



CHILDREN LIVING IN SHARED CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS: BOUNDARIES, BARRIERS AND BELONGING

**Third meeting of the European Network for Multi-
locality Studies**

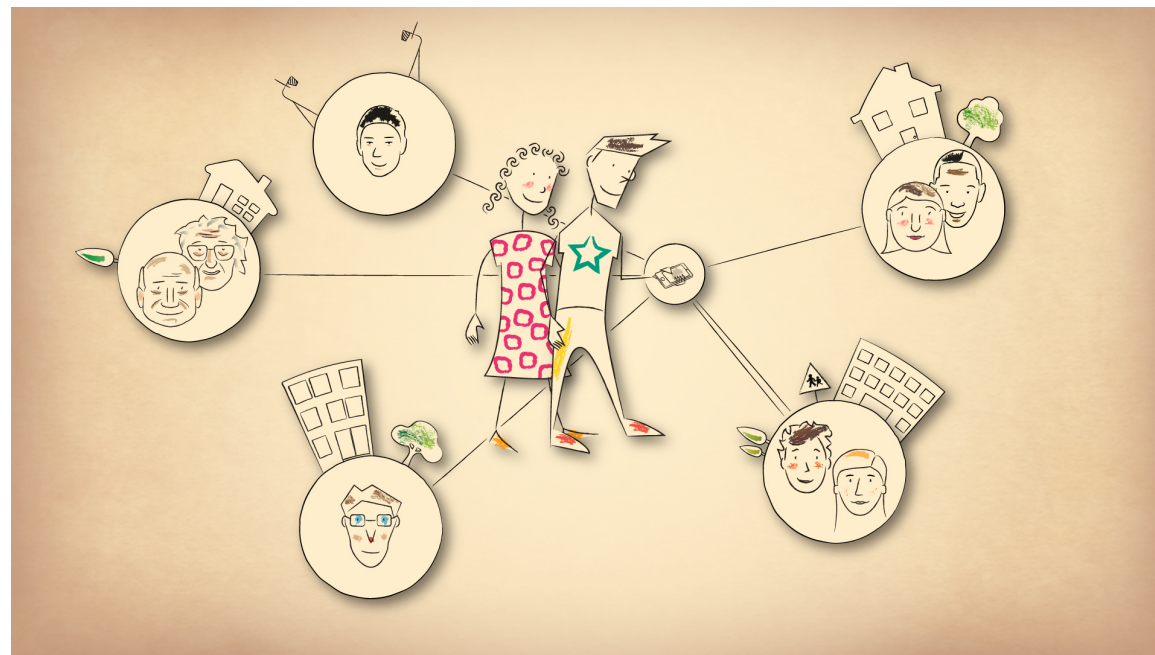
University of Louvain – 27-28 May 2019

Nobels Bérengère

PHD student – Belgium (UCLouvain)

