

CIES e-WORKING PAPER N.º 94/2010

Educational patterns among bi-national children

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CIES e-Working Papers (ISSN 1647-0893)

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Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to cast light on children's upbringing and education in families of mixed EU nationality living in Lisbon. After a brief introduction, I will dedicate the first two parts to the theoretical contextualization of European mixed couples as a new family arrangement born of EU social integration; as to entail, thereafter, an attentive reflection on issues related to transnational children's upbringing. Qualitative evidence from 24 in-depth interviews with three different groups of couples (Portuguese women married to European men; Portuguese men married to European women; married non-Portuguese European couples of different nationalities) will be then presented and discussed. According to the original findings, when certain variables – children's language capabilities (one, two or more languages), type of school (national/international, state/private), and social networks (national/mixed/international) – are taken into account, three types of educational strategies emerge: a *family assimilation strategy*, a *bi-national family strategy* and a *peripatetic family strategy*. In the final part, a critical appreciation will be carried out of the role that these family strategies have in the theorizing and research on migration and minority child-raising, not only within an EU socio-political context but also in a wider global environment involving cultural heterogeneity.

Key words: Education strategies, European bi-national families, privileged migrants, language transmission, formal education system, social networks.

Introduction

This paper reports original findings from a study of the socialization strategies among upper middle class European mixed families. As we are dealing with a rather privileged social group in terms of social class and ethnic origin, children from a bi-national EU milieu hold certain social, symbolic and economic resources that help to protect them from marginal positions or discrimination in the host society. In coming from an affluent family and belonging to a homogeneous ethnic group in terms of race, culture, citizenship and religion, European children become an “invisible social group” within the host state.

However, though in recent decades we have been seeing a large amount of research based on immigrant children, European scholars have mostly been publishing on underprivileged social groups belonging to migrant workers’ communities (Thomson and Crul, 2007; Crul and Vermeulen, 2003). This is the reason why, apart some isolated efforts (Finnäs and O’Leary, 2003; Wagner, 1998), very little is known about child-raising strategies among privileged migrants. As the existing information is very limited, a study of this nature will not only expand our knowledge in this field, but also become relevant to the debate on wider issues focusing on the bringing-up of other ethnic minority groups.

My aim in these pages is to examine the choices that EU mixed parents residing in Lisbon say they make for their offspring’s socialization, specifically in areas centred on the transmission of linguistic capital, formal education (the school selected), and the nature of social networks¹. Each parental option in any of these dimensions will clarify whether their socialization goals are developed as a way of perpetuating their high status as a minority group (Finnäs and O’Leary, 2003; Liberson, 1985) and the cosmopolitan capital normally associated to the family (Weenink, 2008).

The five main parts into which this chapter is divided seek to contribute to the theoretical and empirical debates in this field: in the next section, taking EU social integration as the standpoint, I will argue that the rise of intra-European families is a central and emerging phenomenon that has to be considered when studying privileged

¹Some studies that contextualize social and family features of the Portuguese society can be found in detail in Torres (2008, 2004) and Torres and Silva (1998).

interethnic minorities. I will then point out certain fundamental ideas that are usually involved in the way parents bring up transcultural children. The following section will describe the methodological procedures that guided the collection of the original data presented here, before we analyse the three “ideal types” of parental education that emerged from the empirical information. The final part summarizes the main points outlined in these pages, and it also constitutes a reflection on the implications that “privileged interethnic European children” as a group may bring to debates on the upbringing processes among minorities both in Europe and in a broader socio-political setting.

I. The rise of intra-European bi-national families

The free movement of persons within the European Union has certainly given rise to one of the most important mobility-promoting legal spaces in contemporary societies. The Schengen Agreement of 1985 and the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 finally established the geographical mobility of Europeans beyond national borders, making access to other EU countries much easier. This European measure, along with a wave of migration in the globalized world and the rise of mass tourism, has contributed to the social and cultural blending of different national groups. In fact, within the EU, the most common reasons for moving – work, education, tourism, personal self-fulfilment and emotional relationships – are motivating people more and more frequently and are beginning to strengthen the *European social integration* (Ackers, 1998; Recchi and Favell, 2009). By moving, individuals are more able to see themselves as *European citizens* and create a *culture of mobility* that can adjust to the goals set by the Lisbon Agenda (2000), which require the EU to generate an economy with a more competitive and adaptable workforce.

One point emerging in this context, which I have been defending (Gaspar, 2009, 2008) and others have also confirmed (Santacreu, Baldoni and Albert, 2009), is that *geographical mobility is a pull factor in the increase in European mixed marriages*. EU free movers are emerging as a particular social group within the European matrimonial market and, therefore, an assessment of how these partnerships create new transcultural family arrangements and specific patterns of children’s socialization is crucial not only

to the EU process of social integration but also to a deeper understanding of interactions among interethnic minorities. Accordingly, the idea that the number of EU bi-national families is increasing can be statistically supported. If we look, for instance, at intra-EU marriages rates in Portugal, the data published by INE between 1995 and 2007 reveals that these interethnic unions rose at the rate of +4.5% (EU15), +13.8% (EU 25) and +38.3% (EU 27), at the same time that the total number of national marriages decreased by 35.9%².

