Love... in translation

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Digital Communications is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole, or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed:

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1. Abstract

This dissertation investigates the intricate dynamics of intercultural relationships specifically within immigrant communities, moving beyond a general understanding to focus on the unique contexts and challenges faced by these populations. The primary objective is to examine how cultural differences manifest in interpersonal relationships, and to explore the specific challenges and rewards inherent in navigating multicultural relationships for immigrants.

This research will delve into key factors influencing the formation and maintenance of these relationships, including an analysis of personal challenges such as xenophobia, social challenges, and the significant undertaking of moving to a foreign country. By focusing on these specific experiences, the study aims to illuminate the multifaceted impact of intercultural relationships on both individual well-being and the broader immigrant community.

The research will specifically explore how these experiences shape their understanding of identity and belonging, providing a framework for understanding the complexities of intercultural interactions within immigrant contexts. Participants will be encouraged to share openly about the challenges and rewards of navigating different cultural norms, including personal anecdotes about cultural faux pas or moments of pride in their heritage. Furthermore, the study will explore the nuances of cultural exchange, emphasizing the importance of consent and strategies to avoid cultural appropriation.

Ultimately, this dissertation seeks to contribute a nuanced and context-specific understanding of intercultural relationships within immigrant communities. The findings are expected to inform support systems for immigrants, enhance cultural competency programs, and foster a more inclusive societal understanding of the unique experiences of intercultural couples within diverse immigrant populations. This work aims to provide a platform for unheard voices, challenging existing narratives and promoting a deeper appreciation for the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by immigrants in navigating the complexities of love across cultures.

Table of Contents

2. Acknowledgements

When living abroad not only we immerse ourselves in the country's culture, but we dive deep/dwell in amplified notions of self. I have never before perceived myself to be so Brazilian as I do now that I emigrated. Brazilians were brought up in a country marked by its diversity, and not only that, but a country that praises diversity.

As an international student living abroad for a year and a half so far, I have questioned my Brazilian identity too many times. That is, if I have become more or less Brazilian since living in Ireland, and what being Brazilian really means. I firmly believe that this experience made me learn not only about the local culture – and the other many cultures of the friends I have encountered in my way – but mainly about my own.

I remember a conversation I had in my first months in Dublin, an Irish colleague made a point that Westerns wouldn't experience such a cultural shock as Easterns might when moving to Ireland. This thought sits with me for a long time, but it was only during this last month that I have come to the realization that is not a matter of shock in the more traditional, negative meaning of the word, but how this experience affects and change us – immigrants - in many unknown ways.

The cultural nuances are perceived and felt daily, and are bodies and subconscious mind are keeping the score of it all. The weather is an important element in our daily lives and can affects us deeply when living in a foreign land. It determines not only the clothing we will be wearing, but our habits, if we are more indoor or outdoor, our dietary, which can affect our health, and ultimately, our humour and psyche.

One's dietary, for instance, could change drastically. For some of my friends, it was the very first time they tried some foods, such as mango, because they come from countries where the tropical fruits are scarce. In my case, I missed the tropical fresh fruits available in abundance in Brazil local markets. This is what I categorize as living a different experience far away from home. However, yearning for the food, for the holidays we celebrate in our countries, and more so, for the loved ones with whom we celebrate it with, is what I personally categorize as cultural shock.

The language we speak – and the way we convey a message, e.g., being ironic, monosyllabic, or straightforward, is also another element that can impact our social interactions. One thing I have learned in my interactions with people from several different nationalities is that humour is not translatable. Also, that being capable of

communicating in a second language ultimately allows individuals to interact, yet it can be limiting and exhausting to non-natives in many ways.

All of these factors combined can converge into a whole novel of challenges when two individuals from different backgrounds engage in a romantic relationship. That is the reason why I choose to listen, to write and to understand intercultural couples' stories and how they navigate all of those 'cultural shocks' and challenges in modern dating.

3. Chapter One: Introduction

This Dissertation by practice is a radio artifact, a Podcast called "Love in… Translation". It adopts a sociological approach to understanding immigration in Ireland, as well as exploring the complex interplay between individuals' cultural experiences and romantic relations.

It tells the story of two intercultural couples, who happened to meet in Ireland. They speak about how they experienced the Irish culture, since living abroad, and their respective partner's culture. They also share their views on how they navigate their multicultural relationships in modern times.

The participants are Giorgia Ossanes and Edoardo Rossi, Italo-Brazilian couple, and Aida Ben Lahmar and Gary Trundle, Irish-Moroccan couple. Despite communicating in a third language, Giorgia and Edoardo both claiming there are significant similarities amongst their cultures, both Latin. Aida and Gary, on the other hand, come from very different backgrounds. Aida is Muslim and comes from a very orthodox country, whilst Gary does not follow any specific religion.

This work intends to investigate how culture, as a system of shared perspectives (ALBUJA, 2022), plays a profound role in shaping individuals' identities, and its influence cannot be overstated, as it not only reflects but also reinforces social norms, values, and beliefs that define who we are and how we perceive ourselves. In other words, what combination of elements forms one's personality and how different backgrounds (nationality, religion, language, age, race, etc) can either collide or integrate with other cultural universes.

Diversity ideologies, or individual beliefs about cultural diversity in society, play a crucial role in shaping the communication dynamics of intercultural couples, ultimately influencing the quality of their relationships (Naeimi, H., West, A. L., Muise, A., Johnson, M. D., & Impett, E. A., 2023).

The phenomenon of human migration has been an integral part of human history, shaping societies and cultures across the globe. However, the scale and complexity of migration flows in the contemporary era have reached unprecedented levels, driven by a confluence of factors including economic disparities, political instability, climate change, and technological advancements.

As a result, many countries have experienced significant demographic shifts, with large-scale immigration transforming the social, economic, and cultural landscapes of both developed and developing nations.

The impact of immigration on the global landscape is, therefore, profound and multifaceted.

Culturally, immigration has a transformative effect on receiving societies. The influx of newcomers can enrich the cultural fabric of a nation, introducing new traditions, customs, and perspectives.

However, it can also lead to cultural clashes and identity conflicts, as host populations grapple with the challenges of adapting to a more diverse society. Thus, the process of cultural integration is complex and often fraught with tensions, as immigrants seek to preserve their own heritage while also participating in the broader society.

The research will facilitate open dialogue about the challenges and rewards of navigating diverse cultural norms within a relationship, encouraging participants to share personal stories of cultural faux pas and moments of heritage pride. Furthermore, it will examine the critical role of language in preserving cultural heritage, including personal anecdotes about language barriers and the importance of effective communication.

The entire documentary was recorded on Griffith's Radio Podcast studio and was entirely edited with Adobe Audition. This method of recording was chosen, as it is the same quality and style that can be seen in other professional podcasts and radio programmes.

Chapter 2 also sociology studies on cultural identity and the sense of belonging and answers the question "how individuals build a cultural identity?" It also examines theories that argue that belonging is a human need and that fitting in, that is, having an identity that marches the collective, can provide a sense of acceptance.

In Chapter 3, the practice, design and executive decisions regarding the production of the radio artifact will be discussed. This will also present research regarding documentary making and review post production outcomes.

Chapter 4 will reflect on the process of making this Podcast. It will highlight how the editing process, with its careful use of music, sound collages, and narrative, was crucial in weaving their individual voices into a cohesive and engaging final product.

Finally, the conclusion will display how intercultural relationships offer a chance to explore new ways of loving, to learn from a different culture, and to build a new, shared world of your own.

4. Chapter two: Evidence of research

4.1. Immigration in Ireland

Ireland, historically a nation defined by large-scale emigration, has undergone a profound demographic transformation since the late 20th century, emerging as a country characterized by significant immigration. For centuries, Irish people have left their homeland in search of better opportunities, driven by factors such as economic hardship, political oppression, and religious persecution. Irish people even consider it to be an 'Irish tradition' to emigrate.

According to the Irish Immigration, there are currently 807,000 non-Irish individuals living in the country. The Irish Post published that more than 30,000 individuals applied to become an Irish citizen in 2024.

This shift marks a notable departure from centuries of population decline, particularly following the Great Famine of the 1840s, which saw millions emigrate and left Ireland with one of the lowest populations globally.

While mass emigration continued into the 1960s and 70s, economic strengthening began to reverse this trend. The year 1996 is often cited as a turning point, as Ireland achieved net immigration, meaning more people were entering the country than leaving (LOYAL, 2011).

The acceleration of immigration in Ireland is inextricably linked to the Celtic Tiger era, beginning in 1988, which propelled the country into unprecedented economic growth. Between 1999 and 2008, Ireland's population surged by 18%, the highest rate among the then 27 European Union member states (LOYAL, 2011). This period saw the issuance of almost 1 million Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) to foreign nationals between 2002 and 2008, reflecting the scale of new arrivals.

This rapid demographic change has had breath-taking socio-cultural, economic, and political ramifications. Irish society, once largely perceived as homogenous in terms

of "whiteness and Christianity" (CRANGLE, 2024) has become increasingly diverse, necessitating a re-evaluation of national identity and belonging.

The influx of new populations has impacted labour markets, social welfare, housing, and political representation, challenging existing notions of class, poverty, and equality. The pace of change has triggered a reassessment of what it means to be Irish in the 21st century, moving beyond a monolithic understanding to embrace a more multifaceted national identity that acknowledges its evolving ethnic and cultural diversity.

By examining these historical and contemporary dynamics, this study aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the multifaceted immigration process in Ireland, acknowledging its complexities and the diverse experiences of those involved.

4.2. Habitus, Community and Belonging

According to French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, *habitus* is a set of culturally-acquired orientations that shape an individual's preferences, behaviours, and lifestyles within a specific social subgroup, influencing their conduct while also generating new practices (HOWSON, 2021).

Those group dynamics can manifest in various forms, such as the notions of community and belonging. A community is formed by a group of individuals who likely share the same values and belief system, which then leads them to bond at long-lasting, emotional level. Through shared values and cooperative relationships, communities foster a sense of social solidarity, which is essential for building and maintaining a strong, cohesive collective identity.

Therefore, a community “encompasses all forms of relationships which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time” (Nisbet, 1970).

Social groups, which exist in a delicate balance between closeness and distance, are a fundamental human motive that reconciles individual needs with those of the collective. Sociologist Scheff has proposed that the maintenance of social bonds is ‘our most crucial human motive’ (SCHEFF, 1990, p. 4).

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word belonging as "*A feeling of being happy or comfortable as part of a particular group and having a good relationship with the other members of the group because they welcome and accept you*".