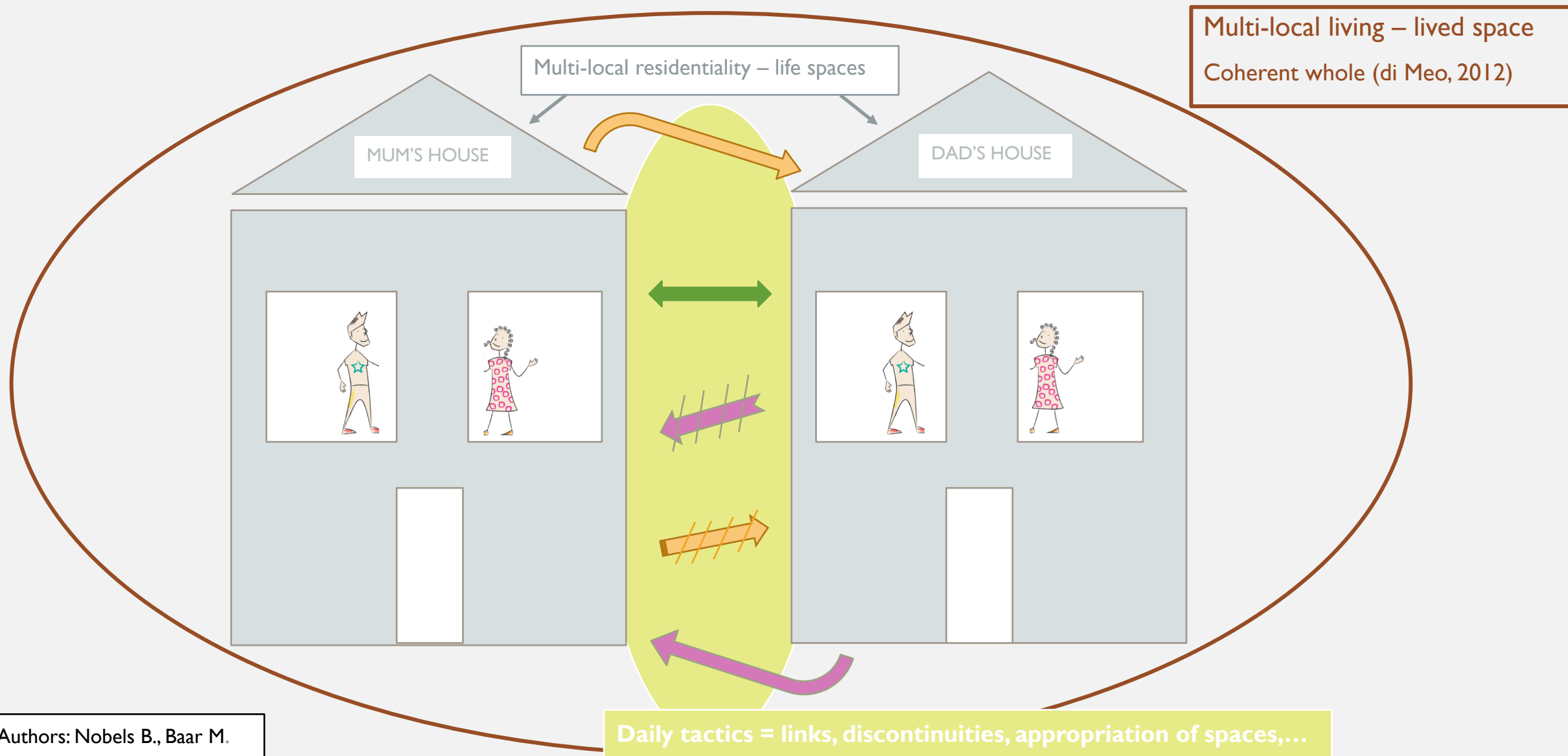
INTRODUCTION

- PhD research on how children construct their sense of home in a context of circular mobility
- European Research directed by Pr. Laura Merla and called “MobileKids: Children in multi-local, post-separation families”
- This research aims at understanding how the experience of multi-locality in the context of shared physical custody shapes children’s socialization.
- Focus of my presentation on one central dimension of my project : *the multi-local way to inhabit of children from separated parents*



THE CONCEPT OF MULTI-LOCALITY

(DUCHÊNE-LACROIX, 2013; DI MEO, 2012; SCHIER, 2015; WINTHER, 2015)



METHODOLOGY

- Preliminary typology based on ten family case studies
- Fieldwork with children aged 10 to 16 in Belgium who live in equal shared custody.
- Interviews with parents and participatory and visual methods for the interviews with children



A WAY TO INHABIT SPACE

(A. MOREL-BROCHET AND N. ORTAR, 2012)

= How do children think and practice their various life spaces ?

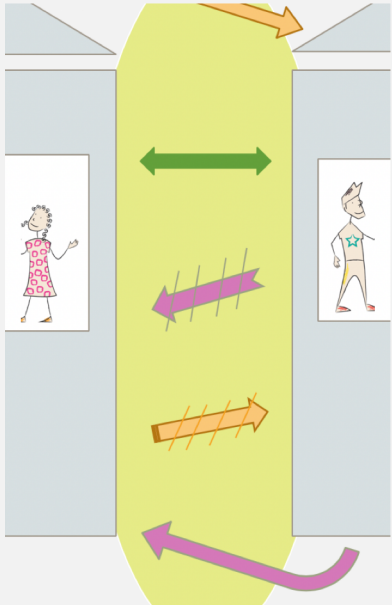
- 3 dimensions of reality :
 - Ideal (representations of each life space and of their spatial, temporal and material boundaries)
 - Factual (activities, family practices and relationships)
 - Material (belongings)

