European Politics and Society: Václav Havel Joint Master Programme

Pompeu Fabra University

Third Culture Kids on Navigating Cultural Identities

Master's Thesis

Author: Karolina Kučerova

Email address: karolina.kucerova01@estudiant.upf.edu

Supervisor: Dr. Joan Miró

Table of Contents

Abstract

This present research investigates how Spanish Third Culture Kids (TCKs) navigated their cultural identities during expatriation during their formative years. Existing literature focuses on how expatriation influences integration, lifestyle & career choices of individuals, however there is limited research on how adult TCKs reflect on their expatriate experiences when they are no longer in their formative years.

Using an exploratory & social constructivist approach, the research employs the Identity Negotiation Strategies and Expatriate Responses (INSER) model to understand how 8 Spanish adult TCKs navigated their cultural attitudes during their expatriation outside their home country – namely their cultural learning mindset & salience of home culture identity. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews & coded in the qualitative data software NVivo. The findings reveal that the majority of participants defined cultural identity as 'evolving and dynamic' and that in early formative years showed passivity towards culture. However, over time their identity negotiation strategies diverged to either monocultural, multicultural, global European & cosmopolitan identities – as reflected in the INSER model. This research highlights the complexities and multifaceted nature of TCK cultural identities, possessing practical implications for fostering greater European identity through family expatriation and support for TCKs in navigating their complex cultural landscapes.

Key words: Cultural Identity, Spanish Third Culture Kids, Negotiation Strategies, European Identity, Social Constructivist Approach, Exploratory

Introduction

In the era of booming globalization, it is unequivocal that mobility is one of the core pillars of modern European society. With this in mind, it is no surprise that large companies have become multinationals with subsidiaries across the world, often sending their employees to ensure effective cooperation. Consequently, the number of people working outside their home country (or so called 'expatriates') has significantly increased – totalling an estimate of over 50 million in 2013, and almost 57 million in 2017 (Knaap 2017). Because of this rise, the world of academia has seen a rise in interest in understanding the effects of living abroad, namely on a sense of belonging and identity. However, these figures do not encompass the families & children that move with expat workers, which is what this present study will explore – namely, how these mobile children navigate their cultural identities during their mobile upbringing.

The purpose of this introduction is to set out the context upon which the investigation will unravel. First, a brief description will explain the reasoning behind expatriates existing, followed by a background & conceptualisation section which will clearly define the objects of this study and key concepts. Furthermore, a literature review will unravel existing research on the psychological consequences expatriates experience from the moment of arriving in a host country – namely the different phases expatriates go through in adjusting, and assimilating within a foreign culture, which will serve as a baseline for understanding how this may interfere with identity. Existing research on Third Culture Kids (TCKs) will be tied into this, namely how they navigate cultural identity formation amongst their mobile upbringing, arriving at the research gap, the question of the study and a theoretical framework which will guide it.

To briefly touch upon the increasing occurrence of expatriates, one can turn to their necessity in an increasingly competitive world. In essence, employees are often sent abroad to multinational subsidiaries for 3 main purposes (Harzing 2001). Firstly, to fill positions, meaning transferring technical knowledge to subsidiaries where qualified local nationals are not available. Secondly, employees are sent abroad due to management development, meaning providing an opportunity for an employee to develop new skill sets in a new environment. The third reason is international transfers where the intention is organizational development instead of individual employee growth. These reasons often coexist, giving rise to a business-fuelled empire of mobility for the purpose of company growth. In essence, this goes to show that expatriates are an increasing phenomenon with a justified framework behind it. The logical implication

from this dictates that as expatriates move, so do their families and children – leading onto the topic of Third Culture Kids.

Conceptualisations

a. Expatriates

Now that the reasoning behind expatriates was touched upon, a clear definition can be provided which will help in conceptualizing the objects of this study: TCKs. Ward and Kennedy (1993) characterize expatriates under the broader category of 'sojouners' – who are individuals that travel voluntarily to a new culture for specific objectives such as occupational opportunities, who view their stay in the new culture as temporary and who expect to return to their home country. Differentiating with long-term travelers, immigrants or refugees, expatriates have been sent by their employers to work at a subsidiary branch in a foreign country, implying highly skilled technicians, professionals and managers. For the purpose of this investigation, the definition conceptualized by Adams & Vijver (2015) will be used when characterizing expatriates: individuals who are (a) employed by a multinational organization; (b) on an expatriate assignment in a host country with a work mission; (c) stay abroad for a substantial but fixed period. Although there exists literature which highlights other characteristics – such as by McNulty (2013), Shaffer et al. (2013) or Cerdin & Brewster (2014) – this investigation will adopt the conceptualization byAdam & Vijver listed above. The reason this definition of expatriates is used points to the difference in class that expatriates belong to, typically higher-working class.

b. Cultural Identity

As was briefly introduced, cultural identity entails the perception of belongingness to a cultural group, differing from a social identity which pertains to the in-group and out-group dynamics an individual assesses to make sense of themselves. Snow & Corrigall-Brown (2015) posits that cultural identity is a collective identity, or a 'we feeling'. This is cultural interactions between individuals, and a feeling that one belongs to a specific cultural category determined by common characteristics. This is opposed to Austins (2005) explanation of a 'me feeling' which alludes to 'what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. In acknowledgement of these conceptualizations, this investigation will follow definitions that were gathered from the participants of this study, which can be summarized in one definition below:

*"Cultural identity is a dynamic and evolving concept that encompasses a way of thinking and viewing life, influenced by one's environment and interactions. It includes elements such as language, which serves as a primary indicator and practical manifestation of cultural identity, as well as traditions, art,*

and history. Cultural identity involves exploring and integrating aspects that resonate personally, reflecting an individual's connection to their culture and the people they encounter." (P1-P8)

c. Third Culture Kids

In 2022, there were an estimated 230 million people who could classify themselves as TCKs (Interaction International, 2022). First coined by Useem (1976), TCKs are defined as individuals who live, or have lived, in a country that is not of their or their parents' origin during the first 18 years of their life, also called their 'formative years'. Other labels used for this population include 'prototype citizens of the future'(McCaig, 2011), 'global nomads' (Grappo, 2008) or 'cultural chameleons' – the last label stemming from Useems explanation that TCKs build relationships with all of the cultures they were exposed to, while not having full ownership to any specifically. This can be visually displayed in the following diagram by Miller & Feather (2020):

Figure 1: The Third Culture Model Diagram
(source: Miller & Feather, 2020)
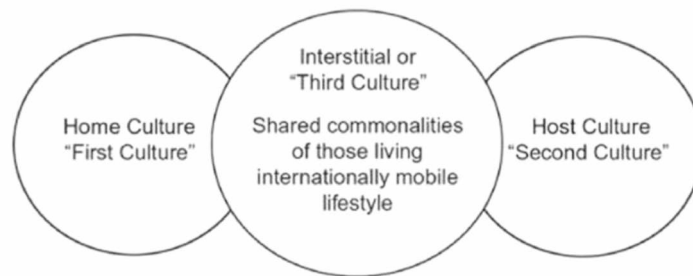
In essence, this explains the three cultures that a child interacts with during their formative years: firstly their parents' home country culture, second is the host country's culture, and third is formed by combining the first two, intersecting and navigating between them (Reken and Pollock 1976). Literature on this conceptualisation varies, as Crossman (2016) proposes a slightly different definition stemming from a legal, geographic & relational culture. In essence, they argue that the areas of cultural intersection are a matter of the ownership of a nation's passport (legal), the physical environment (geographical), and the culture of shared experiences (relational). This investigation will follow the conceptualisation by Pollock & Reken (2009). It is important to acknowledge that TCKs were born in their home country, but lived outside of it (host country or countries) during their formative years.

In understanding TCK identity formation, Broderick and Blewitt (2019) assert that TCKs may adjust their identity to mold to the new climates they are exposed to more dramatically than adults, referring back to the 'mastery' phase of The U-Curve of Adjustment. Toder and Marcia (1973) build on this by arguing

individuals who fail to develop a conscious sense of self will shift their identities to reflect their immediate surroundings & cultures, referring to the aforementioned 'cultural chameleons' or possessing 'intercultural literacy'. This implies that due to the interaction of various environments, the development of TCK identity is an ongoing negotiation between a person and their social context or environment.

Although expatriate adult experiences are important to note, as seen in the introduction, the rest of the investigation will solely focus on the TCK experience. It is important to note the difference between these two subject groups, as when adults adapt to a new culture they typically already have a sense of who they are and where they belong, making the process of going through the aforementioned phases of Adjustment in a much smoother manner. By contrast, TCKs move between cultures before forming a personal identity, where moving acts as a disruptive mechanism to gaining a sense of self. This touches upon the Theory of Cognitive Development by Jean Piaget (1950) which explains that the experiences and environments in formative years mold an individual the most, and it is when an adolescent completes this stage that they, in theory, have a formulated sense of self of beliefs, values & culture understandings. A last acknowledgement to make here is that other factors play a part in TCK adjustment, and they will be omitted from this investigation. For example, the personal attributes such as social skills and social self-efficacy tools passed down by parents, meaning the ability to socially interact in new environments. In addition, the level of family dynamics & support or the academic system of the new environment also influences TCK adjustment. These dispositional factors cannot be separated from the way TCKs experience expatriation, and thus a direct causal link between expatriation and cultural identity development cannot be made. However, this study adopts a social constructivist research paradigm where the objects of study (TCKs) reflect on their past experiences and attempt to understand how they navigated cultural identities.

Furthermore, while the label 'TCK' does include the word 'Kid' it is often used without restrictions on age, hence implying that even in adulthood, the term 'Third Culture Kid' can be used for identification. This will be mirrored in this investigation, as the object of study are adults that were TCKs.

To conclude this section, for the purpose of this investigation, 'expatriates' is defined as skilled individuals sent abroad temporarily to a subsidiary, by their employers. 'Third Culture Kids' (TCKs) are individuals who grew up in a culture different from their own during formative years. 'Cultural Identity' is the complex sense of cultural belonging to cultural practices, beliefs, norms, customs & attitudes – and will be later explored further in the Theoretical Framework section. This sets the foundation for investigating how these profound cross-cultural experiences shape the cultural identities of TCK, emphasizing the significance of exploring identities in the broader context of global mobility and cultural

integration.

Literature Review

With the growing existence of expatriates, research on expatriate adjustment and integration into host countries began emerging. The following diagram depicts The U-Curve of Adjustment in Expatriates by Black and Mendenhall (1991), capturing the psychological changes within expatriates upon arrival in their host country:

Figure 2: The U-Curve of Adjustment

(source: Black and Mendenhall, 1991)

Degree of Adjustment
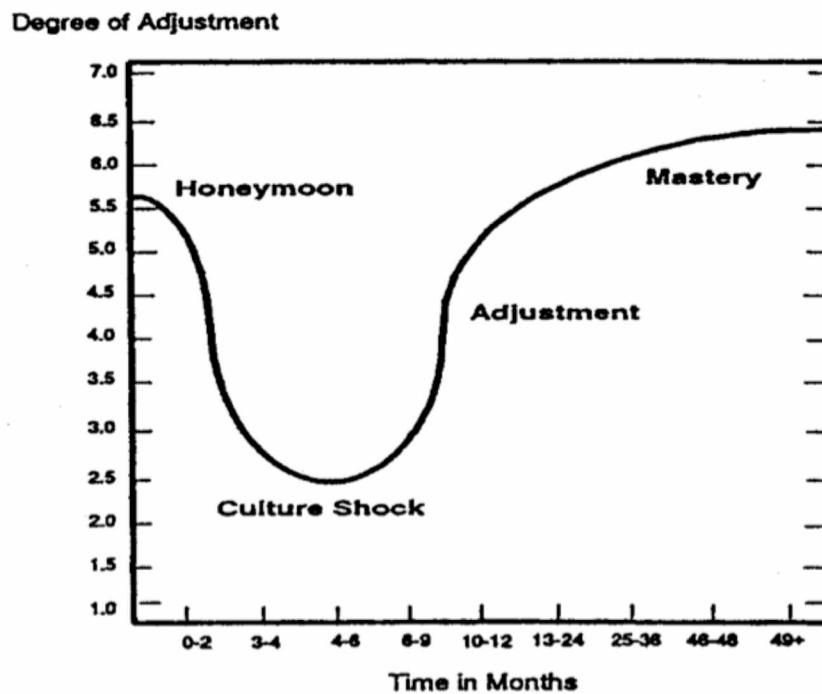
This graph illustrates 4 phases which expatriates go through; Honeymoon. Culture Shock, Adjustment and Mastery. An acknowledgement to make is that these evolutionary steps are not always linear, and that a multitude of factors – as will be explained – alter the course, or hinder the progression. For one, the 'Honeymoon' period can be described as the initial encounter with the new environment. It is where they are faced with the new culture, society, economics & geography for the first time. The next phase is 'Culture Shock', where individuals can reflect on their new social & cultural interactions on a deeper level, making subconscious connections to their own culture, as well as pinpointing the differences. Upon these reflections, one arrives at the phase of 'Adjustment', also referred to as 'Acculturation'. This entails

a psychological change where the individual adopts, consciously or subconsciously, the values and norms of their new environment. This manifests through a modification of behaviors associated with culture, also explained as the navigation between two dimensions: personal cultural maintenance and cross-cultural engagement. These dimensions dictate how much the individual accepts the host nation's culture at the expense of their own. Furthermore, there are a plethora of situational & dispositional factors that play a role in the navigation between these dimensions. The former touches upon the prominence of 'expat enclaves ', namely if there is an existing network of expatriates which stick together to differentiate themselves from the local culture & people, thus hindering their integration into their host country. In addition, dispositional factors related to the expatriate's personal attributes play a significant role in the adjustment phase. For example, inherent characteristics conceptualized by the Big Five personality traits could alter motivations to integrate (Shaffer et al. 2006). These include emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. In addition, competencies and inclinations towards the expatriate task could influence integration.

