New "racialised" geographies of kinship.
Kinning in Mixed families[1]

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Abstract

Mixed families, in Europe as in Italy, constitute a rapidly expanding phenomenon. This essay analyses the way in which extraneousness-otherness are embodied in the kinning of the mixed couples involved. The paper is divided into two sections; in the first, we will discuss how the kinning process related to migratory regimes acts as a device for the differentiation of family and national belonging; in the second, we will analyse the family *mixedness in action* in the kinning process of mixed family particularly of Italian-Moroccan families. This section will be focused especially how different attitudes and ways of dealing with the visible somatic trace of the child born in mixed family are part of kining process.

Key-words: Mixed family; kinning; children; national-family belonging; Italy

Introduction

Contemporary migration deeply transforms the family practices, solidarity and intimacy that affect intergenerational relationships and familyhood. In the context of global migration, mixed families express the "conflicts and opportunities of globalization in the private space of their own existence" (Beck, Gernsheim-Beck 2011, p. 11; see also Bacas 2002). Dan Rodríguez-García (2008) refers to mixed couples as a form of global family characterized by "a socio-cultural hybrid space" where the initial differences are transformed and re-invented by social actors through daily negotiation. Therefore, mixed families produce in daily life a "création de nouvelles identités et d'espaces transnationaux" (Le Gall, Therrien 2013, p. 7; Le Gall 2005).

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The last decades – in Europe as in Italy – have witnessed a progressive increase in mixed marriages linked to the growth of many men and women's mobility and to the spread of social networks that enable transnational dating and marriage. In Italy, in the public context, increasingly characterized by nationalist positions, and in many family contexts, families in which one partner comes from an Arab state, such as an Italian-Moroccan couple, experience strong social disapproval due to islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Thus, in this case mixed families become the space where inequalities as we shall see in the article, are part of the process of construction of conjugality, parenthood and kinship. At the same time, they are a space of resistance and creativity, where subjects react to social stigma and are engaged in transforming those perceived as strangers into relatives and citizens. Starting mainly from a long-term research on Italian-Moroccan families[2] the first section of this essay analyses how the kinning process together with today's migratory regime act as devices for the production of "differentiated" belonging, which produces, on the one hand, hierarchies between relatives up to exclusion and, on the other hand, it transforms the family into a domain of struggle for belonging. This kinship "differentiated" belonging in the public arena, giving rise to a *racialised geography of citizenship* which produces exclusions and social hierarchies based on the nation, social class and gender, that come to term with a counter-conduct, as well as counter-discourses and narratives, that are produced by the subjects involved in mixed families and constitute the horizon within which ideas of a more inclusive and democratic society are elaborated. In the second section, we will discuss the fluidity, relationality and dynamic dimension of the kinning process (Howell 2007) connected with family mixedness and social perception of somatic features. The construction a kind of *family somatic line* redraws the family line of belonging as a kind of *racialised geography of kinship*, in which the family becomes a paradoxical and conflictual space where some subjects contribute to reproduce, in their daily life, the inequalities of a selective migratory regime and of islamophobia, while others react against this. Ultimatly, the system of exclusion acted by some members of the family is reinforced by that acted by the State and by society[3].

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2   The ethnographic study on mixed Italian-Moroccan couples started in 2001 and is being conducted in the geographical area of Rome and Southern Italy. During research, the family biographies of forty Italian-Moroccan couples were reconstructed from separate interviews with the partners (80 interviews). In 2017 I carried out a study on divorced Italian-Moroccan mixed families and on young children of mixed couples aged between 17 and 27 years. In recent years, research has expanded to include mixed Italian-Maghreb couples.

3   Mixed marriages steadily increased in Italy from about 4% in 1990 to 10% in 2008, to 13% in 2014 and settling at around 9% in 2017. The majority of Arab-Italian

From selective Western migratory regime to 'Racialised' geographies of citizenship and "Italianness"

Nowadays, in Europe, the Western migratory regime of selective control (Walters 2004), based on the filtering of "undesirable" subjects, tends towards the militarization of territories, the strengthening of rebordering policies and reticular control within the national territory, that reproduces the physical borders of nation-states in the everyday life (De Genova 2002). The policy of rebordering within the framework of the new nationalistic ideologies pushes the paradigm of selective filtering to the point of complete closure towards migration. The Italian case, with the closure of the ports and the criminalization of humanitarian migration policies of sea rescue, epitomize the hardening of this migration regime, which becomes functional to the new sovereignties expressed by the motto "Italians first".

