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**Success and limits of interculturalism: Sephardic
belonging and identity in Québec**

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Abstract: This article focuses on religious and linguistic pluralism in a multinational state by examining the ways in which Moroccan Jews from different generations who are born in and outside of Canada negotiate their sense of belonging. Drawing on life-story interviews with members of the community living in Quebec—and thus devoted to empirical findings and discussions—it examines how a sense of belonging is expressed in a linguistically and religiously unique context of a multinational state by Sephardic identities. It argues that while narratives on linguistic commonality remain salient by allowing a rapprochement to the Franco-Quebecois majority, narratives regarding the religious difference nonetheless limits Moroccan Jewish belonging in Quebec. This article fleshes out spatial immigrant diversity and Canadian linguistic and religious pluralism and evinces a generational difference pertaining to Moroccan Jews through the medium of narratives of belonging in Quebec.

Keywords: Interculturalism, citizenship, Sephardim, Quebec, generational difference, belonging

Introduction

The Inquisition as a destroyer of progress and prosperity in the Iberian nations is intimately related to Iberian Jewry's expulsion or elimination as a factor in Iberian life—a factor which had greatly influenced and enhanced Spain and Portugal. The historian's importance is in his documentation of this process, a process which we see through his eyes. In order to better understand the subject, we must also better understand the historian involved with it (Lorence 1982: 13, 14).

L'article 19 de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme de 1948 énonce la liberté d'expression de la manière suivante : « *Tout individu a droit à la liberté d'opinion et d'expression, ce qui implique le droit de ne pas être inquiété pour ses opinions et celui de chercher, de recevoir et de répandre, sans considérations de frontières, les informations et les idées par quelque moyen d'expression que ce soit* ». L'expression apparemment redondante (surtout en anglais : « *right to freedom of opinion and expression* ») veut dire que c'est l'opinion ou l'expression « indépendante » de celle des autres qui doit rester « libre », ou ne pas être soumise à des contraintes et à des interdits (Balibar 2018: 55).

Following the Inquisitions in the fifteenth century, Jews who were expelled¹ from Iberian Peninsula what today is called Spain and Portugal were able to survive by relocating to various places such as the Ottoman Empire, Morocco, and the Balkans. In Canada, although the first Sephardic migration dates back to the Renaissance period, it was only in the wake of the Holocaust in Europe, the decolonization of North Africa, the rise of Arab nationalism, and anti-Judaism that

¹ During this time Jews were either burned alive, forced to convert to Christianity, or driven out of the country.

the Sephardic mass migration to the country began (Levy/Cohen 1998: 95; Train 2006; Cohen 2012). As in the United States, Sephardic Jews are a small minority in Canada, unlike the established Ashkenazi community from eastern, western, and central Europe (Miles 2007; Ben-Ur 2012; Tobin et al. 2005; Papo 1986; Anctil 2011). In both the United States and Canada there are Sephardic Jews from Morocco and the Ottoman Empire and its successor states (Naar 2015), yet most of Canada's Sephardim born outside of the country are Moroccan (see table 1 below for the case in Quebec) and they settled in and around Montreal and Toronto² in the second half of the twentieth century.

Historically, within Canada, it is possible to contemplate three waves of Sephardic immigration: the first taking place between 1957 and 1964 directly from Morocco, the second between 1966 and 1970 either from France or Israel³, and the third after the 1970s, mostly through family reunification and for job-related reasons (Lasry 1981). In order to facilitate their entry into Canada, many of the first wave Moroccan Jewish immigrants got help from the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee. Immediately after they arrived, the majority of those who had French as their mother tongue—or were francophones or Francophiles—settled in Quebec. The Sephardic community structure in and around Toronto is different from that in Quebec; the majority of Sephardic immigrants arrived from Tangier, the former Spanish zone of Morocco, and are hispanophone (Cohen 1989).

Taken from the National Household Survey of 2011, Shahar (2015) highlights demographical findings and numbers concerning Sephardic population distribution in Quebec but not in the rest of Canada. The only scientific information we have comes from the 2001 census

² There are also small Sephardic groups in Vancouver, Ottawa, and Winnipeg.

