Gender and economic inequalities: British and Catalan/Spanish perspectives on *Vale*, a short film advertising Estrella Damm

Joanna Gore

University of Nottingham

Introduction

This paper contributes to existing debates in intercultural communication (hereafter IC) about how to understand cultural differences and intercultural dynamics. It does so by applying a feminist, intersectional lens to cross-cultural discourse analysis. Specifically, the study examines how British and Catalan/Spanish viewers differentially decode *Vale* (Amenábar), a short Spanish film advertising Estrella Damm beer. This case study is particularly relevant in the current context of heightened British, Catalan and Spanish nationalisms, and tensions in Catalonia around tourism. The paper draws on original research conducted in Barcelona, Spain, namely semi-structured interviews with five Catalan/Spanish nationals, who are bilingual

Catalan and Spanish speakers, and five British nationals, whose first language is English.

The film provides a rich text to elicit responses on questions of cultural difference, identity and communication because it is explicitly about intercultural interaction in the context of tourism. Its central plot involves a holiday encounter between a group of twenty/thirty-something Spanish friends and a young English-speaking woman called Rachel. The story focuses on Rachel, and Victor, one of the friends, who is frustrated because his limited English makes it difficult to communicate with her. Taking advantage of the pertinent subject matter in *Vale* to stimulate responses, the study analyses how participants interpret the film in relation to three key sub-themes: (sub-/supra-) national and other cultural identities; power hierarchies; and intercultural communication itself, specifically between native speakers of Catalan/Spanish and speakers of English.

This study contributes to the existing literature in three key ways. Firstly, it builds on the small strand of literature within IC (Holliday, Kullman and Hyde; Piller; Scollon, Jones and Rodney) that is critical of the assumption – known as 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller) – 'that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world' (ibid: 302). It does so by taking an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on feminist linguistics (Weatherall; Swann) and intersectional understandings of gender and culture (Flores; Johnson). These insights are applied to the empirical data from the British and Catalan/Spanish interviews, while looking to move beyond a solely nation-based approach to IC.

The paper's second contribution is methodological. The study used a film as a stimulus for participants' reactions, which were then subjected to cross-cultural discourse analysis. This is an underutilised method, but one that offers a way to further understanding within IC by eliciting categories that are meaningful to participants (Uchida 45) rather than pre-defined by the researcher or model to be applied. Thus, the study offers an innovative approach that gives close attention to local context, including language, and that is sensitive to inequalities within and across national borders.

The third contribution of this paper is in further developing scholarship on gender within IC. Gender has already been shown to

matter to conceptions of national culture (Stedham and Yamamura). This paper builds on this by problematising the treatment of gender and nationality as 'variables' or 'unified containers' (Johnson 372). Rather, the study sheds light on how economic inequalities between countries and gender inequalities can operate together - but may also compete with and eclipse one other. Through these insights, the paper addresses how gender intersects with ethno-national identities. The evidence presented suggests that the field of IC should continue to draw on, and contribute to, feminist scholarship on intersectionality.

Background

This research was conducted in Barcelona in 2019, where the context for communication between locals and foreigners has been shaped by struggle and contestation around tourism, an issue closely tied up with the dynamics of gentrification (at a micro/meso level) and forces of neoliberal globalisation (at a macro level). In Barcelona, residents' experience of the economic and social costs of mass tourism – including rising rents driving people out of their homes and perceived loss of neighbourhood spirit and authenticity – has influenced attitudes towards tourists themselves. Waves of anti-tourist protest in Catalonia, particularly from 2014 onwards, increasingly targeted foreign visitors directly with their 'Tourist go home' campaigns (Hughes). The British press also covered these mobilisations, with the tabloids taking an antagonistic tone, writing about 'attacks on holidaymakers' (Sobot), and 'sick' anti-tourist posters (Malm). In 2019, an official survey found that 61.3% of the 3,612 residents surveyed thought Barcelona was reaching or had already reached its limit with the number of tourists it could receive, with a growing number of people – 3.1% in 2012, increasing year on year to 16.6% in 2019 – saying tourism was harmful for the city (Ajuntament de Barcelona 15). The effects these dynamics may have on participants' views of the relationship between Catalan/Spanish residents and English-speaking tourists are of interest, since bridging intergroup conflict is a stated aim of IC scholarship (Piller 194).

In Catalonia, a sense that Barcelona's cultural identity and authenticity is being eroded by tourism and other forces of neoliberal globalisation has special resonance in times of heightened nationalist tensions. This has been particularly the case in the lead-up to and

aftermath of the referendum for Catalan independence in October 2017. In fact, the resurgence of Catalan, Spanish and British nationalisms is a significant element of the impetus for this research and a feature of the context that ultimately overshadows issues around tourism. In the last five years, Catalan and Spanish nationalist discourses have been stoked and channelled as the issue of Catalan independence has increasingly come to the fore. Meanwhile, in Britain, 'Brexit' has played a dominant role in constituting and polarising ideas about national identity. 'Leave' supporters have found a collective sense of belonging through a rejection of the status quo, increasingly embodying a rising 'exclusionary nationalism' (Foster) that appeals to resentment and nostalgia: 'I want my country back... we're all just so frustrated' (Question Time audience member, quoted in ibid). At the same time, those who voted against Brexit have lamented and fought back against a 'crisis of multiculturalism' (Closs Stephens 405), characterised by 'an intensification in racism, Islamophobia, and identity politics' (ibid). This research aims to examine such competing notions of cultural identity and otherness – notions that are key to IC (Sarangi 88) – in the context of English-speaking tourism in Spain.

Since this paper treats culture itself as an ideological construct and not something that precedes intercultural communication (Piller 10), the Catalan bid for independence and 'Brexit' are of relevance not so much as geopolitical or territorial disputes over physical boundaries, but rather as battles of discursively constructed identities, or for what Anderson calls the 'imagined communities' of nationality. In order to understand these processes from a cross-cultural perspective, this study set out to answer the following research questions:

1. How do interviewees position themselves in terms of national or other identities in their responses to the film?
2. What perspectives do participants offer on intercultural communication itself, specifically between native speakers of Catalan/Spanish and speakers of English?
3. What are the differences and similarities between the two nationality groups' interpretations of the film?
4. What are the implications of these findings for IC?

These research objectives are of particular interest in the context of the intergroup tensions and resurging nationalisms outlined above.

