the transmission of nationality. Many of their children obtained a foreign passport right after birth.

We should state that the majority of the mixed families we interviewed in the Moroccan context were engaged in an intense transnational life:

We speak to each other on the Internet. I speak to my mother a lot more than she speaks to my sister who lives only five minutes away from her. She says to me: 'I know a lot more about what's going on with you (in Morocco) than I do with your sister'. They call me fairly frequently. We speak to each other five, six times a week.

(Patricia, Haitian-Canadian woman, married to a Moroccan man, one child)

Not only did they maintain frequent links with the family of the immigrant parent (telephone, letters, social media) but also travelled abroad frequently to visit their family. The geographical proximity of Morocco to Europe and the existence of low-cost travel certainly eased this mobility. But we also met some Moroccan-Canadian and Moroccan-American families who travelled to North America every summer to visit their family. Three families never travelled to the country of origin of the foreign parent, but these cases were relatively rare in our sampling. A war-affected country, geographical distance and/or lack of sufficient economic resources were the reasons why these families did not or only rarely visited their families abroad. These families transmitted their Vietnamese, Senegalese and Iranian nationalities to their children, but it was much more for symbolic than pragmatic reasons. Obtaining a foreign nationality was not only a strategy to maintain transnational links but also a resource to strengthen their desire to transmit multiple affiliations to their offspring. It is important to stress that behind the pragmatic view on nationality, the majority of the parents in mixed couples also wanted to transmit both nationalities for their symbolic meaning. We previously mentioned that the representations of home of foreign-born partners in mixed couples residing in Morocco refers to mobile and plural affective bonds (Therrien, 2013).

In Quebec as well, many couples travelled regularly to the immigrant partner's country during holiday times. Some returned every year or every two or three years (especially those who live outside Montreal), and others less frequently. Since most couples were at the beginning of their working lives and sometimes parents of several young children, not all had the resources to travel regularly. For Francis and his wife, the difficulty of seeing their extended family in Gabon was mainly due to the high cost of travel. Despite Francis' intense ties to his mother, he had only been to Gabon once in the last ten years. He travelled with his child because his wife was not able to accompany them for economic reasons, as she explains:

It's three thousand dollars a ticket, so we tightened our belt so that he could go with our son at least, so that his mother could see her grandson.

(Lucie, Quebecer woman married to a Gabonese Man, one child)

In addition to the economic precariousness of some parents, poverty in some of the countries of origin of the immigrant parent, as well as armed conflict or political instability, also prevented couples from travelling. In part to remedy these difficulties, couples organised to receive visits from their loved ones, either on a regular basis or during a particular event such as a birth.

Most couples maintained contact with the family abroad via the Internet, telephone and mail on a regular basis and communicated on a weekly or even daily basis in many cases. For example, in addition to visiting Mexico annually for a couple of weeks, Luisa and her spouse, two professionals who met in Quebec and were parents of three young children under the age of six, communicated weekly with the family in Mexico. Even when grandparents and the extended family are far away, they are involved in the transmission of languages, religions and traditions. Several couples, especially those who have met abroad, cherished the idea of eventually living in the country of origin of the immigrant partner. Depending on the situation, this project could be for sooner or for later. They planned to move once their financial situation was stable or when the political climate in the country of the migrant partner had changed.

The fact that the child 'has two countries' was seen as an advantage for most parents. Several parents mentioned that if one day their child decides to live in the 'other' country, he/she will already know some of the traditions as well as its language. However, not all parents made the decision to pass on a second nationality to the child. Most couples considered Canadian citizenship to be sufficient, since the Canadian passport makes it easy to travel around the world. In some cases, the requirement of military service for boys in the other country was a good reason not to take things further. This coincides with what Fresnoza-Flot (2018) observed in her study of mixed families in the Belgian context. All partners from immigrant backgrounds had Canadian citizenship, acquired either by birth (those born in Canada), or after they moved to Quebec (those who had migrated).

Conclusion

The comparison between Morocco and Quebec allowed us to show that national context greatly influences the choices made by the parents, and that the identity transmission process is also strongly impacted by the transnational experience of these mixed families. The role of the place of residence on mixed children's socialisation has been analysed in other studies.

Caballero et al. (2008), for instance, highlighted the impact of the neighbourhood on socialisation practices. In our case, transmission strategies greatly differ because of the different national contexts. The strategy of mixed couples to connect their child with the two sides of their family by negotiating the choice of first name and last name was facilitated by the Quebec legislation but was not found in families in Morocco where the obligation to choose a Moroccan name was rooted in the social rules of paternal filiation. The transmission of bi-nationality was first and foremost seen as pragmatic in Morocco—where a foreign passport gives access to mobility—and more symbolic by the families interviewed in Quebec who did not see it as a necessity. The status of languages, which is connected to the colonial history of the countries, also impacted legislation, educational provision and language transmission. Our results also showed that the different economic and geopolitical positions of these two countries directly influence identity transmission.