³ For the second wave, it is prudent to mention social and class differences among immigrants. While community leaders preferred to go to France and stay there, the middle class and merchants tended to immigrate to the Americas, while the working class remained in Israel (Fillion 1978).

pinpointing 8,070 Sephardim living in Toronto and 870 in Vancouver (Cohen 2011: 177). However, the National Household Survey of 2011 tells us that Montreal hosts 22,225 Sephardic Jews which represents 24.5% of the total Montreal Jewish population of 90,780.

The majority of works on Canada's Sephardim are limited to historical and linguistic integration of Moroccan Jewry in Quebec (Berduogo et al. 1987; Cohen et al. 2017). Researching generational experiences of Moroccan Jews through an analysis of linguistic and religious belonging of people in Quebec is what separates this article from previous studies. In the following pages, I present empirical findings of my qualitative interviews with people from different generations and explore how Moroccan Jews negotiate their belonging in Quebec.

Method and Data

I conducted my interviews from a distance during the COVID-19 pandemic from summer 2020 to winter 2021 when the participants and the researcher alike were spending most of their time at home⁴. I organized Zoom meetings with each participant and listened to their life story, from birth to their arrival and afterward in Canada. The duration of my interviews varied from sixty minutes to one hundred eighty minutes, but I also carried out additional conversations through email and Zoom to examine some narratives more thoroughly and to continue my communication with the community. All of my participants knew that I was a non-Jewish female researcher, originally from Turkey, studying Canada's Sephardim. Recruitment for my in-depth interviews was organized in three ways: (1) I used the snowball sampling technique and asked for referrals from people I already knew in the community, to make more acquaintances; (2) I made a public

⁴ I have to admit that "staying home" decisively facilitated my work despite the paramount effects of the pandemic. As a researcher, I found myself in a position where "listening" became a form of solidarity and a humanistic duty rather than solely a means to conduct research. I also believe there was no hierarchical power relation between me and my interviewees through my practice of speaking for others (Alcoff 1991) due to our continuous communication.

announcement of my research on social media and (3) I asked for referrals from the people I newly met and interviewed.

The data has been gathered from life-story interviews with fifteen people, most of whom originally come from southern Morocco and live in Montreal. I talked with six women and eleven men whose ages ranged from twenty-eight to eighty-four. The names of the participants have been changed to maintain confidentiality. While my interviews with the elder generation were all conducted in French, I carried out my interviews with the younger generation both in English and French. Transcripts were registered and produced from Zoom videos and shared with research participants if they so desired. My elder interviewees from Morocco were born in Casablanca, Safi, Tangier, Kenitra, Mogador, and Rabat with some having Sephardic parents or grandparents from cities such as Essaouira, Smyrna, Marrakesh, and Fez. Among five participants belonging to the younger generation group, two of them now live in Toronto.

Rather than focusing on what an individual remembers about a particular historical issue, event, or time—as with oral history interviewing—my life-story interviewing took the form of understanding a person’s entire life (Atkinson 2007). Through my interviews, I was especially interested in understanding participants’ sense of belonging in Quebec by listening to their family and migration trajectories. It was through individuals’ stories that I became aware of their lives, recognized the meaning of their trajectories, and acknowledged them (Becker 1998: 14). How representative this article’s qualitative outcomes are for Sephardic identification in Quebec as a whole, of course, is open to debate. Without any doubt, the meaning of Sephardic identity can be explored distinctively in different contexts and situations, at different times, and with different actors. Sephardic Jews cannot be considered a monolithic group—either temporally, spatially, linguistically, ideologically, or economically—and the Sephardic experience within Canada is

surely unique compared to that in other parts of the world. The difference in experiences can be observed among people coming from the same culture or country, as this article attempts to do through its generational approach. As a result, I consider my findings a source of information rather than a truth claim.

Multinationalism and minority nationalism

Canada is not a nation and, historically speaking, it has never been so. As a multinational state, Canada is a fitting case study to debate questions of nation-building, belonging, citizenship, and identity. Even though their experiences and place in history are different, both Indigenous peoples and the Franco-Quebecois—not all francophone Canadians—are defined as non-immigrant national minorities, and unlike immigrants “have fought to form themselves (or rather to maintain themselves) as separate and self-governing societies, and have adopted the language of ‘nationhood’ both to express and to justify this struggle for self-government” (Kymlicka 1998, 127). Therefore, “it is no coincidence that the Quebec provincial legislature is called the ‘National Assembly,’ or that the main organization of Aboriginals is called the ‘Assembly of First Nations’” and that there are nation-based Inuit and Métis organizations (Ibid.).