However, despite representing a rich field of analysis for the social sciences, research into intra-EU partnerships is still insufficient. Apart from certain exceptions with greater or lesser theoretical relevance (Ackers, 1998; Braun and Recchi, 2008; Gaspar, 2009, 2008; Lauth Bacas, 2002; Norwicka, 2006; Santacreu, Baldoni and Albert, 2009; Santacreu and García, 2008; Scott and Cartledge, 2009; Varro, 1995), this idea has still hardly been investigated when compared to mixed families where at least one partner does not hold European citizenship. More accurately, most studies focusing on bi-national marriage in Europe have centred on unions between European natives and migrant workers from underprivileged European and non-European backgrounds (Cortina et al., 2008; Cretser, 1999; González Ferrer, 2006; Lievens, 1999; Neyrand and M'Sili, 1998; Kalmijn and van Tubergen, 2006; Klein, 2001; Rodríguez García, 2006; Rother, 2008; van Tubergen and Maas, 2007) as a means of assessing the level of these minority communities' social integration within the host countries.

So why might an EU mixed marriage be a sociologically relevant object of study? By relating to a marital union between citizens from different national contexts inside the EU (Gaspar, 2008, 2009), it constitutes an excellent site to evaluate how particular values and social meanings are negotiated, constructed and developed on a daily basis within a European political and institutional setting³. The legal status of EU partners establishes secure basic conditions for them to live in a foreign country as part of a *privileged migrant group*, with their civil rights fully guaranteed by the host state. Marrying someone from another EU country does not involve the legal and security

²Source: INE, Demographic Statistics.

³In the category "EU countries" I include not only the EU-27 states but also neighbouring countries (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) that have certain "privileged" political and social relations with the EU.

procedures applied to non-EU spouses for the couple to enjoy citizenship and freedom of movement across internal EU borders. A European nationality offers citizens certain advantages regarding residence, geographical mobility, civil rights, legally guaranteed freedom from discrimination, and easier access to employment, as compared to other groups of migrants. For an ethnic minority with EU citizenship it is, in a word, a powerful source of social inclusion and acceptance in the host society. Moreover, this legal system guarantees the construction of a *cross-border geographical mobility*, which, in time, turns out to be experienced by both partners as a *private and internal in-between EU region* (Lauth Bacas, 2002).

European citizens also tend to have (at least in some national contexts) more *symbolic prestige* associated with their nationality. ‘Being European’ or ‘Western’ might symbolize belonging to an ethnic group which enjoys positive advantages in an “ethnic ranking system” and is, therefore, less likely to suffer from negative social discrimination in the host society (see Finnäs and O’Leary, 2002; Wagner, 1998). This idea is consistent with some of the investigations that have expanded our knowledge of privileged migrants and have revealed that these groups often have a positive social status attached, derived from their nationality, profession or social class.

In a study of highly qualified professionals, Wagner (1998) found that Western expatriates living in Paris were considered to be attractive, interesting and enriching in terms of their culture, whereas professionals originating from developing regions were viewed as groups to be avoided, even if they came from the upper middle-class. O’Leary and Finnäs’ (2002) research on the Swedish-speaking community in Finland also showed how this “high status minority group” exhibited certain dominant practices and lifestyles – higher education, and more highly valued professional occupations and distinctive leisure activities – when compared with the ethnic majority of Finnish-speakers. These findings highlight the fact that *dominant minorities* can develop strategies to maintain and secure their class privileges and ethnic prestige even when part of a wider social community.

Additionally, Stierna (2003) also demonstrated that ethnic European communities like the Swedes tend to make use of their high economic and social capital as a group when living in Madrid. This research revealed that the Swedish community was not stigmatized as other working immigrant groups could be, since they were

perceived by Spanish society as belonging to an upper-middle class group and a “foreign minority elite”. In fact, mixed marriages with Swedish citizens were more likely to occur with Spanish natives from a higher social class or other European citizens from socially “highly appreciated” nations (e.g. France, Great Britain or Germany), who represented prestigious lifestyles.

For this reason, and since we are speaking of European ethnic minorities whose social status is symbolically valued, it is to be expected that EU interethnic partnerships are more likely to show higher levels of social acceptance and integration than those between an EU citizen and non-EU partner (Gaspar, 2009; Rother, 2008; Scott and Cartledge, 2009). This “positive discrimination” may be transformed into symbolic capital that can act as a powerful tool in developing successful adjustment practices on the level of belonging to and being integrated into the receiving country.

This is particularly relevant since belonging to a bi-national partnership produces specific conjugal dynamics inserted in a “complex socio-cultural hybrid space”, where both partners interact not only with natives of the host society but also with other foreign groups. This is why not only the spouses but also the whole family network (affinal and consanguineal) have to be reorganized around at least two different geographical and cultural places, which brings new forms of re-adaptation to all the generations involved (Rodríguez García, 2006). Even when high assimilation levels occur, the internal structure that these families tend to display create and stimulate strategies, behaviours and patterns of cultural negotiation quite unique when compared to lifestyles of families from a single national background.

In the following pages, I shall turn to issues related to upbringing patterns among interethnic minority families in order to understand whether EU relationships do exhibit specific choices in children’s socialization that are important for debate when wider rearing models for ethnic minority groups are considered.

