Article

Changing from Visibility to Invisibility—An Intersectional Perspective on Mixedness in Switzerland and Morocco

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Abstract: In the context of intermarriage, mixedness can take different forms. Most often, it refers to a mix of class, religion, nationality, ethnicity or 'race' in a couple. In this article, I go beyond a separate analysis of categories, analyzing the interrelation of these factors. The article discusses how and under which circumstances mixed children become visible in Switzerland and Morocco using a comparative and intersectional approach to mixedness. Based on 23 biographical narrative interviews, I analyze three situations of stigmatization: racialization, language practices and othering due to religious affiliation. Stigmatization processes due to mixedness, it is argued, are a relational phenomenon depending not only on markers such as 'race', ethnicity and religion but also on their interplay with gender, class, language and biographical experiences. The results suggest that mixed individuals have found creative ways to navigate their visibility: they normalize their binational origin, look for alternative spaces of belonging, emphasize their 'Swiss-ness' or 'Moroccan-ness', use languages to influence their social positioning or acquire knowledge about their binational origin in order to confront stigmatizations. The study reveals further that processes of othering due to mixedness are not only an issue in 'Western' societies that look back on a long history of immigration and have pronounced migration discourses. Even in Morocco, a country where immigration has so far been a marginal phenomenon, the importance of social hierarchies for the positioning of people of binational origin is evident.

Keywords: mixedness; stigmatization; biography; Morocco; Switzerland; binational

1. Introduction

Experiences of otherness occur when the perception of the self differs from the perception of others. People of mixed origin whose mixedness is visible (through phenotype, accent, name or religious attributes) are particularly concerned by such processes of othering (Odasso 2016; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021; Unterreiner 2011). In his work, Goffman (1963) shows how 'the other' is constructed as the deviation of 'the normal'. In this sense, mixedness can be understood as a stigma, as it is perceived with mistrust by society as something 'abnormal', which does not conform to dominant social norms. In reference to the 'tribal stigma' of Goffman (1963, p. 4), Odasso (2016) argues that mixedness presents an 'inherited stigma' that is passed from the mixed couple on to the children. The children inherit, so to speak, the stigma of their 'mixed' parents and as a consequence are perceived as 'impure' by society and experience stigmatization in various social situations (Nowicka 2006; Odasso 2016; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021).

For Goffman (1963), a stigma is a social position that has a discrediting effect. It does not describe a character trait of a person but is created in social interactions. Hence, a person can be stigmatized in one context and be considered 'normal' in another. In the context of mixedness, this means that individuals can be categorized as 'the other' in certain situations because of their national or ethnic belonging (see, for example, Nowicka 2006; Odasso 2016), their name (see, for example, Cerchiaro 2019), their 'noticeable accent' (see, for example, Therrien 2020, p. 291), religious affiliation (see, for example, Cerchiaro

2022), their skin color or their appearance (see, for example, Rodríguez-García et al. 2021; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021) while in other situations they may gain social acceptance. In this context, being othered is mainly due to the visibility of one's mixedness.

Different from traditional concepts such as 'the marginal man' (Park 1928; Stonequist 1937) and the assimilation theory (Gordon 1964) that predict a conflict between the different cultural origins of mixed individuals, a growing body of research, within which this study is situated, shows that individuals of mixed origin are not torn between their binational origins but find creative ways to solve this 'identity mismatch' between social ascription and self-identification (Odasso 2016; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021; Unterreiner 2015). These studies demonstrate that identification possibilities of children with multiple affiliations ('mixed race' and 'ethnic identities') depend strongly on the visibility of their mixedness in society. Nevertheless, they remain bounded by an analysis of single categories such as 'race', 'religion' or 'ethnicity' and hardly ever discuss the complex interplay of the multiple lines of differences that mixed individuals experience.[1] Mixedness and its visibility do not exist a priori; they are fluid and highly contextual (Varro 2003). In their respective studies on identifications of mixed individuals in Britain and New York, Aspinall and Song (2013) and Childs et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of an intersectional approach in studies on mixedness. In line with them, I will nuance the discussion to the extent that I will take not only an intersectional but also a comparative perspective to examine the interplay of different dimensions of mixedness, such as 'race', ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, religion and language. Analyzing the biographical experiences of binational children in Morocco and Switzerland, I will go beyond current studies that analyze 'race', nationality, ethnicity or religion separately by looking at the interrelation of these dimensions with gender, class and language and analyzing how and when mixedness becomes a meaningful difference (for a similar approach, see Cerchiaro 2022). Mixedness is thus understood 'as an *intersectional term*' (Collet 2017, p. 149). By adopting an intersectional approach (Davis 2014), it will be possible to analyze how and under which circumstances mixedness becomes visible and when it may fade and become invisible.

The comparative approach focusing on Switzerland and Morocco further highlights how specific contexts and social markers influence the (in)visibility of mixedness. The different geopolitical position, the national and migration history influence the social construction of the 'other' in the two contexts: While in Switzerland, an assumed 'cultural distance' is a main line of social difference (Riaño 2011; Wimmer 2004); in Morocco, 'race' and class are crucial for the social positioning of people (Khrouz 2019; Mouna 2016). Nevertheless, these social hierarchies are not static but fluid (Gilliéron 2022; Therrien 2020). As Phoenix (2006) argued, categories of differentiation have to be reconstructed empirically in order to contextualize them historically and socially. They are not the same everywhere, nor do they have the same dynamic in different situations (Gilliéron 2021). Moreover, they may even change their significance over a lifetime (Gilliéron 2022). It is thus 'important to investigate diversity in the context of power relations and analyze in detail which of all possible differential facets makes the difference, creates unequal identities' (Lutz 2014, p. 13).

Based on 23 biographical narrative interviews with individuals of binational origin in Switzerland and Morocco, this article discusses how visible mixedness may become invisible in certain situations and vice versa. As such, stigmatization processes due to mixedness, it is argued, are a relational phenomenon depending not only on markers such as 'race', ethnicity and religion but also on their intersection with gender, class, language and biographical experiences. Moreover, the article highlights that processes of othering due to mixedness are not only an issue in 'Western' societies such as Switzerland that look back on a long history of immigration and have pronounced migration discourses. Even in Morocco, a country where immigration has so far been a marginal phenomenon, the importance of social hierarchies for the positioning of people of binational origin is evident.

Nonetheless, the results suggest that mixed individuals in both countries find creative ways to navigate their visibility.