The completion of the 'Culture Shock' phase leads onto 'Mastery'. In essence, this implies the individual feels a level of comfort in their new environment, and their new 'self' – touching on the concepts of identity. Vignoles (2011) explains that the happenings in this phase are very individually tied to the specific person & their attributes, however overall, individuals draw form and incorporate aspects from three identity dimensions: personal, social and relational identity. This means that in the 'Mastery' phase, expatriates underwent primary interaction, reflected on them on a subconscious level, experienced adjustment and integrated into their new environment. As they are accustomed to this new culture, they now decide the level it affects their identity – or as Vignoles (2011) explains – what aspect of their 'tridimensional identity', which comprises 3 identity types. For one, 'personal identity' pertains to personal traits, abilities, likes, dislikes & values. Second, 'social identity' refers to the part of an individual's identity that stems from their membership in social groups together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership, rooted in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1974). It is the internal creation of symbolic boundaries which separate the collective 'us' from the diffuse 'them'. Thirdly, 'relational identity' explains the emotional connections with significant others, emphasizing how close relationships influence self-concept. It is important to acknowledge that these identities are integrated within each other, and that they all influence how individuals view themselves as independent entities and as members of a larger community. All in all, in the 'Mastery' phase, the individual navigates to what extent does their expatriation influence which aspect of their tridimensional identity.

Furthermore, there exists other research which conceptualizes the same phases, however defines them in different ways. For instance, the Cultural Identity Development model by Sussman (2000) similarly depicts the phases that sojourners undergo to new cultures, starting with 'initial interaction', leading to 'altering their behavior and social thought' and ending with 'change in cultural identity'.

What differentiates The U-Curve of Adjustment in Expatriates and the Cultural Identity Development model is the realm of 'cultural' identity. This form of identity is currently understudied in academia although very prominent in expatriate experiences. It is the perception of belongingness to a cultural group, identifying with its values, attitudes, symbols and commitments, and will be later further explained in the theoretical framework of this investigation. Furthermore, the literature above captures expatriate experiences of adults. While the objects of study are TCK adults that were children during expatriation, it is noteworthy to mention adult experiences of navigating cultural identities as they could mirror TCK experiences.

When unraveling the existing literature on TCKs, one can turn back to Miller et. al (2020) on The Third Culture Model which explains TCKs have a 'home culture', a 'host culture' and a 'third culture' – often resulting in a sense of 'in-betweenness' where individuals struggle with their sense of cultural belonging. Another perspective to this, as pointed out by Reken and Pollock (1976) is that the result is not 'in-between' – which holds a connotation of confusion – but rather an ownership of dual cultural identity. In essence, this means that TCKs explore their roots to cultures in a 'both/and' way rather than having to choose 'either/or.

Bennett (1993) builds on this further through conceptualizing 'encapsulated marginality' and 'constructive marginality', where the former is described as feelings of alienation from the dominant culture, resulting in isolation as the individual cannot integrate or create a sense of belonging in their current cultural environment. Conversely, constructive marginality is when an individual can construct context intentionally for the purpose of making their own identity – or, in other words: culturally belonging everywhere. Although this literature primarily investigates adult expatriates, one can draw parallels to TCKs.

From this there is an implication that TCKs are in a constant state of cultural marginality – that is, trying to negotiate behaviors, identities, values and attitudes between encapsulated marginality and constructive marginality. If the individual finds themselves in a state of encapsulated marginality for prolonged

periods (in this case, during formative years), Choi and Luke (2011) explain that the consequences may entail psychological degradation, withdrawal and cultural identity confusion.

Conversely, the result of constructive marginality implies an individual can resolve identity dilemmas of cultural marginality by appropriately integrating elements from the two cultures they are involved in, and be able to navigate through them with ease. A similar concept is the Global Citizenship Theory, which hints at a self-perception that downplays national affiliations, and rather embodies a global identity with an amalgamation of identity elements from various cultures (Pashby 2011). This extends beyond legal, political, geographic or national implications, and emphasizes belonging to a global community with an understanding that everyone is interconnected. Fee, Gray, and Lu (2013) points to this not being a mere social phenomenon, but also a biologically-supported one, observed through a longitudinal field study which investigates the effects of an international environment on changes in cognitive complexity (CC) of expatriates. CC is a foundational block to an open-minded view with capability of operating across cultural dimensions. The findings of this research demonstrated that being exposed to various and contrasting cultural settings signifies an increased understanding of characteristics of people, situations, and can infer meaning from limited and changing contexts, identity patterns and make cross-cultural connections.

This array of literature illustrates that a mobile upbringing is not merely geographic, but also a journey through cultural, social and psychological landscapes. It presents the idea that cross-cultural mobility has many potential outcomes & repercussions on cultural identity. Whether it is 'culturally belonging everywhere' or 'culturally belonging nowhere', the influence of mobility on cultural identity is unequivocal.

When looking at specific case studies of TCK identities, one can turn to Meyer (2015) research on the identity perceptions of children in international schools in Germany. The findings showed that the German children, even though in an international environment, expressed a solid understanding of their cultural & national identity. In contrast, TCKs that either were from other countries, or originally German but have lived abroad and now returned back to Germany, expressed a solid detachment from any one cultural identity. Furthermore, TCKs expressed that they felt an 'international' identity which was promoted to them by international schools they attended. A second case study carried out by Tanu (2008) observed TCK communities in Indonesia, finding that children related to an 'Euro-American-centric' interpretation of 'international' with English language proficiency, Western orientation and keeping boundaries away from local markers being the defining factors of their identity.

A last relevant case study was Hohenauers (2015) investigation on TCKs navigating multiple cultural identities in Brussels. The study targeted individuals aged 15 to 19 who either were currently attending or previously attended one of the European Schools in Brussels, facilitating semi-structured in-depth interviews to understand how participants navigate their multiple cultural identities and how these identities influence their sense of self. One of the key findings showed that TCKs often modify their answer to 'where are you from?' based on the situation and context they are in, identifying as their birth place culture for simplicity sake despite their complex cultural background. In addition, TCKs found that their identity can be described as pertaining to a 'Brussels bubble', which symbolizes multiculturalism and openness due to the many European institutions. Lastly, another major finding was that TCKs long for a national attachment as a result of feeling disconnected from their passport countries, experiencing what is known as reverse culture shock. In this sense, a part of TCKs identities is the desire to connect with a specific nationality and foster a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, the literature review of this investigation unravels that TCKs experience a complex sense of belonging which transcends national, geographic, social and cultural boundaries. The literature presented above points out this could result in a cultural identity confusion (encapsulated marginality) or in a dual cultural identity (constructive marginality). In other words, TCKs might sense they 'culturally belong everywhere' or 'culturally belong nowhere'. Previous case studies add on this, namely Meyers (2015) showing TCKs detachment from their local environment in Germany, and pointing to the role that international schools play in this. Furthermore, Hohenauers (2015) investigation illustrated the location of TCKs residence plays a role, for example Brussels which holds many EU institutions, helping to build a sense of constructive marginality. In addition, this study unravels that TCKs answers to identity-related questions are often dependent on whom they are speaking to.

The commonality of all these prior studies is: they all investigate identity formation when the TCKs are still in their formative years, that is, until 18 years old. This leads this investigation into the gap identification.

Gap Identification

For one, this research sets out to explore how adult TCKs reflect on their expatriate experiences when they are no longer in their formative years, following a social constructivist research paradigm where a reflection on past experiences facilitates in understanding the present. For this reason, the subjects of

study are adults between ages 20 and 30, and they are asked to reflect on their experiences during expatriation in formative years which are 8-18.

Furthermore, to date there is no research on TCK adult experiences of expatriation amongst Spanish populations. Prior research on TCKs explores TCKs living in Western European countries (such as Germany and Belgium), however no research explores Southern European regions. A further avenue of analysis could be a comparison in TCK experiences across EU regions.

Lastly, no prior research relates TCKs experiences to the broader topics of EU integration. As will be explained, there are parallels in the cross-cultural mobility experiences between Erasmus program participants and European TCKs. Erasmus programs are a successful example of European integration, and therefore one could imply so are intra-TCK experiences. What differentiates this research is that cross-cultural mobility in formative years will be investigated (ages 8-18), while Erasmus programs typically occur during university years (ages 18-25). At these ages, individuals already have some sense of their cultural identity in comparison to their formative years, as is explained by Theory of Cognitive Development.

Research Question

This allows for the arrival of the research question for this investigation:

How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect they navigated cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years?

Research Significance

Shaffer et al. (2006) explains that in the last two decades, literature on expatriates has mainly focused on criteria for expatriate effectiveness, the success of international assignments (return/retention decisions and job performance). Adams and Van de Vijver (2015) supports this, arguing that expatriate acculturation, and its reflection on identity, is a highly understudied field. This statement is even more applicable to researching the children of expatriates, as Moore and Barker (2012) mentions that much of the TCK literature discusses the negative emotions children face as a consequence of constant mobility. They acknowledge that there are very limited empirical studies in the TCK area, and that a 'more complete picture and theoretical framework have yet to emerge'. In essence, this highlights the need to

explore further – to build knowledge on the effects of expatriation on navigating cultural identity, especially in the sphere of TCKs. This is the theoretical contribution.
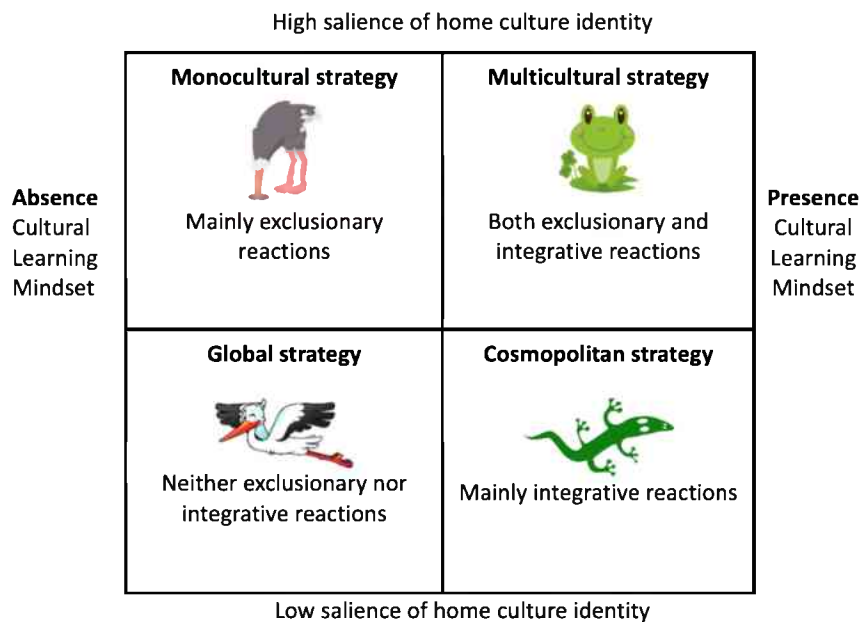
Regarding the social practicality & application to outside academia, TCK research can be applicable to an array of current socio-political discussions. For one, as McCaig (2011) views TCKs as the 'prototype citizens of the future', he implies this cross-cultural upbringing will become an increasing phenomenon in global society. In the context of Europe, this could be powerful in the discussions on European identity. For one, one can turn to the research by Jacobone and Moro (2014) on Erasmus programs which demonstrates that student mobility across Europe, for academic purposes, sparks cultural enhancement, personal development, foreign language proficiency as well as an 'Europeanising' impact, meaning a stronger identification with European values. Literature by Van Mol (2018) takes this further, pinpointing Erasmus programs as a tool of fostering European identity due to the collaborative nature of these programs between people of various European cultures. Furthermore, The European Commission (2017) posits that Erasmus programs are a successful example of European integration, as it is a practical manifestation of the European ideal of free movement, fosters a an understanding and appreciation of diverse European cultures, and works towards a goal of fostering a sense of belonging to a community that transcends national identities. When taking this a step further, one can argue that the Erasmus program is a strategic soft power tool which strengthens intra-EU educational links & networks, acting as a way to build a more 'united' front when cooperating with non-EU states (Ferreira-Pereira and Mourato Pinto, 2021). When relating this to the concepts of TCK, one can infer the parallel & make the logical assumption: the cross-cultural mobility between European countries by Third Culture Kids fosters a sense of European identity, and in the long-term can be viewed as a tool of building a more 'united' Europe. In the policy-making realm, this could hypothetically manifest in a greater investment by the European Union into expatriate mobility opportunities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will support the analysis of this investigation follows the Identity Negotiation Strategies and Expatriate Responses Model (INSER) by Li et. al (2021). To explain, one must first define two key components of it: exclusionary and integrative responses towards a host culture. Exclusionary responses mean that an individual expresses emotional uncertainty associated with the host culture, and upholds exclusionary behaviors of social isolation, avoidance of activities stemming from local culture and general cultural rejection. Furthermore, there is a high salience of home culture identity. On the contrary, integrative responses involve a cultural learning mindset, where individuals actively

interact with local language and culture, and maintain efforts to integrate into their host environment. In essence, the salience of home cultural identity and a cultural learning mindset is what differentiates exclusionary and integrative responses towards a host culture, acting as an inter-mediatory mechanism which connects cultural identity negotiation strategies and expatriates responses. This can be demonstrated in the diagram below:

Figure 3: The Negotiation Strategies and Expatriate Responses (INSER) Model

(source: Li et. al. 2021)

High salience of home culture identity

	Monocultural strategy	**Multicultural strategy**
Absence Cultural Learning Mindset	Mainly exclusionary reactions	Both exclusionary and integrative reactions	**Presence** Cultural Learning Mindset
	Global strategy	**Cosmopolitan strategy**
	Neither exclusionary nor integrative reactions	Mainly integrative reactions

Low salience of home culture identity

Li et. al. (2021) conceptualizes the different identity negotiation strategies through an animal analogy, namely: Ostrich, Frog, Bird and Lizard. The Ostrich represents a monocultural strategy, where expatriates maintain their home-culture identity, prioritizing their existing self-identity and upholding exclusionary reactions towards their host environment. They rely on values, customs and behavioral norms rooted in their home cultures as a guide to existing in the host country. Lastly, these individuals have a salient home cultural identity and do not exhibit a cultural learning mindset towards their host culture. The analogy of an ostrich with its head in the sand is used to illustrate the cognitive closed-mindedness to the host culture.

Secondly, the frog inhabits the multicultural strategy, explained by Berry (1997) as keeping their home cultural identity but being accepting to the host culture in adapting to a new environment. There is an active element of choice, where the individual is receptive to internalize the host culture, however

maintains their home cultural identity. Here, the individual upholds a cultural learning mindset while retaining a home cultural identity – characterized by the frog as they live both in water and on land.