It is indeed important to emphasize the distinctiveness of francophone communities in Canada, which is linked to the empirical findings discussed here. To elaborate, there are the Franco-Ontarians, Franco-Manitobans, Acadians, and so on—and then there is Quebec. Secularization, one of the main origins of this distinction, led French Canadians outside of Quebec to repudiate Quebec as the centre of a larger community. The modernization attempts of the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s created a new community, *la nation québécoise*, among French Canadians in the province, whose members to a great extent have transformed their commitment from the

Church to the state (Morrison 2019). Within Quebec, there are also Indigenous and anglophone Quebecers who either cannot speak French or do not live an important part of their lives in the language and therefore are generally not considered to be part of Quebecois culture (Blattberg 2003). Indeed, Taylor (1994) has broadened the concept of identity by underlining its complexity and has publicized the term “Politics of Recognition” to refer to the search of diverse groups’ demands for state recognition, including Franco-Quebecois, Indigenous peoples, racial minorities, and feminists, among others. In particular, Taylor’s study uncovers the complex nexus of multiple identities and groups living in contemporary liberal societies. He suggests that a strong sense of belonging can be established through trust, social solidarity, and continuous measures of redistribution—most of all, however, through the mutual recognition of distinct communities. Like other minority nations around the globe, such as Catalonia, Flanders (Veny/Jacobs 2014), and Scotland, members of *la nation québécoise* have declared themselves as a “nation.” Subsuming internal minority nationalism(s) mentioned above, Canada is “best seen not as a traditional ‘nation-state’ but as a multination state” (Kymlicka 1998: 127; see also Kymlicka 2000).

Interculturalism and citizenship

The main response to historical nationalist movements in Canada (Gagnon/St-Louis 2016) was built within the body of “a new Canadian identity based on equality of individuals and languages (as opposed to communities and cultures)” (Papillon/Turgeon 2003: 325). The policy of official bilingualism was put into effect in 1969 by the federal government, especially through the initiative of Pierre Trudeau. This strategy was later applied to Canadian multiculturalism policy in 1971 and was then revisited in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 (Bashir/ Kymlicka 2012). Despite what critics may say, the latter is primarily associated with Canadian immigrant-

based diversity management and is “a policy aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants to Canadian society” (Papillon 2012: 19).

The rejection of Quebec’s status as a political unity, the assumption of French Canadians as another ethnic group, and concern about taking a multicultural approach that emphasizes individual rights too much, *inter alia*, led many Quebecers to oppose multiculturalism. Consequently, as articulated in 1990 by the Liberal Party of Quebec, “the idea of interculturalism is born of the rejection of multiculturalism and the desire to develop a model that is more suited to the needs of Quebec society, in particular, the need to better protect the characteristics of francophone Quebec” (Bouchard 2015: 61). Additionally, an alarming decrease of the birthrate among Franco-Quebecers caused state actors to worry about the possible tendency among allophones to move linguistically towards the anglophone community. As a result, the fate of Franco-Quebecois society has been tied to finding a way to incorporate immigrants into the society. The model of interculturalism asserts that there is a reciprocal effort—a “moral contract”—between the host society and cultural groups for the incorporation of the latter. For the defenders of it, interculturalism, in contrast to multiculturalism and assimilationism, offers a lifeline by accentuating the significance of dialogue, contact, and conversation among groups. The driving force behind its legitimation is that it insists on the need for difference rather than sameness by addressing the shortcomings of multicultural citizenship. Instead of recognizing cultural rights asserted by multiculturalism, interculturalism—in theory—addresses barriers that hamper dialogue and conversation. According to Bouchard (2015), within the frame of Quebec’s intercultural theory, for instance, the survival of national identity and respect for the rights of minority groups remain two important concerns.

However, like multicultural policy, intercultural diversity management has been subject to crucial criticisms. From the view of Quebec, as discussed by Salée (2007, 2010), Bouchard (2015), and Gagnon and St-Louis (2016), Quebec’s diversity management remains problematic since it does not question the Eurocentric norms and hierarchy existing between Euro-descendants and other minority groups. Hence, the sense of intergroup solidarity—something fundamental for the fulfillment of Quebec citizenship—becomes dysfunctional.