II. Education among bi-national children

Due to their greater exposure to cosmopolitan influences and interactions, interethnic EU families tend to transmit these values to their children, whose lifestyles and behaviours are closer to transnational influences and mentalities than those of native children (Norwicka, 2006; Wagner, 1998; Weenink, 2008). As the child-rearing project of bi-national couples is linked to different cultural and social codes of behaviour which interplay whenever a child is born, both parents have to negotiate and deal with processes of cultural readjustment so as to achieve the best socialization outcomes for their offspring. In most cases, child-rearing projects are merely defined as general sets of action or expectations in the first stages of a child's life, without the pre-setting of rigid means or resources – social norms, values, beliefs and identities – which need to be activated in the first years of a child's life. Only during his or her development do parents tend to re-adapt and re-build certain educational lines according to the particular situations needing a solution (Rodríguez Marcos, 2006). However, the need to negotiate and reconcile different models and national upbringing styles may not be free of tension and may force the acceptance of not easily foreseeable pacts within the family unit (see Rodríguez Garcia, 2006).

According to the findings of various investigations, the foremost priority areas invested in by interethnic families in the process of children's socialization are those related to language transmission, the type of school selected and the nature of the social networks supporting the family (Deprez and Dreyfus, 1998; Norwicka, 2006; Rodríguez Marcos, 2006; Wagner, 1998). These choices are not only made for the positive rewards and advantages that they might bring for the child's future, but also for the importance attributed to affiliation with the ethnic group minority (Finnäs and O'Leary, 2003). Choosing certain child-rearing strategies over others implies the capacity to select the most prestigious and powerful resources that can be turned into important social capital. They can then act as distinctive symbols to maintain an upper-middle class position or guarantee the "ethnic prestige" associated with particular national cultures (Lieberson, 1985). The socialization options related to a child's future are thus good indicators of

the social strategies developed by dominant minority parents to reproduce or attain social mobility in their class trajectories⁴.

When it comes to *language transmission*, the parents' decision is most often to retain both native linguistic codes. However, the most highly educated groups were found to be more motivated and aware of the symbolic and positive benefits that investment in the bilingual skills represents in contemporary societies (Finnäs and O'Leary, 2003; Rodríguez Marcos, 2006; Wagner, 1998; Weenink, 2008). Being able to express oneself in two or more languages is seen nowadays as a powerful resource that enriches the symbolic and social capital of the child and augments his or her competitive capabilities for the future (Weenink, 2007, 2008). On the other hand, there is also an affective meaning associated with the importance attributed to bilingualism by transnational families, as it enables the child to communicate with the extended family, especially grandparents and close relatives.

According to Rodríguez Marcos (2006), three strategies can be found in language transmission: first, the parents do not teach their own languages to their offspring since they speak a third language at home (often English). Second, only one of the parents teaches his or her language to the child, which turns out to be the only language spoken at home. Third, both parents teach their language to the children who, to a greater or lesser degree, learn to communicate in both linguistic codes. A fourth scenario to be considered, which we shall examine further on, is the coexistence of at least three languages in a child's language acquisition process: within mixed partnerships, it may well happen that both father and mother teach their own languages to the children and that neither of these is spoken in the host country.

However, research on bi-cultural education (Deprez and Dreyfus, 1998; Norwicka, 2006) has shown that the situation is really more complex than this since, in the end, the language of the destination society tends to dominate over other minority languages spoken within the family unit. This means that an interethnic child may not always have balanced bilingual skills or may not identify her or himself, either with the two parents' original cultures, since the prevailing scenario is that the leading culture of the host society turns out to dominate.

⁴A classical study on children's educational strategies across different social class positions is the one developed by Kellerhals and Montadon (1991).

Another element that determines the level of bilingual skills and cultural dominance in a child's identity is whether or not one of the parents is a national citizen. Research conducted by Deprez and Dreyfus (1998) in Paris and Dakar with mixed couples revealed that when one of the parents was a native citizen, the language transmission of the foreigner partner was more likely to be disregarded within the family unit, whereas if both parents belonged to different national settings, it was more likely that both foreign languages were preserved.

Furthermore, the gender of the parent is also interpreted as conditioning language transmission: several studies have stressed the central role that the mother plays in the child's linguistic development (Deprez and Dreyfus, 1998; Finnäs and O'Leary, 2003; Lomsky-Feder, 2010; Norwicka, 2006). Traditionally, the role of the mother has been more directly linked to the daily care for the children, not only in the organization of the household but also on the emotional support side (Torres, 2008; Torres and Silva, 1998). By assuming this leading affective role, the mother is more likely to be constantly attentive in transmitting language and correcting the child's linguistic skills, regardless of whether she is native-born or a foreigner.

A second area in which interethnic parents tend to invest is the type of *school system* they prefer for their children. The choice regarding formal education (private/public, national/international) is extremely important since it is one of the most powerful sources of ethnic transmission (Lieberson, 1985; Finnäs and O'Leary, 2003; Wagner, 1998; Weenink, 2008). Bi-national families do dedicate a lot of effort to selecting the most suitable school for their children. This choice can be determined by their personal situation, the length of time they plan to stay in the destination country, future migration projects, the degree and nature of familial and community support networks and, most obviously, the quality attributed to different educational institutions⁵.

Another factor that I consider to be highly influential in their schooling decision is their level of commitment to the country of residence. In fact, those who register their children in national school systems tend to reveal a clear effort to assimilate. The use of formal national institutions symbolizes a wish to socialize their children in a "truly"

⁵For a deep analysis of the formal and informal educational solutions taken by Portuguese couples for their children in Lisbon, see Torres and Silva (1998).

homogeneous culture, which can boost their level of social integration through personal relationships developed with local peers or through the assimilation of the values, behaviours and practices of the society they live in. However, because we are dealing with a social group from an upper-middle class background, the reputation attributed to certain national school systems in terms of the quality of the curriculum and teachers can also be an important element when opting for a particular ethnic-majority institution.