In other words, is the acceptance of an individual by others, which leads him to believe he is part of the social group, not only accepted, but welcomed and a valued member of the group, is one humanity's most basic needs.

True belonging is contingent upon the creation of a culture that celebrates authenticity, where individuals can unapologetically express their unique identities and differences, free from the need to conform or cover, and where diversity, equity, and inclusivity are the cornerstones of a genuinely accepting environment.

While the notion that immediate and intimate ties are strongest and most meaningful may be intuitive, a closer examination reveals that abstract and remote bonds, such as those formed at the national or global level, can be just as powerful and enduring as more proximal connections.

4.3. Cultural identity

The concept of culture is constantly debated and redefined, making it a complex term that can't be rigidly fixed. To discuss the central role of 'culture', we must abandon the idea of absolute truth, as Stuart Hall suggests (HALL, 1997). Similarly, identity is also plural, reflecting its multifaceted nature.

In analyzing how groups behave, we can identify three distinct levels of affiliation. First, "localism" describes actions of communities operating on a smaller scale, encompassing movements driven by ties of family, kinship, ethnicity, and regional loyalties (EVANS, 2023).

Secondly, "nationalism" focuses on establishing, reasserting, or reshaping the nation-state as the primary entity for loyalty and association. Within this national context, an individual's culture develops, that it is the entire set of learned patterns created and developed by humans. A nation, in this sense, has been famously characterized by Benedict Anderson as an "imagined community."

Finally, there are those entities — states, groups, organizations, and individuals— who, aligning with the perceived flow of history, acknowledge and embrace diversity. This is called transnationalism. Their aim is to cultivate constructive and beneficial relationships among people from different national backgrounds.

To grasp the challenges and unique aspects of intercultural couples, it's essential to delve into the definition and evolution of the concept of culture. Various thinkers have contributed to this understanding, revealing that culture is not static but a dynamic element that shapes human identity and interactions.

Edward Tylor, in 1871, was among the first to conceptualize culture comprehensively. For him, culture is a "complex whole" encompassing everything people learn and acquire as members of society. This includes everything from knowledge and beliefs to art, morals, laws, and customs. In other words, everything we do and are as part of a social group is part of culture.

Norbert Elias, in *The Civilizing Process*, explores how customs and social rules have changed throughout history, influencing individual behavior and feelings. He argues that from the Middle Ages onward, dominant classes were gradually shaped by social life, leading to the suppression of spontaneity in favor of rules and repression in private life. This process, according to Elias, contributed to the distinction between "high culture" (formal, institutionalized) and "popular culture" (informal, everyday) (ELIAS, 1990).

Complementing this view, Isabel Ferin (2009) highlights that culture is not fixed. It comprises spiritual heritage, religious beliefs, and all manifestations of human activity, which are directly linked to the economic, political, and social conditions of each person and community. This means culture is constantly in flux, adapting and transforming over time (FERIN, 2009).

Cultural identity is how an individual perceives and positions themselves in the world, shaped by their cultural context. Culture, therefore, is something that is learned and internalized through social interaction.

It's important to note that no society can exist without culture, but its cultural norms and values are constantly changing. A society's culture encompasses both intangible aspects – such as beliefs, ideas, and values – and tangible aspects – such as

objects, symbols, and technology. Furthermore, even within the same society or community, cultural values can be contradictory and lead to conflict.

In the current landscape of globalization, the dynamics of culture intensify. Zygmunt Bauman described "liquid modernity," characterized by unstable, hybrid identities detached from local ties. "Time-space compression," driven by tourism and migration, has increased the frequency and intensity of connections between people from different backgrounds who were previously less intimately linked (BAUMAN, 2001).

4.4. Covering

Covering refers to the adaptive behaviour where individuals strategically downplay or conceal specific facets of their identity to align more closely with the norms of a dominant social group.

This practice, while often a mechanism to circumvent social exclusion, can be understood as a subtle yet significant impingement on an individual's authentic self, compelling them to suppress unique characteristics for the sake of assimilation.

None of the interviewees reported experiencing overt prejudice or social marginalization from their family or friends. Consequently, the concept of "covering"—the act of downplaying one's identity to conform to dominant norms—did not appear to be prevalent within this specific cohort.

However, the unconventional Muslim relationship discussed highlighted a nuanced dynamic: not only was the non-Muslim partner expected to adhere to cultural and religious norms while in Morocco, but the Moroccan Muslim individual was also expected to conform upon returning to her home country. This raises a pertinent question regarding Aida's "real" identity, prompting an inquiry into the fluidity and context-dependency of selfhood in intercultural contexts.

In exploring the markers of cultural belonging, a notable response from one interviewee, Gary, illuminated the evolving nature of cultural identity. Gary observed a significant transformation in Irish culture over recent decades. Traditionally characterized as rural, provincial, or traditional, Ireland is now undergoing a period of mass immigration, which is actively redefining the local cultural landscape. This demographic shift not only reshapes the existing culture but also contributes to a sense of "cultural limbo," where the very essence of Irish identity becomes less certain.

This embrace of diversity, while progressive, may paradoxically trigger a counter-movement of resistance and repudiation of differenc. As posited by sociologists, uniformity does not equate to homogeneity. Ultimately, the acceptance of the "other" is foundational to establishing bonds in intercultural interactions.

4. 5. Dating Beyond Borders

Intercultural relationships are a powerful expression of our increasingly interconnected world. For many, they represent a union of two people who have chosen to build a life together despite coming from different national, racial, ethnic, linguistic, or religious backgrounds.

For a long time, the term interracial was used interchangeably with intercultural. This narrow view focused on physical differences, overlooking the richness of cultural elements that make each person unique.

The very concept of "race" itself is a social construct, as science hasn't found significant genetic differences between people of different "races" (BALLARD, 2002). Yet, physical appearance, nationality, mother tongue, ethnicity, or religion are all important parts of what makes an intercultural relationship special.

The focus on "race" can sometimes overshadow other vital cultural elements, like how we express our emotions and how we communicate. This means we might be missing out on a deeper understanding of what makes these relationships so resilient and fulfilling.

For example, cultural differences can sometimes create a power imbalance within a relationship. Imagine one partner coming from a culture that values direct communication, while the other's culture prefers a more indirect approach. This can lead to misunderstandings, especially when discussing sensitive topics.

However, many intercultural couples successfully navigate these challenges by relying on two key strategies: open communication and flexibility. Studies suggest humour is another key element to coping with the differences. When partners make a conscious effort to share their experiences and understand each other's perspectives, they create a strong foundation for their relationship. In these cases, cultural differences become a source of strength, not a weakness.

Language, in particular, can be a significant hurdle. While many couples communicate in a common language, differences in their native tongues can sometimes create barriers to emotional expression. It can be difficult to fully articulate your feelings in a language that is not your own, and subtle nuances can be lost in translation.

5. Chapter three: Constructing and Designing of the Radio Documentary

My academic journey began with a focus on the broader strokes of immigration in Ireland. I was captivated by the stories of people moving across borders, the challenges they faced, and the new lives they built. My dissertation was initially conceived as a sociological exploration of this phenomenon, a look at the intricate dance between cultural experiences and romantic relationships.

Before I could even begin to tell these stories, I knew I needed to immerse myself in the research. I delved into the existing literature, seeking to understand the very fabric of culture - how it's formed, how it shapes individuals, and how it influences the dynamics within an intercultural relationship. This preliminary research was a crucial step, providing me with the foundational knowledge I needed before I could authentically engage with the couples I would later interview.

My original plan for the creative component of this dissertation was quite different. I envisioned a documentary, a data-driven narrative about global and Irish immigration, with the personal stories of couples as a secondary element. The focus was to be on the immigrant experience, with their romantic relationships serving as a tangential thread.

However, as I prepared to start production, I found myself drawn to a different medium. I started listening to a variety of podcasts and interview-based shows, and I was struck by their intimacy and power. The ability to connect with an audience through voice alone, to create a space for deep, personal conversations, resonated with me. It was at this point that I pivoted, deciding to create a podcast instead of a documentary.

This change in direction allowed me to delve deeper into the personal narratives of intercultural couples, making their relationships the central focus rather than a secondary detail. The podcast became the heart of my dissertation, a place where the

sociological theories I had studied could come alive through the voices of those who were living them every day.

5.1. Pre-Production Research

My dissertation explores the intricate dynamics of intercultural relationships, a topic that has profoundly shaped my academic and personal trajectory. The research process began with an extensive exploration of key theoretical constructs relevant to intercultural experiences, including cultural identity and the concept of love.

My personal connection to this subject stems from my relocation to Ireland, an experience that immersed me in diverse cultural landscapes. Living alongside individuals from various countries, whose cultural backgrounds sometimes mirrored and at other times diverged significantly from my own, provided fertile ground for reflection. As noted in the introduction, this international exposure has been instrumental in sharpening my perception of my own culture, allowing me to discern its symbolic meaning for me, appreciating its strengths while also acknowledging its challenges.

A recurring question, both in my self-reflection and in conversations with international peers, was the extent to which one feels compelled to "adapt" to the local culture by suppressing more salient cultural habits. As a Brazilian, the inherent tactility of my culture – the tendency to gesticulate and engage in informal, affectionate physical contact – frequently became a source of personal anxiety.

Instances where colleagues perceived this behavior as unusual led to feelings of chagrin and, at times, a sense of personal rejection. The act of consciously restraining these ingrained gestures felt like a diminishment of my Brazilian identity. This internal conflict prompted a crucial self-inquiry: is such adaptation necessary for fostering intercultural harmony, or does it compromise one's authentic self?

This personal query found a powerful echo in the TedTalk "Both, not Half" by actor Jassa Ahluwalia. This presentation, which deeply resonated with me, elucidates the experiences of individuals with mixed heritage, challenging the reductive binary thinking often imposed by language.

Ahluwalia critiques the notion of being "half" of anything (in his case, half British, half Punjabi), arguing that such terminology implies incompleteness. Instead, he

asserts that individuals of mixed heritage are whole and complete in their unique cultural tapestry. He further highlights the societal pressure often placed on mixed-heritage individuals to choose one aspect of their identity, or the perception that they are "not enough" of a certain background to assume roles of recognition.

This argument particularly resonated given my own background: with a Portuguese father, I was often perceived in Brazil as embodying more of a European identity, whereas in Ireland, I feel more closely connected to my Brazilian roots. Now, having lived in Ireland for nearly two years, I perceive my two inherent heritages as having intermingled with the local culture and the rich tapestry of cultures generously shared by my international friends.