Studying Moroccan Jews made me notice how linguistic and religious pluralisms of Quebec shaped their sense of belonging and informed their identity construction. The relationality of the participants with their unique lived experiences (Emirbayer 1997) show how they negotiate their belonging. In the following sections, I first locate Moroccan Jewish belonging in Montreal in linguistic commonality which also facilitated the institutionalization of the community in the province. I then reveal the complexity of belonging, due to religious difference, by adding relationality of their co-religionists, Ashkenazi Jews.

Analysis of belonging via linguistic commonality and religious difference

Language and religion can cultivate both sameness and difference between populations, and are intertwined with ethnicity and nationhood. Yet, little if any literature on multiculturalism has paid attention to the dynamics of linguistic and religious pluralism, or a comparison of the two in any sustained way (Brubaker 2015, 2013). This study attempts to fill in this gap by plunging into the individual experiences of Moroccan Jews located in Quebec; in a multinational state such as Canada. When analyzing the Moroccan Jewish sense of belonging in Montreal, I come to grips with two conceptual frameworks that I refer to as “linguistic commonality” and “religious difference.” What I want to argue here is that while on the one hand the French language leads first-generation Moroccan Jews to identify themselves through sameness with the Franco-

Quebecois community, their Judaism, on the other, can clash with the Catholicism of Quebec. I use this linguistic commonality to show its impact on the ease of Sephardic cultural integration in francophone Quebec. I then employ religious difference to lay out the limits of belonging in the Catholic Franco-Quebecois community, especially from the point of view of the second generation.

From the ten in-depth interviews conducted with the first-generation, whose mother tongue, for the most part, is French, it is clear that the community remains, through the organizations they built, organized and institutionalized in Quebec. As soon as they arrived in the 1950s, the first-generation formed various associations in Quebec to respond to the cultural and linguistic needs of the Sephardim. *L'Association juive nord-africaine* was established in 1959, and later *La Fédération sépharade de langue française* was founded in 1965, which became *l'Association sépharade francophone* (ASF) the following year (Cohen 2010). Having been generally guided by anglophone social networks and having faced the absence of francophone Jewish schools led them to create a francophone Jewish Institution called *l'école Maimonide* in 1969. Founded in 1966, the *Association Sépharade Francophone*, as mentioned above, changed its name to what is today called the *Communauté sépharade unifiée du Québec* (CSUQ) which publishes a monthly magazine called *La Voix Sépharade*. Many of my interviewees living in Montreal actively participate in the events organized by the CSUQ, some of whom were involved in the establishment of it. Furthermore, the *Festival Sefarad de Montréal*, which takes place annually since 2006, is worth mentioning as it connects multiple generations of Sephardim and diverse communities in the city. Two of my interviewees told me that they actively worked in this festival in the past. The historical foundation of these educational and cultural institutions undergirds the idea that there exists an overriding Sephardic institutional component bestowing the community a

sense of belonging in Quebec. Still, it should be noted that this is the linguistic frame that facilitated them to construct this structure and thus reclaim their identity in Quebec, especially through voluntary work. Born in Casablanca in 1954, one interviewee from the third wave, Ruth, who arrived in Quebec from France in the 1980s explains:

I feel Quebecois by solidarity. . . Am I a *pure-laine* Quebecois? I never am, I am always an immigrant until the end of my days. I am distinguished by my accent already. It's not the language that separates us! . . . Not the accent that separates us, it's just a vector, a transmission. . . I can't have the Quebecois accent, just as I can't have the *Marseillais* accent, I didn't have the Parisian accent. I am me; I am me with who I am. (my translation)

Born in Kenitra in 1948 and immigrated to Quebec from France in 1978, Galia's accounts on Quebec as follows:

I was involved in a lot of things. . . I worked from 1989 to 2016. So, [sic] this was really the place that allowed me to develop, to belong, a place of belonging. For me, this is very important because since I was thirteen, since I left Morocco, I had not found any places where I could say that I could live my entire life. Maybe I'll die here. I was in France, I was in several cities, I was in Quebec . . . I left; I came back . . . I could say that here is where I want to die. (my translation).