REPRESENTATIONS OF MULTI-LOCATIONAL FAMILY CONFIGURATION

(SCHLINZIG, 2019)

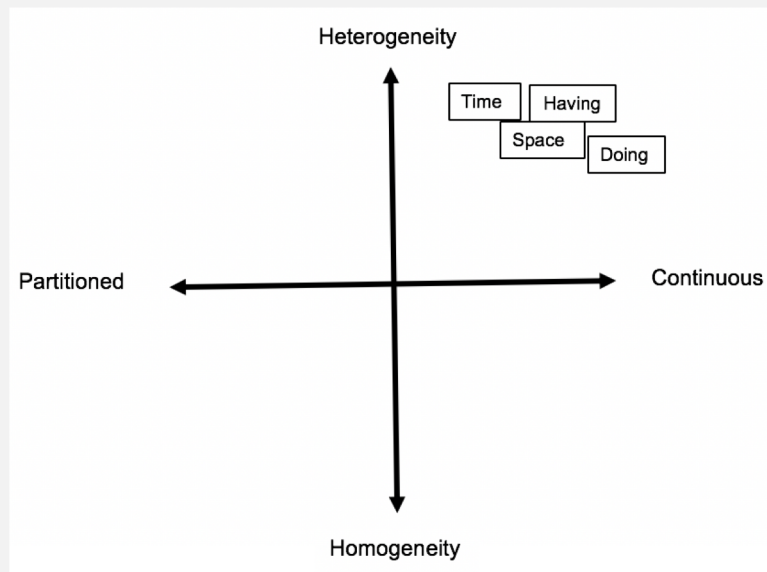
Spatial, temporal and material limits established by the parents after the separation:

- « Limit-form » (Mincke and Montulet, 2019)
- « Flow-form » (Mincke and Montulet, 2019)
- « Membrane-form »

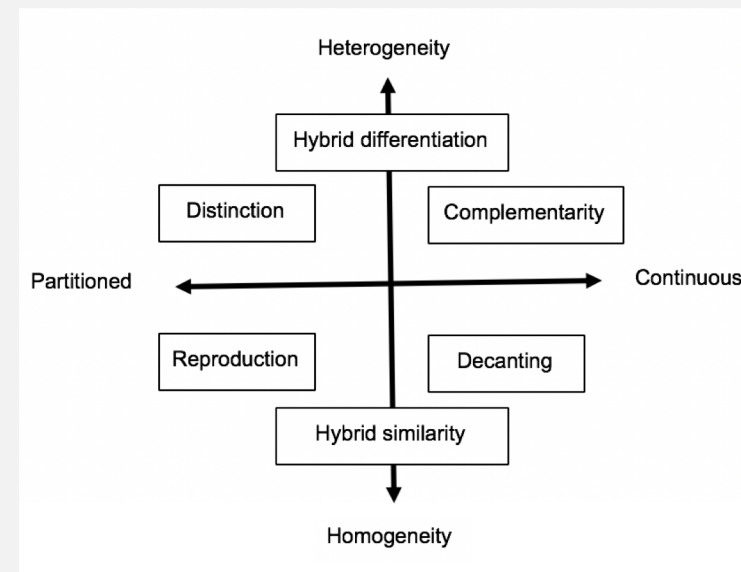


CHILDREN'S WAY TO INHABIT MULTILOCALLY

Example: Mathilde's cross



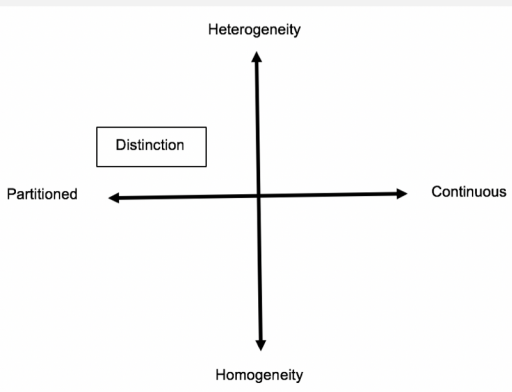
Types of children's way to inhabit multilocally