The comparison between Morocco and Quebec also enabled us to bring out the similarities between parental identity transmission projects. Beyond the enablers and constraints inherent to the different contexts, these projects had a lot of commonalities. Interestingly, parental identity transmission projects were profoundly cosmopolitan, either in the political context of Quebec that promotes interculturality or in Morocco where legislation preserves the country's Arabo-Islamic character and patriarchal structure. The interviewees in both contexts seem to share a common 'desire for elsewhere' (Therrien, 2013) that explains their willingness to transmit a multiplicity of references and affiliations to their children. Their transmission strategies clearly testified to the diversity of the possible identifications. Through their choices, parents sought not only to offer the child a multiplicity of affiliations, but also to anchor him/her in a contemporary world characterised by intense mobility and an ever-increasing demand for multiple cultural competences (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2010). For example, transmitting English in addition to the languages spoken by parents, the nationality of the country where one does not live, or an international first name (Collet, 2019) are tools envisaged by parents to facilitate their children's future in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. In this regard, the parents in our studies share commonalities with a majority of multiracial parents studied by Song and O'Neill Gutierrez (2015) who engage in parenting practices that emphasise a 'cosmopolitan ethnos'. They also share some common points with some of the parents studied by Caballero et al. who see their children's mixedness as enabling them to be 'citizens of the world', that is 'to fit in or identify with other communities and cultures' (2008, 23). But unlike these parents who do not conceive their children's sense of belonging as necessarily rooted in their cultural heritages, mixed couples in Quebec and Morocco sought to make it easier for their children to live in a globalised world through their concerted efforts to transmit both their cultural backgrounds. In other words, the parenting practices

we observed were a combination of the mixed and the cosmopolitan mode of transmission (Caballero et al., 2008).

Indeed, these families do not live detached from a more global world. By highlighting the impact of globalisation on the formulation of parental projects, our chapter also helps to situate mixedness in a transnational perspective (Chito Childs et al., 2019). The comparison emphasised the fact that the vast majority of parents envision their children's future in a space that extends well beyond the local or national context, both for families living in Morocco and in Quebec. Like other authors who have attested to the parents' desire to maintain contact with the immigrant parent's lineage (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2010; Unterreiner, 2015), we too observed that many ties were maintained with the family in the immigrant's country of origin. However, unlike these authors, we were able to show that these ties have an influence on parental identity projects. Indeed, the comparison between the two national contexts allowed us to show how transnational links not only orient parental projects but also facilitate their application, as illustrated by Le Gall and Meintel (2011). Parents relied on long distance relationships maintained with the family to strengthen the children's sense of belonging. The involvement of the extended family in the socialisation of children—at a distance or through travel—has been observed, particularly in the learning of a language, but also of cultural codes. Thus, the role of the national context and transnational links in children's socialisation practices echoes the notion of 'simultaneity' developed by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) which highlights the interplay between attachment to a country and the development of transnational practices.

Goulbourne et al. (2010, 12) used the concepts of 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital to explain the ability of transnational families to maintain close and significant connections across the boundaries of nation-states. In the case of mixed families, we prefer using the concept of 'trans-bordering' social capital to highlight the ability of parents not only to create and maintain transnational links, but also to use this ability to strengthen their children's sense of belonging to more than one society, while facilitating their transnational mobility. We also highlighted the parents' ability to find strategies to go beyond the symbolic and legal boundaries of the national/social environment that they live in. Based on these findings, we argue that the parents in mixed couples, just like their children—as we observed in our current comparative research on mixed individuals¹¹—are what we could call *border crossers*. They have this capacity to build bridges beyond real and/or symbolic boundaries that arise in or are at the core of their everyday life.

As Chito Childs et al. (2019) highlighted in their study on mixed people's identity, comparing parents' choices within a global framework also allows a better understanding of how ethnicity, culture, class, religion and gender operate in local and national contexts within a global world. Other factors were important in shaping how parents in Morocco and Quebec raised their

children. In Quebec, the parents interviewed were young whereas in Morocco the participants were older and so more established professionally. The intensity of transnational mobility was impacted by their economic capital. The individual trajectories (prior to the couple's formation) seem to have considerable weight in the parental choices, as well as the migratory trajectory of the parents. These aspects could be further explored in future research. Moreover, because children's choices may not necessarily be in line with what has been passed on to them by their parents, further investigation is also needed into how being trained for transnationalism (Nyíri, 2014) and growing up as multicultural (Slany & Strzemecka, 2017) impacts mixed individuals' identifications and social perception of mixedness.

Notes

- 1 In Canada, the provinces are sub-divided into regions. Greater Montreal is the most populous metropolitan area in Quebec.
- 2 Immigrants make up 23.4 per cent of Greater Montreal's population (MIDI, 2019).
- 3 Quebec's school system consists of four levels: preschool, elementary and secondary, college and university education. There are no restrictions on who can attend an English adult education centre, college (CEGEP) or university in Quebec. Under certain conditions it is possible for some children to attend an English school.
- 4 In 2016, 21 per cent of Montreal's population spoke at least three languages, twice as many as in Toronto and Vancouver (Nadeau, 2018).
- 5 For a long time, the Catholic church had great influence on Quebec's economic and social life. However, the clergy was removed from the management of most social institutions in the 1960s, a time of radical transformation known as the 'Quiet Revolution'.
- 6 General Population and Housing Census, Kingdom of Morocco (2014). https://rgph2014.hcp.ma/downloads/Resultats-RGPH-2014_t18649.html.
- 7 Placed under protectorate in the north and the south by Spain and in the middle by France, Morocco gained independence in 1956.
- 8 Before 2007, the Nationality Code forbade Moroccan women from transmitting their nationality to their children.
- 9 'The teaching of the Arabic language will be renovated and strengthened, while making it compulsory for all Moroccan children, in all educational institutions operating in Morocco, without prejudice to bilateral agreements governing foreign institutions in Morocco' (Special Education Training Commission 1999, 44).
- 10 Only the two families where the two spouses were Muslim (one where the foreign woman converted to Islam before the couple's formation and one where the foreign man was Muslim from birth) willingly opted for Muslim first names.
- 11 <http://identiteplurielle.com/>.

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