On the other hand, when an ethnic-minority school⁶ is selected, this choice can be seen as a strategy for the reproduction or upward mobility of an upper-middle class (Weenink, 2007, 2008). Studies conducted by Wagner (1998) on transnational families living in France and Weenink (2007, 2008) on upper-middle class parents in the Netherlands have shown that enrolment in international institutions not only follows a strategy of acquiring social prestige but also – and most importantly – the transmission of cosmopolitan capital to the children. In fact, international educational systems tend to be selective in their student recruitment, either due to the fact that they are conceived as legitimate institutions for privileged ethnic-minority groups or because they can only be afforded by upper-middle class parents. The permanent interweaving of students enrolled in these schools justifies the arrangement of their curricula according to contents that are easily transferable to other national environments and, therefore, suitable for the education of a “transnational social elite”.

Apart the fact that ethnic-minority schools represent a strategic choice for the reproduction of upper-middle social groups, they also represent one of the few resources that interethnic parents have available for transmitting their minority languages and socializing children into an international atmosphere close to their cultural and national repertoires. Most often, these schools can be conceived as “small societies” ruled by their own social codes and formal educational principles which do, in fact, play an important role in the transmission of ethnic identification, not only by reinforcing the ethnic linguistic skills but also by transmitting wider cultural reference points in a foreign context to particular social groups (Finnäs and O’Leary, 2003; Lieberson, 1985; Wagner, 1998).

⁶By ‘ethnic-minority school’ I mean those international institutions, not only in Lisbon but almost in every European capital, such as the British School, the German School, the French School and the Spanish School.

For this reason, international schools also function as a privileged meeting place where both children and parents can encounter people from different cultural origins who contribute to their affiliation with a transnational culture (Wagner, 1998). Being part of an internationalized formal system represents, for some ethnic minority groups, an opportunity of participating in interethnic and multicultural enclaves who tend to reinforce feelings of group cohesion and social identity. This illustrates both the importance that *social networks* have on mixed families' adaptation to a host society and the degree to which those networks are also related to certain parental educational choices.

The existence of national social ties that help people to act on their daily routine and acquire a sense of being part of a receiving society is extremely important for the success of both children and parents' social integration. Adjustment to migration can benefit from fluid and constant interaction between the migrant and his or her living environment, since some processes of adaptation to the main culture can be more rapidly achieved through social contacts with the local citizens. Where one member of the couple is a native of the host state, the social support system may be tied more directly to the locality than in situations where neither is a national citizen (Gaspar, 2009; Rother 2008; Santacreu and Francés, 2008; Scott and Cartledge, 2009)⁷. In fact, these couples may suffer more from the lack of informal and practical support (e.g. help in caring for the children) and therefore intensify their transnational social contacts, which can sometimes mitigate the need for social assistance (e.g. profiting from grandparents' visits to invest more in professional or conjugal life) (Ackers, 1998; Stalford, 2005).

This is why when difficulties are felt with integration into national support systems, a mixed (both national and foreign) or international friendship network helps some families to surmount social isolation. Also, kinship ties with, for example, extended family members, friends, work colleagues, and neighbours can provide an important tool for assessing families' choices about the children's socialization. Being

⁷A research developed by Torres and Silva (1998) on domestic and child arrangements in Lisbon, has revealed that recurring to family networks (mainly to grandmothers) for child care assistance is less common than it would have been expected among national Portuguese families (15 to 19% of the observed cases). However, the nature of this family help tends to increase to 20% whenever it is made on an informal and discontinuous basis, like taking sometimes children to school or staying with them for a couple of hours while parents cannot.

able to count on other transnational families' experience and know-how in day-to-day matters such as schooling, medical care, child care services and affective support is a vital social capital in the migration adjustment process.

All in all, despite the fact that interethnic children's education is related to various macro and micro social processes that weave between the leading and minority cultures, some of the most important parental choices are connected, as we have seen, with language transmission, the school system and the nature of social ties. In the pages below, after clarifying certain methodological procedures developed in my research, I shall reflect on the empirical evidence that has emerged in each of the issues mentioned above.

III. Methodology

The Project

Regarding the empirical focus of this investigation, a qualitative methodology has been used as a means of understanding the family choices made in their children's upbringing. Although parents were contacted and asked to participate in the study, using a snowball technique, I tried to include participants from as many different social and cultural backgrounds as possible. After providing them with the preliminary information by e-mail or telephone, semi-directed interviews of approximately one-and-a-half hours were arranged and conducted with each parent. The interviews took place in the interviewee's home or office, the interviewer's home, or public places, and were conducted in English, Portuguese or Spanish, depending on each parent's language capabilities. Contrary to previous investigations that only focused on one partner (Scott and Cartledge, 2009), each parent was separately asked the same questions in order to obtain an individual perspective of the child's upbringing within the family unit. As this technique has barely been used in previous studies, I consider it constitutes a significant methodological contribution to studies centred on family lives, in that it provides a wider and more complete portrait of both the mother and the father's choices and projects for their children. The information on the child-rearing strategies was analysed, as mentioned before, on the basis of a number of general dimensions focusing on

language transmission, the type of school selected, and the nature of the social networks supporting the family.