Thirdly, a bird is used to illustrate a global identity strategy where expatriates believe in a transcendence of values beyond cultural boundaries. This means a lack of identification with a home culture and a host culture to define self, and instead a global identity image is emphasized where a universal set of values is upheld. Regarding their cultural learning mindset and home culture identity, the global identity strategy dictates neither exclusionary nor integrative practices. The bird is used as an analogy to express a detachment from either location – the ground and the sky. Another theoretical later of this investigation can be found when zooming into the 'Global Strategy', namely by relating it to European identity. Although this cultural negotiation strategy explains a universal set of values is upheld, for this investigation one can alter this to 'European identity' stemming from the European Commission (2015) argument that transnational practices within the EU can evoke a sense of belonging to a greater 'European' community.

Lastly, a cosmopolitan strategy involves an active engagement in the host culture, and an independence from the home culture. There is a parallel to the global identity strategy in the sense that both detach from home & host culture, however cosmopolitans actively engage with their host culture, consume cultural products, appreciate their embeddedness in their host country and they do not uphold this universalist set of values that global identity does. Furthermore, cultural independence hinders information processing through the perspective of their home culture, preventing salient home cultural identity – alluding to mainly integrative response mechanisms. This strategy is visually represented through a lizard, as this animal adapts to its surroundings.

This framework is essential in guiding this research as it will explore the Cultural Learning mindset & Home Culture Identity Salience of Spanish TCKs during expatriation in formative years.

Research Design & Methodology

For the methodology, this investigation will explore a qualitative analysis consisting of data collection from semi-structured interviews and a ethnographic approach in the examination, namely a qualitative discourse analysis from an interpretivist standpoint. For one, the qualitative approach allows for providing descriptions of socially constructed realities and the meanings attached to experiences – situating this study within the social constructivist research paradigm where Spanish adult TCKs develop subjective meanings of their expatriate experiences through interactions with their cultural surroundings (Creswell 2018). An interpretivist standpoint can also be used to convey the exploratory nature of this investigation as it intends on capturing lived experiences of participants from their own descriptions.

For the research question of 'How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect they navigated cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years?' the independent variable is the 'expatriate experience' of Spanish adult TCKs. This encompasses the various experiences, environments and cultures TCKs are exposed to during their expatriation in formative years. The dependent variable is the understanding of navigating cultural identities during expatriation. The participants used for this investigation are Spanish adult TCKs between ages 20 and 30 that were expatriates outside of Spain for at least 8 years during their formative years. This follows the line of reasoning by Piagets (2024) who demonstrates the core culture-building phase in a child's life occurs between 8-18, the starting point being age 8 where cognitive capabilities are developed enough to grasp external influence on the self. The participants were acquired through a snowball sampling technique, where the researcher initially identified 3 participants who possessed the desired characteristics (Spanish TCKs that lived abroad in formative years). These were existing contacts through shared experience of attending an international school in Madrid. In turn, these participants identified other participants from their networks, allowing for a chain-referral process until the sample size (8) was attained.

While the INSER model will be used as a theoretical framework guiding the research, an acknowledgement to make is that the PolVan Cultural Identity Model by Reken and Pollock (1976) was considered, as illustrated on the following page:

Figure 4: The PolVan Cultural Identity Model

(source: Reken and Pollock, 1976)

Foreigner Look *different* Think *different*	Hidden Immigrant Look alike Think *different*
Adopted Look *different* Think alike	Mirror Look alike Think alike

This model illustrates the relationship that TCKs have to their surrounding culture, namely their different cultural identities, with the outcomes being: Foreigner, Hidden Immigrant, Adopted & Mirror. Within these categories there is a differentiation between how the TCKs 'look' and 'think' in relation to their host culture. However, for this investigation, the key areas of interest are the attitudes towards expatriation (to assess the Cultural Learning Mindset) and the action behavior during expatriation (to assess the salience of home culture identity), subsequently disregarding the Polvan Cultural Identity Model.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to accommodate an open dialogue about participants' backgrounds, experiences and perceptions of identity. Furthermore, probing techniques were employed where necessary to acquire comprehensive data where interviewees' experiences were properly and contextually understood, questions in Appendix 1. Conducting surveys was considered, however due to the social constructivist nature of this research, semi-structured interviews allowed for participants to express details on their TCK cultural identity. Furthermore, surveys would be more suitable for a quantitative analysis. The questions were designed to understand their curiosity in the host culture (Cultural Learning Mindset) as well as if this manifested into action (Salience of Home Culture Identity). Lastly, signed informed consents were collected from the participants, to follow ethical considerations in research (Appendix 2)

A small-N design approach aligns with the exploratory and theory-building perspective of this investigation. Initially, this investigation set out to explore TCKs around the EU, for which large-N would be appropriate. In addition, the initial idea incorporated a cross-cultural analysis of various TCK communities & their understanding of the influence of expatriation on their cultural identity. However, in focusing on a single community of Spanish TCKs, a small-N delves deeper into the interplay of dynamics

in the formation of cultural identity. A limitation extends to the generalizability, as findings from a single TCK community may not be reflective of TCKs globally, limiting external validity. However, the object of this study is not to provide mass-scale generalizations. Instead, it adopts an interpretivist standpoint where a specific group of people are studied – namely their meanings & experiences from their own perspective.

Furthermore, the exploratory nature of this research alludes to an inductive reasoning approach touching on theory-building perspective. This is where observations from interviews serve as a basis for identifying patterns and relationships in the data, building a greater picture on the phenomenon of TCK experiences & cultural identity.

The data collected was subject to a thorough analysis, guided by description-focused coding. This analysis aims to describe the information participants are providing, understanding their statements & uncovering patterns. The methodology is informed by the insights learned from Creswell (2018), leveraging tools such as NVivo. Prior to inputting data into the software, the interview transcripts were cleaned for sentence coherence & clarity, omitting long pauses & filler words which interrupt flow of speech. In addition, participants were anonymized for ethical compliance, replacing names with P1-P8. Grouping & coding the interview data allowed for 4 guiding categories to emerge: Defining Cultural Identity, Attitudes to Expatriation, Cultural Integration Strategies & Navigating Identities. Themes emerged within these categories which answer the primary research question How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect they navigated cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years?.

Findings

Defining Cultural Identity

The raw data with interviews is found in Appendix 3. The preliminary investigation to TCKs navigating cultural identity was to establish how TCKs define cultural identity, relating back to the conceptualisation of cultural identity for this research.A word frequency cloud below illustrates what cultural identity meant to participants P1-P8:

Figure 5: A word frequency illustrating the key words conceptualizing cultural identity by participants (source: author)

Upon closer glance at the codes, the findings point to TCKs relating cultural identity with a multitude of concepts. For one, 4 participants related cultural identity with cognitive processes, namely mentality and language. This can be extracted from:

P4: *"I see cultural identity as a mentality, as a way of thinking and a way of viewing life"*

P5: *"I think it has to do a lot with linguistics …. language is the main indicator of cultural identity"*

P3: *"things that come to mind are traditions, art, history, mentality, language"*

P8: *"language is really important, and it's something that you put into practice, something that manifests during the day"*

Second of all, 3 participants described cultural identity as an evolutionary process, such as in:

P1: *"it's not something static, it's something that can change, and it's influenced a lot by where you live,*

the culture there, the people that you meet"

P6: *"I kind of explored what resonates, what speaks to me, and then I can decide what my cultural identity is"*

This links in with the notions set forth by Moore and Barker (2012) who explains cultural identity as a dynamic psychological response that is influenced and altered by specific experiences.

A majority of participants defined cultural identity as *"subjective"* and *"something on a deeper level"* where *"everyone has their own experience and everyone's experience is very different"* (P3) as well as an inherent concept that is *"passed from parents down to generations"* (P6). When asked to expand, participant P6 explained that *"because cultural identity is passed down through generations, it relates us to the past"* and *"takes attention away from you as yourself and relates to a greater community"*. This alludes to the conceptualization by Snow & Corrigall-Brown (2015) who posits cultural identity as a 'we feeling' and a 'collective identity' that is shared between individuals, evoking a sense of community.

Furthermore, one participant identified cultural identity as something that manifests through actions & has to be *"actively practiced"* (P7). These definitions provided by participants solidified the understanding of cultural identity for this investigation, allowing for a baseline or alignment between the research and participants' experiences.

Attitudes during expatriation

To arrive at the application of the Negotiation Strategies and Expatriate Responses model, one must identify the attitudes towards expatriation (Cultural Learning Mindset) & the action behavior during expatriation (to pinpoint the Salience of Home Culture Identity). Regarding the former, the findings showed that during expatriation, Spanish TCKs exhibited different attitudes to their host culture implying varied Cultural Learning mindsets. The responses were grouped via NVivo, allowing for themes to emerge as illustrated on the following page:

Figure 6: A table showing the coded categories on attitudes during expatriation

(source: author)

	Theme 1- Cultural Passiveness in Childhood	Theme 2- Host Culture Curious	Theme 3- Lost Interest In Host Culture	Theme 4- Expatriation Status Hindered Curiosity	Theme 5- Home Culture Curious
P1	X				X
P2	X				
P3	X	X		X	
P4		X			
P5	X	X			
P6		X			
P7			X		X
P8	X	X			

To explain, Participant 1 expressed a lack of interest in their host culture during childhood expatriation in France due to mere fact *"when you're a kid, you don't really acknowledge these things"* in reference to culture, stating *"they're not a priority for you"*. However, P1 expressed that later in formative years & during expatriation, they became more interested in their Spanish (home) culture:

> *"I was trying to put pieces together of my identity that I didn't really know much about because we didn't really live in Valencia for too long"*

Regarding attitudes to host culture during expatriation, Participant 2, 3, 5 & 8 also displayed a cultural passiveness to their host cultures during their childhood. Participant 2 in *"cultural identity was passive in my mind"*, Participant 3 in *"I dont think it's something you think of as a child"*, Participant 5 in *"I was kind of passive to culture"* and Participant 8 in *"I was not that curious. I was so young"*. Participant 3 attributed this to a sense of confusion regarding the duration of their families' expatriation, stating that *"we didn't know how long we were going to be there. So I had many questions and my parents just did not know. So there was this internal conflict of whether this would be my life for a while or to go through the*

year with the intention that we're going to move back soon." Participant 3 then expressed they experienced a turning point moment due to an event organized by their international schools later in teenagehood, where families of students would display their cultural foods, music & art: *"I think that evening, it just clicked in my mind that culture is such a multifaceted and complex concept, and that made me a little bit more aware to find out more about culture"*. From that point, they were more curious about their host culture.

Participant 4 expressed a natural interest in their host country (Portugal) & in cultural activities that pertain to it (surfing & football), however acknowledging *"it's just something that naturally happened because everyone around us was doing it, so it felt like the natural thing to do"* rather than a conscious act of host culture curiosity. This mentality was mirrored by Participant 6 who explained curiosity in their host country (France) was attributed to the fact their parents' work was linked to culture (fashion) and so they *"felt naturally curious without it being a conscious effort"*. Participant 8 attributed their curiosity to their host culture (Czech) came at a later age & it manifested through learning the language, explaining they did not want to be *"one of those foreigners that live ignorantly in a place without trying to connect"*.

This was contrasted with Participant 7, who quickly lost interest in their host culture (British) and instead felt more drawn to exploring their Spanish home culture during expatriation in the UK. They explained feeling disconnected to the nightlife culture, stating that *"as I learned more about the UK culture, it's almost like I was less interested in it"*. In addition, they *"befriended a Spanish group of people and we had our Spanish community events"* which sparked interest in their home culture. Furthermore, their interest in their home culture was further cultivated by religion in the family, explaining *"my family is religious and all of my friends back home had a communion, which I did not, we moved before it was possible and then in London we never did it."*

These findings highlight that during expatriation, Spanish TCKs displayed varying degrees of curiosity and interaction with the host cultures. A majority of the participants were passive to exploring culture when they were in their childhood years, simply because culture was not an important concept in their cognitive processes. Similarly, most experienced a turning point when they began understanding the concepts, after which they either explored their host culture (P3, P4, P5, P6, P8), pursued learning about their home culture (P1), or attempted to connect with their host culture & failed (P7). In the case of Participant 3, they were confused whether to pursue integration into their host culture due to uncertainty of how long their expatriation status would be (however, upon moving to the next destination they were curious about host culture).

Knowing the curiosity levels of TCKs during expatriation is the first step in understanding their unique experiences. It is to identify their Cultural Learning mindset when they were abroad. The next step is to inquire how this curiosity (or lack of) manifested into actions, through behavior action.This will create a picture of the relationship between the salience of home culture identity and cultural learning mindset, linking back to the Negotiation Strategies and Expatriate Responses Model & navigating between cultural identities.

Cultural Integration strategies

The next step in answering the research question 'How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect they navigated cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years?' is exploring if their cultural learning mindset manifested into action (or lack of). The findings show that there were 6 different behaviors that participants adopted during their expatriation in host countries during their formative years. An important acknowledgement to make is that most of the times, these efforts were not conscious, meaning participants partook in cultural activities not for the sake of acculturation, but because it *"seemed like the natural thing to do"* and *"everyone was doing the same around"*.

For one, the majority of participants expressed that their parents played a big role in their acculturation, explaining they were the driving force behind integrating into their host culture, illustrated in the table below:

Figure 7: A table showing the instances of parents influence on acculturation of TCKs

(source: author)

Participant	Instance of Parents Influence on Acculturation
P1	a. "My parents were really big on the Festival of Music so we would go every year, which is on June 21st. Everyone is out, the music is filled in the streets"
P2	a. "We would also skiing in the Swiss Alps every year, and we would kind of do everything that comes along with this"
P4	a. "I got into surfing because of my parents. My parents never surfed before and when we moved here, we took a course together and then we would go on week trips for

	surfing around Portugal" b. "They definitely tried to integrate themselves into Portugal and I think they took me on board with them"
P6	a. "If my mom wasn't in fashion, perhaps I would have a different relationship with French culture. But because she was so heavily involved, I was really heavily involved. And then I guess I felt integrated."
P8	a. "In Germany, we would go cycling with my parents. We would take weekend trips and go on these really long cycling trips. And I think that was something my parents tried for"

The second most common integration strategy into host culture was through sports, namely Participants 3, 4 & 8, as they expressed rowing (Germany), football (Portugal) & Cycling (Germany) to be a part of the culture they were surrounded in. Participants 4 & 6 also expressed cultural integration strategies entailed building a sense of community:

"I have my friends here and a surfing community and a football community and all these things make Portugal my home and not Spain" (P4)

[in reference to feeling integrated in France] *"also I had friends there. Friends build a community. And I think that's important."* (P6)

Focus was also on the importance of language & gastronomy in cultural integration. Regarding language, Participant 8 explained "I tried to learn the language, even though it was really hard to learn. I tried so that I can integrate myself a little bit and not be one of those foreigners that live ignorantly in a place without trying to connect." Similarly, Participant 2 said "I was curious to learn proper German and French". This demonstrates language is a significant tool in a cultural learning mindset. Regarding gastronomy, Participant 3 explained the *"Germans are really passionate about a specific kind of bread... It's kind of like part of the culture to go in the morning and get their bread. So I started doing this for my family, and I feel like we've always had German bread in the house"*.