Starting from the 90s, first in Northern Europe and towards the years 2000 in Southern countries such as Spain and Italy, the cultural turn in migration governance is centred, among others, on an increasing control of migrant families. As many scholars have stated, migration policies and marriage policies are "co-constructing" (Parisi 2014; Pellander 2014; Anzil *et al.* 2015; Collet 2017; Roca *et al.* 2017; Scialdone 2019). In fact, starting from the 90s, the control of marriage by the state became one of the most salient topics on the European migration agenda that produced increasingly restrictive norms in policies of family migration in both Northern to Southern European states (Kofman 2005; Fair 2010; Wray 2011; Collet 2017). In Italy in 2009, law n. 94–better-known as the Second Security Package– introduced the ban on marriage for undocumented immigrants. This ban did not affect EU immigrants as it was applicable only to non-European citizens, now defined "foreigners"[4]. Two years later, this ban was repealed by the Supreme Court, as it was considered against the freedom to marry and the right to have a family[5]. The political restrictions on mixed marriage as an element of danger and threat to society are more evident in Arab-Italian marriages. The discriminatory attitude towards Islam and Arab-Islamic migrations over the years is turned into discriminatory state policies. Marriages between Italians and foreigners with a "suspicious background", like Arab or

marriages involving an Italian woman who marries or cohabits with an Arabian men, mainly from North Africa, in 25% of the cases from Morocco. In 2016, marriages between an Italian man and a Moroccan woman represents 3.8% of mixed marriages, whereas marriages between an Italian woman and a Moroccan man represent 13.8 % of mixed marriages (Istat data). Currently there is an upward trend in marriages between Italian men and Arab women, 36% of which come from Morocco.

4   See Circular No. 19 issued by the Ministry of the Interior enacted on 7 August 2009.

5   Judgment of the Constitutional Court no. 245 of 25th July 2011.

Moroccan, represent a threat to the family as a place where what is considered "normal" and "acceptable" is produced. In these cases, love ceases to be a private matter and becomes a matter of public order, a political category in which a kind of *sentimental patriotism* (Parisi 2014) plays an important role in building a barrier against the threat to familial and national integrity. At the same time, such love-based discourse produces a counter-hegemonic narrative on the positive social value of the mixed family (*Ibidem*).

As many scholars have stated, there is a significant relationship between representation of family belonging and nation belonging that is expressed – in a particularly evident way in a migratory context – in the relationship between "being a relative" and "being a citizen" (Ong 2005). In fact, in Italy, for a long time, 80% of migrants successful applied for citizenship through marriage with an Italian person[6]. From 2014 the percentage was reduced to about 50%, due to the growth in the percentage of migrants born in Italy, the so-called "new" citizens, obtaining citizenship. This has led some scholars to consider Italian citizenship a "family affair" (Zincone 2006). This situation is intended to change because the recent "security law" launched in 2018 by the Minister of the Interior[7], Salvini, makes the obtention of citizenship through marriage with an Italian non-automatic, and introduces the revocation of citizenship for migrants condemned for crimes against national security, as well as the awarding of citizenship through acts of "heroism" towards society, like a prize. Thus, for migrants the process of "citizenisation" (Fortier 2017), previously strongly rooted in family membership, is now replaced by acts of "heroism" towards society. The new "security Law" introduces a hierarchy between national and naturalised citizens. Italian naturalised migrants, under the threat of revocation of citizenship, become "weakened" or "failed" citizens (Tyler 2010; Anderson 2013). The struggle for citizenship exposes a conflict between the institutional viewpoint, based on legislation and regulations, and the viewpoint of subjects who uphold an idea of citizenship linked to multiple dimensions of belonging (Bellagamba 2009; Parisi 2014). The migrant claim to citizenship is expressed through "acts of citizenship" that introduce a rupture in the order of things and of gelonging (Isin 2009, p. 380).