Theoretical framework

Definitions of culture

Culture, and how it is conceptualised, is central to IC research. The field has tended to approach the question in one of two broad ways (Chen 5; Uchida 44). One treats culture as relatively stable and homogenous within ethnic and national boundaries (Uchida 44). The most widely used and influential framework in this tradition is Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions. Hofstede defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another' (Hofstede, Minkov, G. and Minkov, M. 4). The focus of his work is measuring differences between people from different countries using variables such as individualism versus collectivism (Hofstede Insights). These scores are then used to predict differences between people from different countries, knowledge of which is intended to be of practical use in intercultural interaction. However, this paper argues that such frameworks, including scholarship that attempts to add gender measurements onto dominant models of IC (Stedham and Yamamura), are inadequate as a tool for understanding and improving intercultural relations. One key reason for this from the perspective of this paper is their insensitivity to the inequalities and complexities at play within a specific intercultural context. Further issues with Hofstede-type models are discussed in section 3.3.

Alternative views have offered a counterpoint to the 'culture measurement branch' of IC research (Uchida 44). Such approaches emphasise the dynamic and heterogeneous qualities of culture, recognising 'diversity, contestation, and dissonance' (ibid) within it. Street offers useful insights with the notion that 'Culture is a verb' (quoted in Sarangi 87). In this view, culture is 'an active process of meaning-making and contest over definition' (ibid). So, it is not enough to enquire only into *what* things mean, but also important to examine *how* those meanings came into existence, allowing essentialist narratives to be challenged. Understanding culture as 'social process' (Chen 6) also demands, and benefits from, attention to 'a host of complex relationships' (ibid), including the power structures embedded in a specific social context (ibid, referencing Hall). Gender is part of this context and influences these power dynamics.

Gender is understood in this paper to be performative, that is, 'constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results' (Butler 34). In this sense gender is not 'an internal essence' (Butler XV), nor is it fixed or binary. It is socially constructed through 'a sustained set of acts' (ibid). Scholars have argued both for the importance of studying gender as part of culture (Uchida 48), and for exploring culture as a context for gender (Johnson 372). Still, as Johnson points out, very little IC literature 'treats gender as implicated in multiple cultural locations' (ibid). This paper addresses this paucity by taking both culture and gender to be socially constructed, heterogeneous and dynamic, and applying these understandings to empirical data in the British-Catalan/Spanish context. The aim is to illuminate the processes by which social identities are created and to shed light on the complex intersections between gender and nationality.

Subjective meanings and multiple cultural identities

The context-specific and subjective nature of meaning is corroborated by Liebes and Katz, whose findings that viewers' different national cultures influenced their interpretations of *Dallas* partially inspired the current study. Accordingly, the present study was designed on the basis that participants' interpretations of the film would be traceable to the different cultural identities that they were orienting to. Since Liebes and Katz focused on differences between nationalities and did not look at the role of gender or other social identities, this paper addresses these gaps.

To do this, the study draws on the work of scholars who take a non-essentialist and non-reductive approach to IC that goes beyond the nation-based model. For example, Scollon, Jones and Rodney argue that, since identities are multiple, diverse and hybrid, all communication is intercultural to some degree (2). This view is shared by Holliday, Kullman and Hyde, whose 'much-needed contribution' (Holmes 57) treats cultural differences not as 'tangible entities' but as 'intersubjective and negotiated processes' (Holliday, Kullman and Hyde xv). This paper takes a special interest in how these processes are negotiated and how they may be affected by power structures (ibid).

Banal nationalism

Hofstede's dimensional model of cultural difference has continued to hold currency, despite being extensively critiqued for being based on insufficient evidence and flawed methodological assumptions. (McSweeney; Piller 121-127). Besides the blindness to inequalities mentioned in 3.1, there are two additional problems with Hofstede's work that are relevant to this study. One is that it supposes that each country has a distinct and relatively homogenous culture compared to other countries (McSweeney 91-92). The second is the assumption that nationality is the key determinant of a person's 'culture' (Piller 123).

The widespread conflation of nation and culture in intercultural communication literature is not just a benign simplification. This study takes Piller's view that methodological nationalism justifies and, in fact, constitutes, 'banal nationalism'. The latter is a term coined by Billig to describe the ways in which nationhood is constantly 'flagged' in established nations through habits and symbols so familiar that they go unnoticed. He argues that while orthodox theory has tended to focus on the most extreme expressions of nationalism, it is necessary to recognise the everyday, routine and less visible instances of nationalism that form the 'ideological means by which nation-states are reproduced' (Billig 11). Both 'banal nationalism' and nation-based approaches to IC build a sense of tribalism through national identity, promote stereotypes, and damage our understanding of cultural difference. Indeed, in the context of Catalonia, which has its own language and identities, and where approximately half of the population is in favour of Catalan independence (ICPS 2018), conflating culture and nationality is unlikely to be a useful approach. A methodological nationalist approach is not only a blunt tool for understanding how participants position themselves in terms of identity, but also inappropriate because it actually reproduces and reinforces 'banal' forms of nationalist thinking. This research draws on Billig's insights into how nations are discursively constructed, and heeds Piller's plea for IC scholarship to escape methodological nationalism by taking a qualitative and discourse-analytic approach (68). This paper applies this approach to the complex context of Catalonia, aiming to find out how participants aligned themselves in terms of cultural identity when nations were not specifically mentioned.

Culture and language

Vale, the short film used in this study, attempts to harness the selling power of both global identity and local culture through the dual use of English and Spanish (or English and Catalan, in the dubbed Catalan version). Symbolically, these languages mean different things. Piller (143) argues that when languages other than the national one are used in advertising, it is 'to imbue a product with an ethno-cultural stereotype about the group who speak the language'. So, for a British audience, the use of Spanish (combined with scenes of the Mediterranean) enables advertisers to mobilise the positive associations of the corresponding stereotype. English, however, does not signify nationality or ethnicity in global advertising. To audiences for whom English is not their first language, English connotes 'a social stereotype of modernity, global elitism and the free market' (ibid: 147). For the advert's home audience, then, English signals 'cool' for the upwardly mobile, or those that aspire to be so, a fact self-consciously referenced in *Vale*. Piller's insights suggest that potential differences in decoding among English and Catalan/Spanish participants may arise not simply due to nationality, but because of the different status of their native languages. This study examines whether these predictions are borne out.

Intercultural mediation

Finally, by way of theoretical framework, I would like to include a note on the overarching motivation for this research. Piller (194) points out that we hear talk of diversity everywhere these days, while at the same time we are seeing the rise of 'old nationalisms that hanker for some mythical past without migration, globalisation and the mixing of people they have brought'. Her observation is general but feels highly relevant; she could be talking specifically about the ongoing situation in Catalonia, or the Brexit vote in the UK. Piller argues for the role of IC scholarship in reducing confrontation between groups with different cultural identities, and building bridges towards creating shared, common cultures (ibid). It is in this spirit of intercultural mediation, as well as advancing understanding of how culture itself operates and can be understood, that this paper frames its contribution to the existing literature.