In the next section, I will present the method and discuss ethical questions for this kind of study. For the presentation of the results, I will first discuss the social perception of 'the other' in Switzerland and Morocco. Then I will turn to the narratives of the mixed children[2] by discussing three situations of stigmatization—racialization, language practices and othering due to religious affiliation—and how other social dimensions such as national origin, class, gender, social discourses, age and biographical experiences interact in stigmatization processes and influence their visibility and invisibility. And I will show how individuals of mixed origin can influence their visibility and invisibility to a certain degree. In the discussion, the findings are summarized and put in a broader context. Understanding stigmatization as relational, it will be argued, puts forward that visibility and invisibility of mixedness are fluid and may not only change in different situations and national contexts but also over a lifetime.

2. Methods and Data

The following article is based on a study conducted between 2014 and 2019 (Gilliéron 2022). It was conceptualized as an intersectional comparison between Morocco and Switzerland in order to shed light on social conditions and national discourses (Unterreiner 2015) and the influence of social positioning (Anthias 2009) on the experiences of mixed children in different localities. For this purpose, 23 biographical narrative interviews were conducted (Schütze 2016), 15 in Switzerland and 8 in Morocco. The interviewees were between 16 and 28 years old at the time of the interview. Their mixedness was defined according to the binational origin of the parents, meaning that interviewees have one native parent and one migrant parent. The individuals were recruited based on the social perception of otherness in the two countries, which is mainly structured along the ethno-national origin. In both countries, processes of othering are fueled by assumptions about cultural differences based on physical traits (see Section 3.1). Thus, the migrant parents of the mixed children were from Europe (three in Switzerland and five in Morocco[3]), Asia (two in Switzerland and one in Morocco), Africa (four in Switzerland and two in Morocco), South America (three in Switzerland), Caribbean (one in Switzerland) and the MENA Region (two in Switzerland). Women were slightly overrepresented in the interview sample (five men and ten women in Switzerland, and five men and three women in Morocco).

The gathered life stories were analyzed following the narrative analysis of Schütze (2016) in order to reconstruct experiences of othering and how the individuals negotiate (non-)belonging at different stages in their life. Hence, I was interested in how the individuals themselves give sense to their mixed origin and integrate it into their biography. The analysis was combined with an intersectional analysis (Davis 2014; Lutz 2014), aiming to compare the experiences of mixed children and going beyond a comparison of national and cultural categories. Although mixedness was defined by the binational origin, it is important to note that the meaning of mixedness for the individuals was analyzed case by case; hence, it was asked in which contexts and in which biographical situations the binational origin or other dimensions of mixedness such as 'race', ethnicity/culture, language, class or religion became a structuring dimension. For this reason, I use the term 'mixed' in the following and not 'binational' because the most salient difference for the individuals was rarely the national origin but the interplay of different categories that put them in the position of 'the other'.

The narrations were contextualized according to the biographical experiences, social contexts and the working contract in the interview situation, such as trust, shared and divided interests and the shifting power relations between my interview partners and myself. The categories of comparison were not defined beforehand but reconstructed in the interviews using an intersectional approach in order to understand how people of binational origin negotiate (non-)belonging in the two countries. This strategy enabled me to analyze and compare stigmatization processes in Switzerland and Morocco beyond ethnic-national

categories and without essentializing the origin of the individuals but instead focusing on the complex multidimensional process of othering and its biographical effects. For the international comparison, cases were formed along similar experiences with racialization, language, gender, class, visibility and invisibility, and according to stigmatization in different spaces such as schools, family environments and transnational spaces.

The interviewees are all in a crucial phase of their life, during which questions of belonging become relevant (King 2004). According to Vera King (2004), adolescence is not only defined by age but presents first of all a life stage with a particular quality, a 'psychosocial possibility space' (ibid. p. 28). During adolescence, young adults process biographical experiences, social conditions and expectations in order to find their place in society. Hence, identity formation processes are particularly salient in this life stage and influence the interviewees' narratives. Most of the interview partners were in the transition from school to work life: 11 were on the way to graduate from secondary school (six in Switzerland and one in Morocco) or were doing an apprenticeship (four in Switzerland), 9 interviewees had just started university (four in Switzerland and five in Morocco) and only three persons were already employed (one in Switzerland and two in Morocco).

Further, the interviews were conducted in regions that reflect some particular dynamics—the German part of Switzerland and the capital of Morocco, Rabat. In the Swiss-German region, I observed a restrictive and conservative discourse on immigration compared to the more liberal French-speaking part of Switzerland. Rabat has an international flair, as embassies and international organizations have their headquarters in the city. As a result, different from other Moroccan cities, in Rabat, it is common to hear French or English in public places, and people are used to a degree of multiculturality in the population.

Finally, my own social positioning in the two contexts must also be considered since it influenced how the mixed children presented themselves. In Switzerland, I am a native, white researcher without a visible migration background; in Morocco, I am in the position of a privileged European migrant. I was part of othering processes because I addressed my interview partners too as 'others' and worth researching. At the same time, this positioning allowed me to see how mixed individuals manage their stigma in the interactions.[4] The interview partners in Switzerland underlined their Swiss origin and distanced themselves from stereotypes about migrants by demonstrating how 'Swiss' they were. In Morocco, however, they mentioned more often experiences of othering and frequently referred to me, the white European, as someone who was also perceived as an outsider in Moroccan society.

3. Results

3.1. The Construction of the Other in Switzerland and Morocco

Switzerland, which is situated in central Europe, has become an immigration country during the last century, with 38 percent of residents with a so-called migration background, according to the national census in 2020. Since the twentieth century, its policy has been characterized by an increasingly restrictive attitude against migrants. Although a multilingual country, national identity is constructed around the assumption of a homogeneous Swiss culture (Duemmler 2015; Riaño 2011; Wimmer 2004). Migration is mainly seen as a problem and a danger to national cohesion. There is a strong assimilation discourse where culture, ethnicity and religion are the most important categories of social difference (Dahinden et al. 2012). In the social perception, therefore, an assumed 'cultural distance' rather than nationality defines 'the other'.[5] This means the more 'foreign' a family's culture is perceived, the more salient othering processes are.

Stolz (2000, p. 290) observes that 'the other' is increasingly equated with a non-Western European origin. Further, with the criminalization of Islam, Muslims are now perceived as the 'unassimilable other' (Jain 2018, p. 60). Like people of color, they are exposed to processes of othering and discrimination. The idea of the 'cultural distance' has increasingly constructed people with non-European origins, Muslims and non-white people as 'abnormal' who have to prove that they are 'worthy' Swiss citizens. This is also

true for the children of mixed origin who are repeatedly challenged to position themselves clearly in relation to their origins and to highlight their 'Swiss-ness'. Their 'in-between positioning' is seen as a challenge to the idea of the assumed homogeneous and cultural national community.