So, in the last decade, despite the rapidly increasing trend of mixed marriage, Italian society continues to have an ambivalent perception of mixed marriages (Tognetti Bordogna 1996, 2018; Parisi 2008; Peruzzi 2008, Rodríguez-García *et al.* 2015; Scialdone 2019). Much of this ambivalence is linked to the concept of diversity expressed by the mixed couple (Cerchiaro 2016) and to the concepts of "dangerousness" already mentioned. In gener-

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6   In 2008, 63% of citizenships were granted through marriage (Source: Ministry of the Interior, Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration).

7   Decree Law n. 113 of 10 October 2018.

al, mixed-marriages are seen as an advantage in transforming the foreigner into a more familiar person through daily life. In this case, mixed-marriage is seen as the main road to integration. Yet, in other cases, mixed-marriages are seen as contaminating elements that endanger the purity and authenticity of Italian identity, as well as personal safety. It is possible to identify a "dynamic scale of *mixité*" (Varro 2003) based not only on language, nationality, skin colour, religion, but also on class, race discrimination, national belonging and racialised exclusion, as well as on the history of relations between States (Varro 2003; Collet, Santelli 2003; Collet, Philippe 2008; Therrien 2017). The conjugal *mixité* also includes the processes through which the partners and the society represent the *mixité*. In this sense, the focus is not linguistic or religious diversity, but the social and daily use of language and religion. The term *mixedness* introduced by Beate Collet (2012) indicates the specific attention to the processes of production and representation of the conjugal *mixité*.

Long this "scale of mixité" families are positioned based on their social acceptability. In the current international scenario, the greatest degree of *family mixedness* is attributed to families with foreign spouses coming from Maghreb and Middle east countries, which in the conventional sense combines the highest degree of cultural and religious differences, as well as social dangerousness. In this case, we can observe that the fear and violence coming from Middle Eastern war scenarios and from international terrorism spill over into the marriage and into the couple's intimate daily life. The "scale of *mixité*" in a dynamic intersectional perspective expresses, therefore, the way in which society perceives and expresses the differences and inequalities that give rise to boundaries and conflicts between "desirable" and "undesirable" immigrants.

Along the same "dynamic scale of *mixité*" we can place the feeling of "betrayal" or "lack of loyalty" to the family and the nation that falls upon mixed couples (Parisi 2020). In fact, the stigma affecting mixed couples is increasingly characterized by the rapid spread of neo-nationalist and sovereign ideologies inspired by the "Italians first" motto. So, the members of a mixed family, especially Italian-Arab families, as Odasso (2013) says, act in a perpetually changing space where the politicisation and mediatisation of socio-historical events represent their conjugal mixedness as disturbing, placing them a priori in a disadvantaged situation. Therefore, mixed families can be "discredited" and / or "discreditable" (Odasso 2013, p. 11-12) because the presence of a "migrant", "foreign", "Arab" or even "Muslim" component introduces strangeness and diversity within the family group, as well as within a supposedly "homogeneous" national community. In this perspective, mixed couples can be seen as a form of "betrayal" of the family and of the nation.

The sentiment of suspicion that affects mixed marriages as a dangerous gateway for the safety of society extends to all family members, including the Italian partner and the children who are born, considered not fully Italian. Nevertheless, the children of mixed families interviewed point to Italy as their first and most important level of belonging. For many mixed children, especially for those with an Arab surname, or those with somatic characters that Italian society and research participants consider as "typical Arabic characters", being recognized as Italians is a "conquest" and not a family inheritance. When Miriam[8] attended primary school, every time she took part in a school play, she played the role of a Moroccan immigrant. Once, her maternal grandfather went to school and argued with the teachers, claiming that his granddaughter was "Italian", not "foreign": "Miriam is my granddaughter, so she is Italian"[9]. In the third grade of high school, her teacher of Italian told her: "Miriam, I advise you to attend evening classes for foreigner; only in this way will you improve your Italian", Miriam reacted by stating: "I'm Italian, because I have an Italian mother and Italian citizenship, and I have always spoken Italian"[10]. The Moroccan origin of his father led Miriam to feel "a little bit Moroccan", as she says, to "feel only 60% Italian" and "40% Moroccan", but not to feel as a foreigner. Miriam perceives herself as a "half-and-half" person, but she adds: "I feel like so many others who, like me, perceive themselves as people belonging to two different halves, not necessarily for cultural reasons. Today, in a sense, we are all 'half-and-half' people"[11].