Methodology
The text: Vale

Vale, a Spanish-made short film advertising Estrella Damm, was selected for the purposes of this study because it is explicitly about intercultural communication in the context of tourism. It is interesting to note here that the film is not about gender on a surface level, making it significant that the participants foregrounded gender as a relevant identity category. The plot centres around a group of Spanish friends meeting an English-speaking tourist called Rachel, and the difficulties that Victor, one of the Spanish members of the group, has trying to communicate with her. A further rationale for selecting *Vale* is that its makers intended 'culture', in at least one sense, to be a discernible theme. The director explains:

> We've tried to reflect and make people feel values that are intimately related to the Mediterranean, putting a special emphasis on its cultural offer. To live 'mediterraneanly' means going out, meeting people and soaking up music, cinema, theatre, exhibitions... We would like the film to awaken this spirit of sociability and optimism in the audience and, why not, to make them smile.
>
> (Alejandro Amenábar, quoted in elPeriódico 2015)

So, while the film is about 'culture', it carefully avoids being about national culture. This use of 'the Mediterranean' as a brand and a supranational alternative to national identities has the advantage of being recognisably local to an international audience while avoiding politically troublesome associations with either Spain or Catalonia for the home audience. As Cannon argues in her book chapter on supra-nationality and sub-nationality in Spanish advertising, 'it appears that whatever constitutes [the Mediterranean] identity, whether it be lifestyle, relaxation, or quality, it is at least preferable to being defined in national terms' (13). This paper explores the extent to which participants agree.

Without wanting to stray too far into a subjective interpretation of *Vale* here, I would like to add one final point about the rationale for its selection in relation to the research questions. Although the plot ostensibly revolves around the meeting of two different nationalities, cultural differences are in some ways minimised. Language is not shown to be a problem for the monolingual English-speaking tourist, Anglophone film references are striking (e.g. *There's Something About*

Mary), and fluency in the language of brands ('Estrella' and 'Sonar') and British bands ('Radiohead' and 'Gorillaz') is shown to be key to bonding in the group and pivotal in the romance story. In this way, *Vale* could be seen to evoke a 'cool', supra-national or 'global' identity based on consumption of international pop culture as well as brands. Given the contested discourses around globalisation and perceived loss of local authenticity in Barcelona, this aspect of *Vale* was seen as potentially relevant for participants.

The intention in describing the film here has been to provide a rationale for its use in this study. Although the ways in which participants' cultural backgrounds may shape their different interpretations of media content is interesting in itself, the main motivation for using this approach, and specifically using *Vale,* was to stimulate relevant responses without pre-defining certain constructs (see 4.3).

The participants

A purposive sample of five Catalan/Spanish participants and five British participants, aged between thirty-four and thirty-nine, was constructed via convenience sampling. This age group was thought to be within the target age group for the film. Participants are all white and all have been to university. The Catalan/Spanish group consisted of three women and two men, all from, and living in, the Barcelona area. The British group consisted of two women, one genderqueer person (assigned female at birth) and two men, from various places in the north of England. Three of them live in Yorkshire, one in London, and one has lived in Barcelona for two years. For clarity and consistency, but also out of sensitivity to participants' feelings about identity, I have referred to the groups as 'British' and 'Catalan/Spanish' throughout the analysis. The use of these terms in not intended to be a political comment on which identities should or should not be recognised nations. Existing knowledge of participants was used to include people with both pro- and anti- Catalan independence views in the Catalan/Spanish sample, although this was not explicitly asked in case it influenced interviewees' answers.

All participants are friends of the researcher. It is acknowledged that this may have influenced the data collected in certain ways, for example, making some participants more inclined to bring up gender as a subject

of interest to the researcher. However, it is also argued that interviewing friends is likely to have affected the outcome of the research in positive ways. The researcher was already involved in participants' lives, and existing friendships placed subjects on a more equal power footing with the researcher, both conditions that feminist scholars have argued are necessary for the dialogic process of knowledge creation (Tickner 27). The tone of the conversations is informal and intimate, and the data are rich, with a subtle range of meanings expressed through humour and irony. The researcher's relationships with the subjects also provided further, valuable context during the coding process.

Procedures

Befitting the exploratory and qualitative nature of the research, ten interviews were conducted. Even with such a small sample size, internal diversity within the two groups was predicted to be sufficient to critically examine dynamics of cultural difference. However, to facilitate comparison and minimise variables, sample groups were similar in terms of age and level of education. The individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted in Spanish, Catalan or English, either face-to-face or online, and then transcribed for coding. Coding categories were developed post data collection following grounded theory coding phases (Strauss and Corbin). The multi-staged coding process was iterative, moving from open coding to 'axial coding' (ibid) towards 'selective coding', and back to open/axial coding in order to compare responses across different social categories once particular themes had emerged as significant. For example, stereotyping in the film and participants' responses to it emerged as key for developing more encompassing concepts in the analysis. So, references to stereotyping in the film were then coded by type (gender/ethno-national) and according to the attitude of the participant towards that instance of stereotyping. For example:

- *the film portrays people from x as y and that is not true/ I do not like that* = Objections
- *the film portrays people from x as y and I do not know if that is true* = Reservations
- *the film shows that people from x are y, and it is true* = Acceptance

Questions 2, 3 and 5 of the interview schedule (see Appendix 1) are modelled on Liebes and Katz. Interview questions are deliberately worded to avoid pre-supposed categories such as 'Spanish culture', which would increase the chances of getting answers that simply reproduce existing discourses. These research instruments, that is, the film and the questions, offered a way to collect rich and relevant data without conditioning participants' responses, and enabled an emic, rather than etic, approach designed to elicit cultural categories that were pertinent to participants rather than use categories that were 'developed a-priori for cross-cultural comparisons' (Uchida 45). Importance was given to the national or regional only when deemed relevant by participants and in such a way that left room for other social or cultural identities to emerge as significant. The study is designed to ask, 'who makes culture relevant to whom in what context for what purposes?' (Piller 68) rather than to discover 'what a person from X is like' (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman 2).

Sarangi warns against assuming that 'the analytic constructs and categories available... (predominantly in English) are sophisticated enough to allow one to describe distinct cultures without distortion' (91). Accordingly, this research and analysis has been carried out as far as possible in the language most appropriate to enabling and appreciating contextual nuance. Interviewing someone in Castilian Spanish, when they may feel strongly that their first language is Catalan, would be insensitive to local context, and might interfere with power dynamics and distort results. Interviews of Catalan/Spanish participants were carried out in Spanish or Catalan according to individual preference. As a non-native speaker of Spanish and Catalan, the researcher's language ability may have contributed to inconsistencies of interview experience between the two groups. However, this is mitigated by proficiency in the learned languages, the good will generated by 'making the effort', and the fact that the researcher's most important role was as listener rather than speaker.