In contrast, in Morocco, perceptions of the other are strongly linked to postcolonial contexts. After the country acquired its independence from France in 1956[6], national cohesion was defined around the idea of an Arab and Muslim[7] ancestor, with the king as the political and religious leader of the country (Wyrtzen 2016). This construction of the national identity is significant for the processes of social demarcation since the foreigner is evaluated in relation to religious and ethnic origins (Beck 2015).[8]

Long considered an emigration country, Morocco has experienced a transformation of migratory movements since the 1990s (Khrouz and Lanza 2015; Mourji et al. 2016). Thanks to the country's economic stability, there has been significant immigration from other Maghreb countries, but also from Europeans and returning Moroccans. With the closure of European borders, Morocco has further become a host country for migrants from West and Central Africa on their way to Europe (de Wenden 2013). Moreover, the Kingdom's political rapprochement with other African countries has led to an increase in labor and study migration (Khrouz and Lanza 2015). In 2015, according to the World Bank, 0.3 percent of the population were migrants, the highest rate since colonization. This transformation of the migratory landscape is also manifested in the social perception of 'the other'. Mouna notes that the two major recent migratory movements—from the West and from the sub-Saharan region—have led to 'a double perception' of the migrant population (Mouna 2016, p. 114). While migration from Central and West Africa is perceived as a migration of the poor to Europe, migration from the Americas, Canada and Europe is linked to 'life projects and new experiences' (ibid.). This perception of the other is structured along racial and religious categorizations and leads to a social hierarchy between the different groups. Due to postcolonial relations, migrants from the global North experience an equal or higher social status in Morocco, which puts them in an equivalent or even privileged situation compared to Moroccans (Mouna 2016; Therrien 2020). In the media, they are often not described as immigrants but as expats, referring not only to their privileges but also to a non-problematic migration (Khrouz 2019). This said, migrants from Central and West Africa are primarily marked as 'black' having a lower social status than Moroccans, although they often share the same religion (Timéra 2011). The media presents them as poor and illegal migrants stranded in Morocco on their way to Europe (Khrouz 2019). They are perceived as inferior to Moroccans and often experience discrimination. While in Switzerland the perception of immigrants and their descendants has been broadly studied, in Morocco they are still an understudied phenomenon (Gilliéron 2020). Therrien (2020) emphasizes that in Morocco, the perception of mixedness is a complex process interacting with phenotype, gender, class and language.

3.2. (In)Visibility of Mixedness and Its Influence on the Experiences of Binational Children

Othering and stigmatization due to a mixed origin can occur at different times in life but seem to be particularly relevant in adolescence. In the transition from childhood to adulthood, questions of belonging become salient, and peer groups are important resources to overcome insecurities and crises (King 2004). The individuals I met generally expressed a strong will to be part of the dominant group – represented by their peers – and developed different strategies to overcome processes of othering. However, there is a big difference between the possibilities for visible and invisible 'mixed' individuals (Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021; Therrien 2020). Invisibility in Switzerland concerns individuals of 'white' European descent, while in Morocco, individuals of Arabic descent are perceived as similar and thus mostly pass as invisible. In both countries, it is whiteness and the assumed 'cultural proximity' that lead to an invisibilization of mixedness. These 'invisible' mixed individuals tend to be able to choose whether or not to show their origins in an interaction. Brigit Richard,[9] who is of Swiss-Irish descent, expresses this vividly:

Birgit: [...] but I want them to know that I have Irish roots and I am not a Swiss cheese. ((laughing)) Well, you know what I mean.

I: Yes

B: It sounds more interesting, let's say it that way.

Birgit's mixed origin is not visible at first sight, but she likes to mention her Irish heritage in order to stand out from the masses. The Irish origin 'sounds more interesting' and is generally well perceived. The mixed origin can still be subject to negotiation in these cases, but more as a private matter. In contrast, mixed children who are 'visible' and discredited on the basis of 'race', name, accent or other visible or audible traits need to relate to their origins in social and public contexts. In the following, I will focus my analysis on these cases, on binational individuals who repeatedly experience situations of non-recognition of their belongings. They develop stigma management in order to negotiate the tensions between the ascribed identity and their self-identification(s). Goffman (1963) shows how stigmatized individuals strive to appear 'normal' by three techniques: passing (e.g., deceiving about the stigma), information control (e.g., concealing or eliminating the stigmatizing trait) or covering (e.g., downplaying or emphasizing the stigma). With the help of this analytical framework, I will show how mixed children find creative ways to make their stigmatizing traits invisible and become part of mainstream society. For this, we will look at three situations of stigmatization and how mixed children manage them: (1) racialization, (2) language practices and (3) othering due to religious affiliation.

3.2.1. Finding Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Racialization

'Race' is a powerful category of stigmatization in Switzerland as well as in Morocco. Racialized mixed individuals hardly pass as members of the majority society. Their physical traits such as skin color, hair or eye shape constantly lead to experiences of othering. Hence, these individuals share the experience of growing up with the awareness of being different. They can never be sure how they are classified and to what extent 'race' plays a role in interactions. '[N]ot knowing what the others present are "really" thinking about him [or her]' (Goffman 1963, p. 14) is a typical challenge for racialized individuals. The experience of being othered is a biographical condition that they have learned to deal with. However, their stigma management is very different in the two contexts.

Resisting the Either-or-Structure—Racialized Mixed Children in Switzerland

In Switzerland, 'mixed' children who experience racialization have developed a pragmatic attitude toward othering processes. One interview partner, Irina Steiner, who is of Guadeloupian-Swiss origin, said that othering processes 'just have always belonged to me'. She grew up with her Swiss mother and was adopted by her new partner when Irian was four. She met her biological father from Guadeloupe only at the age of 10 and has seen him three times since. Although she feels Swiss herself and has no personal ties to Guadeloupe, she has to deal with her binational origin and constantly needs to explain her 'difference' to others. This is a delicate act for Irina as she hardly knows anything about her 'other' origin and has to do her own research in order to understand and react to processes of othering.

Racialized individuals can hardly establish an unquestionable belonging to Switzerland but have to opt for the compromised position of the in-between, as another interview partner described:

Sara: I would say that I feel like I belong more to Switzerland [...] but you're just never seen as that by others, because you just don't look the same. So, you know yourself that you're not one hundred percent that. [. . .] That's why you identify with the two places.