In her perception, her Moroccan father's origin does not transform her into a foreigner, but rather a person with a richer and more varied experience, whereas the teacher mechanically extended the foreign origin of the father to Miriam herself, and in this way tended to turn Miriam into a "foreigner".

In the same way, Daniel a 17-year-old boy, with a Moroccan mother and Italian father, when he went to primary school, he was mocked by his classmates who called him "African" or "foreigner". His classmates considered his particular olive-coloured skin and his black, big, downward-slanting eyes, as particular signs of his "extraneousness"; for this reason, Daniel is being considered a "foreigner," an "African"[12]. His Italian paternal grandfather went to school several times to protest, accusing teachers of not defending his grandchild enough against schoolmates who mocked him as a "foreigner". The grandfather protested claiming the "Italianness" of Daniel. For him, his

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8   Miriam is a young girl of 22 years born in a mixed Italian-Moroccan family.
9   Interview, Roma, 20/9/2018.
10   *Ibidem.*
11   *Ibidem.*
12   Rome, Interview, 10/9/2018.

grandson's slightly darker skin tone–very similar to that of southern Italians, as he says– did not matter. From his point of view, the important thing was that his grandson had an Italian father and Italian grandparents. This element included him in the genealogy of an Italian family, making him "Italian" too. The perception of his grandson's diversity extended a stigma of strangeness to the whole family. Bringing Daniel back to the "colour line" of Italian national whiteness, which also includes the "tanned" skin hues of southern Italians, meant stressing the Italianness of Daniel and dismissing the suspicion of "betrayal" that affected the whole family du to the mixed family of Daniel parents. Daniel says that when he was a child, his grandfather often asked him "do you felt Italian or Moroccan". Daniel's answer: "I am Roman". For him being a Roman does not merely mean being an inhabitant of Rome, but includes being born in Rome, speaking with a Roman accent, having an "emotional", "sentimental" relationship, as he says, with the city in which he lives[13]. In this way, through his identification with the place/community where he lives and where he was born, he overcomes the Moroccan/Italian opposition. As Daniel says, "living in a mixed family teaches you how to survive through cunning"[14].

The above stories of Miriam and Daniel show how the construction of Italianness involves different subjects: parents, grandparents, relatives, institutions, peer groups. In both cases the full Italian character of the mixed children is guaranteed by their grandparents, who through the insertion of the grandchildren into the *family somatic line* establish their belonging to the parental group and, through this, to the nation. In a way, the grandparents are trying to repair the "betrayal" of their own children, who introduced "foreignness" within the family and the nation. As Daniel's and Miriam's cases show, the action of the Italian grandparents to "re-integrate" their grandchildren in the national and familial community is much more effective, maybe because they are not suspected of "betrayal" as their children are.

The process of becoming "Italian" displays different visions of family and national belonging, often in conflict with each other. Italianness intersects several elements: family history, kinning work, the origin of parents, the sex of the foreign parent, the social class, the relation with local community, the perception of "family somatic line" or "national colour line" that defines the relationship between whiteness-somatic features and belonging to the nation. All these references in action redraw a *racialised geography of citizenship and Italianness.* But at the same time the two stories reveal the presence of counter-action and a counter-hegemonic narrative that expresses the possi-

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13   *Ibidem.*
14   *Ibidem.*

bility to build a more inclusive society and to challenge the idea of origin as a device to construct belonging and social relations.