In further developing my theoretical framework, I revisited the film "Green Card," starring Gérard Depardieu and Andie MacDowell. While the film's practical premise—obtaining a U.S. visa— was not directly relevant to my research on non-American couples, it provided a compelling exploration of romantic partnership within an intercultural context.

The narrative depicts a marriage of convenience between a Frenchman and an American, each seeking to achieve personal objectives—his, to reside in the United States and rebuild his life; hers, to secure a coveted apartment exclusively available to married couples.

What begins as a strategic alliance unexpectedly evolves into genuine affection. The film poignantly illustrates how the contrasting personalities of the protagonists, initially a source of turmoil, ultimately enrich their relationship, a sentiment echoed by one of my interviewees, Italian Edoardo Rossi.

Initially, I considered analyzing the television program "90 Day Fiancé"; however, I ultimately decided against it. My concern was that the televised nature of the show might compromise the authenticity and spontaneity of the depicted relationships due to potential scripting. Nevertheless, the theme of stereotypes, frequently prominent in the show, remained a consideration for potential exploration during my interviews with couples.

5.2. Product analysis and Inspiration

'Dating Beyond Borders' is a well-established YouTube channel (and now podcast) created by Marina Iakovleva, that has carved out a significant niche by exploring the fascinating and often humorous intersection of dating and cultural diversity. The core content of YouTube channel "Dating Beyond Borders" revolves around cross-cultural dating experiences.

This manifests in several ways: stereotype exploration to illustrate common stereotypes and cultural quirks associated with dating individuals from specific countries (e.g., "*You Know You're Dating an Italian Woman When...", "How to Ruin a French Date in 5 Minutes*").

Many videos delve into the specific dating cultures of various nations, discussing everything from communication styles and social etiquette to expectations around relationships and family involvement. This includes the series "What It's Like to Date In..." and topics like "No Sex Before Marriage? Why Korean Relationships are Shockingly Different!" or "What are the DUTCH Really Like?".

While these can sometimes lean into generalizations, they are typically presented with a light-hearted tone, often from the perspective of an outsider navigating unfamiliar norms.

More recently, especially with the expansion into a podcast, the channel has shifted towards deeper, more sociological conversations through interviews with guests from around the globe, who share their personal anecdotes and insights on cross-cultural relationships, identity, and the challenges and joys of dating abroad.

In summary, "Dating Beyond Borders" has successfully built a platform that explores cultural diversity through the lens of dating. While it started with a more light-hearted and sometimes stereotypical approach, it has evolved to embrace deeper, more nuanced conversations about how culture shapes relationships and human connection globally.

Its current style, blending informative discussions with personal stories, effectively promotes understanding and bridges cultural gaps for its diverse audience, and it was a great source of inspiration for my radio artifact.

5.3. Production:

5.3.1 Structure and Design

I chose a podcast format for a few key reasons. First, I wanted to reach a wider audience than a traditional academic paper ever could. I also wanted to create a more informal, personal space for my participants. Podcasts are a great way to share research findings, spark discussions, and give people a platform to share their own stories in their own words.

My podcast features interviews with individuals from diverse backgrounds about their intercultural relationships. We talk about everything from how they met and what challenges they've faced, to the cultural differences and similarities that make their love stories so unique.

To grab the listener's attention right away, each episode begins with a sound collage of the most powerful or humorous moments from the interviews. It's a way to draw people in and make them want to hear the full story. This is followed by an introduction of the guests, and then we dive into their interviews.

At the end of each episode, I added my own narration. This allowed me to reflect on the meaning of each couple's story, to highlight what I learned, and to create a more compelling narrative. The episodes are also intertwined with music that reflects the diverse cultures of my guests, creating an immersive soundscape. Each song is from the country of one of the interviewees and relates to love, adding another layer of depth to their stories.

5.3.2. Interviews

After a deep dive into the existing research, I developed a set of questions to guide my interviews. I wanted to create a structure that allowed me to explore key themes while also leaving room for the unexpected. These questions were my starting point, but I also asked plenty of spontaneous, improvised questions during our conversations. This approach allowed me to follow the natural flow of each couple's story, ensuring that the interviews felt less like an academic interrogation and more like an authentic conversation.

Conducting these interviews required a deeply ethical and empathetic approach. I knew from the outset that I was delving into a sensitive area—not only were my participants sharing the intimate details of their romantic relationships, but they were also

immigrants navigating a new country. This reality brought with it a heightened need for caution and care, particularly regarding privacy and confidentiality.

My priority was to create a safe space where participants felt empowered to share their stories without fear of judgment or exposure. I was meticulous in getting their informed consent, clearly explaining how their stories would be used. I assured them that their confidentiality was paramount and that any sensitive details would be handled with the utmost discretion.

Crucially, I recognized that there's no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to intercultural relationships. I had to be mindful of the unique dynamics of each couple, treating every conversation with cultural sensitivity. I made a conscious effort to avoid generalizations or stereotypes about their respective nationalities and cultures. Instead, I focused on listening to their individual experiences and understanding their story on their own terms.

5.3.2.1 Giorgia Ossanes & Edoardo Rossi

Giorgia is a journalist from Pelotas, a city in the southernmost state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul. She has been living in Ireland for nearly three years, where she is pursuing her master's degree in journalism. Brazil's vast size means there is incredible cultural diversity, and Giorgia identifies strongly with Uruguayan culture, given her home state's border with the country. She met her boyfriend, Edoardo, in Ireland.

Giorgia is reserved and quite shy, yet also deeply affectionate—a trait we Brazilians share. When she speaks about Edoardo, her love is palpable. She and Edoardo both believe that the passion they share is a beautiful similarity between their Brazilian and Italian cultures. Giorgia also has a bright, infectious laugh, another characteristic that reflects her Brazilian heritage.

Edoardo's story is a testament to following one's passion. He left a mundane 9-to-5 office job in Italy that left him unfulfilled and moved to Ireland to become a pizza chef. Giorgia jokes that he is the quintessential Italian, both passionate and a pizza chef. It was at the restaurant where he found his new career that he met Giorgia, who would soon become his girlfriend. Edoardo's journey to Ireland was a quest for happiness, and he found it not only in his work but also in his love for Giorgia.

I interviewed Giorgia and Edoardo separately, asking them the same core set of questions with slight variations. I originally considered interviewing them together at the end but decided I had enough material from the individual interviews. However, in the production phase, I found myself regretting this decision. After seeing the dynamic between my other couple, Aida and Gary, in their joint interview, I realized I had missed an opportunity to capture Giorgia and Edoardo's interactions firsthand.

Despite this, the editing process was crucial in bringing their stories together. I wove their separate interviews into a single narrative, creating the illusion that they were speaking to each other. This approach allowed me to highlight their individual perspectives on the same events, providing a rich, layered account of their relationship.

5.3.2.2 Aida Ben Lahmar & Gary Trundle

Aida was a classmate of mine, but we had never discussed intimate topics. When I mentioned my dissertation idea about interviewing couples, she was immediately open to participating. At first, Aida seemed very anxious. I assured her that the process would be comfortable and even sent her some of the questions beforehand to ease her worries. As the interview progressed, she began to relax and open up. This shift is noticeable in the podcast itself.

I believe her initial hesitation stemmed from discussing her relationship while also navigating her Muslim faith and traditions. I made it clear to Aida, both before and during the interview, that she was not obligated to answer any questions that made her uncomfortable. I also offered to edit out anything she didn't want shared. She ultimately responded to every question with ease and didn't request any edits. When I later interviewed her with Gary, she was far more relaxed, and the conversation had a wonderful, natural flow.

As an Irish native, Gary seemed very comfortable with the interview. I had already explained the process and questions to Aida, so Gary was well-informed from the start. I may be biased, but I believe that speaking in his native language gave him a sense of confidence and ease. This was confirmed by the fact that he was the most talkative interviewee, as evidenced in the interview transcripts.

I found his perspective as a local on Irish culture to be incredibly insightful. He brought up a compelling point about the uncertainty surrounding cultural identity and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment, which is a very relevant topic in Ireland and globally. What he shared aligned with my preliminary research, which suggests that when a familiar culture faces rapid change, a strong reactionary movement often emerges.

This isn't a defence of protests or anti-immigrant sentiment—as the grandchild of immigrants and an immigrant myself, I am firmly against such views—but rather an observation that his perspective aligns with my initial sociological findings.

5.4. Post-Production: Editorial Decisions

Initially, I envisioned the podcast's opening with a grand narrative, beginning with the sheer number of people in the world and weaving in Plato's myth from "*The Symposium*".

According to him, the original humans were not like us today. They had a spherical body with four arms, four legs, and two faces. These beings were complete and self-sufficient, but also very proud and powerful. In their arrogance, they tried to climb Mount Olympus to dethrone the gods. As punishment, Zeus decided to split them in half. From this division, each half began to feel an intense longing and a strong desire to be reunited with its other original part. It is this desire to be whole again, to find one's lost "soulmate", that Aristophanes defines love.

I planned to use the quote that the road to love is narrow, with room for only one, as a guiding thread. However, as I shifted from a radio documentary to a podcast format, I realized this approach would be too extensive and wouldn't fit the intimate tone I was aiming for.

Instead, I decided to let the participants introduce themselves indirectly. I created a sound collage of their most compelling or humorous remarks about their partners and what defines them. This serves as an engaging hook for the listener. This is followed by a brief, direct introduction of the guests, before moving into the full interviews.

I felt the series needed something to tie the stories together, but since I divided them into separate episodes, I initially thought a unifying introduction wasn't necessary. After editing each couple's story individually, I decided to create a narration for each

episode's conclusion. This narration not only captured the essence of their love story but also served as a clear marker for the end of the episode.

For the episode featuring Giorgia and Edoardo, I wanted to create a playful narrative that blended their Brazilian and Italian cultures. My initial ideas included a mix of samba and tarantella or a fusion of pizza and feijoada. I then landed on the idea of describing them as a modern-day Romeo and Juliet. I chose this comparison carefully, as their story contains no elements of rivalry; in fact, they share many similarities. I also wanted to avoid a tragic tone, given the lightness and joy of their relationship. The reference was meant as a playful nod, not a literal comparison.

I aimed to summarize the core of their love story: finding completeness in similarity and enriching life through differences. Given their mention of using a translator, I incorporated a play on words, transforming "lost in translation" into "love...in translation." To honour their cultures, I included two popular sayings: a quote from Paulo Coelho about love being just a word until someone gives it meaning, and a well-known Italian saying.