Sara Bhumibol is a girl in her twenties and of Thai-Swiss origin. Although she is multilingual—German, English and Thai—she does not feel legitimate identifying as Thai because, according to her, she 'does not understand enough' about Thai culture. She 'belongs more to Switzerland' but is not perceived in this way. She feels an ambivalence between the ascribed identity and her self-identification that she cannot dissolve.

Racialized individuals such as Sara and Irina have to learn to deal with the visibility of their mixedness. It is a visibility they have not chosen and which only exists because of racialization. In the narration about their mixedness, these individuals tend to reduce their stigma by emphasizing their Swiss ancestry, their Swiss-German mother tongue or their 'Swiss' socialization and position themselves in-between. In the case mentioned above, Sara Bhumibol distances herself from migrant children by referring to her Swiss grandparents and her mother tongue, which is why, according to her, '[Swiss] people [...] can still identify with me'. For Sara, her Swiss ancestry, thus, leads to more acceptance of her mixedness. This stigma management is based on the strategy of covering (Goffman 1963), as she normalizes the binational origin by emphasizing her 'Swiss-ness' to achieve belonging. It is a strategy that almost all of the racialized individuals in my Swiss sample choose, which suggests that they cannot escape othering due to 'race' but only deflect attention from it. Positioning themselves in-between appears to be a compromise in order to reduce the ambivalences of their mixedness. By highlighting how 'Swiss' they are, mixed children may reproduce discursive images; yet this practice can be read also as a resistance since they resist the exclusion as 'other' and try to interpret and organize themselves as meaningful within the binary either-or structures (Scharathow 2014, p. 431).

Finding Niches of Belonging—Racialized Mixed Children in Morocco

Unlike in Switzerland, racialized individuals in Morocco do not position themselves in an in-between space but find alternative spaces of belonging. In fact, they look for 'niches' where their 'race' is perceived as less salient. The case of Abdoulaye Eden, who is of West African-Moroccan origin, is particularly emblematic of this dynamic. He grew up in a working-class neighborhood with his parents until the age of 15, when his mother died of a stroke, and he went to his father's country of origin to continue his studies. After graduation, he went back to Morocco and enrolled at the university where he was working toward a PhD at the time of the interview. There, he has gained an awareness of the social hierarchy in Moroccan society and his position within it:

> Abdoulaye: [...] you can even see Moroccans who are black. So, the only distinction between them and me is in the name. In the first name. you see? My name is Abdoulaye, so when I meet a group of people who don't have a culture that's a little bit open, who aren't open, I introduce myself as Abdullah. [...] and at a certain time [in my life]. I even considered myself as a black Moroccan, a Sahrawi, because my mother is Sahrawi but there you go.

Morocco has a black minority that gives Abdoulaye the possibility of identification when he adapts his name to Abdullah. By changing his name, he finds a 'niche' where the stigma of being perceived as 'black' loses its power. He can now pass as a Sahrawi and hence as a Moroccan. Nevertheless, it is a strategy he uses only as a last resort when he meets with people 'who aren't open' to his binational origin. Most of the time, he is surrounded by people who know him and his family origin. To surround oneself with 'open-minded' friends or other mixed individuals is a tactic that I observe in most cases in Morocco, but to a lesser degree in Switzerland. It seems that in Morocco, finding 'niches' is the only way for racialized individuals to escape the daily processes of othering.

A similar strategy is to look for international schools and universities where mixedness is more common and accepted. Abdoulaye reports that at university, he even experiences his mixedness as an advantage because it has helped him to get good grades, as French—his second language—is the main language in class. This strategy is possible in general for mixed children of a higher social class. In the international educational settings, their mixedness fades as they meet with other 'mixed' individuals and Moroccans of the upper social class, a social group whose lifestyle is oriented toward Europe (Therrien and Le Gall 2017). These examples suggest that mixed individuals in Morocco tend to divide their social world into two groups (Goffman 1963, p. 113): one where they are 'the other' and stigmatized because of their mixed origin, and the second, made up of more mixed environments, where they do not suffer from othering.

White Privileges?—Experiences of Othering of Mixed Children of European Descent in Morocco

Further, in the context of Morocco, individuals of European-Moroccan origin constitute a special case of visibility as they are, in general, well-perceived by Moroccans and experience a privileged status (see also Therrien 2020). This is linked to the postcolonial context in which France and, more generally, Europe are imaginary spaces of possibilities and new perspectives (Mouna 2016). In everyday life, these individuals can easily find 'European cultural' spaces outside of their nuclear family and international school, such as restaurants or some neighborhoods in Rabat where they can switch between Arabic and French.

Although mixed children who are positioned as 'white' may not have discrediting experiences due to their skin color, they do experience othering that can turn to stigmatization in certain situations (Khanna and Johnson 2010). They report stereotypes that bother them: having a good financial situation, living in a decent neighborhood and thus not knowing the 'real' Morocco. In these situations, whiteness, in conjunction with class, becomes a visible marker of difference for mixed children of European descent.

For Nadine Bourras, who is of Southern European-Moroccan origin, for example, being perceived as European is a burden. She grew up in Morocco in difficult financial circumstances. This contradicts the social expectations of being a well-off 'white' European, and Nadine experiences discredit by her peers in the private school she attends (bullying), among her Moroccan relatives (distrust), and in everyday interactions on the street:

> *Nadine: In the street, I had a bit of trouble, I felt a bit rejected because people saw me as a foreigner. [...] in the cab for example when I said that I was Moroccan and that I didn't speak Arabic very well [...]. They said to me 'what do you mean?! You are Moroccan, and you don't speak Arabic?! It's not normal!' well why? [...] So ... I felt a bit like a foreigner here.*

Moreover, she does not speak Moroccan Arabic and feels constrained within Moroccan norms as a girl, which reinforces her feeling of exclusion. Nadine is perceived as a 'foreigner' everywhere and can hardly establish a sense of belonging to Morocco. The intersection of 'race' with class and gender leads to experiences of stigmatization. Nadine feels confined to the margins of Moroccan society but also in the country of origin of her migrant mother and in France, where she studies at the time of the interview. As a consequence, she looks for alternative spaces of belonging (or niches such as in the example above) and even considers moving to a third country where her feeling of being a foreigner would at least be reflected by her actual status.