All coding and analysis have been conducted in the original language to avoid distortion or loss of nuance. English translations of relevant material have been included for the benefit of the reader only and have not influenced the findings of this research. Where translations are given, every effort has been made to convey participants' original meanings fully and accurately. Recognising the difficulty and sometimes

impossibility of finding English equivalents for certain phrases due to their contextual and cultural specificity, translations provided are suited to an ethnographic purpose that takes context fully into account (Leavitt).

Finally, living in Catalonia for twelve years has deepened my understanding of the cultures that are the subject of this study. However, the subjectivity of the researcher – as a white British woman living in Barcelona – as always with ethnography or research into 'other' cultures, is acknowledged. Reflecting on my own personal experience, on my relationships with the participants and my role in the research process itself has been incorporated into the study as part of the practice of 'reflexivity' (Ackerly, Stern and True 4; Tickner 28). This is a corrective awareness of one's own personal position in the research process that aims to 'to strengthen the standards of objectivity' (Tickner ibid).

Analysis and discussion

The data are rich, complex, and sometimes contradictory, confirming that meaning is subjective and context dependent. Given the variety of responses and the many themes that emerged during the interviews, the analysis below is necessarily selective. Firstly, I describe similarities between responses in the Catalan/Spanish and British sample groups, particularly focusing on gendered patterns of interpretation. I then look at the differences in interpretations between the British and the Catalan/Spanish sample groups, and what those differences tell us about the intersections of local culture with gender. Finally, I consider how some participants either contested or accepted identification with specific supranational identities suggested by the film. This last part of the analysis demonstrates that – contrary to both a causal view of national culture, and perhaps, the expectation set up by contexts of heightened nationalist feeling – national identities are not necessarily the most salient social category in specific contexts of IC.

Quotes from participants are labelled with the interview number in superscript.

Similarities – 'gender's omnipresence'

Overall, internal variation within each sample group was similar to that across the groups. The only consistent division amongst the participants correlated with their gender, not their nationality. All four male participants were positive about the male character (see Appendix 2) and three out of the four were positive about the film. Two women and the genderqueer person were highly critical of the same character (see Appendix 2), and no female or genderqueer participant said they liked the film.[1]

A detailed look at Appendix 2 shows two things. Firstly, as mentioned, there is a diversity of interpretations both within and across gender and nationality groups. Secondly, however, there are several cross-national parallels associated with gender. For example, male comments from both nationality groups often identified positive characteristics of the main character ('cool'[2], 'friendly'[2], 'endearing'[2], 'attractive'[6], 'noble'[9], 'humble'[9]) and saw him as 'misunderstood'[2] ('intellectual underestimation'[5], 'here, inside, there's a man... who has an interior world'[5], 'They accuse him of being in his own world... But I don't see him like that'[9]). On the other hand, female and gender non-binary participants more frequently saw negative characteristics ('creepy'[1], 'the dud'[1], 'insecure'[1,8,10], 'wants to demonstrate things'[4], 'whingey'[7], 'angry'[8], 'fragile masculinity'[8]) or objected to the male character's insistent pursuit of the American/English woman ('an uncomfortable kind of, like, he's just going to pursue her regardless of her interest in him'[1], 'this insistence... 'no, mate'... it's so focused, it's tiring.[7]) The fact that this gendered pattern of interpretations cuts across nationality groups shows that the way in which the two groups interpreted gender in the film shared striking commonalities, particularly evident in female and gender-queer participants' criticisms of the main character versus male participants' positive views. This also suggests that identification with, or reaction against what Connell calls 'hegemonic masculinity', crosses geographical borders.

Nine out of the ten participants expressed reservations or objections about either gender stereotyping or stereotyping based on country/place of origin in the film (see Appendix 3). While gender roles were not

---

[1] For more detailed data transcripts (in Catalan, Spanish and/or English) please contact the author at: jogore6@gmail.com.

mentioned by any male participant, four out of six female/genderqueer participants objected either to the stereotypical way in which genders were portrayed, or because the film reminded them of stereotypical gendered behaviours and gender power dynamics they had encountered in the real world. There were, however, some differences between these gendered interpretations that could be linked to nationality. These are analysed in the following section.

The intention in drawing out these gendered patterns of interpretation here has not been to use gender categories as if they *explain* differences in the comments. To do so would be to give gender a causal role, treating it in itself as the answer to questions of difference, just as Hofstede's model does with nationality. Replacing a static and essentialist view of nationality with a static and essentialist view of gender (or attempting to combine them) is not useful. Nor does it solve the problem of deciding which dimensions of social identity are most relevant and how they might be interacting with one another at any one time. This is where IC stands to benefit from current understandings of gender, which conceptualise it as a social category that is highly fluid (Swann 552) and variable across different cultural contexts (Flores 384). As Uchida (48) points out, both gender and culture are increasingly understood as constructs, which are dynamic and emergent in social interaction. The task at hand is therefore to integrate 'the dynamic and heterogenous view of culture and the dynamic and heterogenous view of gender' (ibid). Although this study did not initially set out to 'look for' gender, specifically, close analysis of the empirical data found compelling evidence for what some feminist linguists have called 'gender's omnirelevance' (Weatherall 2000). At least, here, gender was sufficiently implicated in the empirical data to enable close examination of how it intersects with other cultural identities.

Differences – the intersections

Patterns of difference between the nationality groups could be traced to interviewees' access to specific cultural references and personal experience. In terms of engaging with theorising the intersections between gender and nationality/local identities, interesting differences in interpretations related to whether participants foregrounded gender or economic inequalities. Before examining this further, it is important to

attend to another notable difference in the interpretations, as this illustrates how the idea that 'culture is a verb' (Street, quoted in Sarangi 87) works in context.