The music for their episode was an experimental process. I first tried the Brazilian songs "*Deixa acontecer naturalmente*" and "*Camisa 10*," both from the *pagode* genre, which Edoardo mentioned he loves. However, the instrumental was too loud and didn't fit the introduction's mood. I then settled on the instrumental introduction of "*Carol, Carol, Carolina Bela*" by Toquinho and Jorge Ben Jor. Even though it is actually a mix of *samba* and *bossa nova* genre, instead of *pagode.*

For the closing song, I initially considered the vibrant Italian classic "*Ti amo*" by Umberto Tozzi, but its energy overshadowed the participants' final words. I then chose the classic version of "*That's Amore*" by Dean Martin, a globally recognized song about love that perfectly captured Edoardo's final passionate remarks. After extensive searching, I found the instrumental version to be the most fitting (That's Amore, Italian Music on Spotify).

To build suspense, I edited the audio to have a brief moment of silence before Edoardo answered what it's like to date a Brazilian. The music then swells as the couple defines love, continuing with my narration to the end of the episode.

When editing the material from my second interviewed couple, Aida and Gary, I followed a similar structure to the first episode. I began with a sequence of soundbites to capture the listener's attention. However, this episode required a different approach due to a crucial factor: the couple's relationship was not fully disclosed to Aida's Muslim family. This necessitated the inclusion of a privacy notice and a more meticulous editing process.

To ensure the couple's privacy and protect their identities, I had to edit out all mentions of their names. This was a challenge, as I have a cultural tendency to refer to people by their names to create intimacy. I also had to remove the few instances where they referred to each other by name.

The initial interviews with Aida and Gary showed signs of nervousness, such as fidgeting and a quiet tone of voice from Aida. I adjusted the audio volume to ensure her voice was clear.

Most of the podcast was created by blending their individual interviews to make it sound like they were conversing. However, there were three questions — about marriage, their age difference, and how they would raise a child being from different cultures — that I asked them together.

The music for this episode was a serendipitous discovery. Having used a cultural tribute in the first episode, I decided to continue the theme. I began with an introduction from the song "*Arabian Nights*" from Disney's Aladdin, performed by Will Smith. I then created a mashup with "*Je n'ai pas change*" by Jean-Marie Riachi, a song I had randomly heard on my Spotify playlist, which I felt offered a beautiful instrumental Arabic element.

Following the tradition of cultural tribute, I needed an Irish song to close the episode. My initial choices were U2's "*With or Without You*" and "*I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*." However, I felt these songs didn't harmonize with the couple's story. It was then that I remembered "*Raglan Road,"* a song an Irish friend had introduced me to. After searching on YouTube, I chose Sinead O'Connor's version, which I found to be the most beautiful and fitting for their narrative. I also wanted to highlight the flute in the instrumental outro, as Aida had mentioned how much she loves that sound in Irish music.

6. Chapter Four: Discussion

When I began this project, I expected to find couples who had faced discrimination or marginalization, as this was a recurring theme in much of the initial research I encountered. To my surprise and relief, neither of the couples I interviewed reported experiencing xenophobia or prejudice. Instead, the challenges they faced were more subtle, rooted in the everyday complexities of their intercultural relationships.

Giorgia and Edoardo's relationship is a testament to the power of cultural similarity. As they both noted, Brazilians and Italians share many commonalities in how they socialize, their close-knit family ties, and their affectionate and passionate nature. This was consistently confirmed throughout their separate interviews. They also playfully reinforced some of their national stereotypes. Edoardo described Brazilians as a joyful, warm, and vibrant people, a sentiment Giorgia echoed, adding that they are playful and optimistic. Giorgia, in turn, called Edoardo "very Italian" due to his reverence for food, particularly pasta and mealtimes, a point he readily agreed with.

Despite this remarkable similarity, they still encountered some challenges. The most prominent was communication. Although their languages share Latin roots, they sometimes needed a translation app to fully express themselves. This highlights a key finding in intercultural research: even when partners share a significant number of cultural traditions, variations in how emotions are experienced and expressed can impact relational dynamics.

They both noted how their shared warm nature and closeness to friends and family strengthened their bond, while their differences in musical tastes created a mutual appreciation for new things. The richness of Giorgia and Edoardo's relationship lies in how they found completeness in their similarities while also enriching their lives with their differences.

In stark contrast, the relationship between Aida and Gary is defined by significant differences. They come from distinct cultures and have different religious backgrounds; Gary is not religious, while Aida identifies as a non-traditional Muslim.

Despite this, Aida expressed that she feels at home in Ireland and has never experienced cultural shock. Gary, however, highlighted some significant cultural differences within their relationship, particularly his difficulty in understanding the active role Aida's family plays in her life.

This dynamic brings to the fore the concept of "covering," but not between the partners themselves. Instead, it arises in the couple's relationship with Aida's family and the broader Moroccan community.

Religious beliefs can be a source of conflict in relationships, especially when partners have different views. While some studies suggest shared faith can bridge cultural gaps, focusing on theological differences can lead to conflict and a sense of distance between partners (TIEN, 2023).

This is especially complex in Aida and Gary's case. While Aida doesn't see herself as a strict or conservative Muslim, her family's perception is different. This forces the couple to present a different version of their relationship to her family, creating a disconnect between their private and public identities.

This leads to another key challenge: how they would raise children. Aida and Gary both acknowledged that they would have to find a middle ground between their cultures, a process that would require navigating her family's expectations and creating a new, shared cultural identity for their child.

Their story exemplifies how intercultural relationships, even without overt prejudice, require couples to constantly negotiate their identities and beliefs both within the relationship and in the eyes of the world.

7. Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explore the intricate landscape of intercultural relationships, moving beyond theoretical frameworks to illuminate the lived experiences of couples who navigate love across cultural divides.

My initial assumption was that I would encounter stories of overt prejudice and xenophobia. To my pleasant surprise, this was not the case. Instead, the challenges these couples faced were far more nuanced, rooted in the subtle complexities of cultural communication, differing family expectations, and the negotiation of personal identity.

Through a sociological lens and the innovative medium of a podcast, I provided a platform for individuals to share their stories with authenticity and intimacy. The journeys of the two couples featured - Giorgia and Edoardo, and Aida and Gary - offer profound insights into the complex interplay of similarity and difference in intercultural love.

Giorgia and Edoardo proved that cultural diversity can also be a significant strength for intercultural couples. Their way of navigating cultural differences with humour, openness and willingness to communicate, cited as key approaches in scholarly literature (Bustamante et al., 2011; Kuramoto, 2018), suggests that cultural differences can enrich identity and foster a fluid, evolving cultural identification. And that cultural similarity can be a source of profound connection, with shared traits acting as a strong foundation for their love.

In contrast, Aida and Gary's story highlights how significant cultural and religious differences can create unique challenges, particularly when it comes to family expectations and the public presentation of their relationship. Their experience of having to navigate different expectations for their private and public lives illustrates a more complex, and often overlooked, aspect of intercultural love.

Ultimately, this dissertation reveals that there is no single narrative for intercultural relationships.

Intercultural relationships offer a chance to explore new ways of loving, to learn from a different culture, and to build a new, shared world of your own. Their stories are a testament to the resilience of love, demonstrating that with open communication and

empathy, individuals can not only bridge cultural divides but also create a life enriched by them.

Despite the rise in these relationships, we still don't have a lot of research on how cultural differences impact couples. This is a missed opportunity, because these relationships are often a microcosm of the challenges and triumphs of navigating a diverse world.

Even though love is often considered a universal emotion, the way it's expressed and experienced varies greatly from culture to culture. The basic ingredients of romantic love - intimacy, passion, and commitment - are found in many countries around the world. But the recipe for how those ingredients are combined and presented is entirely unique to each couple.

This is where intercultural relationships truly shine. They offer a chance to explore new ways of loving and being loved, to learn from a different culture, and to create a new, shared culture of your own.

In conclusion, this dissertation underscores that intercultural love is not merely about overcoming grand obstacles, but about the daily work of finding common ground, celebrating differences, and continually creating a new, shared culture.

Their stories are a testament to the resilience of love in an increasingly diverse world, demonstrating that with open communication and empathy, people can build a bridge across any cultural divide.

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9. APPENDIX

9.1. NUJ CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of the National Union of Journalists are expected to abide by the following professional principles.

A JOURNALIST:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies.
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion.
5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward, and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means.
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest.
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work.
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information, and takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained during her/his duties before the information is public knowledge.
9. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's.
10. age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
11. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed.

12. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about her/his welfare.

13. Avoids plagiarism.

9.2 Appendix – Griffith College Research Ethics Policy

Griffith College's Principles of Research Ethics

Researchers in Griffith College are committed to adhering to the highest ethical standards. These ethical standards include the principles of informed consent, the right to withdraw from research, data protection, and respect for human rights and equality as well as sensitivity to issues arising from inequalities of power. It also recognises that there are particular ethical issues in research involving children, young people and vulnerable adults and that such research involves particular attention. Vulnerable populations may include, for example, children, people with a learning disability, prisoners, and those in a subordinate position to the researchers.

The purpose of a Research Ethics Committee is to review research projects before they commence in order to assess their ethical implications and to provide guidance, support and approval to researchers on ethical issues.

Our obligation to research participants includes an obligation to explain, in accessible terms, what the research is about, who is undertaking it, funding it (if applicable) and why it is being undertaken. The creation of a Research Ethics Approval Form requires postgraduate learners (in conjunction with their supervisor) who are engaged in academic research involving humans to consider the ethical implications of their research proposal and to create and include an information sheet as part of their application for ethics approval.

Consent is a fundamental research principle and Griffith College's Research Ethics policy proposes that it should be documented and explicit. All consent forms should be clear and easy to understand and should explain to participants what is involved in the research (including any identifiable risks). Participants should be made aware in a consent form that participation is voluntary, that they can withdraw at any time and without subsequent effect to them. It is important that no pressure should be exerted on participants and/or that no unreasonable inducement be offered in order to gain consent. Participants should either be assured of confidentiality or advised on the limits of confidentiality i.e. participants should be aware that confidentiality of information provided can only be protected within the limitations of the law (depending on the nature of the research

proposal, these limitations may need to be stated). In the case of unobtrusive observational or covert research, care should be taken to ensure that the research is justified and that the benefit of undertaking the research outweighs the risk (such as invasion of privacy).

It is important also to recognise that all researchers must be appropriately qualified and have sufficient experience to lead or conduct the research.