Participants

The original data reported here was collected from 24 individuals, representing 12 European interethnic families who had been living in the Greater Lisbon area for at least one year before the interview. On average, the couples had 2 children, whose ages ranged from 2 months to 10 years. The children of 10 of the couples had dual nationality (both the father's and the mother's) and only 2 couples had opted for single nationality for their offspring. The parents were recruited according to a particular group structure so as to control for gender and nationality (for a socio-demographic overview, see Table 1 in Appendix 1):

- Portuguese men married to/cohabiting with European women (4 couples);
- Portuguese women married to/cohabiting with European men (4 couples);
- Non-Portuguese European men married to/cohabiting with non-Portuguese European women (4 couples);

If we take a look into their socio-demographic profile, the mean age was 37 years, with the men being somewhat older (39 years) than the women (36 years). On average, the relationship had existed for 9 years, including the dating period and the marriage or cohabitation period itself. Nine couples were married and the remaining 3 were cohabiting. The socio-economic status of these parents was high and all interviewees were highly educated – 12 had a bachelor's degree, 5 a master's degree, and 7 a PhD – and had professional histories matching these levels of credentials. However, though in most of these marriages both the mother and the father were working (9 dual-earner couples), there were 3 sole breadwinners among the men. A large proportion of the interviewees mentioned that they had lived in foreign countries apart from Portugal (two, on average). All participants were able to speak English competently, and had mastered at least four different languages.

IV. Assessing family educational strategies among bi-national children'

An analysis of the data resulting from the interviews allowed to delineate certain ideal types of parental choice, on the basis of language transmission (monolingual, bilingual, trilingual), formal education (public/private, national/international schools), and the nature of social networks supporting the family (national, mixed, international). As a result of this, three types of family child-raising strategies emerged – *the family assimilation strategy*, *bi-national family strategy*, and *peripatetic family strategy*.

The criteria behind the definition of these ideal types combined different dimensions. The *family assimilation strategy* required the existence of at least two of these dimensions: Portuguese as the dominant mother tongue, enrolment in a Portuguese state or private school and native Portuguese citizens as the principal source of the social networks. The *bi-national family strategy* had to involve at least a couple of the following processes: bilingual skills (equal mastery of two languages), attendance at a national or international state/private school, and mixed or international social networks. Finally, for a couple to be included under the *peripatetic family strategy*, parents had to exhibit at least two of the following patterns of socialization: trilingual skills without a clear dominance of one of the languages, the choice of a private or public international school, and international social networks as the main source of social capital. Table 1 presents the types of parental choices taken by each EU couple:

Table 2 – Types of family child-raising strategy in mixed EU couples

Type of couple	Name	Assimilation Strategy	Bi-national Strategy	Peripatetic Strategy
Portuguese Man - European Woman	Paulo Athina	X		
	Miguel Gertrude		X	
	Rodrigo Ema	X		
	Bernardo Hanna			X
European Man - Portuguese Woman	Markus Carlota		X	
	Albert Sara		X	
	Johann Sónia	X		
	Jan Andreia	X		
	François Giulia			X
European Man - European Woman	Sean Claire		X	
	Knut Marguerite			X
	Josep Annette	X		

As we can see from Table 2, although there is no clear pattern in the relationship between the types of EU couple and the child-raising strategies, a scenario of social assimilation or bi-culturalism appears to be most likely when at least one of the parents is a native Portuguese citizen. Similarly, when both parents originate from two different countries (excluding Portugal), a peripatetic model is most common. If we now compare all the patterns observed, the most frequent is the *family assimilation model* (5 cases), followed by the *bi-national family strategy* (4 cases) and the *peripatetic family pattern* (3 cases). Furthermore, contrary to what was indicated by earlier investigations (Deprez and Dreyfus, 1998), gender differences do not appear to determine child-raising choices on these families.

In the next sections of the chapter, I shall make a detailed analysis of the ideal child-raising types mentioned above.

A) *Family assimilation strategy*

This strategy requires a deliberate effort of assimilation into the host country by both members of the couple. In this case, and as mentioned before, certain issues involving language skills, type of school and social network links can be said to be very much like those found within Portuguese society, since its culture and social norms become dominant over those of the European ethnic minority. Parental attitudes towards child-raising are therefore consciously developed along the lines of Portuguese culture, which prevails in the development of the social and personal identity of the child.

How, then, are these choices translated into specific family practices? According to the criteria set above, an *assimilation strategy* is developed when Portuguese becomes the dominant language, a local school is selected, and the main network ties are with the Portuguese. In a word, Portuguese culture is taken as the benchmark. This is what happens in the case of Johann (German) and Sónia (Portuguese): Portuguese is the only language spoken by the family, their children go to a state school and, though their circle of friends includes one or two foreigners, the core of their social network is Portuguese. Johann is pretty clear when explaining why he does not speak German to his children:

"I made some attempts but I was never persistent! Apart from that, I used to feel I said things and no else understood! My wife didn't understand, and the kids didn't understand... Maybe it was easy if my wife would understand German, it would be easy to establish German at home and Portuguese outside... But as she doesn't speak, I didn't do that. But I think I failed. If I would have been persistent, my kids would have learnt. But I wasn't, and so they did not learn.... And that wasn't an important issue to me..."