The other mixed children of European descent with similar experiences may rather adopt a strategy of covering (Goffman 1963, p. 102) in order to minimize their stigma—being considered as a privileged European—and be socially accepted. They try to emphasize their 'Moroccan-ness' by learning Moroccan Arabic, speaking Moroccan slang or actively looking for friends 'below' their social class.

3.2.2. Becoming (In)Visible through Language Practices

Language use within the mixed families of my sample was slightly different in the two countries. In Morocco, not all individuals I met spoke the local Moroccan dialect[10], but most of them spoke the foreign language of their migrant parent. In Switzerland, on the contrary, all spoke fluent Swiss German, but only a few considered themselves bilingual. In both countries, language seems to be an important tool to create belonging, especially for racialized individuals. While racial categorizations can hardly be changed by the racialized individuals, language can influence their effects (Valentine et al. 2008) and ease stigmatization. In this way, language practices become 'part of the performance or doing of identity' (ibid., p. 385). This dynamic is slightly different for Switzerland and Morocco.

Facing a Monolingual Habitus in Switzerland

In Switzerland, stigmatization is often linked to the prejudice that mixed children are migrants that do not know Swiss German or the 'Swiss' culture. Binational individuals reported that speaking their second language was forbidden in school or that the language of their migrant parent is of 'no use', as Sara Bhumibol in the above-mentioned case argues about Thai. Due to the essentialist discourse on belonging in Switzerland, speaking a language other than the local dialect carries the risk of othering and stigmatization. Multilingualism is accordingly a visible marker of difference that is negatively connoted.[11] As a result, mixed children tend to have a negative perception of their multilingualism and distance themselves from it in order to be less visible as 'others'.

Having no foreign accent may help them emphasize their Swiss origin but will not prevent them from experiencing othering. In this regard, Irina Steiner, of Guadeloupe-Swiss origin, told me that she occasionally simulates a phone call in Swiss German to show passengers on the train that she is 'from here'. In this sense, language serves as a strategy to highlight her Swiss origin. She may turn a first impression around by speaking the local dialect, but as soon as the interaction develops, she is immediately again confronted with othering and asked questions such as 'where are you really from?' and thus, has to find other strategies to emphasize her 'Swiss-ness'.[12] 'Race' still trumps language, but the latter may mitigate the experience of othering.

Entering Contexts of Belonging through Practices of Language in Morocco

Unlike in Switzerland, multilingualism in Morocco is widely acknowledged and seen as a resource. Nevertheless, language is a strong marker of difference in daily interactions. Binational children told me that language practices place them within or outside Moroccan society. Again, I would like to cite the emblematic case of Abdoulaye:

> *Every time someone is confused about me, they come and talk in French. They speak to me badly. And as soon as I say a word in Arabic dang! All of a sudden I get much more respect [. . .] and they apologizes [. . .] Initially they'll assume you are a foreigner but as soon as you speak a word in Arabic dang! you are part of the Moroccan people. Whether you're black or not you are one of them.*

As we have seen before, Abdoulaye changes his name to establish belonging. Nevertheless, he can also use language as a strategy to create possibilities of belonging. Speaking the local dialect, he can shift the initial discredited positioning due to 'race' ('they speak to me badly'). Not only changing his name but also his language, thus, help him to alleviate his stigma of being 'the other' and to establish belonging. It is a strategy he uses manly when he meets new people. In this way he can anticipate their prejudices and often receives social recognition for knowing the local dialect.

In Morocco, language is an important marker for belonging as people assume that foreigners will not learn the local dialect but speak French. As soon as someone speaks the local dialect, people assume that they are of Moroccan descent. As a consequence, some mixed children who have not learned Arabic at home or in school invest a lot of energy to learn it on their own.[13]

In addition to the differentiation through language, however, I also observe that mixed children in Morocco learn to play with their language skills and, in this way, to influence how they are perceived. John Bayad, who is of Eastern European-Moroccan origin, for example, speaks French in order to attain a privileged status at his workplace and Arabic when he wants to be included among his Moroccan peers:

> *John: [Being considered French] helps sometimes . . . In the sense that people may have a higher opinion of me [. . .] they take me more seriously when at first sight I seem to be a foreigner. Yes, for example, I quite often realize that people speak more nicely with me in French.*

In both examples, the two young men use language to gain respect. However, while Abdoulaye achieves this goal by becoming invisible, John uses language to become visible

as a preferred 'other'. This difference relates to their different positions in the racial hierarchy and associated opportunities in Morocco. Nevertheless, mixed children of European and of West African descent similarly experience language as an empowering tool. They switch between their origins, adapting to their environment through language practices. As such, it can be argued that they have learned to play with social ascriptions and know how to use them for their purpose.

The situation is slightly different for one young man of Asian descent, who is 'perceived as the absolute otherness' (Therrien 2020, p. 283). Here, language is an important resource too, although not in the way one might expect. For Kamal Suharto, who is of Asian-Moroccan origin, it is not the local dialect or French but English that turns his binational origin less salient as a marker of difference. Regarding this dynamic, he argues: 'they have never seen an Asian person or a mixed person who can speak Darija [the Moroccan dialect] before'. Although he speaks the Moroccan dialect without an accent, he prefers to speak English in public because being seen as a foreigner at first sight is less harmful to him than constantly being seen 'as something extra-natural'. Speaking English opens up an in-between space (Bhabha 1994) in which Kamal's Asian-Moroccan origin becomes blurred. While he elicits astonishment when he speaks the Moroccan dialect, he can situate himself in an indefinable, socially privileged (middle-class or globalized) space by speaking English. English is an international language that is not immediately associated with a specific national origin and offers, in this sense, a space of possibility that allows Kamal to present his personality without being reduced to his 'Asian' origin.

These examples suggest that the language practices of mixed children in Morocco follow different aims. Depending on where they are situated in the racial hierarchy and how it intersects with class, they have different possibilities to influence othering processes. Yet, in both national context language seems to serve a strategy of 'passing' (Goffman 1963) in order to establish belonging.