Griffith College's Learner Guidelines on Research Ethics

1. The purpose of the ethical review process is to offer advice, support and guidance on ethically appropriate research and as such the process should be viewed as a support to good research practice.

2. All postgraduate researchers within the Journalism & Media Faculty who are proposing to do academic research involving humans are required to seek ethical approval from the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (REC).

3. There are a number of exemptions to the Faculty's research ethics approval process. All applicants are advised to check with their supervisor/Dissertation Co-ordinator that their research requires consideration before submitting their approval form. Exemptions:

I. If an applicant is doing a Dissertation by Practice in the College, they are not required to seek formal ethical approval but instead should be guided by industry best practice1 .

II. Research which uses only existing data which is publicly available.

4. The process of gaining ethical approval begins by first downloading Griffith College's Research Ethics Approval Form which is available on the Media Faculty page on Moodle. The form itself, and its implications for your research, should be considered by you and then discussed with your supervisor.

5. It is important that you consult with your supervisor before you submit the Research Ethics Approval Form.

6. Dates for submission of Research Ethics Approval Forms will be posted on the Media Faculty page on Moodle.

7. The completed application should be proofread and spellchecked before submission by you to the Faculty REC. It should also be signed by your supervisor before submission.

8. No data collection should be carried out on your project until you have received written approval from the Faculty REC.

9. The application form must be completed in full, and submitted by the dates specified. Late submissions will result in a delay in applications being processed.

10. Applicants should submit one signed copy of the form to the Faculty Office and an email copy of their form to the Dissertation Co-ordinator.

11. Incomplete Research Ethics Approval Forms will not be accepted and will be returned. This will result in a delay in processing your application.

12. The Faculty REC will endeavour to process applications as quickly as possible. Please note that if a project is judged to be of particular risk, the Faculty REC may forward your proposal to the College REC for advice and guidance.

13. The Faculty REC is not concerned with methodological issues but may choose to comment on them in so far as they have ethical implications.

14. If your application is successful, your supervisor will receive written notification and you can commence data collection and proceed with your project.

15. If your application is unsuccessful, your supervisor will receive written feedback explaining the decision and advising on the next course of action. You will be invited to re-consider your application in light of this feedback.

9.3 Script

Intro Episode 1: Giorgia & Edoardo

Narrator: Welcome to "*Love…In translation*". The podcast where we untangle the hilarious, heart-warming, and sometimes, utterly bewildering world of intercultural relationships.

Outro Episode 1: Giorgia & Edoardo

Narrator: For thousands of years, poets and writers have tried to pin down what love really is. Is it a verb? An action? A feeling only a lucky few get to experience…? Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho said it best: Love is just a word until someone comes along and gives it meaning.

For our own Romeo and his Brazilian Giulietta, love is about acceptance and finding a sense of completeness in each other.

Of course, that doesn't mean they never get lost… in translation. Sometimes their communication gets a little tangled… But that's okay, because as the Italian saying goes: L'amore trova una via. Love always finds a way….

Stay tuned for the next episode of "*Love… in Translation"*.

Intro Episode 2: Aida & Gary

Narrator: Imagine you're an intercultural couple who have navigated the complexities of love across cultures, but you have to do so in secret. Due to personal reasons, we can't reveal our guests' real names or any identifying details, so today they will be called 'Rima' and 'Cillian'. Let's meet the lovebirds…

Outro Episode 2: Aida & Gary

Narrator: No matter where we come from, our backgrounds, our nations, our beliefs, we are each a complete universe unto ourselves. And sometimes, the beautiful truth is that home isn't found in a city or a country, but in another person. The story of Rima and

Cillian reminds us that love can cross any border, for as the Arabic proverb says: The heart has a key, and love is its only lock. Their love isn't just about who they are together; it's about loving who they become when they are with one another.

Stay tuned for the next episode of "*Love… in Translation"*.

9.4 Interview Questions

Questions to Giorgia Ossanes:

1. Can you introduce yourself? Name and where you are from?
2. How long have you been living in Ireland?
3. What is the thing that you miss the most about Brazil?
4. Have you experienced any sort of cultural shock since moving to Ireland?
5. What makes you Brazilian?
6. What do you believe to be typical Brazilian stereotypes around the world? Is it a positive or negative stereotype?
7. What is your favourite Brazilian food? What is the type of music you listen to?
8. What mannerisms and personality traits make your partner Italian?
9. How did you meet?
10. Have you dated someone from another nationality before?
11. Did you have any pre conceptions or pre conceived ideas about Italians?
12. Would you rather date someone from your culture or from a different culture?
13. What language do you use to communicate?
14. Is language a barrier in your relationship?
15. What do you mean by "we respect each other's culture"? Can you give examples?
16. Can you name Italian songs that your partner has been listening to recently?
17. Any challenges you might have to face in an intercultural relationship?
18. How does the encounter with your respective families happened? What was their reaction?
19. Can you complete the sentence "Love is…"? And "Dating an Italian is …?"

Questions to Edoardo Rossi:

1. Can you introduce yourself? Name and where you are from?
2. What makes you Italian?
3. What makes your partner Brazilian? What kind of mannerisms?
4. Have you dated someone from another nationality before?
5. How did you meet?
6. Did you have any pre conceptions or pre conceived ideas about Brazilians?
7. How long have you been living in Ireland?
8. What is the thing that you miss the most about Italy?

9. Have you experienced any sort of cultural shock since moving to Ireland?
10. What language do you use to communicate?
11. Any challenges you might have to face in an intercultural relationship?
12. What kind of music you listen to?
13. Do you believe your partner's Brazilianess is rubbing off on yourself? Is your partner becoming a bit Italian?
14. Any negative experiences you might have faced due to dating someone from a different nationality?
15. Can you complete the sentence "Dating a Brazilian is …?" And "Love is…"?

Questions to Aida Ben Lamar:

1. Can you introduce yourself? Name and where you are from?
2. How are you experiencing living abroad?
3. How did you meet?
4. What attracted you in your partner's profile?
5. What common interests you shared?
6. Before moving to Ireland, what was your idea about Irish people?
7. Any aspect you found it to be very dissonant from your own culture?
8. Have you dated someone from another nationality before?
9. What makes you Marrocan? Do you think this might be one of the reasons why you are non-judgemental of other cultures?
10. What language do you use to communicate?
11. What do you believe to be typical Irish stereotypes?
12. How does the encounter with your respective families happened? What was their reaction?
13. What makes your partner Irish?
14. How long have you been dating? Since you start dating, did you pick up some Irish mannerisms or did some of your marrocaness rubbed on your partner?
15. Any challenges you might have to face in an intercultural relationship?
16. Can you complete the sentence "Love is…"? And "Dating an Irish is …?"

Questions to Gary Trundle:

1. Can you introduce yourself? Name and where you are from?
2. How did you meet?
3. What attracted you in your partner's profile?

4. What common interests you shared?
5. What was your idea about Moroccan people?
6. Any aspect you found it to be very dissonant from your own culture?
7. Have you dated someone from another nationality before?
8. What makes you Irish?
9. What makes your partner Moroccan?
10. What language do you use to communicate?
11. How does the encounter with your respective families happened? What was their reaction?
12. What makes your partner Moroccan?
13. Do you think apart from religion there is any other aspect in your relationship that might be challenging?
14. Do you think this is a positive thing or maybe something exciting about the relationship?
15. Did you experience since you're dating any kind of prejudice or marginalization or maybe negative episodes. regarding your relationship?
16. What do you believe are typical Irish stereotypes?
17. Do you think Irish people perceive this positively?
18. If I were to ask you what makes you Irish, what would you say?
19. Is language a barrier in the relationship?
20. Can you complete the sentence “Love is…”? And “Dating an Irish is …?”

9.5 Interviews

INTERVIEW GIORGIA OSSANES 26/06/2025 - RADIO STUDIO GRIFFITH COLLEGE

Karina: Hi, Giorgia!

Giorgia: Hello, how are you?

Karina: Good, how are you?

Giorgia: Good, good, good,

Karina: Can you introduce yourself? Please tell me your name and where you're from.

Giorgia: My name is Giorgia, I'm from Brazil.

Karina: Giorgia, for how long have you been living here in Ireland?

Giorgia: I would say, 2 years and a half, almost three years.

Karina: What do you miss the most about Brazil?

Giorgia: I think…The thing I miss the most about Brazil is my family, because I think all the rest you can sort of get here, food, our culture, our music… But my family is there…I wish I could meet them or have them here more often. Yeah, my family, definitely.

Karina: Have you experienced any kind of cultural shock since moving to Ireland?

Giorgia: I think the biggest cultural shock was probably the city centre of Dublin (laughs). I'm from a fairly small city in Brazil so I'm not used to seen so many homeless people in the streets, people using drugs…I would say this was the biggest cultural shock for me. But in terms of culture, I don't think anything was….I think everything was okay.

Karina: What makes you Brazilian?

Giorgia: Oh…. that's a, that's a hard question. Let me think. Oh…. I think it's our warm way, you know, of acting with people. And I feel like we are always opened to meet people. Even for me, I'm an introvert, still, I'm very opened to meet new people. I think that would be it. Or maybe, seeing the good of everything, making jokes about everything, so I think that would be that. It's a hard question.

Karina: What do you believe to be typical Brazilian stereotypes?

Giorgia: I think it's, in general, hmm… At least for women, we are very connected to sexuality…hmmm…. But overall, I think it's…. positive, our positiveness and warmth, because people usually connect us to samba and Carnival, warm weather, and they expect us to be all very happy and excited. I think that's the biggest thing.

Karina: Would you say it is a positive or negative stereotype?

Giorgia: I think overall people have positive stereotypes about Brazil…. I think….It's because…maybe if we see it from a diplomatic point of view, Brazil is very neutral, so we don't get negative stereotypes like the United States, so I think most of the stereotypes we have are positive.

Karina: What makes your partner Italian?

Giorgia: Oh…He is so Italian (laughs). I think, hmm, I think they are very closed to us in terms of how they socialize…. what makes him Italian? I think…. the connection to food, yeah, the connection to food. Because for them it's very important to have a meal with other people and to really enjoy the moment. Any meal, so even if it's just a happy hour with some snack they will really be in that moment and be present. So, that's the biggest thing.

Karina: How did you met?

Giorgia: So, we worked together in a pizza restaurant (laughs). Very Italian of him working in a pizza restaurant. He is a pizza chef; I was a waitress. For two or three months we were friends, and only friends, because he is such a cool person, and so nice, and everyone loves him. So, yeah…

Karina: Have you ever dated someone other nationality?