Fluid and dynamic kinning processes vis-à-vis family mixedness and family somatic line in action

Research on Italian-Moroccan mixed family, shows that each member of a mixed family (parents, children) engages in "cultural work" aimed at maintaining the unity of the family and building up a feeling of familyhood that incorporates their mixed biographical heritage. Parents distance themselves from the concept of mixité by stressing that mixité is in the "eye of the beholder". They are aware of the disruptive value of their choices on social and conjugal norms. Therefore, rather than their cultural differences or extraneousness, they emphasise the efforts they make in everyday life to foster the *familiarisation* of family members that have different experiences and different visions of the world. Day after day, Italian partners found themselves looking at the world and society with "Moroccan" eyes, just as Moroccan partners perceived themselves as progressively more Italian. They are aware that the mixedness that marks their biographies widens from family to society and change the family's biographical heritage, as well as prompting a creative transformation of society (see also Cerchiaro 2016).

The mixedness introduced by foreign partner within families and kinship groups becomes more evident with the birth of a mixed child, who inscribes mixedness into the heart of kinship. In fact, mixed children embody mixedness in the generation's dynamic, making this process irreversible. Furthermore, children manifest the feeling of family "betrayal", which overlap with national "betrayal", that a mixed marriage often entails.

As far as children are concerned, it is true that they are the product of mixedness, embedded in them through their Arab surname (in the case of an Arab father), "somatic" features and family history, but as Unterreiner (2015) states they do not replicate their parents' idea of mixedness. In fact, they are not passive but active and reflective subjects, and together with their parents they are engaged in the construction of the family's mixedness– sometimes in conflict with their parents–that becomes a strategic reference in the construction of their own subjectivity. In the children's perspective, the Moroccan or foregnier origin of a parent is no longer seen as an element that reproduces an essentialised familial cultural identity along the generations, a device to extend the parent's original condition of extraneousness to all of the family components; rather, the foreign parent's origin constitutes a factor for the development of a critical and decentralised mode of belonging

to Italian society. Thus, children do not mechanically reproduce a parent's Moroccan origins; instead, they are re-semanticised, re-interpreted, re-enacted in different contexts and for different purposes. With their action, children–in a sense–multiply the origins of the family through their coming into contact with each other and contributing to the generation of a family narrative that challenges social stigma.

Therefore, mixedness is embodied in the process of kinning and affects the biographical heritage of the subjects and of the family. In a complex interplay at the boundary between kin belonging and national belonging, the perception of mixedness is constructed, as we have seen, starting from several dimensions. I shall analyse two of these: the meaning attributed to the national origin of the foreign parent and the newborn's somatic characteristics. The two dimensions overlap, and they become, among others, key elements of the kinning process of many mixed families. Some mixed children interviewed are aware that their body–that some would call "exotic"–exhibits what is perceived and defined both by research participants and by society as "Arab somatic characters": large eyes slanting downwards, tanned skin colour, black and curly hair. These somatic features, together with their Arabic surname, make them identifiable as not "fully Italian". The somatic features represent the visible trace of the subjects' "half and half origin", as many interviewees say, and lead directly to the presence of the foreign parent.

Starting from ethnographic materials, in particular on two case studies I will analyse in particular the kinning dynamics that concern the perception of the new-born's somatic characteristics related to the national origin of the foreign parent.

Miriam[15]. She is 22 years old and was born to a mixed family with a Moroccan father and Italian mother. Her mother's family of origin never approved that their only daughter had married a poor Moroccan man and, moreover, had converted to Islam. When she was young, her maternal grandparents told her "you are the prettiest of your siblings, because you have a white skin", and they stressed "you belong to our race, to our family". Whiteness, therefore, was used by the mother's parents to underline the physical resemblance that allowed Miriam to be recognized as belonging to the family group. In this case, from the grandparents' point of view, the "colour line" enters the kinning process which allows Miriam to be considered fully inserted into the parental group. The kinning process enacted by the grandparents leaves their daughter's Moroccan husband out, marginalising her daughter because, with her marriage choice, she "betrayed" and endangered the symbolic and somatic kin's heritage, hierarchising their grandchildren's belonging. Miriam over time reacted with more and more

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15   Interview, Roma, 20/9/2018.