DISTINCTION

Representation of multi-locational family configuration as partitioned and heterogeneous

Through their belongings:

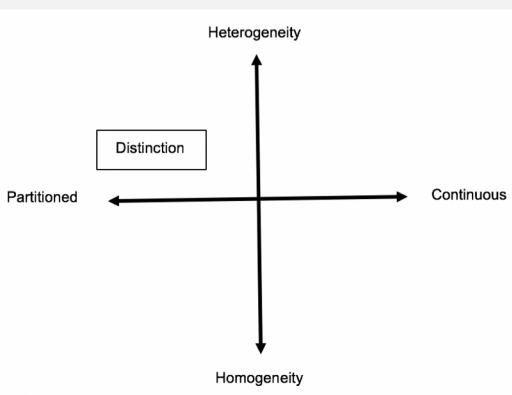


"(...) [I leave] half at dad's house and half at mom's house ... (...) I could [take stuff] but I don't do it ... otherwise there will be more in one side than in the other ... (...) when I wear the same clothes, I bring them there and then I change ... " (François, 11).

"(...) because I don't do the same at my dad and my mom so what I need at my mom, I leave at my mom's home ... " (Marie, 12).

DISTINCTION

How Marie and François run up against parental spatial, temporal and material more or less impermeable boundaries ?



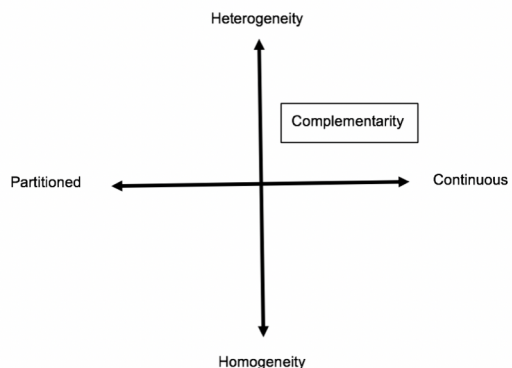
Marie comes closer to the limit-form representation of her parents.

François drifts apart from the flow-form representation by setting his own impermeable limits within the broad scope.

COMPLEMENTARITY

Representation of multi-locational family configuration as continuous and heterogeneous

Through their belongings:



“ Researcher : do you have some things that you leave all the time here (at mom’s home), that you don’t use at dad’s home? Things that refer : it belongs to mom’s home and it belongs to dad’s home?

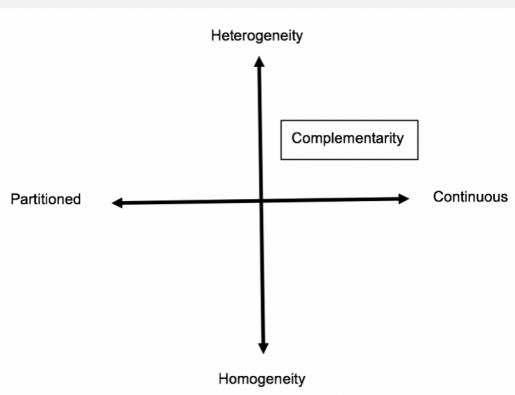
Mathilde : yes, the clothes... but sometimes I wear those at dad’s but they always have to come back...

Researcher : and sometimes, do you make the opposite?

Mathilde: yes, yes, often... but then, they have a specific place so that when we remove them, we put them there (on a specific place) and after, we take them back...” (Mathilde, 13)

COMPLEMENTARITY

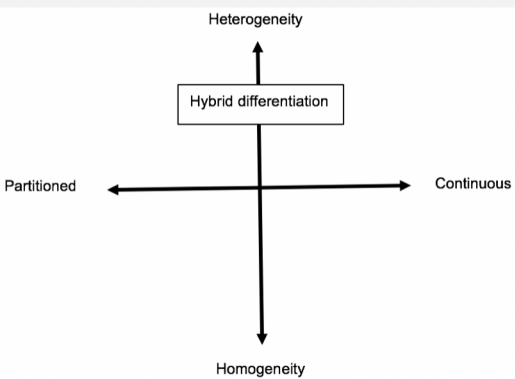
How Mathilde runs up against parental spatial, temporal and material more or less impermeable boundaries ?