Lastly, Participant 5 explained that a cultural activity pertaining to Brussels was partaking in EU Youth Exchange Programs because of the multiculturalism of the city, in addition to the European institutions present. For this reason, they viewed this as a way of cultural integration because *"it felt like it was the Brussels thing to do"* (P5).

To conclude this section, Spanish TCKs adopted an array of cultural integration strategies, ranging from sport to gastronomy, language, community & youth exchange. The majority of participants expressed that the activities were in part due to the parents, highlighting the dependence on family in navigating cultural identities. Furthermore, these strategies were not conscious, evoking the sense that cultural identities are located on a subliminal level.

Navigating identities

Until now, the investigation followed the direction of: Spanish TCKs conceptualizing cultural identity, unraveling their Cultural Learning Mindset & reflecting their Action Responses (Salience of Home Culture). This was done to capture the unique experiences of Spanish TCKs during their formative years, as well as arriving at the investigation into how Spanish adult TCKs navigated their cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years.

Coding in NVivo allowed for an emergence of categories & themes when asking on navigating cultural identities, namely through the questions:

1. What relationship do you think you had with your Spanish cultural identity? Did you keep in touch with your Spanish cultural identity?
2. Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?
3. Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict inside yourself when you were growing up and maybe how did you resolve that?

The findings showed 5 categories: Disconnected from Home Culture, Maintained Home Culture Identity, European Cultural Identity, Coexisting Identities & Host is Home Culture.

Disconnected from Home Culture

The category with the most coded cases & references was labeled 'Disconnected from Home Culture' as it meant that during expatriation, these Spanish TCKs started feeling out of touch with their home culture.

For instance, Participant 1 described "feeling a bit of a culture shock every time I went back to Spain for the summer" regarding the cultural customs. They explained *"in Spain it's normal to kiss with two kisses on the cheek. But in Nantes (France), that's not so much the no*rm" and *"that always made me feel a bit hesitant about how to greet people"*. Similarly, Participant 8 pointed out the differences in cultural

customs in gastronomy, describing that *"in Spain we eat tapas, and we share food"* and *"In Germany and in Czechia, people just order one meal and that's your meal"* when describing how they felt disconnected to Spain when living abroad.

Furthermore, Participant 1 attributed feeling disconnected from Spanish culture to not keeping up with cultural traditions, namely Las Fallas festival originating in Valencia. They explained that when living in France, their parents would organize a Las Fallas community event, however they just perceived it as *"fun"* rather than anything *"connected to Spanish culture"*. This participant also expressed feeling disconnected when being taught about the Franco-Spanish War when attending a French school, expressing that their French environment & teacher subconsciously evoked a sense of guilt in the participant, coming from a Spanish background in *"in that moment it was a bit difficult to navigate those feelings"*.

In addition to history, Participant 5 attributed feeling disconnected to Spanish culture to language, explaining that *"once we moved to Brussels we started speaking more English at home for some reason, and it made me disassociate with Spain"*.

Lastly, Participant 4 and 6 related disconnection to family, however for different reasons. Participant 4 stated *"I don't have anything holding me back in Spain. We don't have family there anymore. It's like a distant connection"*, shedding light on cultural disconnection due to lack of family ties. On the contrary, Participant 6 expressed they felt disconnected because of having family & friends ties in their home country, and that visiting them from France made them feel distant as *"I was building a life in Paris"*.

Maintained Home Culture Identity

The category with the second most coded cases was labeled 'Maintained home culture identity' as it uncovered 5 participants that although they were living abroad during formative years, maintained a strong sense of cultural identity.

In contrast to Participants 4 & 6, Participant 1 felt connected to Spain due to frequent visits to grandparents, giving them a "sense of what it's like to live in Spain". Similarly, while Participant 5 explained feeling disconnected to Spanish language during their time in Brussels, they later stated they started feeling connected to Spanish culture once they moved to Spain at age 25. This is when they began actively using the language, relating cultural identity as "the internal voice & language when you are thinking or dreaming".

Second of all, TCKs parents being the driving force to maintaining cultural traditions during expatriation was a common theme amongst the participants, namely P1, P2 & P7. For instance, Participant 1 expressed they would partake in the Spanish tradition of eating grapes for New Years, in addition to traveling to Spain for extended weekends to see football matches with their father. Similarly, Participant 2 explained after school their mother would prepare typical Spanish *"pan con tomate"* while living in Switzerland. Lastly, Participant 7 related lack of cultural integration in the host country to their parents *"befriending Spanish people which felt like a bubble"* while living in the UK. This goes to show that parents' behavior regarding maintaining home culture within the household was a strong indicator in how the TCK navigated their cultural identity. This was not the case for Participant 8, who said they had to actively try to not lose touch with their 'Spanishness',

European Cultural identity

The category with the third most coded cases was themed 'European cultural identity' as it symbolized participants that expressed their expatriate upbringing has caused them to feel a European identity when asked about culture. For example, Participant 2 explained that the core languages they felt are European were Spanish, German & French – all languages they spoke fluently being Spanish & growing up in Switzerland. They viewed cultural identity as an identity that is *"connected to the other cultures"* and that *"it is all related to each other through history, music, traditions, politics"*. Secondly, Participant 3 expressed that they felt connected to Europe because they spent a year living in Japan at age 12, therefore returning to Europe, even though it was not Spain but Germany, felt like returning home. They expanded this mindset in *"I feel a strong European identity. I feel like Europe has so many different complex cultures and they're so kind of connected"*.

Coexisting Cultural Identities

Another category that emerged upon coding participants' responses was 'Coexisting cultural identities' which illustrate seeing expatriation not as something which disconnects an individual from their home culture, as well as it does not build an attachment to the host culture. Instead, it views expatriation during formative years as something that can amplify certain cultures within an individual while not suppressing others. For instance, Participant 2 expressed they view their expatration as something that makes *"identity more colorful rather than having any cultural tensions against each other"*, implying that home and host cultures can coexist equally. Similarly, Participant 6 views their cultural identity to be *"half Spanish, half French"* because they spent equal amount of time in both countries, making them possess *"both cultural*

identities".

Host is Home Culture

The last & least frequently coded category was labeled 'Host is Home' as it represented the participants that expressed they culturally identify with their host culture. This relates to Participant 4, who lived in Portugal from age 8 and is now 20. They expressed this through *"I felt Portugal was my home, not even my host country. When I'm meeting new people, I will say that I'm Portuguese rather than Spanish because it's just how I feel that I am".*

Discussion

Now that the findings revealed the Cultural Learning Mindset of participants and their Action Responses, one can link back to the Identity Negotiation Strategies & Expat Response (INSER) model to answer the research question 'How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect they navigated cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years?', as well as shed light on this contribution to current literature. This can be illustrated on the INSER model below:

Figure 8: An Identity Negotiation Strategies & Expat Response Model with Spanish TCK experiences

(source: author)
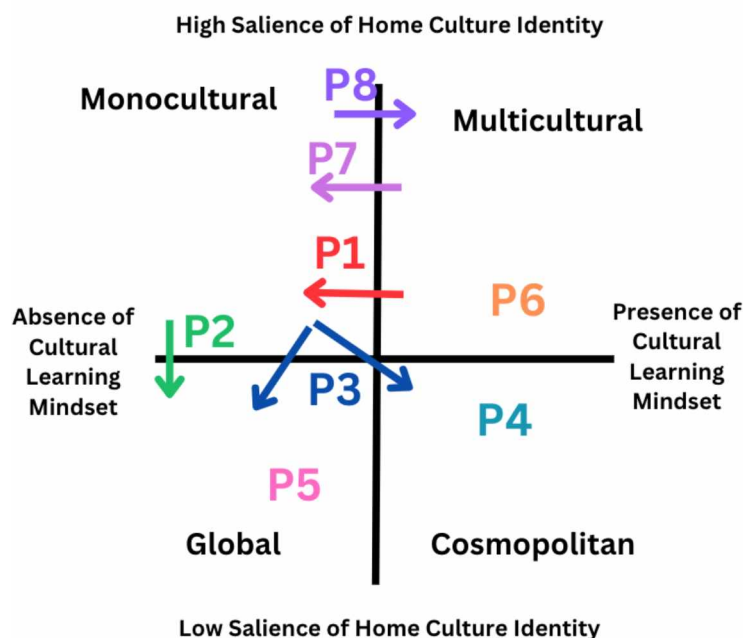
In explaining the diagram, Participant 1 can be marked as starting off with a multicultural strategy, and then moving towards a monocultural strategy. This is because at the start of expatriation, their parents attempted to acculturate them as well as maintain a home culture identity (implying both exclusionary and

integrative reactions), however it resulted in P1 feeling disconnected to either culture. This can be related to the previously explained literature on encapsulated & constructive marginality (Bennett, 1993), namely encapsulated marginality where TCKs experience feelings of alienation from their dominant culture. However, later during their formative years, P1 became increasingly interested in their home culture identity, implying a shift to mainly exclusionary reactions where the participant is only pursuing home culture curiosity. This finding does not support the U-Curve of Adjustment which implies after a culture shock, an individual will 'master' and be absorbed into the new culture, altering their cultural identity. Furthermore, it does not support the Third Culture Model which alludes to TCKs being in-between host & home cultures or owning a dual cultural identity.

Participant 2 can be placed between monocultural & global strategy, where at the start of expatriation, parents would try to maintain the home culture within the household. In addition, P2 adopted a "passive" mentality to the cultural learning mindset, placing them within the monocultural category. However, over the course of formative years they acquired various language skills, evoking a sense of European identity. They described this as a feeling of *"connected to other cultures"*, implying a global strategy. When relating back to the literature, these findings hint at the aforementioned Global Citizenship Theory which hints at a self-perception that embodies a greater-than-nations mentality and an identification with various cultural identities, arriving at the mindset of belonging to a community where everyone is interconnected. In addition, this finding touches upon Meyer (2015) finding that TCKs feel an international identity.

Participant 3 can be viewed as a transition from monocultural to cosmopolitan or to global strategy. The placement in monoculturalism can be attributed to a lack of cultural learning mindset in early expatriation, namely due to living in Japan where they did not feel interested in culture. However, P3 describes a turning point moment where they began to be interested in their host culture, specifically upon arrival to Germany after Japan. From then, P3 displayed mainly integrative reactions to their host culture and passive to home culture, which signify a shift to cosmopolitan cultural identity. However, when inquired about their cultural identity, P3 responded they feel a *"European identity"*, which can either imply transition to global cultural strategy where *"everyone is kind of connected"*, mirroring the findings to Participant 2. However, Participant 3s findings align with encapsulated marginality in feeling disconnected from the dominant culture, leading to a lack of sense of belonging in their cultural environment in Japan. However, upon moving to Germany, their Global cultural strategy aligns with Global Citizenship Theory (Pashby, 2011).

Participant 4 can be located within the Cosmopolitan category as they exhibited mainly integrative reactions towards their host culture. This is where their cultural learning mindset was present (manifested through feeling of belonging to community & partaking in cultural activities). At the same time, they expressed a feeling of being disconnected to their Spanish culture. This finding aligns with the U-Curve of Adjustment as the individual got acculturated, experiencing a psychological change where they felt comfort in their new environment in reaching the 'mastery' phase where, in linking to the Cultural Identity Model (Reken and Pollock, 1976), they changed their cultural identity to align with their host.

In the case of Participant 5, their cultural identity navigation during expatriation in formative years can be described as a transition from Monocultural to Global. This is because during early expatriation, they were passive to perceiving culture, however around age 15 began taking an interest in their host culture (while feeling disconnected to their home). Interestingly, the participant described their host culture in Brussels as multicultural, leading to the finding that this heightened awareness of host culture was in fact a heightened interest in a greater image where cultures are interconnected. In linking this to prior literature, this also aligns with the U-Curve of Adjustment as their new environment altered their identity. In addition, the findings touched on Hohenauers (2015)study on TCKs in Brussels, which said TCKs cultural identity can be described as pertaining to a 'Brussels bubble' of multiculturalism and an intertwined nature with the EU.

Participant 6 can be marked as adopting a Multicultural strategy as they consider their *"life to be half in Spain, half in France"* and so they *"have both cultural identities"*. This posits a salience of home culture identity, while showcasing a cultural learning mindset. This is also evident as they express a feeling of community when in their host country, alongside partaking in cultural activities, while stating their cultural identity remains Spanish. This links in with literature by Reken and Pollock (1976) which dictates a TCK experience does not have to result in a state of 'in-between' cultures with connotations of confusion, but can result in an 'both/and' mentality where a TCK explores both cultural identities.

Participant 7s experience as a TCK navigating cultural identities can be described as transitioning from a multicultural to a monocultural strategy over time. Participant 7 expressed that upon arrival in their host country (UK) they felt curious to explore the multiculturalism that London has to offer, however soon lost interest & resorted to exclusionary reactions. This could hint at the findings on encapsulated marginality by Benett (1993), where TCKs feel out of touch from their dominant culture & do not integrate in their current cultural environment

Lastly, Participant 8 displayed a passive approach to culture in early formative years, hinting at exclusionary reactions and a monocultural strategy. However, over time they related more to multicultural strategy as they tried to learn the host country language & watched films (cultural learning mindset), however maintained a sense of home culture identity (salience of home culture identity). This also aligns with Reken and Pollocks (1976) findings of TCKs feeling a 'both/and' mentality with host & home culture.