decision to the attempts of her mother's relatives to incorporate her into the "colour line of whiteness" on which symbolic belonging to the family was founded. Over time Miriam has increasingly approached her suffering father's migration history, the social and family stigma that affects her family. She proudly claims to be a "half and half" person. The system of belonging based on physical resemblance thus acts as a device that hierarchises relatives up to the point of exclusion. Miriam decisively reacts to the attempt of differentiated incorporation proposed by her grandparents, which results in the disintegration of her family of origin. Miriam claims instead a family and subjective belonging made up of mixedness rather than somatic similarities. In this case the kinning process highlights a conflict between the subjects in the field, starting from the contrast between the *line of physical resemblance*, in this case mainly the *colour line,* and the *line of mixedness*. This opposition highlights different visions of the factors that contribute to building family and parental belonging. On the one hand they emphasise somatic characters as national and cultural differences; on the other hand, they underline love, care and a shared family history developed through daily life as the common reaction to social stigma and racism.

Zaira[16]. She is 26 years old and has a Moroccan father and an Italian mother. The mother of Zaira had a daugther form her first marriage with an Italian man. Some years later she became a widow. After that the woman began a relationship with a Moroccan man, with a good education and an import-export activity between Italy and Morocco. The couple went to live together in an Italian city different from the one where her parents lived. After a few years Zaira was born. The relationship between the mother and the father ended when she was about 6 years old. Her father married another Italian woman, and with his new family moved to Morocco. Zaira's somatic traits resemble her father's: she has large black eyes slanting downwards, curly hair and a "tanned" skin colour. When she was a child, she was mocked by her "Italian" half-siblings, who called her "African"; but as she says, "in my life and in my house there were no traces of my African origin. Only my somatic signs were considered as visible trace of my less-than-full 'Italianness'"[17]. This often produced conflicts and misunderstandings between Zaira and her "Italian" half-siblings. For a long time, her mother removed all references to her ex-partner and avoided her daughter's requests to tell her about her distant father. Over the years, her body became the deepest trace of her father. This bodily trace pushed Zaira to re-establish his relationship with her father. When she was 16, she spent a one-month vacation in Morocco with her father, her father's new family and her father's relatives (grandparents, aunts, cousins). Zaira does not speak Arabic, though

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16   Interview, Foggia 5/03/2018
17   Interview, Foggia 5/03/2018.

she speaks French quite well; this helped her in communicating with her aunts and cousins, while with her grandmother communication took place with the help of her aunts or her father, who translated Arabic into Italian or French. Of her grandmother she remembers the gestures, the smiles, the gazes, that to her seemed to be "full of affection and tenderness". Zaira says that "the period I spent in Morocco rejoined me with that part of my story, with my broken, buried origins"[18]. The "reconquered" relationship with her father, first through her body signs and then through the restoration of the relationship with her father and her father's relatives, also allowed Zaira to reconnect with her family, with her half-sibling and, in general, with the "buried side" of her history. From this moment on, somatic traits became part of her mixedness *biographical heritage*. Often people ask her whether she is Italian, and she replies that she is "Italian with a Moroccan father".

These bodily traits transcend the biological dimension and call into question the way in which people define the social dimension of their relationships (Marre, Bestard 2008; Grilli 2017). The attention to somatic signs is linked to the contemporary tendency to shift the process of subjectivation onto the body, that becomes the privileged place to experience one's own subjectivity. In our case, the kinning process and the social use of somatic features exposes the conflictual dimension of physical likeness, considered in its capacity to produce social relations (see also Osanami Törngren *et al.* 2018).

In all these cases, family "resemblances" which call upon specific bodily features play a fundamental role in the re-kinning process that allows the construction of a feeling of belonging to a kin relation. It is interesting to note that the three cases present different attitudes and ways of dealing with the visible trace that connects the child to parents, grandparents, peer group and to the children themselves and with the social use of somatic features. These different attitudes affect the way children present and identify themselves, epitomized by sentences such as "I'm Roman" (Daniel); "I'm half-half" (Miriam); "I'm Italian with a Moroccan father" (Zaira). In one case, the *family somatic line* is used to produce differentiation and exclusion (Miriam), while in the other case the *somatic line* intersects the *mixedness family line* and local dimension of belonging that transcends the Italian/foreign opposition (Daniel). In the case of Zaira the *somatic line* is used to reconstruct a biographical history.