A consistent pattern of difference related to frequent comments from British participants expressing puzzlement over meaning. There were no such reactions in the Catalan/Spanish interviews. Comments such as 'that was a really weird bit'[1], 'I didn't really understand why...'[6] or 'it's a bit weird'[8] were common in the British interviews, suggesting that some symbols in the film were not well understood by the British participants due to their context-specific nature. For example, the link between Estrella and culture (defined as music, festivals, and films) was better understood by the Catalan/Spanish group after years of exposure to Estrella's marketing campaigns:

> And it turns out that there's one who... knows the answers to everything, because thanks to Estrella Damm, who sponsor absolutely everything, he's had a much more active cultural life, not because he's interested in culture but because he's interested in going to drink beer.[4]
>
> (translated from Catalan)

Both the point and ironic tone is paralleled in a British comment:

> I wasn't sure, like, is the idea that he knows all this stuff (*laughing voice)* 'cause he really likes drinking Estrella? And like he just says 'yes' to everything because Estrella is involved?[8]

The ingredient that differentiates the second comment from the first is the uncertainty about intended meaning. Rather than being due to essential differences between nationalities, a more plausible explanation is that greater exposure to Estrella marketing activities, that is, a particular meaning-making process, provides the context that allows meaning to be interpreted fully. This is true regardless of whether the subject accepts or resists whatever is being signified. Participants on both sides of the nationality divide expressed irritation at the film being an advert, but Catalan/Spanish familiarity with the format ('I'm really sick of these Estrella Damm adverts'[3]) contrasted with a British sense of novelty ('I find it a weird medium that I'm not quite used to yet'[10]). These differences underline the importance of understanding culture as context, or '*con*-text, which must be read against any and every text'

(Johnson 372). There is no evidence of different national 'values' (Hofstede) coming into play here, rather a lack of context, which British participants themselves were aware of. They framed their comments as curiosity rather than opposition, showing that difference in itself does not have to imply tensions.

Having seen how access to specific cultural reference points is crucial in creating meaning, this understanding can now be brought to bear on examining how gender and national identities interact. Historical and cultural reference points informed the interpretations of two women from the Catalan/Spanish group, who saw the male character as a modern incarnation of the *macho ibérico*. One explains:

> so there's a whole series of films from the seventies, in the last moments of the Franco period when tourism begins, that star... Alfredo Landa, for example, films that have the same story... the *macho ibérico* ends up pulling a woman from another country, always associated with the figure of the *sueca* [Swedish woman], even if she's from another country. But, let's say, it's, even though they don't speak a word of Spanish, he ends up conquering the foreign woman, which, the critics commented, was a way to say that although foreign countries were freer, they were social democracies, etc., in the end what a woman wanted was this Spanish macho male, this Spain with traditions, values, sun, that, in a way, ends up winning the battle between all the countries.[3]

(from Catalan)

There is a key tension here between the narrative of the economic and political underdog and the sexist and stereotyped symbols that resource it. According to the *macho ibérico* reading, the effect of the film relies on the intricate power balance between the two main characters and what they represent. The male protagonist is at once a Don Juan-style 'womaniser' (a stereotype that several participants alluded to) and a victim of injustice who represents a politically and economically disadvantaged country. The female character is a 'pale'[1,8,9], 'pretty'[1,3,4,5,8,9,10] foreigner, whose trophy value ('like a prize'[7]) lies in being from a wealthier country and being 'hard to get'[8] due to the 'language barrier'[8]. The ethno-national stereotypes here are gendered and the gender stereotypes have an ethno-national dynamic, making it difficult to unpick which is which:

> I still think there's a very, like, er, non-Spanish, like, kind of Americanised
> or British perspective on Spanish people because, erm, er, they go out
> partying, you know… it's inferred that he slept with one of the girls before,
> you know, they wake up and they're all like half-naked in the bed and it's
> like, 'oh you know, so Spanish-y and relaxed and, they're all friends now
> but they have all slept together kind of thing, whereas the American girl
> is all, kind of, like, coy and intellectual and non-sexualised in it. [10]

Participants' different interpretations around these intersections are particularly interesting. They depended to some extent on familiarity with particular tropes, but also on personal experience, and how they positioned themselves in terms of unequal power relationships. All participants broadly agreed that the female character was one-dimensional, and several across the groups mentioned that she could be British or American, supporting a *sueca* figure reading (as a wealthy pale-skinned female tourist whose actual nationality is less relevant than what she represents), whether they were aware of that specific trope or not. However, the British group tended towards criticising this lack of characterisation from a feminist point of view ('a bit of a pixie dream girl trope',[1] 'the thinnest form of female characterisation',[1] 'just… the focus of his goal',[2] 'quite stereotyped'[8]) while two female participants from the Catalan/Spanish group expressed frustration towards her as a real person ('total princess',[7] 'she's not very interested',[7] 'she learns 'vale' and that's it',[3] 'they've given her holidays, she's had constant beer, and in the end, she gets sex, probably good sex'[3]). One of these Catalan/Spanish female participants also highlighted a double standard around linguistic expectations: 'even though she's a foreigner in Spain and she doesn't speak the language, the only person who comes out of it looking like a mental retard is him'[3]. These negative comments about the female character seem to be rooted in real life experience of hosting tourism and the privileged position of English speakers. They reveal complex dynamics likely to affect Catalan/Spanish-English IC in the context of tourism.

So, what British female participants read as gender inequalities were mainly interpreted by Catalan/Spanish females as inequalities between countries. These readings based on identification with the economic or linguistic underdog did not combine easily with gender-based critiques. However, one of these two Catalan/Spanish women was sensitive to and critical of male dominance:

> [The *macho ibérico* has] a bit of a sexist attitude, er, being a bit above other people... 'I'm here, take notice of me', or, like, 'don't [you all] leave me', which is a bit why Quim Gutiérrez gets angry because he doesn't have the tools to communicate and he lives in frustration, so, like, the *macho ibérico* channels these frustrations of not getting, not achieving, really well, I think. [7]
>
> (from Spanish)

Echoes of this view from the British data ('fragile masculinity'[8], 'slightly angry... insecure man'[8]) show that access to the context-specific symbol of the *macho ibérico* is not necessary to critically interpret meaning, in this case, in similar ways. Interestingly though, the gender-based critique in the interview above virtually disappeared when it came to the question of the *sueca*'s relative economic power:

> **Participant 7:** like... the *sueca*, 'I come from a rich country, more advanced and everything... I'm not going to lower myself to speaking to you who is always in Francoism.'
>
> **Researcher:** ... and how do you see this situation or stereotype as a woman?
>
> **Participant 7:** I can understand that what's different catches your attention... if in 1970 there weren't any blond women with blue eyes and suddenly it was like, 'wow'.
>
> **Researcher:** Mmm.
>
> **Participant 7:** I can understand, then, this thing about difference, but I find it very silly.
>
> (from Spanish)