Born in southern Morocco and immigrated to Quebec in 1970, Halimi recounts the following story:

It's a difficult process in fact to forge [sic] to an identity, in a new society, to find your place at the level of your Jewish identity with Quebecers, Canadians and all that . . . But in the end, we can be proud to say maybe that we have contributed a lot to Quebec, which, in return, has given us a lot. The possibility of studying, of having physical and emotional security. I did not have all that in Morocco. So, Quebec gave me full security, civil rights . . . it's important . . . I didn't have the same civil rights as Muslim women in Morocco . . . here, we have the same rights . . . We contribute a lot, we contribute because we work hard, because we pay our taxes . . . we are very proud to be Canadian. (my translation)

The following account from an interviewee who was born in Tangier explains the reasons of her family's immigration to Quebec in 1976:

So, my parents were bilingual. Yes, they spoke Spanish at home, but they spoke French fluently . . . French was our second language. We chose Quebec . . . because it was a French-speaking region, and we didn't speak English at all. For us, immigration was either in a Spanish or French-speaking region. (my translation).

Another interviewee from the first generation who arrived in Quebec from Casablanca in the 1970s further claims his sense of belonging in Quebec in the following way:

The Quebecois identity means a warm community belonging to me. A community, how would I put it, a Latin spirit, this Latin warmth, and very close to the culture I had, to the culture of Latin. Immediately we become friends . . . we discuss etc. We immediately talk to each other. (my translation)

Born in Mogador in 1947, this interviewee from the first generation who arrived in Quebec from Israel in the 1970s says:

I have a lot of respect for Quebecers who have lived through a past that was not necessarily the most equitable . . . I very much understand Quebec's linguistic demands. But at the same time, I also have a lot of admiration for the Canadian vision, which is a bilingual country. I have been part of a lot of government, federal etc. . . . there's a nice balance in Canada despite all the claims that we see. (my translation)

Whereas through linguistic commonality, narratives show the success of intercultural citizenship, the type of citizenship unique to Quebec due to the importance of Francophonie in the creation of its identity, it appears that there are also limits to it caused by religious difference. Given the fact that the established Jewish community was and is always anglophone, from Ruth's story, Jews speaking French was regarded as strange and unusual in the 1980s in Quebec. Ruth recounts the clash her daughter encountered between Catholicism and Judaism at the school with the following story:

My daughter comes home from school one day after two months and she says to me, she is crying, she is not happy . . . I say what was going on at school . . . “because I don’t want to take catechism course.” I was asked if my daughter would take catechism classes. I said no! So, we put her in a moral class and there the kids . . . ask the question why she is in a moral class and not with them. She says, “because I’m Jewish and I’m not Catholic.” “So, are you Jewish?” And the kids say to her, “You can’t be, you can’t be Jewish.” She says “yes, I am Jewish.” The little eight-year-old children tell her “no, the Jews don’t speak French. You are French. So, you can’t be Jewish and French. It’s impossible.” And my little girl is crying, she comes back in the evening “I don’t want to go back to school anymore. I’m unhappy.” Well . . . I go to see the teacher . . . and I explain to the teacher that she has to explain to the children that there are French people who are Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish. (my translation)

Somers and Gibson (1994: 39, 40) contend that “the classification of an actor *divorced* from analytical relationality is neither ontologically intelligible nor meaningful.” Actors construct relations with surrounding persons and places within cultural, social, and structural relational contexts in a continuous conversation. As Emirbayer (1997: 294) further implies “agency is always a dialogic process by which actors immersed in the *durée* of lived experience engage with others in collectively organized action contexts, temporal as well as spatial.” My empirical study clearly demonstrates that language remarkably facilitated the process of Sephardic institutionalization in Montreal. Consequently, there is a success in the Sephardic sense of belonging thanks to this linguistic commonality with the majority. Whereas first-generation despite their religious difference negotiate their sense of belonging, the second-generation, mostly Anglophone, is more outspoken about their difference in the province. During the Quiet Revolution, Sephardic Jews were not allowed attend Catholic francophone schools⁵. Many of my interviewees agree that as a result of this, Moroccan Jews started becoming *anglicisées*. An Anglophone interviewee from the second-generation states:

⁵ This is one of the reasons for the establishment of francophone Jewish Institution *l'École Maimonide*.

I'm Montrealer but I'm Canadian. I'm not Quebecois, I've never felt Quebecois. No Jews are Quebecois . . . I think I definitely love Quebec as French. When I go to other provinces, I notice there's no French and I find it not as pleasant. I like the diversity of having multiple languages. So that's Quebec's plus . . . I don't think that Quebecers really embrace other religions. I think they pretend to, but they don't.