Conclusions

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18   *Ibidem.*

In this article I have analysed how the kinning processes bring into play different subjects – partners, parents, children, grandparents, institutions – that move in contexts often made conflictual by prejudices, stigma and exclusions. Becoming relatives is a task that intertwines multiple aspects: nationality, class, gender, somatic features. With respect to this last aspect, the cases presented show different attitudes and ways of dealing with the somatic trace of the child born in the mixed family from institutions, relatives – particularly parents, sibling and grandparents – and from the children themselves. These different attitudes affect the way children present and identify themselves. At the same time, these different attitudes affect the ways in which kinning process take place and, in general, they influence the meaning the various subjects attribute to the concept of mixedness and being mixed; in the end, they influence the sense of "betrayal" and "loyalty" towards the family and the nation. In fact, the practices and discourses involving somatic features show a sort of attentiveness to the "family body" that acts directly upon the subjects' intimacy and constitutes an important level in the process of constructing family as well as social and public belonging. Hence, we can say that there is a kind of continuity and overlap between the "family body" and the "national body". In fact, we have seen how discourse, rhetoric and policies concerning mixed families and their children produce symbolic and material boundaries between "us" and "them" (Staver 2014), reinforce social hierarchies, and reinforce differential inclusion up to the point of expulsion. In this sense, control of mixed marriages is mainly related to the granting of citizenship, the control of new citizens and state ideology, as well as to "cultural authenticity" and "national authenticity". From this perspective, the family becomes a border zone through which the state is able to govern the conduct of those who enter and violate the apparent homogeneity, integrity and well-being of the "national community" (Parisi 2014). In fact, the dynamics of family mixedness force subjects to rethink kinship relationships, to interrogate kinning vis-à-vis different national origins, and to call into question kin biographical heritage as representing the presupposed kin group's homogeneity, including in terms of continuity between family belonging and national belonging. As Bonjour and de Hart say, "the intimate domains […] play a crucial role in the construction of national identities […] of categories of 'us' and 'them'" (Bonjour, de Hart 2013, p. 4).

The cases explored show how mixed families constitute a challenge to the nation's presumed homogeneity, and through their actions they uphold an idea of openness and expansion of social relations. A nation perceived as a "community of values" "is defined from outside by exclusion, and from inside by failure, but the excluded also fail, and the failed are also excluded" (Anderson 2013, p. 5). In this sense, the concept of mixité takes on a political value capable of generating critical subjectivities with the capacity

to transform society. Varro (2018) invites us to transcend the mixed / non-mixed dichotomy and to recognize that all families, as well as society at whole, are characterized by a dynamic mixedness possessing a transformative power leading towards a more open and fluid social reality (Varro 2003, 2018; see also Therrien, Le Gall 2012; Collet 2017).

Therefore, my ethnography of mixed couples reveals a continuity between kinship and citizen within a framework of racialised hierarchies that lead from *racialised geographies of kin* to *racialised geographies of citizenship*. Citizenship conceived as "a terrain of struggle constituted through a continuous interaction between migrants' practices of citizenship and its institutional codification" (Andrijasevic 2010, p. 159). On the other hand, mixedness reveals its potential as a factor producing critical subjectivities that act creatively to bring about a transformation of society. The different experiences of familial mixedness, in addition to being a factor in the construction of creative and critical subjectivities that foster change towards a more inclusive and democratic society, increasingly becomes–particularly for the generation of children born to such couples–capable of generating counter-hegemonic narratives that radically criticise the idea of a so-called homogeneous society based on the concept of origin as personal and societal destiny, moving from the practice of mixedness to the narrative of mixedness. Thus, the policies of cultural essentialisation that generate hierarchical and differentiated social and familial cartographies come to term with the practices and narratives of a more cohesive, inclusive and democratic society. *Racialised geographies of kin and citizenship* have to confront the emergence of *social cartographies of mixedness* that are based on inclusion, sharing and co-participation.

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