(Johann, German, married to Sónia, Portuguese)

Johann's discourse reveals two central ideas justifying not teaching one's native language. First of all, if one parent is not able to speak or understand the mother tongue of the other, the communication between father/mother and child is disturbed, as it is felt that one of the parents is left out by the other. In fact, communication between one of the parents and the child not only involves them but is often a subtle message to the other partner. Secondly, for some individuals, choosing or not to invest in language transmission is associated with the symbolic significance or meanings attributed to their mother tongue. This attitude may well be related to weaker attachment to the original

national identity or to permanent settlement, which tends to increase a migrant's level of social and cultural assimilation.

Moreover, apart the exclusive use of Portuguese as the language in Johann and Sonia's family unit, the type of school that their children attend is also consistent with an assimilation strategy. Economic and logistic factors can also contribute to the parents' decision when they opt for a particular school system over another: as Sónia says, they chose a Portuguese state school not merely because they wanted their children "*to feel Portuguese and not feel different*" but also for economic reasons, as the German school is extremely expensive for them, and because of the distance from where they live.

Paulo (Portuguese) and Athina (Greek) can also be included among those adopting an assimilation strategy. Though both of them speak to their son in their native languages, he goes to a private Portuguese nursery and will enter the national school system later. Apart from one or two mixed couples that they know, the family's social network is mainly Portuguese. As Paulo recognizes, the preponderance of the national environment will be decisive in structuring his son's identity and upbringing, with Greek culture representing a sort of "imagined and exotic community" where they normally spend their summer holidays. The lack of educational structures (i.e. a Greek school) in Lisbon seems, in part, to condition the choice of school for their son and, therefore, influences their level of commitment to the country they are living in. As Athina recognizes,

"My son will never feel Greek the way I do... He's only going to feel Greek through me, through the relationship he has with me... And here in Portugal I think I cannot teach him much more than the language..."

(Athina, Greek, married to Paulo, Portuguese)

Although an assimilation strategy is possibly more likely in a couple in which one member belongs to the society, this needs not always to be so. In fact, one of the couples interviewed – Josep (Spanish) and Annette (German) – belonged to two different foreign backgrounds but still adopted rearing processes closer to the Portuguese. According to them, the most important thing to bear in mind in their children's socialization was the need to give them a cultural and geographical basis with which they could consistently identify. And even though both of them usually use their mother tongue to speak to their sons, the home language is Portuguese, which they said

is the main means of communication between the couple and the children's best spoken language. Additionally, when mentioning the type of school selected, Annette explains:

"We are not going to put our children in international schools – either German or Spanish – because they already have these two cultures, these two languages, and they need to feel that their basis is only at one specific country. We think that they should feel Portuguese... Yes, they should feel that they are Portuguese!"

(Annette, German, cohabiting with Josep, Spanish)

In opting for a school in the Portuguese state system, the couple illustrates a clear effort to integrate into the receiving country and, ultimately, avoid the danger felt by various interethnic parents of bringing up their children in a European *in-between space*. They want to provide them, instead, with a sense of emotional and cultural belonging. Attendance at a state school will contribute to the development of a "*unique cultural input*" capable of guaranteeing good Portuguese as the first language and strengthening the social networks with their Portuguese peers and their parents. Being immersed in Portuguese society is viewed as the "ideal child-raising choice" for children to acquire a solid and unambiguous cultural identity.

B) Bi-national family strategy

The second socialization pattern emerging from the qualitative data requires a "living commitment" on the cultures of both parents, by investing on an equal footing in the transmission of the two national contexts of reference. This educational process leads to the creation of a *bi-cultural upbringing* which not only implies achieving equilibrium by acquiring different linguistic resources and national social codes, but may also mean dividing families' lives between two places of residence in Europe. These couples' discourse is particularly interesting because it shows that the best solution for a child's upbringing within an EU space of personal mobility is not simply *assimilation into one parent's country* but *simultaneous assimilation into those of both*. Markus is particularly clear-sighted when explaining this idea:

"I try to build an environment between Berlin and Lisbon... I think it would be good to our children if they feel two geographic anchors. And I feel possible to build that, two places where they can relate to. I would like them to speak perfectly two languages (German and Portuguese), that can they progress and identify with both countries. If we stay

here in Portugal I would like them to go to a German school because I would be afraid that their German would not be perfect. I want them to relate in German, it is important to me. And I give them CDs and books in German too..."
(Markus, German, married to Carlota, Portuguese)

As mentioned above, following a bi-national assimilation strategy also implies learning both parents' languages perfectly since bilingualism is assumed to be an enriching social capital and one that is central to developing a "truly dual identity". Moreover, in Markus's opinion, the intention to send the children to the German school is an important way of ensuring that their formal education will take place within the culture of the ethnic minority parent. Actually, several of the couples who can be included in this socialization strategy mentioned the importance of sending their offspring to an international school as a way of "compensating" the cultural and symbolic dominance of Portugal as the home country. Besides, in Markus's view, raising children in a bi-cultural environment and thus giving them a solid sense of having a dual identity and two national attachments will not necessarily induce a sense of rootedness in them. As he clearly explains,

"We don't want to have 'Euro-children'. We want to have children raised with two European identities, but we don't want children that could feel everywhere and nowhere in Europe."
(Markus, German, married to Carlota, Portuguese)

Like Markus and Carlota, Sean (Irish) and Claire (French-Belgian) try to raise their children in the setting of a bi-cultural identity, though there is a difference. Although they represent a type of European mixed couple that lives in a foreign state, this does not necessarily entails bringing the children up in more than both parents' own cultures. In this particular case, the leading role of Portuguese culture tends to be minimized, as the family unit lives "socially apart" from the host country. One of the elements that most determines this "socio-cultural isolation" is language and their own social/working conditions in Lisbon: they have not mastered Portuguese, Sean's working environment is predominantly international, their children go to the French school, and almost all their friends are foreign. They are what are usually termed "expatriates". Moreover, as they come from two different national settings, they clearly show social reproduction practices by stressing the importance of raising their children in both an English-speaking and French-speaking cultural environment:

“Our oldest daughter has been to French school. And she’s going to get English school for Secondary School. For us it is very important to be completely equal, to keep both at the same level. So we know that her English is not that good but she understands it very well, she speaks it very well, but it is not as perfect as the French... So she’ll go to do the Secondary School in English at the age of 12 or 11 ...”