At this moment, political economic inequalities take precedence over those relating to gender, softening the critique of sexism. This shows how one form of inequality can eclipse another, and perhaps explains why the other Catalan/Spanish woman who talked about geopolitical and economic inequalities was one of the only two female participants who did not criticise gender stereotyping in the film. These complexities suggest the need for an intersectional lens (Johnson 375, Flores 379-398) to understand these dynamics. This is what Crenshaw (2) called 'the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when understanding how the

social world is constructed'. Crenshaw and other Black feminists developed intersectionality as a way to understand, in particular, the interaction of racism and sexism in Black women's lives (ibid), which could not, they argued, 'be wholly captured by looking at the race or gender dimensions separately' (ibid). Although the present study is not concerned with race but with nationality, it draws on these understandings, and finds that multiple cultural identities may not only operate together, but also interfere with and compete with each other. This poses a challenge for theorising on intersectionality and underlines what Spelman called the 'ampersand' problem, or the fact that 'the parts of non-dominant women's identities, their experiences of oppression cannot accurately be conceived as separable, summative, or 'piled on" (Houston 49). Gender and nationality are not neat, separate variables that can be easily added together or isolated because they interact in complex and specific ways. On the other hand, it is interesting that only Catalan/Spanish women and not Catalan/Spanish men thought of the *macho ibérico* stereotype. Perhaps, in this instance, their belonging to one non-dominant social category (as women) gave them a sharper focus on other types of hierarchy (between different languages and countries). Further research is needed involving a similar design but across larger, women-only or NB sample-groups, that are more diverse in terms of race and social class, to explore the gender dimension and its interactions further.

Supranational identities – 'international cool' and Mediterranean

While the British participants did not comment on the power dynamics or negative effects of tourism, they did offer other interpretations related to the unequal status of certain types of culture. Two of them were irritated by 'all the kind of lifestyle aspirational stuff'[6] linked to the use of British, Anglophone and brand references ('things that are internationally cool',[6] 'the hipster culture that has become really international',[1] 'key cultural points, that ... transcend nationality'[1]). Both of the interviewees who took issue with these references did so on the grounds of power hierarchies, calling their use 'cultural imperialism from Western countries'[6] that 'elevated that kind of... international pop culture to a far higher level than say, like, Spanish culture or tradition or music'[1]. In recognising and criticising the symbolic use of English and English

language references in the film these participants resisted positioning themselves as culturally dominant. One, in particular, objected to 'being commodified'[6] by the commercial use of 'stuff [that]'s really important to me'[6]. Here he orients to his inferior power position as someone being exploited, both as a potential customer and as the embodiment of a selling point.

Contrary to the researcher's expectations, the symbolic or 'aspirational'[6] meaning of the Anglophone references and English itself was not addressed by the Catalan/Spanish group, but four out of five Catalan/Spanish participants expressed reservations or objections relating to the Spanish character's exaggerated lack of English, finding it to be an unrealistic stereotype. These comments, and those described above about language and economic inequalities, suggest that the English language is seen by Catalan/Spanish participants as a) a normal part of life and b) a basic necessity for employment, rather than a passport for the upwardly mobile: 'if someone doesn't speak English, they can be president of the state, but they'll have difficulty getting a normal job with a terrible wage'[4]. Here the focus is on the material consequences and conditions of the dominance of English, rather than its symbolic connotations.

While representations of 'global' identity in the film were contested in various ways, participants were unanimously positive about the Mediterranean as a 'brand'. Associations ranged from the generic (holidays, sun, good food) to the more deeply personal:

> they really nail it when they push this 'Mediterranean' button, don't they, to associate this with the Mediterranean because it's true that a lot of people here in Spain, Catalonia, don't completely identify with something, out of weariness, I mean, with one specific nationality, but a lot of people do feel from the Mediterranean... maybe I'm speaking for myself *(laughs),* but it's true that if I had to choose a homeland, like, then I wouldn't mind saying 'Mediterranean'.[9]

Once again, the above quote highlights the fluid and subjective nature of social identities. The reference to 'weariness' regarding Catalan or Spanish identities suggests resistance to nationalist discourses and reveals a desire to find a meaningful identity untainted by identity politics. It is the only direct reference to Catalan/Spanish politics in the interviews, perhaps unsurprisingly, despite the broader context, given

the film's deliberate avoidance of flagging national identities wherever possible.

The reference that immediately follows points again to the role of local and historical references in creating meaning and identity:

> There's that song by Joan Manel Serrat, isn't there, that was a hit, a success when he released it in the 70s, and a lot of people, when they listen to this song, they get emotional because you feel like you identify with it. It's an anthem for a lot of people, in fact it's one of the songs that is most played at funerals *(laughs).* They play the song *Mediterráneo* by Serrat... But when you listen to it it creates a photograph, first a literary one with the lyrics and then the music, which is like a perfect combination, and these- I think that in this advert they appeal unconsciously, or directly, to the unconscious of, in this case, the people who live here, to identify ourselves with this.[9]
>
> (from Spanish)

These comments are insightful for understanding how 'imagined communities' (Anderson, used here in a literal sense) are discursively and semiotically created through cultural practice. They offer a counterpoint to the assumptions of methodological nationalism, showing how boundaries can be dissolved and redrawn in an instant, providing the right semiotic resources are available. The 'Mediterranean' label, this research suggests, has popular appeal – what more powerful symbol of identification than the song you would choose for your own funeral? – while the 'global cool' references either went unnoticed, were contested (by Spanish/Catalan participants), or were seen as offensive (by British participants). Both points underline the fact that national identities may not be the most relevant or desirable for the subject in any given context, and that all social categories may be the site of contestation, both from inside dominant groups or from the margins.

Conclusion

The findings of this cross-cultural study reveal how different local, historical and personal experiences shape — in complex and, at times, competing, ways — practices and understandings of intercultural communication. The richness of the data obtained confirms the benefits of context-specific understandings rather than universal models, and of

multilingual rather than monolingual approaches. In particular, the study found that gender and economic/geo-political inequalities, both within nation-states and across national borders, emerged as more salient mediating factors than constructs such as nationality. Thus, this paper finds that dynamics relating to intersecting inequalities are central to IC and should be examined in any future research in the field that seeks to challenge stereotypes and improve intergroup understanding.

This research corroborates and contributes to the work of scholars arguing for gender to be read as a crucial part of culture (Flores 372; Uchida 48). A key finding is that the economic/geo-political and gender lenses through which participants interpreted the film rarely overlapped; such identifications often proved mutually exclusive, indicating that different inequalities not only intersect but also compete. The fact that this obscuring or jostling between narratives of different non-dominant identities was most evident in Catalan/Spanish women's responses adds complexity. This warrants further investigation, particularly of how nationality and gender interact with race and social class.