Contribution to Academic & Theoretical Debate

In understanding how these findings serve this investigation, one can turn back to the research question 'How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect on navigating cultural identities during their expatriation?'. For one, these findings point out the complexities of TCK experiences, demonstrating there is no 'one-size-fits-all' strategy in navigating cultural identities during expatriation in formative years. Most participants were passive to culture in early formative years (P2, P3, P5, P8), but eventually their identity negotiation strategies diverged. Some participants maintained their Spanish home culture identity (P1, P6, P7, P8), some became increasingly interested in their host culture identity (P3, P4, P5, P8) – either through parents' influence or their own accord. Lastly, some began identifying with a greater European identity (P2, P3, P5). It is important to acknowledge these identities are multi-faceted and often overlapping, emphasizing the multi-layered experiences of Third Culture Kids.

For the cases of Participants 4 & 5, the U-Curve of Adjustment & Cultural Identity Model applies, inferring that Spanish TCKs displayed a Cultural Learning Mindset and became acculturated to their new environment when navigating their cultural identity. In addition, it touches upon Meyer (2015) case study that states TCKs feel disconnected from their passport countries, known as reverse culture shock.

The concept of European identity came up for participants 2, 3 & 5 when navigating cultural identities, aligning with the literature on Global Citizenship Theory (Pashby, 2011) which hints at the self-perception that extends to a greater community that is interconnected – namely, a European one. In addition, it builds on Meyers' (2015) findings that TCKs feel an 'international' identity. One could argue this holds practical applicability, as increased family expatriation could foster a greater European identity.

Lastly, a new finding which does not pertain to existing literature can be linked to Participants 1,6, 7 & 8. These participants displayed (with varying levels & various reasons) an increase in interest in their Spanish home culture during their expatriation.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

In critically analyzing these findings, one can compile the critique into 4 categories. For one, regarding the participants category, while the investigation set out to explore Spanish TCKs that grew up around Europe, Participant 7 spent a part of their formative years in the UK. As the UK is no longer a member of the EU, this brings the validity of P7s results into question. Secondly, some questions were considered confusing for participants, for instance: "Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself growing up, and how did you resolve them?". A few participants requested to repeat the question, and some did not know how to respond. This may question the reliability of the participants' responses.

Regarding researcher reflexivity, an acknowledgement to make is the potential bias that may have skewed results due to researcher preconceived experiences of expatriate upbringing from being a TCK themself. However, to bypass this, a semi-structured interview format was designed, to hinder possibility of a conversational narrative where ideas are exchanged. In addition, coding data in NVivo was essential to identify themes, however some data had to be rejected from the analysis as participants would express their cultural identity in this moment – while this investigation pursues cultural navigation in past formative years. This means only data where participants were reflecting on the past was acknowledged, potentially taking away an interesting avenue of research.

A future avenue of research could be carrying out a longitudinal study to track the long-term impact of expatriation on cultural identity, studying the same participants every 10 years. This could explore the participants attitudes & behaviors towards mobility, cultural integration & identity.

Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis has explored how Spanish Third Culture Kids reflected on navigating cultural identities during their expatriation during formative years. The exploratory and interpretivist standpoint allowed for participants to share their meanings behind cultural identity and share their experiences. The Identity Negotiation Strategies and Expatriate Responses model (Li et. al. 2021) served as the theoretical framework, from where 8 participants were questioned to determine their cultural attitude during expatriation (to link to Cultural Learning Mindset in INSER) as well as their behavior through actions (to determine Salience of Home Culture Identity). The findings showed that initially most participants showed passivity towards culture in their early formative years, however over time their identity negotiation strategies diverged, with some maintaining spanish home culture identity, some increasingly becoming interested in their host culture, and some identifying with a greater European identity.

Bibliography

Adam, Byron G., and Fons J.R. van de Vijver. 2015. "The Many Faces of Expatriate Identity." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 49 (November): 322–31. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.05.009.

Austin, Jon. 2005. *Culture and Identity*. Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: Pearson Education Australia.

Bennett, J.M. 1993. "Cultural Marginality: Identity Issues in Intercultural Training." In *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, 109–36. Intercultural Press.

Black, J. Stewart, and Mark Mendenhall. 1991. "The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited: A Review and Theoretical Framework." *Journal of International Business Studies* 22 (2): 225–47. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490301 .

Broderick, Patricia C, and Pamela Blewitt. 2019. *The Life Span: Human Development for Helping Professionals*. 5th ed. New York: Pearson.

Choi, Kyoung Mi, and Melissa Luke. 2011. "A Phenomenological Approach to Understanding Early Adult Friendships of Third Culture Kids." *Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling* 1 (1): 47–60. https://doi.org/10.18401/2011.1.1.4.

Creswell, John W. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Crossman, Tanya. 2016. *Misunderstood : The Impact of Growing up Overseas in the 21st Century*. Norwich, Uk Summertime Publishing.

European Commission. 2017. *Combined Evaluation of Erasmus+ and Predecessor Programmes: Executive Summary. Publications Office of the European Union*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0e2ac9b5-2216-11e8-ac73-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-250126884.

European Commission. 2015. "Final Report Summary - EUCROSS (the Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identities among EU and Third-Country Citizens) | FP7." CORDIS | European Commission. 2015. https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/266767/reporting.

Fee, Anthony, Sidney J Gray, and Steven Lu. 2013. "Developing Cognitive Complexity from the Expatriate Experience." *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 13 (3): 299–318. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470595813484310.

Ferreira-Pereira, Laura C., and João Mourato Pinto. 2021. "Soft Power in the European Union's Strategic Partnership Diplomacy: The Erasmus plus Programme." *The European Union's Strategic Partnerships*, 69–94. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66061-1_4.

Harzing, Anne-Wil. 2001. "Of Bears, Bumble-Bees, and Spiders: The Role of Expatriates in Controlling Foreign Subsidiaries." *Journal of World Business* 36 (4): 366–79. https://doi.org/10.1016/s1090-9516(01)00061-x.

Hohenauer, Nora. 2015. "'European, What Else Should I Identify As?' the TCK Experience in Brussels." Interaction International. 2022. "Third Culture Kid Definition." InteractionIntl.org. May 12, 2022.

https://interactionintl.org/third-culture-kid-definition/.

Jacobone, Vittoria, and Giuseppe Moro. 2014. "Evaluating the Impact of the Erasmus Programme: Skills and European Identity." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 40 (2): 309–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2014.909005.

Knaap, Daphne . 2017. "Expat Life: Experiences of Expats Living in the Netherlands." University of Utrecht,. https://studenttheses.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/20.500.12932/28557/Master%27s%20thesis-D.%20vdKnaap.pdf?sequence=2%26isAllowed=y.

Li, Chenchen, Ling Eleanor Zhang, and Anne-Wil Harzing. 2021. "Expatriate Cultural Identity Negotiation Strategies: A Dynamic Framework *." *Emerald Publishing Limited EBooks*, August, 131–40. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83982-826-320211013.

McCaig. 2011. "A Systematic Review of Third Culture Kids Empirical Research." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 82 (82): 81–98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.03.002.

McNulty, Yvonne. 2013. "Are Self-Initiated Expatriates Born or Made? Exploring the Relationship between SIE Orientation and Individual ROI." *Talent Management of Self-Initiated Expatriates*, 30–58. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230392809_3.

Meyer, Heather. 2015. "Boundaries and the Restriction of Mobility within International School Communities: A Case Study from Germany." In *Migration, Diversity, and Education*. Palgrave Macmillan London.

Miller, Scott T., Katherine A. Feather. 2020. "Growing up Globally: Third Culture Kids' Experience with Transition, Identity, and Well-Being." *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 42 (September). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-020-09412-y.

Moore, Andrea M., and Gina G. Barker. 2012. "Confused or Multicultural: Third Culture Individuals' Cultural Identity." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 36 (4): 553–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.11.002.

Pashby, Karen. 2011. "Cultivating Global Citizens: Planting New Seeds or Pruning the Perennials? Looking for the Citizen-Subject in Global Citizenship Education Theory." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 9 (3-4): 427–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.605326.

Piaget, Jean . 2024. "Piaget's Theory and Stages of Cognitive Development." Simply Psychology. 2024. https://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html.

Reken, Ruth E. , and David C. Pollock. 1976. *Third Culture Kids Experience of Growing up among Worlds*. New York: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Shaffer, Margaret A., David A. Harrison, Hal Gregersen, J. Stewart Black, and Lori A. Ferzandi. 2006. "You Can Take It with You: Individual Differences and Expatriate Effectiveness." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91 (1): 109–25. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.1.109.

Snow, David A., and Catherine Corrigall-Brown. 2015. "Collective Identity." *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 174–80. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.10403-9.

Sussman, Nan M. 2000. "The Dynamic Nature of Cultural Identity throughout Cultural Transitions: Why

Home Is Not so Sweet." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 4 (4): 355–73. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0404_5.

Tajfel, Henri. 1974. "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour." *Social Science Information* 13 (2): 65–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847401300204.

Toder, Nancy L., and James E. Marcia. 1973. "Ego Identity Status and Response to Conformity Pressure in College Women." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 26 (2): 287–94. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0034477.

Useem, Ruth H. 1976. *Third Culture Kids*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Van Mol, Christof. 2018. "Becoming Europeans: The Relationship between Student Exchanges in Higher Education, European Citizenship and a Sense of European Identity." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 31 (4): 449–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1495064.

Vignoles, Vivian L. 2011. "Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity." *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_1.

Ward, Colleen, and Antony Kennedy. 1993. "Where's the 'Culture' in Cross-Cultural Transition?" *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 24 (2): 221–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022193242006.

Appendix 1

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you lived, maybe why you lived in these places, and for how long?
2. What do you understand about cultural identity?
3. How do you define your cultural identity?
4. When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?
5. If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?
6. Did you feel integrated into the host culture?
7. When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your home cultural identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not?
8. Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?
9. Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself growing up and how did you resolve them?
10. How do you think growing up abroad influenced your views on concepts like belonging and home?
11. Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging nowhere? How so?

Appendix 2

Informed Consent:

Research: "How do Spanish adult TCKs reflect they navigated cultural identities during their expatriation in formative years?"

Researcher Name: Karolina Kucerova
Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain

Research Overview:
This research aims to explore the experiences of individuals aged 20-30 who grew up as Third Culture Kids (TCKs) around Europe. The focus is on understanding how this unique upbringing has influenced them navigating between cultural identities.

Participant Information:
Target Participants: Individuals aged 20-30 that grew up outside their home country (Spain) for at least 8 years during their formative years (8-18).

Procedures:
Participants will be invited for a 20-minute interview where they will share personal information regarding their TCK experiences

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. Your decision will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Pompeu Fabra University.

Confidentiality:
All information shared during the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your name and any identifying information will be anonymized.

Recording of Interviews:
The interviews will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analysis.

Benefits and Risks:
Participation in this study may contribute to a better understanding of the cultural experiences of Third Culture Kids. There are no known risks associated with participating in this research.

Informed Consent:
I, the undersigned, have been informed about the nature and purpose of the study titled 'Third Culture Kids on Navigating Cultural Identities'. I understand that my participation involves sharing personal information in an interview setting. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers.

Contact Information:
If you have any questions or concerns interview about the study, you may contact:

karolina.kucerova01@estudiant.upf.edu

Appendix 3

<u>**PARTICIPANT 1**</u>

1   So can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you have lived and for how long?

Sure, so I was born in Valencia, Spain. Both of my parents are Spanish. They're also from, yeah, they're from Valencia. We moved to Nantes, France when I was six, and I have lived there until I was 15. After that, my parents, they relocated to Dusseldorf, Germany, and I spent most of my teenage years there until I was 19. Then I moved to Berlin, and I've been living in Berlin since then, which means, like, I've been in Berlin for about four years now. So yeah, it's been quite a journey, kind of living across these different places and kind of taking in different cultures and moving around a lot, a lot.

1   And what do you understand by cultural identity?

Cultural identity, I feel like that's a really complex thing. Like, it starts with what you inherit from your family, like traditions, language, values.So it's something that's, like, inside you, but then as you grow up, especially if you, like, move around a lot like I did, that starts to kind of change. Like, it's not something static, it's something that can change, and it's influenced a lot by where you live, the culture there, the people that you meet. And I think that's different to national identity.

2   Can you expand on how you think its different to national identity?

I feel like national identity is, like, what's on your passport and, like, where you were born physically. But cultural identity is, like, a layer below that, it's something deeper. And I think it's about how you kind of connect with cultural things and how they kind of appear in your everyday life.

3   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?

Honestly, that's a really hard question. I think, honestly, as a kid in Nantes, I was just into hanging out with my friends than, like, actively learning about French culture. Like, it didn't really, like, click for me back then. I was just trying to fit in into a new environment and do well at school and, like, do my sports and play tennis. But when I moved to Germany, I feel like that's when I started to get more curious, but actually more curious about my own family background. Like, I started asking my parents questions more on my family history, asking about my great-grandfather's life back in Valencia because he used to be a painter and a photographer.
So it felt like I was kind of trying to put pieces together of my identity that I didn't really know much about because we didn't really live in Valencia for too long. But yeah, so I think when you're a kid, you don't really, like, acknowledge these things. They're not a priority for you.
I think just having friends and being happy and having, like, your toys, that's kind of more important when you're really, really young. When I got older thats when I started to acknowledge my Spanishness more, and became more curious about the culture.

4   If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the host culture?

Um, in France, it was quite, like, quite subtle. We would go on these family road trips around the south of France and we would, like, explore different places and sometimes we would rent houses for short stays. Also, every year, we would, like, my parents were really big on the Festival of Music, which is on June 21st. Like, everyone is out, the music is filled in the streets and it's very, like, festive and everyone's kind of happy for that day. So I guess being a part of that made me feel somehow connected, even if it was just a little bit.

And, like, when I was learning French, now I'm native in French, but I feel like I was really trying to understand the slang and it really helped me blend in and feel a bit more French, like, at school. But then every time I returned home, I was back to kind of being very Spanish. Like, we would watch Spanish TV.My parents would put on, like, Spanish 60s and 70s music when we would be in the house.

5   Did you feel integrated into the host culture?
Well, in France, not really. I always felt a bit cold.People were somewhat distant and it was, like, quite tough making friends initially. I remember feeling a bit of a culture shock every time I went back to Spain for the summer. For example, in Spain it's, as you know, like normal to kiss with two kisses on the cheek. But in Nantes, that's not so much the norm. Like, you do that with close friends and family and that always made me feel a little bit, like, hesitant how to greet people. But Germany was really different.
Maybe because I was older, I felt kind of more sure of myself. I was more open to kind of being with the culture and it was also easier for me to integrate and to feel part of the community there. I feel like Germany has that.