3.2.3. Religion as an (Un)Visible Marker?

Besides 'race', religion is another crucial marker of difference that is often discussed in studies on mixedness (Cerchiaro et al. 2015; Odasso 2016; Rodríguez-García et al. 2016; Therrien 2020). In the present study, however, it was found that othering due to religion is contextual and can change over time. In contrast to studies on binational couples in Morocco, where religious mixedness is addressed as a symbolic boundary crossing (Mouna 2016; Therrien 2014, 2020), I found that religion was not a salient marker of difference for the interviewed individuals. This finding may be explained by the fact that most of the interviewees are considered Muslims because they have a Moroccan parent or a migrant father who converted to Islam. Islam is passed down to children through the father. In order to recognize marriage under Moroccan law, men of non-Muslim faith must convert when marrying a Moroccan woman.[14] In this context, religious belonging may become 'invisible' for mixed children in Morocco, it is a private issue that is not questioned by others and hardly contributes to processes of stigmatization (as long as religious (non-)affiliation is not visible through attributes or practice). However, there was one young man who reported being called 'nsrani'—Christian—in the new neighborhood into which his family moved. Yet, this changed as soon as he learned the Moroccan dialect and was included in a peer group. It seems that he did not so much experience discredit as joking quips pointing to the European origin of his mother. He grew up in a non-religious household but is considered Muslim by law due to his Moroccan father. In the other cases, religion was hardly mentioned as a site of differentiation. When it came up in the interviews, it was more about a personal reflection on one's own religious references.

Becoming Visible—The Case of Mixed Children of Arab Descent in Switzerland

In Switzerland, in contrast, religion is an important dimension of difference for mixed children. Most saliently, this was the case for the mixed children of Arab descent. Like in other European countries (Cerchiaro 2020; Odasso 2016), they have experienced a change

in the perception of their mixedness during the last decades: Muslims have become the prototype of 'the other' in the migration discourse after the events of 9/11 (Duemmler 2015). In order to show how this affected the possibilities of mixed children, we will turn to the case of Leyla Bourgiba, who is of Tunisian-Swiss origin. Leyla is in her twenties, has blond hair and blue eyes and speaks unaccented Swiss German: her mixedness is thus invisible at first sight. She was born in 1994 in a little village and 'was always considered Swiss', as she puts it. However, this changed when she entered high school in 2006, and her classmates started to address her as Muslim:

> *Leyla: I was always considered Swiss. Only later, in high school, they did ask me 'but you're from Tunisia, why aren't you wearing a headscarf?'*

Leyla is proud of her Tunisian origin. She always knew she had 'two homelands', but the questioning of her peers troubled her. This was the first time that her Arab origin triggered religious prejudices. Leyla's experience of stigmatization is further strongly linked to gender.[15] As a teenager, Leyla was addressed not only as a Muslim but as an Arab *woman* and confronted with stereotypes of oppressed women and forced marriage. In this sense, Leyla experienced double stigmatization during adolescence: as a Muslim and as a woman. The intersection of gender, religion and nationality led to increased visibility and hence vulnerability.

The change in discourse has thus changed the ascribed identity of binational individuals of Arab descent, putting the religious affiliation in the forefront before the ethnic and the national one, which also has an impact on their self-identification (Odasso 2016). Although Leyla feels Swiss and Tunisian, Christian and Muslim, her multiple affiliations are not recognized by the Swiss society. The continuing negative discourse about Arabs and Islam challenged her to an 'inner' confrontation with her religious origins. At the age of 17, Leyla decided to turn to Islam. She met with other Arab peers, learned Arabic and how to pray and started to fast during Ramadan. In this process, she felt 'more and more Tunisian and more and more a Muslim'. Her new positioning is nevertheless not that unambiguous. At the same time, she emphasizes her Christian heritage from her mother's side and notes that, ultimately, both religions are quite similar. Leyla is also at a crucial age where questions of belonging are very present (King 2004). In this light, her religious quest may also reflect a search for stability and belonging. For this, she needs to 'recombine religious symbols' (Cerchiaro 2020, p. 515) in order to manage stigmatization.

The case of Leyla exemplifies how religion can suddenly turn into a visible marker when the social perception of 'the other' changes. Intersecting with gender (being a woman) and age (being an adolescent), the new perception as Muslim led to a quest of origin in order to confront this new experience of stigmatization. In her case, it results in a strategy of 'information control' (Goffman 1963) which is characterized by the choice of one membership and the denial—or at least invisibilization—of the other, although Leyla feels connected to multiple religions and nationalities.[16]

4. Discussion

The space of possibilities for mixed children is structured by the (in)visibility of their mixedness. In line with recent critical studies on mixedness (such as Cerchiaro 2022; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021), the article demonstrates that depending on the constellation of their mixedness, they have different social positions and thus different scopes of action to establish belonging. In other words, visibility leads to different degrees of choice and hence, to different strategies to overcome stigmatization. My results suggest that the more visible their mixedness, the more contested the affiliation of these individuals, and the more pronounced the biographical negotiations they engage with to manage stigmatization (see also Gilliéron 2022).

Nevertheless, the presented cases illustrate that being 'visible' and thus discredited or 'invisible' and thus discreditable are not stable but fluid positions (Goffman 1963, p. 41ff). They can change from one situation to another over the course of a lifetime, and most importantly, mixed children can themselves influence their position in different ways.

I have looked at three situations of othering in more detail: racialization (1), language practices (2) and religion (3).

Racialization processes turn certain mixed children 'visible' and hence they have to learn to deal with everyday stigmatization (Goffman 1963, p. 48). Although they identify as Swiss or Moroccan, they have to react to their social perception as others, and, at the same time, they have to find strategies to highlight that they belong to Switzerland or Morocco, respectively.

In Switzerland, racialized mixed children tend to adopt a 'strategy of covering' (Goffman 1963, p. 102ff) when they normalize the particularity of their mixedness. By emphasizing their 'Swiss-ness' they try to make their multiple affiliations invisible and thereby become 'normal' in the sense of Goffman. It is thus a strategy to establish belonging. This stigma management is due to the strong and essentialist discourse on belonging in Switzerland that leaves little space to position oneself beyond it. As Aspinall (2020) argues in the context of Britain, the discourse of belonging and its terminology influence the possibilities of self-identification for 'mixed' children. Not having terms to describe their lifeworld, they have to use the discursive categories around them. Nevertheless, in positioning themselves in an in-between space, they create their own space of belonging and in this way challenge the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' (Al-Rebholz 2014). It is a form of resistance against the demand of unambiguity.

For Morocco, the results suggest that racialized mixed children engage more in a 'strategy of passing' (Goffman 1963, p. 73ff) by looking for already established 'niches' of belonging where their difference is less salient. According to their social positioning and individual resources (language, class, social network), they choose to integrate international contexts (private schools, international universities), establish affiliation to a specific minority group (for example, the Sahrawi minority) or—in the particular case of Rabat—to the French community. This dynamic indicates that different from Switzerland in Morocco, there is no discursive space such as hyphenated identities, half-half constructions or the like to choose from for their self-presentation. Rather, they have to position themselves within the either-or-structure, between Moroccan or non-Moroccan. Thus, they look for spaces in which their mixedness loses its significance or adapt their names and language in order to reduce processes of othering.