This paper finds that at the root of intercultural tension or 'misunderstanding' often lies a crucial lack of context, be it semiotic/linguistic, gender, or historical, through which to interpret meaning. Where there is tension, it is not caused by difference itself, but rather stems from the power dynamics of inequalities, which may be multifold and complex. Through attention to local conditions, using a gender and intersectional lens, we may discover commonalities of experience and/or expose conflicts of interest that derive from different power positions. The aim, then, has been to illuminate these contexts, to examine how different inequalities operate together, and, at the same time, to undermine simplistic divisions imposed by nationalism, whether banal, methodological, or otherwise. This process of excavating and recognising the inequalities that both separate and unite individuals along lines of ethnicity, race, nationality, gender and/or class, is a step towards undoing them. It is also a process that lies at the heart of IC, as the basis for generating greater mutual understanding and forging common cultures.

FILM

Vale. Directed by Alejandro Amenábar, performances by Dakota Johnson and Quim Gutiérrez, Estrella Damm, 2015.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in7R8MHwkm0 – English

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jlQiwcsV9Q – Spanish

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWMQkvxWCFM – Catalan

WORKS CITED

Ackerly, Brooke A., Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, editors. *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. 1st ed., Cambridge UP, 2006.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised ed., Verso, 2016.

Ajuntament de Barcelona. 'Enquesta de Percepció del Turisme – 2019. Presentació de Resultats' Registre Públic d'Enquestes i Estudis d'Opinió, 2019. Retrieved 07/07/20 from: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/sites/default/files/r19019_percepcio_de_turisme_2019_informe.pdf

Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. Sage, 1995.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2006.

Cannon, Jackie, et al. *Advertising and Identity in Europe the I of the Beholder*. Intellect, 2000.

Corbin, Juliet M., and Anselm L. Strauss. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 4th ed, SAGE, 2015.

Close Stephens, A. 'Feeling "Brexit": Nationalism and the Affective Politics of Movement'. *GeoHumanities,* vol. 5, no. 2, 2019, pp. 405-423.

Connell, Raewyn. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed. Polity, 2005.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.' *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1991, pp. 1241–1299.

elPeriódico 'Vale', el cortometraje de Estrella Damm dirigido por Alejandro Amenábar'. 2015. Retrieved 26/07/20 from https://www.elperiodico.com/es/tele/20150615/vale-el-cortometraje-de-estrella-damm-dirigido-por-alejandro-amenabar-4277022

Foster, Russell. 'I want my country back': Emotion and Englishness at the Brexit ballotbox – EU Referendum Analysis 2016'. Retrieved 07/07/20 from: http://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016/section-8-voters/i-want-my-country-back-emotion-and-englishness-at-the-brexit-ballotbox/

Flores, Lisa. 'Gender With/out Borders: Discursive Dynamics of Gender, Race and Culture' in Dow, Bonnie, and Julia Wood. *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Communication*. Sage, 2006, pp. 379–396

Hall, Stuart, and University of Birmingham. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. *Culture, Media, Language Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. Routledge in Association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1992.

Hofstede, Geert H. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. 2nd ed., Sage, 2001.

Hofstede, Geert, Michael Minkov and Gert Hofstede. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. 3rd ed., McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Hofstede Insights, 2020 https://www.hofstede-insights.com/ Retrieved 18/06/20 from: https://hi.hofstede-insights.com/national-culture

Holliday, Adrian, Martin Hyde and John Kullman. *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2010.

Holmes, Prue. 'Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book: Review' *Language and Intercultural Communication,* vol. 9, no. 1, 2009, pp. 57-59.

Houston, M. 'The Politics of difference: Race, class, and women's communication' In Rakow, Lana. *Women Making Meaning: New Feminist Directions in Communication*. Routledge, 1992, pp. 45–49.

Hughes, Neil. 'Tourists go home': anti-tourism industry protest in Barcelona, *Social Movement Studies,* vol. 17, no. 4, 2018, pp. 471-477. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1468244

Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials *Sondeig d'Opinió ICPS, 2018,* la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2018. Retrieved 26/07/20 from: https://www.icps.cat/archivos/sondeigs/dossiersc2018cat.pdf?noga=1

Johnson, Fern. 'Gender and Communication in Intercultural and Global Contexts: Introduction' in Dow, Bonnie, and Julia Wood. *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Communication*. Sage, 2006, pp. 371–378

Malm, Sara. 'Sick tourist posters encouraging tourists to jump off balconies' *The Daily Mail,* 2018. Retrieved 26/07/20 from: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6062729/Barcelona-anti-tourist-posters-encouraging-people-jump-balconies-emerge-streets.html

McSweeney, Brendan. 'Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and Their Consequences: A Triumph of Faith - a Failure of Analysis.' *Human Relations* vol. 55, no. 1, 2016, pp. 89–118.

Piller, Ingrid. *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction* Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Sarangi, Srikant. 'Culture'. In Senft, Gunter, Jan-Ola Östman, and Jef Verschueren, eds. *Culture and Language Use*. John Benjamins Publishing, 2009, pp. 81-104.

Scollon, Ronald, Suzanne Wong Scollon and Rodney H. Jones. *Intercultural Communication a Discourse Approach*. 3rd ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Sobot, Rita. 'Anti-tourist activists in Barcelona threaten fresh attacks on holidaymakers'. *The Daily Mail,* 2017. Retrieved 26/07/20 from: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4750474/Anti-tourist-activists-Barcelona-threaten-fresh-attacks.html

Stedham, Y.E, and Yamamura, J.H. 'Measuring National Culture: Does Gender Matter?' *Women and Language*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2006, p. 67.

Spelman, Elizabeth V. *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Women's Press, 1990.

Swann, Joan. 'Yes, But Is It Gender?' in Coates, Jennifer, and Pia Pichler, eds. *Language and Gender: a Reader*. 2nd ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp.551–568.

Tickner, J. Ann. 'Feminist meets International Relations: some methodological issues' in Ackerly, Brooke A., Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, editors. *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. 1st ed., Cambridge UP, 2006.

Wimmer, Andreas, and Nina Glick Schiller. 'Methodological Nationalism and beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences.' *Global Networks (Oxford)*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, pp. 301–334

APPENDIX 1: Interview Schedule (English)

Title: Cross-cultural perspectives on an Estrella Damm advert

Research question: What impact, if any, does nationality have on Spanish and British viewers' interpretation of a short film advertising Estrella Damm?

Advert: English: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd5NuHrb_Ys

Interview schedule:

1. Had you seen the advert before? What's your first reaction to seeing it (again)?

2. Can you re-tell (what you remember of) the story in your own words?

3. Who are the central characters? … How would you describe him/her? Why do you think he/she does what he/she does?

4. Which, if any, of the characters do you identify with? (What is it about them that you identify with? OR What is it about them that you can't identify with?)