6   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your home culture identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not?
I'm sorry, I don't think I understand the question. Like, we can just repeat it.
7   So, when you think about the time that you spent abroad, what relationship do you think you had with this culture identity that relates to Spain, like the Spanish cultural identity? Did you keep in touch with this, like, Spanish cultural identity or not?
Okay, I think I understand now.Definitely. I've always stayed in touch with my Spanish roots. My parents were quite, like, they tried quite hard with that, I think.
So, like, we kept up with all the Spanish traditions. We went back to, like, we would eat grapes for New Year's, for example. We also went back to Spain for family events, for summers.My dad got us into football, so we would occasionally go to Spain to watch matches, like, for extended weekends. So, it's always felt like no matter where we are, our home culture is this kind of, it's there, and it's kind of reinforced by our parents, even though we were not in Spain. And it was kind of helping me to connect with Spain somehow.
Also, coming back home to Spain, we had our grandparents there, and I think this helped a lot. Like, I would get my, I would help my Spanish grandma in the garden house. I would go into town and do her groceries for her.
I would go sometimes to church with her, and I feel like that also gave me a sense of what it's like to live a Spanish, well, at least, like, rural life.

8   Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage? Yeah, let me think. Actually, yeah, there was one time when we were in Nantes, and during the Las Fallas festival, which is, like, this really big festival in Valencia, some family friends of my parents, they were also from Valencia, and they decided to throw a barbecue to kind of celebrate this.
And as children, we would make puppets, and that's, like, part of the tradition in Valencia. I was about 12 at the time, and it was really fun, like, making the small puppets and getting to decorate it and celebrating with these other kids. And it was fun, but I didn't really feel that connected to Spain from that experience.

Like, it was more just having fun with my brother and the other kids. But looking back now, I kind of understand that, like, more about the festival and the significance, and I do appreciate that our were trying to keep us in touch with, like, the Valencian kind of roots. It was, yeah, at the time, it just didn't feel like anything cultural. It was just fun. Yeah.

9   Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself when you were growing up, and how did you resolve them?

This is, I think, the hardest question. Okay, I have to think. There's probably one thing that comes to mind. I remember in school, we were learning about the Franco-Spanish War, and the way it was taught, especially since the teacher was French, it felt a little bit, like, biased against Spain. I remember feeling, like, this inside, like, this little feeling, almost like being ashamed of being Spanish, which is weird, because why would a history lesson, like, make you feel like a bad guy? It's not even, yeah, it didn't make any sense.

And it was, I guess, in that moment, a bit difficult to navigate those feelings. I don't know if it was, like, an inner conflict, but it was just a moment where I was, like, Spain versus French mentality, or, yeah, history.

10   And how do you think being a third culture kid, or, like, growing up abroad influenced your views on concepts like home and belonging?

So I feel like growing up abroad has definitely kind of, like, broadened my understanding of home.

I feel like I can make a home anywhere. Like, right now it's Germany. That's my home.

But that doesn't change the fact that, like, my household, like, culture is still deeply Spanish. I always, like, associate it somehow with my parents, like, in the house, the culture is Spanish. And so it's this idea that I can belong anywhere I choose to.

And I can kind of make a home anywhere. Right now that's Germany. But there's always a part of me that remains kind of tied to my household culture, which is Spanish.

11   Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere, or culturally belonging nowhere? And why?

I would say I belong everywhere, but in, like, but not really. I believe I belong everywhere, but in a specific way. Like, I think that the world is so interconnected.

And you see so many similarities between people, and it doesn't even matter where they're from. So of course that there are cultural differences between us. But I do believe in, like, this thing people say that there's more that unites us than divides us.

So yeah, I believe in that. And I think that so we all kind of, we all kind of culturally belong everywhere. Because culturally belonging nowhere sounds like you're alone.

And I feel like when we're talking about culture, you're not actually alone. Everyone's kind of together and connected. Right.

Thank you so much for this interview. Thank you.

1   So can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you have lived, maybe why you also lived in these places, and for how long?

Sure, so my name is XXX, I am 24 years old, I was born in Madrid, and I lived there until I was 12, then I moved to Switzerland, to Zurich specifically, and it was because of my parents' work. So I speak like Swiss, German, French, Spanish, my parents were Spanish. Now I'm 20 and I still live in Zurich, but my parents went back to Spain when I was like 18, because both of them finished their work responsibilities here, so I continued living here and I go to university now.

2   And what do you understand by cultural identity?

Well, cultural identity is complex, many things together, but it's not like one thing, it can also change, and it changes as you explore more things, you try new things, you adapt, sometimes you can reject various cultural elements of specific cultures, so it's this kind of different, multiple identities that an individual can have inside them, and it's like different, yeah, it's complex. And how do you define your cultural identity? I would say I'm European. Living in Switzerland, where you speak German and French, and also I came from Spain, so I feel like all this together, of course there's more countries in Europe, but all of this kind of together, like these languages, make me European.

I see it as connected to other cultures, like German is not just German, and French is not just French, same for Spanish, so I think it's all kind of related to each other through history, language, music, traditions, and politics, and I feel like, yeah, I think my interest in politics, and my feeling of being European, that kind of like, played together. So yeah, I think my cultural identity is European.

3   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?

When I moved, I was 13, and I guess I didn't know much about cultural identity, I was kind of, this was very passive in my mind, and still, I don't really know what it is, I have some ideas.

I was in an international school with many different nationalities, people, cultures, and languages, and there were also many Spanish people in my class. I didn't really, that was important to me, being friends with people in my class, and fitting in, but I didn't really feel curious about, like, Swiss culture. Like, I did feel curious to learn more about other people, like their traditions, maybe when I was like 16.

I was curious to learn proper German and French, and I spoke it every day with people in my class, and with my classmates, we would watch YouTubers that were like German, French, Swedish, Italian, but it never crossed my mind to actively look for Swiss content culture, or on purpose look for it.

4   If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?

I don't know if I actively tried, but I know my parents did, and maybe that kind of affected me. We would also skiing in the Swiss Alps every year, and we would kind of do everything that comes along with this, like reclats. But not that much more.

So I think, I guess when I was like a teenager and a child, my integration was mostly because of my parents. They hosted a lot of dinner parties, so now I think, yeah, I guess they tried to integrate a lot, and I guess that made me have these experiences, which I would not have if it wasn't for them.

5   And did you feel integrated into host culture?

Again, I didn't really give it much thought.I guess I felt integrated whenever we went skiing, because it's such a typical thing to do, but even though we did this, I felt more international than Swiss. Yeah, like more European.

6   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your home culture identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not? When I was younger, I felt more in touch with it when I lived in Spain. Also, when we moved to Switzerland for a bit, my dad would

dedicate Sundays for like the family, and he would kind of tell me what's happening in Spain, or my mom. I remember when I came back from school, every day my mom would prepare like pan con tomate, like bread with tomatoes. But when I was growing up, it was harder to kind of maintain all of these things, so we kind of stopped having this like family day.But like not actively, I just moved at the time afterwards. Also, I was learning German and French, so I was really involved also at school, and I did many activities. So like keeping in touch with my Spanish culture identity wasn't something that was on my mind, or wasn't like a priority. But now I feel like it's maybe a shame, like I feel European, Swiss, and that's stronger than my feeling of like Spanish, almost.

7 **Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?** I felt disconnected when I visited Madrid last summer after a really long time. I had to actually like to think before speaking, it didn't really come out naturally. Also, my parents are both Catalan, and that's an identity like I never felt connected to. Like I lived in Madrid, not in Catalonia, and at home we never spoke Catalan, so that's an identity I don't even feel close to. Maybe it's a shame now, but like yeah, I don't, it's not really on my mind.

I did feel connected though when my older sister got married to a Spanish man, and with the family we went back to Madrid for the wedding. She's been living in Spain for a while, and she has her life there, and her friends, and now her husband. And at the wedding it was a lot Spanish people and music, and that felt like a community that is somehow related to me, but still somehow distant.
Like it's not at the forefront, it's not like the main thing in my identity.

8 **Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself, and how did you resolve it?**
I think, oh, I actually don't know. Okay, wait, let me think. Can you repeat the question? Sure.
9 **Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict, like cultural maybe disagreement within yourself navigating between different identities, and how did you resolve them?**
I don't know if I would call them conflicts, like it never went against each other. I feel like some cultures are more like elevated, like higher in my mind, but that doesn't mean that the other ones are like in conflict. So I always thought of it as something that makes like it more, like the identity more colorful, rather than having any tensions against each other. Like when I was living in Spain, I guess Spanish culture was elevated, and I guess all this is internal. It's not like suddenly you start dressing Spanish, it's all how your mind understands things around you.
But then again, I was a child, and I only lived there until I was 13. Now I'm 24, so it's maybe hard to like back on, so I don't know if I have a kind of a good enough answer for you.
10 **And how do you think growing up abroad influenced your views on concepts like home and belonging?**
I feel like home can change, but right now it's Switzerland. But I don't know, that's kind of hard. Like I also want to go traveling, and I still want to live abroad. I don't want to go back to Spain.
So I feel like home, I don't know. I don't know how to answer this question.
11 **Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere, or culturally belonging nowhere?**
 I don't know. I see myself as belonging, I would say belonging in Europe. That's how I, that's where I feel at home. I think it's because I speak fluently German, French, and Spanish, and English.
And those are like some of the main European languages. So when I travel, I can make friends really easily, and it's kind of easy to connect to people. Also, because in Switzerland, we have many cultures in one country, and also very like many regional differences.
So it's like here, it's normal to be navigating through different cultures. And that's like a part of the culture itself. So maybe that also plays a role in something.

PARTICIPANT 3

1   Can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you lived, maybe why you lived in these places, and for how long?

Sure, so my name is XXX, I'm 24. I lived in Madrid until I was 12, that's where I was born. Then I lived in Japan for one year, until I was 13.

Then until 18, I lived in Berlin. Then in Paris until I was 24, well now I'm 24. I moved around a lot because my father, he was a diplomat, so he would be sent on work missions to a lot of different countries, and my mom and I, we would follow him.

2   What do you understand by cultural identity?

So the things that come to mind are film, music, traditions, art, history, mentality, language, maybe even sport. I think it's definitely like a multi-faceted concept, and there is not one clear definition. I think everyone has a different understanding of culture and of identity, so together maybe it's confusing. It's also subjective, like everyone has their own experience and everyone's experience is very different, but you can also have similarities and I guess connect with other people's experiences, but it's still really subjective, and it's like your own, it's inside, it's internal.

3   How do you define your cultural identity?

I definitely feel Spanish, but that wasn't always the case. I think now I feel Spanish like at this point in my life because we lived all over the world.

I think, yeah, because we lived all over the world, I felt really out of touch with my Spanish identity, especially when I was a teenager, like I didn't know what Spanish identity was. I think I considered myself more European when I was growing up. We went from living in Spain to living in Japan, and those are like completely two different cultures and worlds, and I was 12, so it was definitely like a big shock for me. Then we moved to Berlin, and it was more similar to Spain than Japan, but at the same time it was still different.

Berlin is such a multicultural place, and that's where I started to get more interested in culture and what it also means to kind of identify with it. I feel like culture is such a big part of Berlin because it's such a multicultural place, and you can be any culture you want. You can even change your kind of cultural identity within Berlin. You don't have to move out of Berlin, so I think because, yeah, but now I feel Spanish. Now I feel more Spanish at the age of 24.

4   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?

 I think it's hard to like think back how you perceived culture when you were a kid.

I think maybe at around 15, I started to be more curious about culture and what it means. Like in Japan, I was struggling a lot to adjust, and then I did kind of start to adjust. We moved again, and this time to Berlin, and in Berlin, I went to an international school, and there were so many different nationalities. In Japan, it was a lot of just Japanese kids, and we had something. When I was 15, we had something called international evening at school where parents of kids, they would set up their tables with food from their country, and it was like a big kind of fair, and everyone went around tasting all kinds of food for free. At our school, we had over 25 different tables with various like cultural foods from different countries, and I was about 14 or 15, I don't know, and it was very recently after we came back from Japan, but this evening of the international evening, I see it kind of in my mind so clearly, like the different flags of the different tables, they were displayed.

A lot of people came dressed in their national clothes, cultural clothes. There was so much music and food, and I think from then, I was more curious to find out more about the culture of Germany, especially Berlin.

I think that evening, it just clicked in my mind that culture is such a multifaceted concept, and that made me a little bit more aware to find out more about culture. Before that I did not really give it much thought or energy. In general this is not something you think of as a child.

5. And when you moved back to Europe, did you feel curious to learn about Spanish culture?
When we moved back it was definitely a moment where I felt more curious about culture, but not really to explore my spanish side. I felt more drawn to see what Berlin has to offer.

5   If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?
I feel like it was little things, but also big things. For example, a little thing for me was buying German bread. Like I noticed, and I spoke with my friends about it, Germans are really passionate about specific kind of bread, and for them, it's kind of like part of the culture to go in the morning and get their bread. That's like very German kind of bread. So I started doing this for my family, and I feel like we've always had German bread in the house, because I always want to get it like almost every morning. Also, a very like Berlin thing to do is cycle around town and everywhere.
So at some point, I got a bike, and I did not really use much public transport, and Berlin has so many cycling paths everywhere. So I guess you could say that that's very part of the culture. I don't know if it was like on purpose, like I wasn't like, oh, it's a cultural thing to do in Berlin to cycle, so now I have to cycle. It was just that I like, I saw it everywhere around me, so it only felt like natural to do, so that I did. Also, Berlin has many lakes, and I joined a rowing club in my neighborhood. I don't know if that's really part of the German culture, but it definitely was part of like the Berlin culture, or at least the neighborhood I was in.

6   Did you feel integrated into the host culture?
Depends where. I feel like in Japan, I did not feel integrated, but then again, we were there only for a year, and integrating I think like takes a longer time than that. I think in Berlin, I felt integrated in the host culture, but it's something that I kind of actively tried for, maybe because I had so many questions about my identity, like I was confused with identity when we were in Japan.
So I tried to get engaged with the community to kind of, I don't know, maybe, maybe not, to kind of be a part of something, and I'd like to belong to something. So I joined the local rowing team. I also joined the basketball team.
We would compete with schools all over Germany, so like I would get to travel and see other German cities. I also would bike everywhere, and when I was 17 or 18, I went to my first like Berlin rave, techno rave, which I feel like is a very Berlin culture thing to do. Then when I was 18, I moved to Paris to study at a university, and there I felt like I was, I kind of had the skills on how to move, integrate, and start a new life. So at that point, it was easy to integrate into the host culture where I was living.