Giorgia: Hmm…Not really…I had a…I don't even consider him a boyfriend, a Brazilian guy when I was a teenager, it was very quick. So, I actually consider Edoardo my first boyfriend….And I'm glad he's my first boyfriend.

Karina: Did you have any pre conceptions or pre conceived ideas about Italians?

Giorgia: To be honest, I don't think I knew that much about the Italian culture…Of course we know about the food, pizza, lasagne, la la la…. I think I had a preconception that they

were very loud (laughs) and that turned out to be true. But I think overall my ideas of Italian people were related to food. I didn't know that much, to be honest.

Karina: How do you feel about dating someone from a different culture?

Giorgia: I don't think I ever thought about it…. nationalities…. And I think when we started dating, I don't think I ever thought "Oh, I'm dating an Italian person". I think it was very natural. He is very respectful of my culture, and I'm very respectful of his culture, so it was never a problem. A little bit later, of course, as it gets more serious you start to think "How am I going to present him to my family?", about the language…. But it was very chill. He speaks a bit of Spanish, so it was easy for him to get the Portuguese…. He is just vey sociable, so he really tried to connect to my family, speak a bit of Portuguese, you know…. Yeah, but I think…. It was never really a conscious thing like "I'm dating someone from another nationality", it was very natural.

Karina: I see, you don't see 'Italian', you see 'Edoardo. May I ask, what language do you speak to each other?

Giorgia: Oh, it's a big mix (laughs). I'm learning a bit of Italian now, because…Just like my family, his family doesn't speak English. So, to communicate with them I have to speak a bit of Italian, or he translates somethings for me. So, I'm speaking a bit of Italian, he speaks a bit of Portuguese, and we both speak English. So, it's a big mix. We mostly speak English…hmmm…because it's the language we are a hundred percent sure we are going to understand each other. But sometimes we have little dialogues in Portuguese, or in Italian, and I think it's very cute (giggles).

Karina: Is language a barrier in your relationship?

Giorgia: No, not at all. I think if the languages were more different, it might be a problem…. when you and your partner don't have a middle ground. But Italian and Portuguese are fairly similar and I think we can communicate just well. Of course…. English is not our first language, sometimes we have to say something in our own languages to be able to express ourselves fully. And sometimes we might not understand, I might say something in Portuguese, something very specific and he won't understand. But then we use translation, and we are able to understand each other. I think it just needs a bit of commitment to try to understand when it is a more difficult subject but I think we do that very well.

Karina: Previously you mentioned you both respect each other's cultures. What do you mean by that? Can you give examples?

Giorgia: I think we embrace each other's cultures, so…If you go to our house in Edoardo's day off, and he's studying, he'll probably be drinking a *chimarrão*, which is a drink from my state. Or, he really likes stroganoff, which is our cultural dish, he also likes to cook listening to *pagode*. The same for me, I'm always listening to Italian songs because of him. I'm on Duolingo trying to speak Italian, you know. And I think we really respect…. For example…. We have small differences in terms of culture, for food for example. The pasta is very sacred for them, and sometimes I do messes with pasta…. I try to do it in secret. Not show him…But I think our differences are funny and make fun of them. And I think it's very cool to have someone so different from you…. Not so different from you, but different, because you learn so much. And I almost feel like his culture is part of my culture, you know. And that we are creating our own culture in our home.

Karina: Can you name Italian songs that your partner has been listening to recently?

Giorgia: I usually listen to Italian Hip Hop, but Edoardo loves the more classic songs, because he used to listen to it with his grandpa, like Vasco Rossi, Ligabue. There is one he really likes…. Let me try with my Italian… "*Piccola stella senza cielo*". It's really cute, I really love it. And he signs it, it's really cute, I love to listen to him singing.

Karina: Any challenges you might have to face in an intercultural relationship? How does the encounter with your respective families happened? What was their reaction?

Giorgia: I mean so there is an effort from both parts to try to speak the other families' language.

Karina: Can you complete the sentence: *Dating an Italian is* …?

Giorgia: …*Belissimo*… (laughs)

Karina: One more: *Love is*…?

Giorgia: Love is…. A safe space, I think, to be yourself.

INTERVIEW EDOARDO ROSSI 26/06/2025 - RADIO STUDIO GRIFFITH COLLEGE

Karina: Hi Edoardo, May I ask you to introduce yourself? Please, say your name and the country where you're from.

Edoardo: Ok, I am Edoardo Rossi, and I'm from Italia, Italy (laughs).

Karina: Where in Italy?

Edoardo: Im from the North, actually from the Northwest, very close to the French border, it's Savona. It's not too big, it's pretty small if compared to big cities like Milan or Rome.

Karina: What makes you Italian?

Edoardo: First thing I have in my mind is food, of course, of course (laughs). It is a stereotype but it's true. I really love food, Italian food specially, it's the biggest thing for me.

Karina: What makes your partner Brazilian? What kind of mannerisms?

Edoardo: Giorgia Brazilian…. I think…the music, maybe, the dance, I don't know…. Yeah, it would be that, maybe the manners, the way she does things, she's really Brazilian, I don't know….

Karina: What kind of mannerisms?

Edoardo: She's really like me, I don't know….hmmm, sometimes, outside she can be a really closed person, but at home she can be a really warm person. So, I think is something about Brazilian people to be warm and joking many times…Yeah, I think that's it… the vibes (laughs).

Karina: How did you meet Giorgia?

Edoardo: The first time I met her was in my work place, she used to be a waitress in my restaurant. We used to hang out with the other colleagues and nothing and we went out many times in discotecs after service, in Dicey's (laughs). Because we used to be a group with a lot of Brazilians in the Restaurant, but not now, there are a lot of Europeans now,

but it used to be a lot of people from Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and gauchos. We had fun with a lot of funk music, "*Baile de favela*". And I met her with the other guys, the first months, yeah…

Have you dated someone from another nationality before?

Edoardo: No, I didn't. No. Dating? No. Never. She is the first non-Italian girl.

Did you have any pre conceptions or pre conceived ideas about Brazilians?

Edoardo: Stereotypes…? Hmm, I knew, I imagined many things about Brazilian people, like they love to dance, we have the image of Carnival in Brazil and hmm…about music…. I always thought about Brazilian people as energetic people, and it kind of matched that, because they are very energetic, very positive, positive energies.

Karina: How long have you been living in Ireland?

Edoardo: Now, it is…In general it's more than two years, I can divide the period in two parts. I've been here for six months in the first part, and now with her it's been more than a year and a half. The first part of the experience I was alone with my friends, I created a group of friends. And now, I'm with her.

What is the thing that you miss the most about Italy?

Edoardo: It could be the weather. In Italy, we have so many sunny days, we can see a lot of colours, sunset, sunrise…I've been to Brazil and it was the same, the sunrise in Rio de Janeiro, Copacabana Beach…. Oh, it was amazing! And the same happens in my city, because it's in the cost line, I'm really used to have happy hours in the village near my town and seeing the sunset. In Dublin it's usually raining, so we have to stay indoors most of the time.

Have you experienced any sort of cultural shock since moving to Ireland?

Edoardo: Cultural shock…Not so many. I thought Irish people were very friendly with foreigners. Actually, the first impact was very good, because I met very friendly Irish people. The first week was very hard for me because it was very cloudy, and all the time. So, it was a huge impact, but just because of that. Because of the weather. About the people? No. Maybe now with the homeless people in the city centre, but if I go to the countryside, to small towns, like Gallway, they're still the people that I imagined. It's quite like before, not so many big differences.

Karina: What language do you use to communicate?

Edoardo: We speak English most of the time, but we speak even a bit of Portuguese and a bit of Italian. Sometimes I say something in Italian to her and she tries to understand…Actually, no, she improved a lot. I had to speak a bit of Portuguese because I was preparing myself to go to Brazil last year. So, in three months I had to learn a lot of Portuguese, especially with Duolingo. I didn't imagine it was so difficult for me because I used to speak Spanish, but Portuguese is very difficult for me, the accent in some words. Sometimes I try some words with her and she says "no, it's not good", like "pão" (laughs, or "*mamãe*", because we don't have this phonetics. The same way for her, when she tries to speak Italian, we have double letters. For example, "*soprattuto*", and it's very difficult for her because she can't listen to the double letter. Even though we have some problems, it's natural for us. We are mixing now English, Portuguese and Italian, so it's getting better.

Karina: Any challenges you might have to face in an intercultural relationship?

Edoardo: No, zero. Zero. No difficulties. It's not difficult. Because of the nationality? No. It's actually something that is…hmmm… More exciting, actually, because every time we learn something new. Now, for example, I've got some hobbies, not hobbies, but I brought "chimarrão" from Brazil and I drink it while I'm studying. It's beneficial for me. We are not having problems, we are enriching our lives with Italian or Brazilian cultures.

Karina: Do you believe your partner's Brazilianess is rubbing off on yourself?

Edoardo: With music, if we go to a party, I can't stand still. I was in a Pagode night in Pelotas and we were with other people, they were sitting, and we just started to dance. I think I'm becoming a bit Brazilian because of that.

Karina: Is your partner becoming a bit Italian?

Edoardo: Yeah, I think so, but…They'are almost the same, it's natural for her, as it's natural for me to embrace the Brazilian aspect. Because they are similar, they're latin, you know.When she's in Italy, I think she's comfortable, with my friend, my family.

Karina: What kind of similiarities?

Edoardo: The way people stay with each other is very similar. We love to have people around and socialize. In the North, it's a bit different, Northerns are a bit colder, they love

to socialize, but in smaller groups. That's why I love to stay with Southern Italians, because they are very friendly, Brazilians too. It's the same in my school, since first day they are opened to interact and make jokes.

Any negative experiences you might have faced due to dating someone from a different nationality?

Edoardo: No. Not at all. Actually, I had zero prejudice about her being Brazilian. Zero. Just positive. Especially in Italy or my friends in here, they had a positive reaction, it was always like "Wow, you have a Brazilian girlfriend!", it was always "Cool!".

Karina: Can you complete the sentence "Dating a Brazilian is …?" And "Love is…"?

Edoardo: Dating a Brazilian is…. exciting (laughs). Love is…amazing, because it completes my life.

INTERVIEW AIDA BEN LAHMAR & GARY TRUNDLE 29/06/2025

RADIO STUDIO GRIFFITH COLLEGE

Karina: Hi, Aida. How are you?