(Claire, French-Belgian, married to Sean, Irish)

In Sean and Claire’s child-rearing projects, there was a quite evidently competition in the search for a bi-cultural equilibrium in socialization. In fact, some of these partnerships reveal a subtle tension in the possible dominance of one culture over the other. In these situations, the child is brought up in an environment where the conjugal relationship frequently implies counterbalancing the dominant role of one parent’s culture. But reaching perfect bi-cultural symmetry may prove unachievable on a long-term basis since it can depend on the *length of stay* of the family in a particular country (Deprez and Dreyfus, 1998; Norwicka, 2006).

C) Peripatetic family strategy

This last type of strategy involves the presence of at least three different cultures structuring family-life routine, i.e. the mother and the father’s own cultures and that of a third one. The coexistence of multiple socio-cultural backgrounds in daily rituals, habits and behaviours frequently leads to the creation of a hybrid ethnic environment within the family unit, without the presence of a leading culture capable of functioning as a matrix of reference. Moreover, parents who develop a peripatetic socialization pattern tend to perceive the host state as a *transitory place*, and hardly ever as a place of permanent settlement. This attitude contributes to a *detached way of living*, which tends to reflect certain instrumental choices in the receiving society that guarantee a minimum level of assimilation in this way of life. The most usual scenario in this option is that the children are raised speaking more than two languages, they normally attend an international school, and their social support system is characterized by non-native individuals who tend to reinforce this semi-level of social integration and perpetuate a permanently denationalized cultural life.

The family of François (French) and Giulia (Italian) surely illustrates this interethnic complexity. They both speak their native languages with their children, of whom the older one attends an international kindergarten and the younger one has a

daily Portuguese nanny at home. As such, the children's upbringing is structured around three linguistic codes, without any being dominant. Difficulties in language adaptation are perceived by the parents as a consequence of mobility:

“When we moved here, I was a little disappointed, you know? And it was tough, especially for the kids. Because our oldest son had to go to the crèche, he has three years old, and he didn't like here because it was in another environment, another language, another kind of school, another system... So latter, we've changed his school and had put him in another one because we thought he was a bit sad...”

(Giulia, Italian, cohabiting with François, French)

The family plans to send their children to the French school as a way of ensuring that at least one language is learnt correctly and, also, because professional reasons still prevent them from knowing whether they will settle permanently in Lisbon or will have to move to another European country. This scenario of future mobility frequently appears in the discourses of EU mixed couples, as having a partner of a different national origin always entails the possibility of moving to that country sometime in the couple's life. Sending children to international schools is not only a means of transmitting a formal education in one parent's native language but also a tactic for providing an education that can be easily transferred to another national context. When it comes to social networks and acquaintances, most of the people that François and Giulia interact with are expatriates with children, or single foreigners. Foreign couples are the most typical partnerships in their social support system, which helps to reinforce the multicultural environment their children are brought up in and also maintains the “distant living” from Portuguese society.

Although a peripatetic strategy is more likely to be pursued by mixed couples in which neither of the partners is a native citizen of the society they live in, this is not necessarily the case. Bernardo (Portuguese) and Hanna (Polish) exhibit the same attitude in their daughters' upbringing. With regard to language transmission, Hanna says,

“I speak in Polish with my children... And my husband speaks with them in Portuguese, but we teach them English as well. We do that as a kind of a game, we also ask them things in English and they enjoy it. It's kind of a fun thing!”

(Hanna, Polish, married to Bernardo, Portuguese)

The coexistence of three languages in a family environment where one of the parents is Portuguese is justified by the symbolic and functional usefulness of English in

an international context. As Bernardo states at some point, *“English is the most useful language to use in any context”*, and for this reason the couple is strongly motivated to send their children to a private English-speaking school that can offer the best guarantee in terms of teaching quality (see also Wagner, 1998; Weenink, 2007). The project of raising their children in an international setting is therefore a deliberate choice to transmit the appropriate cosmopolitan capital to them for a possible international lifestyle in the future. Furthermore, the social networks that usually relate to the family mainly involve foreigners or mixed couples with at least one Portuguese partner:

“They are normally mixed couples... They are normally colleagues from the university, where at least one of the partners is a foreigner. Sometimes both are, but normally just one of them is. And the kindergarten where our daughters go also has many children whose parents are not Portuguese. So they have immense contact with an international community. And that environment is similar to the one they also have. And that might help them not to feel so strange, so different from the other kids....”