The results show further for the case of Morocco that 'race' can interlink with class or gender and lead to experiences of stigmatization, including for mixed children of European descent positioned as 'white'. In studies on mixedness, class has been an underestimated factor so far. While social mobility can extend the scope of action of mixed children, my results suggest that class can also reinforce experiences of stigmatization when the individuals do not meet the expectation of being well situated and/or do not know the local dialect. In order to keep their agency, these individuals tend to look for alternative spaces of belonging or develop strategies of 'covering' (Goffman 1963, p. 102), downplaying their binational origin or emphasizing their 'Moroccan-ness'. The latter strategy may seem similar to the racialized individuals in Switzerland. However, while in Switzerland, it is a compromised strategy leading to a position in-between, in Morocco, it seems to be a strategy enabling social recognition of the Moroccan belonging.

According to language practices, I have demonstrated how different dynamics develop for mixed children in Morocco and Switzerland. In Switzerland, multilingualism tends to be problematized, whereas, in Morocco, it is the multilingual context that leads to experiences of othering. Therefore, mixed children in Switzerland position themselves rather as monolingual in order to be able to establish belonging, especially if the other language has no social prestige.

This said, in Morocco, and more particularly in Rabat, mixed children grow up with a certain normality of multilingualism in everyday life: Darija, Arabic and French are used in various circumstances. However, they experience a different social positioning depending on which language they are addressed. This is strongly interlinked with 'race', as shown with the cases of Abdoulaye and John . They are both addressed in French, but while

the former faces a hostile attitude, the latter feels favored. Hence, despite the different dynamics in the two countries, language practices are in both contexts a 'powerful practice of differentiation, of being set in difference, thus, othering' (Mörgen and Schnitzer 2015, p. 12, translated).

However, as illustrated, mixed children can also influence the social perception by using language(s)—Swiss German, Moroccan Arabic, French or English—to enter contexts of belonging. Hence, it serves them as a strategy of 'passing', reducing the 'visibility' of their difference (Goffman 1963, p. 73). In Switzerland, speaking Swiss German enables racialized mixed children such as Sara or Irina to highlight their Swiss origin and to feel more accepted in their mixedness. Processes of stigmatization appear to decline when they speak the local dialect. In Morocco, in contrast, the language practices of mixed children depend on their positioning in the social hierarchy. Like in Switzerland, racialized mixed children in Morocco establish belonging by speaking the Moroccan dialect. Speaking the local dialect gives them the possibility to feel recognized as Moroccans. Mixed children of European descent, however, are more likely to use French in order to show their difference and gain a privileged social status. In addition, mixed children of Asian descent, such as Kamal, in turn, are tempted to use English in order to consolidate their position as 'the other'. Language as a strategy to change perception is, however, a precarious strategy because it has to be performed again and again.

Finally, according to religion, the results suggest that religion can be experienced as a visible or an invisible marker for mixed children, depending on the social discourse surrounding them. Although or precisely because Morocco is a religiously defined state, religion does not turn into a visible marker of difference for mixed individuals. The mixed children of my sample have been perceived as Muslims first and foremost by law and by the society because either their father is Arab or because he has converted to Islam in order to legalize his marriage with a Moroccan woman (for a different dynamic see Therrien 2020). Their membership in the *umma* (Muslim community) is, thus, not questioned (Gilliéron 2022).

This said, for Switzerland, I have shown that the changing discourse on religion and, more precisely, the Islamophobic public discourse since 2001, has increased the visibility of mixed children of Arab descent and their stigmatization (see also Odasso 2016). As we have seen in the case of Leyla, this dynamic may even intensify when it interacts with gender (woman) and age (being an adolescent). Although it may be less relevant for self-identification, religion seems to be a very powerful category of othering. Being 'invisible' in childhood, Leyla became 'visible' as an 'Arab woman' in adolescence because the discourse had changed. As a consequence, Leyla engaged in a quest of her discredited origin in order to position herself more confidently within her mixed origin. This led her to conceal her bi-religious belonging in favor for her Tunisian and Islamic heritage. She thus adopts a strategy of 'information control' (Goffman 1963, p. 64) showing only 'one side' of her complex origin to others. In sum, in Switzerland, religion seems to provoke othering if mixed children adhere to Islam or want to position themselves bi-religiously. The latter suggests that religion is as exclusive as 'race', forcing mixed children to choose 'one side' although they may self-identify 'beyond' (see also Cerchiaro 2022).

My findings enrich the research literature on othering processes of 'mixed' children (Aspinall and Song 2013; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021; Rodríguez-García 2015; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021; Waters 2009) and nuance the discussion in that they highlight, from an intersectional and comparative perspective, the complex interplay of different dimensions of mixedness, such as 'race', 'culture', class, gender, nationality, religion and language, and the biographical—i.e., the long-term and ever-changing—engagement with multiple belongings. As such, I have demonstrated that stigmatization due to mixedness is a relational phenomenon and depends not only on 'race', ethnicity or religion but can be strengthened or weakened by the dimensions of gender, class, language and age. Visibility and invisibility of mixedness are fluid and may not only change in different situations and national contexts but also over a lifetime, as the case of Leyla illustrated. The intersectional

approach puts forward the importance of the social positions in the analysis of mixedness, particularly for international comparison. As already Osanami Törngren et al. (2021) point out, the experience of mixedness seems to be strongly dependent on the social positioning of the mixed individuals and on whether their visibility is positively or negatively connoted. The comparison of the cases in Switzerland and Morocco underlines further that the possibilities of mixed children are influenced by the historical and national context surrounding them. However, the social and national context is not all-powerful; the discussed examples show that children of mixed origin find creative ways to deal with stigmatization processes and to establish belonging in the society they live in.

Last but not least, the results also reveal that processes of stigmatization due to mixedness occur in 'Western' immigration countries, such as Switzerland, and countries of less pronounced migration discourses, such as Morocco, alike. In both contexts, individuals of mixed origin experience processes of stigmatization. In Switzerland, it can be observed that multiple belonging is accepted, but its recognition is still lacking. Mixed children still have to explain their 'deviation' and can only position themselves in an in-between space. In Morocco, in contrast, only those of European origin and from the upper middle-class experience social recognition of their multiple affiliations. All others develop strategies to minimize attention to their mixedness.