7   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your home cultural identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not?
It's interesting. Even though I was actively doing things to integrate myself in Germany and in France, too, I was also more and more interested in what it means to be Spanish.

Like I started also reading more Spanish literature, especially Galician authors. I would watch films with my mom that were banned during the Franco era, and I was just more interested in like Spain's general history because I never learned about it in my school so much into detail. So yeah, even though I was like living abroad, I was also at the same time maybe strengthening my relationship to my kind of home.

8   **Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?**
When I was living in Japan at age 13, I felt disconnected, I think, to my Spanish heritage because it was so far away and it was such a different world to what I was used to. I suddenly felt more connected as soon as we went back to Europe. Like when we came back to Europe, I felt like I'm home, like I'm home in Europe.

But even though we moved to Berlin and not Spain, it somehow felt European and it felt closer to home, like closer to Spain than Japan did. Also, when we came back from Japan, I started being more interested in politics, in Spanish and generally politics in Europe. I think, yeah, maybe because also my father was a diplomat.

And I think because it was just so different, in Japan. So when we came back to Europe, it just really hit me how different things are there, like on this other side of the world. Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself growing up and how did you resolve them? Well, when I was living in Japan, that's where I kind of felt culturally confused.

We didn't know how long we were going to be there. So I had many questions and my parents just did not know. So the conflict of whether to kind of like completely, like if this would be my life for a while or to kind of just like go through the year with the intention that we're going to move back.

I didn't know what's going to happen. So this uncertainty of not knowing how long we will be expatriates in Japan, I think that affected me a lot. I didn't know if I should completely like dive into this new life and accept it.

Also, I was so young. I feel like it was naturally resolved by us by well, after having after a year we had to move back. So when we felt when we moved to Berlin, I felt like a welcome home.

Which is weird because I've never lived in Berlin, but it was still Europe. And that felt more home than Japan.

9   **How do you think growing up abroad influenced your views on concepts like belonging and home?**
I feel like home could be anywhere for me, but it has to be still in Europe.

Like I can't see myself building a home, for example, in Latin America or in Southeast Asia, like Europe feels like home. Belonging, I feel like is the same. I view belonging as the first step in building a home.

It's like the precondition, like the pre yeah, the thing before to feeling home. So I don't know if I can say that being a like a person that grew up around has influenced my views on the concepts because I have like nothing to compare it to because I only know this upbringing. I cannot compare it to not having this experience.

You know what I mean? Yeah, yeah.

10   **Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging nowhere? How so?**
I'd have to say again, culturally belonging everywhere, but still in Europe. Like I feel a strong European identity.

I feel like Europe has so many different complex cultures and they're so kind of connected. So everyone in a way is like, I don't know, I feel like it's all connected. Everyone belongs everywhere in Europe.

1   Can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you have lived and for how long?
My name is XXX. I'm from Madrid and I lived in Madrid until I was eight, then lived in Portugal. Now I'm 20 and I'm still living in Portugal in Lisbon.I moved to Lisbon with parents whose work sent them to Portugal. In Portugal I finished high school and now I'm on a gap year. I travelled around. Now I don't know where I'm going to live, but right now I'm in Lisbon.

2   **And what do you understand by cultural identity?**
I see cultural identity as a mentality, as a way of thinking and a way of viewing life and appreciating art. Not really language alone or food or traditions, nothing by itself.I think it's bigger than that and it's not something we can touch. It's not tangible. I think of it as a way of thinking and living. Yea, that's probably it.

3   **How do you define your cultural identity?**
I would say my cultural identity is a Southern Mediterranean way of thinking. I guess that's Spanish and Portuguese, but I relate more to Portugal. It's a way of life where people enjoy life.
What's important is spending time with people you love, eating good food, appreciating the small things, not having this rushed and chaotic way of life. I was just now in London when I was traveling and I feel like that's very rushed and chaotic. I feel like my cultural identity is not that. I feel like that's not only in Portugal, but in my mind I associate myself with Portugal and this mentality.

4   **When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about the host culture you were in, in Portugal?**
I was, and I still am, really into football. I feel like this got me involved into Portuguese culture. I used to be obsessed with Cristiano Ronaldo and obsessed with knowing what made him who he is today. I think that football is a very big part of the Portuguese culture. In school, I played football and we traveled around Europe with my team.

I got to go to Germany, UK, France and Italy and compete with schools there. I also think a big part of Portuguese culture is surfing. I would go on surf trips with my friends, but I don't think it's something that we did on purpose because it was Portuguese and we wanted to learn about the Portuguese culture.

I think it's just something that naturally happened because everyone around us was doing it, so it felt like the natural thing to do.

5   **If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?**
As I said, sports played a big role. Also, I loved sweets and cakes and Portugal has so many sweet things like rice puddings or pastéis de nata.

I would eat a lot of those and I tried making them a few times. But again, this is not something that I did on purpose to integrate myself into Portuguese culture. I think it was something that was just natural because it was everywhere around me and everyone around me was doing it.

Lastly, this kind of laid-back mentality way of life was something I saw around me and then I did it too. I got into surfing because of my parents. My parents never surfed before and when we moved here, we took a course together and then we would go on week trips for surfing around Portugal.

We did that a lot over the years. I don't know if it was on purpose that they took to surfing because it was the normal thing to do here. But they definitely tried to integrate themselves into Portugal and I think they took me on board with them. No pun intended.

6   Did you feel integrated into the host culture?
Definitely. I felt like Portugal was my home, not even my host country.

Maybe because I moved when I was eight and when you're eight, you don't have the ability to understand what really home is. I have a very vague memory of Spain, to be honest. Also, I have my friends here and a surfing community and a football community and all these things make Portugal my home and not Spain.

7   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your Spanish cultural identity? Did you keep in touch with your Spanish cultural identity or not?
That's a difficult one. That's something my grandma would ask me kind of passive-aggressively because my grandma is Spanish and I feel like I completely lost touch with Spanish culture. To be honest, if I'm being really honest, I'm not too sad about it.

I don't have anything holding me back in Spain. We don't have family there anymore. I speak fluent Spanish but maybe that's also because of the similarity to Portuguese and I speak that fluently.

Sometimes when I'm meeting new people, I will actually say that I'm Portuguese rather than Spanish because it's just how I feel that I am.

8   Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?
Let me think. There hasn't been a moment where I felt connected to Spanish heritage.

I would say I'm more disconnected. When we went to a funeral of my grandfather in Madrid a few years ago, I was asking more questions about him and I guess it's true. I felt more of a connection to my roots and I felt so sad that my grandfather passed away but I didn't feel connected to the culture like to Spain.

It's like a distant connection in my heart. No, in my mind but I think Portugal is in my heart if that makes sense. Definitely.

9   Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict inside yourself when you were growing up and maybe how did you resolve that?
Let me think. I think this is a hard one. I don't know how I would.No, I can't think of any. I'm sorry. That's okay.

No worry. Moving on to the next question.
10   How do you think being a person that grew up abroad influenced your views on things like home and belonging? Like what is home and belonging to you?
I don't know if this is because I grew up around. Yeah, I didn't really. To be fair, I have not really thought about things like this before this interview so I don't have like a prepared answer but I feel like home and belonging for me is Portugal. I feel like it's the same thing, no? Like to belong somewhere and to feel at home.

Of course. Yeah, that makes sense and

11   Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging nowhere and how so?

I relate more to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere. After my year of travel, I just did around the world.

I think it showed me that the world is such a diverse place and we all, everyone kind of belongs to everyone. Yeah, that's how I feel. I don't know if I have like a longer answer. No, I don't. Yeah. Right, thank you so much for the interview.

Thank you.

<div align="center">

PARTICIPANT 5

</div>

1   Can you tell me a little bit about your background including where you have lived and for how long?

My name is XXX. I'm Spanish. I'm from Madrid. I lived there until I was 10 Then I lived in Brussels in Belgium until I was 18 And then I went to Italy for university until I was 25 When I was 25, I moved to Barcelona And now I'm 27 and I live and I work in Barcelona Yeah, I think I mean We moved to Belgium because my mom worked for like a multinational corporation But originally both of my parents are Spanish. So my mom is from Barcelona. My dad is from Madrid Um Yeah, what else I mean when I was 18 my parents moved back to Madrid and I went to University as I said in Italy in Rome when I was 18 Yeah, I studied art. I don't know if this is all relevant information. I'm just I don't know if I answered your question Yes, yeah you did don't worry Um,

2   What do you understand by cultural identity?

hmm, that's That's a hard one. I'm not so sure. I feel like cultural identity is related to The country that you're from it's a feeling you have when you're home like when you go on holiday And then you come back home It's this feeling inside and I think it has to got to do and I think it has to do a lot with linguistics Like not just language like language is also important but also like the intonation so the slang the humor I feel like Yeah, language is the main indicator of cultural identity

3   How do you define your cultural identity?

I would say my cultural identity is Spanish Because the language I think in like it's the internal voice that I have inside when Like you're I'm sleeping or I have dreams So that's Spanish it's something I don't have to really think about But to be honest, I feel like I only recently started feeling this like Spanishness only when I moved back to Spain when I was 25 before that I Still knew what it was to be Spanish, but I somehow felt like a foreigner when I would come visit Spain Especially when I was growing up in Brussels. I didn't really I Didn't really know who I was

But I feel like that's just normal when you're a teenager I feel like when you're a child and a teenager You're still really like creating who you are your identity And I guess cultural identity too. So it was confusing going from Spain to living in Belgium Because I was just Forming who I was in Spain and that then I had to start all over in Belgium Where I like the life culture the mentality of people whether It's just so different.

And then when I went to Italy for university, I guess that confusion was still there But I don't know I didn't pay so much attention to it. Then when I moved back to Barcelona when I was 25 I could still I could like feel. That I was becoming more Spanish and I was connecting to my culture in my home But I think it's hard to I know it's hard to

think about this like retrospectively Because when you're a teenager you have different priorities And also it's hard to think about these things like it's a lot of existentialism

4   **When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?**

I think living in Brussels is like living in an international bubble because it has so many EU institutions so it's just this hub of culture and politics and organizations So there I naturally felt Interested in what they have to say like in these EU institutions. I started volunteering in local communities I did a few like EU youth exchange programs around Europe But yeah during my time in Brussels I didn't feel like I was getting like this Belgian culture like I guess some parts Yeah, like food and language But Brussels felt more like an international place and like a place for opportunities and a really active place for people from all over the world

5   **If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?**

Well, as I said, I did a few EU Youth exchange programs. I got to go to Italy and that's where I fell in love with Rome I also went to Portugal and Germany.

I feel like that's the thing that everyone in my school did It was like an international school and it was filled with a lot of kind of like-minded people and all international So it felt like it was the Brussels thing to do I don't know if it was conscious or unconscious, but it was just sort of there Yeah, I don't know if that answers your question, I hope so. Yeah, yeah, don't worry it does and

6   **Did you feel integrated into the host culture?**

Like in in Belgium or like anywhere that you live Yes, and no like I feel like Brussels feels so international I feel like I was integrated into the international bubble, but in terms of Belgian Culture as a whole culture. I did not feel too connected to it.

Like there are a lot of different regions in Belgium with their distinct differences and my parents and I did not really try to connect to those or travel so much If anything we went to the Netherlands Which is very different

7   **When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing What relationship do you think you had with your home culture identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not?**

Sorry, I don't think I understand the question. Can you please rephrase it a little bit?

8   **So when you reflect on your time that you spent abroad Did you keep in touch with your Spanish cultural identity or not?**

So I didn't keep in touch. I think with my Spanish identity when I lived in Spain I mean until I lived in Spain And I started learning more About what Spanish cultural identity is.
I think as I lived in Spain until 10 I wasn't really aware of what Spanish culture is. I think when you're a child, it's more important what friends you have at school and that you get to play with your toys So I was kind of passive to culture and then in Belgium at around 15 I started volunteering and kind of being more interested in different cultures that Brussels had to offer Then when I lived in Italy, I felt more equipped to deal with a new life because in Brussels I had some Italian friends. I guess I kind of knew about the Italian mentality, way of life, food and more about the culture Also, I did a youth exchange program there so that really made me see myself in Italy So yeah, I was more curious about different cultures But I did not feel this big connection to Spanish culture and that's not until I moved to Barcelona I think language played a

role in that like I did speak Spanish but once we moved to Brussels at home, we started also speaking more English for some reason and Because we started speaking more English at home, it made me disassociate with Spain

9   Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?

So when I moved to Barcelona and a few months in it was San Jordi day which is like this Catalan Valentine's Day where the girl gets a guy a book and the guy gets a girl a rose and The streets are filled with books and roses and even though this is a very Catalan tradition That's not really like the Spanish tradition It still brought me closer somehow to Spain

Also, my mom is from Barcelona So I guess it made me feel close to her like I was asking her about her old boyfriends when she was living in Barcelona when she was young

I felt Disconnected from my Spanish heritage when at school we would have something called MUN days it was for young people and it was called model United Nations and essentially it's the concept of United Nations but for like like a Student represents a country and then you discuss with other countries like other students on a specific problem in the world

And in the end you make a resolution by working with like similarly minded countries or like allies So in one MUN I was representing Spain and this is particularly where I felt kind of disconnected to my Spanish side because I Didn't know so much about Spain's like stance on this topic we were debating about and I had to ask my parents and Like research and to be honest, I felt a little bit ashamed that I don't know Interestingly these MUN experiences somehow made me feel Made me see the power that Europe has when it acts together That EU countries would always try to solve things together in these debates And I feel like that showed me that everyone is kind of more connected Yeah, did you experience any moments of cultural conflict within yourself when you were growing up and how did you resolve them Um, I would say this MUN experience that I just said like I can't think of anything else fair enough that's completely Okay.

10   how do you think being a person that grew up abroad Influenced your views on concepts like home and belonging.

I feel like now home and belonging Are Spain like I belong here and my community here and if I feel like community makes You feel like you belong somewhere right like over time That's what makes a home, but it's interesting because this was something I had to try for like I had to actively Put myself out there. Like even though I'm Spanish.