Aida: Hi Karina. I'm good. How are you?

Karina: I'm good, I'm grand. Can you introduce yourself? Name and where you are from?

Aida: I'm Aida, I'm from Morocco, I'm turning 27 soon and I've been here in Ireland since last February.

Karina: How are you experiencing living abroad?

Aida: At first, when I decided to come her, I was scared. I have never travelled outside Morocco before, and I was doing it the first time so it was scary. And it only hit me when I pass the checkpoint, the airport gates and realized I couldn't see my parents anymore. However, when I arrived here, I had a great host family. It wasn't as hard as I expected it to be. Everything came very easily. I came here and got a job in two weeks. I was comfortable with my host family. My host mother showed me the way, bus lines etc. So,

it was less hectic, or crazy. The paper work was a very smooth process…And I hate paper work (laughs). And then I met him.

Karina: Okay, and I want to know all about it. How did you guys meet?

Aida: We met on Bumble after a few crazy experiences… We bump into obstacles but we have to stay positive, and as they say 'the third is the charm' (laughs). Some people think the app is like a game, but it's real life, it's real people. There are some psychos out there. Bumble is a better option for women because they can choose who they want to interact with, as they message first. So, I messaged him, I sent him a gif, we started to talk, he asked me my WhatsApp, and then we went on our first date. He suggested the zoo, the first date was filled with animals, so he really knew how to get into my heart.

Karina: What attracted you in your partner's profile?

Aida: I really don't judge people before I get to know them, but when I first saw his picture, I thought he looked very youthful, he was thirty-five at the time. "He looks very young for his age", I thought. He looks funny, you know, not playful…I don't know. And I checked his profile, he wasn't to invested, there was no red flag, so I thought "Let's start a conversation". We had a few common interests, like mindfulness and outdoor activities. I can't remember exactly what it was…

Karina: Before moving to Ireland, what was your idea about Irish people?

Aida: Maybe you'll find my answer a bit surprising but there was no cultural shock for me. That's how similar our cultures are. Except for religion…. And pork, because we don't eat pork. And there's a lot of sausages around (laughs). But, no, literally, nothing, no differences, no nothing. My host family knew how to cook great food, they had two children they were so fun, they would be wrestling around and I would hear their giggles from my room. We are very family oriented too. To be honest? No cultural shock whatsoever. I'm Muslim, but I'm not really… Extreme, extreme Muslim. Like, I like to have fun, I've been given this life to experience it. I won't do things that are harmful to people or myself, but other than that I just blend in easily.

Karina: Any aspect you found it to be very dissonant from your own culture?

Aida: Not really. You would find extremely liberal people everywhere. It all depends on your values. For example, I'm family oriented and I want to have a family one day so I won't be dating around, you know? If I'm meet someone and he's the extreme opposite

just be straight forward about it and tell me. I don't harm you and you don't harm me. I respect you and you respect me. Wherever you go you'll bump into these people.

Karina: Have you dated someone from another nationality before?

Aida: Yes, before meeting Gary. I went out with two guys; one was Spanish the other one was Romanian. The Spanish guy was very descent he came forward and said he just wanted something casual. I respected that. If he wants to be friends, that's okay for me. The Romanian guy, not so much. They have their own reputation in Ireland so I was like "okay", let's say he met the stereotype. I was not looking for a specific nationality. We are all humans. My preference was a descent guy who has the same values as me. No specific nationality or culture. So, I was very open minded. I never saw that coming, bur for some reason it happened (laughs).

Karina: What makes you Moroccan? Do you think this might be one of the reasons why you are non-judgemental of other cultures?

Aida: What makes me Moroccan? Okay, I will tell you a funny story. So everywhere I go here they either think I'm Brazilian, Portuguese, or Spanish. I even got Turkish, because I don't meet the stereotype. Morocco has been a beacon for all sorts of people. Literally, we have so many genes, we've had experience with the Spaniards with Americans, people from the Middle East. I'm talking about people who came from Saudi Arabia. My first heritage comes from Andalusia. I am a mix of so many nations, so that's what makes me Moroccan, because I look like so many other nationalities when I'm literally just Moroccan.

Karina: Do you think this might be one of the reasons why you don't have preconceptions or judgements towards people?

Aida: I could say so. Like, I consider with myself as a global citizen, where I don't see cultures as limitations, you know? I don't think that culture makes you who you are in absolute. So, for me, a culture is just a part of it it's not the whole thing. I find myself everywhere I go.

Karina: What language do you use to communicate?

Aida: We speak English to communicate, and few times we speak, well, I speak because he only knows a few words that are known worldwide, sometimes I'll be speaking words in Spanish or French, but we make it funny. It is so funny, sometimes I would be speaking

words in Moroccan. As a matter of fact, the first time I told him I loved him was in Moroccan. I love you in Moroccan is “”. He thought he heard me saying “Come on”, or something. So, he tried to figure the word I was saying and then he googled on his phone how to say “I love you” in Arabic, but we speak Moroccan dialect, so it’s not Arabic, it’s a different dialect. And I told him he was close and that he was smart for googling. It was funny. Then he said, once he knew what I was saying “I love you in all languages”. So, I was like “yep” (laughs).

Karina: What do you believe to be typical Irish stereotypes?

Aida: Stereotypes…? To be honest, when I first came here the only things, I knew about Ireland were the myths about fairies and all of that. And music, and I always loved Irish music, the medieval violins…But I heard about the Irish stereotypes that people liked to drink every day. And I thought “That’s weird” because he (Gary) rarely drinks. I also don’t drink. When we started to go out, we started to drink more, in dates or parties, but not excessively. But about Moroccan stereotypes...? It depends on the Western point of view. Some people think that they like to practice black magic, but…. They do practice black magic, but it’s the minority and people who aren’t really educated. That’s the stereotype you would get from Saudi Arabia.

Karina: How does the encounter with your respective families happened? What was their reaction?

Aida: I was invited over Christmas. But the first time I met his mother was two months after we started dating. Then I met his sister. They are a lovely family; they are very close. I haven’t met his father yet, since they’re not very close, but maybe in the future. But he’s going to meet my family next month, in July, and I’m really excited about it, to see my cats, my country.

Aida: They don’t speak English, so I’ll do a lot of translation. To be honest I don’t have a lot of concerns about him meeting my family, but me coming back home…. I waited s long to get away from home and going back to that house just makes me anxious. Not about going with him, just about me being home again. But I’m sure he’s going to love there, the beaches, the weather, the food. And they are going to love him. He is just smiley, funny, easy to get along with. My partners are conservatives so the only thing they worry about and asked about religion is if we get married. Morocco is a Muslim country so you cannot marry a non-Muslim. So, for us, if we do get married in the future he has to convert

in the future, otherwise he won't be able to register our marriage, he won't have some rights, property rights, kids… But for lifestyle purposes? Who cares?! I'll be practicing my religion; he's going to be doing himself. We have similar values; he doesn't have to have the same religion.

Karina: What makes your partner Irish?

Aida: (laughs) Look at him…. He's pink! (laughs). Irish…? Colour aside, he's very funny, he's hilarious and another thing, so, you're Brazilian, you cook with spices, I'm Moroccan, I cook with spices. For him? He has no idea if something has spices or not. One time he bought burgers with spices and I asked him what spices were in it, he said "there are no spices", and I asked him "Are you sure? Cause it won't be tasty if there are no spices". And I started to read the label and of course there were spices.

Karina: How long have you been dating?

Aida: Our anniversary was on the 13th of April, so one year and a few months.

Karina: Since you start dating, did you pick up some Irish mannerisms or did some of your 'Moroccaness' rubbed on your partner?

Aida: I don't know, maybe the accent. I had one woman saying to me that I had the most Irish accent when I said "I swear to God" (laughs). And when it comes to him, he has rhythm, for example, he is not weird about rhythm. He loves sauna, and we have them in Morocco.

Karina: Any challenges you might have to face in an intercultural relationship?

Aida: Do you mean from him or outside?

Karina: From others.

Aida: Not really, he puts me first. He has always had me with him in occasions with his family, friends. I was always invited to his life. We do get some looks when we are walking in the streets, but I'm sure it's because we look great together. We are mixing genes in here. I never felt left out.

Karina: Can you complete the sentence "Love is…"?

Aida: Genuity… is that a word (laughs)? You don't want to act, you know, try too much, make it happen… If it's there, it's there, if not, it's not.

Karina: And “Dating an Irish is …?”

Aida: A lot of fun, a lot of laughter, a lot of smiling.

Karina: Hi, Gary!

Gary: Hi.

Karina: How are you?

Gary: Good, how are you?

Karina: I’m great. May I ask you to introduce yourself?

Gary: Yeah, so I’m Gary, I’m Irish, born and raised in Dublin. Lived here most of my life, apart from a year or so in Cork. I’m Aida’s boyfriend and we’ve been together just coming a year and a half now.

Karina: Okay. Would tell me how did you met?

Gary: We met online, on Bumble. Hmm… She was pretty much the first person I matched with on Bumble. I never used the App before. I had a friend who used it and said it was good so… Downloaded it, made a profile, match for her day one, and yeah, that was it.

Karina: What caught your attention on Aida’s profile?

Gary: Yeahh…I’m trying to remember her profile. I can’t remember most of it. But…she seemed very down to earth, just a kind of a chill girl. Not, I’d say, as modern as the women I’m used to. Hard to describe, more traditional, she seemed like a blast from the past, more than a super modern woman.

Karina: I heard you made the right move when deciding to go to the Zoo for your first date.

Gary: Yeah, yeah… we love animals and like that's the perfect first date for me. And I suggested that to her she thought it was the perfect first date so I thought “yeah, this is probably gonna go well!”. Yeah, we're into the same things, like, you know, we're not big

drinkers or partiers, or whatever, so she likes nature, we've very similarly interests, we've slightly cultural differences, but I feel personality wise, we are the same.

Karina: Did you have any notions about the Moroccan culture?

Gary: No, I really didn't know much about Morocco. It was one country I never really met people from Morocco, didn't have any interactions about it, didn't know people who live there or anything, so I had a very limited understanding about Morocco. I knew generally kind of where it was but in terms of the culture and everything, she taught me pretty much everything about it. I really didn't know much of what the population was like, the religion anything like that.

Karina: Have you ever dated someone from another nationality?

Gary: Yeah, but more European and much closer to my culture. She comes from quite a different culture so anyone I dated in the past would have come from European culture pretty similar to myself. Slight language difference but in that we would have had very few cultural differences.