5. Conclusions

The article demonstrated how visibility and invisibility of mixedness are informed by different dimensions at the intersection of 'race', ethnicity, nationality and religious affiliation yet also depend on class, language practices, gender, age and biographical experiences. Hence, I argue that stigmatization processes are a relational phenomenon leading to different possibilities for mixed children.

In effect, three situations of stigmatization were analyzed: (1) the racialization processes, (2) language practices and (3) othering due to religious affiliation, and how mixed children manage these three situations. The biographical narratives in Switzerland and Morocco show that they have found creative ways to navigate their visibility. Rather than being powerless, they develop strategies of 'passing', 'covering' and 'information control' (Goffman 1963) creating spaces for capacity for action. Therefore, they normalize their binational origin, emphasize their 'Swiss-ness' or 'Moroccan-ness', look for alternative spaces of belonging, use language to influence their social positioning or acquire knowledge about their binational origin in order to confront stigmatization.

These findings contribute to the existing discussion on 'mixed' identities, arguing that 'visibility' influences the scopes of action of these individuals and their possibilities of identification by highlighting the complex and intersectional interplay of different categories (Aspinall and Song 2013; Cerchiaro 2022; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021; Rodríguez-García 2015; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021; Waters 2009). They point to the importance of an intersectional approach, especially when carrying out an international comparison of mixedness (Childs et al. 2021; Törngren et al. 2021). As such, the comparison between Morocco and Switzerland has revealed the particular influence of social and national contexts. Processes of othering due to mixedness are not only an issue in 'Western' societies that look back on a long history of immigration and have pronounced migration discourses in politics and academia. Even in Morocco, a country where migration has so far been a marginal phenomenon, mixed individuals are challenged by stigmatization processes. The intersectional approach made it possible to reconstruct the dynamic process of stigmatization in the two contexts and to analyze *how* individuals *themselves* balance their social positioning and find meaningful spaces of belonging that go beyond 'either-or' categories.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Notes

1.   For a critical discussion how studies on 'cross-border marriages' reinforce nation-states' concerns by such categories see Moret et al. (2021). The authors emphasize that researchers should analyze the difference within these families as an empirical question and that we should carefully distinguish between categories of practices and categories of analysis. My aim to use an intersectional approach for the international comparison instead of comparing national origins goes hand in hand with this argument (see Section 2).

2.   The term "children" refers here to the generational position the individual occupies in the mixed family and does not reflect the actual age of the person, as the respondents here are adolescents and adults aged between 16 and 28.

3.   In Morocco binational couples are still a marginal phenomenon. Most of them are formed with partners from Europe. I observed a differentiation of the European origin in the social perception—due to the colonial past with France, the Arab Spanish conquest and close economic relations with some European countries. Hence, I differentiate between individuals with a parent from Central (three), Southern (one) and Eastern (one) Europe. Binational couples between a Moroccan and a partner of another Arab Islamic country were not considered in this study because these couples are perceived as similar by Moroccans and hardly experience othering processes (see also Therrien 2020).

4.   In Switzerland for example, there was an interview partner telling me in the beginning that she might not be the right person for my research as she is not a "migrant" herself. And when I explained an interview partner in Morocco that he will recognize me because "I am tall and look like an European", he laughed and replied "you can also recognize me because I am black".

5.   Culture was also enshrined in 1991 as a category in the Immigration Act by the 'three-circles-model' which defined the 'other' by his/her cultural difference. Although this model was abolished with the integration into the Schengen area, the notion of cultural difference is still present in the political discourse and in the integration act, forcing for example people who are assumed to be culturally very different (the former third circle and nowadays all nationals from outside Europe, US and Canada) to sign an integration contract.

6.   The northern and southern part of Morocco were under the Spanish protectorate and gained independence in 1956 and 1958 respectively.

7.   There is a separate constitution for Moroccan Muslims and Jews.

8.   The national identity has been slightly transformed in recent years with the new constitution of 2011, in which the cultural heritage of the different ethnic populations—such as Amazigh, Arabs, Sahrawis, Jews and Muslims—on the territory is emphasised (Mourji et al. 2016).

9.   All names used in the empirical examples are anonymized using names that reflect the cultural origin of their actual name. As different studies show, name can become a visible marker for mixed children (Therrien 2020; Osanami Törngren and Sato 2021). Further, for Morocco, only regional origins are mentioned for confidentiality reasons.

10.   Many binational and middle-class Moroccan families send their children to international schools where English or French is the main language. Further, especially in Rabat, it is possible to live without knowing Arabic because French is a common language in daily interactions.

11.   Exoticizing a language as something 'interesting' may first be seen as positive but it enhances the particularization of mixed children and should not be confused with recognition.

12.   They tend to emphasize their Swiss grandparents, typical "Swiss" things in their family or make jokes about their "other" origin in order to distance themselves from 'the other' and establish belonging to Switzerland.

13.   In my sample, only Nadine Bourras, who is of European-Moroccan descent, did not speak Arabic at all. This is due to her parents' decision to distance themselves from Moroccan culture and to the fact that she went to a private French school, where only little classical Arabic was taught. Her position is precarious, as she feels on the sidelines of Moroccan society, "like a foreigner" in Morocco.

14.   This provision leads some binational couples to marry abroad. In this case, however, the foreign partner does not receive a settlement permit via family reunification, but must enter Morocco via the labor migration route. Work such as Cerchiaro and Odasso (2021), Cerchiaro et al. (2015), Odasso (2016) and Therrien (2014) shows that bi-religious families have to deal with particular negotiations with regard to the upbringing of the children and the relationship to the extended family. In my sample, however, religion was not challenging the identifications of the individuals I met. This does not mean that some were not searching for an own approach to their religious heritage, but it was not experienced as a threat to their identity.

15.   Young men of Arab descent also experience a stigmatization process, where Islam is linked to stereotypes on masculine domination (Dahinden et al. 2012; Odasso 2016) but, unfortunately I had no such case in my sample.

[16]   A similar observation can be done for Sara Bhumibor who was raised in the Christian and Buddhist religions; she now defines Christianism as a belief and Buddhism as a philosophy, which allows her to embrace both without denying one of her parents. Cerchiaro (2020, 2022) labeled this kind of attitude of bi-religious mixed individuals as "spiritual identification" pointing to the anti-dogmatic position and the high reflexivity the individuals develop. The examples of Sara and Leyla suggest further that bi-religious affiliation is even more incompatible than a binational origin, a hypothesis on which I cannot elaborate further here.

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