Mathilde comes closer the form-membrane representation of her parents and bypasses other limits more impermeable by creating airlocks.

HYBRID DIFFERENTIATION

Representation of multi-locational family configuration as heterogeneous and at the same time as partitioned and continuous



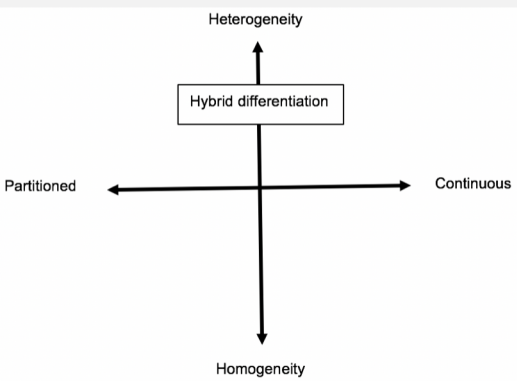
Through their belongings:

"Researcher: and your clothes, how do you manage?"

Thomas: Oh, clothes! I have a reserve at mom and a reserve at dad and if I have a lot more at mom or if I need one or two sweats, I go to dad and I bring them here on Friday with the bag (...) but usually they stay in the house but sometimes I put a t-shirt on Friday, so it comes to my mom ... and I try to put it back next Friday, so it goes back to dad's house... it goes from one house to another but it does not matter ... " (Thomas, 13).

HYBRID DIFFERENTIATION

How Thomas runs up against parental spatial, temporal and material more or less impermeable boundaries ?

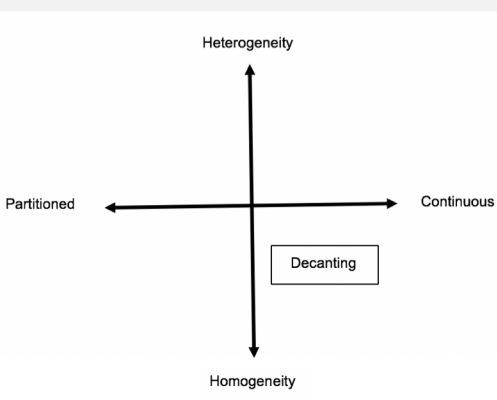


Thomas partly drifts apart from his parents' membrane-form representation by closing some passages

TRANSFERRING

Representation of multi-locational family configuration as continuous and homogeneous

Through their belongings:



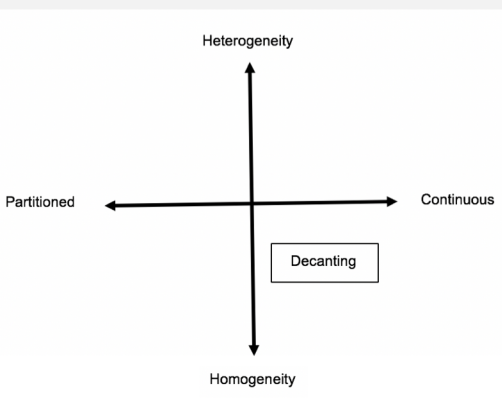
"I carry my clothes, my skateboard ... all my stuff to change the wheels and all that ... my suitcase where there are my scout clothes, my clothes, some shoes when a week I want to put one, another week, my skate shoes, the console and my school work ..."

Researcher: and your suitcase, do you empty it every time ?

Remi: my suitcase... my mom asks to empty it but I say "yes, yes, I emptied it" but it is not emptied in fact ... now, it is still open up (...) I leave everything in it since it's folded and ... if it's unfolded, I'll have to fold again and at my dad's the same ... except that ... since we have two floors to climb as we sleep in the attic, we have to climb two floors with the suitcase (...) once at dad's, my suitcase stays downstairs ... " (Remi, 13).