5. How true to life are the characters?

6. Does the advert say or show anything about a particular culture? Which culture? What does it show? (Prompt to talk about the American character as well if they haven't mentioned.) How true to life is that?

7. Does the story say or show anything about languages? And relationships between different cultures? How true to life is that?

8. Did you like the advert? Why/ Why not?

9. What do you associate with the brand or label 'mediterráneamente' / Mediterranean?

10. Is there anything else that you would like say that you haven't had the chance to comment on yet?

APPENDIX 2: Comparison of Comments about the Quim Gutiérrez (Male) Character

British	Catalan/Spanish
How would I describe him? Sort of… maybe a bit creepy*(laughing)* –no, maybe not creepy. I don't know…. just maybe a bit of a blank really. I mean, *(smiling voice)* he is fit[1] ...But then I suppose kind of insecure. [1] He was sort of like the dud a bit, you know, tagging along, clumsy… [1] ...So he's seen, I dunno. I guess he's seen as like the clutz, or like the kind of runt of the litter, or whatever.[1] 'an uncomfortable kind of, like, he's just going to pursue her regardless of her interest in him[1] **(Participant 1, female)** I liked the guy, the guy who couldn't communicate. I thought he was really cool.[2] ...Er, he just seemed really nice and friendly. [2] And he was kind of misunderstood, like, yeah, there's something really endearing about him.[2] Um, I liked him. I thought he was like a really warm, he was like intelligent, like he was really sort of, like, into stuff, he was really cultural.[2] He just seemed really cool. He was a very *(smiling voice)*handsome young man-[2] He seemed like the kind of person I would really like straight off. [2] **(Participant 2, male)** ...he's a massive nerd and so they keep asking him questions and she asks him a question about a dog and he has flashbacks erm, and then remembers the name of the dog and she has sex with him. [6] He's, well, he doesn't go out with them at the beginning but he's like, I don't know if 'shy' is the word but he should be, like, in his slippers smoking a pipe, erm, but he's al- but he's also Spanish, so he's	a Spanish guy in Ibiza, umm, having a holiday and although it seems he's cultured, apparently, he depends on his friends, it seems… [3] ...the contrast between a guy who seems to be a hopeless moron because he doesn't speak English and it *(laughing voice)* turns out that he has a memory to remember insignificant details of films and music festivals[3] **(Participant 3, female, translated from Catalan)** He's shy but at the same time he wants to demonstrate a lot of things, doesn't he? First, he wants to be seen, then he wants to show that he knows things.[4] [His friends think] that he's really scatterbrained, for sure. [4] **(Participant 4, female, translated from Catalan)** ...he's so fragile and a bit of a dreamer and that his friends see him, like a bit, like… I think that his friends, errr, they have a lot of affection for him and they love him, eh? But, obviously, there's an intellectual underestimation… because they see him as a guy who's not very with it. [5] ...being capable of registering all these details is speaking to you of a certain sensibility towards the world, isn't it? And it's what she detects, that this boy speaks awfully and is a bit dumb but, ah, but here inside, no? He's a really spectacular boy and really fun but here, inside, there's a man, a guy who has an interior world and that's what captures her attention, isn't it? [5] **(Participant 5, male, translated from Catalan)** He's, like, jealous of one of his friends because he can communicate better with this girl…[7]

way more attractive than an English person would be.[6] (Participant 6, male) I read him as some kind of like fragile masculinity, sort of, I dunno, like, a bit uncertain of his own identity and position within the group and then there's this sort of, this sort of comes to a head around the arrival of this English-speaking woman and then I think the advert tries to show us that he's a nice guy and that he's quite funny and sweet but I didn't find it that compelling. [8] Also they were quite stereotyped, weren't they? … this slightly angry, this like, man with feelings about, you know, dunno, some man- some insecure man who wants to chirpse some woman. Not really my cup of tea as a story. [8] (Participant 8, gender non-binary) he's presented as quite shy because his English is not very good… [10] his insecurity is, 'oh, I'm not', is it 'charismatic' or something, or, something, there's a word he used and he's like, 'right, I've got to be like that', so he's trying to be like the others because they can speak better English, and actually that's not what endears her to him is it? [10] (Participant 10, female)	… the frustration of Quim Gutiérrez that he can't express himself…[7] He's, like the typical Spanish guy, here, of 'I see the girl, I like her, I'm going to attack'. They're throwing in all the stereotypes. [7] Umm, whingey, erm, yeah that, shame- well, yeah, shameless, and being able to speak to a person even though you've got no idea. I don't know. Apart from that they have him all the time with no top on, so he's like the 'macho ibérico'. [7] 'this insistence… saying 'no, mate'… it's so focused, it's tiring.[7] (Participant 7, female, translated from Spanish) I have to admit that I identified at some point with the main character[9] Well, I see him as very, like, noble, mm, this element- They accuse him of being in his own world, always being distracted, don't they? But I don't see him like that. I mean, someone who notices these details, that others don't notice, like, surely it's not that he's distracted, it's that he's noticing other things, which is different.[9] And so I see him as, well, like, the most humble of all of them, because the others, especially the boys, are trying to fake something…[9] (Participant 9, male, translated from Spanish)

APPENDIX 3: Attitudes Towards Stereotyping in the Film

Gender stereotyping

	British		Catalan/Spanish	
Male	Not mentioned	2	Not mentioned	2
	Reservations	0	Reservations	0
	Objections	0	Objections	0
	Acceptance	0	Acceptance	0
Female	Not mentioned	0	Not mentioned	1
	Reservations	0	Reservations	1
	Objections	2	Objections	1
	Acceptance	0	Acceptance	0
Gender non-binary	Not mentioned	0		
	Reservations	0		
	Objections	2		
	Acceptance	0		

National stereotyping

	British		Catalan/Spanish	
Male	*Not mentioned*	*1*	*Not mentioned*	*0*
	Reservations	*0*	*Reservations*	*2*
	Objections	*0*	*Objections*	*Partial*
	Acceptance	*1*	*Acceptance*	*0*
Female	*Not mentioned*	*0*	*Not mentioned*	*0*
	Reservations	*0*	*Reservations*	*1*
	Objections	*2*	*Objections*	*2*
	Acceptance	*0*	*Acceptance* *Partial**	
Gender non binary	*Not mentioned*	*0*		
	Reservations	*1*		
	Objections	*0*		
	Acceptance	*0*		

*Accepted representation of 'other' culture as true but objected to the portrayal of 'their' culture