Another interviewee from the second generation originally Francophone but now residing in Toronto expressed his feeling of exclusion in Quebec in the following words:

I have no affiliation with Quebec. If tomorrow there's a war and they say we have to go back and save Quebec, I probably would be the last one to say maybe I'll show up . . . They knew who I was. They know I'm not "Tremblay," whatever you wanna call. They like to think that they're very open, multicultural and everything. It's not true.

This twenty-eight-year-old interviewee who was born in Montreal states he feels Canadian rather than Quebecois:

. . . nationalism, the feeling of nationalism, division, the francophone barrier . . . By laws you feel different . . . as a Jew, as a religious Jew, because of the secular of Quebec . . . The statist side of the 60s . . . The Quiet Revolution. I think there is less tolerance compared to English Canada. To the demands of ethnic communities and their demands . . . I have a lot of hope for English Canada than French Canada. (my translation)

As evidenced by the failure of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, Quebec expressed its discontent regarding the federal government's role in some provincial matters. Many Franco-Quebecois were worried about the extent to which Canada omitted their specific culture and history after the failed recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness in the Constitution (Banting et al 2007). Born in Montreal and living now in Toronto, this interviewee's accounts, whose parents originally from southern Morocco, as follows:

Especially with the 95 referendum . . . I guess we felt more like Canadian . . . I think in Montreal, there's still political issues that make it difficult for people to work together where there's religious symbolisms . . . That's why Toronto has been great, we benefited a great deal. There's less of that political issues that we have in Quebec.

Lastly, this second-generation interviewee's accounts evince his distance from the Franco-Quebecois community:

I feel very different than Franco-Quebecois. I don't have the same accent, the story . . . I'm like an immigrant at the age of ten. I didn't know Franco-Quebecois until I was ten years old. I grew up in a Moroccan ghetto. I don't feel Canadian too because I grew up in Moroccan Jewish circles. I don't have any complaints, but I don't feel included. I don't feel like a foreigner too. I don't need to be integrated into indeed. (my translation)

As can be understood from those narratives, whereas first-generation passes to Quebecois and accentuates the linguistic commonality which facilitated their integration in Quebec, those who were either born in Quebec or came to there at a younger age are more Anglophone and outspoken about their feeling of exclusion in the province. As Emirbayer (1997: 300) assumes while explicating relational theory "concepts cannot be defined on their own as single ontological entities; rather, the meaning of one concept can be deciphered only in terms of its 'place' in relation to the other concepts in its web." By the same token, casual explanations for the positionality of the participants from different generations can be found within configurations of relations. In my empirical study, therefore, it is not that the identity of the interviewees *per se* that creates this positionality, rather, they respond to or negotiate their situation in the face of relations with the majority. Whereas French language forges a rapprochement with the majority via solidarity and helps the process of Sephardic institutionalization in Montreal, younger generation identifying more as Anglophone remain more critical and has a weaker sense of belonging in the province.

Conclusion

Kenedy and Nunes' (2012: 130) research on civic identity and participation of Portuguese-Canadian Youth in Quebec and Ontario concludes that "it would appear that youth in Quebec may

choose to identify with the Quebecois identity, not only because of linguistic and religious commonalities but also because of the many parallels between the historically marginalized position of Franco-Canadians and that of their community.” This article, however, argued that while there appears to be an affinity between Moroccan Jews and Franco-Quebecois identity due to linguistic commonality, religious difference from the majority limits Sephardic belonging in Quebec. The interviewees living in Montreal from different generations enter into relationships with surrounding persons, places, and cultures that entail relational contexts. In the narratives, even though intercultural responses to diversity are promising due to their shared commitment to pluralism, their capacity to address issues of difference can also be limited (Dhamoon 2006, Taylor 2012). Whereas first-generation Moroccan Jews do not have much to say about their religion difference and passes to Quebecois, it becomes palpable in the narratives among second-generation in Quebec. The positionality of the participants from different generations can be fathomed within relational contexts operating according to their own logic. It is not individual attitudes or values *per se* that determine the structures that form those patterns. It is rather a repertoire of relations and communications that come into play when analyzing these patterns or negotiations. Therefore, instead of assuming that the participants’ Moroccan Jewish identity led them to negotiate their sense of belonging, I argue that they respond to their position or situation by negotiating differently within relational contexts. To conclude, not only does this study flesh out the religious and pluralism in a multinational state through the medium of narratives of belonging, but it also evinces a generational difference pertaining to the Sephardim.

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