TRANSFERRING

How Remi runs up against parental spatial, temporal and material more or less impermeable boundaries ?



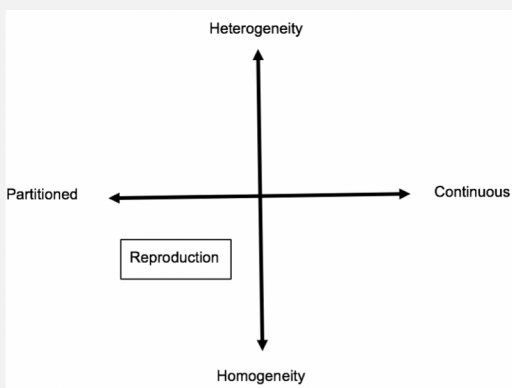
Remi has a membrane-form representation which articulates the opposed representations of his parents (limit-form and flow-form).

REPRODUCTION

Representation of multi-locational family configuration as partitioned and homogeneous

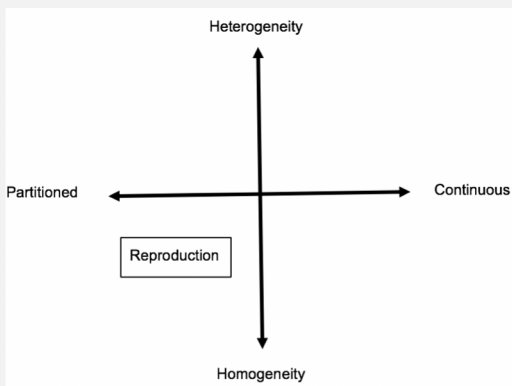
Through their belongings:

"What I did here is that to not disturbed my sleep..., before I had two alarm clocks, an alarm clock at dad's and an alarm clock at mom and I woke up earlier at dad's, so, I put the two alarms at the same time like that, it was simpler ... (...) I woke up a bit earlier at my mother's, and a bit later at my father's, so it was balanced... ” (Tristan, 15).



REPRODUCTION

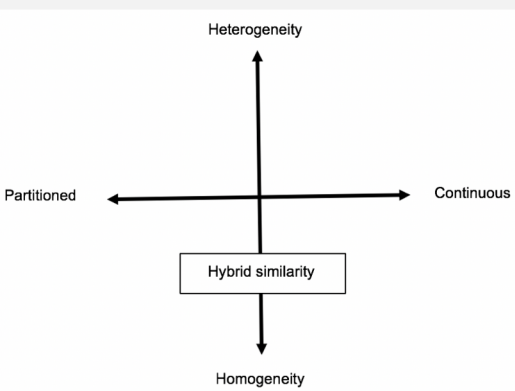
How Tristan and Alice run up against parental spatial, temporal and material more or less impermeable boundaries?



Tristan and Alice drift apart from their parents' membrane-form representation by closing some passages

HYBRID SIMILARITY

Representation of multi-locational family configuration as homogeneous and on the same time as partitioned and continuous

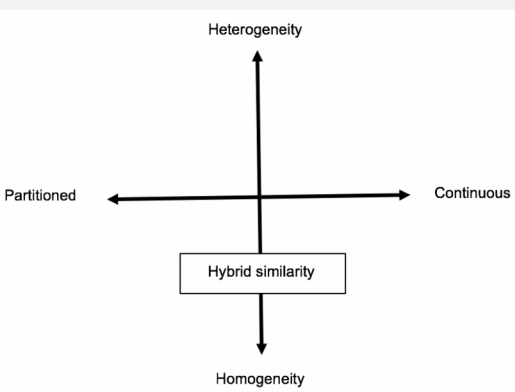


Through their belongings:

"I move all my usual stuff, which I use every day at my dad's or my mom's, it depends on who I am with (...) I go maybe two, three times a week but it is not just to say hello, it's also to take belongings in the morning or, before going to school ... clothes or things I forgot when I went last time or whatever ... " (Eliot, 14).

HYBRID SIMILARITY

How Eliot runs up against parental spatial, temporal and material more or less impermeable boundaries?



Eliot comes closer the membrane-form representation of his parents.



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