Karina: So, you're mentioning the cultural differences, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Gary: The religion was a big one. Obviously, she's Muslim, I've never died of Muslim before. And I didn't know how that would go, like I knew at the start that we were going to be quite different culturally. Personality wise we are very similar, but where we come from and kind of what's acceptable and the norms are quite different so that took a bit of getting used to. Especially her family dynamic compared to mine. We are not used to somebody whose parents are kind of self-involved in their lifestyle at her in age. It's not something we really have here as a culture. Like we have close families, but her parents' kind of want to know where she is all the time and who she's with. So, she has to be more careful about what parts of her she reveals to her family more so than anyone I dated. People I've dated in the past would be like "oh this is who I am, my parents know, they know everything I do, it's fine". But she… her family is very traditional so she has to sheltered them a little bit. So that would take getting used to.

Karina: Do you think apart from religion there is any other aspect in your relationship that might be challenging?

Gary: Like I said, having to hide somethings from her parents and to keep some parts of our lives a secret from her parents because they're very traditional and they wouldn't accept us living together…. I mean she's staying in my place more than she would stay in her house. I'm 37 so I haven't hidden anything from my parents in a long time. She's 10 years younger, now she's turned to 27 and so even an Irish culture like a 27-year-old wouldn't be really hiding anything from their parents whereas in her culture they have to be very careful about what they reveal or what they let people know. So yeah, there's a little bit of secrecy in a relationship which was completely new to me.

Karina: Do you think this is a positive thing or maybe something exciting about the relationship?

Gary: I think for her culturally it's probably a positive thing. I think in Western culture we've probably gone a little too far the other way. it'll be like oh my parents don't get to decide anything in my life and it's not that their business. I think their parents' involvement in their life keeps them a little bit more traditional which isn't a bad thing. I think they're very family oriented and very careful about who they allow into their lives which I think is probably a positive thing, but then it can make our relationship stressful. So that's a culture shock to me. I felt like suddenly I was a teenager again. Like I haven't hid anything for my parents since I was a teenager, you know? Don't let them know we're here, we're drinking, we're doing this… so it felt like suddenly at age 36 I was being a teenager again and having to hide things from her mother and yeah it might be oh yeah quite childish in a away so that was hard to deal with at my age.

Karina: Aida had the opportunity to meet your family, right? How did that go?

Gary: Yeah, pretty early on. Hmm, my family are pretty chill. Hmm…I think they were a little bit shocked when I first said that she was a Muslim and everything, and everyone thought that there'd be a bit of a culture shocker, but once they knew her, they saw how good we are together. Like they realized there was no, there's no barriers, there's nothing there that's going to make the relationship awkward or difficult, so I guess she spent lots of time my family she's pretty much part of the family already.

Karina: So, I heard that you are meeting her family in July…

Gary: Yeah, next month, little bit nervous, let's see how it goes. Well, she tells me Morocco is very Western friendly in terms of tourists and everything. It can be quite a

restrictive culture but that's only put on the people who live there. Like, the man and the culture and everyone will be quite… They expect the women to be very traditional, whereas they don't treat westerners the same. they don't expect them to adhere it's all sort of values. I think they have they seem to have a two-tier society there whereas Western people who emigrate there get treated very differently than the people who grow up there so I don't think there'll be a massive culture shock in terms of the place. From her family, yeah…. (pauses) Mainly because I need to be careful about how I act around her

Karina: In what sense?

Gary: Her family have a very different flip of what our relationship is like. That we have a very I don't know what you'd call it…. 1920s kind of attitude where we don't kiss, we don't hold hands

Karina: Did you experience since you're dating any kind of prejudice or marginalization or maybe negative episodes. regarding your relationship?

Gary: No, not from here, like I said, my family were probably a little bit shocked when I first told that she was Muslim and everything, but like I said they're very open minded.

Karina: What do you believe are typical Irish stereotypes?

Gary: I think our stereotypes of kind of washed away a little bit we're coming a little bit more generic. Ireland has changed a huge amount in the last even 10 to 15 years compared to all I remember. And obviously we've had huge amounts of immigration and our culture shifted very rapidly, so I think a lot of the traditions were used to and they don't stand there as much anymore. It doesn't feel like traditional Ireland and I'm not so sure about what we are becoming.

Karina: Do you think Irish people perceive this positively?

Gary: I think we do have a kind of traditional culture that people want to protect and yeah, I think people feel that's going to be washed away a little bit with the amount of immigration we've had especially in capital cities and stuff like if you go rural Ireland. Where you'll get a much more traditional kind of Irish life. Whereas in the cities I think now are becoming much more European that rather than Irish it's hard to distinguish an Irish city from any other European city now. I think compared to 15, 20 years ago you

really wouldn't know you're in Ireland. There's a lot more non-Irish nationalities now especially in cities, like for my job, I work on broadband network so I install fibre up the cables in houses apartments businesses all day, you know?

Karina: If I were to ask you what makes you Irish, what would you say?

Gary: That's tough to answer because I don't know how traditional Irish, I would be. I think we've always been typically very welcoming, we're quite open-minded. I think, like, we've always had quite a rural culture which is changing now, like Ireland would have always been associated with farming and agriculture, drinking, and all that sorts of things. Whereas now, yeah, I think we're shifting a bit and we're not quite sure who we are right now, I think that's what's triggering people to be quite against immigration…. Now you see massive anti-immigration protests. I think we've lost what we were and we're not really sure what are right now. And I don't know how he really address those problems, how you change that back. But, yeah, I think people feel like they're, like, losing the traditional Irish culture and it's hard to even articulate what that is…. Sometimes it's more of a feeling. But you can just feel things slip away or feel things change.

Karina: And what makes Aida Moroccan?

Gary: So, more the tradition…. I think one thing I noticed about her compared to other girls I know is that she's not very involved in social media and stuff, which I'm not at all. I have no social media whatsoever. I haven't had social media since I had a Facebook page when I was in the early 20s and I deleted that, so I'm completely removed from that world. It's kind of alien to me. Whereas a lot of girls I would have dated in the past were heavily involved in that. They spent huge amounts of their daily lives worried about how everyone is gonna perceive them and constantly taking pictures of themselves or trying to get the right picture and the right lighting. Sometime I feel like they're not actually living their lives anymore, they're not experiencing things in real-time.

Karina: Since you've started dating, I don't do you think there's something about her culture or her identity that you picked up a little bit?

Gary: Nothing beyond how traditional they are. I haven't been to Morocco, so the only experience of Moroccan culture is through her. So, I don't know how I'm going to find it when I go and interact with our family and I got to see big difference is there but now me and her are very similar. I feel like Moroccan culture is almost like Irish culture twenty-

thirty years ago. We would have been much more traditional a couple of decades ago. I think it would have been very similar to that life where, you know, you're hiding things from your parents and you're trying to keep the traditional fronts, pretend you're living a traditional life….

Karina: Is language a barrier in the relationship?

Gary: Not for us because she's really fluent. It will be when I go to meet her family because they don't really speak English. They speak French, which I don't. So that's probably gonna be a little bit of a challenge. But she works as an interpreter herself, is the ideal you have to have if you're bringing a foreigner to meet your family. Other than that, I don't think we'll have any issues.

Karina: Okay. And as a final question… It's actually not a question, can you complete these two sentences: Love is…?

Gary: Love is finding someone you are willing to share the rest of your life with and build something together.

Karina: okay and dating a Moroccan is?

Gary: Dating a Moroccan is a slight culture shock but much smoother and easier than I first expected.

9.6 Consent Form

Consent Form

I, Aida Ben Lehmar, enter into this agreement with Karina Teixeira Marques, hereby known as the producer.

I have been informed and understand that the Producer is producing a radio documentary for academic purposes that may be aired on public and/or commercial radio and other formats.

I hereby grant the producer the right to use any of said recordings in their productions, whether recorded on or transferred to videotape, film, slides, photographs, audiotapes, print, digital/electric media or any other media in perpetuity.

This includes, without limitation, the right to edit, mix or duplicate, and to use or reuse said recordings, either alone or as part of its finished productions.

Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing at any given time of the process.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

Karina Marques, karina.marques@gmail.com or karina.marques@student.griffith.ie or Francesca Lalor (Practical Dissertation Supervisor) francesca.lalor@griffith.ie

This project has been approved by the Faculty of Journalism and Media Communications; Griffith College Dublin

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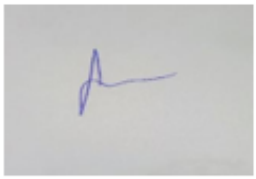
I have read the foregoing and fully understand and consent to the terms and stipulations contained therein.

Participant Signature



PRINTED NAME

Aida Ben Lehmar

Producer Signature Karina T Marques

Date __29/06/2025___

Consent Form

I, Gary Trundle, enter into this agreement with Karina Teixeira Marques, hereby known as the producer.

I have been informed and understand that the Producer is producing a radio documentary for academic purposes that may be aired on public and/or commercial radio and other formats.

I hereby grant the producer the right to use any of said recordings in their productions, whether recorded on or transferred to videotape, film, slides, photographs, audiotapes, print, digital/electric media or any other media in perpetuity.

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I have read the foregoing and fully understand and consent to the terms and stipulations contained therein.

Participant Signature

PRINTED NAME Gary Trundle

Producer Signature Karina T Marques

Date 29/06/2025

Consent Form

I, Edoardo Rossi, enter into this agreement with Karina Teixeira Marques, hereby known as the producer.

I have been informed and understand that the Producer is producing a radio documentary for academic purposes that may be aired on public and/or commercial radio and other formats.

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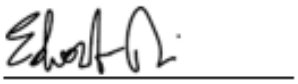
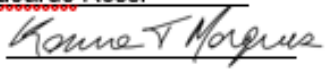
Participant Signature 

PRINTED NAME Edoardo Rossi

Producer Signature 

Date 26/6/2025

Consent Form

I Giorgia Ossanes Jaques, enter into this agreement with Karina Teixeira Marques, hereby known as the producer.

I have been informed and understand that the Producer is producing a radio documentary for academic purposes that may be aired on public and/or commercial radio and other formats.

I hereby grant the producer the right to use any of said recordings in their productions, whether recorded on or transferred to videotape, film, slides, photographs, audiotapes, print, digital/electric media or any other media in perpetuity.

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I have read the foregoing and fully understand and consent to the terms and stipulations contained therein.

Participant Signature Giorgia Ossanes

PRINTED NAME Giorgia Ossanes Jaques

Producer Signature Karina T Marques

Date 26/6/2025