(Bernardo, Portuguese, married to Hanna, Polish)

Bernardo and Hanna’s child-rearing practices demonstrate a clear effort on the level of social class reproduction trajectories, in that they favour both trilingual skills within the family unit and attendance at an international English-speaking school. They believe this will be an instrument for their daughters’ acquisition of cosmopolitan capital and other prestigious and potent resources capable of positioning them in a privileged ethnic minority group (see Finnäs and O’Leary, 2003; Wagner, 1998; Weenink, 2007, 2008). Though Portuguese, Bernardo is carrying out certain distinctive socialization strategies aimed at reproducing the practices and lifestyles of an upper-middle class whose symbolic prestige is associated with an elite international environment.

V. Conclusion

Children belonging to ethnically dominant minority groups have hardly been taken into consideration in studies of migration and minority communities. However, this topic is particularly relevant if we take the space of EU intra-mobility today and the new socio-political conditions associated with migration in contemporary societies.

When moving, EU migrants and their children have similar civic rights to those of nationals of the host states, which make them a privileged social group within the minority communities. Moreover, not only is having an EU nationality perceived as more prestigious and valued within multicultural contexts but these groups also tend to originate from more highly educated backgrounds (see Recchi and Favell, 2009). Within an “ethnic ranking system” (Liebersohn, 1985), even in contexts where social groups are an ethnic minority, the symbolic affiliation attributed to their ethnic status and social class may be given a more positive value than belonging to a dominant group.

Accordingly, the implications that the phenomenon of privileged European children from these migrant family units has for debates on upbringing among minorities is crucial. Developing this view, and partly trying to overcome the absence of research on dominant minorities’ socialization patterns, this chapter centred on the rearing strategies of EU mixed families in an upper-middle class position. Parental decision-making on issues like language transmission, the choice of school, and the nature of social networks were analysed and then used in the production of three ideal types of upbringing – a *family assimilation strategy*, *bi-national family strategy*, and *peripatetic family strategy*. In accordance with Weenink’s view (2007, 2008) of child-raising processes under conditions of cultural homogeneity, the EU bi-national families assessed in this research also exhibited practices of social reproduction in their children’s socialization goals. The driving force behind parents’ attitudes is the will to transmit “cosmopolitan capital” to their offspring, even in situations where assimilation into Portuguese culture is more obvious. The perceived benefits of bilingual skills, the transferability of the formal knowledge acquired in international schools, and interaction with transnational communities are conceived as strategies for reproducing cultural models adjustable to a *moving culture*, not only within the EU internal space but also in more global environments.

Thus, further research assessing the child-raising and social integration processes of ethnic minorities should expand the theoretical debate on privileged children’s socialization. This subject is particularly relevant within contemporary multicultural contexts since it implies different dynamics of assimilation between the majority and minority groups. In this case, the traditional leading role attributed to the

culture of the receiving society over those of migrant minorities needs to be reconsidered, since EU interethnic children can compete with prestigious and potent resources as a “cosmopolitan minority elite”. In this interplay, various processes of ethnization may emerge within privileged migrant families: the fact of being a “dominant minority” can entail important advantages when trying to negotiate recognition and legitimacy as an ethnic social group, and it also can lead to processes of cultural reconstruction capable of promoting social cohesion and solidarity within multicultural settings, not only inside but also outside the EU.

Appendix 1:

Table 1 – Socio-demographic information of the EU mixed families

Type of couple	Name	Sex	Age	Nationality	Length of relationship	Number of children	Age of the children	Nationality of the children	Languages of the children
HP - ME	Paulo	M	42	Portuguese	11 years	1	3 years	Portuguese and Greek	Portuguese and Greek
	Athina	F	38	Greek					
	Miguel	M	34	Portuguese	10 years	2	7 and 3 years	Portuguese and Maltese	Portuguese and English
	Gertrude	F	39	Maltese					
	Rodrigo	M	36	Portuguese	5 years	2	2 years and 3 months	Portuguese and Lithuanian	Portuguese and Lithuanian
MP-HE	Ema	F	29	Lithuanian					
	Bernardo	M	36	Portuguese	8 years	2	4 and 2 years	Portuguese and Polish	Portuguese, Polish some English
	Hanna	F	31	Polish					
	Markus	M	39	German	10 years	2	3 years and 6 months	Portuguese and German	Portuguese and German
	Carlota	F	32	Portuguese					
HE - ME	Albert	M	33	Belgian	9 years	1	2 months	Portuguese and Belgium	Portuguese and French
	Sara	F	33	Portuguese					
	Johann	M	42	German	10 years	2	9 and 6 years	Portuguese and German (oldest)	Portuguese
	Sónia	F	35	Portuguese					
	Jan	M	47	Belgian	2 years	1	3 months	Portuguese and Belgium	Portuguese
HE - ME	Andreia	F	34	Portuguese					
	François	M	34	French	5 years	2	3 and 1 year	French and Italian	French, Italian, Norwegian
	Giulia	F	37	Italian					
	Sean	M	40	Irish	15 years	3	6 and 2 years, 3 months	French and Belgium	English and French
	Claire	F	40	F.-Belgian					
	Knut	M	47	Norwegian	15 years	2	13 and 10 years	French	French, Norweg. Portuguese
HE - ME	Marguerite	F	43	French					
	Josep	M	36	Spanish	13 years	2	1 and 4	Spanish	Catalan, German Portuguese
HE - ME	Angela	F	36	German					

Acknowledgements

The author is particularly grateful to Anália for constructive observations on the content of this text. She is also indebted to Diana Maciel, Cláudia Casimiro, Cristina Marques, Madga Nico and Tiago Lapa for insightful comments on an earlier draft of this text.

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