It did not come naturally to me Even though I'm Spanish and once I moved here as an adult, I had to try to make a community Also, I spoke Spanish But I had to get into the habit of speaking it all the time because at home We started to more speak English at one point. I don't know really when that happened. That's just kind of happened Yeah, it makes sense.

I mean it makes sense that like suddenly maybe you start speaking Spanish at home How do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging nowhere and how so I feel like I culturally belong Nowhere not fully at least like I culturally belong to Spain But it's still so recent I've been living in Spain for two years and I'm still kind of like adjusting and learning about my culture And I still somewhat feel like a foreigner in my own country Right. Thank you so much for your time and for answering my questions. Thank you

PARTICIPANT 6

1   Can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you have lived and for how long?

I'm from Madrid. I lived in Madrid until I was seven. Then I lived in Paris until I was 16. Then I went back to Madrid. I lived in Madrid until I was 18. Now I study in Madrid and I am 22. I lived in Paris because of my mom's work. She works in fashion and her company wanted her in the office in Paris, so that's why we lived in Paris for a few years, so she would oversee the projects there in fashion.

2   And what do you understand by cultural identity?
Cultural identity is something that is passed from parents down to generations, but I think it can also change. I don't know if I understand the difference between heritage and cultural identity.

Maybe to me that means the same thing. I don't know. I never really thought about cultural identity.

3. what do you mean by 'passed down by generations'? Can you expand?

I think cultural identity is passed down through generations. It somehow it relates us to the past and takes the attention away from you as yourself and relates to a greater community. But to be honest culture makes sense, but cultural identity, I don't really know what that is, but if I had to think about it, my parents were Spanish, so my cultural identity is naturally Spanish. But then again, as I grew up, for example, in France, I kind of explored what resonates, what speaks to me, and then I can decide what my cultural identity is. Maybe it's because my mom is in fashion, but somehow I relate culture to clothing.

Like when I'm in the Paris metro, I can tell it's Paris because of the clothes that people wear, and I feel like that's a culture and it's also an identity. So if you give into it and you start dressing like it, then it's that you have that cultural identity. Yeah, I think I relate fashion a lot to cultural identity, especially because Paris is such a big place for fashion.

3   And how do you define your cultural identity?
I would say that I'm French-Spanish. I know my family history, my roots, my traditions, language, and mentality. But I did live nine years of my child and teenage years in Paris, and that just naturally shaped the person I am.

I think that's unavoidable. Now I'm living back in Madrid, and so I consider my life so far to be like half in Spain, half in France. So I guess you could say that I have both cultural identities.

Right, yeah, thank you for that answer.

4   And when you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?
Well, my mom works in fashion as a designer. So when we lived in Paris, there was a lot of fashion around my mom and also just our house.

Paris is the city of fashion. It's really ingrained in the culture. So I think you could say I was naturally really curious and interested in my mom's work.

I was invited with my mom to fashion shows, and I really love to see her create her work. So yeah, I think fashion is what got me interested in French culture. Oh, and the food, definitely the food.

I love French food, even though sometimes it's very heavy. We would have a lot of good cheese in the house. And yeah, my mom also drank wine.

So I think my mom, because she was so interested in fashion, and that's really big in the Paris culture, that made me interested in it. So I guess that's how we... that's how we were both curious. But I think I was like curious through my mom, through her connection with fashion.

Right, thank you for that answer.

5   If anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?
I think every day, everything I did was kind of because of my mom. Like the fashion shows, kind of the events, the food.

I was really in like a teenage part of my life where these things were really glamorous and really exciting. And I knew that it's a very like Paris fashion thing to do. So I don't think I would do it alone.

Like if my mom wasn't there, or if my mom wasn't in fashion, perhaps I would have a different relationship with like the French culture. But because she was so heavily involved, I was really heavily involved. And then I guess I felt integrated. I guess I felt naturally curious without it really being a conscious effort.

Yeah, that was my next question. Perfect.

6   Did you feel integrated then?
Yeah, well, as I said, my mom, she had contacts and the fashion.

And also I had friends. So friends build a community. And I think that's important.

That's super true.

7   And when you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your Spanish cultural identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not? Give me a second. It's a lot of words. Yeah, fair enough. No worries. Please take your time. So I think I kind of lost touch with my Spanish cultural identity a little bit. But not all the way.

I see France, like my time in France as kind of a pause from a Spanish cultural identity. But then when I went back to Madrid, it felt like I was Spanish again. Like when I lived in France, it felt like I was French.

It's weird. It made sense at the time. And to be fair, I never thought about this before.

But I guess you could characterize it as yes. When I was living in France, I felt French. When I was living in Spain, I felt Spanish.

And it was like a break. It was like different phases. Yeah, I understand.

8   And can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?
Disconnected? I would say when I lived in France, but I would travel back to Spain to visit the family every few years. I felt disconnected. Yeah, because I was building a life in Paris.

And then when I go back to Madrid, I was suddenly reminded of the life in Madrid and my friends and growing apart from them. But I definitely felt reconnected when I moved back to Madrid. Got it.

Now moving on to the next question.

9 **Have you experienced any moments of conflict within yourself when you were growing up? And how did you resolve this?** Uh, this is a really hard question. Honestly. Honestly, I don't know. I'm sorry. I don't I don't know.

Okay, give me a moment. Let me Can you say it again, please? Of course. No worries.

10 **Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict inside? Like when you were growing up abroad? And how did you resolve this?** Yeah, sorry. I don't know. I really can't think of something.I think I understand the question. But I don't think I know how to answer it. That's no problem.

Don't worry about it. So moving on.

11 **How do you think that being a person that grew up abroad influenced your views on concepts on home and belonging?**

To me home is where you have family.

So that is Spain. But belonging. I associate that with Spain and France.

Like it can be really anywhere with the right people and hobbies and passions and mentality alignment. So yeah, belonging can be anywhere. But home is Spain.

Last question.

12 **Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging nowhere? How so?** I relate to the phrase culturally belonging every and everywhere. Sorry, I relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere.

PARTICIPANT 7

1 So can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you have lived and for how long?

I'm 28, so I, umm was born in Madrid. I lived there until I was 12. Then I lived in London. Umm, because my parents were researchers and they took, like academic positions at the London School of Economics and then at 19, yeah, move back to Madrid.

And now you live in Madrid, yes? Yes

2 **What do you understand by cultural identity?**

I think cultural identity is something that you put time and practice into, although some aspect is kind of natural.

But I think it's something that you have to practice. It's not just something you see, it's something you have to like replicate it. And I think it's actions. Cultural identity is actions in my mind.

3 **And how do you define your cultural identity, if I may ask?**

I would say Spanish.   Yeah, Spanish.Nothing to add.   OK, fair enough. And OK, moving on.

4 **When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?**

I think when I was living in London, I found London very multicultural and exciting and very different to the Spanish mentality and the Spanish way of life. So I was definitely curious, but after a while I realized I didn't really like it. I felt like the culture evolved a lot around drinking, maybe a bit too much. And when I started going out like clubbing, I didn't really like the clubbing culture there. I felt like alcohol and clubbing was super important to UK culture, at least in London from what I saw.

So I think as I learned more about UK culture, the less I was interested in it.

5   Are there other reasons why you stopped being interested?

I mean, I know I also made more Spanish friends, so I felt like I was around Spanish people, so that didn't really motivate me to learn about UK culture that much.   Fair enough.

6   **And if anything, did you do anything to integrate yourself into the new culture?**
As I said, I tried, but also, as I just said, I gave up eventually because I befriended a Spanish group of people and we had our Spanish community events, we spoke Spanish, so I didn't really feel like we were in the UK.

7   **Did you feel integrated into the host culture at any point?**
No. I found my own culture, so I didn't feel the need that much. I feel like British culture and London culture are completely different things.

I don't really know what London culture culture is to be honest. It's international and it has people from all over the world. Also, London culture changes a lot, like I've been in London five years and it changed a lot.

8   **When you reflect on your special upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your Spanish cultural identity and did you keep in touch with it?**
So I feel Spanish. I celebrate like Spanish holidays, like Spanish traditions at home, all sorts of things. I feel like parents didn't integrate much. They also made friends with Spanish people and it felt like a bit of a bubble. But to be fair, London is like a bubble in itself.   Yeah, I don't know. I don't know what else. Fair enough. There's nothing else comes to mind. We can move on. Yeah.

9   **Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?**
So I felt disconnected when I went back to Madrid and saw friends and, like, their lives were kind of moving on without me. So I felt, I don't know if I feel disconnected with Spanish culture, but I feel like friends make or like Spanish people make the culture. So if you feel disconnected from them and the life there, then that makes you disconnected from like Spanish culture. Also, my family is religious and all of my friends back home had a communion, which I did not, we moved before it was possible and then in London we never did it. That made me feel disconnected. Fair enough.

10   **Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself growing up? And how did you resolve it?**
I don't know, like I understand the question, but I I don't know.   Fair enough, we can move on.

11   How do you think that being a person that grew up abroad influenced your views on things like home and belonging?
 So I think home for me is Spain.   My like upbringing in the uk don't think that really affected my understanding.
 So I belong in Spain. Like to me it's the same thing. Yeah.

12   **And do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging Nowhere. And why?**   I think cultural belonging in Spain? Like, I just genuinely feel like Spain is my home. Fair enough, right? Thank you so much for the interview. Thank you.

PARTICIPANT 8

1   Can you tell me a little bit about your background, including where you have lived and for how long?

Sure, so I am Spanish. I'm from Madrid. I'm 23 years old. When I was five years old, we moved to Berlin, to Germany, and then we moved to the Czech Republic. We lived in the Czech Republic until I was 15, and then we moved back to Madrid when I was 15, and then we lived there until I was 18, and then I went to the Netherlands to university when I was 18 years old.

2   And what do you understand by cultural identity?

I think cultural identity, it's kind of hard to define because it could mean so many things.

I feel like no one really knows what it actually is. I feel like cultural identity has got to do with traditions and history and language. I think language is really important, and it's something that you put into practice, something that manifests during the day or manifests when there's a holiday or a religious day.

I also think that family plays a big role in your culture because when you're growing up, your parents are the ones that pass down the culture to you. Yeah.

3   how do you define your cultural identity?
Well, I'm not sure.

I think now I feel Spanish. I think even though we lived abroad for a while, we lived in the Czech Republic and in Germany, I still feel Spanish, and I feel like it's something that I had to kind of... it's something that I had to try for myself, and I had to try for so that I don't lose touch with my Spanishness. in terms of how I celebrate things and holidays and traditions, and also I have family back home in Spain, and I think because I have a really big family back there, it helps me keep in touch with my culture.

4   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, how curious do you think you were to learn about your host culture?

So I think in Germany, I was not that curious. I was so young. But then when we lived in Prague, I kind of... I don't know, I found Prague so beautiful, and I think I found the language really fascinating.

So I think I tried to learn the language, even though it was really hard language to learn. I tried so that I can like integrate myself a little bit and not be one of those foreigners that live ignorantly in a place without trying to connect. it was like a challenge because the language is so hard, but I think language is definitely really important.

5   And if anything, what did you do to integrate yourself into the new culture?

In Germany, we would go with my parents cycling a lot. We would take like weekend trips and go on these really long cycling trips. And I think that was something my parents tried for, so that they fit in maybe with the culture, or like they just do things with me.

I don't know if it was like a cultural activity that we did because it was a cultural activity, but it was just something that a lot people did around us, and so it made sense that we do it too. So we went on a lot of cycling trips around Germany. Also, we would watch German and Czech Christmas movies, because especially in Czech Republic, Christmas movies are so important, and everyone watches these Christmas movies for like whole of December basically, and there's so many of them, of these movies.

So with my parents, we would watch them too. We would buy them with like subtitles, and yes, I think that we also did, but I think that was more for my parents. No, the cycling was from my parents, but the movies I brought to my parents.

6   Did you feel integrated into the host culture?

In Berlin, not so much. I think even now I don't know what Berlin culture is, because it's so multicultural, and everyone has a different kind of experience in Berlin, because also depending on where you live in Berlin, but Berlin is so massive and so multicultural.

So I think with Berlin, there comes this multiculturalism, and I guess from that people relate to it, or they build themselves, and they build like their identity in the long term. But in Prague, I think we felt integrated into the expat community, but not in the not in the host culture. I think the Czech mentality, Czech people, I found a little bit cold, especially coming from Spain, where I think everyone's super friendly and warm.

So yeah.

7   When you reflect on your expatriate upbringing, what relationship do you think you had with your home culture identity? Did you keep in touch with it or not?

I definitely kept touch with my home culture identity, because we had family in Spain, so we would go travel and we would go visit them a lot. Yeah, we have all the cousins and aunts and grandchildren close to Valencia, so we would go there a lot and spend summers there.

So I think that helped me be in touch with the culture, also with the language.

8   Can you share an experience where you felt particularly connected or disconnected from your Spanish heritage?

I don't know, I think it's really hard to reflect on this. I cannot think of one specific moment.

9   Have you experienced any moments of cultural conflict within yourself growing up, and how did you resolve them?

I think in Spain, like we eat a lot of tapas, and we share a lot of food. So whenever you go with your friends or with families for a meal, you have little pinchos, you have a lot of different plates on the table, and everyone just shares. And I feel like in Germany and in Czech Republic, people don't do that.

You just kind of order one meal, and it's your meal, and you eat it. I think, I don't know if that was a conflict inside me that I felt, but it's like, I definitely saw that food was a really big difference. And I feel like food for me is important.

So I would see the differences, and then I would kind of think of it as a conflict. I don't know if I would resolve them. I just, I always had to go into this mentality of, oh, I'm in the Czech Republic, so I'm not sharing food.Oh, I'm in Spain, so I'm sharing food now.

10   How do you think being an expatriate influenced your views on concepts like home and belonging?

I feel like I can belong where I want to. If I try, if I make a community, if I learn the language, then I will belong anywhere.

But I think there's only one home, and one home only, and that's for me Spain. So even though I grew up abroad, I would say my home is Spain.

11   Do you relate to the phrase culturally belonging everywhere or culturally belonging nowhere? How so? I feel like I culturally belong everywhere, but kind of in Europe.

I feel like, yeah, I don't know if I have a really strong... No, I do, actually. I do feel European. Even though I'm Spanish, I do feel European.So I feel like home, I mean, that I culturally belong in Europe and nowhere else, probably.